

6 Summary

The area around the Kiggavik and Sissons leases has been the subject of exploration and study since the late 1970s by various parties. Following initial feasibility and baseline studies, review of existing information and the submission of a formal Project Proposal in 2008, AREVA initiated the procedural requirements towards completing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Baseline wildlife investigations that began in 2007 in support of the Project Proposal and advanced in 2008, 2009, and 2010 in support of the DEIS are found within this report.

Lying predominantly within the Dubawnt Lake Plain/Upland Ecoregion, the Project area is located in a low Arctic region characterized by minimal topography, predominantly shrub tundra habitat with low structural habitat heterogeneity, an extreme northern climate, and relatively few terrestrial vertebrates. The terrestrial environment is used by caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*), muskox (*Ovibos moschatus*), large predators, small mammals, and upland birds, while the extensive water and wetland features dotting the landscape provide habitat for various species of waterbirds. Although the diversity of species may be lower than other ecoregions, the importance of the region in the life cycles of many of these species is well documented. The barren-ground caribou is a principal component of the northern ecosystem.

Human activities historically consisted of subsistence hunting and gathering, and local plants and wildlife continue to be used by people living in the region. The Hamlet of Baker Lake is the community in closest proximity to the Kiggavik Project and previous studies as well as Inuit Quajimajatuqangit (IQ) studies completed as part of this baseline program demonstrate the continued dependency that local people have on terrestrial resources in the region. During community meetings and gathering of IQ, caribou in particular were consistently identified as being of utmost importance to the Inuit. Maintenance of healthy caribou populations are one of the key concerns of Elders and community members in Baker Lake.

Field studies, collaring data and IQ have concluded that caribou from several identified herds occur year-round within the Regional Study Area (RSA) in different seasons. Although historically the RSA was identified as a post-calving area for Beverly caribou, current use by the Beverly herd during the post-calving season appears to be limited. Most animals remain north and west of the Thelon River/Aberdeen Lake complex as they move between tree line wintering areas and calving areas near Queen Maud Gulf. The Qamanirjuaq herd has not historically been identified as using the RSA during any season; however, baseline studies found that most animals occurring within the RSA during the post-calving season extending into early August were from the Qamanirjuaq herd. Collaring data on the northeast mainland herds (Wager Bay, Lorillard, and Ahiak herds) have supported the view by scientists and local residents that most caribou occurring in the RSA in the winter are individuals from these herds.

The most critical seasons for caribou in the RSA are the post-calving period, when cow and calf groups are particularly sensitive to disturbance, and the winter period, when individuals are already stressed by extreme conditions and limited food supply. Identified water crossings, some of which are situated in close proximity to the proposed All-Season Road, are also considered to be important habitat features. Many of these crossings, particularly those situated between Aberdeen, Qamanaajuk, and Schultz lakes, have a long history of use by caribou and Inuit. Several of these crossings are protected under the Nunavut Caribou Protection Measures. Although available scientific information indicates that the area around the RSA is not used during the calving season, some IQ states caribou have frequented the area during this season.

Another predominant mammal species in the Kivalliq region is the muskox, which was seen regularly and in herds up to 80 individuals during baseline studies. Recent trends suggest the muskox has expanded its range rapidly since the mid-1950s when populations were at very low levels. The establishment of the Thelon River Wildlife Sanctuary, where hunting continues to be off-limits, was likely a key refuge for expanding muskox populations. Large predatory species, including grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*), wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), and wolf (*Canis lupus*) are present throughout the RSA but are observed infrequently. The former two species are considered to be species of Special Concern by the federal Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). Caribou are a key prey species for all of the larger predatory mammals, but particularly wolf. Smaller predatory species, such as Arctic fox (*Alopex lagopus*) and ermine (*Mustela erminea*), are also present, but their primary prey includes small mammals such as Arctic hare (*Lepus arcticus*), sik sik or Arctic ground squirrel (*Spermophilus parryi*), voles and lemmings.

Of terrestrial vertebrates, birds are represented by the greatest number of species. Several raptor species occur, including the relatively common and federally-listed peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*; Special Concern), which nests within the RSA. Other raptor species, including the federally-listed short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*; Special Concern) and rough-legged hawk (*Buteo lagopus*), are known to nest but at low densities. The breeding status of gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*) and snowy owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) is not known. Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) have only recently been recorded in the RSA and are likely only summer visitors. Raptor species feed primarily on small mammals and upland birds, of which there are several common species in winter (i.e., ptarmigan) and summer (e.g., Lapland longspur [*Calcarius lapponicus*], horned lark [*Eremophila alpestris*] and savannah sparrow [*Passerculus sandwichensis*]). Other notable upland bird species include jaegers, and sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis*), an uncommon nesting species in the RSA.

Waterbirds, including ducks, geese, swans, gulls, terns, and shorebirds are also well represented in the RSA. The most common waterbird species are Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*), semipalmated sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*), and long-tailed duck (*Clangula hyemalis*). As well, during the spring and fall migration periods, large flocks of Canada geese and snow geese (*Chen caerulescens*) migrate through the study area. Although no federally-listed waterbird species are found breeding within the RSA, several species are considered sensitive in Nunavut. One sensitive

species in particular, king eider (*Somateria spectabilis*), which was documented as breeding within the RSA during 2009 baseline studies, has not previously been recorded outside of more coastal regions of Nunavut.

The wildlife fauna of the region surrounding the Project is well understood from Inuit Quajimajatuqangit (IQ) as well as many year's of scientific studies and field investigations documenting species abundance and distribution. Of all wildlife species, caribou are the most important wildlife species in the ecosystem from both a food chain perspective and as an important food source for the Inuit. Protection and maintenance of existing caribou populations and a way of life for the Inuit is of critical importance.

7 References

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7.3 IQ Interviews

ARVJ (Arviat Hunters and Elders). 2011. Summary of community review meeting conducted by Mitchell Goodjohn with five HTO members and two Elders. February 18, 2011; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment E.

BL01 (Baker Lake Interview 01). 2008. Summary of individual Elder IQ interview conducted by Hattie Mannik in Baker Lake, 2008; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment B.

BL02 (Baker Lake Interview 02). 2008. Summary of individual Elder IQ interview conducted by Hattie Mannik in Baker Lake, 2008; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment B.

BL04 (Baker Lake Interview 04). 2008. Summary of individual Elder IQ interview conducted by Hattie Mannik in Baker Lake, 2008; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment B.

BL05 (Baker Lake Interview 05). 2008. Summary of individual Elder IQ interview conducted by Hattie Mannik in Baker Lake, 2008; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment B.

BL06 (Baker Lake Interview 06). 2008. Summary of individual Elder IQ interview conducted by Hattie Mannik in Baker Lake, 2008; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation; Attachment B.

BL08 (Baker Lake Interview 08). 2008. Summary of individual Elder IQ interview conducted by Hattie Mannik in Baker Lake, 2008; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment B.

BL10 (Baker Lake Interview 10). 2008. Summary of individual Elder IQ interview conducted by Hattie Mannik in Baker Lake, 2008; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment B.

BL01 (Baker Lake Interview 01). 2009. Excerpt from socio-economic informant interview conducted by Susan Ross and Mitchell Goodjohn in Baker Lake. March 4, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment B.

- BLE (Baker Lake Elders). 2011. Summary of community review meeting conducted by Mitchell Goodjohn with ten Elders. February 17, 2011; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment B.
- BLH (Baker Lake Hunters). 2009. Excerpt from socio-economic focus group conducted by Susan Ross and Mitchell Goodjohn. March 4, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment B.
- BLHT (Baker Lake Hunters and Trappers). 2011. Summary of community review meeting conducted by Mitchell Goodjohn with eight representatives of the Baker Lake Hunters and Trappers Organisation. February 16, 2011; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment B.
- CHAH (Coral Harbour Adult Hunters). 2009. Excerpt from socio-economic focus group conducted by Linda Havers and Mitchell Goodjohn. May 13, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment H.
- CHW (Coral Harbour Women). 2009. Excerpt from socio-economic focus group conducted by Linda Havers and Mitchell Goodjohn. May 13, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment H.
- CI01 (Chesterfield Inlet interview 01). 2009. Summary of IQ interview conducted by Mitchell Goodjohn with a family of three hunters. May 6, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment C.
- CI03 (Chesterfield Inlet Interview 03). 2009. Summary of IQ interview conducted by Mitchell Goodjohn with two Elders. May 6, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment C.
- CI04 (Chesterfield Inlet Interview 04). 2009. Summary of IQ interview conducted by Mitchell Goodjohn with individual Elder. May 6, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment C.
- CI05 (Chesterfield Inlet Interview 05). 2009. Summary of IQ interview conducted by Mitchell Goodjohn with individual Elder. May 6, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment C.
- CI06 (Chesterfield Inlet Interview 06). 2009. Summary of IQ interview conducted by Mitchell Goodjohn with individual Elder. May 7, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment C.

- CI08 (Chesterfield Inlet Interview 08). 2009. Summary of IQ interview conducted by Mitchell Goodjohn with individual Elder. May 7, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment C.
- CIHT (Chesterfield Hunters and Trappers). 2009. Excerpt from socio-economic focus group conducted by Linda Havers and Mitchell Goodjohn. May 7, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment C.
- RBH (Repulse Bay Hunters). 2011. Summary of community review meeting conducted by Mitchell Goodjohn with two hunters. February 11, 2011; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment G.
- RBHT (Repulse Bay Hunters and Trappers Organization). 2009. Excerpt from socio-economic focus group conducted by Linda Havers and Mitchell Goodjohn. May 11, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment G.
- RBJ (Repulse Bay Hunters and Elders). 2011. Summary of community review meeting conducted by Mitchell Goodjohn with five representatives of the Repulse Bay HTO and six Elders; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment G.
- RBYA (Repulse Bay Young Adults). 2009 Excerpt from socio-economic focus group conducted by Linda Havers and Mitchell Goodjohn . May 12, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment G.
- RIHT (Rankin Inlet Hunters and Trappers Organization). 2009. Excerpt from socio-economic focus group conducted by Susan Ross and Linda Havers. April 2, 2009; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment D.
- RIJ (Rankin Inlet Hunters and Elders). 2011. Summary of community review meeting conducted by Mitchell Goodjohn with nine Elders and representatives of the Rankin Inlet HTO. February 14, 2011; in Appendix 3B: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Documentation, Attachment D.

7.4 Engagement Cited

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7.5 Personal Communications

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8 Glossary

Caribou craters: Result of caribou digging into snow to access food underneath.

Collaring: A method of monitoring animals by placing collars to study their seasonal distribution and movement patterns. Collars are tracked by satellite.

Dens: Dug out areas used by large mammals for rearing and hibernation.

Ecological Land Classification (ELC): A land classification system based on terrain, soils and vegetation, in which areas of similar ecology are identified and mapped within a hierarchy of ecosystems where broad to specific levels of detail are presented on a series of maps.

Eskers: Deposit laid down by glacial processes, like a gravel deposit, used often for denning and some bird habitat.

Harvest Study: A study of hunter and angler fishing patterns in the Baker Lake area. A calendar is used to collect data on animals harvested and fish caught.

Local Study Area (LSA): The area immediately surrounding specific components of the Project, including the Mine site and access roads. LSAs include the footprint of the infrastructure itself as well as a pre-determined buffer. The LSA provides a boundary for various surveys.

Raptor: A bird that hunts by snatching its prey (e.g., peregrine falcon, rough-legged hawk).

Relative Abundance: An estimate of the number of animals in a given area. A measure for comparing wildlife populations between sites. Does not reflect the actual number of animals present in an area.

Regional Study Area (RSA): The area surrounding all of the Project-related infrastructure, including entire road alignments and associated infrastructure, as well as a large buffer area. The size of the buffer is selected to ensure any changes across a larger-scale area can be adequately monitored, and to provide an appropriate comparison to the LSAs and the various habitat and species that may move in and out of these areas.

Ungulate: A wide taxonomic group of hoofed mammals (e.g., caribou, muskox)

Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Coordinate System: A system used to derive geographic coordinates, normally in metres, east and north, of an origin that are defined uniquely with a grid in each zone.

Valued Ecosystem Component (VEC): Environmental attributes or components selected through consultation with regulatory and governmental authorities, discussions with members of the local community, and a review of VECs identified in other similar projects. This selection process can be further refined through the application of one or more of the following criteria : conservation status, relative abundance within the project area, importance in subsistence lifestyle and economy, importance in predator-prey systems, habitat requirement size and sensitivity, and contribution to local area concerns. Other considerations include scientific and aesthetic values.

Waterbird: Birds that typically nest very close to water and spend most of their time foraging on or around waterbodies and wetlands, including gulls, jaegers, waterfowl, and some shorebirds.