

Location: 64°30'N, 101°45'W

Size: 1873 km²

Description: This area includes the Thelon River from Eyeberry Lake to Beverly Lake, the Ursus Islands area, the shores of Beverly Lake, and the west half of Aberdeen Lake (to 99°10'W) and 20 km upstream along the Dubawnt River. Baker Lake is 150 km east of the eastern end of this area.

The underlying rock formation is Precambrian sandstone, much of which is obscured by low-relief Pleistocene deposits. The area around Lookout Point is within a sand-silt formation. The Ursus Islands area is largely sandstone and pebbly sandstone (Bird 1951). Most of the Beverly Lake – Aberdeen Lake region is underlain by Dubawnt sandstone. The low and rolling area is covered with unbroken glacial till, which has been sorted into expanses of sand and pebbles. Continuous and discontinuous eskers are common. A late glacial lake inundated much of the area; strandlines and wave-cut beaches are evident (Bird 1967). A large delta occurs on the south side of Beverly Lake.

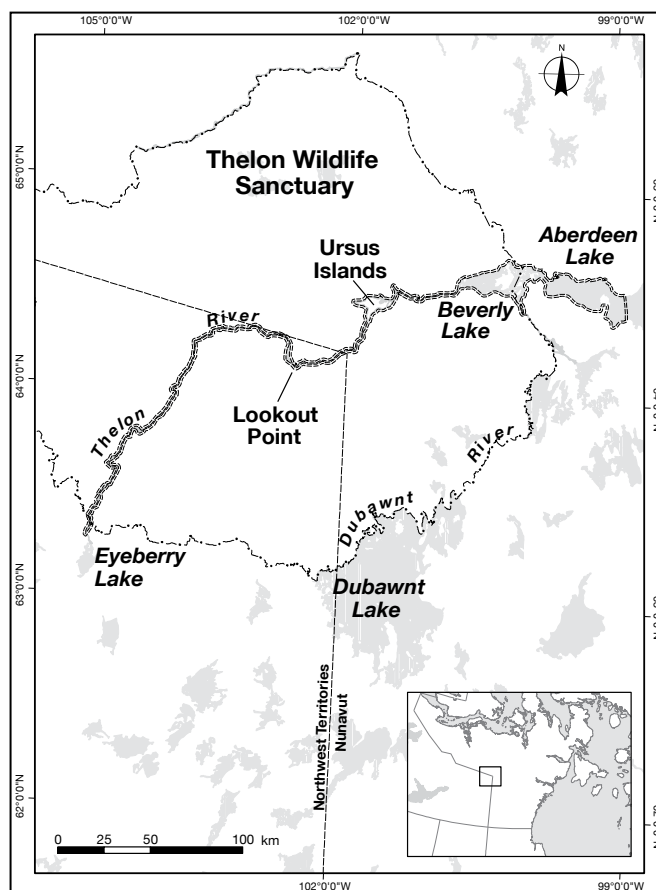
The vegetation belongs to the northern transition section of the boreal forest, giving way to low Arctic around Beverly Lake. From Lookout Point to Ursus Islands, the river banks are wooded with spruce, larch, and willows. The river banks between Ursus Islands and Beverly Lake are high but not precipitous. Adjacent wet sedge meadows and moss-sedge complexes provide suitable grazing areas for geese. A few stunted spruce are found in gullies.

Biological value: Between 10 000 and 13 000 non-breeding Canada Geese, originating in the northern United States and southern Canada, use this area to moult (Kuyt 1966; Alexander 1990). Most of the geese belong to the *B. c. maxima* and *B. c. moffitti* subspecies (Sterling and Dzubin 1967). There is some indication that birds in the western part of the area are from the Pacific, Hi-Line Plains, and Rocky Mountain populations, whereas those east of Beverly Lake are from the Western Prairie and Manitoba Interlake populations (Kuyt 1966; Sterling and Dzubin 1967). The larger estimate of Canada Geese represented 3% of the Canadian population of the two subspecies (Alexander et al. 1991). Flocks of Canada Geese generally appear in mid-June and depart soon after moulting is completed in mid-August (Sterling and Dzubin 1967).

Greater White-fronted Geese are known to breed in the area. In 1960, Kuyt (1962) reported 30 broods between Beverly and Aberdeen lakes. Tundra Swans also breed and moult west of Beverly Lake. Islands in Beverly Lake provide habitat for some of the few inland breeding colonies (numbering up to 140 pairs) of Lesser Snow Geese (Alexander 1990).

Raptor nesting areas are found on the north shores of Beverly and Aberdeen lakes (Kuyt 1980).

Calving grounds for the Beverly caribou herd lie along the northern boundary of the area. Several river crossings used by the herd occur in this area.



Sensitivities: Flightless geese are sensitive to disturbance during their moult.

Potential conflicts: The surrounding area has high potential for uranium. The proposed Kiggavik uranium mine site is located southeast of Aberdeen Lake.

Status: Most of this site occurs within the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary, which has a subsurface land withdrawal. It is an Important Bird Area in Canada (NU091; IBA Canada 2004) and an International Biological Programme Site (Site 4-6; Beckel 1975).