

Key Site 34: Scott Inlet, Nunavut

Location: 71°3'17"N, 71°17'15"W

Size: 408 km²

Description: Scott Inlet is located on the east coast of Baffin Island, about 120 km north of Clyde River (Kangiqtugaapik). Scott Island, approximately 11 km long, is in the centre of Scott Inlet. A description of this key terrestrial habitat site is found in Alexander et al. (1991) and Latour et al. (2008).

Scott Inlet lies in the High Arctic oceanographic zone (Nettleship and Evans 1985). Over winter, open water develops parallel to the eastern and southeastern coast of Bylot Island (Smith and Rigby 1981). Recurring offshore leads form in sea ice off Scott Inlet, with a relatively narrow band of landfast ice, although this may vary greatly among years (McLaren 1982). The floe edge is usually not far from shore. However, landfast ice forms in the inlet and along the eastern Baffin Island shore. Shore leads open as early as February but may close again in April or May (Smith and Rigby 1981). Ice breakup may not occur until July, and freeze-up begins in late October.

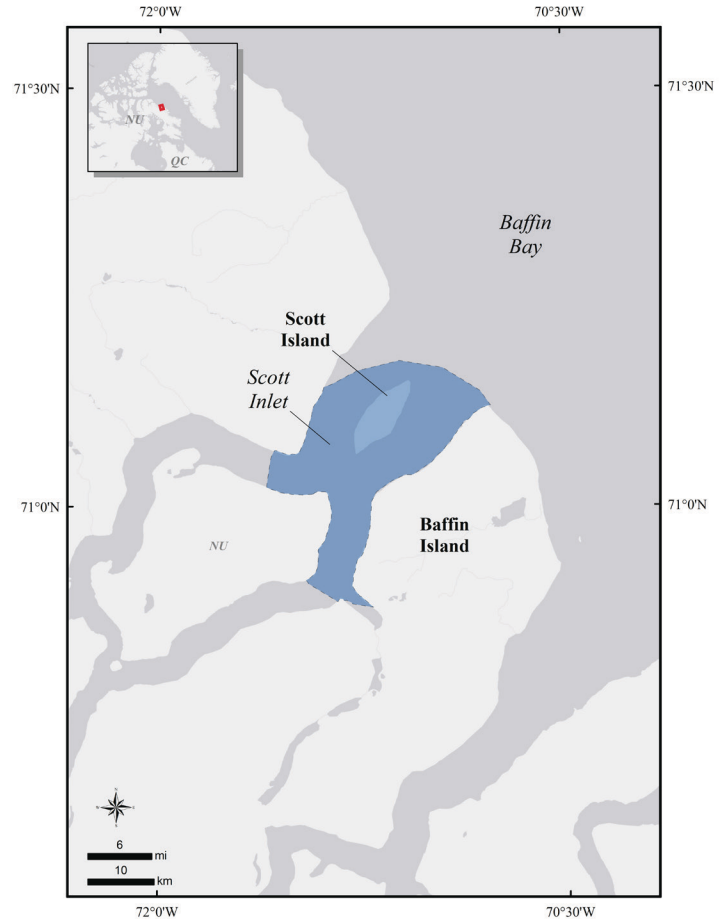
Precision and Correction of Abundance

Estimates Presented: Abundance estimates presented for this key habitat site have not been adjusted to account for incomplete detection or other biases. Abundance estimates should, therefore, be treated as minimum estimates.

Biological Value: King Eiders (*Somateria spectabilis*) and Common Eiders (*S. mollissima borealis*) may congregate along the ice edge during migration, usually in May (McLaren and McLaren 1982). Up to 25,000 migrating eiders have been observed along the eastern Bylot Island and north Baffin Island region during migration (McLaren and Renaud 1979).

Sensitivities: Sea ducks are sensitive to disturbance at their colonies and to the pollution of offshore waters.

Potential Conflicts: Baffin Bay and Davis Strait have potential to become marine shipping routes and areas of hydrocarbon exploration and development (Imperial Oil Ltd. 1978, Petro-Canada Ltd. 1979, Arctic Council 2009). In 2016 Canada designated the Arctic waters indefinitely off limits to new off-



shore oil and gas activities and in 2019 suspended the terms of all active oil and gas licenses in the western and eastern Arctic offshore areas. Baffin Bay is also of increasing importance as a tourist destination for cruise ships (Hall and Johnston 1995, Wakelyn 2001), although Scott Inlet is rarely visited by cruise ships. Oil spills associated with drilling or shipping activities could endanger large numbers of sea ducks and pollute their feeding areas.

Status: Scott Inlet is an Important Bird Area in Canada (NU070; CEC 1999) and a Key Marine Habitat Site (Site 18; Mallory and Fontaine 2004). Surrounding coastlines include crown and Inuit-owned lands, while the marine waters fall under federal jurisdiction.

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