

## Key Site 54: Baie des Anglais, Quebec

**Location:** 49°13'3"N, 68°7'10"W

**Size:** 36.4 km<sup>2</sup>

**Description:** The Baie des Anglais is located on the north shore of the St. Lawrence lower estuary, immediately northeast of Baie-Comeau, a municipality with approximately 10,000 residents.

The mouth of the bay stretches about 3.5 km from Pointe Saint-Gilles in the east to the mouth of Manicouagan River in the west. The west side of the bay is heavily industrialized with North America's largest aluminum smelters and grain transfer terminal. Baie-Comeau also has a deepwater port and a nautical club. The mouth of the small Rivière aux Anglais' lies in the west-northwest of the bay.

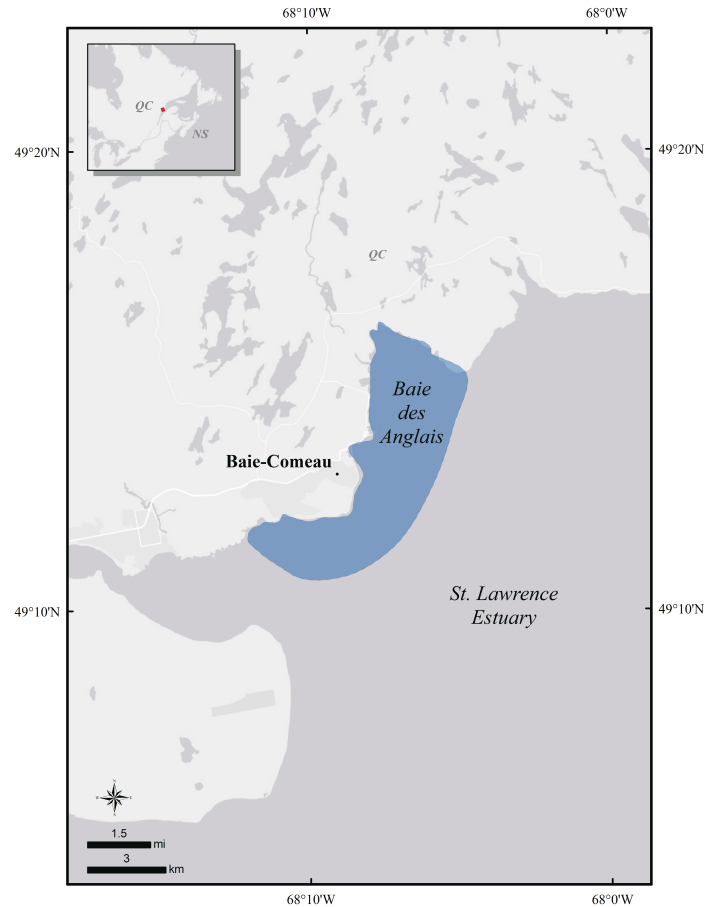
### Precision and Correction of Abundance

**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:** This site is the most important wintering site for eastern Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*), which are listed as a species of special concern (Environment Canada 2013). The site supports about 15% of the eastern Barrow's Goldeneye population during winter. From early November to late April, up to 1,000 individuals may be found in the ice-free waters of the bay (Robert et al. 2003). Barrow's Goldeneyes mostly occupy the littoral zones to the west of Pointe Saint-Gilles and between Pointe Saint-Gilles and the areas near the Baie-Comeau wharf, as well as the vicinity of the mouth of the Rivière aux Anglais (Robert et al. 2003).

Other sea ducks overwintering in the Baie des Anglais include up to 3000 Common Goldeneyes (*Bucephala clangula*), 500 Common Mergansers (*Mergus merganser*), and 2000 Red-Breasted Mergansers (*Mergus serrator*) (Robert et al. 2003, Canadian Wildlife Service unpublished data).

During spring, the key site also attracts many migrating sea ducks, including Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*), Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*), Black Scoter (*Melanitta americana*),



Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, and Red-Breasted Merganser (Robert et al. 2003; Canadian Wildlife Service unpublished data).

There are few data on the occupancy of the key site at other times of the year; however, it is plausible that there are numerous sea ducks present during the molting and the fall migrating periods. For instance, 2000 Common Eiders and 2000 Surf Scoters have been reported by birders in September and October, respectively (Regroupement Québec Oiseaux et al. 2018).

**Sensitivities:** Availability and quality of food resources could be influenced by pollution. Given the regular marine traffic in this key site (e.g., ferries), human disturbance is also of concern.

**Potential Conflicts:** Because of the industrial activities in this bay and significant marine traffic, including ferries and cruise ships, there are increased chances of water pollution (e.g., oil spills,

chronic contamination). For instance, the Baie des Anglais is known to be one of the most severely PCB-contaminated sites in eastern Canada due to past releases from nearby industrial plants; however, contaminants in Barrow's Goldeneye using the site have been assessed and levels were generally low and not of toxicological concern (Ouellet et al. 2012). That said, risks of contamination exist. Human disturbances (e.g., recreational boating), and bird collisions with vessels, also present potential conflict.

**Status:** The southwest part of the key site has been recognized as an Aquatic Birds Concentration Area (*Aire de concentration d'oiseaux aquatiques*; 578 ha; MELCC 2021). Part of the Baie des Anglais is also designated as a Canadian Important Bird Area, principally because of its crucial importance to the wintering population of Barrow's Goldeneyes (QC082; IBA Canada 2021).

#### Literature Cited

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