



Western Arctic Mariner's Guide

The following marine mammals are common in the western Arctic, however, other species may also be seen. It's possible for marine mammals to venture outside of their common habitats and be seen elsewhere.



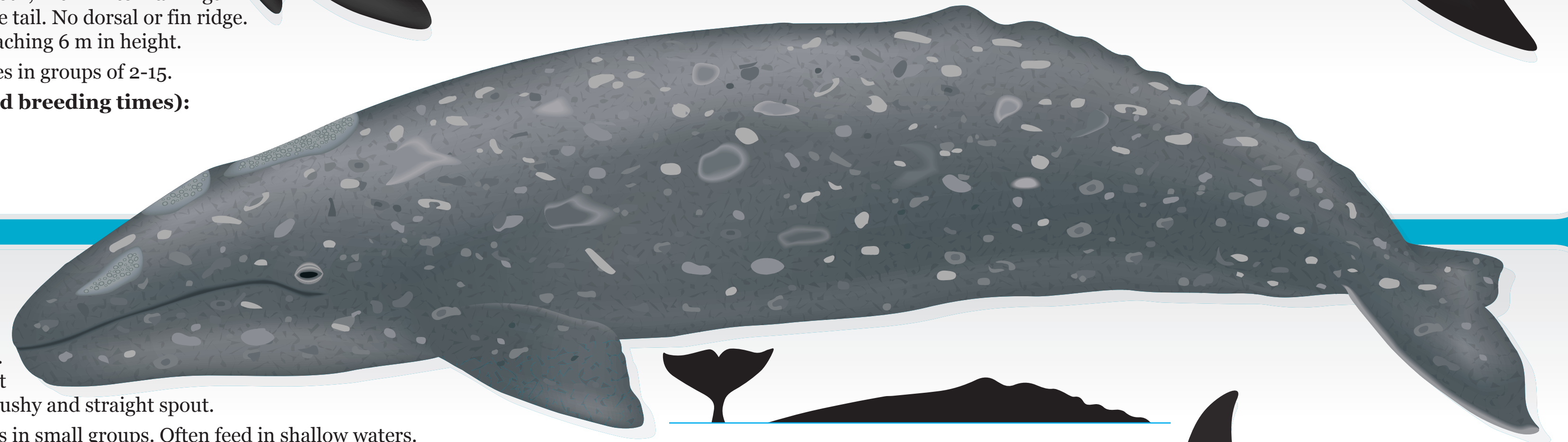
Bowhead Whale Length: 12-20 m

Appearance: Mainly blue-black in colour, with white markings on the chin, belly and just forward of the tail. No dorsal or fin ridge. Paired blowholes, with bushy spouts reaching 6 m in height.

Behaviour: Often alone, but sometimes in groups of 2-15.

Sensitive months (key foraging and breeding times): J F M A M **J J A S O N D**

Status: Special concern



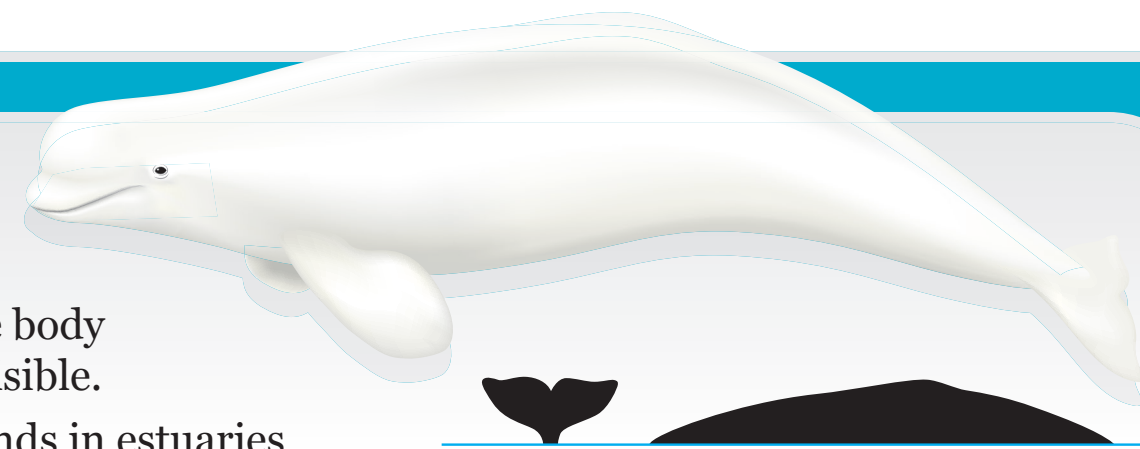
Grey Whale Length: 11-15 m

Appearance: Dark to light grey, and often covered with patches of barnacles. 7-15 knuckles along the dorsal ridge, but no dorsal fin. Off-white baleen. Short, bushy and straight spout.

Behaviour: Often alone but sometimes in small groups. Often feed in shallow waters.

Sensitive months (key foraging times): J F M A M **J J A S O N D**

Status: Special concern



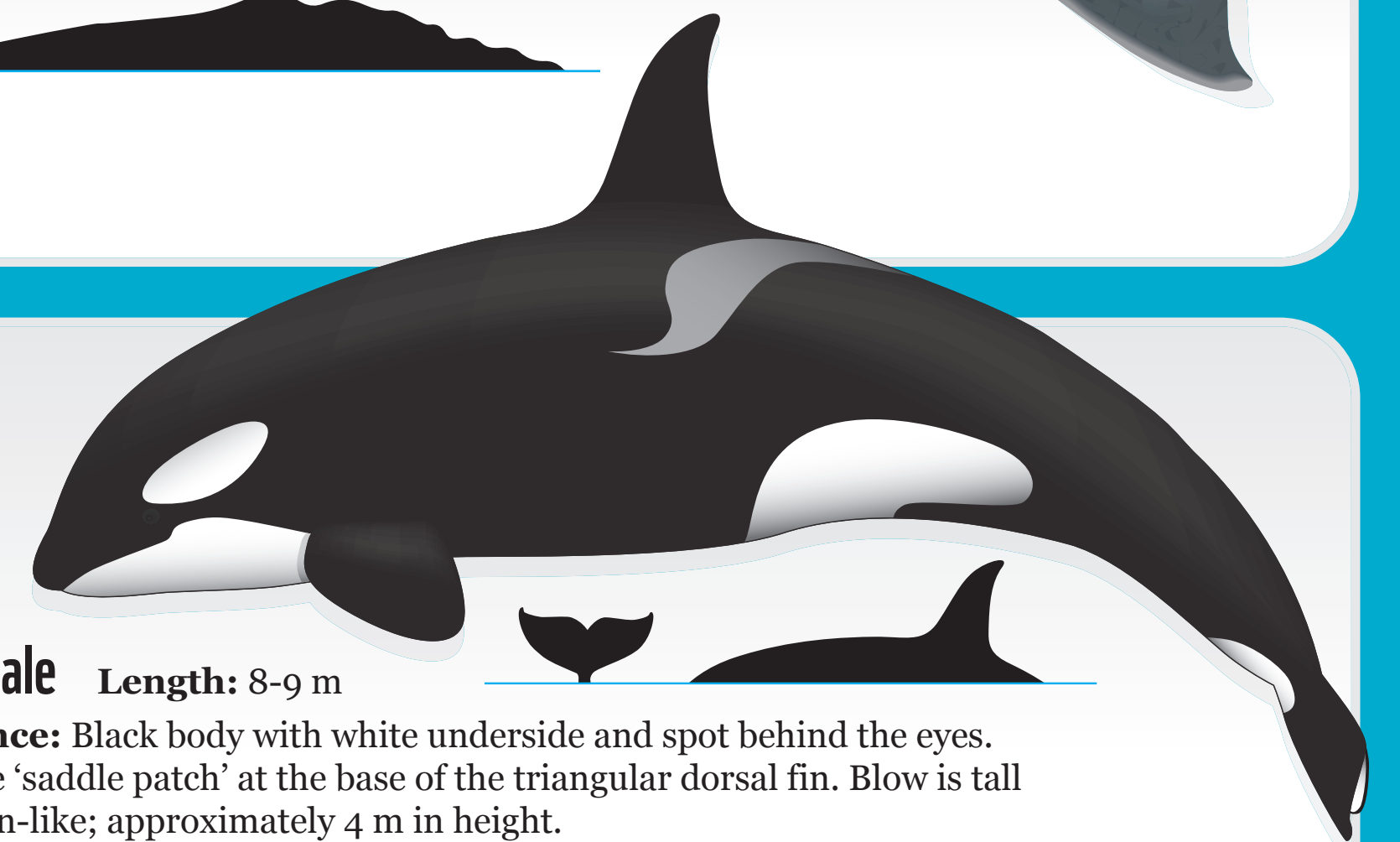
Beluga Whale Length: 3-4.5 m

Appearance: Adults are white, while young are dark grey. No dorsal fin, only a small portion of the body is visible out of the water. Blow is low and hardly visible.

Behaviour: Concentration of hundreds to thousands in estuaries during the summer months for annual migrations.

Sensitive months (breeding, calving and foraging concentration times): J F M A M **J J A S O N D**

Status: Not at risk



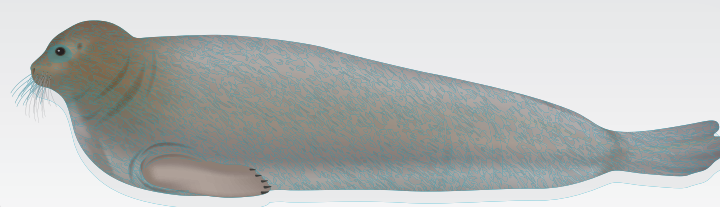
Killer Whale Length: 8-9 m

Appearance: Black body with white underside and spot behind the eyes. Grey-white 'saddle patch' at the base of the triangular dorsal fin. Blow is tall and column-like; approximately 4 m in height.

Behaviour: Typically form groups of 2-25.

Sensitive months (risk of disturbance): J F M A M J **J A S O N D**

Status: Special concern



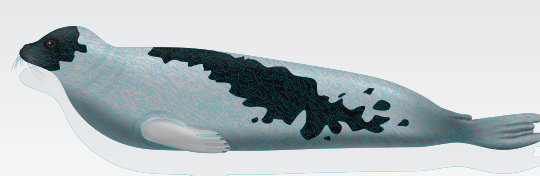
Bearded Seal Length: Up to 2.5 m

Appearance: Light grey to dark brown, with light brown tinge on head and light grey underside. Long, white whiskers and squared front flippers.

Behaviour: Often alone, but can be in small groups. Hauls out on the edges of wide leads or on the points of small ice floes, faces both the water and downwind.

Sensitive months (sea ice dependence and pupping activities): **J F M A M J J A S O N D**

Status: Data deficient



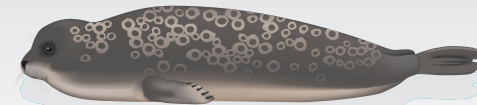
Harp Seal Length: Up to 2 m

Appearance: Light grey body with black or brown head and long, black 'harp-shaped' saddle on the back.

Behaviour: When migrating, the seals leap out of the water like dolphins.

Sensitive months (risk of disturbance): J F M **A M J J A S O N D**

Status: Not assessed



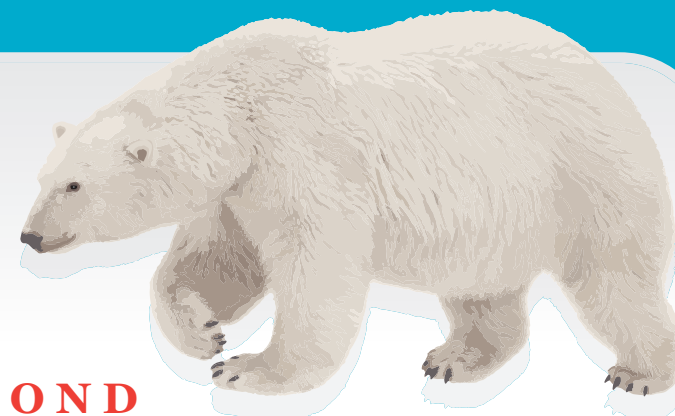
Ringed Seal Length: Up to 1.5 m

Appearance: Dark grey body with light rings on the back and silver colouring on the front.

Behaviour: Maintain breathing holes throughout the winter. Commonly associated with ice floes and pack ice.

Sensitive months (sea ice dependence and pupping activities): **J F M A M J J A S O N D**

Status: Not at risk



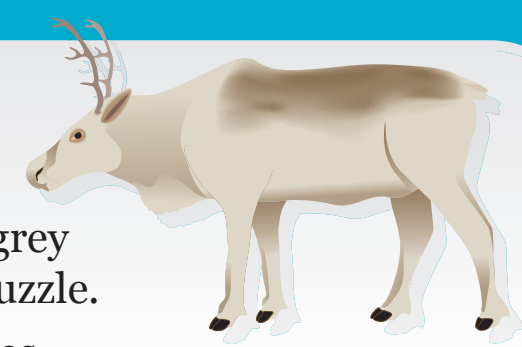
Polar Bear Length: Up to 3 m

Appearance: White, but can appear yellow, or light brown.

Behaviour: Solitary, except during breeding and cub rearing. Majority of time is spent on sea ice.

Sensitive months (breeding and denning period): **J F M A M J J A S O N D**

Status: Special concern



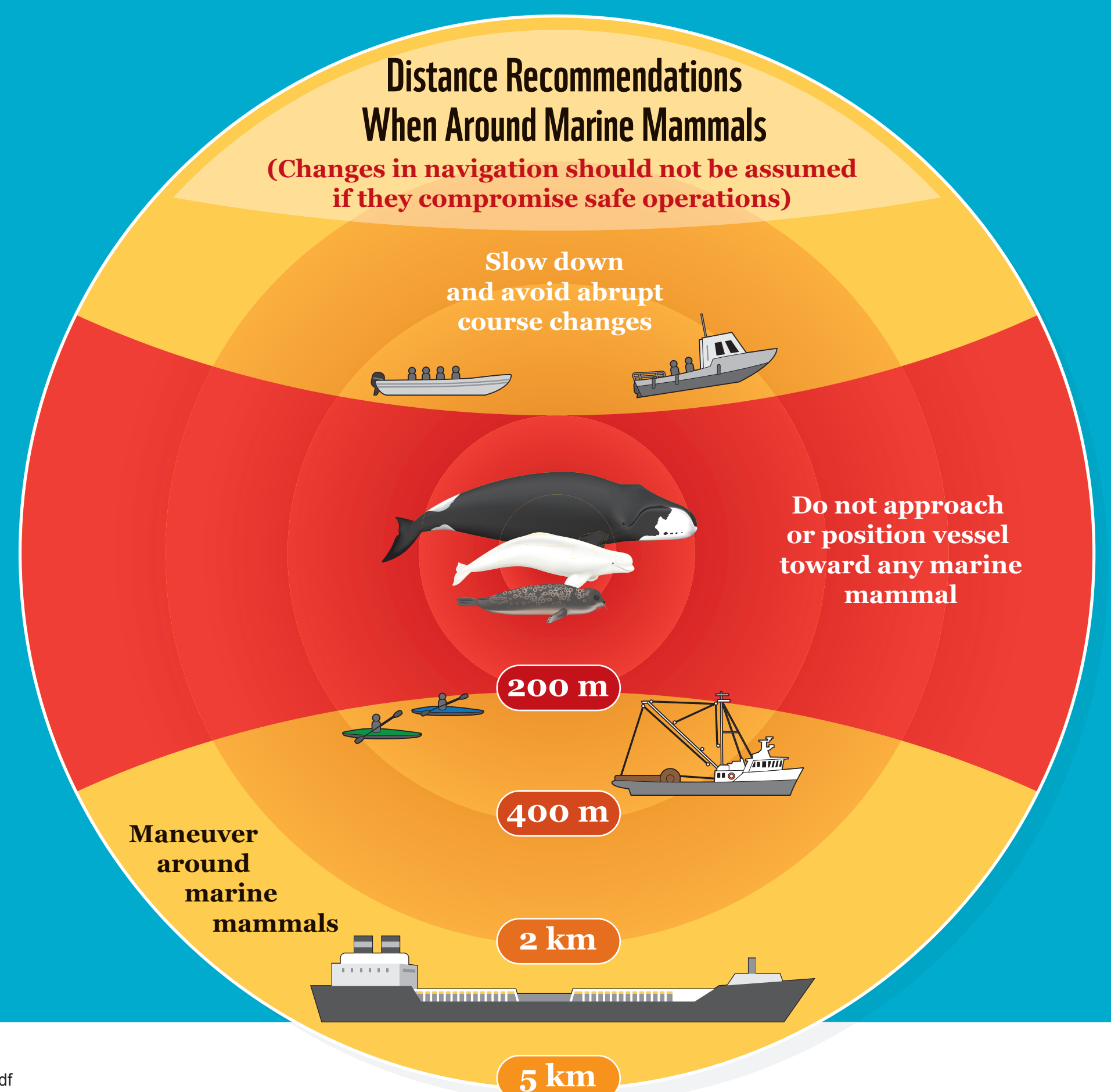
Caribou Length: Up to 2 m

Appearance: Both males and females have antlers, with grey/ivory velvet. Males lose antlers after mating season, while females do not. Winter coat is mostly white/grey in colour with brown on back. Compact body with small ears, short tail and hairy muzzle.

Behaviour: Often seen in herds. Population summers on Victoria Island and crosses the Dolphin and Union Strait to reach wintering grounds.

Sensitive months (sea ice crossing and calving): J F **M A M J J A S O N D**

Status: Special concern





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HABITAT: Summer

Legend

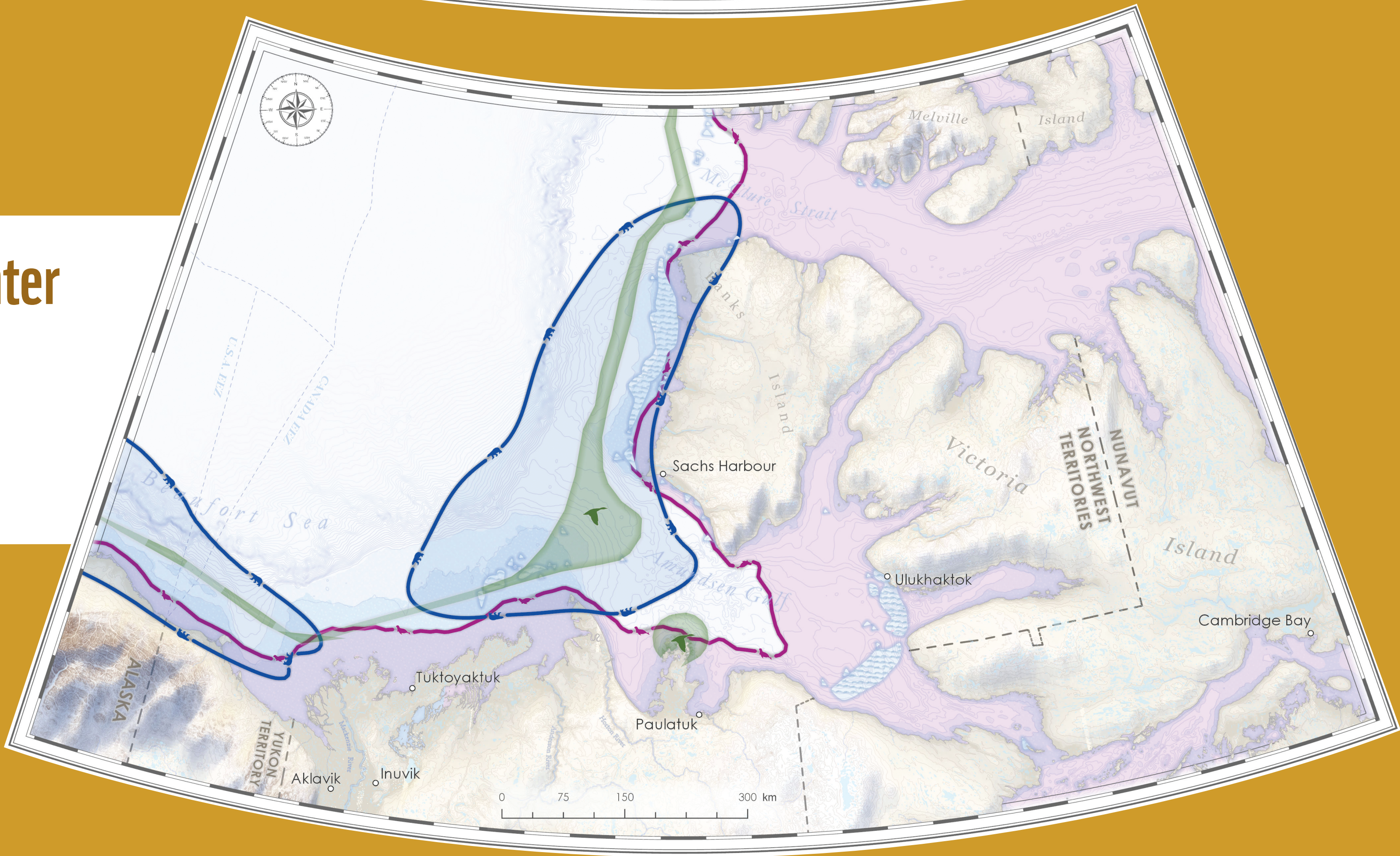
- Polar Bear Concentration
- Ringed Seal Concentration
- Bowhead Concentration
- Beluga Concentration
- Key Migratory Bird Habitat



HABITAT: Winter

Legend

- Polar Bear Concentration
- Ringed Seal Concentration
- Polynya
- Key Migratory Bird Habitat



NOTE: For navigation purposes, please use charts provided by the Canadian Hydrographic Service.

CONTACT

Please contact for errors, omissions, comments, additions

Andrew Dumbrille, 613-290-2006
adumbrille@wwfcanada.org

Vernon Amos, 867-777-2828
igc-c@jointsec.nt.ca

MARINE WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS, ENCOUNTERS & INCIDENTS

Report to: Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Steve Ferguson,
204-983-5057, steve.ferguson@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

You may be asked to provide:

- Date and time you found the animal or witnessed the incident
- Specific location, including latitude and longitude (if available) or driving directions (if accessible by land)
- Species or type of animal, including a description of the size, colour, features
- Condition of the animal – alive, sick or injured, freshly dead, badly rotting away
- Number of animals involved
- Your contact information, including name and phone number

RECOMMENDATIONS

Whale Sensitive Habitats

- If possible, avoid whale calving, foraging, molting and migration areas and follow mitigation procedures in the vicinity of marine mammals:¹
 - Wildlife will be given right-of-way;
 - Maintain a straight course and constant speed, avoiding erratic behaviour;
 - When marine mammals appear to be trapped or disturbed by vessel movements, implement appropriate measures to mitigate disturbance, including stoppage of movement until wildlife have moved away from the immediate areas; and
 - Adhere to setback distances (see chart) when in the presence of marine mammals.
- Passage through or close to Beluga Management Zones 1A and 1B outside of designated routes, even if it's the shortest route should be avoided from break-up to August (see map) (Contact HTC for annual variations).

Migratory Bird Sanctuaries

- Hunting, disturbing, destroying or taking of migratory birds or their nests are prohibited.
- Maintain a 500 m setback for ships from seabird colonies when birds are present.⁵
- Maintain a 100 m setback from seabird colonies for zodiacs, kayaks and other small launch vessels.
- Maintain a 500 m setback distance from sea duck colonies, moulting aggregations of sea ducks and waterfowl.
- Avoid any sharp or loud noises, do not blow horns or whistles, and maintain constant engine noise levels.
- Always travel at steady speeds when close to seabird and waterbird colonies, moving parallel to the shore rather than approaching the colony directly.

Sources:
¹ Carter, N., Dawson, J., Knop, J., Joyce, J., Weber, M., Kochanowicz, Z., Mussels, O. (2018). Arctic Corridors and Northern Voices-Governing marine transportation in the Canadian Arctic, Cambridge Bay, Nunavut.
² Baffinland Iron Mines. (2016). Shipping and Marine Wildlife Management Plan.
³ Paulatuk Community Conservation Plan. (2016).
⁴ Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan. (2016). Nunavut Planning Commission. http://www.nunavut.ca/files/2016DNLUP/2016_Draft_Nunavut_Land_Use_Plan.pdf
⁵ Carter et al. (2018). Arctic Corridors and Northern Voices-Governing marine transportation in the Canadian Arctic, Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territories.
⁶ Sachs Harbour Community Conservation Plan. (2016).
⁷ Carter et al. (2018). Arctic Corridors and Northern Voices-Governing marine transportation in the Canadian Arctic, Aklavik, Northwest Territories.

⁸ Inuvik Community Conservation Plan (2016).
⁹ Draft Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan Tourism Guidelines. (2018).
¹⁰ Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations CRC c. 1036. 2009 http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C._c._1036/
¹¹ Environment and Climate Change Canada. (2017). <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/avoiding-harm-migratory-birds/seabird-waterbird-colonies-disturbance.html>
¹² Ulukhaktok Community Conservation Plan (2016).
¹³ Tuktoyaktuk Community Conservation Plan (2016).
¹⁴ Aklavik Community Conservation Plan (2016).



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RECOMMENDATIONS

Icebreaking

- Avoid icebreaking during ice formation and breakup.⁵
- Avoid icebreaking through caribou sea-ice crossings (Victoria Island to mainland) from October to June.^{4,5}
- Avoid icebreaking through seal denning and pupping areas.⁴
- Avoid shipping in polynyas approximately November to June.
- Avoid crossing on-ice community transportation corridors when sea is frozen, unless accompanied by ice-bridging.⁵
- Avoid shipping through the Prince of Wales Strait during winter season (October to June).⁷
- Avoid shipping through and around floe edges in April, May and June.⁵

Routing

- Communicate schedules, locations and routes (by phone, email, and fax) to the various local organizations (see contact list).

Subsistence Harvesting

- Avoid culturally significant marine areas during harvesting seasons:
 - Beluga harvest: June to August.^{3,7,8,12,13,14}
 - Seal harvest: Year-round.⁷
 - Polar Bear harvest: October to May.³
 - Subsistence Fishing: Anchor 60 meters from Ulukhaktok from July to September.⁶
- Call ahead to the appropriate and respective HTC/HTO hamlet office to see if harvesting is taking place near planned route – if so, detour when safe.

Operations

- The disturbance, damage or destruction (including through the depositing, discharging or dumping any substance) of any living marine organisms or any part of its habitat is prohibited.^{9,10,11}

Permitting

- For educational, marine tourism, or scientific research within the ANMPA, submit activity plan to DFO at least 60 days prior to the planned start date for the activity.
- Consider Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan tourism guidelines, along with consultation with the local HTC, for all whale watching tourism proposals.

Speed

- Reduce speeds below 10 knots in beluga management zones, Dease Strait and Queen Maud Gulf.¹

LOCAL PHONE NUMBERS

Contact the nearest community Hunters and Trappers Organization/Association for local knowledge of marine mammals

Aklavik: 867-978-2723 **Sachs Harbour:** 867-690-3028

Ulukhaktok: 867-396-4808 **Tuktoyaktuk:** 867-977-2457

Inuvik: 867-777-3671 **Cambridge Bay:** 867-983-4650

Paulatuk: 867-580-3004

Joint Secretariat-Inuvialuit Settlement Region: 867-777-2828

Nunavut Wildlife Management Board: 867-975-7300

CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE

Contact for permitting requirements if transiting in a Migratory Bird Sanctuary or National Wildlife Area

Telephone: 1-800-668-6767

Email: ec.enviroinfo.ec@canada.ca

NATIONAL PARKS

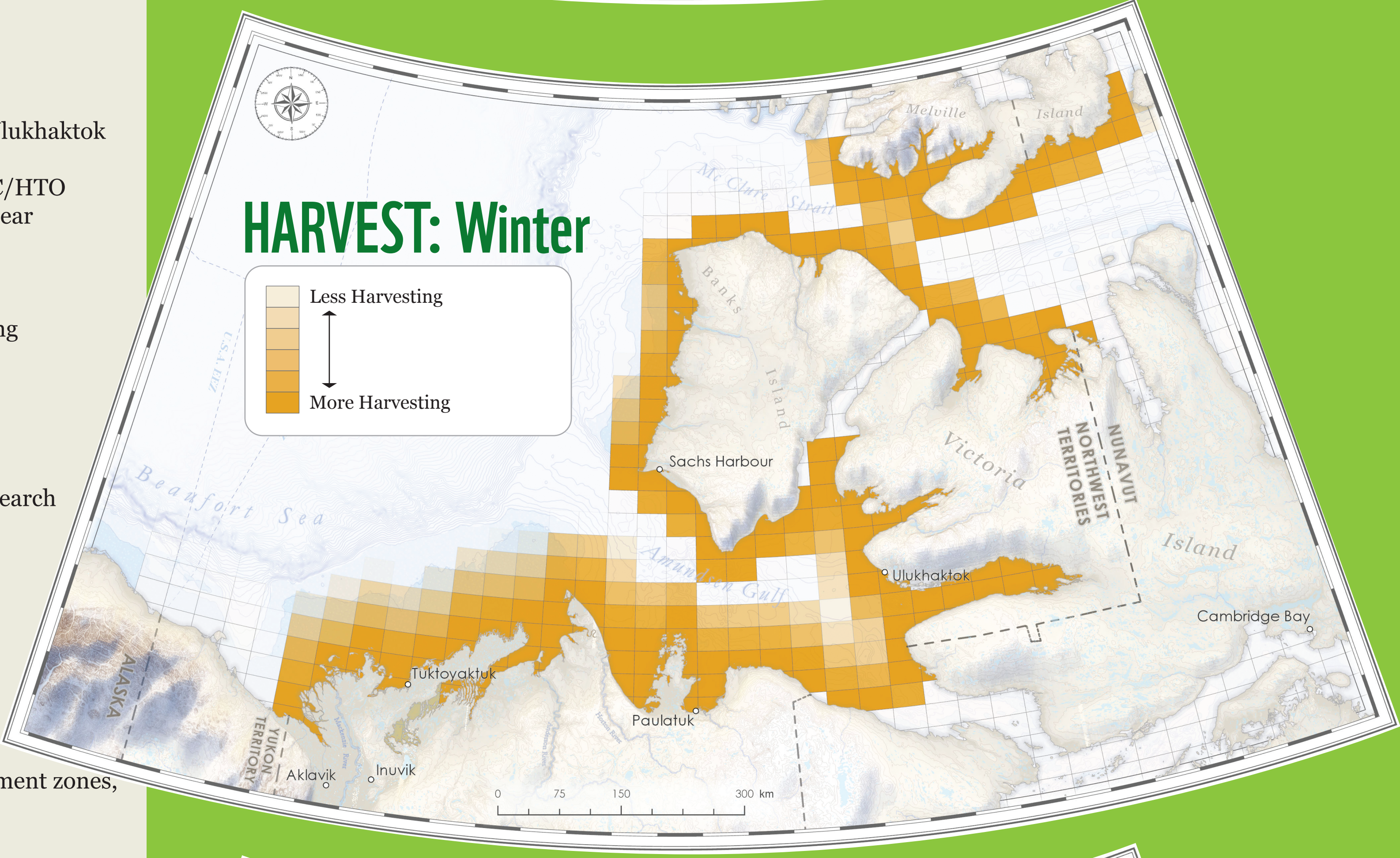
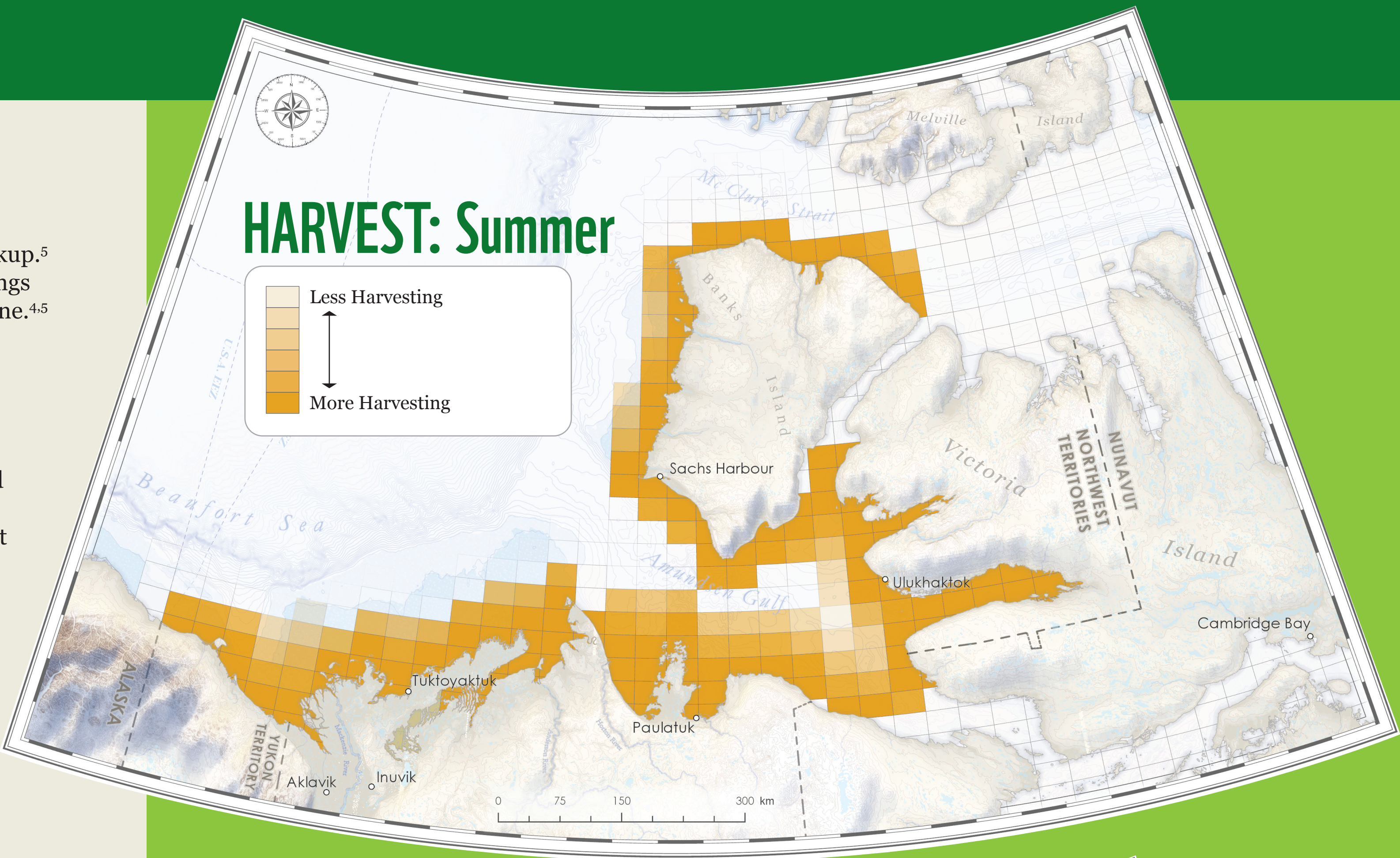
Telephone: 867-777-8800

Email: Inuvik.info@pc.gc.ca

ANGUNIAQVIA NIQIYUAM MPA

Telephone: 867-777-7500

Email: ANMPA@dfo-mpo.gc.ca



* Contact Olokhtomiut HTC for permission and routing instructions

NOTE: For navigation purposes, please use charts provided by the Canadian Hydrographic Service.