

SITE GUIDE**POND INLET, BAFFIN ISLAND, N.W.T.**

Location: Northern Baffin Island, eastern Canadian Arctic (72°40' N; 78°00' W).

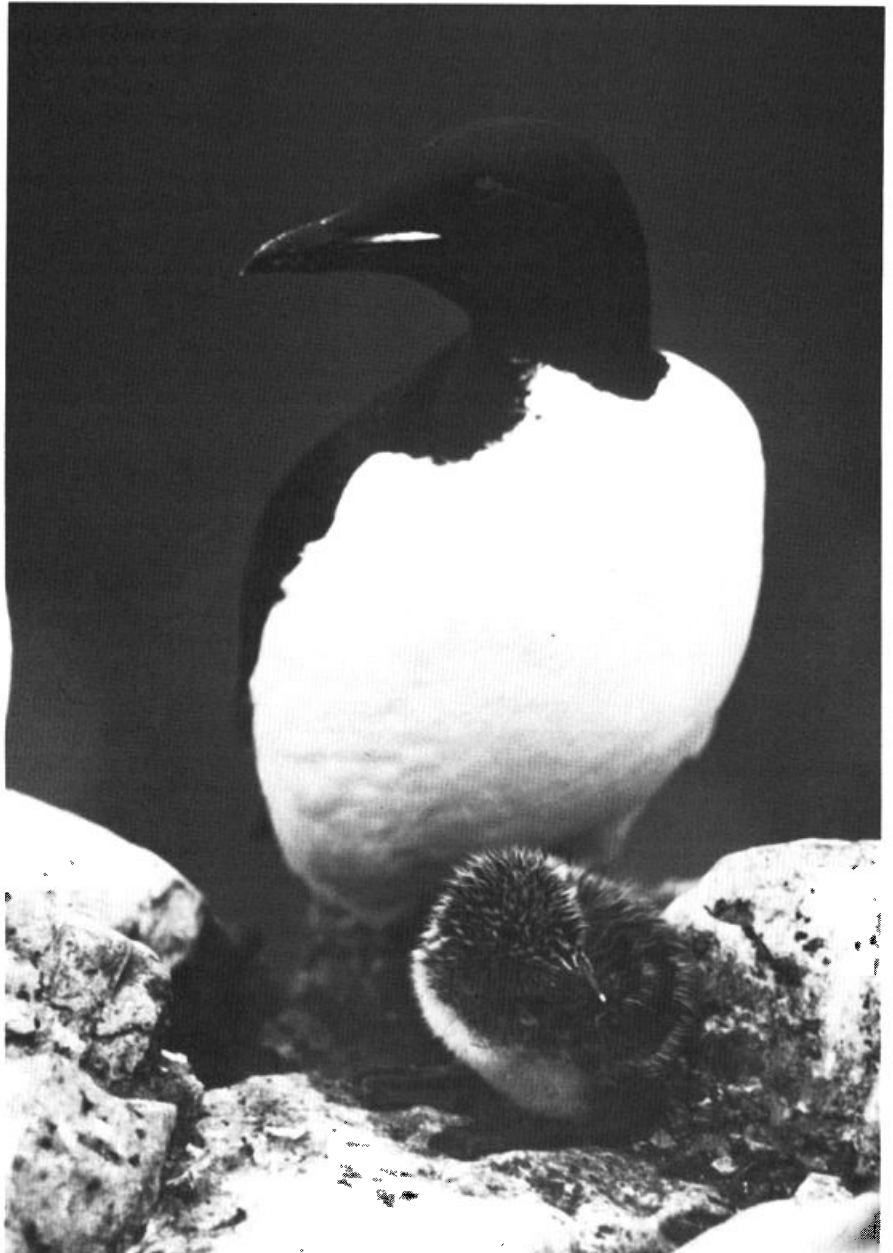
Description: see accompanying paper and map, this issue, p. 119-129.

Access: During the summer, Pond Inlet is serviced twice weekly by turbo-prop aircraft from both Nanisivik and Frobisher Bay (First Air). There are two jet flights weekly from Montreal to Nanisivik and at least eight flights weekly from Montreal to Frobisher Bay (Nordair). Weekly service by Twin Otter is also available from Resolute (Kenn Borek Air) where there are two jet flights weekly each from Edmonton (Pacific Western Airlines) and Montreal (Nordair).

Local Transportation and Hiking: Snowmobile is the main means of transportation on land until the snow melts in mid-June, and it is used on the sea-ice until at least mid-July. Local Inuit can be hired to transport visitors to most areas *via* snowmobile or, during late summer and early fall, by boat. Opportunities for day-hiking are numerous around the settlement because of its proximity to Salmon River, Salmon Creek, Janes Creek and the wetlands west of Salmon River mouth. After spring run-off in June, the tundra dries surprisingly fast and hiking is easily accomplished in light leather boots. Virtually all the rivers and streams can be forded on foot. One of the best local hiking routes is up Janes Creek, then down Salmon River *via* Utuk Lake. Hiking along eastern areas of the inlet can be accomplished only after ferrying *via* snowmobile or boat through the narrows of the inlet. There the most productive areas are along river valleys draining into Guys

Bight and Erik Harbour, and especially near Button Point, southeast Bylot Island. Elsewhere, hiking along the eastern inlet can be treacherous owing to mountains, rock and glac-

iers. Hikers should note that because Bylot Island is a federal Migratory Bird Sanctuary, written permission for entry must be obtained from the Canadian Wildlife Service. Trips *via*



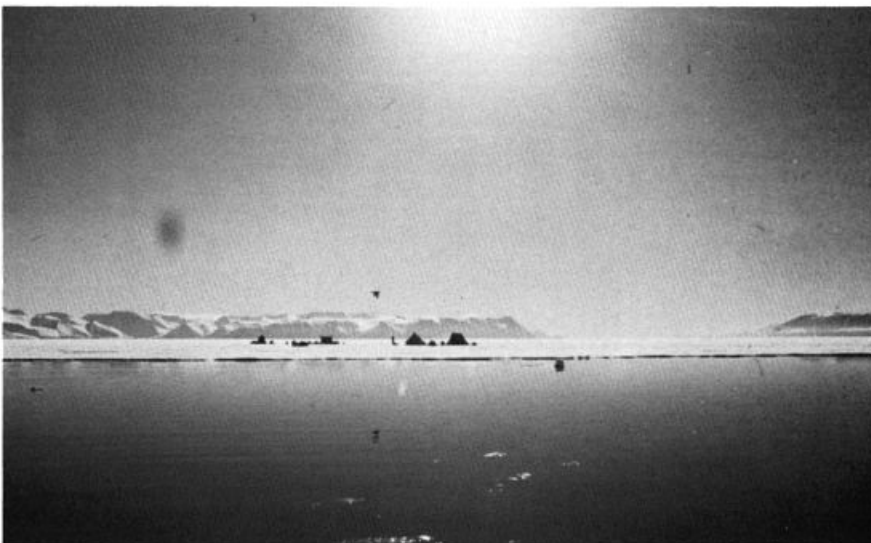
Thick-billed Murre; adult and chick. Photo / Wayne Renaud.



Aerial view of raised beaches and ponds west of Salmon River mouth, the most extensive wetland in the study area. Photo / *Wayne Renaud.*



Mountainous south shore of Pond Inlet looking west towards Beloeil Island (right). Photo / *Wayne Renaud.*



An Inuit hunting camp along the Pond Inlet floe-edge. Photo/*Kerwin Finley.*

snowmobile to the floe-edge at the eastern end of Pond Inlet in June or July can be arranged through the Co-op (see below). Due to the melting of the sea-ice, the trip may become difficult or impossible after early July. Inuit guides are essential on sea-ice trips since unpredictable ice conditions and Polar Bears are best handled by experienced persons. Camping on the sea-ice at the floe-edge is uncomfortable and often dangerous, especially during windy weather when there is the danger of ice chunks breaking away and floating out into Baffin Bay. Day trips from the settlement, or extended camping trips based at Button Point, are recommended.

Accommodations: Comfortable barrack-type accommodations with hot water and showers are provided by the Toonoonik-Sahoonik Co-op Hotel (Postal Code: X0A 0S0; Phone: 816-9928) for about \$85.00 (Canadian) per day including three meals. Reservations are essential. Although there are no provisions for camping at the village, tents may be safely erected nearby. Campers should bring all dried and special foods and equipment. A well-stocked Hudson's Bay store and a smaller Co-op store offer canned and some fresh food, cold weather clothes and some camping equipment.

Organized Tours: Organized tours that include Pond Inlet are provided by Canadian Nature Tours (355 Lesmill Rd., Don Mills, Ontario M3B 2W8) and probably others.

Birdwatching: As described in the accompanying paper, bird diversity is high relative to most other areas in the arctic islands with at least 36 species breeding and another 24 species reported as migrants or vagrants. Up to 25 species of birds can be observed in a day in the vicinity of the village and Salmon River mouth from mid-June to mid-September. A visit to the Pond Inlet area in late June or early July will catch the first good showing of tundra wildflowers; they are particularly common on the coastal slopes between Salmon River and Salmon Creek. The best areas for viewing water-associated birds in spring are at the shorelead off Salmon River mouth and the floe-edge

at the eastern end of Pond Inlet. If there is stable ice below the seabird colony near Cape Graham Moore, a popular event for the Inuit on the July 1 weekend is the annual gathering of fresh murre eggs. Visitors to the floe-edge in June-July will likely see

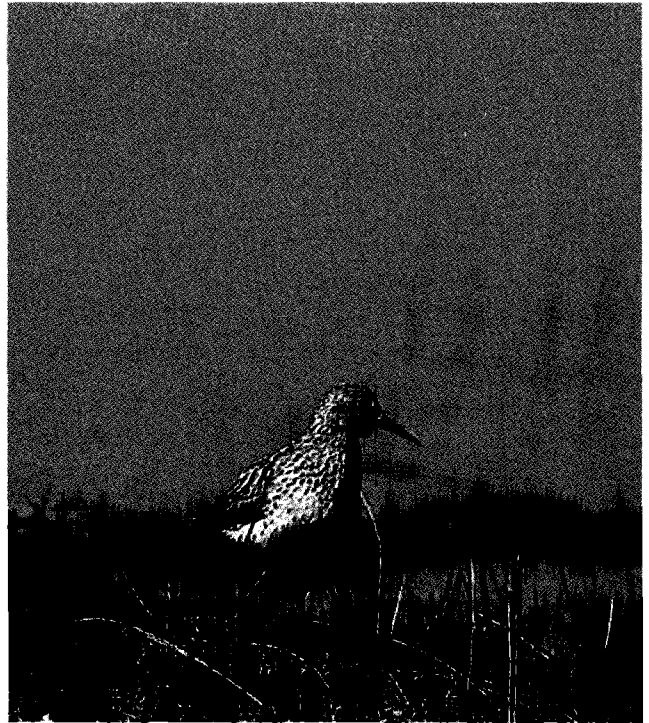
many species of marine mammals including Narwhals, Bearded Seals, Harp Seals, and Polar Bears as well as the ubiquitous Ringed Seal. There is also the possibility of sighting White Whales and Walrus.

Ratings: Spring (June) ★★★★★, Summer (July-August) ★★★★★, Fall (September-October) ★★★, Winter (November-May).

—Wayne E. Renaud



Dry tundra dominated by Richardson's willow and blueberry near the mouth of Salmon Creek. Photo / Wayne Renaud.



White-rumped Sandpiper, a common nesting species in coastal wetlands. Photo / Wayne Renaud.



Thick-billed Murres erupt from the cliffs of the seabird colony north of Cape Graham Moore where about 20,000 pairs nest. Photo / Elizabeth Gibb.



Ivory Gulls resting on ice floes near the eastern end of Pond Inlet. Photo / Kerwin Finley.