

# Arctic Canada

## *& Wood Buffalo National Park*

### A Greentours Tour Report

29<sup>th</sup> June – 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Leaders – Ian Green & Page Burt

Trip Report by Ian Green

#### **Day 1          June 29<sup>th</sup>          To Yellowknife**

Our first flight took us to Calgary then it was on to Yellowknife. We arrived in the capital of Northwest Territories at about a quarter to ten at night and it was still very much sunny and bright. Yellowknife is a small place still, population barely twenty thousand, and it is pleasingly laid-back. It took just a short time to connect with our luggage and be met by staff from Bathurst Lodge. We were whisked off to the Chateau Nova in no time at all.

#### **Day 2          June 30<sup>th</sup>          to Bathurst Lodge**

At eight-thirty we were taken down to the Airport and about ten o'clock we took off in the De Havilland heading rapidly north. The flight takes about an hour and three quarters and the views out the windows tell a continuous tale of wilderness – signs of human activity are few and far between shortly after leaving Yellowknife. The landscape was covered in lakes, large, very large and small, all the way until near the Arctic Coast where the land rose into the Barrenlands.

Today's flight took us first to Wekweètì Airfield where we took on extra fuel. What happened next was quite extraordinary. As we landed Liz and Seda noticed a large white animal lying down by the dirt runway. A pure white Arctic Wolf! The pilot turned us around a couple of times and we taxied past it. It did take a little notice getting up and wandering slowly to one side, but it didn't seem unduly bothered! We took quite a lot of photos at pretty close range! Whilst refuelling we all got out to try and see the wolf but it had left. We could now just see the footprints in the sand. It was we learnt later rather unusual to see such a pure white animal down on the edge of the forest zone. This one was exceedingly pure white and a totally stunning animal too. Later the staff at Bathurst suggested that the Wolf was probably denning below the runway!

Soon after we took off the trees had largely disappeared to be replaced by tundra. We started to see the 'highways of the north', long sinuous moraine systems deposited by outwash streams from previous glaciations known as Eskers. It is along these that many of the large mammals travel and live – a favourite spot for denning wolves and bears! As we were flying quite low careful watching from the aircraft windows revealed a large male Moose standing in a small lake, a Grizzly Bear on one of the eskers, and another Arctic Wolf running steadily along one. Occasionally the wilderness

was interrupted by mines – we passed a diamond mine then later the large Lupine Gold Mine which is now only operating to prevent pollution. The ninety-mile long Lake Controyto by the mine had appreciable areas of ice still floating about its surface. North of here the landscape became spectacular as the land rose and rivers cut ever deeper through it. We followed the impressive valleys of the Hood River doing a double pass over Wilberforce Falls, the Arctic's highest waterfall and noting two Musk Oxen close by. Then we followed the Burnside River until we espied the long finger of Bathurst Inlet coming down from the north. The land's surface here is rocky with large patches of green in the valleys and lots of patches of snow and again the mix of sandy eskers and river gravels all combining giving the landscape a surprisingly colourful appearance though there was no mistaking the provenance of the name 'Barrenlands'.

Suddenly the aircraft banked as the tiny settlement of Bathurst Inlet came into view. No more than thirty little houses surround the lodge on an improbably scenic little headland where the Burnside River meets the Inlet in a large delta. Behind the settlement the land rose quite quickly into low mountains. We landed to be greeted by the co-owner Boyd Warner, as well as the lodge's naturalist, Page Burt, and then the various local families with all their lively and enthusiastic children.

The flora right by the runway was extraordinary! It was so colourful! A mosaic of white, blue, yellow and red Blue Lupins were abundant and so too the Arctic Liquorice *Hedysarum alpinum*. The little white orchid *Platanthera obtusata* was abundant along with Large-flowered Wintergreen as we walked across to the lodge. The asphodel *Tofieldia pusillum* added more white. Louseworts are wonderful here and especially the lovely pale pink *sudetica* each flower crowned with bright crimson, was much enjoyed. Then we saw lovely yellow-flowered *Pedicularis labradorica* and pink *Pedicularis arctica*. Savannah Sparrows and American Robins were seen as we walked to the lodge. Page and gave us an introductory talk and then we had dinner followed by a detailed talk from all associated with the lodge about how the next week will go etc.

In the early evening we went on a walk with Page back down to the airfield and thence to the rather beautiful tundra between there and the sea. Bird highlights were very photographable Least Sandpiper, great views of White-crowned and Savannah Sparrows, and a wonderfully tame Willow Ptarmigan who posed on the beach even when surrounded by several of us at only five metres range! We spent much time enjoying the minutiae of the flower world along this stretch for there seem to be more plant species here than anywhere in the Bathurst area. There were the larger more colourful species such as Large-flowered Wintergreen, *Hedysarums mackenzeei* and *alpinus*, Yellow Arctic Locoweed, blue Arctic Lupin and the various louseworts. Down by the airfield we found an extraordinary show of the lousewort *Pedicularis sudetica*. This made for a colourful show with the blue sea beyond. Back to the minutiae however! We took a look at the many sedge and rush family representatives on show from *Rhynchosporas* to *Luzula* and from *Juncuses* to *Carexes*. The latter were really very rich and in the two hours were out we encountered no less than fourteen species - *Carexes aquatilis*, *atrofusca*, *bicolor*, *bigelowii*, *capillaris*, *glareosa*, *maritima*, *membranacea*, *microglochis*, *rariflora*, *scirpoidea*, *subspathacea*, *vaginata* and *williamsii*! We also found the single headed cotton-grass *Eriophorum russeolum* and the many-headed *angustifolium*. Peter spotted two Caribou up on the shoulders of the Nose, the mountain that rises behind Bathurst Inlet.

**Day 3**

**July 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Young Island and Hidden Lake Island**

After the rigours of travel yesterday we elected for a lay-in until breakfast, ignoring the all night daylight. Roger couldn't resist the lure of the outside world and was out early photographing Yellow Warbler and American Tree Sparrow.

Breakfast was a fine mixture of the usual fare - it was easy to eat too much even if you hadn't been up and out early! Then it was out in the 'Blue Loo'. This rather ungainly looking boat is just ideal here. Based on a 'giant' zodiac it has a rigid superstructure which allows us to sit and stand and even use telescopes in comfort. The stability is amazing! And at the back – yes, a covered blue 'outhouse loo'! We headed out into the inlet for the first time. The lovely sunny morning had become a little cloudy and cool but the water was calm and Blue Loo's progress serene. This boat is excellent for watching wildlife from as it is so smooth - 'scope use is possible even on a moving boat! We scanned as we went - initial sightings were of Common Mergansers, Glaucous and Herring Gulls and the odd loon.

We cruised the channel between Young Island and Quadjit Island. We scanned the land for any signs of mammals eventually coming up with a couple of distant Caribou. It was the sea that provided much of the entertainment. Common Mergansers were numerous, the males of the latter looking splendid in the sunlight. A pair of Red-throated Divers also allowed us to get quite close and further down channel we found two more species of Loon. A gorgeous Yellow-billed Diver stayed on the water as we closed in on it before flying and providing some great take-off photographs. This metre long species is really very impressive and strikingly patterned too. Just nearby there was a Pacific Diver, looking very elegant in its summer plumage, all tones of black and white and grey. Gulls included Herring Gulls and many Glaucous Gulls. The morning's main highlight came when a Golden Eagle flew past us heading towards a flock of Canada Geese. These were probably moulting as it seemed impossible for them to get airborne as the huge raptor sped towards them. Mass panic ensued and then to our great shock, the Golden Eagle just careened into the mass of geese, pinning one under the water. The eagle tried to drown the goose but never seemed to get it completely under control and perhaps made a mistake when it lifted the goose out of the water in its beak! After a couple of minutes of struggle the goose suddenly bobbed up in the water a few metres from a sodden and rather dejected-looking eagle who sullenly headed for the shore and sat there holding his wings out to dry for the next ten minutes. Eventually they were dry enough for him to fly off up the ridge. It had been quite a show!

We pulled in to Sally Point and took our picnic lunch on the boat before landing. The land here was gently sloping rocky beaches and tundra with several rocky outcrops which comprised parallel dykes. We searched the main cliff here for Gyr Falcon and though there was plenty of whitewash we couldn't find any of the birds themselves. White-crowned and Savanna Sparrows and Redpolls were the other birds evident. The flora was excellent. There were all the usual louseworts in good flower - in fact in perfect flower. The Cloudberry was just hanging on with several still with flowers. There were some fine shows of Labrador Tea and Lingonberry. The Prickly Saxifrage provided some photogenic clumps and there were many fabulous Arctic Lupins, a beautiful show of *Cassiope tetragona* and abundant and varied sedges including the lovely *Carex rariflora*. In the same damp mossy spots that we found the last mentioned species was a highlight – the tiny *Pinguicula villosa*, a lovely little thing with minute flowers and the whole plant only 3cm tall. Meanwhile Ian and Kate had been finding a Caribou jawbone on the beach and a very ancient and rather fascinating fossil.

In the afternoon we headed across the water to Hidden Lake Island. The landscapes here were fascinating with a classic example of glacial rebound with multiple raised beaches. There was a raised beach every half a metre or so! There were a number of new plants here with the Arctic Riverbeauty in flower as well as *Astragalus richardsonii*, *Hedysarum mackenzeei* and the last blooms of the lilac Pallas's Windflower. Reaching the little lake we found that Sam had already located the Red-throated Divers on the nest. We found another couple of pairs of these lovely birds and some proved photographable, the Lesser Scaup and White-winged Scoter were rather less amenable. Baby White-crowned Sparrows and American Tree Sparrows scattered as we yomped through the willow at the far end of the lake before heading back down the opposite ridge. We saw Bear and Fox dung and what were probably Snowy Owl pellets. Buff-bellied Pipit and Red-necked Phalarope were enjoyed and a Glandon (Arctic) Blue photographed.

We headed back along the north side of Quadjut Island enjoying the afternoon sun and the breeze and searching for animals but no luck until we had nearly reached Bathurst when a distant Caribou was spotted.

Dinner featured Arctic Char and the evening checklist was all but abandoned when the call came from Page – Arctic Wolf! We ran outside and there, up the Snye, was a superb fully white Arctic Wolf trotting serenely (in our direction!) along the sand bar. We headed towards it to get a better look and for the next forty minutes watched this stunning animal as it trotted about the landscape have a dig here, inspection there, and once it had realised we were there, it kept an eye on us too. However though it didn't get any closer neither did it run off, merely keeping a track parallel to us, though 500m or so away. Gradually it worked across the lower slope of the Nose before reaching the skyline and with a couple of backward glances at us, disappearing over the other side. Magical!

#### **Day 4      July 2<sup>nd</sup>      Bird Island and Tinney Cove**

At six-thirty several of us met to go and look at the Phalarope Pools. On the way down some scanning of the distant hills that rise behind the delta revealed a just about visible Musk Ox! Just fifteen minutes or so walk from the lodge these are little boggy pools in an open area close by the Snye, the channel that goes through the delta nearest the lodge. True to their name they soon produced Red-necked Phalaropes and these were eminently photographable. At one point three span in little circles in front of Roger and Seda. They are beautiful birds. Just as entertaining was a Lesser Yellowlegs that scolded loudly from the tops of bushes just a couple of metres away from us! We found that the muddy pool fringes had some very clear mammal tracks. A Caribou had walked through whilst a Wolf had criss-crossed the area. A Grizzly Bear too had sauntered through. Then it was back to the lodge for breakfast.

We boarded the boat at nine-thirty. Conditions were good though the wind was brisk taking the edge off the otherwise rather warm temperatures. We pulled out into the inlet and then through the gap between Bear Island and Peregrine Point. We headed alongside Long Island stopping briefly to look at Common Mergansers, an Arctic Loon and some Scoter, before heading off towards Bird Island. This was a great experience with the close proximity of the breeding birds and therefore a great chance to get some photographs. Glaucous, Herring and Thayer's Gulls were all nesting on the island and were all approachable to within a few metres. Needless to say we didn't disturb any that were actually on the nest though we did walk past one or two nests with eggs in them. There were also Common Eiders nesting on the island and we had a great view of the males as they flew around

the coast when we arrived and later we saw a nest full of the eider down with an egg in it. We discovered that a few of the gulls had been predated by an animal, we surmised probably a fox or a wolf, as the flight feathers had all been neatly bitten off. A little beach combing provided us with an Arctic Ground Squirrel skull which must have been bought from the mainland. The lovely lilac-pink wallflower *Erysimum pallasii* was in fabulous bloom amongst the rocks everywhere. Also of note here was the diminutive *Saxifraga rivularis* which in places formed tight little clumps of white blooms.

Then it was across the sea to Tinney Cove though we had to zigzag between islands as the headwind was rather strong for our broadside boat. This was a beautiful place with long volcanic dikes cutting up some huge glacial rebound beaches worn from the bedrock of algal limestone. There were huge outcrops of the latter. Inland the hills rose shiny grey with just a few green valleys to interrupt the bare rock. Surf Scoters, White-winged Scoters, a group of American Wigeon, two Red-throated Loons, and of course lots of Common Mergansers were on the sea. We followed a line of outcropping limestone up the beach. This offered sheltered places under the rocks where ferns and early flowers flourished. Purple Saxifrage was in wonderful bloom and where snow had recently melted there were some Few-flowered Anemones. We admired several very fresh blooms of *Rhododendron lapponicum*. As we wandered upslope we started to find mats of *Silene acaulis* carpeted with pink blooms and each time we photographed one we went on to find one better! Eventually one was found fully fifty centimetres across and totally smothered in flowers *and* with a full-on Arctic scene behind it. Front cover that one! There were the last blooms too of *Oxytropis nigrescens*. We started to find Woolly Louseworts and again the further we went the better these stunning pink furry blooms got! Some of us headed over to a large snow patch where Arctic Ground Squirrels were on the rocks. *Ranunculus pedatifidus* offered a surprisingly tall show of flowers (well eight inches) on a rocky bluff. Butterflies were quite numerous in the sun with Arctic Blue the mainstay along with Arctic White, Taiga Alpine, sulphurs and fritillaries. Shorelarks and Redpoll were seen. We walked back round a rocky headland and found a superb Lapland Longspur on an area of orange, black and white rocks. In fact perfect camouflage for this bird. Further downslope we found a Redpoll's nest with two eggs in it, then some pretty *Loiseleuria procumbens* and just before reaching the boat a gorgeous new lousewort, *Pedicularis flammea*, with yellow blooms tipped with deepest brown-crimson! Sadly it was now time to leave this marvellous place and cruise back to the lodge in the evening sunshine.

After dinner Page then took us on a tour of the settlement which took in fish drying racks, and also the various houses that the Warner's through connections and grants had caused to be built for the local Inuit, and the Church which contained some unusual items such as a sled-runner 'door-runner' and caribou hide lined walls. Page told us many amusing anecdotes about life here notably as we were shown round her 'metal' igloo. The travelling snakes were a highlight!

## **Day 5      July 3<sup>rd</sup>      Fishing Creek**

Several of us gathered at six-thirty to go and explore the Phalarope Pools again. A very distant Northern Harrier was our first bird. The Phalaropes were there but were very active so were less easy to photograph. The Lesser Yellowlegs was extremely agitated and noisy! We wandered down to the lake shore where we saw a Tundra Swan on the Snye and a pair of Red-throated Loons that were close enough to photograph. Peter appeared having found our first Harris's Sparrow and so we

all went to see if we could find it and it duly obliged and allowed us all great views. A Yellow Warbler was there too.

Breakfast finished we went to get ready though Peter spotted a Caribou swimming across the Snye so we hastily rushed outside to get photographs!

Unfortunately the rain started at this point however we went ahead with the boat trip hoping the forecast for better weather later would be realised. It proved true! By Peregrine Point we found an immature Bald Eagle that cruised back and forth along the cliff edge. Heading south in the inlet we passed various water birds before pulling up at Poppy Island where we took the chance to dry off and stretch our legs. This small island had abundant a very beautiful Sea Pea in bloom and scattered amongst it were the small yellow blooms of the Arctic Poppy. Glaucous Gulls nested on the island, their nests replete with the large beautifully marked eggs. Offshore were three Yellow-billed Loons that chatted with each other for a while. There were also a few Common Eider.

Just a little further and we pulled into Fishing Creek and anchored up, taking our picnic before we did anything else. Fishing Creek is a superbly scenic area with a lake joining the inlet via a short creek, and the lake fed by a river that cuts a gorge from the high Barrenlands to the west. To the east were high hills and in between were sweeping tundra-scapes with lakes scattered up the valley. Northwards we had magnificent views out over the Inlet to the various islands up near Bathurst Inlet. We looked hard for mammals, this being a productive spot for Musk Oxen during past visits but we were out of luck today, only the dung being seen. As we landed we saw Caribou tracks on the beach and these were neatly overlain in places by much fresher Wolf tracks. We were to see lots of evidence of Caribou generally but it was only Peter that found one sitting quietly on a hillside. He also spotted a Peregrine around this time. Page took half the group on an exploration of various Inuit archaeological sites along the side of the Creek. Here were old fox-traps as well as Caribou runs where the Inuit channelled the migrating Caribou before killing some of them. Meanwhile Bill had gone fishing in Fishing Creek and was having a very productive time catching a number of Lake Trout on his fly rod, several of them exceeding twenty inches. These he released but the 10lb Arctic Char, a magnificent fish, was kept for the next night's dinner!

The rest of us wandered slowly up the ridge scanning for mammals. The only live ones we found were Arctic Ground Squirrels though we did find the skull of a young Wolf. Birds were better though. We saw three or four more Bald Eagles, all distant, but these did include a couple of adult birds. There were several Harris's Sparrows spotted and also a few Lapland Longspurs (Buntings). Four Long-tailed Ducks flew along the creek and later we spotted one on a lake. There were also several distant Tundra Swans and pair of Sandhill Cranes too. The flora was excellent. It was a rich site for louseworts with all but one of the species found. Noteworthy were more Woolly Louseworts, some very fine looking *Pedicularis sudetica* and another single plant of *Pedicularis flammea*. We found our first plants of *Saussurea angustifolia*, the Fireworks Flower, and one was just about in bloom. There were also lots of fine Moss Campion cushions and the best *Loiseleuria procumbens* we'd yet seen. Then it was back to the boat and the trip back to the lodge. Boyd and the float plane appeared just then catching us by surprise with a low flyover as we were leaving! He'd been out checking for Musk Oxen for us. No luck with these but even in his short flight he'd managed to see three bears and three wolves! Back at base, and a hot tea in hand, we were able to see one of the Wolves as Boyd showed us where the 'babysitter' was on lookout duty below the den in the sandy bank opposite. It was a long way off, but we could see enough to understand it was a pure white Arctic Wolf!

Dinner was steak and much enjoyed, and this was followed by a very informative talk by Page on the Inuit's use of plants in their daily lives.

## **Day 6      July 4<sup>th</sup>      Amethyst Point**

During breakfast Alan spotted a Musk Ox up on the high hills to the west. Though very distant this was a large male and he looked superb in the open tundra. Boyd offered to take some up in his floatplane and go and see the Musk Ox up close. This they were very successful in – coming back with great photos. Bill elected to go fishing again at Fishing Creek and they saw a Grizzly Bear on the way.

The main trip of the day was to try and circumnavigate Quadjut Island, calling for a long stop at Amethyst Point. Both species of merganser were common and we saw occasional loons. A Bald Eagle was seen en route. We pulled in to Amethyst Point about eleven. Page showed us a 'grave' a hundred yards from the beach. A grave is perhaps not the right word as the skeleton (or at least the major bones and skull) lie on the surface of a glacial rebound beach along with various things left to help their progress in the afterlife. In this case two cups, a spoon, a sewing kit in a can and a superb old tilley stove. The stove was made after 1929 so all that is known about this person is that they must have died after then! None of the local Inuit know who this person was and even whether it is one or two people is not certain. A little above the grave was an amazing outcrop of amethyst set in quartzite. Huge veins of the crystals were set in the base rock – it was a rock collectors dream – and lots of specimens were collected! There were plenty of very large smoke quartz crystals too. The upper surface of the rock had been worn smooth by glaciation (there were glacial striations on nearby rocks) and the quartz, haematite and amethyst veins and nodules were smooth patterns on the rocks surface – a colourful scene.

Down by the shore were some very obliging waders. Both Least Sandpiper and Semipalmated Plover posed well for the cameras. The flora was very fine with all sorts of nice species. Most noticeable was a large population of particularly floriferous Bog Rosemary. *Melandrium apetalum* was by the coast along with *Oxytropis deflexa foliolosa*. Tiny *Pinguicula villosa* was seen in moss by a little rivulet where Frigga's Fritillary was photographed. Other butterflies included Arctic Blue, Northern Blue, Palaeno Sulphur and a rather worn Painted Lady!

Now we continued the circumnavigation of Quadjut Island studying the pristine tundra for signs of mammals as we went. Suddenly Boyd announced a Grizzly Bear. This was a young female that was very active on the slope to our left. She was jogging around then rooting around in the vegetation and frequently changing direction. We landed briefly but she went over the top of the ridge again, though not because she was aware of us, she still hadn't twigged we were about. Over the next twenty minutes we saw quite a lot of her and though distant it was great to watch her going about her business without being aware of us. Eventually our scent(!) drifted in to her and she stuck her nose in the air moved it around a bit, then turned to face us. She considered us for a minute then was off, running steadily uphill. She amazed us with the strength and stamina of her running as she bounded off into the distance at one point clambering rapidly up an almost vertical rock bank. Meanwhile another Bald Eagle flew by. We continued seeing a couple of Long-tailed Ducks and also a great flock of scoter with four White-winged Scoter and seven Surf Scoters.

We landed at Seal Cache Island. The weather was by now stunning and we enjoyed the wonderful scenery. Page took us around this tiny island which was chock full of Inuit cultural artifacts. Initially we were shown stone tools probably made on the island, then a tent ring where we could also see the 'hammer stone' that was used to make the tools. Then it was along a short ridge to several Tule Inuit rings and below them a seal cache complete with Ringed Seal skeleton and skull! There was a fabulous display of *Hedysarum mackenzeei* on this island. Then it was back to Bathurst in brilliant afternoon sunshine.

Peter knocked on our door at half eleven with the news that the Arctic Wolf was again crossing the Snye. This time it was another from the pack across the river, a beautiful animal, mostly white but with a light silver-grey back. It spent a while down near the Phalarope Pools and then to our great joy started running towards us. We headed to the crosses on the hill and sure enough there it was in front of us. Now aware of us it didn't come closer, instead pondering what to do next. It was less than a hundred metres away and largely unconcerned by the rather excited threesome stood in front of it. We spent ten minutes getting great photos as it fossicked this way and that before gradually heading off up the hillside where the other whiter Wolf had gone a few nights before! It was difficult to get back to sleep again!

## **Day 7      July 5<sup>th</sup>      Kaotok Hill, Oldsquaw Bay & Swan Lake**

This morning started very early for some of us. At five fifteen we met for tea and coffee and then Colin took four of us up the Snye in a little boat. The Snye has gradually silted up over the years and is now difficult even in the little boats at low tide. Needless to say it was low tide! We had to help walk the boat through some particularly shallow areas but luckily it was only your leader who filled his wellies with water! Eventually we were through and motoring up towards Swan Lake. A Grizzly Bear was spotted on the left slope. It was not too distant and nicely out in the open, but of course once we approached it soon turned and jogged back up the hill. Still, a nice sighting, and a large 'blonde' Grizzly too. We passed Tundra Swans on the way up. We stopped below the large hill that guards the entrance to the Swan Lake area. This is Kaotuk Hill. Our job was to climb it – not too arduous, but it was a five hundred foot vertical rise and quite steep towards the end. Once on top though we had the most incredible view. We could see tundra stretching off to the horizon in all directions – probably a quarter of a million square kilometres in view! To the west we seemed level with the top of the Barrenlands which rose in grey ridge waves into the distance. To the east we could see back towards Bathurst, and the Inlet beyond. To the north the Burnside Delta lay spread before us, and to the south Swan Lake and other smaller lakes dotted rolling cotton-grass tundra that stretched into the vast horizon. Truly magical. We soon spotted another Grizzly Bear, but this one was very distant. Peter soon spotted another animal, this the totally white Arctic Wolf that could be seen heading off along an arm of the delta towards the lodge! Lastly as we were patting ourselves on the back for such a fine haul of mammals and wondering aloud where the Caribou might be Peter said, "well, there's one!" And it was, just below us in some thick willow, an impressive male with large antlers still encased in velvet. We decided that we could get close to this one so we descended a somewhat steep and difficult slope before creeping up on the Caribou. Land forms and wind were on our side and soon we were stood admiring the animal from forty metres distance! It stood to run away but Colin called it with a grunt and then swinging his arms like antlers caused the animal to stop confused! We got great photos! Then it was back to the lodge stopping for some wonderful photographic opportunities with a group of five Long-tailed Ducks.

We arrived back to find that those at the lodge had been enjoying views of the pure white Arctic Wolf as it crossed the Snye!

After breakfast (hasty for some of us) we headed round Quadjut Island in the Blue Loo. The sun was strong, the wind low, in fact a perfect summer's day. Beautiful for cruising round the islands. As we neared our destination we spotted a Golden Eagle soaring overhead and getting higher and higher. Suddenly he dropped in a stoop, pulling out for a while before again dropping, this time vertically and very fast until he almost pulled out a remarkable take. The scoter he'd been aiming at was flying low over the water and saw the danger just in time and literally hit the water from the air diving straight under! The eagle put on the brakes and pulled out inches from the water. Totally spectacular. The scoter was not on his own but all of his friends had also disappeared under water so it took us a while to understand that there were half a dozen White-winged Scoters and eight Black Scoters, the latter resplendent in glossy black plumage and swollen yellow bills – we watched these two groups for a while the eagle returning but not coming down for a second attempt.

In the evening Colin and Sam took us in the Blue Loo up the Snye, the water depth being OK on the tide at this point. We spotted one of the Arctic Wolves as we went, it stayed well up the slope from us, keeping itself mostly hidden in the willow scrub. A small group of Long-tailed Ducks took off in front of us and then a pair of Trumpeter Swans. We completed the Snye and entered Swan Lake. This is a very scenic place. With the edge of the graben just to the west and nearer at hand the steep-side Kaotok Hill and the hill above the lodge, the landscapes were stunning. It didn't take Sam long to spot a bear. It didn't take Peter long either! But they weren't looking in the same direction. So two bears, no three, no.... four in the end. Three Grizzlies were up at the far end of the lake in the willow scrub there, and one to the east of the lake. All of them were rather good at disappearing but at times we could see them and indeed there were quite good views of a couple of them for a brief time. Then it was back down the Snye, passing the Long-tailed Ducks again, before getting back to the lodge and a glass of wine!

## **Day 8      July 6<sup>th</sup>      Young Islands and FON Island**

There was a bit of wind this morning though it was still bright and quite warm. As we breakfasted a female Moose and her calf walked across Young Island – they were quite distant and only stayed in the open for a couple of minutes so not everyone saw them.

Our trip this morning took us alongside Young Island however we saw no sign of the Moose there. We landed at a very nice looking spot backed by cliffs and with a fine show of flowers with especially photogenic Castillejas. We were on the lookout for Ringed Seals but none showed. Sam did spot a Moose way to the north on the mainland, barely visible, likely a different one from the one spotted this morning. Incidentally that mother and baby were walking right towards the wolves' den when we last saw them...

Returning we went through a gap between the islands and came back down the east side of Young Island, the sea getting rougher. We passed large numbers of Mergansers and occasional loons. Eventually we landed on FON Island. FON = Federation of Ontario Naturalists. Red-throated Loons had been nesting on the the little pond. There were a number of Least Sandpipers around the pool and offshore were Yellow-billed Loons. There were some great animal (and bird) footprints in the mud by the lake. The cute little semi-aquatic buttercup *Ranunculus hyperboreus* was common in

the main pool, indeed there was a wonderful flora in general here with a great variety of sedges, some fine clumps of *Saxifraga hirculus*, and also the pinkish *Melandrium affine*. Just before we left a pair of Sandhill Cranes flew in and landed – so very close to us. They walked off across the beach and up the flowery slope beyond with half the group in tow! Old World Swallowtail was flying about and we also saw a Mourning Cloak – known to us in Europe as Camberwell Beauty.

After the evening meal a cultural evening had been arranged. This was an exceptional event as it involved most of the local Inuit. Boyd Warner told us a little of some of the ‘eskimo’ artefacts on show in the lodge and then Sam Kapolak told us about the rest, going into fantastic details about how each tool or weapon was used. Page talked us through a most dramatic costume event where locals appeared wearing various current and past ‘eskimo’ Inuit gear. Everything seemed to be made from Caribou though trimmings were always Wolf, Caribou or Wolverine, the latter the most prized as the hairs shed frozen ice particles the easiest! The standard of workmanship was superb and in almost all cases Page was able to point out somebody in the room who had made the item and who it was for! A number of local kids were there with Isaac and they all enjoyed the show as much as we did I think!

## **Day 9      July 7<sup>th</sup>      The Delta and to Yellowknife**

This morning most of us met a little before six in the lodge building for tea and coffee before Boyd took us across the Snye in the little boat. We walked across the delta during the next three hours, exploring generally, but mainly heading over towards the Wolf den. We were not successful in finding the Wolf but did see very many tracks both of Wolf and also of other mammals such as Caribou and Moose. The only mammal actually seen was an Arctic Ground Squirrel.

Birds were also rather sparse, it was very cool this morning with a quite strong wind. We did see a group of Pacific Golden Plovers flying past. Otherwise it was the plants that held most interest. There was a great mix of sedges including *Carex chordorrhiza*. Also new was *Aster sibiricus* which was scattered here and there, and there was much *Achillea nigrescens*. There were fabulous patches of Arctic Riverbeauty, *Pyrola grandiflora* and *Lathyrus japonicus*. *Lycopodium annotinum* was also new.

After breakfast I went up the Snye to collect the trap cameras. These had had mixed results. There was nothing at all on the one by the Phalarope Pools. However the two further down the Snye had done rather well. They were on the same stick, one pointing one way, the other the other way. Both had several very fine pictures of Arctic Wolf on them – and in almost all of those images the Wolf was looking suspiciously at the camera! There was also a very furry Red Fox too.

En route I flushed a Willow Ptarmigan at close range and also photographed a Semipalmated Plover doing a frantic distraction display. At the Phalarope Pools the birds themselves provided much entertainment and photographic opportunity and Peter even managed to find their nest and photograph the tiny chicks. He also spotted a Musk Ox, though it was miles away up beyond Swan Lake.

We relaxed for a while before walking over to the airfield at around a quarter past one. We were able to birdwatch on the way, or beach comb, or to enjoy the flowers, especially those on the bench below the airfield. Most of us were lined up right by the runway when the de Havilland arrived. It really was a spectacular landing as the runway is very short! We said goodbye to all the friends we

had made in Bathurst Inlet - Alan the helper, Colin, Sam the general organiser and boat driver, Suzie the cook, and all the kids - Isaac, Marlow and the irrepressible little Jemma. And of course Page. She had done as much as any human could to make this a successful visit and her enthusiasm and her incredible knowledge of the region, its flora and fauna, its people and its geology and geomorphology, just left us in awe!

Once up and away we found the sky still clear and had marvellous views over the remarkable Barrenlands landscape. We searched briefly for Musk Oxen, passing one on our left, but couldn't find the group of twenty the pilot had seen on the way in. Then it was over Wilberforce Falls where a Caribou was also spotted and just after Peter espied a white phase Gyr Falcon. Flying at ten thousand feet we couldn't readily see animals (or at least didn't) but we could see the make up of the land. Beautiful lakes with waters looking like tropical caye seas soon changed to highlands with great areas of pale rock and tundra polygons. Sandy eskers moved sinuously across the landscape. The water soon became more prolific and the lakes larger. Then trees started to appear and soon we were in Yellowknife.

It was a short journey to the Chateau Nova and after a wash and brush up it was into dinner where at the hotel where the food was excellent.

## **Day 10      July 8<sup>th</sup>      Around Great Slave Lake to Hay River**

Just a ten minute walk from the Chateau Nova in Yellowknife lies the Niven Lake Nature Reserve - a very good spot to spend the pre-breakfast period. Roger went down there this morning and found plenty of variety including a family of Red-necked Grebes and various wildfowl such as American Wigeon and Mallard. Out on the main lake were Bonaparte's Gulls and Common Terns. Red-winged Blackbirds were noisy and obvious.

After a good breakfast back at the Chateau we headed out on the second stage of our trip – the exploration of the taiga forests south of Great Slave Lake. Today's journey was to take us on the only road out of town if you don't include its brief continuation north and the winter ice road! It is almost five hundred kilometres round Great Slave Lake to Haye River. Locals proudly proclaim the lake as the second largest in Canada (after Great Bear Lake) and the eleventh largest freshwater lake in the world - the first doesn't include any of the great lakes (as they are half in the US) but the second does - all a bit odd!

The road passes through a wilderness from almost the city limits with much barren Canadian Shield rock showing this interspersed with areas of stunted forest and 'muskeg'. We passed by several little 'sloughs' or lakes during the morning. Each had a few birds with Red-winged Blackbirds and Lesser Scaup being ubiquitous. There were Buffleheads, Ravens and Northern Harriers. By the water grew much Water Arum *Calla palustris*, Cattail and sedges along with *Eleocharis fluviatile*, *Scirpus validus* and even a little *Scutellaria galericulata*. In the water was the abundant yellow Bullhead Lily *Nuphar variegatum* as well as duckweeds and pondweeds. The roadside verges were a bizarre show of swaying shining *Hordeum jubatum*, white and yellow Melilots, and *Erigerons*.

Beyond Edzo-Rae the country became subtly different with thicker forest and open bogs and suddenly a little hilly. There were larger rivers too. In the forest understorey were Bunchberry, *Orthilia secunda* and the lovely Twinflower. We tried a side track which took us up to a communication tower and here we took our picnic. There were great views out over an area of bog

and forest but no animals to be seen though we did enjoy our picnic up here – almost mosquito-free! Harebells bloomed well up here.

Now we had to cover ground to the south and there was little time to stop, however when we finally found some Bison, we most certainly did stop. These were two fabulous bulls in an open area (it had been mostly forest...) and as chance would have it there was a track which took us to within two hundred metres of them. We parked up and walked slowly over to them. We started getting amazing photos so we got a bit closer... and a bit closer... until in the end we were standing just fifteen metres from two full-grown bull Woodland Bison. And they are most impressive creatures. They seemed most peacable though when one of them suddenly snorted we all took a couple of steps back! We spent half an hour with these amazing animals before putting them down where we found them and going on with our journey south. We passed another Bison a little while later, another bull. Then it was down into Hay River and the Ptarmigan Inn where we settled in and later met local naturalist Gary Vizniowski for dinner.

## **Day 11      July 9<sup>th</sup>                      Hay River and to Wood Buffalo National Park**

This morning we met Gary at 06.00 and headed out to explore the local wildlife spots. Driving down a track on the edge of town we came across a Red Fox who posed well just by the roadside though it was sad to see it had a heavy limp. Further down the road a Snowshoe Hare was even more obliging and hopped back and forth into the road in front of the photographers. We took a walk where the West Channel of the Hay River exits to Great Slave Lake. Bluebells (*Mertensia paniculata*) lined the track and there were both Yellow-rumped and Tennessee Warblers in the willows. A hundred metres in saw us admiring a huge Bald Eagle's nest, we didn't at first notice the superb adult Bald Eagle posing atop a spindly spruce. This bird looked haughtily on as we photographed it in superb morning light with the green of the spruces and the brilliant blue sky as background. Further along Northern Flicker and Belted Kingfishers provided further excitement. The morning's first American White Admirals appeared, the first of very very many today. Along the channel were Goldeneye and a Beaver. Down by the shore we could see a group of Ring-billed, Mew and Herring Gulls on a sand bar and with them were a few Common Terns and three or four Caspian Terns. A large flock of American Wigeon was enjoyed and we also noted Lesser Scaup and Green-winged Teal. Heading back we spotted a dead Ruffed Grouse on the road.

In town we stopped at the visitor's centre where Gary had spotted a Merlin on top of the tree behind it. Sure enough we had cracking 'scope views and photos of this female. Suddenly there was a loud falconic cackling and in came the male, carrying an offering in his talons. He landed and the female jumped up and snatched the prey, feathers flying everywhere. She looked very fierce as she mantled it.

Then it was in to the Ptarmigan Inn for breakfast before packing and loading up for the journey down to Fort Smith. We visited a local sandwich bar to get lunchtime comestibles as well as another well-stocked shop. Then Gary took us up to the coastguards place close to the lake where his friend let us in. The friend soon showed us where the Great Horned Owls were hanging out. There were two comically bespectacled youngsters sitting together on a horizontal brach. The adult nearby. The adult flew off, however soon we were able to enjoy stellar views of this charismatic bird. Nearby a Western Tiger Swallowtail flew about and Milbert's Tortoiseshells too.

We fuelled up and picked up our picnic then we headed out of town and towards Fort Smith. Gary took us on a walk around some ponds where we spent quality time with a pair of Sandhill Cranes and got really quite close to them. They were quite vocal and liked to lead us away by walking along the path in front of us. Pied-billed Grebes and Buffleheads were on the water. There were various sparrows, an immature Bald Eagle, a Northern Harrier or two and Yellow Warblers too.

Next Gary took us to a less than pleasant place. Chicken manure covered the place to a depth and it stank! However the birds loved it and we enjoyed great views of Lesser Yellowlegs and Least Sandpipers, Solitary Sandpipers and a Pectoral Sandpiper. Common Ravens were abundant here.

We stopped for lunch by a lake where Gary, as promised, showed us our first Common Loon of the trip. As we watched this bird we ate our picnic. The light was stunning. Damp areas close to the lake held *Tofieldia glutinosa* and under nearby trees *Cypripedium passerinum* and *Amerorchis rotundifolia* had already finished.

We said our goodbyes to Gary, he had shown us a lot in just a morning! Then we entered Wood Buffalo. This national park is huge – it's the size of Switzerland – and it's a full-on wilderness. There are almost no settlements and only one proper road, and even dirt tracks are limited to a very few. It is thickly forested throughout and harbours a dense mammal population though of course with only a tiny bit of access and thick forest the possibility of seeing these mammals would be limited. We were here to try though!

Next we headed out to the viewpoint over the Salt Plains. This is a spectacular spot with panoramic views over a vast expanse of salt plains, wetlands and forest. A stunning spot with absolutely no human interference in the landscape as far as the eye can see. It looked like it ought to have vast herds of bison but in fact it didn't have any – not even any animals in fact. There were though rather a lot of Sandhill Cranes. And some distant American White Pelicans that for a while made us wonder if we were looking at Whooping Cranes!

We drove back along the dirt road to the main highway and rounding a corner found a large Black Bear walking along the road towards us. We stopped and it continued to walk towards us turning into the forest. It was in beautiful condition its black fur shiny and thick. We could hear it walking in the forest parallel to the road so we turned the vehicle round and sure enough it came out again walking away from us. We moved past it hoping it would reappear and it did though it was only a short time before it again disappeared into the forest. This time it didn't come back to the road.

Time was getting on so we headed purposefully now for Fort Smith, though bears had other ideas. Liz and Peter suddenly shouted 'bears!' so we hastily turned round and there they were – two cute little baby Black Bears just off the side of the road, their mother just behind them in the bushes, another large bear behind her. Sadly they only stayed a short time soon disappearing in the forest where we could see the two little bear clubs climbing up the trees. Now it really was time to get on to Fort Smith which we reached at six-thirty or so and settled into the Pelican Rapids Hotel.

## **Day 12      July 10<sup>th</sup>      Wood Buffalo National Park – Hay Camp Road and Pine Lake Road**

We met up at six ready to go explore Wood Buffalo. The road took us south close to the course of the Slave River though the river was never in sight. We soon learnt the difficulty of spotting

wildlife in this habitat. There was abundant mammal sign along the roads but of course unless anything crossed the road or was active in the road verges we would struggle to see it. Small roadside wetlands were another matter and allowed us to see a number of birds. A Broad-winged Hawk was perched above one where a Bufflehead and Green-winged Teal floated. A Beaver crossed one pond. We heard chickadees as we drove and stopped and spent a while enjoying both Boreal and Black-capped Chickadees at close range along with Tennessee and Yellow-rumped Warblers. The forest in this part was very dwarfed with the pines and spruce only two or three metres high.

Further down the road we found a side track and drove into the forest for a while. The track soon petered out but we could see an open valley in front of us so we walked a little. This was a promising looking mammal area but the only ones we could find were Red Squirrels. Out in the open sedge beds though we were in for a treat. Here we found Le Conte's Sparrows. Two of them, and one that came very close and allowed great photographs. This is really a very beautiful little bird. Driving back through the forest we had very brief views of a Black Bear. Then it was time to head back to Fort Smith for breakfast.

Breakfast was much needed and the hotel's Chinese restaurant didn't disappoint with some fine breakfast dishes for us. Replete we had a short break before reconvening for a walk down to the 'Rapids of the Drowned'. This took us down through rather fine forest where the understorey was decorated with many white stars of One-flowered Wintergreen. Reaching the edge of the river we were greeted by quite a sight. The Slave River must be half a mile wide at this point – a giant of a river. And all the way across lay the cascading waters of the Rapids of the Drowned. In them fished several American White Pelicans. There was a group loafing out in the middle of the rapids but nearer at hand and right across some flat rocks were two and sometimes more pelicans that fished right in front of us, ferry-gliding up the fast flowing water before plunging their beaks into the fastest part of the torrent – and all this just metres from us. It was a very photographable spectacle! There were Spotted Sandpipers on the shore and lots of dragonflies on sedgey pools at the river's edge. It was a wonderful spot and we spent a happy hour there clicking away!

A visit to the national park office had confirmed that we were unlikely to be able to spend time on Parson's Road, closed due to heavy flood damage. This was a pity as this is the best mammal-watching road in the park. Undeterred we headed south along the Pine Lakes Road to the Salt River where we had been told Bison were often to be seen. We found the places they had been lying in the sedge meadows but they weren't at home right now! A cliff by the river here had a colony of Cliff Swallows. We took a walk round the Karst Trail looking at the flora in the mossy edges of the abundant swallow holes next to the track. There were lots of wintergreens including *Pyrola asarifolia*. Again we encountered Boreal Chickadee. Then it was down to another trail through the forest. Here we spent an hour walking out towards a lake. There were plenty of Red Squirrels. The main birds to feature were woodpeckers with at one point three species all in the same spot. A Black-backed Woodpecker gave us very good views and briefly with it was a Three-toed Woodpecker as proved by Roger's photographs. Around us at the same time were several Northern Flickers. We spent the last hour of the evening trip driving further south along the same road. Though there was abundant Bison sign we couldn't find any. There was a Snowshoe Hare or two and a Woodchuck, and as we returned towards Fort Smith a couple of Black Bears.

Day 13

July 11<sup>th</sup>

## Wood Buffalo National Park – Fox Holes, Salt Flats Overlook and Pine Lake Road

The morning started with a drive northwards which took us twenty minutes along the main highway. Nearing our turn-off we spotted a Black Bear that didn't stay long, and barely a kilometre further along, at our junction, another one which did allow us good if still brief views.

We drove around the Fox Holes loop. This took us through some sublime habitats – a mixture of forest types, some fine wetlands and extensive grassy salt plains. The latter didn't have much in the way of wildlife though there was a pair of Sandhill Cranes. The wetlands were good though with a variety of wildfowl including Lesser Scaup, American Wigeon, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Canada Goose, Pintail and Bufflehead. There were American Coots with young and lots of Red-winged Blackbirds. We found Marsh Wrens to be quite common with a couple of nests right by the road, and one that singing bird that performed well for the cameras. There were various sparrows including American Tree and a couple of Alder Flycatchers were seen. A Red-tailed Hawk was seen here and later a much darker bird in the forest. In said forest we took a side road that went for miles off towards the Slave River. Along this we saw several Northern Flickers, and a number of Ruffed Grouse. Butterflies were quite numerous along the roadsides and included Tawny Crescent Northern Blue and the lovely Pink-edged Sulphur.

Next we headed out to the viewpoint over the Salt Plains. Today there were still no herds of bison but there was an animal. A Timber Wolf was watched loping along the edge of a wetland before disappearing for a while when I passed the telescope to Roger and then reappearing for a few more seconds once I had the 'scope back, this time running towards us but again evading everyone else's eyesight. This time it didn't come back out!

We headed back for brunch, much needed and enjoyed! Then there was a chance to relax or wander and explore the town. Most went to the museum. Roger revisited the Pelican Rapids area for more camera work.

At a quarter to four we met again for our afternoon/evening trip out on the Pine Lake Road. We stopped to look at several lakes around the Float Plane dock area. These had lots of yellow *Nuphar variegatum* lilies in flower, also small white Pygmy Water-lilies and a mystery *Hydrocharitacean* too. There were large flowered bladderworts in the shape of *Utricularia vulgaris* and a variety of sedges. Dragonflies were abundant and included many darners, a rubyface or two, Four-spotted Chasers, and the damselflies *Enallagma boreale* and *Lestes disjuncta*. There was lots of birdlife on the lakes. A young Red-necked Phalarope looked a little out of place. There was a family of Red-necked Grebes, exceedingly handsome birds. There were Buffleheads, American Wigeon and Ring-necked Ducks. We checked out another spot where we found Lesser Yellowlegs and Solitary Sandpipers. A Beaver sailed across the little lagoon. We stopped at the floatplane dock and spotted a distant Common Loon and also a group of Bonaparte's Gulls out on the water.

Now we headed south quickly, slowing some 50km south of Fort Smith and looking for wildlife. Soon we found a pond with Beavers. These had built a dam by the roadside culvert and we saw them close to this and also below the road where we were able to obtain good photographs of them, one animal cruising along with assorted greenery above his head! A pair of Cedar Waxwings flew in and joined us, one bird coming to a berried bush by the roadside and allowing memorable close-ups before flying back up to a dead larix and presenting a berry to the other waxwing. A moment

we all failed to capture I'm afraid! We explored further south and then started the drive back. The only mammal seen on the return was a single Silver Fox – this is in fact a Red Fox which in these parts has evolved a silver-phase, which is variable in colour but this was a dark silver-grey.

We had dinner back at the golf course on the platform overlooking the giant Slave River. Slate-coloured Junco and Western Tanager sat on tree-tops as we enjoyed an excellent meal. Unfortunately I'd forgotten to pick-up the stool to help people into the vehicle out at the beaver pond some 50km from Fort Smith but it was a good excuse to drive out there again. So some of us did. We started seeing more and more Snowshoe Hares as we went but nothing larger until a Black Bear appeared. Then we spotted a superb Silver Fox and on the way back lots of Common Nighthawks and, just as we neared Fort Smith, a Great Grey Owl flew across in front of us.

## **Day 14      July 12<sup>th</sup>                      Wood Buffalo NP and to High Level**

We left Fort Smith early and headed north stopping first at the Salt Plains overlook. No sign of yesterday's Wolf nor did we actually see any other mammals out on the plains but around us were a number of cute and cuddly Least Chipmunks. Down on the plain too there were many signs of animals, particularly Bison, but also Woodland Caribou, Wolf and Beaver. Saltmarsh plants grew around the salty watercourse here, an odd sight in Canada's northern interior. Seda photographed a White-throated Sparrow and up on the slope we saw Cedar Waxwings and a male Merlin. We looked long and hard at two distant large white birds with black on the wings and in the end could not decide for sure what we were looking at – pelicans or whooping cranes! There were however lots of Sandhill Cranes. Indeed Sandhill Cranes continued to feature as we drove across the highway to the Foxholes road where we spotted several groups walking down the road in front of us! A Woodchuck was seen too.

Departing Fort Smith our journey was soon interrupted by a Black Bear that proved much more cooperative than previous ones and allowed good photography. We continued, spotting two more Black Bears. Then we entered a roadwork zone, and just a couple of hundred metres along from the girl who told us we could go on if we drive carefully there was another Black Bear. We stopped in the midst of the roadworks (there was no other traffic than us – just lorries dropping piles of earth in the middle of the road) and enjoyed ten minutes with a bear who was probably just a year old and who was enjoying the soapberries immensely. We watched and photographed him from twenty metres range and he merely noted us and occasionally glanced at the cameras before guzzling his way through another load of berries.

We headed up to Hay River and took a well-earned brunch there, finding the only restaurant in town that still served breakfasts at midday! We checked the visitor centre to see if the Merlin was there and then headed south towards High Level.

We made only a couple of stops on the way, one for a Broad-winged Hawk, and the last, a break for the driver, where we spotted some Sandhill Cranes, a very large hawkmoth visiting the abundant Fireweed, and a Red-eyed Vireo. The darned *Aeshna interrupta* was photographed here. Then it was on to High Level for the night.

I popped out to fill up with fuel and saw two Red Foxes on the railway line.

## **Day 14      July 12<sup>th</sup>                      to Edmonton**

It was an early start for the long journey south to Edmonton. We left High Level with the merest hint of light in the sky, the moon still shining brightly to our south. Though today was just going to be the start of the long journey home we had hopes that some wildlife might come our way as we travelled south and we had barely left the township when a White-tailed Deer appeared by the road. Soon after another one too. Then there was a long gap before we headed into wild country that allowed us to see more mammals. This was a superb tract, about two hundred kilometres long, mainly forest but with some rivers, wetlands and occasional open areas. More White-tailed Deer appeared and we saw them regularly, but only one stag with antlers in velvet. A Black Bear disappeared quickly, and there was a single Elk. The highlight though was a couple of Coyote pups on the roadside. Northern Harrier appeared from time to time, and Northern Flickers too. As we approached Edmonton we started to see more and more Red-tailed Hawks, and almost in the city itself we spotted a nest of an Osprey with one standing on it.

Then it was to the airport where we all checked-in and headed our separate ways. It was hard to describe the feeling of being amongst the general hubbub of humanity again after our experiences in Bathurst, a remote wilderness, and Wood Buffalo, a national park the size of Switzerland, largely uninhabited, with just the large village of Fort Smith, which had felt like a city to us until we reached Edmonton!

## Systematic List Number 1a

## Mammals of Bathurst Inlet

Grizzly Bear	<i>Ursus arctos</i>	1 seen from the air as we flew up to Bathurst and then we had to wait a few days before we got good views of one on the end of Quadjut Island. Another was seen that day on the fishing expedition. The early morning trip to Kaotok Hill yielded a single distant Grizzly sighting, but the evening visit to Swan Lake no less than 5 bears were seen!
Barren Ground Caribou	<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	It seems the big herds (up to 600,000 strong) no longer come this way. So just a few individuals seen, max of three on one day. One male allowed very close approach, the others were mostly distant.
Moose	<i>Alces alces</i>	A male seen from the air as we flew up to Bathurst and a mother and calf seen briefly and distantly from the lodge at Bathurst. Moose were formerly very rare this far north but sightings are very much on the increase.
Musk Ox	<i>Ovibos moschatus</i>	Two were seen from the aircraft as we flew over the Burnside on the way in to Bathurst. Two singles were seen very distantly from the lodge area. The second of these was on departure day and we flew over it on the way out, however we didn't dally, expecting to see the 15 or so the pilot had seen on the way in, but we didn't find those!
Arctic Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	what an amazing time we had with Wolves this year! We started with a superb animal actually sitting on the side of the runway at Wekweëti when we stopped to refuel. The pilot taxi-ed back to it and we watched it wandering around just metres away through the aircraft windows! Perhaps even better were the almost daily sightings at Bathurst Inlet. A den was occupied over towards the edge of the delta and most evenings/nights a Wolf would come past the settlement. We watched them wading the Snye and wandering the tundra and low willow scrub just inland of the settlement, the most memorable encounter coming in fantastic midnight sunlight when one came within 80m of us by the edge of the settlement. The trap cameras also captured great images of them. Boyd flew over the den area and could see four wolves there and our sightings suggested at least two different wolves.
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	None seen at Bathurst Inlet this year but the trap camera on the delta caught one
Arctic Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus parryii</i>	Known locally as 'Hick-hicks' these were abundant, and certainly in the Settlement, very tame.

## Systematic List 1b    Mammals of Wood Buffalo

Elk	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	A male seen en route to Edmonton
American Bison	<i>Bison bison</i>	3 males seen towards the Southwest corner of Great Slave Lake
White-tailed Deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	c.12 seen en route to Edmonton
Black Bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>	Up to 5 seen daily in Wood Buffalo. Total of sixteen animal sightings
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	A 'normal' form seen in Hay River and 2 'silver' phase animals in Wood Buffalo
Timber Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	1 distant sighting from the Salt Plains Lookout (IG only)
Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>	2 cubs seen en route to Edmonton
Muskrat	<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>	1 near Edzo-Raes
Woodchuck	<i>Marmota monax</i>	1-2 seen daily including an very cute fat 'townie' in Hay River!
Beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>	seen daily
Least Chipmunk	<i>Eutamias minimus</i>	a few at the Salt Plains Lookout

## Systematic List 2a    Birds of Bathurst Inlet

The taxonomic order follows that in the National Audubon Society Guide to Birds by David Allen Sibley.

Yellow-billed Loon	<i>Gavia adamsii</i>	seen on 4 days
Pacific Loon	<i>Gavia pacifica</i>	several out on the Inlet – see on 5 days
Red-throated Loon	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	much commoner than the previous two species
Tundra Swan	<i>Olor columbianus</i>	seen daily in small numbers
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	seen daily in small numbers
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	noted on two days
America Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>	noted on three days
Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	noted on three days
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	scattered in the inlet
White-winged Scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>	commonly noted in the inlet
Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>	noted on two days
Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta americana</i>	a fine group of birds narrowly escaped being Golden Eagle dinner!
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	noted on two days
Barrow's Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala islandica</i>	noted en route to Fishing Creek
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	?probably seen Oldsquaw Bay
Common Merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	very common
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	common
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	seen daily with max daily count of 3
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	seen almost daily with max daily count of 4
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	one female and one male noted
Rough-legged Hawk	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>	singles seen twice
Gyr Falcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	just the one seen by the Burndside as we left
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	just 1 seen Fishing Creek
Willow Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>	singles by the airfield and up the Snye
Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis</i>	2 distant birds (IG only) at Fishing Creek and 2 very close on FON island
Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	Pairs here and there - seen almost daily
American Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis dominica</i>	c.8 flew past us on the last morning in the Delta
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	c.12 offshore of Bathurst Settlement
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	singles on each visit to the Phalarope Pools
Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	common
Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>	1 Bathurst Settlement
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	2-4 in the phalarope pools every visit! Occasional sightings elsewhere
Long-tailed Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	1 seen from the boat while we were in the inlet
Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Larus philadelphia</i>	only seen at Wekweètì Airfield (and Yellowknife)
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	common
Thayer's Gull	<i>Larus thayerii</i>	Seen on about half the days though not common. Best were close-ups of birds nesting on Bird Island
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	common
Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	locally quite common on gravelly sites
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	a few seen daily
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	1 over the settlement – not a common bird up here!
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	seen daily, but mainly just the pair in the Settlement
Buff-bellied Pipit	<i>Anthus rubescens</i>	scattered

Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	noted daily in the Settlement and along the Snye
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	common
Tree Sparrow	<i>Spizella arborea</i>	scattered and locally common
Harris's Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia querula</i>	a few pairs along the Snye from the settlement. Also noted Fishing Creek and Quadjut
White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	widespread and common
Lapland Longspur	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	gravelly areas where the rock is black, orange and white! Tinny Cove and Fishing Creek
Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	1 seen Fishing Creek
Common/Hoary Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea/hornemanni</i>	widespread and common. I find it difficult to separate these two species and though many approach the latter in this area the gradation seems clinal

## Systematic List 2b    Birds of Wood Buffalo Extension

The taxonomic order follows that in the National Audubon Society Guide to Birds by David Allen Sibley. This list includes all birds seen during the last six days of the tour including time in Yellowknife.

Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>	One on lake just north of the park, and two on the float plane lakes
Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	a family two on the float plane lakes
Horned Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	near Hay River and two on the float plane lakes
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	near Hay River
American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	groups at Pelican Rapids and scattered sightings e.g. Salt Plains
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Salt Plains
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	scattered
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	a few seen
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	common at water bodies generally
American Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>	common at water bodies generally
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	1 float plane lakes
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	a few seen
Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discolor</i>	1 Salt Plains
Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	Hay River area
Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	scattered
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	scattered
Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	common throughout
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	2 Hay River
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	seen daily
Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>	1 seen on journey to High Level
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	seen almost daily
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1 seen close to Edmonton Airport
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	seen daily
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	male and female passing food behind the visitor's centre in Hay River. A male seen en route to High Level
Ruffed Grouse	<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>	a group along the Fox Holes track
American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	scattered
Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis</i>	widespread and common in the park
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	only noted near Hay River
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	scattered
Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>	noted almost daily, likes the beaver ponds
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>	scattered
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	an immature on float plane lakes
Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	near Hay River
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	1 near Hay River
Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Larus philadelphia</i>	Yellowknife and Fort Smith
California Gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>	Hay River
New Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	Hay River
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	frequent Fort Smith
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	frequent Fort Smith
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Yellowknife and Hay River
Caspian Tern	<i>Sterna caspica</i>	c.4 Hay River
Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	4 seen very well at Hay River
Great Gray Owl	<i>Strix nebulosa</i>	1 seen in flight along the Pine Lakes road
Common Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles minor</i>	10+ along the Pine Lakes road
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>	2 Hay River
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	scattered throughout

Three-toed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides tridactylus</i>	1 Salt River Loop
Black-backed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides arcticus</i>	1 Salt River Loop
Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	scattered
Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	Hay River
Alder Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax alnorum</i>	locally frequent
Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	scattered
Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	Hay River
Cliff Swallow	<i>Hirundo pyrrhonota</i>	frequent in Wood Buffalo
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	frequent in Wood Buffalo
Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	1 en route to Edmonton
Gray Jay	<i>Perisoreus canadensis</i>	seen almost daily
Black-billed Magpie	<i>Pica hudsonia</i>	common in Fort Smith and other settlements
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	only near to settlements
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	widespread in low numbers
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapilla</i>	seen just one day
Boreal Chickadee	<i>Poecile hudsonia</i>	seen just one day
Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>	Fox Holes track on both visits
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	widespread in low numbers
Veery	<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>	heard most days
Gray-cheeked Thrush	<i>Catharus minimus</i>	seen on two days
Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	widespread
Tennessee Warbler	<i>Vermivora peregrina</i>	widespread
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	widespread and common
Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Dendroica virens</i>	1 seen
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	scattered
Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	Yellowknife (Roger)
Western Tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>	noted on two days in Fort Smith
Le Conte's Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus leconteii</i>	2 seen along Hay Camp Road
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	scattered
Tree Sparrow	<i>Spizella arborea</i>	scattered
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>	common
Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	Fort Smith
White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	Fox Holes track
White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	widespread and common
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	Hay River
Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>	Hay River
Swamp Sparrow	<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>	frequent especially around beaver ponds
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	widespread in low numbers
Rusty Blackbird	<i>Euphagus carolinus</i>	scattered
Pine Siskin	<i>Carduelis pinus</i>	scattered
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	only noted close to Edmonton!

## Systematic List 3a    Flowers of Bathurst Inlet

The taxonomic order and nomenclature for this list has been taken from Vascular Plants of Continental Northwest Territories, Canada (1980) by Porsild and Cody. Species in [square brackets] not seen in 2017.

### *Pteridophyta*

<i>Cystopteris fragilis</i>	Fragile Fern	Scattered throughout
<i>Dryopteris fragrans</i>	Fragrant Shield Fern	Widespread on screes and cliffs – a very elegant little fern
<i>Woodsia glabella</i>	Smooth Woodsia	Uncommon in rocky crevices

### *Equisitaceae*

<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Common Horsetail	Widespread
<i>Equisetum variegatum</i>	Variiegated Horsetail	Beaches and wet areas by coast

### *Lycopodiaceae*

[ <i>Lycopodium selago</i>	Mountain Clubmoss	Between Swan Lake and Hydro Creek on cliffs]
<i>Lycopodium annotinum</i>	Interrupted Clubmoss	Between Swan Lake and Hydro Creek on cliffs. 2017 – only noted in the Delta

### *Isoetaceae*

[ <i>Isoetes muricata</i>		Phalarope Pools]
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### *Sparganiaceae*

[ <i>Sparganium hyperboreum</i>		Phalarope Ponds along the Snye]
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### *Potamogetonaceae*

[ <i>Potamogeton filiformis</i>		Phalarope Ponds along the Snye]
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### *Graminae*

<i>Elymus arenarius</i>	Lyme-Grass	coastal
[ <i>Hierochloe alpina</i>	Holy Grass	scattered throughout]
<i>Poa arctica</i>		scattered throughout
plenty of other grasses to check next time!		

### *Cyperaceae*

<i>Rhynchospora alba</i>		noted at various boggy localities
[ <i>Carex amblyorhycha</i>		boggy area by the Settlement]
<i>Carex aquatilis</i>		widespread and common in all wet habitats
<i>Carex atrofusca</i>		along paths etc
<i>Carex bicolor</i>		a beautiful little sedge found in damp places along tracks. 2017 Fishing Creek
<i>Carex bigelowii</i>		common in slightly damp tundra. 2017 Amethyst Point
<i>Carex capillaris</i>		widespread. Both subspecies <i>capillaris</i> and less commonly <i>robustior</i> found
<i>Carex chordorrhiza</i>		found in deep water such as by the lake at Tinney Cove. 2017 by the settlement
<i>Carex fuliginosa</i>		Roger ID'd this species – found with the <i>Carex microglochin</i> in boggy areas

<i>Carex glacialis</i>		scattered in dry gravelly areas – in 2006 only noted on Quadjut Island]
<i>Carex glareosa</i>		Boggy area by the Settlement and islands in the inlet
<i>Carex gynocrates</i>		calcareous outcrops on Quadjut Island]
<i>Carex lobeliaceae</i>		2017 Fishing Creek
<i>Carex maritima</i>		common along paths and muddy areas near shore
<i>Carex membranacea</i>		by peaty pools such as on Quadjut Island and at Tinney Cove
<i>Carex microglochin</i>		scattered by pools
<i>Carex misandra</i>		scattered in drier areas, delicate arcing peduncles. Distinctive]
<i>Carex nardina</i>		Calcareous areas on Quadjut Island and Tinney Cove]
<i>Carex norvegica</i>		Boggy area by the Settlement. Not seen in 2006 or 2017 and maybe an incorrect identification]
<i>Carex physocarpa</i>		scattered
<i>Carex podocarpa</i>		scattered]
<i>Carex rariflora</i>		another lovely sedge with distinctive pale green utricles with jet black glumes with pale midrib. Generally common in damp areas
<i>Carex rupestris</i>		common on rocks
<i>Carex saxatilis</i>		in pools on Quadjut Island and at Tinney Cove]
<i>Carex scirpoidea</i>		common on damp areas. 2017 Tinney Cove
<i>Carex subspathacea</i>		Along shores growing right at the water's edge or in it! By the Settlement.]
<i>Carex supina</i>		Tufted species growing in the sand dune of the delta
<i>Carex ursina</i>		Boggy seashore at Old Squaw Bay on Quadjut Island and at Tinney Cove]
<i>Carex vaginata</i>		common on edge of damp areas. 2017 FON Island
<i>Carex williamsii</i>		Boggy area by the Settlement]
<i>Scirpus caespitosus</i>		common in boggy areas
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>		Scattered throughout
<i>Eriophorum callitrix</i>		locally abundant
<i>Eriophorum russeolum</i>		wet areas by the Settlement]
<i>Eriophorum scheuchzeri</i>		Damp slacks behind beaches on Young Island and Tinney Cove. In 2017 only by the settlement
<i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i>		Dominant over large areas of wetter land
<i>Eriophorum viridi-carinatum</i>		Hidden Lake Island
<i>Eleocharis uniglumis</i>		Seashore]
<i>Eleocharis acicularis</i>		Scattered]
<i>Eleocharis quinqueflora</i>		scattered throughout
<i>Kobresia myosuroides</i>		Local]
<i>Kobresia simpiciuscula</i>		Scattered]
<b>Juncaceae</b>		
<i>Juncus arcticus</i>		wet areas on islands
<i>Juncus biglumis</i>		?probably this species in wet areas by settlement]
<i>Juncus castaneus</i>		wet areas by settlement
<i>Luzula confusa</i>		scattered
<b>Liliaceae</b>		
<i>Tofieldia coccinea</i>	Red False Asphodel	Widespread in low numbers
<i>Tofieldia pusilla</i>	Small False Asphodel	Widespread
<b>Orchidaceae</b>		
<i>Corallorhiza trifida</i>	Coralroot Orchid	Scattered throughout – under willows and alders

*Habenaria obtusata* Small Northern Bog Orchid Widespread and locally common

### Salicaceae

[*Salix herbacea* Least Willow Noted on Quadjut Island – really tiny!]  
*Salix reticulata* Net-veined Willow Widespread on dry tundra  
 Many other willows – they are quite diverse here – need checking next time!

### Betulaceae

*Alnus crispa* Green Alder Locally dominant along rivers  
*Betula glandulosa* Dwarf Birch Widespread

### Polygonaceae

*Oxyria digyna* Mountain Sorrel Rather uncommon  
*Polygonum viviparum* Bistort Scattered

### Caryophyllaceae

*Cerastium alpinum* Mouse-ear Chickweed Scattered  
*Cerastium humifusum* Gravelly beaches  
*Honckenya peploides* Seabeach Sandwort Local along coasts  
 [ *Melandrium affine* White Bladder Campion Scarce – in 2006 only seen at Old Squaw Bay]  
*Melandrium apetalum* Scattered – back of gravelly beaches on islands  
*Minuartia rubella* frequent on gravelly calcareous areas  
*Silene acaulis* Moss Campion scattered throughout – some impressive cushions  
*Stellaria monantha* Blue-Green Chickweed Local. A very pretty little chickweed

### Ranunculaceae

*Anemone parviflora* Few-flowered Anemone White flowers with a blue wash to the back of the petaloid sepals. Mostly over this year though some in flower near recently melted snow patches  
*Anemone richardsonii* Richardson's Anemone Yellow. Again near snow patches. Only in flower near the Settlement in 2017  
*Caltha palustris* Marsh Marigold Amethyst Point and the lake behind Tinney Cove. The arctic subspecies has small white flowers! 2017 only the former  
*Ranunculus lapponicus* Lapland Buttercup By the little stream between settlement and airstrip. In 2017 Oldsquaw Bay  
*Ranunculus cymbalaria* Wet areas near lodge and Amethyst Point  
*Ranunculus gmelinii* Small Water Crowfoot scattered  
*Ranunculus pedafidus* scattered  
 [ *Ranunculus hyperboreus* Amethyst Point]  
 [ *Ranunculus pygmaeus* Pygmy Buttercup scattered]

### Papaveraceae

*Papver radicatum* Arctic poppy rather uncommon. 2017 on Poppy Island!

### Cruciferae

*Cardamine digitata* Bitter-cress Streamsides along the Snye. 2017 scattered throughout  
*Cardamine pratensis* Cuckoo Flower Scattered. 217 much rarer than previous species  
*Descurainia sophioides* Tansy-Mustard Paths around the settlement  
*Draba glabella* Smooth Whitlow-Grass Locally common  
 [ *Draba nivalis* scattered]  
 Other *Draba* species present!  
*Erysimum inconspicuum* Yellow Wallflower Scattered. 2017 Young Island

<i>Erysimum pallasii</i>	Pallas's Wallflower	Some still in pink flower on Bird Island. 2017 seen in small numbers at many localities
<i>Lesquerella arctica</i>	Arctic Bladderpod	Gravels on Young Island and Bird Island. 2017 in seed on latter
[ <i>Cochlearia officinalis</i>	Scurvy Grass	Local]

### Saxifragaceae

<i>Parnassia kotzebuei</i>	Kotzebue Grass-of-Parnassus	Marshy areas often near shore. Short petals
[ <i>Parnassia palustris</i>	Grass-of-Parnassus	Less common than previous species]
<i>Saxifraga aizoides</i>	Yellow Mountain Saxifrage	Scattered. 2017 Oldsquaw Bay
<i>Saxifraga cernua</i>	Bulblet Saxifrage	By streams along the Snye. 2017 Oldsquaw Bay
[ <i>Saxifraga foliolosa</i>		Stream dropping to the Snye. Quadjut Island]
<i>Saxifraga hirculus</i>	Yellow Marsh Saxifrage	By pools along the Snye and other wet areas. 2017 FON Island
[ <i>Saxifraga nivalis</i>	Snow Saxifrage	Cliffs at Old Squaw Bay on Quadjut Island etc]
<i>Saxifraga oppositifolia</i>	Purple Mountain Saxifrage	Scattered – mostly over
[ <i>Saxifraga punctata</i>	Heart-leaved Saxifrage	the light green almost smooth leaved <i>porsildiana</i> subspecies was seen by Sally Point and the dark green hairier leaved <i>nelsoniana</i> subspecies was seen at Old Squaw Bay]
<i>Saxifraga tricuspidata</i>	Prickly Saxifrage	Locally dominant

### Rosaceae

<i>Dryas integrifolia</i>	Mountain Avens	Widespread
<i>Potentilla egedii</i>	Seaside Cinquefoil	Yellow flowers. Beaches
<i>Potentilla nivea</i>	Snow Cinquefoil	Yellow flowers, dry areas
<i>Pentaphylloides floribunda</i>	Shrubby Cinquefoil	Yellow flowers. A shrub. Scattered
<i>Potentilla palustris</i>	Marsh Five-finger	Dark red flowers. Wet areas
<i>Rubus chamaemorus</i>	Cloudberry	Scattered

### Leguminosae

<i>Astragalus alpinus</i>	Alpine Milkvetch	Scattered throughout
<i>Astragalus richardsonii</i>	Richardson's Milkvetch	At Old Squaw Bay on Quadjut Island. Pinker than above Species. Also noted at Tinney Cove. 2017 very scarce
<i>Hedysarum alpinum</i>	Liquorice-root	Widespread and common. Bear food!
<i>Hedysarum mackenziei</i>	Wild Sweet Pea	Scattered. Larger and showier than last species – magenta flowers
<i>Lathyrus japonicus</i>	Beach Pea	Scattered along coasts – some stunning displays!
<i>Lupinus arcticus</i>	Arctic Lupine	Widespread and locally dominant
<i>Oxytropis arctica</i>	Arctic Crazyweed	Magenta flowers with a white blaze. Scattered throughout.
<i>Oxytropis arctobia</i>	Blackish Oxytrope	Magenta Flowers. Small. Quadjut Island and Tinney Cove – local.
[ <i>Oxytropis deflexa</i>		subspecies <i>foliolosa</i> . Amethyst Point]
<i>Oxytropis glutinosa</i>		by the Settlement
<i>Oxytropis maydelliana</i>	Yellow Crazyweed	Yellow flowers. Scattered throughout

### Linaceae

<i>Linum lewisii</i>		Light blue. Rare - only on Flower Island. 2017 Fishing Creek.
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### Empetraceae

<i>Empetrum nigrum</i>	Crowberry	Widespread and locally common
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## Onagraceae

<i>[Epilobium angustifolium]</i>	Tall Fireweed	Scattered]
<i>Epilobium latifolium</i>	River Beauty/Dwarf Fireweed	Stunning. Locally abundant on screes, dry gravelly tundra and pebble beaches.
<i>[Epilobium palustre]</i>	Small White Fireweed	?probably this species in wet areas near the settlement]

## Haloragaceae

<i>Hippurus vulgaris</i>	Mare's-Tail	Ponds along the Snye
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## Pyrolaceae

<i>Pyrola grandiflora</i>	Large-flowered Wintergreen	Widespread and locally abundant
<i>[Pyrola (orthilia) secunda]</i>	Side-flowered Wintergreen	Scattered – not common]

## Ericaceae

<i>Andromeda polifolia</i>	Bog Rosemary	Widespread in wet areas
<i>[Arctostaphylos aplina]</i>	Black Bearberry	Scattered in dry areas]
<i>Arctostaphylos rubra</i>	Red Bearberry	Scattered in dry areas
<i>Cassiope tetragona</i>	White Arctic Heather	Locally quite common
<i>Ledum palustre</i>	Labrador Tea	Widespread
<i>Loiseleuria procumbens</i>	Alpine Azalea	dry ridge east of airfield. 2017 Tinney Cove & Fishing Creek
<i>Rhododendron lapponicum</i>	Lapland Rosebay	Widespread – virtually all over this year
<i>Vaccinium uliginosum</i>	Blueberry	Widespread
<i>[Vaccinium vitis-idaea]</i>	Lingonberry	Scattered]

## Diapensiaceae

<i>Diapensia lapponica</i>	Diapensia	Locally abundant on dry gravelly ridges. Over this year
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## Primulaceae

<i>Androsace septentrionalis</i>	Fairy Candelabra	scattered throughout though uncommon
<i>Primula stricta</i>		white-lilac flowers. Scattered, mostly along shorelines
<i>[Primula egaliksensis]</i>		lilac flowers, margins of calyx lobes glandular-ciliate. Only seen on Young Island]

## Plumbaginaceae

<i>Armeria maritima</i>	Thrift	Scattered
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## Gentianaceae

<i>[Gentianella tenella]</i>		Amethyst Point]
<i>[Lomatogonium rotatum]</i>	Marsh Felwort	Just coming into flower along shore between settlement and airfield and with some in fine flower but unreachable on the little island off there]

## Boraginaceae

<i>[Mertensia maritima]</i>	Seaside Bluebells	Uncommon along shorelines]
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## Scrophulariaceae

<i>Castilleja elegans</i>	Painted-cup	Widespread
<i>Pedicularis arctica</i>	Arctic Lousewort	Pink flowers. Scattered throughout

<i>Pedicularis lanata</i>	Woolly Lousewort	Bright pink flowers emerge through white woolly inflorescence. May be two species as normal early flowering one long over but a new flush of flowers near airfield and scattered elsewhere
<i>Pedicularis capitata</i>	Crowned Lousewort	A few large cream to pale yellow flowers. Local but widespread
<i>Pedicularis flammea</i>	Flame-tipped Lousewort	Fishing Creek & Tinney Cove
<i>Pedicularis labradorica</i>	Labrador Lousewort	Yellow flowers, branched plants. Widespread
<i>Pedicularis lapponica</i>	Lapland Lousewort	Pale yellow flowers, purple foliage. Scattered
<i>Pedicularis sudetica</i>	Sudetan Lousewort	Striking red and pink flowers. Common in boggy areas

## *Plantaginaceae*

*Plantago canescens* In dunes of the delta

## *Lentibulariaceae*

*Pinguicula villosa* Small Butterwort  
Tiny flowered, lives in moss. Very local – only found by the mossy streams between the Settlement and the Airfield in 2006. 2017 scattered

*Pinguicula vulgaris* Butterwort  
Widespread

*Utricularia intermedia* pools in the delta

## *Campanulaceae*

*Campanula uniflora* Arctic Harebell Uncommon

## *Compositae*

*Achillea nigrescens* Black-tipped Yarrow Scattered. 2017 only on the delta

*Antennaria* sp. Pussytoes scattered

*Arnica alpina* Scattered

*[Artemisia borealis]* Scattered – mostly in sandy dune areas]

*Artemisia tilesii* in the Settlement

*Aster sibiricus* Siberian Aster in dunes of the delta

*Chrysanthemum integrifolium* Amethyst Point

*[Crepis nana]* Dwarf Hawksbeard at Old Squaw Bay on Quadjut Island]

*[Erigeron humilis]* widespread]

*[Matricaria ambigua]* at Old Squaw Bay on Quadjut Island]

*[Matricaria maritima]* Amethyst Point and Quadjut Island]

*Saussurea angustifolia* Fireworks flower Stunning. Scattered

*Senecio atropurpurea* Scattered throughout

*Petasites sagitarius* Coltsfoot Around the settlement – in leaf

*Taraxacum lacerum* Scattered

## Systematic List 3b Flowers of Wood Buffalo Extension

The taxonomic order adopted here is alphabetically by family and the nomenclature for this list is based on the Plants of Western Oregon, Washington and British Columbia (2005) by Kozloff and in some case updated by referral to <http://www.eflora.bc.ca/> the eflora of British Columbia.

### ***Alismataceae***

*Alisma plantago-aquatica* Broad-leaved Water-Plantain

### ***Apiaceae***

*Cicuta* sp

### ***Araceae***

*Acorus calamus* Sweet Flag

### ***Araliaceae***

*Aralia nudicaulis* Wild Sasparilla

### ***Asteraceae***

*Achillea millefolium* Yarrow  
*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum* Ox-eye Daisy  
*Cirsium arvense* Creeping Thistle  
*Gnaphalium uliginosum* Cudweed  
*Hieraceum umbellatum* Narrow-leaved Hawkweed  
*Matricaria matricarioides* Pineapple Weed  
*Petasites frigidus* Sweet Coltsfoot leaves only  
*Taraxacum officinale* Common Dandelion

### ***Betulaceae***

*Alnus crispa* Green Alder  
*Alnus incana* Speckled Alder  
*Betula papyrifera* Paperbark Birch

### ***Boraginaceae***

*Lappula occidentalis*  
*Lappula squarrosa* Bristly Stickseed  
*Mertensia paniculata* Tall Bluebells

### ***Brassicaceae***

*Arabis glabra* Tower Mustard  
*Capsella bursa-pastoris* Shepherd's Purse  
*Cardamine pennsylvanica* Pennsylvania Bittercress  
*Descurainia sophia* Flixweed

### ***Campanulaceae***

*Campanula rotundifolia* Harebell

### ***Caprifoliaceae***

*Linnaea borealis* Twinflower  
*Lonicera dioica* Twinning Honeysuckle

*Symphoricarpos albus*

Snowberry

## ***Caryophyllaceae***

*Arenaria stricta*

Sandwort

*Minuartia dawsonensis*

Rock Sandwort

## ***Chenopodiaceae***

*Chenopodium capitatum*

Strawberry Blite

*Salicornia europaea*

Glasswort

subspecies *rubra*

*Suaeda caleoliformis*

Sea Blight

## ***Cornaceae***

*Cornus stolonifera*

Red Osier Dogwood

*Cornus canadensis*

Bunchberry

## ***Cupressaceae***

*Juniperus horizontalis*

Trailing Juniper

## ***Cyperaceae***

*Carex aquatilis*

*Carex aurea*

*Carex bebbi*

*Carex buxbaumii*

*Carex capillaris*

Hair Sedge

*Carex chordorrhiza*

*Carex diandra*

*Eleocharis palustris*

Common Spike Rush

## ***Elaeagnaceae***

*Shepherdia canadensis*

Russet Buffaloberry

## ***Empetraceae***

*Empetrum nigrum*

Crowberry

## ***Equisetaceae***

*Equisetum arvense*

Field Horsetail

*Equisetum fluviatile*

River Horsetail

*Equisetum hyemale*

Scouring Rush

*Equisetum pratense*

Meadow Horsetail

*Equisetum scirpioides*

Dwarf Scouring Rush

*Equisetum sylvaticum*

Wood Horsetail

*Equisetum variegatum*

Variiegated Horsetail

## ***Ericaceae***

*Ledum groenlandicum*

Common Labrador Tea

*Vaccinium myrtilloides*

Sour-top Blueberry

## ***Fabaceae***

*Astragalus alpinus*

Alpine Milkvetch

*Hedysarum alpinum*

Alpine Hedysarum

*Hedysarum sulphurescens*

Yellow Hedysarum

<i>Medicago falcata</i>	Yellow Lucerne
<i>Medicago sativa</i>	Alfalfa
<i>Melilotus alba</i>	White Sweet Clover
<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>	Yellow Sweet Clover
<i>Orthocarpus luteus</i>	Owl Clover
<i>Oxytropis deflexa</i>	Reflexed Locoweed
<i>Oxytropis splendens</i>	Showy Locoweed
<i>Trifolium hybridum</i>	Alsike Clover
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>Vicia americana</i>	American Vetch

## **Gentianaceae**

<i>Gentiana macounii</i>	Fringed Gentian	or possibly <i>Gentiana detonsa</i> ?
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## **Juncaceae**

<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	Alpine Rush
<i>Juncus balticus</i>	Baltic Rush
<i>Juncus bufonius</i>	Toad Rush
<i>Juncus tenuis</i>	Slender Rush

## **Lamiaceae**

<i>Scutellaria galericulata</i>	Common Skullcap
<i>Stachys palustris</i>	Woundwort

## **Lentibulariaceae**

<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>	Common Butterwort
<i>Utricularia intermedia</i>	Flat-leaved Bladderwort
<i>Utricularia vulgaris</i>	Common Bladderwort

## **Liliaceae**

<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>	Wild Chives
<i>Maiathemum canadense</i>	False Lily-of-the-Valley
<i>Maiathemum trifolium</i>	Three-leaved False Solomon's-Seal
<i>Smilacina stellata</i>	Star-flowered Solomon's-Seal
<i>Tofieldia glutinosa</i>	False Asphodel

## **Linaceae**

<i>Linum perenne</i>	Flax
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## **Lycopodiaceae**

<i>Lycopodium annotinum</i>	Stiff Club-moss
<i>Lycopodium selago</i>	Northern Club-moss

## **Nymphaeaceae**

<i>Nuphar variegatum</i>	Bullhead Lily
<i>Nymphaea tetragona</i>	Pygmy Water-lily

## **Onagraceae**

<i>Circaea alpina</i>	Alpine Enchanter's Nightshade
<i>Epilobium angustifolium</i>	Common Fireweed
<i>Epilobium leptophyllum</i>	Small-flowered Willowherb

*Epilobium palustre*

Swamp Willowherb

## **Orchidaceae**

*Cypripedium passerinum*

Franklin's Lady's Slipper

seed only

*Goodyera repens*

Dwarf Rattlesnake Plantain

*Habenaria obtusata*

Blunt-leaved Bog Orchid

*Habenaria viridis*

## **Parnassiaceae**

*Parnassia palustris*

Grass-of-Parnassus

## **Pinaceae**

*Abies balsamica*

Balsam Fir

*Larix laricina*

Tamarack

*Picea glauca*

White Spruce

*Picea mariana*

Black Spruce

*Pinus banksiana*

Jack Pine

*Pinus contorta*

Lodgepole Pine

## **Plantaginaceae**

*Plantago eriopoda*

Saline Plantain

*Plantago major*

Common Plantain

## **Polygonaceae**

*Polygonum amphibium*

Water Smartweed

*Polygonum persicaria*

Lady's thumb

## **Polypodiaceae**

*Cystopteris fragilis*

Fragile Fern

*Dryopteris fragrans*

Fragrant Shield-Fern

*Polypodium virginianum*

Common Polypody

## **Potamogetonaceae**

*Potamogeton spp*

## **Primulaceae**

*Androsace septentrionalis*

Northern Fairy-Candelabra

## **Pyrolaceae**

*Moneses uniflora*

One-flowered Wintergreen

*Pyrola asarifolia*

Common Pink Wintergreen

*Pyrola chlorantha*

Greenish-flowered Wintergreen

*Pyrola (Orthilia) secunda*

One-sided Wintergreen

## **Ranunculaceae**

*Actaea rubra*

Red and White Baneberry

*Ranunculus acris*

Meadow Buttercup

*Ranunculus cardiophyllus*

Heart-leaved Buttercup

*Ranunculus cymbalaria*

Seaside Buttercup

*Ranunculus pedatifidus*

Birdfoot Buttercup

*Ranunculus pennsylvanicus*

Bristly Buttercup

*Ranunculus rhomboideus*

Prairie Buttercup

## **Rosaceae**

*Amelanchier alnifolia*

Saskatoon

*Fragaria vesca*

Wood Strawberry

*Fragaria virginiana*

Wild Strawberry

*Geum macrophyllum*

*Geum triflorum*

Old Man's Whiskers

*Pentaphylloides floribunda*

Shrubby Cinquefoil

*Potentilla anserina*

*Potentilla nivea*

Alpine Cinquefoil

*Potentilla norvegica*

Rough Cinquefoil

*Potentilla palustris*

Marsh Cinquefoil

*Rosa acicularis*

Prickly Rose

*Rubus spp*

*Spiraea betulifolia*

Meadowsweet

## **Salicaceae**

*Populus balsamifera*

Balsam Poplar

*Populus deltoides*

Cottonwood

*Salix spp*

## **Saxifragaceae**

*Mitella nuda*

Bishop's Cap

*Saxifraga tricuspidata*

Prickly Saxifrage

## **Scheuchzeriaceae**

*Triglochin maritimum*

Seaside Arrowgrass

## **Scrophulariaceae**

*Castilleja raupii*

*Rhinanthus minor*

Yellow Rattle

## **Typhaceae**

*Typha latifolia*

Common Cattail

## **Violaceae**

*Viola nephrophylla*

Northern Bog Violet