



NIRB File No.: 25YN013
NPC File No.: 150661

April 10, 2025

Danica Hogan
Canadian Wildlife Service
PO Box 2310
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7

Sent via email: Danica.hogan@ec.gc.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for Canadian Wildlife Service’s “Monitoring Program Pilot in Ahiak Migratory Bird Sanctuary” Project Proposal

Dear Danica Hogan:

On March 17, 2025 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen the Canadian Wildlife Service’s “Monitoring Program Pilot in Ahiak Migratory Bird Sanctuary” project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission), which noted that the project proposal is outside the area of an applicable regional land use plan. On March 19, 2025 the NIRB received the complete application from the Proponent.

Pursuant to Article 12, Sections 12.4.1 and 12.4.4 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and s. 87 of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act, S.C. 2013, c. 14, s. 2 (NuPPAA)*, the NIRB has commenced screening this project proposal and has assigned it file number **25YN013** - please reference this file number in all future related correspondence.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Scope:

All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be accessed from the NIRB’s online public registry at www.nirb.ca/project/126155.

Project:	Monitoring Program Pilot in Ahiak Migratory Bird Sanctuary
Region:	Kitikmeot Region
Location:	Ahiak Migratory Bird Sanctuary (MBS): Elice River, Perry River, Karrak Lake, and McNaughton Lake

Closest Community:	Cambridge Bay	Distance (approximate)	100 kilometres (km)	Direction	South
Summary of Project Description:	The Proponent intends to develop and implement monitoring protocols as part of the Ecological and Conservation Monitoring Program. This program aims at monitoring the status and effectiveness of the Protected and Conserved Areas Network managed by Environment and Climate Change Canada for priority species including Species at Risk, geese and shorebirds and landbirds.				
Project Proposed Timeline:	March 2025 to July 2027				

According to the project proposal, the scope of the project includes the following undertakings, works or activities:

- Develop survey program (2025);
- Conduct on-ground PRISM (Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring) surveys which would include bird density, species diversity, habitats the birds are using and how a given nesting season may compare to previous years;
- Use of aerial survey techniques to develop and implement sustainable long-term monitoring protocols to assess light geese use of the MBS;
- Use of a helicopter to transport personnel to and from survey locations and to conduct aerial surveys;
- Use of Twin Otter aircraft for fuel caching (2026) potentially at Ellice River Cabin or McNaughton Lake followed by fuel drum cleanup at the end of the project (2027);
- Use of existing camps at Karrak Lake and Perry River Cabin for personnel and fuel cache sites; and
- Removal of garbage and human waste from the cabin sites at the end of the field season.

Inclusion or Exclusion of Scoping List

At this time, the NIRB has identified no additional works or activities in relation to the project proposal. As a result, the NIRB will proceed with screening the project based on the scope as described above.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

All documents received can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca/project/126155 and include:

- *NPC Conformity Determination and Application*
- *NIRB Application in English, Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun*
- *Non-technical Summaries in English, Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun*

The NIRB will copy you on screening process related correspondence and upload related documents to the NIRB's online registry for public access. The NIRB may request additional information at any time during the process.

The NIRB is copying parties and municipalities potentially affected by Canadian Wildlife Service project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **April 21, 2025**.

The NIRB would like parties to provide comments regarding:

- Whether the project proposal is likely to arouse significant public concern; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse eco-systemic or socio-economic effects; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse impacts on wildlife habitat or Inuit harvest activities; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is of a type where the potential adverse effects are highly predictable and mitigable with known technology, (and providing any recommended mitigation measures); and
- Any matter of importance to the Party related to the project proposal.

Please note that *proposed* project-specific terms and conditions, should the project proceed, have been attached for consideration and comment ([Appendix A](#)).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please send your comments to the NIRB via email at info@nirb.ca, via fax at (867) 983-2594 or via the individual project dashboard for this assessment on the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca/project/126155.

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at kgillard@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Kelli Gillard PAg, CTAJ
Manager, Impact Assessment
Nunavut Impact Review Board

Attachments: Appendix A: *Proposed* Project Specific Terms and Conditions

Enclosures (4): Public Notice of Screening (English, and Inuinnaqtun)
Comment Forms (English, and Inuinnaqtun)

cc:

Distribution List

Wynter Kuliktana, Kitikmeot Inuit Association

Tannis Bolt, Kitikmeot Inuit Association

Justin Buller, Government of Nunavut

Dianne Lapierre, Government of Nunavut

Sean Joseph, Government of Nunavut

Jonas Azonaha, Government of Nunavut

Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute

Tracey McCaie, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

Marcus Bermann, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

Lisa Pirie, Canadian wildlife Service

Environment and Climate Change Canada

Jose Audet-Lecouffe, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Appendix A: Proposed Project Specific Terms and Conditions

The following is a list of project-specific terms and conditions which, should the project proceed, may be recommended to be attached to any approval.

General

1. Canadian Wildlife Services (the Proponent) shall maintain a copy of the Project Terms and Conditions at the site of operation at all times and make it accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
2. The Proponent shall operate in accordance with all commitments stated in correspondence provided to the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC File No.: 25YN013), and the NIRB (Online Application Form, March 19, 2025; Project Summary, March 19, 2025, and Additional Information, March 19, 2025). This information should be accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
3. The Proponent shall operate the site in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.
4. The Proponent shall ensure that it meets the standards and/or limits as set out in the authorizing agencies' permits or licences as required for this project.
5. The Proponent shall ensure that all personnel, staff and contractors are adequately trained prior to commencement of all project activities, and shall be made aware of all operational plans, management plans, guidelines and Proponent commitments relating to the project.

Waste Management

6. The Proponent shall manage all hazardous and non-hazardous waste including food, domestic wastes, debris and petroleum-based chemicals (e.g., greases, gasoline, glycol-based antifreeze) in such a manner to avoid release into the environment and access to wildlife at all times until disposed of appropriately or at an approved facility.
7. The Proponent shall dispose of all combustible wastes as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies. All non-combustible wastes from the project site shall be removed to an approved facility for disposal.

Fuel and Chemical Storage

8. The Proponent shall locate all fuel and other hazardous materials a minimum distance away from the high-water mark of any water body and environmentally sensitive areas as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies. The materials shall be stored in such a manner as to prevent their release into the environment.
9. The Proponent shall use adequate secondary containment or a surface liner (e.g., self-supporting insta-berms and fold-a-tanks) when storing barreled fuel and chemicals at all locations.
10. The Proponent shall ensure that re-fuelling of all equipment occurs a minimum distance away from the high-water mark of any water body as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies.

11. All fuel and chemical storage containers must be clearly marked with the Proponent's name for ease of identification.
12. The Proponent shall have a Spill Contingency Plan in place at all fuel storage or transfer locations and shall ensure that appropriate spill response equipment and clean-up materials (e.g., shovels, pumps, barrels, drip pans, and absorbents) are readily available.
13. The Proponent shall follow the authorizing agencies' direction for management and removal of hazardous materials and wastes (e.g., contaminated soils, sediment and waste oil).
14. The Proponent shall ensure that wildlife deterrent systems are utilized at the time of a spill incident in order to avoid wildlife (terrestrial or marine) and migratory birds from being contaminated.
15. The Proponent shall ensure that all spills of fuel or other deleterious materials of 100 litres or more must be reported immediately to the 24-hour Spill Line at (867) 920-8130.

Wildlife – General

16. The Proponent shall not substantially alter or damage or destroy any wildlife habitat in conducting this operation unless otherwise authorized by the appropriate authorizing agencies.
17. The Proponent shall not chase, weary, harass or molest wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, hovering over, pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
18. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.

Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance

19. The Proponent shall carry out all phases of the project in a manner that protects migratory birds and avoids harming, killing or disturbing migratory birds or destroying, disturbing or taking their nests or eggs. In this regard, the Proponent shall take into account Environment and Climate Change Canada's *Avoidance Guidelines*. The Proponent's actions in applying the *Avoidance Guidelines* shall be in compliance with the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and with the *Species at Risk Act*.
20. The Proponent shall not disturb or destroy the nests or eggs of any birds. If active nests of any birds are discovered or located (i.e., with eggs or young), the Proponent shall avoid these areas until nesting is complete and the young have naturally left the vicinity of the nest by establishing a protection buffer zone¹ appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.

Aircraft Flight Restrictions

21. The Proponent shall not alter flight paths to approach wildlife and avoid flying directly over animals.
22. The Proponent shall plan flight paths that minimize flights over known habitat likely to have birds or concentrations of wildlife. Aircraft should avoid critical and sensitive wildlife areas at all times by choosing alternate flight corridors.

¹ Recommended setback distances to define buffer zones have been established by Environment and Climate Change Canada for different bird groups nesting in tundra habitat and can be found at www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb.

23. The Proponent shall restrict aircraft/helicopter activity related to the project to a minimum flight altitude of 610 metres (2,100 ft) above ground level except during landing, take-off or if there is a specific requirement for low-level flying, which does not disturb wildlife or migratory birds.
24. The Proponent shall avoid known concentrations of birds (e.g., bird colonies, moulting areas) by a lateral distance of 1.5 kilometre. If avoidance is not possible maintain a minimum flight altitude of 1,100 metres (3,500 feet) over these areas.
25. The Proponent shall ensure that aircraft/helicopter do not, unless for emergency, touch-down in areas where wildlife are present.
26. The Proponent shall advise all pilots of relevant flight restrictions and enforce their application over the project area, including flight paths to/from the project area.

Caribou and Muskoxen Disturbance

27. The Proponent shall avoid interfering with any paths or crossings known to be frequented by caribou during periods of migration as identified by current land use plans in place and/or by Inuit Qaujimaningit.
28. The Proponent shall not locate any operation or undertake activities that could block or cause any diversion to migration of caribou or muskoxen.
29. The Proponent shall immediately cease activities likely to interfere with the migration or calving of caribou or muskoxen until such time as the caribou or muskox have passed.

Land Use and Restoration of Disturbed Areas

30. The Proponent shall ensure that the land use area is kept clean and tidy at all times.
31. The Proponent shall remove all garbage, fuel and equipment at the end of each field season and/or upon completion of work and/or upon abandonment.

Heritage Sites

32. The Proponent shall ensure that archaeological and paleontological sites are not purposely or inadvertently disturbed as a result of project activities.
33. The Proponent shall ensure that all personnel are aware of the Proponent's responsibilities and requirements regarding archaeological or palaeontological sites that are encountered during land-based activities. This should include briefings explaining the prohibitions regarding removal of artifacts, and defacing or writing on rocks and infrastructure.

Other

34. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
35. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.