Demande de la CNER faisant l'objet d'un examen préalable #126349

ECWG Bowhead Whale Photo Identification and Biopsy Sampling

Type de demande : New

Type de projet: Scientific Research

Date de la demande : Thursday, February 19, 2026

Period of operation: from 2026-07-29 to 2026-09-27

Promoteur du projet:
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DÉTAILS

Description non technique de la proposition de projet

Anglais: Our proposed project is to conduct field research on bowhead whales in Ninginganiq National Wildlife Area in 2026. The project objectives are to: 1. Use crossbows to collect biopsy samples that may be used for estimating population abundance, determining sex, studying diet, estimating age, and assessing pregnancy through hormone analyses. 2. use small drones to collect photographs and videos of bowhead whales for use in photo-identification studies. 3. record bowhead whale (and other marine mammal) sounds using a small sound recording device (SoundTrap) deployed for 2 weeks during the field work. The work would take place in Isabella Bay, Ninginganiq NWA, over approximately 2 weeks in late August and early September 2026. Field personnel will consist of 3 employees of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) as well as up to 4 local field guides hired from the community of Clyde River. Results from this research will have a direct benefit to the conservation of Eastern Canada-West Greenland (ECWG) bowheads by providing samples necessary for updating abundance estimates and gaining an understanding of life history characteristics needed for population modelling. The continued development of a photo-id catalogue for ECWG bowhead whales will also allow for long term studies on changes in body condition as an indicator of population health. Our research objectives align well with the priorities set out in the Ninginganiq NWA Management Plan, to protect bowhead whales while enhancing knowledge of their ecology and monitoring changes in population health.

Français: N/A - French isn't an applicable language for the affected community.

Inuktitut: ᑐᒃᓯᕋᖅᑕᕗᑦ ᐱᓕᕆᐊᕆᔪᒪᓪᓗᒍ ᓄᓇᒥ ᖃᐅᔨᓴᕐᓗᑕ ᓱᖅᑲᓕᖕᓂᒃ ᓂᒋᖓᓂ ᑲᓇᑕ ᓂᕐᔪᑎᓂᒃ ᓴᐳᓐᓂᐊᕐᕕᖓᓂ 2026-ᒥ. ᐅᓇ ᐱᓕᕆᐊᖑᔪᖅ ᐃᒪᓐᓇ ᐱᓕᕆᐊᖑᓂᐊᖅᑐᖅ:1. ᐊᑐᕐᓗᑎᒃ ᐱᓯᒃᓯᖕᓂᒃ ᒪᒃᑕᖏᓐᓂᒃ ᐲᖅᓯᓗᑎᒃ ᐊᑐᖅᑕᐅᓂᐊᖅᑐᑦ ᖃᐅᔨᓴᕐᓗᒋᑦ ᐅᓄᕐᓂᖏᓐᓂᒃ, ᖃᐅᔨᓴᑭᑕᐅᓂᐊᖅᑐᖅ ᐊᖑᑕᐅᖕᒪᖔᒃ ᐊᕐᓇᐅᖕᒪᖔᑦ, ᐃᓕᓐᓇᓱᒃᑐᑦ ᓂᕆᖃᑦᑕᖅᑕᖏᓐᓂᒃ, ᓇᓚᐅᑖᕿᑎᑦ ᐅᑭᐅᖏᓐᓂᒃ, ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᖃᐅᔨᓴᑦᑎᐊᕐᓗᒋᑦ ᓯᖓᐃᖕᒪᖔᑕ ᑕᒪᐅᓐᓇ ᑎᒥᐅᑉ ᐊᐅᓚᔾᔭᐃᔨᖓ ᖃᐅᔨᓴᖅᑕᐅᓗᓂ.2. ᒥᑭᔪᖅ ᖁᓕᒥᒎᓕᖑᐊᖅ ᐊᔾᔨᓕᐅᕈᑎᓕᒃ ᐊᔾᔨᓕᐊᖏᓐᓂᒃ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᑕᕐᕆᔭᐅᓯᐊᖏᓐᓂᒃ ᓱᖅᑲᓕᖕᓂᒃ ᐊᑐᖅᑕᐅᓂᐊᖅᑐᑦ ᐊᔾᔨᖑᐊᑦ ᐃᓕᑦᑎᓇᓱᒃᓗᑎᒃ.3. ᓂᐱᓕᐅᖅᑕᐅᓂᐊᖅᑐᑦ ᓱᖅᑲᓖᑦ (ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᐊᓯᖏᑦ ᐳᐃᔨᑦ) ᓂᐱᖏᓐᓂᒃ ᐊᑐᕐᓗᑎᒃ ᒥᑭᔪᒥᒃ ᓂᐱᓕᐅᕈᑎ (SoundTrap) ᐃᒫᖅᑕᐅᓯᒪᓗᓂ 2 ᐱᓇᓱᐊᕈᓯᕐᓄᑦ ᓄᓇᒥ ᐱᓕᕆᕕᒋᔭᖏᓐᓂ. ᐅᓇ ᓴᓇᔭᐅᔪᖅ ᐱᓕᕆᐊᖑᓂᐊᖅᑐᖅ ᐃᒐᓕᖅᑑᕐᒥ, ᓂᒋᖓᓂ ᑲᓇᑕ ᓂᕐᔪᑎᓂᒃ ᓴᐳᓐᓂᐊᕐᕕᖓᓂ, ᐃᒻᒪᖄ 2 ᐱᓇᓱᐊᕈᓯᑦ ᐊᑖᓂ ᐋᒍᓯ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᖁᓖᓂ ᓯᑎᐱᕆ 2026. ᓄᓇᒥ ᓴᓇᔩᑦ ᐱᖓᓲᓂᐊᖅᑐᑦ 3 ᑖᒃᑯᓇᖓᑦ ᐃᖃᓗᓕᕆᔨᒃᑯᑦ ᐃᒪᕐᒥᐅᑕᓕᕆᔨᒃᑯᓪᓗ ᑲᓇᑕ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᑎᓴᒪᑦ 4 ᓄᓇᓕᖕᓂᑦ ᐊᐅᓪᓚᕈᑎᔭᐅᓯᒪᓗᑕ ᑲᖏᖅᑐᒑᐱᖕᒥᑦ. ᖃᐅᔨᓴᑭᑎᓂᑦ ᑐᑭᓯᓇᖅᓯᔪᑦ ᑕᒪᑐᒪᖓᑦ ᐃᑲᔫᑎᑲᐅᑎᒋᓂᐊᖅᑐᑦ ᓴᐳᓐᓂᐊᕈᑎᓂᒃ ᑲᓇᖕᓇᖓ ᑲᓇᑕ-ᐱᓇᖕᓇᖓ ᑲᓛᑦᓛᑦ ᓄᓇᖓᓂ ᓱᖅᑲᓖᑦ ᖃᐅᔨᓴᑭᑎᑦᑎᒍᑦ ᖃᓄᐃᓕᖓᓕᕐᒪᖔᑕ ᒫᓐᓇ ᐅᓄᕐᓂᖏᑦ ᓇᓚᐅᑖᖅᓯᒪᔪᑦ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᑐᑭᓯᓗᑕ ᐃᓅᓯᖏᓐᓂᒃ ᑕᐃᒪᖓᓂᑐᖅᑲᖅ ᐱᔭᐅᔭᕆᐊᖃᖅᑐᓂᒃ ᐅᓄᕐᓂᖏᓐᓂᒃ ᖃᐅᔨᑦᑎᐊᕐᓂᐊᕋᑦᑕ. ᐅᓇ ᑲᔪᓯᓂᐊᖅᑐᖅ ᐱᕙᓪᓕᐊᔭᐅᓂᖓ ᐊᔾᔨᖑᐊᖅᑎᒍᑦ ᓄᐊᓯᒪᔪᓂᒃ ᑲᓇᖕᓇᖓ ᑲᓇᑕ-ᐱᓇᖕᓇᖓ ᑲᓛᑦᓛᑦ ᓄᓇᖓᓂ ᓱᖅᑲᓖᑦ ᐊᔪᓈᔭᖏᒻᒥᔪᑦ ᐊᑯᓂᐅᔪᒃᑯᑦ ᐃᓕᑕᐅᓇᓱᖕᓂᑯᓂᑦ ᖃᓄᖅ ᐊᓯᖑᖅᑎᓯᒪᖔᑕ ᑎᒥᖏᑦ ᖃᐅᔨᒪᒃᑲᓐᓂᖅᑐᑦ ᐅᖅᓯᖑᖅᑕᑦ ᖃᓄᐃᖏᑦᑎᐊᖅᑐᖏᓐᓂᒃ. ᐅᓇ ᖃᐅᔨᓴᑭᑎᕗᑦ ᑐᕿᓕᐅᐳᑕᐅᕙᓪᓕᐊᓂᖓ ᒪᓕᑦᑎᐊᖅᑐᖅ ᓯᕗᓪᓕᐅᑎᔭᐅᕙᒃᑐᓂᒃ ᓂᒋᖓᓂ ᑲᓇᑕ ᓂᕐᔪᑎᓂᒃ ᓴᐳᓐᓂᐊᕐᕕᖓᓂ ᐊᐅᓚᑦᑎᔾᔪᑕᐅᔪᓄᑦ ᐸᕐᓇᐅᑎ, ᓴᐳᒻᒥᓗᒋᑦ ᓱᖅᑲᓖᑦ ᐊᕐᕖᑦ ᑐᑭᓯᔭᐅᑦᑎᐊᓯᓗᑎᒃᑯ ᓇᔪᖅᐸᒃᑕᖏᑦ ᓯᓚᑎᖏᓪᓗ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᒥᐊᓂᕆᓗᒋᑦ ᐊᓯᖑᖅᑐᑦ ᑖᒃᑯᐊ ᑎᒥᖏᑦ ᖃᓂᒪᓂᐊᓐᖏᒻᒪᖔᑕ.

Personnel

Personnel on site: 7

Days on site: 14

Total Person days: 98

Operations Phase: from 2026-07-29 to 2026-09-27

Activités

Emplacement	Type d'activité	Statut des terres	Historique du site	Site à valeur archéologique ou paléontologique	Proximité des collectivités les plus proches et de toute zone protégée
2026 study area in Ninginganiq, NWA, NU. Boat-based marine work.	Researching	Marine	The marine area of Ninginganiq NWA is important habitat for bowhead whales who use the area for feeding, resting, and socializing. Bowhead field research has not been conducted in Isabella Bay since the late 1980s.	According to the Ninginganiq NWA management plan, it is believed that the area around Isabella Bay has high potential for archaeological sites, but no extensive surveys have been undertaken.	The nearest community is Clyde River, approximately 100km to the northwest.
Nuvuttiapik. Approximate location of camp (existing cabin) to be used in 2026.	Camp	Inuit Owned Surface Lands	The camp location and research cabin we intend to use at Nuvuttiapik were built in the late 1980s, for the bowhead whale research conducted there at that time. An old hunting cabin is also located at the site.	The site is not an important archeological site. Nuvuttiapik is noted as being the site of a winter camp, on of the primary locations where Inuit lived before whalers arrived in the area.	The nearest community is Clyde River, approximately 100km to the northwest.

Engagement de la collectivité et avantages pour la région

Collectivité	Nom	Organisme	Date de la prise de contact
Clyde River	Jaysie Tigullaraq	Clyde River Hunters and Trappers Organization	2025-12-01
Clyde River	Danica Hogan	Ninginganiq Area Co-management Committee	2026-01-21

Autorisations

Indiquez les zones dans lesquelles le projet est situé:

Transboundary
North Baffin
South Baffin

Autorisations

Organisme de régulation	Description des autorisations	État actuel	Date de l'émission/de la demande	Date d'échéance
Service canadien de la faune	Application for a national wildlife area permit under the wildlife area regulations.	Applied, Decision Pending		
Pêches et Océans Canada	Animal Use Protocol - application to DFO Ontario Prairie and Arctic Animal Care Committee	Not Yet Applied		
Pêches et Océans Canada	License to Fish for Scientific Purposes	Not Yet Applied		
Pêches et Océans Canada	Authorization to Disturb a Marine Mammal (required to fly a drone over whales)	Not Yet Applied		
Hunters and Trappers Associations/Organizations	Project was proposed to Clyde River HTO and we received their support on 14 January 2026.	Active	2026-01-14	
Nunavut Planning Commission	Project proposal submitted to NPC on 22 Jan 2026 and was referred to NIRB for screening on 12 Jan 2026.	Active		

Project transportation types

Transportation Type	Utilisation proposée	Length of Use
Water	2 motor boats, up to approximately 9 m in length	

Project accomodation types

Temporary Camp

Utilisation de matériel

Équipement à utiliser (y compris les perceuses, les pompes, les aéronefs, les véhicules, etc.)

Type d'équipement	Quantité	Taille – Dimensions	Utilisation proposée
Drone	2	283.0 x 107.7 x 347.5 mm	Small drones will be used to take photos and videos of bowhead whales.
crossbows	4	90 cm length	Crossbows, with special biopsy arrows and tips, will be used to collect small skin/blubber tissue samples from bowhead whales.
Motor Boat	2	up to 9 m long	To be used to travel to the study area and search for and approach bowhead whales for sampling and data collection.
Hydrophone	1	24 cm long x 7 cm diameter	To be deployed in Isabella Bay for approximately 2 weeks, to record bowhead whale sounds.
Shotgun	1	12 Gauge	To be used only for Polar Bear safety in camp.
Generator	1	2200 watts	Small generator to be used in camp to power small electronics and charge batteries.

Décrivez l'utilisation du carburant et des marchandises dangereuses

Décrivez l'utilisation de carburant :	Type de carburant	Nombre de conteneurs	Capacité du conteneur	Quantité totale	Unités	Utilisation proposée
Other	fuel	4	1	4	Gallons	Naphtha to operate camp stoves for preparing meals.
Gasoline	fuel	12	220	2640	Liters	To power boat motors and generator
Povidone Iodine (Betadine)	hazardous	1	1	1	Liters	Disinfectant used to clean biopsy sampling tips. Non-hazardous material.

Consommation d'eau

Quantité quotidienne (m3)	Méthodes de récupération de l'eau proposées	Emplacement de récupération de l'eau proposé

0	Using 5 gallon jugs, Water will be transported to the site from the community of Clyde River. Re-supply trips to the community will be made as required.	Using 5 gallon jugs, Water will be transported to the site from the community of Clyde River. Re-supply trips to the community will be made as required.

Déchets

Gestion des déchets

Activités du projet	Type des déchets	Quantité prévue	Méthode d'élimination	Procédures de traitement supplémentaires
Camp	Eaux grises	100 litres	Dispersed on the land at least 50 meters from camp and water sources.	NA
Camp	Déchets non combustibles	200 litres	Stored in garbage bags inside sealed plastic barrel to be packed out to dispose at Clyde River dump.	NA
Researching	Other, Used Povidone-Iodine (Betadine)	500 ml.	Used Betadine (Not considered hazardous waste) will be collected and transported back to the Freshwater Institute in Winnipeg and disposed of following the Freshwater Institute lab waste disposal procedures.	While not classified as hazardous waste, Betadine is an antiseptic and disinfectant agent, and its active ingredient, povidone-iodine, is a known irritant and will be handled with care.
Camp	Eaux usées (matières de vidange)	200 litres	Treated with neutralizing and gelling agent, stored in sealed bags, in sealed barrel, and packed out for proper disposal in Clyde River	NA

Répercussions environnementales :

We will make use of a previously built cabin at Nuvuttiapik, and our research will take place on the water, so there are no likely impacts to the land, soil, or vegetation. No waste or harmful substances will be released into water. Direct, though relatively small, impact on bowhead whales. Using one or two boats (approximately 9 m in length) Bowheads will be approached to a distance of about 10 to 20 m and a crossbow will be used to obtain small skin and blubber biopsy sample. Pursuit times are generally short (often less than 10 minutes), and once the sample is collected, pursuit is immediately ended and whales have been observed to resume their previous behaviours. There are no lasting negative effects to bowheads as a result of these research activities. Care will be taken when transferring fuel and filling fuel tanks to minimize chances of a spill. In the event of a fuel spill, a spill response kit will be on hand to facilitate clean up and minimize harmful substances entering the environment. Betadine that has been used to clean biopsy tips will be packed out to dispose of with lab waste at DFO Winnipeg. Garbage and waste will be stored in sealed containers and packed out for disposal in Clyde River. Human waste will be treated with a neutralizing/gelling agent, stored in sealed waste bags and containers, and packed out for safe disposal in Clyde River. Grey water will be dispersed on the land, well away (but at least 50m) from camp and from any water bodies.

Additional Information

SECTION A1: Project Info

SECTION A2: Allweather Road

SECTION A3: Winter Road

SECTION B1: Project Info

SECTION B2: Exploration Activity

SECTION B3: Geosciences

SECTION B4: Drilling

SECTION B5: Stripping

SECTION B6: Underground Activity

SECTION B7: Waste Rock

SECTION B8: Stockpiles

SECTION B9: Mine Development

SECTION B10: Geology

SECTION B11: Mine

SECTION B12: Mill

SECTION C1: Pits

SECTION D1: Facility

SECTION D2: Facility Construction

SECTION D3: Facility Operation

SECTION D4: Vessel Use

SECTION E1: Offshore Survey

SECTION E2: Nearshore Survey

SECTION E3: Vessel Use

SECTION F1: Site Cleanup

SECTION G1: Well Authorization

SECTION G2: Onland Exploration

SECTION G3: Offshore Exploration

SECTION G4: Rig

SECTION H1: Vessel Use

SECTION H2: Disposal At Sea

SECTION I1: Municipal Development

Description de l'environnement existant : Environnement physique

The work in Ninginganiq NWA will take place in August and early September, when the area is mostly free of sea ice, allowing travel by boat to search for bowhead whales.

Description de l'environnement existant : Environnement biologique

The east Coast of Baffin Island is known as both a migration corridor for bowheads of all age/sex classes, as well as an aggregation area for older adult bowheads. The area of Ninginganiq (Isabella Bay) is known as an important aggregation area for bowheads in late summer and fall. The presence of both shallow banks and deep water troughs make this an attractive area for social behavior, resting, and feeding.

Description de l'environnement existant : Environnement socio-économique

Bowhead whales are a culturally important species which experienced drastic declines in abundance during the commercial whaling era, which ended in 1915. Since the end of commercial whaling the ECWG bowhead population has slowly been recovering, but current abundance estimates are far below historical estimates from prior to commercial whaling. The current quota for hunting bowheads in Nunavut is up to 5 per year (also up to 2 in Nunavik and 2 in West Greenland). With increased reports of killer whales in the eastern Canadian Arctic, including several reports of killer whale predation on bowheads, there has been much interest and support in studying the ECWG bowhead population.

Miscellaneous Project Information

Identification des répercussions et mesures d'atténuation proposées

Land/soil/vegetation – We will make use of a previously built cabin and established camp at Nuvuttiapik, and our research will take place on the water, so there are no likely impacts to the land, soil, or vegetation.Water – While our research activities are boat-based, in the marine areas of Ninginganiq NWA, there are no likely impacts to the aquatic or marine environments. No waste or harmful substances will be released into water.Wildlife – Our proposed research will have a direct, though relatively small, impact on bowhead whales. Using one or two boats (up to approximately 9 m in length) Bowheads will be approached to a distance of about 10 to 20 m and a crossbow will be fired at the whale, targeting the mid back area of the whale, to obtain small skin and blubber biopsy samples. Crossbow arrows are equipped with special biopsy tips, 4 cm in length and 0.6 cm in diameter, and a yellow float that acts as a stopper to prevent penetration beyond 4cm. We hope to sample as many bowheads as possible, which could be up to 100 individuals over a two week period. While this process is disruptive to bowhead behaviour, pursuit times are generally short (often less than 10 minutes), and once the sample is collected, pursuit is immediately ended

and whales have been observed to resume their previous behaviours. As such, there are no lasting negative effects to bowheads as a result of these research activities.Wildlife habitat – Our research activities focus on sampling the whales themselves and there are no likely impacts to wildlife habitat.Air quality/pollution – Our field activities involve the use of two small boats and running a small generator to power and charge small electronics and drone batteries. Pollution from these activities will be negligible and will have no real impact on air quality.Mitigation: Fuels (gasoline, Naphtha) and cleaning solutions (Betadine) will be stored in tightly sealed containers (gasoline in fuel barrels, jerry cans, and boat gas tanks; Naphtha and Betadine in original packaging). Care will be taken when transferring fuel and filling fuel tanks to minimize chances of a spill. In the event of a fuel spill, a spill response kit will be on hand to facilitate clean up and minimize harmful substances entering the environment.Betadine that has been used to clean biopsy tips will be packed in sealed containers to be packed out to dispose of with lab waste at DFO Winnipeg.All garbage and waste will be stored in sealed containers and packed out for proper disposal in Clyde River. Human waste will be treated with a neutralizing and gelling agent, stored in sealed waste bags and containers, and packed out for safe disposal in Clyde River.Grey water production will be minimal, but will be dispersed on the land, well away (but at least 50m) from camp and from any water bodies.

Répercussions cumulatives

This research project will contribute important samples and data to DFOs growing archive of ECWG bowhead genetic data, and more recently, to our Photo ID catalogue, to estimate population abundance using mark-recapture methods. The work is supported by the communities of Igloolik, Sanirajak, and Clyde River. Each of these communities will benefit from the project through revenue and employment opportunities, training opportunities, and involvement and collaboration in research that is meaningful to the communities.

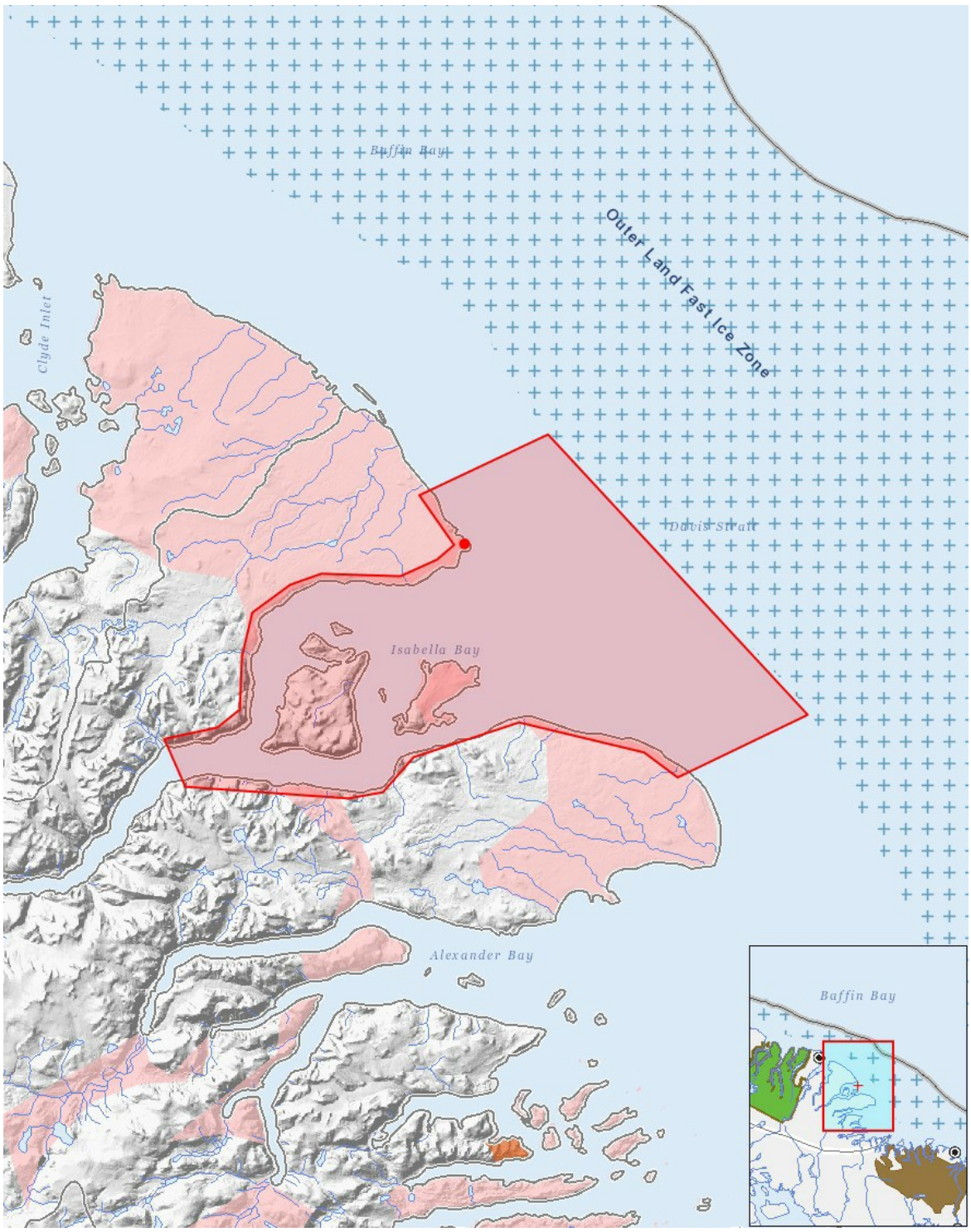
Impacts

Identification des répercussions environnementales

	PHYSICAL	Designated environmental areas	Ground stability	Permafrost	Hydrology / Limnology	Water quality	Climate conditions	Eskers and other unique or fragile landscapes	Surface and bedrock geology	Sediment and soil quality	Tidal processes and bathymetry	Air quality	Noise levels	BIOLOGICAL	Vegetation	Wildlife, including habitat and migration patterns	Birds, including habitat and migration patterns	Aquatic species, incl. habitat and migration/spawning	Wildlife protected areas	SOCIO-ECONOMIC	Archaeological and cultural historic sites	Employment	Community wellness	Community infrastructure	Human health
Construction																									
-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Exploitation																									
Camp		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	M	-	-	-		-	P	P	-	-
Researching		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	M	-	-	-		-	P	P	-	-
Désaffectation																									
-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-

(P = Positive, N = Négative et non gérable, M = Négative et gérable, U = Inconnue)

Site du projet



Liste des géométries de projet

1	polygon	2026 study area in Ninginganiq, NWA, NU. Boat-based marine work.
2	point	Nuvuttiapik. Approximate location of camp (existing cabin) to be used in 2026.