

## PROJECT SUMMARY:

### **Arctic Shorebird Monitoring Program - 2005**

We are concerned about the populations of shorebirds that breed in the arctic. Recently, studies that count these birds on their migration routes have found that numbers of most species are declining. No one is sure why this is happening, though some possible causes are: loss of habitat in countries where the birds spend the winter, human developments at their migration stopping points, climate change, and toxic substances on their wintering grounds.

Our knowledge of the size of shorebird populations is not very good, and some of the species that breed in the arctic are difficult to monitor on their migration routes. We want to monitor the birds on their breeding grounds because we will get better estimates of their true population sizes. Canadian and American biologists have developed a method to monitor the population size of shorebird species that breed in the arctic. We want to use this method to keep track of shorebird populations over the years, so we will know if they are increasing or decreasing. We can use this information to detect problems with the shorebird populations and then try to figure out what is causing the problem.

In early June, 10 people will fly in to the Queen Maud Gulf Bird Sanctuary by Twin Otter and then helicopter to establish temporary tent camps near the mouth of the Perry River. They will conduct ground surveys on small plots and record all of the birds that they observe. For approximately 10 days the team will be supported by a helicopter allowing them to conduct surveys farther away from the location of the camp. The tent camps (along with all garbage) will be packed up and flown out in mid July after the majority of the shorebird nests have hatched. All efforts will be taken to ensure the area is left with no evidence of the tent camp.

Two people will also do a reconnaissance survey along a transect on Ellesmere Island from 21-23 June, 2005. The purpose of the survey is to familiarize ourselves with the shorebird community and the habitat types of the area prior to conducting shorebird surveys there. The transect will be conducted by helicopter, with numerous stops to evaluate habitat and bird life. There will be no camps; we will be accommodated at Parks Canada warden cabins and other permanent establishments en route.