

Project Description

We hope to work with local Inuit hunters to collect swabs, tissue, feather, and blood samples from eiders over-wintering in the polynyas and leads near Sanikiluaq. These samples will be analysed for avian cholera, and will indicate whether the disease has reached the wintering grounds of Common Eiders in Nunavut and possibly where the disease originated from. They will also inform us about what other breeding areas the disease may be carried to by infected birds over-wintering in the polynya.

Using snowmobiles, we hope to accompany hunters to their hunting grounds for 1-3 weeks between January and March. We will be using the Environment Canada cabin at 55° 49.361N, 79° 53.925W during the camping trip. We would like to collect samples from birds shot as a result of hunting. We will not be collecting birds solely for scientific purposes.

After a bird has been shot and retrieved by a hunter, blood, feather, cloacal and choanal swabs, and tissue (liver, kidney, and lungs) samples will be collected. Blood, swabs, and tissue will be frozen at -20°C, and feathers will remain at room temperature. All samples will be shipped to the Veterinary College in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec to be analysed for Avian Cholera. We will collect up to 200 samples of each type for disease analysis. We will also opportunistically collect any dead eiders found to be sent to the lab for cholera analysis.

Sample	Amount collected	Number of samples
Blood	3 ml	200
Feather	5 feathers	200
Cloacal swab	1 swab	200
Choanal swab	1 swab	200
Tissue	Kidneys, liver, lungs	200 each
Carcasses	Whole or partial carcasses	As found