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Parks Canada
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March 28 2014

Nunavut Impact Review Board
Box 1360
Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, X0B 0C0
via email: info@nirb.ca

RE: Request for Comments for Part 4 Screening for the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge's "Investigations of Canadian Ice Caps" project proposal

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the University of Cambridge's project to survey the coasts and glaciers of Ellesmere Island, Devon and Axel Heiberg Islands, including Quttinirpaaq National Park.

Quttinirpaaq National Park, administered by Parks Canada, is located on north Ellesmere Island. Parks Canada is mandated to protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations.

As noted in the application, the survey activities will not involve landing in the national park and therefore do not require a Parks Canada Research and Collection Permit. As the survey flights will be carried out over the park, the project was reviewed by the Quttinirpaaq Joint Park Management Committee, the co-operative management group responsible for reviewing research applications for the park.

The review comments are centred around the potential effects of the survey activities on wildlife. The University of Cambridge application does not specify the survey's flight altitude. Parks Canada's standard recommendation to pilots flying over park air space is to maintain a normal flying altitude of 2000 feet; however survey techniques often require flying at lower altitudes, increasing the risk of disturbing wildlife, particularly muskox and Peary caribou. Peary caribou is listed as endangered under the Species at Risk Act.

Parks Canada is submitting the following comments and recommendations to reduce to potential impacts of the proposed project on wildlife.


- No fuel caches or landings will be permitted inside the park boundaries. The applicant has not been authorized to land in the park and survey participants should be aware of the park boundaries (Appendix 1)
- Aircraft should maintain a normal flying altitude of 2000 feet when not conducting survey activities while in the air space over the park.
- Do not circle, chase, hover over, pursue or in any other way harass wildlife. Do not alter the flight path to approach wildlife, and avoid flying directly over animals.
- Avoid congregations of animals.
- Avoid disturbing Peary caribou. Caribou (especially pregnant cows) are particularly vulnerable to increased stress during the late winter and early spring period due to range restriction and reduced forage. See attached maps (Appendix 2) for known Peary caribou locations in the park area.
- The inclusion of community observers on survey flights to help prevent wildlife disturbance is recommended.
- The submission of GPS track logs of flight routes and altitudes with research reports to the Nunavut Research Institute and communities is recommended, particularly if including community observers on the survey flights is not practicable.

If you have any questions regarding Parks Canada's comments, please contact Jane Chisholm (867-975-4762, jane.chisholm@pc.gc.ca).

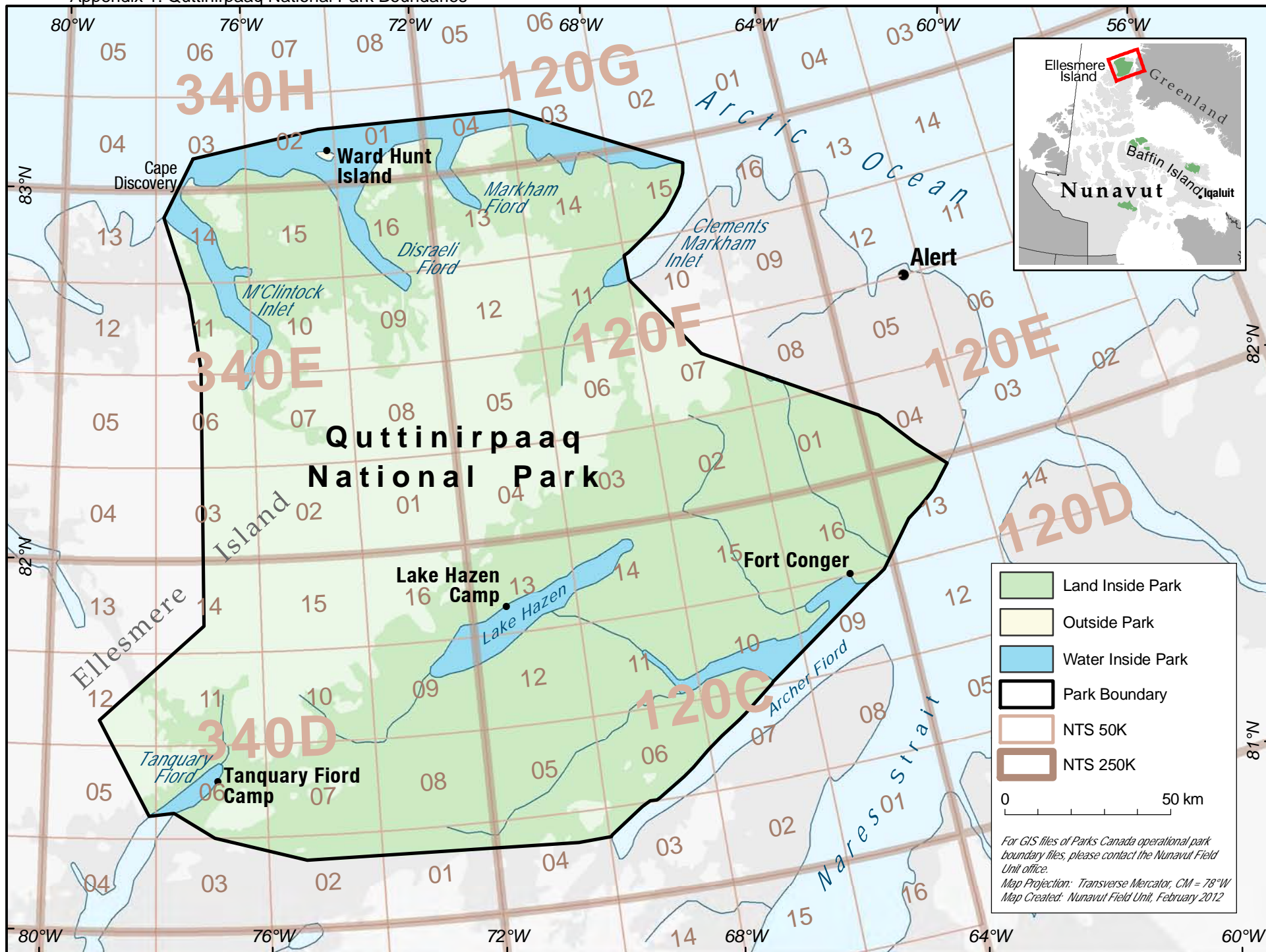
Sincerely,



Andrew Maher

 Resource Conservation Manager

Appendix 1: Quttinirpaaq National Park Boundaries



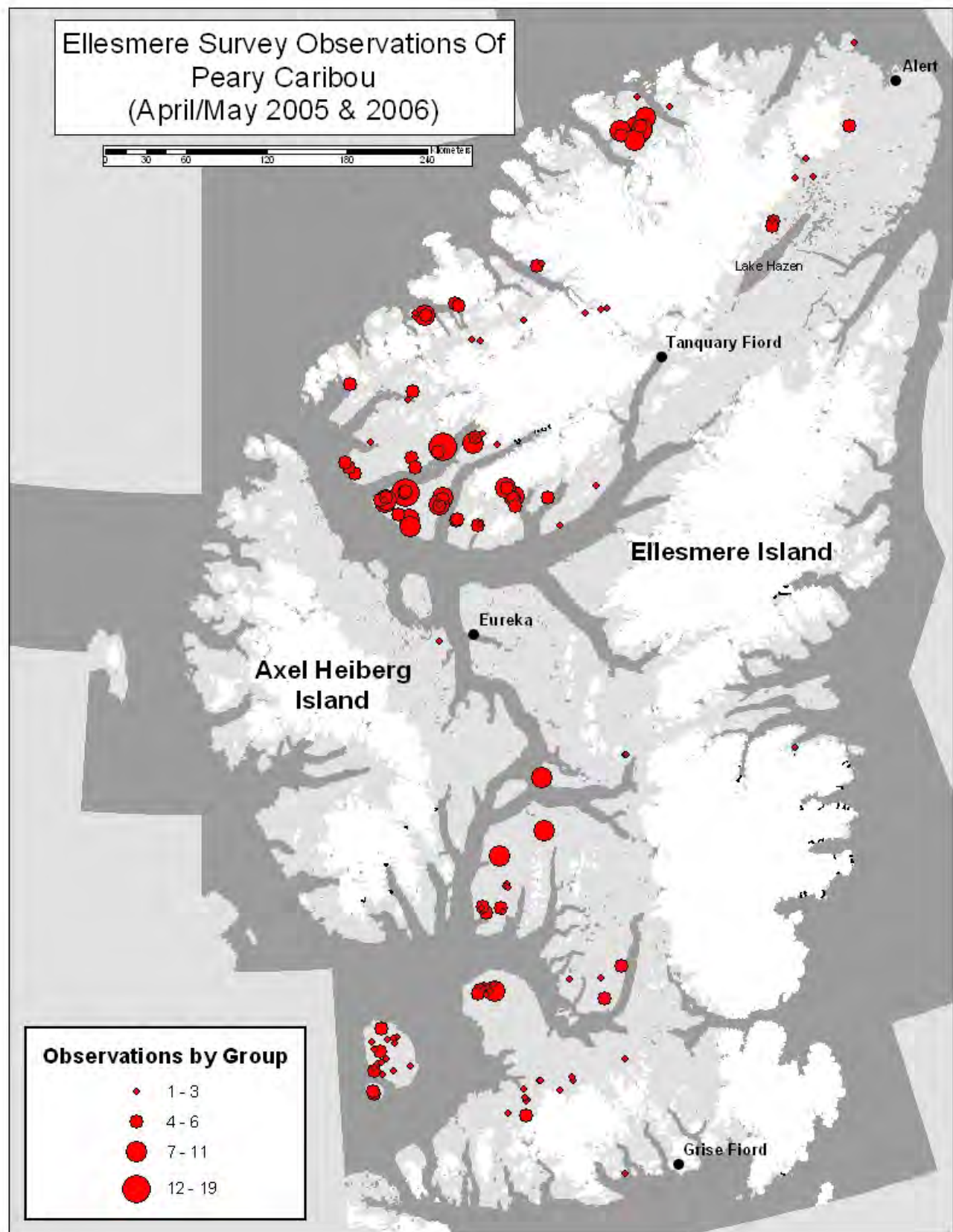


Figure 3 Observed distributions and relative abundance of Peary caribou on Ellesmere Island in April/May 2005 & 2006..

Appendix 2: Known locations of Peary Caribou

