

Summary of activities and rationale:

We will take photos of the Thick-Billed Murre and Northern Fulmar colony from a boat with a camera and with a drone with a team of approximately 10 to 12 people at Akpait and Qaqulluit Island. Thick-billed murre and Northern Fulmar will be counted from the photographs to know the population size and compare to previous counts. We will compare the number of birds counted from the boat-based photographs and drone photographs to know what survey method is best to use in the future. We will install trail cameras at Akpait and Qaqulluit Island to see when Thick-billed Murre and Northern Fulmar arrive for the breeding season, when they lay eggs, when chicks hatch, when chicks fledge, and when they leave the colony at the end of the breeding season. We will also install trail cameras, facing the ocean, to see how many vessels are using the National Wildlife Areas and when they are using them. We will also search for a good area to build a cabin at Akpait or Qaqulluit Island with a drone, as suggested by the Sululiit Area Co-management Committee.

Project location:

Akpait National Wildlife Area (66.917, -61.75) and Qaqulluit National Wildlife Area (67.215, -62.497).

Proposed date and duration of visits:

We will visit each site, Akpait and Qaqulluit Island for 1 to 2 days in late July/early August 2024. We plan to hire community members to return in fall and summer 2025 to retrieve trail cameras, and change trail camera batteries and SD cards.

Method of transportation:

We will boat to all sites from Qikiqtarjuaq each day and visit each site once or twice. The round-trip boat trip to Akpait will take approximately 10-12 hours. The round-trip boat trip to Qaqulluit Island will take approximately 6 hours.