

Naujaat, ᓇᓱᓴᓴ, "Nesting place for seagulls"

Introduction

Naujaat, in the Kivalliq Region is at the north end of Roes Welcome Sound, which separates Southampton Island from the mainland. In 2016, the population was 1082. The community continues to rely on traditional sealing, fishing, hunting, trapping, and carving for their livelihood, together with tourism. Naujaat is known for its Inuit artists, especially carvers, jewelry makers, and other traditional crafts¹. The growth of the mining sector could bring diversity to the community and region economy¹. The area is well known for its nesting grounds, located about five kilometers north of the community, as every June, thousands of seagulls, snowbirds, loons, eider ducks, longtail ducks, and jaegers return to nest². The Ukkusiksalik National Park is located just south of the community on Repulse Bay and surrounds Wager Bay³.

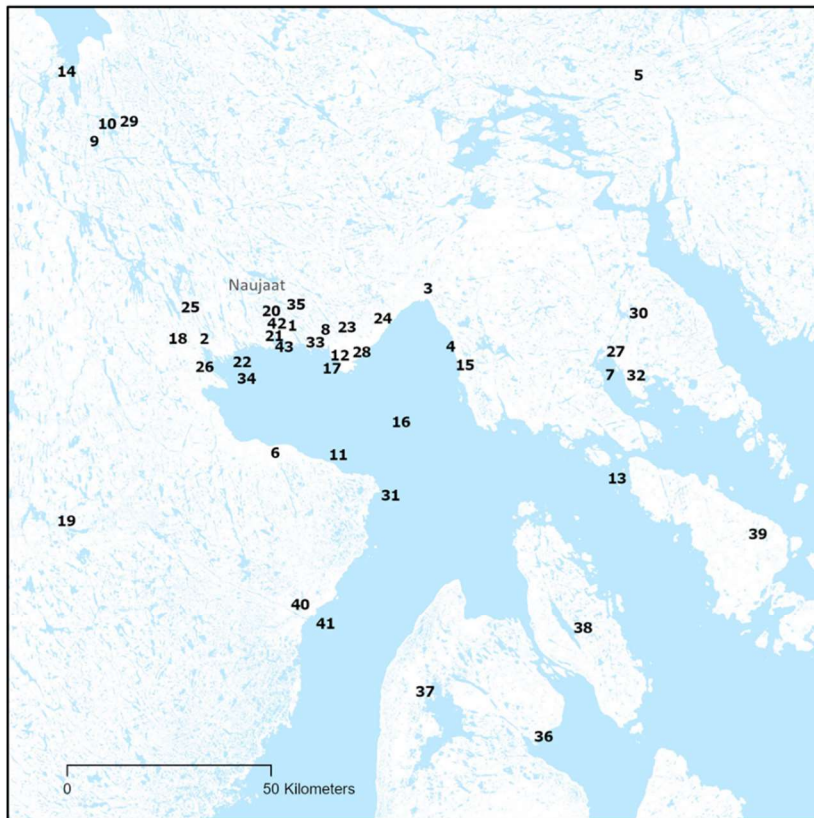
Community Restoration Priorities

At the time we visited the community, no urgent community restoration priorities were identified.






Community Map and Workshop Highlights

The CRN research team visited the community in February 2020.

Naujaat



Map Legend

-  **Contamination:** 1 Creek to ocean, potential contaminants from the dump; no testing ever conducted by the Hamlet, 2 Contaminants testing desired, 3-5 Abandoned mining site, 6 Abandoned oil barrels, 19 Abandoned oil barrels [1950s] but cleaned up in 1980s - 30-40 jerry cans, 27 Abandoned camp, and 35 Potential diamond mine - only ten miles from town and very close to local water supply.
-  **Species change:** 7 Monitoring of marine species desired (health, abundance, migration patterns), 11 -13 2017: acoustic boxes dropped by non-resident, disturbing and scaring away marine mammals, 14 Char quality not as good anymore, reason unknown, 15 Declining seal populations in the bay due to increased marine and air traffic, 18 More char recently in North Pole River, and 23 & 24 Abundant char, numbers increasing.
-  **Water issues:** 8 River drying up, too shallow, and 9. River drying up.
-  **Harvesting areas:** 10 Lake used for community fishing derby's - char and trout, 25 Summer char fishing site - gill nets and migration route, 28 Key hunting site, 30 Fishing site; no changes observed, 31 Beach Point: lots of birds and duck eggs (eider duck, snow geese), 36-37 Community fishing lake, and 38 Popular arctic char fishing lake.
-  **Ice changes:** 16 & 17 Floe edge form December/early January until late July - early 2000s.
-  **Building or structure:** 20 Water supply, 21 Old water supply, 42, Dump, and 43 Sewage lagoon.
-  **Mammal migration:** 22 Ringed seal pupping site, 32 Upstream run very abundant - late August, 33 Narwhal used to come right into the bay but too many boats in the ice-free season now; still go to floe edge during the winter, 34 Elephant whale ? spotted in the 1990s, 39 Fat caribou, and 41 Harbour seals like to sun on rocks.
-  **Fish migration routes:** 26 Char migration route - along the coast.
-  **Debris and garbage:** 29 Finding old tags in fished char - previous sampling site in the 1980s?, and 40 Abandoned oil barrels - 1950s but cleaned up in 1980s - 30-40 jerry cans.

Literature Review

In 1983, a series of limnological records showed a lowered water table and summer drying of substantial bodies of water and ponds, resulting in changes to water chemistry; elements which, in the Arctic, have been stable for millennia⁴. Other issues included ancient weirs in some of the rivers are now above water and are unusable even if the cache sites, now were further away from the water⁵. This was still an issue in 2019, as participants at a coastal restoration workshop reported that during summer, motors and canoes can hit bottom because the nearshore areas are very shallow⁶.

| Attributes | Examples of Environmental Changes and Observations |
|-------------------|--|
| Sea ice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2014 the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) predicted that the summer floe edge would retreat, however the floe edge proximity varies each year⁷. Residents in 2015 note that it takes longer to freeze and ice melts earlier in the spring, but lakes do not seem to be affected². Other studies have noted ice being thinner and melts earlier in the spring⁶. |
| Seasonal events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents have noticed that the springs are very short, and summer comes earlier every year⁸. People were able to travel overland during the spring but now as snow melts earlier, freeze up is much later⁸. |
| Snowfall | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People have noted that snowfall has increased and become more variable every year⁸. Snow and ice used to remain throughout the summer but now it completely melts during this season⁸. |
| Weather | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wind has changed over the last two years (2000-2001)⁴. An influx of stormy weather impacts hunters who are not able to reach their camps outside of the community, especially for boat owners⁴. |
| Freshwater levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water tables, including rivers and fishing spots are much lower now⁸. Potential impacts could include changes in the health and the structure of invertebrate populations, and the loss of essential habitats for wildlife and migratory birds, thus affecting local food supply⁴. |

| Attributes | Examples of Ecosystem Changes and Observations |
|-------------|--|
| Polar bears | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2011 there was an increase in polar bears², which had been previously noted in 2010⁸. Community members were concerned about their safety and wanted an increase in quotas². |
| Seals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents were concerned about the condition of seals as they appeared to be more diseased². Ringed seal numbers were abundant, however the size and proximity of the population, and their fat content fluctuated according to floe edge distance⁸. |
| Whales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area forms part of the primary summering area of the Northern Hudson Bay narwhal population⁹, and community members report seeing an increase in animals². Bowhead whale populations are also thought to have increased⁸. Orcas are seen close to shore, but beluga avoid the shore now⁸. |
| Fisheries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some residents have observed that Arctic char populations were increasing, whereas Arctic cod was decreasing⁵. Others have noted that the taste and texture of fish has changed, specifically, Arctic char and lake trout⁶. Residents suggested that this is because the fish have switched to different prey items⁶. |
| Birds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A decrease in native bird species and an increase in non-native bird species has been observed⁸. Ptarmigan population numbers and body size had also decreased but there are more ravens, geese, and swan, hence the increased potential for food⁸. |

Based on the Current Gaps in the Literature, Research Needs Include:

- Freshwater table studies:** Although there are several issues regarding the lowering of water tables, one potential benefit is the increased access at low tide to small islands, thus giving greater access to caribou hunting areas⁷.
- Economic development:** A commercial fishery would be beneficial to the community, if supported by proper fisheries management techniques².
- Shipping and transportation studies:** There is a need for capacity to address emergencies related to the oil tanker that delivers oil and gas, especially to protect future wildlife and food security⁶.

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