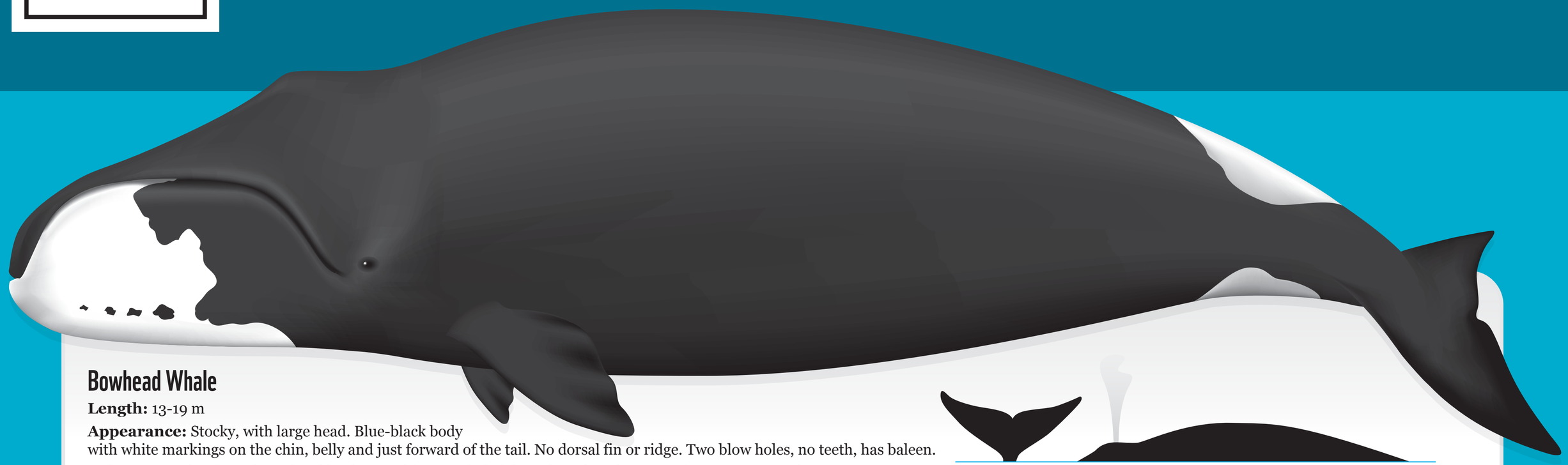
Marine Mammals of Hudson Strait

The following marine mammals are common to Hudson Strait, however, other species may also be seen.
It's possible for marine mammals to venture outside of their common habitats and may be seen elsewhere.



Bowhead Whale

Length: 13-19 m

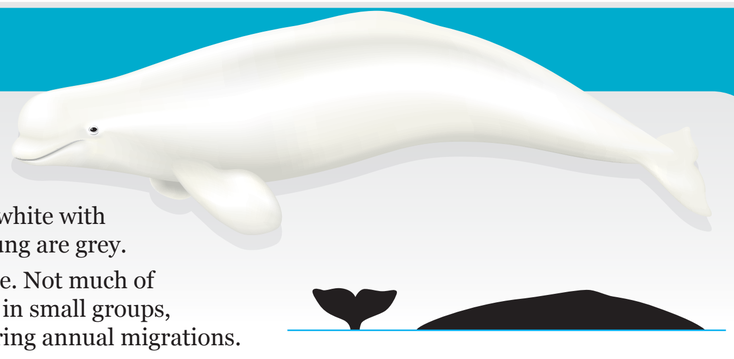
Appearance: Stocky, with large head. Blue-black body with white markings on the chin, belly and just forward of the tail. No dorsal fin or ridge. Two blow holes, no teeth, has baleen.

Behaviour: Blow is V-shaped and bushy, reaching 6 m in height. Often alone but sometimes in groups of 2-10.

Habitat: Leads and cracks in pack ice during winter and in open water during summer.

Status: Special concern

Beluga Whale



Length: 4-5 m

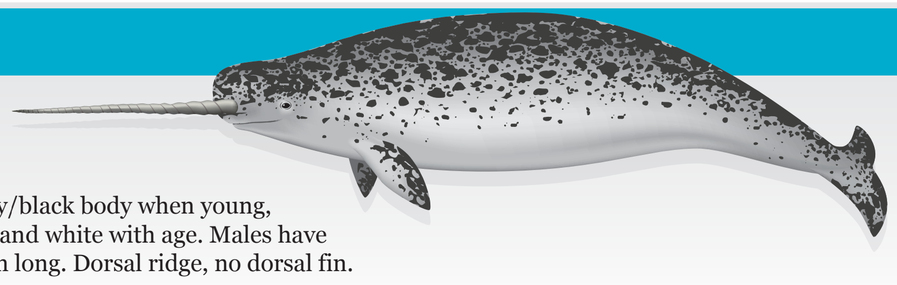
Appearance: Adults are almost entirely white with a tough dorsal ridge and no dorsal fin. Young are grey.

Behaviour: Blow is low and hardly visible. Not much of the body is visible out of the water. Found in small groups, but sometimes hundreds to thousands during annual migrations.

Habitat: Found in open water year-round. Prefer shallow coastal water during summer and water near pack ice in winter.

Status: Endangered

Narwhal



Length: 4-5 m

Appearance: Dark grey/black body when young, becoming speckled grey and white with age. Males have a spiralled tusk up to 3 m long. Dorsal ridge, no dorsal fin.

Behaviour: Blow is puffy. Not much of the body is visible out of the water. Often in groups of 15-20 but can be hundreds.

Habitat: Can navigate under heavy ice cover by using cracks and holes to breathe.

Status: Special concern

Hooded Seal

Length: 2-3 m

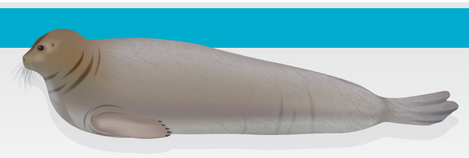
Appearance: Silver-grey with irregular dark blotches over most of the body. Males have characteristic inflatable black "hood" on forehead and inflatable balloon-like nose membrane.

Behaviour: Solitary, except during pupping (mid-March to early April), mating (late winter) and moulting (June-August).

Habitat: On drifting pack ice and in deep waters.

Status: Not at risk

Bearded Seal



Length: Up to 2.5 m

Appearance: Grey to dark grey with brown tinge on head and light grey underside. Long, white whiskers and square shaped front flippers.

Behaviour: Solitary, but form small groups during mating and moulting (March-May).

Habitat: Water less than 200 m depth and commonly found with drifting sea ice.

Status: Data deficient

Harp Seal

Length: Up to 2 m

Appearance: Light grey body with black or brown head and long, black 'harp-shaped' saddle on the back.

Behaviour: Form large groups in April-May. When migrating, the seals leap out of the water like dolphins.

Habitat: On pack ice for majority of the year, dispersing widely in open waters during summer months to feed.

Status: Not assessed

Ringed Seal

Length: Up to 1.5 m

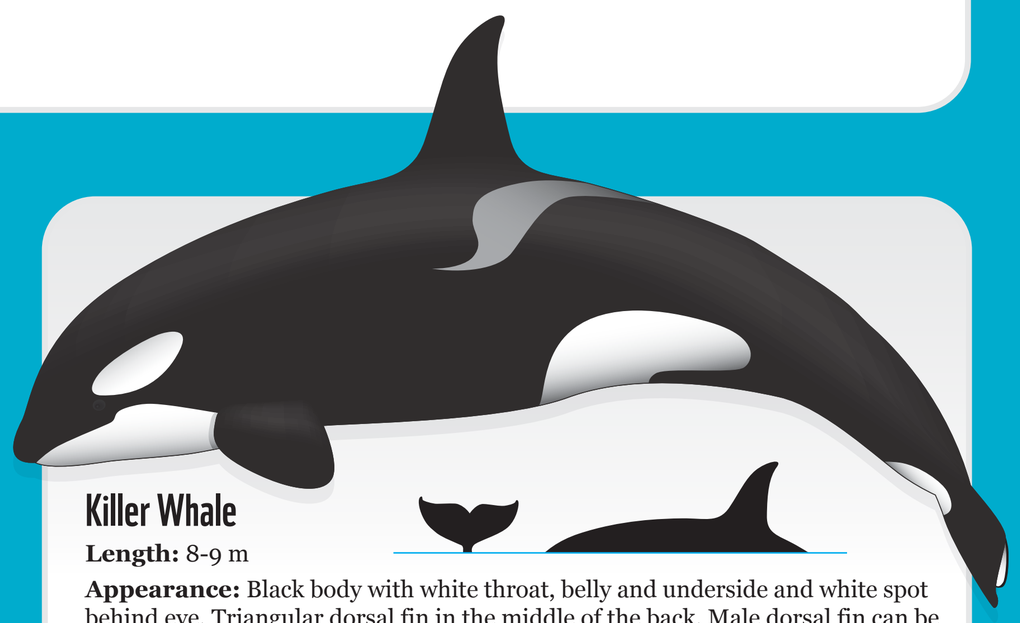
Appearance: Dark grey body with light rings on the back and silver-coloured on the front.

Behaviour: Maintain breathing holes throughout winter.

Habitat: Associated with ice floes and pack ice.

Status: Not at risk

Killer Whale



Length: 8-9 m

Appearance: Black body with white throat, belly and underside and white spot behind eye. Triangular dorsal fin in the middle of the back. Male dorsal fin can be up to 2 m in high.

Behaviour: Blow is tall and column shaped; approximately 4 m in height. Typically form groups of 2-25.

Habitat: Coastal water and open seas, often in water less than 200 m depth.

Status: Special concern

Polar Bear

Length: Up to 3 m

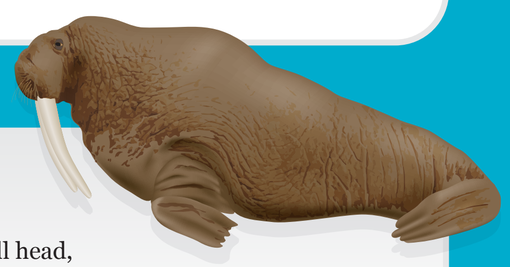
Appearance: White, but can appear yellow, or light brown.

Behaviour: Solitary, except during breeding (late March-May) and cub rearing.

Habitat: Majority of time is spent on sea ice.

Status: Special concern

Walrus



Length: 2-3.5 m

Appearance: Big, stocky body with small head, thick, brown skin, a broad flat muzzle, white whiskers, and two distinctive tusks.

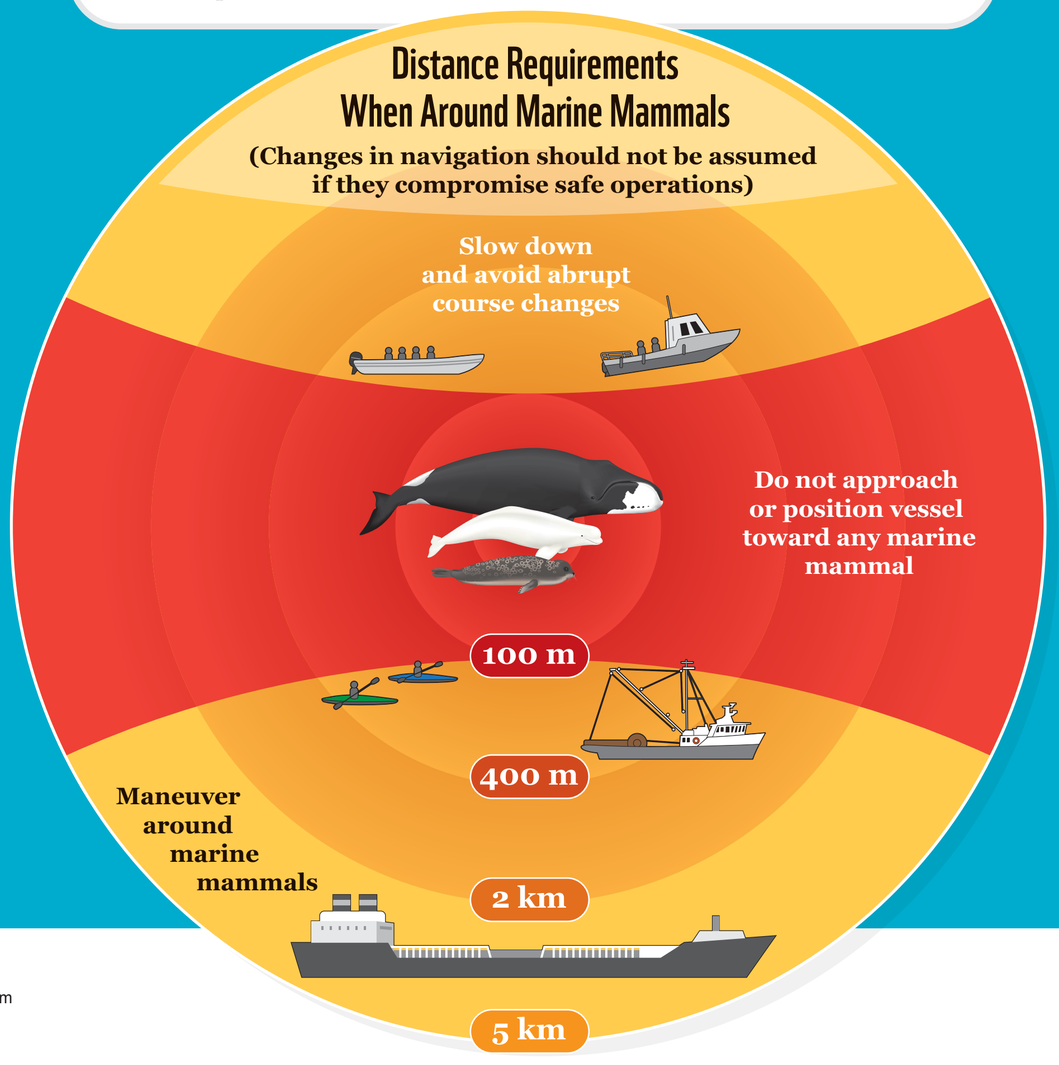
Behaviour: Occur in tight groups on ice floes or on land.

Habitat: Shallow water and coastal beaches in summer and at the edge of fast ice in winter.

Status: Special concern

Distance Requirements When Around Marine Mammals

(Changes in navigation should not be assumed if they compromise safe operations)



Sources:

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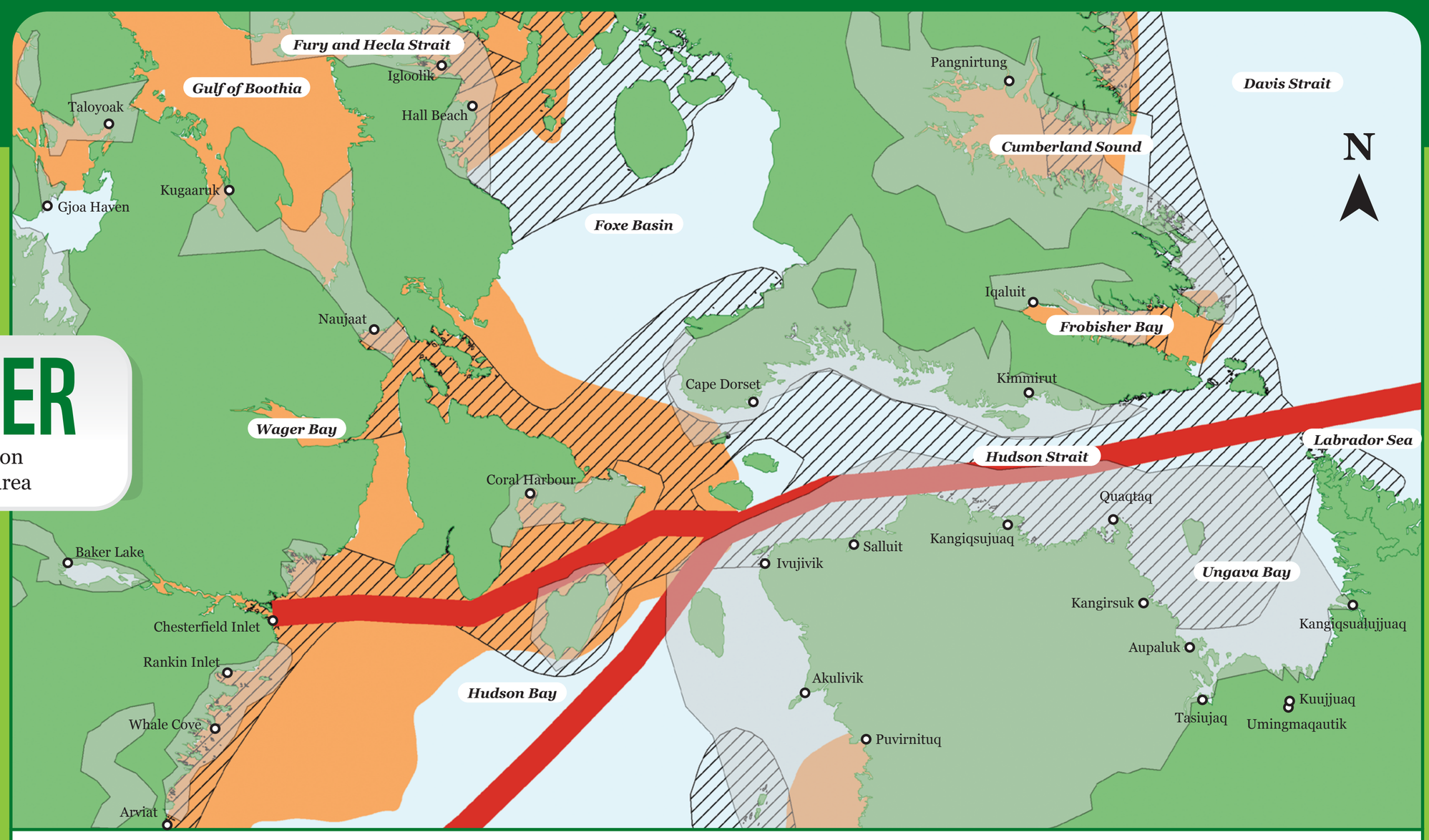
- Government of Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada. (2016). Seal Species. Retrieved September 9, 2016, from http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/seal-phoque/seal-species-eng.htm
- King, J. (1983). Seals of the World. New York: British Museum (Natural History) and Cornell University Press.
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Canadian Coast Guard. (2016). Annual Edition April to March - Notices to Mariners 1 to 46. Retrieved September 12, 2016, from: https://www.notmar.gc.ca/publications/annual-annuel/annual-notices-to-mariners-eng.pdf

Hudson Strait Mariner's Guide

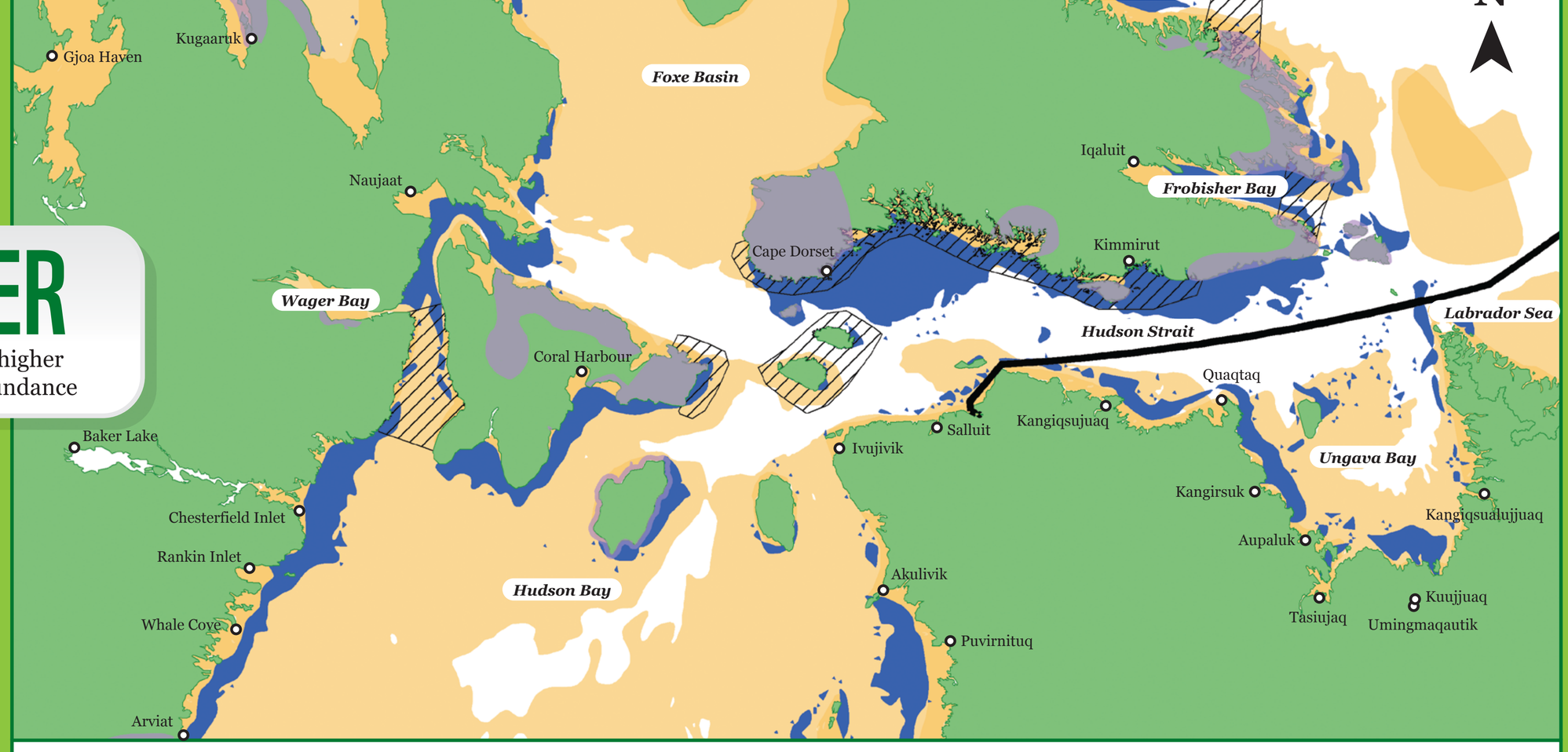
SUMMER

Seals are common throughout the area



WINTER

Ice free areas have higher marine mammal abundance



NOTE:
For navigation purposes, please use maps provided by the Canadian Hydrographic Service.

LOCAL COMMUNITY HUNTER AND TRAPPER ORGANIZATION PHONE NUMBERS

Contact the nearest community for local knowledge of marine mammals.

Akulivik: 819-496-2222
Arviat: 867-857-2636
Aupaluk: 819-491-7070
Baker Lake: 867-793-2520
Cape Dorset: 867-897-8978
Chesterfield Inlet: 867-898-9063
Coral Harbour: 867-925-8622
Iqaluit: 867-979-6848
Ivujivik: 819-922-9940
Kangiqsualujjuaq: 819-337-5271
Kangiqsujuaq: 819-338-3342
Kangirsuk: 819-935-4388
Kimmirut: 867- 939-2355
Kuujjuaq: 819-964-2943
Naujaat: 867-462-4334
Nunavik Hunting Fishing Trapping Association: 819-964-0645
Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board: 819-254-8667
Puvirnituq: 819-988-2825
Quaqtaq: 819-492-9912
Rankin Inlet: 867-645-2350
Salluit: 819-255-8953
Tasiujaq: 819-633-9924
Whale Cove: 867-896-9944

WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS, ENCOUNTERS, AND INCIDENTS

Report to: Department of Fisheries and Oceans,
Steve Ferguson, 204-983-5057, steve.ferguson@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

You may be asked to provide:

- Date and time you found the animal or witnessed the incident
- Specific location, including latitude and longitude (if available) or driving directions (if accessible by land)
- Species or type of animal, including a description of the size, colour, features
- Condition of the animal – alive, sick or injured, freshly dead, badly rotting away
- Number of animals involved
- Your contact information, including name and phone number

Sources:
[1] Vard Marine Inc., A Fincantieri Company. (2015). Hudson Strait shipping study phase 1- study to determine the socio-economic, cultural, oceanographic and ecological impact and risk of shipping. Report No.: 300-06-00
[2] Stephenson, S.A., & Hartwig, L. (2010). The Arctic Marine Workshop: Freshwater Institute Winnipeg, Manitoba, February 16-17, 2010. Can. Manuscript Rep. Fish. Aquat. Sci., 2934, p. 67. http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/341178.pdf
[3] Reeves, R.R., Ewins, P.J., Agbayani, S., Heide-Jørgensen, M.P., Kovacs, K.M., Lydersen, C., Suydam, R., Elliott, W., Polet, G., van Dijk, Y. & Blijleven, R. (2013). Distribution of endemic cetaceans in relation to hydrocarbon development and commercial shipping in a warming arctic. Mar. Policy, 44, p. 375-389.
[4] Hannah, C., Dupont, F., & Dunphy, M. (2009). Polynyas and tidal currents in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. Arctic, 62:1, p.83-95.
[5] Riewe, R. (1992). Nunavut Atlas. Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute and the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut. p. 259.
[6] Government of Nunavut. (2014). Submission to the Nunavut Planning Commission for the Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan. Retrieved from: http://www.nunavut.ca/files/2014DNLUP/2014_Draft_Nunavut_Land_Use_Plan.pdf