

DEVELOPING MARINE AND TERRESTRIAL CONSERVATION FOR QIKIQTAIT

2024-25 Annual Report



QIKIQTAIT
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SUMMARY

The 2024-25 fiscal year was the strongest yet for capacity building, training and outcomes for community priorities for Inuit-led conservation of Qikiqtait. Simeonie Kavik, the Qikiqtait Programs Manager led coordination of programs on the land and at the garage workshop with the support of Johnassie Ippak, as well as ongoing work by Johnny Ippak, Josie Amitook and another 6-12 individuals involved on a more casual basis, in addition to youth training program participants. Lisi-Kavik Mickiyuk managed our sewing, culture and youth programs along with office administration, meetings and coordination with HTA and other partners with the support of Julia Mickiuyuk, Ashley Appaqaq, Betsky Meeko and Annie Amitook along with youth culture program participants. With the equipment and infrastructure provided in previous years now in place and operational, it was possible to focus full time on program delivery. It was an exceptional year with the team working well together in a coordinated manner for stewardship of the islands, exceeding expected outcomes. A key focus was on helping implement priorities for monitoring and taking care of the wildlife for future generations that the Sanikiluaq Qikiqtait Steering Committee has been guiding for many years, as well as youth training and capacity building in Inuit knowledge and skills. The capacity of the team to manage and deliver diverse and interconnected programs in collaboration with HTA, Hamlet, QIA and other community programs reflected a lot of hard work, coordination and a proven approach to an effective conservation economy that serves long-term community priorities for taking care of the islands and wildlife for future generations.



SANIKILUAQ QIKIQTAIT STEERING COMMITTEE

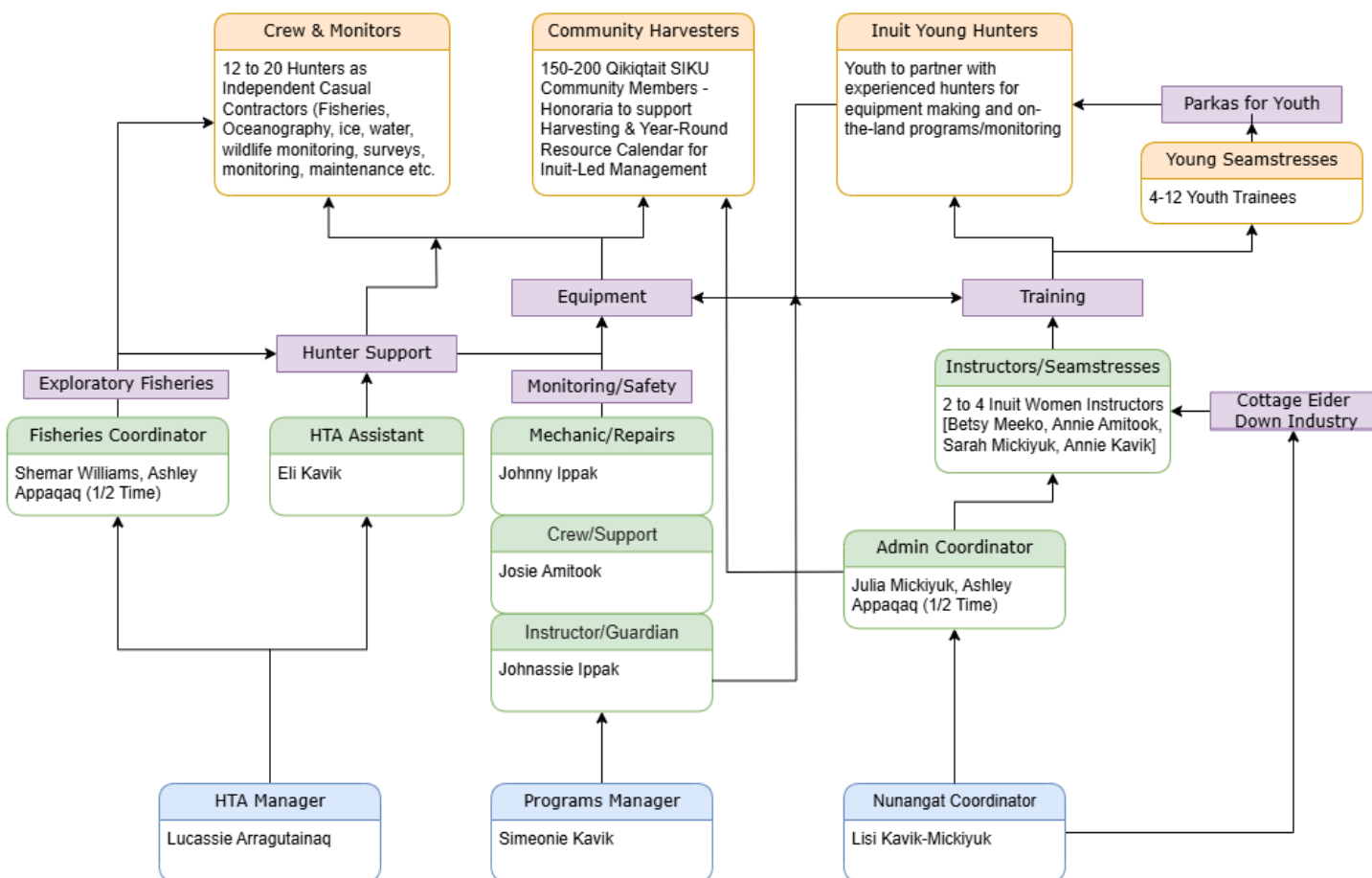
The Sanikiluaq Qikiqtait Steering Committee is the backbone of the whole-of-community approach to stewardship in Sanikiluaq. It's establishment dates back to the Environment Committee established by the community in the 1990s. The steering committee is an independent body made up of elected representatives from the Hamlet, Hunters and Trappers Association, QIA as well as elders and youth representatives, QIA, HTA and AES staff, the MLA, Wildlife Officer and key knowledge holders. The SQSC has played an active ongoing role in establishing priorities for Qikiqtait since 2018. Four meetings in 2024-25 helped guide ongoing activities for Qikiqtait in partnership with QIA and government, including coordinating on fisheries establishment in Nov 2024.



PROGRAMS AND CONSERVATION ECONOMY OVERVIEW

Sanikiluaq has worked for many years to develop a community vision for creating conservation economies for Qikiqtait tied to Inuit knowledge transfer, cultural, subsistence and stewardship principles. The diagram below outlines the SQSC's framework for local programs and connected conservation economies developed in 2020 to support community priorities, which was implemented with funding from ECCC in 2020 and expanded with support from QIA to AES and the Sanikiluaq HTA since 2022. Complementary programs support each other providing synergies and efficiencies allowing benefits to the community to exceed the sum of the parts of each individual program. For example, youth sewing programs help create Parkas for Youth, while Equipment Making Programs support Qamotik, Harpoon making and other tools, and as a result youth or community members that don't have equipment or winter hunting clothes can be supported for inclusion in AES land-based programs or HTA harvesting equipment loaning programs. The diagram was updated in 2024 to reflect ongoing positions created for a conservation economy for Qikiqtait by parallel HTA and AES programs supported by QIA. This report identifies work done under the sections managed by AES in 2024-25, along with indications of how these outcomes helped support parallel programs with the HTA, Hamlet and QIA in the community.

A holistic vision to AES and HTA programs and conservation economies for Qikiqtait





Lucassie Arragutainaq
Chair, AES & SQSC



Lisi Kavik-Mickiyuk
Inuit Nunangat Coordinator



Simeonie Kavik
Qikiqtait Programs Manager



Johnassie Ippak
Programs & Youth
Coordinator



Ashley Appaqaq
Outreach, Education &
Community Fisheries Coordinator



Julia Mickiyuk
Admin Coordinator,
Lab Technician



Johnny Ippak
Mechanic & Programs Crew



Josie Amitook
Programs Crew

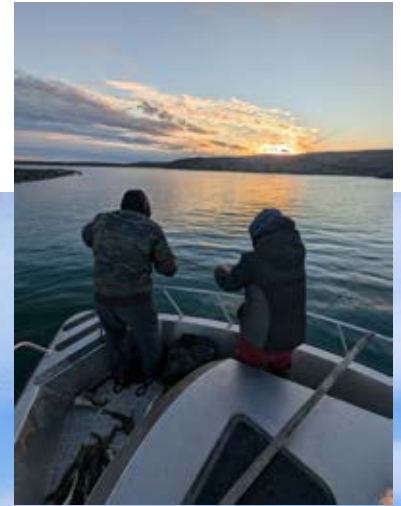


Betsy Meeko
Lead Seamstress Instructor



YOUTH PROGRAMS

Support for training and knowledge transfer for the next generation of hunters, land users and caretakers for Qikiqtait is a top community priority. AES programs support youth in a holistic manner across programs as well as through dedicated activities for equipment making, sewing and culture programs, engagement of youth in meetings and planning activities, and youth land use harvesting programs that build on the outcomes of all these activities to support Inuit knowledge and skills transfer. Johnassie is the lead coordinator for land programs with youth and led a variety of activities including fishing, seal harvesting, seafood harvesting and other harvesting activities on an ongoing basis throughout the year.





Equipment Making Programs

Inuit-made equipment is essential for all year-round programs for Qikiqtait that support land-use, stewardship activities, youth programs and HTA programs supporting community harvesters. The garage workshop in Sanikiluaq provides key capacity for creating equipment, led by Simeonie Kavik and Johnnassie Ippak who engage youth and younger less experienced hunters as a part of equipment making programs. In addition to supporting AES programs, the team also helps build qamutiit for the Sanikiluaq HTA that they distribute on loan to community members that need them for harvesting activities, providing an important compliment to the HTA's snowmobile loaning program supported by QIA. This helps support harvesters in Sanikiluaq have access to necessary equipment that contributes to food security and wellbeing in the community. The AES team also helped QIA Nauttiqsuqtiit staff to create qamutiit on several occasions as a part of our ongoing support bridging community programs. This year Sim and Johnnassie also helped develop new scallop dragging equipment for exploratory fisheries and benthic sampling and community harvesting activities as pictured below.



Inuit Hunting and Survival Tools

Led by master craftsman Simeon Kavik, the program was expanded this year to include new types of traditional tools representing a full suite of Inuit hunting tools for safety and harvesting on the land, helping share the diverse Inuit knowledge of crafting skills as well as the importance of how to prepare for harvesting and safety. These items were given away to community land-users at the 2025 annual meeting to much excitement by community members.



Repairs, Maintenance and Mechanics

The AES team supports ongoing repairs and maintenance for AES and HTA snowmobiles, ATVs and boats including annual maintenance, major repairs and otherwise that help keep programs running smoothly. We also supporting ongoing requests for repairing QIA Nauttiguqtiit staff equipment including snowmobiles and providing parts such as shocks and slides on request.

Sewing, Eider Down and Culture Programs

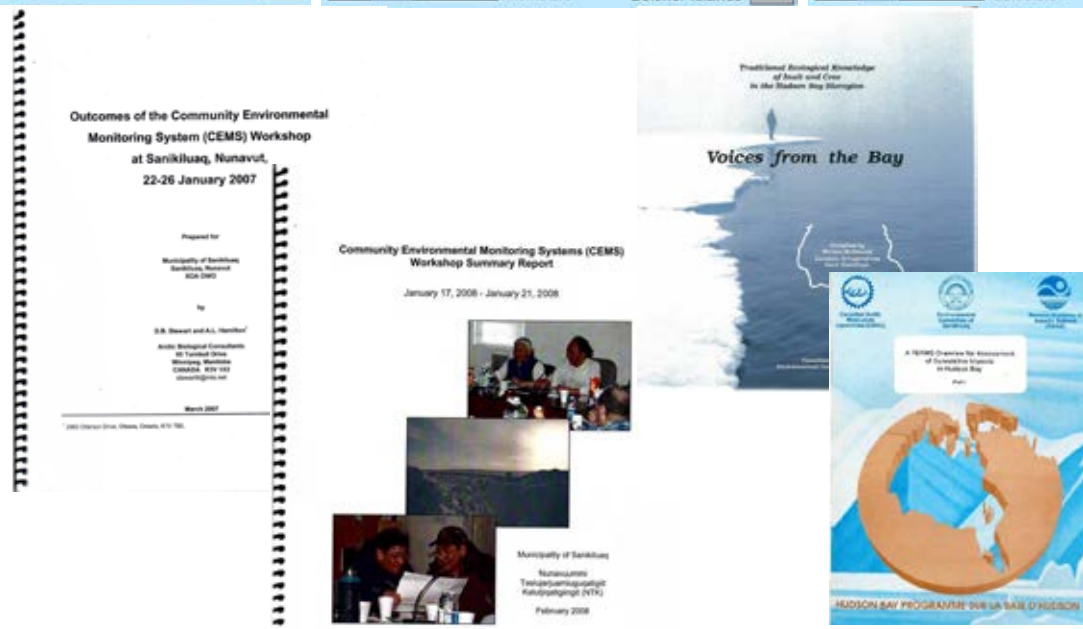
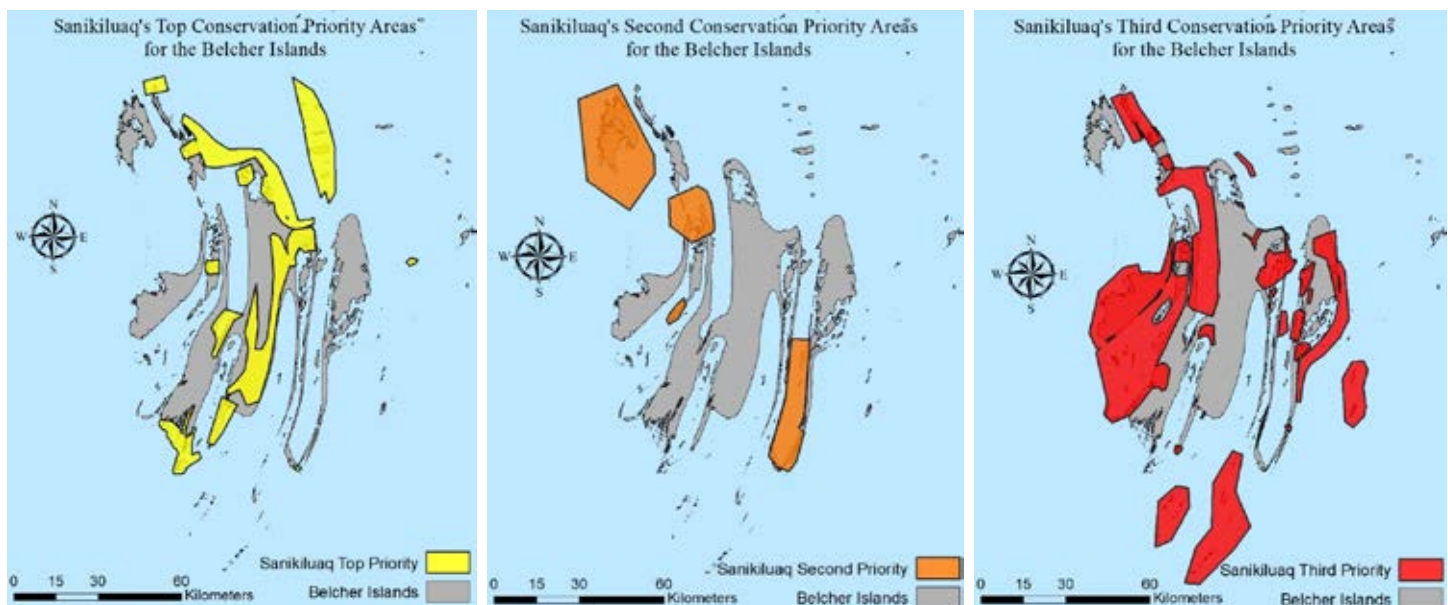
Ongoing eider down, sewing and culture programs help create training in Inuit skills for young seamstresses and support our Parkas for Youth programs. This year we helped support HTA, Hamlet, School and QIA programs for community members that required winter clothing to participate as well as for community visitors including the QIA team in spring 2024 for a knowledge exchange programs, fishing trip and visit to the newly constructed cabin at ulutsatuq polynya pictured below.





MONITORING AND STEWARDSHIP FOR QIKIQTAIT

The Sanikiluaq Qikiqtait Steering Committee has a long history of coordinating community priorities and has put a lot of work into coordinating priority activities for Qikiqtait for taking care of the islands and wildlife for future generations, based on historical work and outcomes from planning meetings with elders and hunters held in 2018, 2019 and 2020. It has been a key priority for our team to help support implementation of these priorities around monitoring so that the Sanikiluaq Hunters and Trappers Association and others have the information they have requested to help make decisions and set policies for harvesting and hunter support programs. While there are many outstanding priorities that will require additional capacity to address, our team was able to assist with implementing a number of these priorities through core funding from QIA, as well as leverage additional support for further jobs, training and capacity building with partners including the University of Manitoba, the Canadian Hydrographic Service, Fisheries and Oceans, SmartICE and Qikiqtaaluk Corporation. Overall these programs are a start to supporting key priorities identified by the HTA and SQSC that align with long-term stewardship of the islands while also addressing short-term needs for the HTA, contributing to the resource inventory and baseline data for Qikiqtait, and the development of a comprehensive monitoring and management plans. The priority areas map below was developed at the 2019 SQSC workshop to help prioritize key species and areas for monitoring and management as a starting point for implementation.



Reindeer Monitoring

In spring 2024, the HTA identified an urgent priority for a reindeer ground survey, based on reports from hunters and elders that the population was low and may require HTA implement a temporary harvest closure or other management policies. To help assess the current population, AES supported the HTA to deliver a ground survey in partnership with other local hunters and the QIA community liaison. AES provided staff for the survey efforts along with drones and training on drones to help get non-invasive accurate counts of each group discovered. The team covered a significant portion of the islands in the survey as indicated in the attached map, using SIKU to provide survey tracks and coverage from each hunter, and making private posts of herd locations. Photos obtained were processed by the SIKU Research and Development team to provide accurate counts from the photos and can be used to help automate this process in the future and for other projects. This work helped the HTA get an accurate number of reindeer to facilitate their resulting management decisions while providing training and capacity building for community members to help continue ongoing monitoring. Reindeer numbers remain an ongoing concern for the community and development of a comprehensive monitoring and management plan for reindeer for Qikiqtaik remains a priority.



Benthic Invertebrates and Exploratory Fisheries

The islands have been identified as a key area for benthic invertebrates powered by unique currents and polynyas that drive circulation, distribution and nutrients for a highly productive marine ecosystem with additional potential for commercial fisheries. Mapping the distribution and abundance of benthic invertebrates and their habitats was identified a key priority in 2023 and 2024 in order to assess the availability of productive areas such as large scallop and sea cucumber beds that have strong fisheries potential, as well as areas for local subsistence and ecological hot-spots. This work is also key to better understanding and mapping the marine ecosystem for Qikiqtait baseline and resource inventory data. This is particularly important for the five year period of the interim Marine Protected Area status, and will provide the information needed to assess if different management scenarios are required in different regions related to benthic fisheries activities. This comprehensive mapping of benthic communities is therefore a prerequisite to informed decision making and stewardship for establishment of Qikiqtait, assessing fisheries potential, addressing knowledge gaps and informing monitoring and management plans in the future.



Open Water Drop Camera Surveys

Additional funding from CIRNAC and QC helped create six new positions with three community boats to help achieve marine benthic mapping activities for this pilot year. AES helped acquire the equipment for drop camera transects to support the field work and provided training to local crews on the drop cameras, and on the use of survey tools on SIKU to properly document the areas surveyed and associated results. A portion of funds from QIA helped support ongoing work later in the fall to continue this mapping work during an exceptionally long open water season in 2024, allowing extensive coverage data of the archipelago in this pilot year that will help address both fisheries and Qikiqtaït priorities. Six new potential scallop beds were identified that will require additional mapping, as well as assessment of additional harder to access regions. This program will continue in 2025 under funding from CIRNAC with work underway to indentify additional sources of funding to continue this work throughout the open water season, including more detailed mapping of the abundance and distribution of the newly identified scallop beds.

SIKU

Explore + Post My Commu

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Survey 1440

Community

Sanikiluaq

Date

Nov 15th, '24 -05

Start Time

12:39 pm -05

End Time

12:45 pm -05

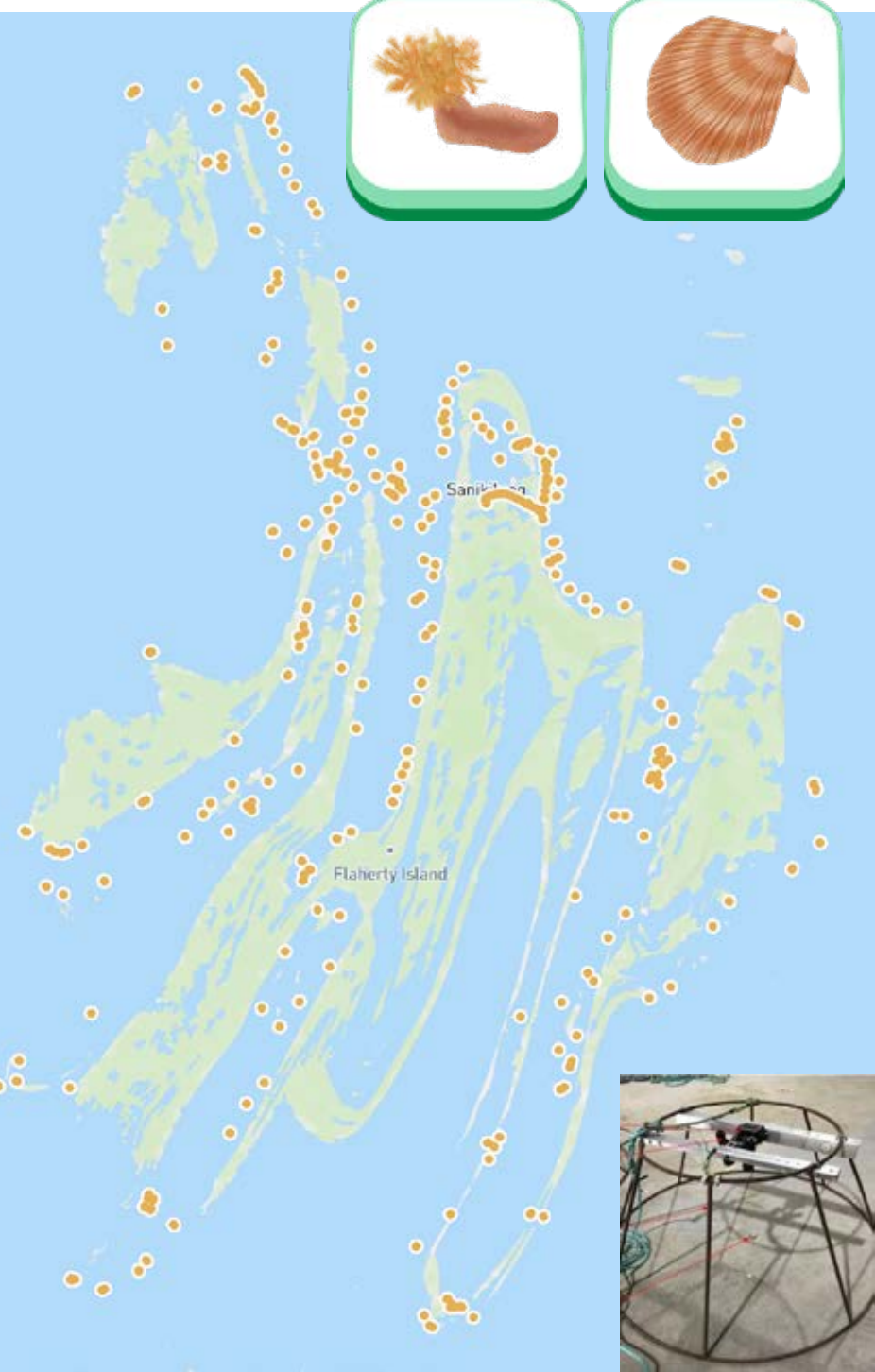
Survey

1. November 15th, 2024 at 12:40 -05

Tallurunnaq • Arctic Scallop

Number of eggs	150
Number of babies	0
Down collected	No

Notes





Ice Season ROV Mapping

In spring 2024 exploratory work determined that underwater Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs) could be used to help map benthic invertebrate communities through the sea ice. This was particularly compelling as the sea ice provides a stable platform for mapping, remote parts of the islands are more accessible by skidoo in spring than by boats in summer, and this creates an opportunity for more year round work compared to the limited open water seasonal jobs for Sanikilurmiut interested in employment in fisheries and monitoring efforts. As such, four individuals were trained on the use of underwater drone techniques for mapping benthic invertebrates in 2024-25 with preliminary work in spring 2024 followed up by additional mapping in winter 2025. This new program has strong potential to support ongoing work opportunities in Sanikiluaq that jointly address fisheries and Qikiqtait priorities once additional funding is identified.

Underwater Timelapse

In Spring 2024 previous exploratory work using underwater timelapse to assess benthic invertebrate communities was further developed with local Inuit staff near Kataapik. This work helped identify the strong potential for ongoing benthic monitoring and assessment with timelapse programs managed by Inuit community members. This approach can provide novel information on the community ecology of benthic invertebrate communities, seasonal changes and also generates compelling footage that can be used for education, training and community engagement. Of particular importance, this pilot work helped identify that sea cucumber populations tend to be in a dormant non-feeding stage in early to mid-winter, but begin to slowly open up and begin active feeding and other activity in the spring associated with increased light, productivity and algae growth in key areas like Kataapik and polynyas. This new information is helping support exploratory fisheries work and catalyzed new programs with support from Memorial University researchers that will be using similar techniques for ongoing fisheries assessment with community members in future years.



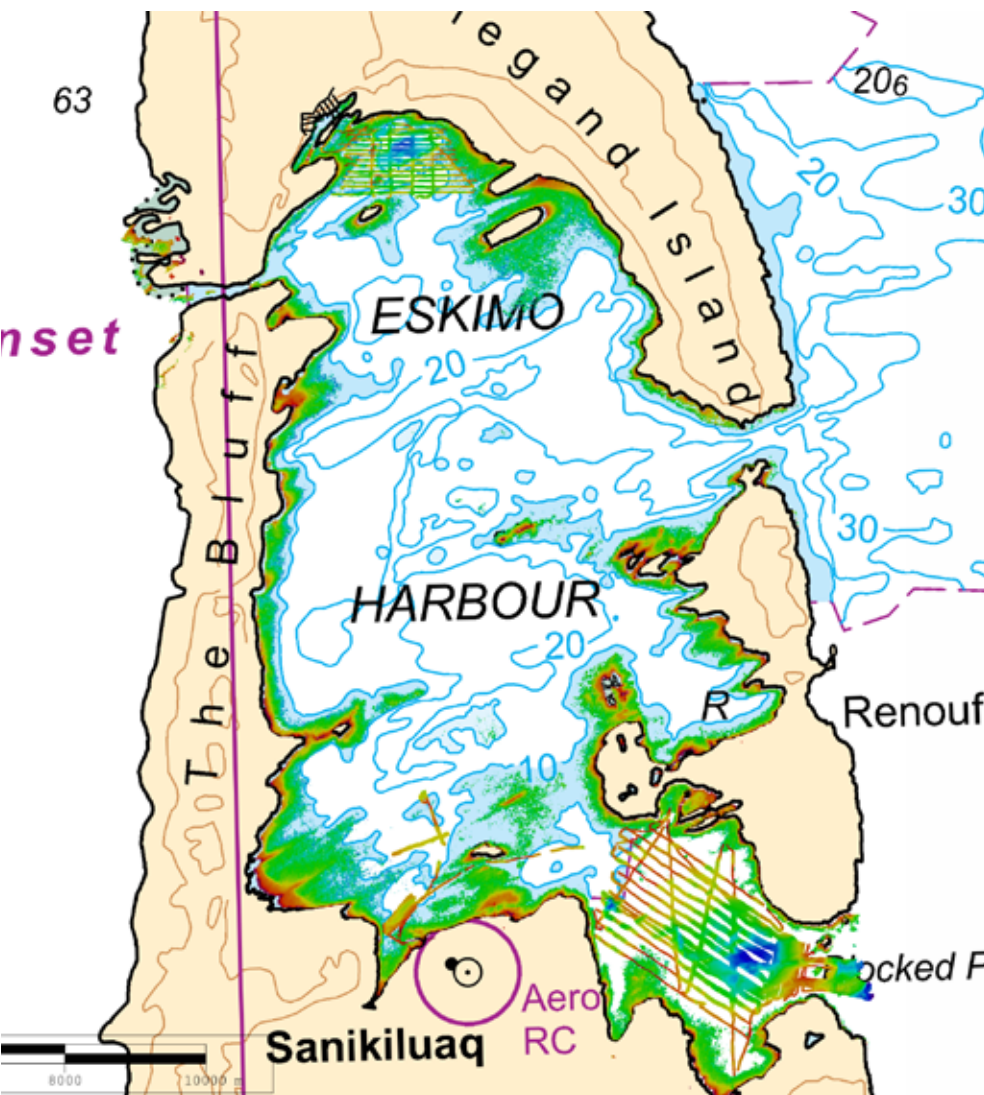


Bathymetric Mapping

Local hunters have in depth knowledge of marine hazards and travel routes around Qikiqtait; however, a significant portion of the islands remain uncharted which is a key information gap for fisheries establishment (determining suitable habitat for scallops, sea cucumbers and other species), for navigation as larger vessels like fisheries vessels visit the islands (Ludy Pudluk, William Kennedy, etc) as well as for identifying hazards, information for tidal and current models (related to community priorities for understanding changing currents relative to climate change and hydroelectric impacts), bottom sediment mapping, and more general benthic community assessments for Qikiqtait baseline data. The Canadian Hydrographic Service supported these priorities in 2024 by visiting Sanikiluaq and installing data loggers on both of the HTA and AES boats to help track depth as a part of ongoing trips, as well as conducting multi-beam surveys of the unmapped harbour entrance and an important passage/polynya area to the east of the community (ulutsatuq). They also supported the purchase of Satellite Derived Bathymetry to improve charts near the community as well as a hydroblock that has been provided to the community for future mapping activities. The data outcomes of this project were combined by the CHS and SIKU team to ensure that the results will be accessible to community members offline on the app for future navigation purposes in spring 2025, and to the community for future use in Qikiqtait activities.

Benthic Sampling

Ongoing sampling programs at key sites for benthic invertebrates in partnership and supported by DFO and the University of Manitoba are helping provide baseline data for Qikiqtait on climate change, ocean acidification, food web dynamics and fisheries. Regular sampling throughout the open water season by the AES team helps contribute information on seasonal changes to benthic invertebrate communities that will support longer term stewardship for the Marine Protected Area and contributes to local jobs and capacity building.



Eider Surveys and Monitoring Programs



Sanikiluaq has a long-term relationship with the unique sedentaria subspecies of the Common Eider that remains on the islands year round. Sanikiluarmitut use eiders for clothing and food given a historical lack of caribou on the islands. As a key species for Qikiqtaut, year-round monitoring and stewardship of eider populations remains a top priority for the community to ensure the long term sustainability of the population for future generations, and to ensure sustainable harvesting and down collection as a part of local subsistence and conservation economies for Qikiqtaut.

The Arctic Eider Society has been supporting these priorities for many years. Ongoing work includes nesting surveys by community members that allow assessing summer demographic trends in association with regular egg and down harvesting activities. Large scale nesting surveys for Qikiqtaut by the Canadian Wildlife Service last conducted in the 1990s were reinitediated in 2022, and as a part of this effort AES developed a new nesting survey tool on the SIKU app that helps track survey efforts and allows Inuit to run these programs independent of on-the-ground support from ECCC on an ongoing long-term basis. This tool supports multiple individuals covering portions of an island and documenting each nest they locate for eiders and other species like terns, gulls and seabirds, and documenting nests destroyed or depredated by polar bears or foxes (which is a growing concern). Photos, egg counts and other details for each nest location are stored on the app and kept fully private, only accessible to the individual and project manager, given the sensitive nature of survey data. This has been supporting ongoing summer nest monitoring of eider colonies in recent years as well as other priority species like terns, black guillemot, and long-tailed ducks. This ongoing summer nesting survey program provides capacity and employment by and for Inuit in monitoring and management of one of the most culturally and ecologically important species for Qikiqtaut and Sanikiluarmitut.

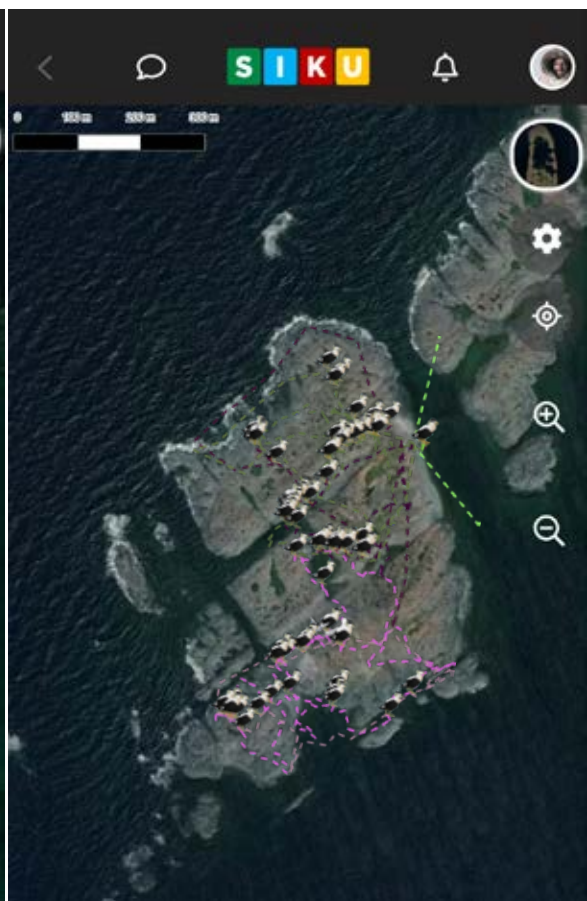


DATE & TIME
5:39:25 PM, 2022-07-16

SPECIES
Common Eider - Mitig

OF EGGS
5

COLLECTED DOWN?
Yes



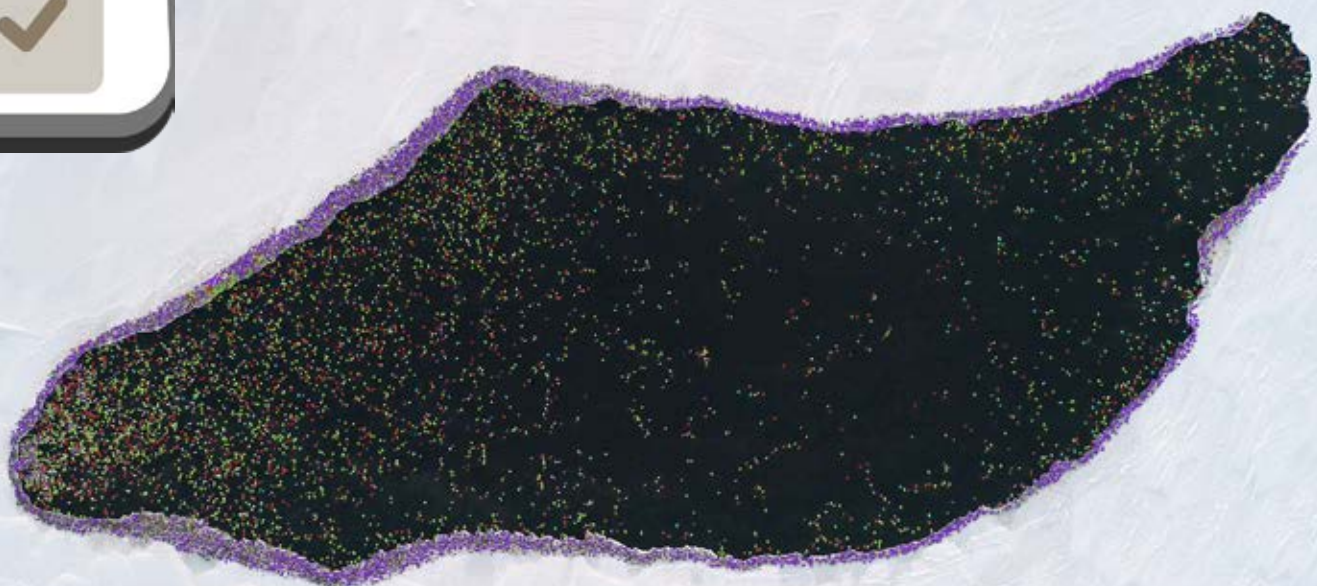


Information gathered from summer surveys is further supported by the demographic data from the larger whole-of-community SIKU program that helps document information on the number of adults, sex-ratios and juvenile survival rates during the fall hunt that follows the summer nesting season, helping track key indicators that elders and hunters have prioritized including the impacts of increased polar bear and fox nest depredation on the frequency of juveniles observed during the fall hunt. This is key information for the community to help track their key indicators for eiders each year towards sustainable management of the population by the HTA.

The program is further supported by winter monitoring in conjunction with sea ice monitoring programs. San-ikiluaq's concerns over large die-off events of eiders in the 1990s promoted a large range of work that has been active since that time, including winter surveys to assess the frequency of ice entrapment and die-off events, as well as tracking the distribution and abundance of key subpopulations. Agiiraaluit is a key place of cultural and ecological significance for the community, and is included in the priority one zone for Qikiqtait stewardship. In winter it is a linked polynya-floe edge system for a large sub-population of Qikiqtait eiders that move back and forth between the floe edge and polynya habitats as a refuge when wind, currents and ice conditions make the floe edge inhospitable, particularly overnight during strong south-west winds. The floe edge-polynya migration is a spectacle of strong cultural importance to the community, for harvesting eiders in the winter, and has been identified as a key time for monitoring the abundance of this population which has been ongoing now for 20 years. In recent years, drone training has supported more accurate counts at both the floe edge and polynya habitats. Similar surveys are done in other regions of the islands each winter with a focus on key polynyas and floe edge habitats including Ulutsatuq, Tukarak, Quipaluq, Nanuqtuuq and Ikirasajjuaq.

Overall this program provides Inuit led monitoring and stewardship of eiders year round in a compelling comprehensive way connected to ongoing cultural activities and harvesting activity that support community priorities for taking care of eiders for future generations.

Similar to the reindeer survey data, the SIKU Research and Development team have developed an algorithm to help automate the counting of eiders, including distinguishing male, female and juvenile birds from drone, aerial and other imagery of large flocks using computer vision and machine learning techniques as illustrated in the photos below. This approach is nearly ready for automation that will allow processing of imagery from surveys for historical data, and to support similar work for other species and communities across the north once directly implemented as a project management tool on SIKU. The engagement of Inuit youth in sureys as well as in novel emerging technologies that support Inuit priorities and knowledge is a further exciting component of this project for local capacity building and the future stewardship of Qikiqtait.



Female ducks: 1501

Male ducks: 2198

Juvenile ducks: 171

Ducks: 3869

Score Threshold: 0.2

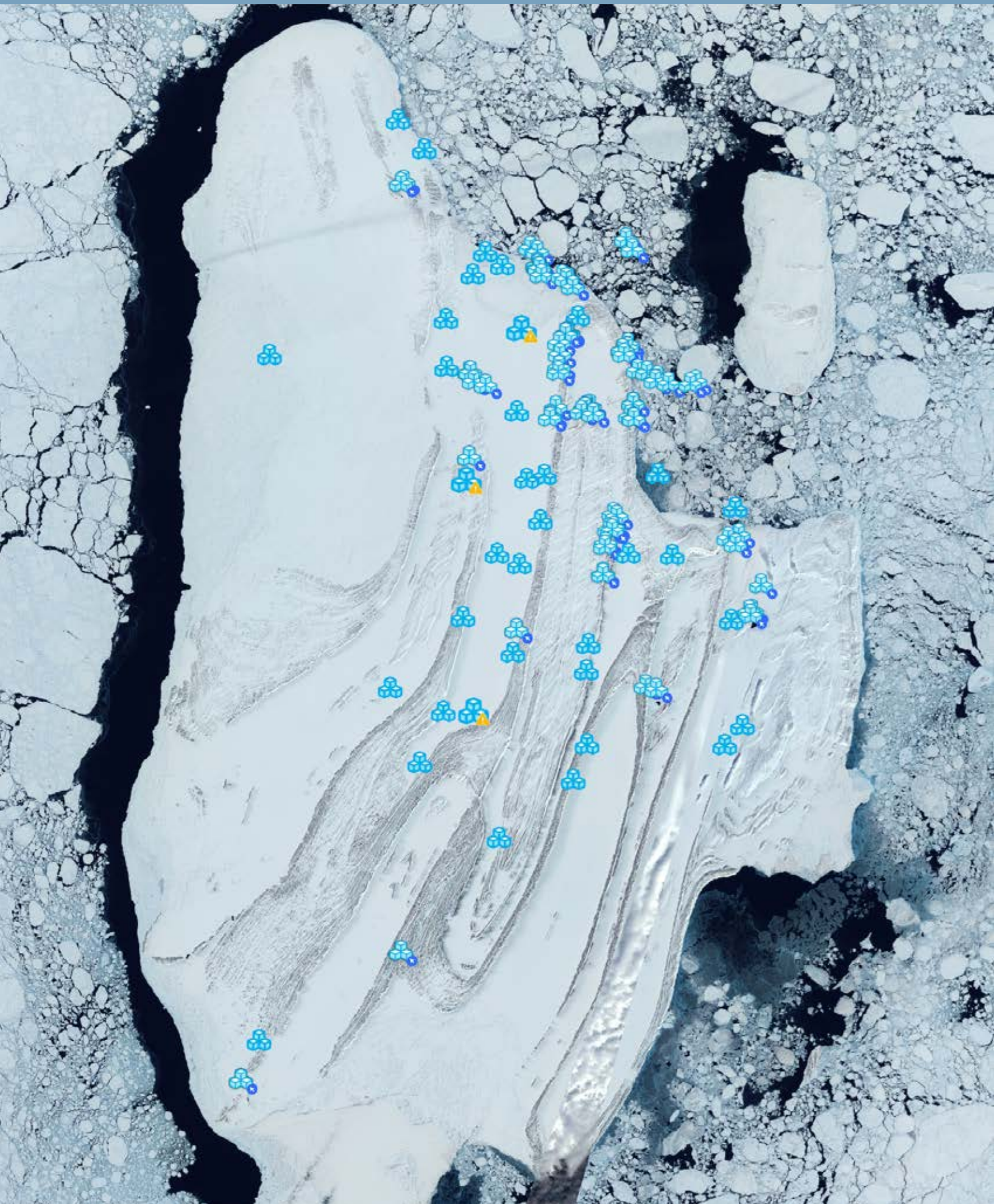
Total: 7369

Sea Ice Monitoring



Ongoing monitoring of sea ice related to community safety, travel routes, wildlife and harvesting habitats, as well as changes associated with climate change and hydroelectric impacts remain ongoing community priorities for Qikiqtait. Key areas have been identified by community members for ongoing monitoring and knowledge sharing coordinated by our committee of local ice experts. These programs also focus on sharing knowledge using detailed Inuktitut ice terminology and classification systems developed through previous knowledge documentation workshops in Sanikiluaq. Work to-date has continued to monitor and share observations of dangerous conditions including apputainaq, siqumaaq and other safety concerns as well as tracking ikirasaq (polynyas), aulaniq (floe edges) and cracks (tukilik, siqummaq, inniruvik) during freeze-up, winter and break-up. Training on using small drones and timelapse to document hazards and map polynyas and tidal cracks has been ongoing, building capacity of the team for ongoing monitoring and sharing outcomes with the community. Support from SmartICE provides additional employment in ice monitoring as well as training, skills development and capacity building. Ongoing work is helping document and share ice conditions at key travel routes and harvesting areas with the community. Ice posts and monitoring from 2024-25 are shown on the ice map on the following page.







Oceanographic Sampling

A long outstanding priority from the community of Sanikiluaq and the SQSC has been understanding impacts of climate change and hydroelectric developments on oceanographic conditions that affect currents, sea ice and wildlife including entrapments, die-off events and harvesting activities. Inuit knowledge indicators, including seals sinking to the salt water layer (halocline) instead of floating when harvested in winter, have guided this program for many years now. Results indicate that freshwater surface layers to the east of the islands in particular are about 20-25m deep and impact vertical mixing of nutrients, ice formation, wildlife like seals sinking, and primary productivity. Recent funding for this work comes primarily from partnership with the University of Manitoba providing additional employment opportunities; however, outcomes are of direct impact to Qikiqtaut priorities and monitoring programs. Ongoing water sampling in key oceanographic regions of the islands quarterly, as well as on a more regular basis near the community, provides baseline data for fisheries, wildlife management and sea ice monitoring. These programs have helped develop skills and training with Inuit field crews as well as training for Inuit staff in lab techniques for water sample processing and analysis in the new Qikiqtaut Center labs, building capacity for the next generation of Inuit researchers, monitors and community leaders.

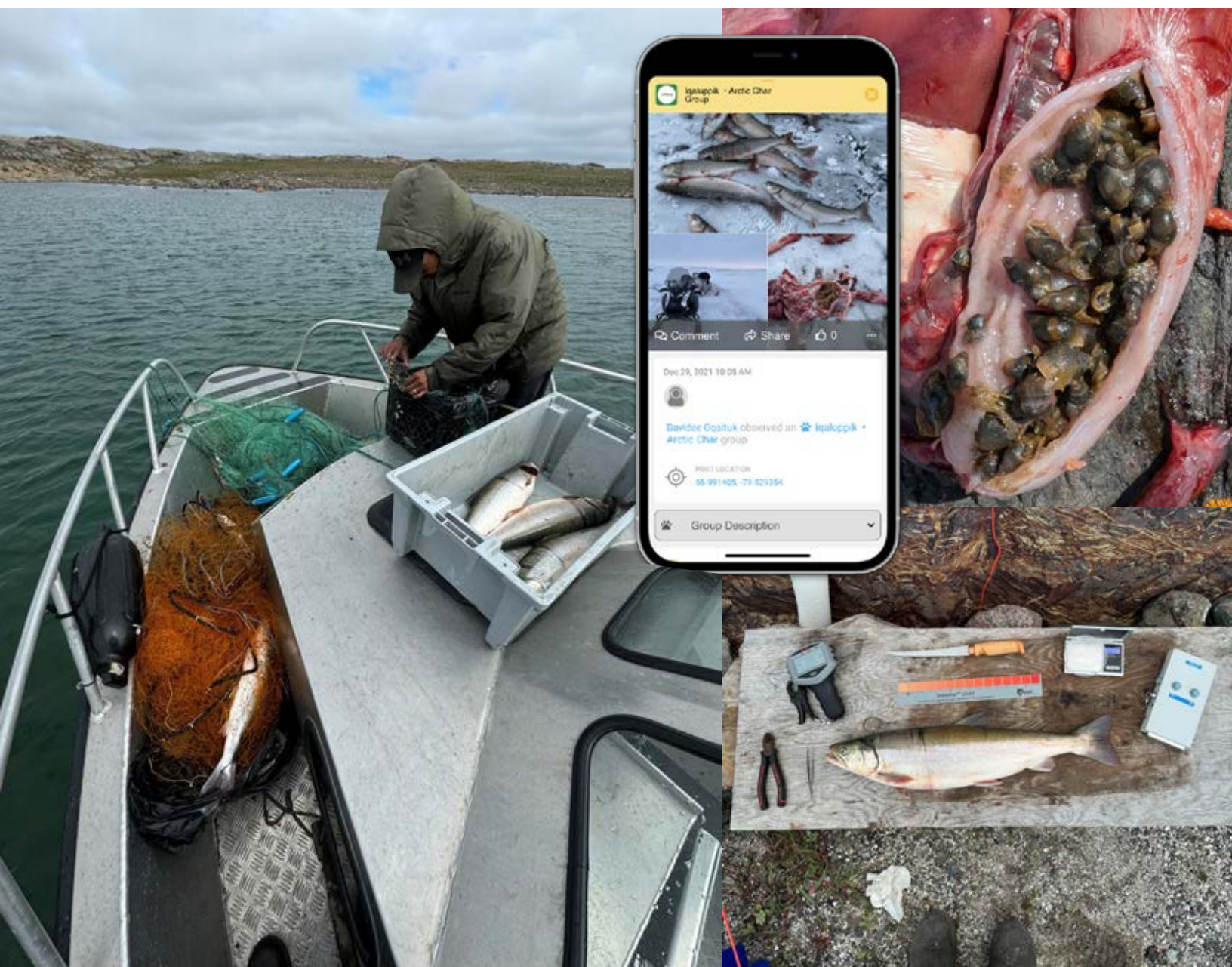




Arctic Char

Arctic Char are the top harvested species and a priority for monitoring and management. Increased support for food security in the community is helping the HTA and other programs to distribute fish to elders and other community members in need; however, ongoing monitoring has been requested to better understand the different populations of Arctic Char around the islands and to help ensure that fish stocks are sustainable under increased fishing pressure in recent years. Community members and the SQSC have raised concerns about specific areas that are heavily targeted with

gill nets throughout the year, as well as key migratory sites between the lakes and ocean where traditional Inuit management and harvesting practices are not being respected in the same way they were in the past. Information from the whole-of-community approach with SIKU is helping support monitoring priorities throughout the year. Recently, a sampling program has been piloted with support from Fisheries and Oceans to help better understand the unique population structure of sea run, lake run and land locked populations unique to the islands that can help inform future stewardship of this resource for the community. These outcomes will help inform the development of a systematic monitoring plan for Arctic Char supporting the HTA and SQSC priorities for development of stewardship for Qikiqtait that supports sustainable Arctic Char populations and harvesting activities, including community food sharing and food security programs.



Other Species

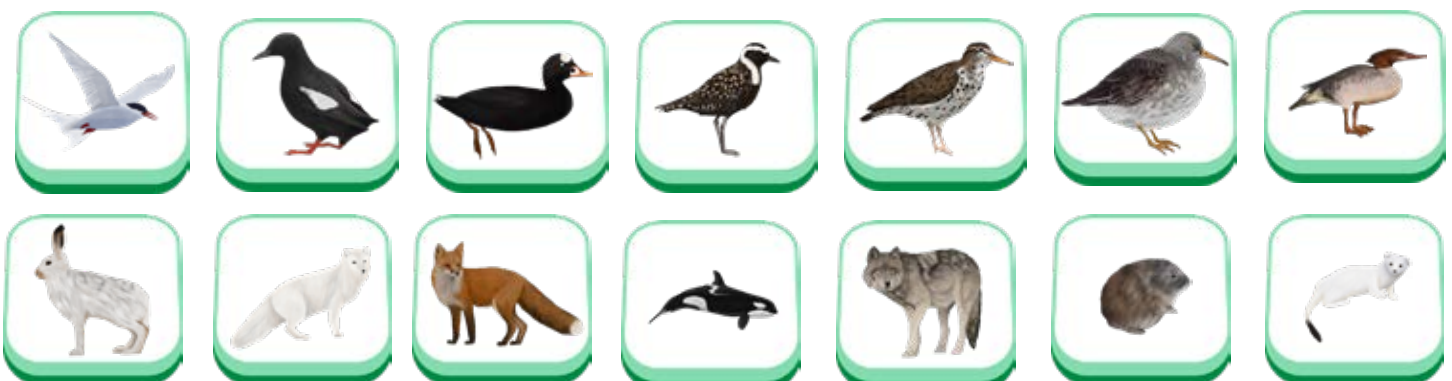
Local hunters, elders and the SQSC have identified a wide range of other priorities for monitoring and management based on the changes they have been seeing in recent years. Interviews recorded with elders in 2023 and 2024 are supporting the documentation of traditional Inuit management and stewardship approaches for taking care of a range of wildlife species that can help inform development and implementation of a monitoring and management plan as well as transfer knowledge to youth on Inuit approaches for taking care of wildlife resources for future generations.

Examples of other priorities include ptarmigan, snowy owls and falcons, which have all been reported by Inuit to be declining, as well as species like ravens, wolves and killer whales that are increasing. Ringed seal monitoring remains a priority, and requests for increased beluga monitoring have been escalated particularly related to the unique Qikiqtait sub-population that little is currently known about, despite large regional management implications. Walrus, shorebirds, the arrival of new/invasive species, berries, vegetation, wildlife health, contaminants and climate are also top priorities. Winter freezing rain events such as those in March 2025 are also of key concern as they can impact a wide range of species.



AES has been helping coordinate a comprehensive review of community priorities, Inuit knowledge of key indicators, background literature review, and identifying knowledge gaps as a part of the feasibility studies for Qikiqtait that is almost complete with previous funding from the Nature Fund (ECCC). Additional funds are required to finalize this document which can help provide a key source of information towards developing monitoring and management plans for Qikiqtait marine and terrestrial regions moving forward.

The Sanikiluaq Qikiqtait Steering Committee's annual spring meeting in 2025 identified next steps to follow-up on consultation for priority species and areas with the recommendation that a meeting be convened later in 2025 in Sanikiluaq. This meeting would help review outcomes to-date and begin the next stage of establishing community priorities and approaches to the development of a comprehensive monitoring and management plan for Qikiqtait, including identifying priority activities for the five year ministerial order Marine Protected Area timeframe.



COMMUNITY-DRIVEN RESEARCH NETWORK

Sanikiluaq has proactively been working with their neighbours for many decades to address large-scale regional concerns in south-east Hudson Bay and James Bay. Consultation and guiding documents were developed by the Sanikiluaq Environment Committee (that now operates as the SQSC) in 2007 and 2008 that have continued to guide local and shared priorities for monitoring and stewardship. These priorities were outlined in a publication by the community in partnership with NTI, QIA and the GN through the (now defunct) Nunavuumi Tasiujarjuamiuguatigiit Katutjiqatigiingit (NTK) partnership in the article “A Life Vest for Hudson Bay’s Drifting Stewardship” published in the journal *Arctic* in 2008. The key recommendations of this work were to “establish a community-based monitoring and assessment network and a cooperative interjurisdictional stewardship body”. The community of Sanikiluaq tasked the Arctic Eider Society with helping achieve these goals as a part of creating AES as a Sanikiluaq based Inuit-led organization that could work locally and across jurisdictional boundaries as a legacy to NTK.

The creation of the Community-Driven Research Network in 2014 was the first step in implementing these priorities, bringing together community and Indigenous organization representatives in each of Sanikiluaq, Inukjuak, Umiujaq, Kuujuaaraapik and Chisasibi to form this network and implement shared priorities for the region with a focus on oceanography, sea ice and wildlife. 2024 was the tenth year anniversary of this highly successful CDRN program, and the communities came together at the new Qikiqtait Centre in Sanikiluaq in fall 2024 to review outcomes and next steps for regional collaboration on priorities. A key outcome of this meeting was discussing how Inuit in Sanikiluaq and Nunavik can work together for the unique Area of Equal Use for the Salikuit, Innalikuit (King George Islands), and Quumiutait (Sleeper Islands) region that connects the Qikiqtait protected area with the Arqviliiit protected area in Nunavik. This would ensure connectivity of the region for conservation, and facilitate a better understanding of how regional monitoring and management works in the complex jurisdictional overlap the five communities share. The highly successful meeting reflects a shared vision for stewardship and management of the region as a whole, and has catalyzed activities for future years to facilitate ongoing coordination and next steps for stewardship of the overlap region.

Creation of the Hudson Bay / James Bay Consortium in 2018 helped implement the second priority from NTK and was recently renamed to the Tasiujaquiaqmiut Sheewetaganapoi Consortium. Participation of Sanikiluarmiut and neighbours in the region at Summits, Roundtables and through the Protected Areas and Community-Led Research and Monitoring working groups, including the Roundtable meeting in Montreal in Feb 2025 have been key to ongoing coordination of a shared vision for the region as a whole. A Summit is being planned for Winter 2026 in Ottawa and participation of staff, organizations and partners for the Qikiqtait will be key to regional coordination and stewardship.



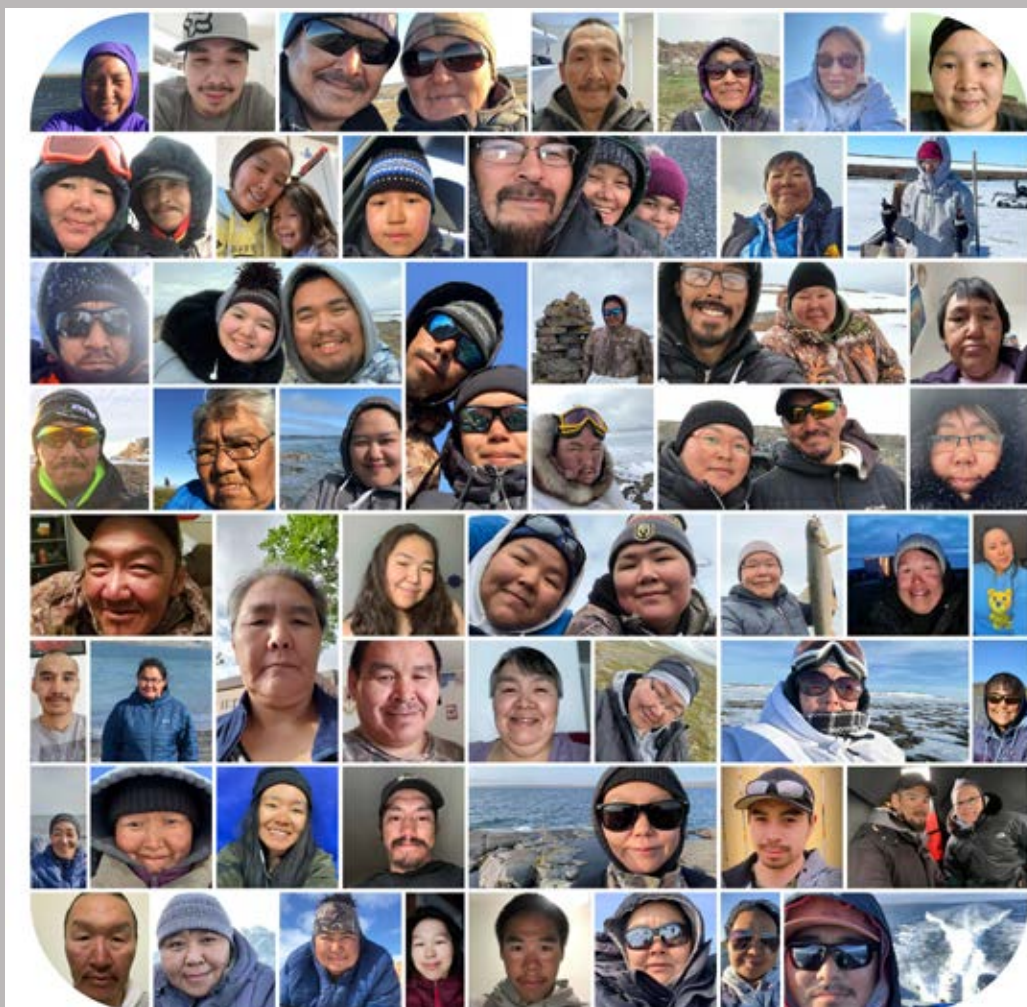


FALL 2024 TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY-DRIVEN RESEARCH NETWORK WITH SANIKILUAQ, INUKJUAQ, UMIUJAQ, KUJJUARAAPIK AND CHISASIBI

WHOLE-OF-COMMUNITY APPROACH TO QIKIQTAIT STEWARDSHIP WITH SIKU

SIKU is a mobile app and online project management platform created by the Arctic Eider Society to provide tools and services to Indigenous land users in support of subsistence harvesting and safety, and to support communities and Indigenous organizations running their own projects using their own language and knowledge systems. It was created under the direction of visionary Sanikiluaq elders including Peter Kattuk and Lucassie Arragutainaq to help mobilize Indigenous knowledge systems for the next generation, and in wildlife management and stewardship. It started in 2014 for Qikiqtait programs and partnerships with Nunavik and Cree communities for the Community-Driven Research Network in support of collaboration, knowledge transfer and digital infrastructure capacity that respects full ownership, access, control and Indigenous data sovereignty.

As pioneers of SIKU, consultations in Sanikiluaq have consistently identified a whole-of-community approach using SIKU to document wildlife and ecosystem trends as a top priority for Qikiqtait monitoring and long-term stewardship. In addition to the full time and casual contractor positions provided through funding for Qikiqtait, this program facilitates a broad inclusive approach for land-users and harvesters in Sanikiluaq. In addition to helping provide support for food security and harvesting activities to over 200 active land users in Sanikiluaq, the SIKU for Qikiqtait project allows the whole community to be a part of the process of taking care of Qikiqtait for future generations. Observations can tag Inuit language and environmental terminology which allows sharing knowledge from an Inuit knowledge perspective. Each land user's observations contribute an important piece of the larger picture for the Qikiqtait resource inventory, and to living time series and spatial data that supports decision making by the HTA and SQSC for wildlife management. This approach is key to Sanikiluaqmiut playing a meaningful leading role in the stewardship of Qikiqtait in the long-term.





QIKIQTAIT

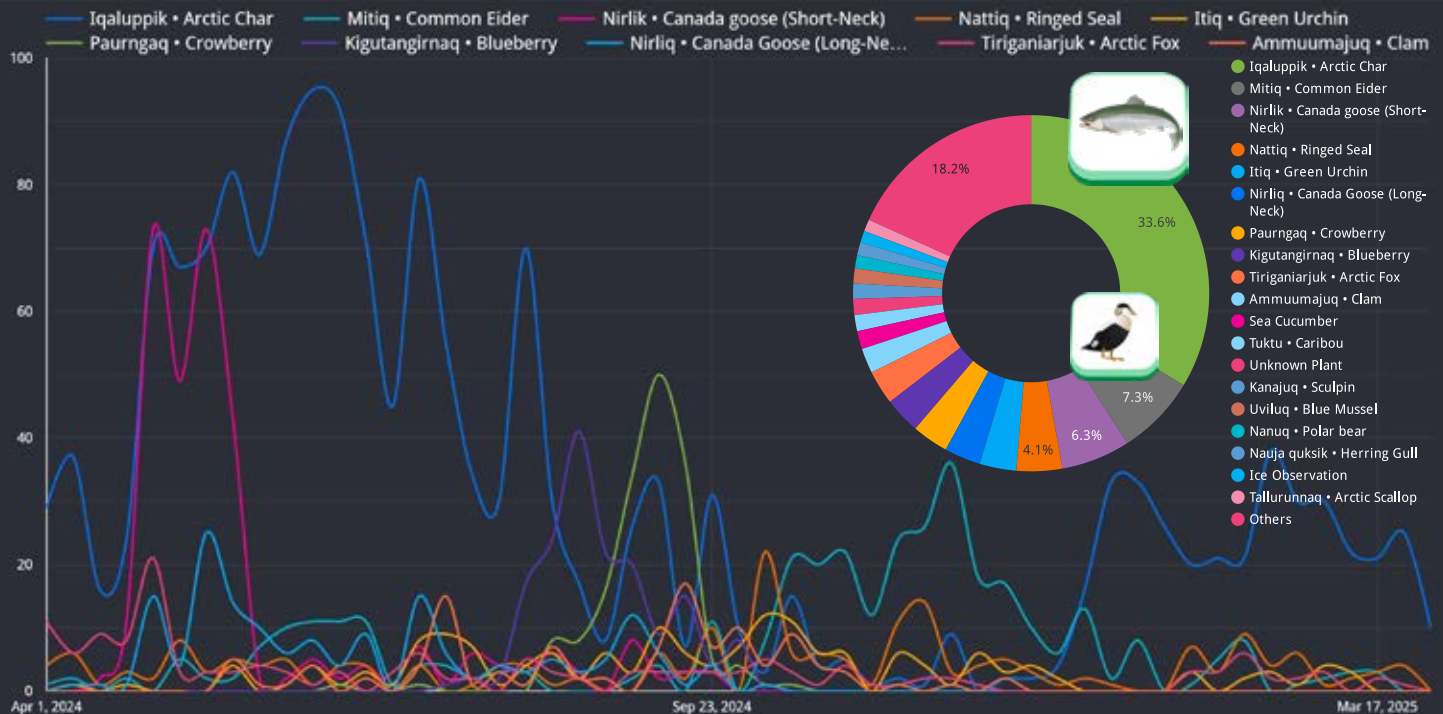
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April 1, 2024-March 31, 2025 SIKU Qikiqtaaluk Project Management Key Performance Indicators Output

Posts
Made
6,460

People
Posting
171



Top 10 Wildlife Species Posts Over Time



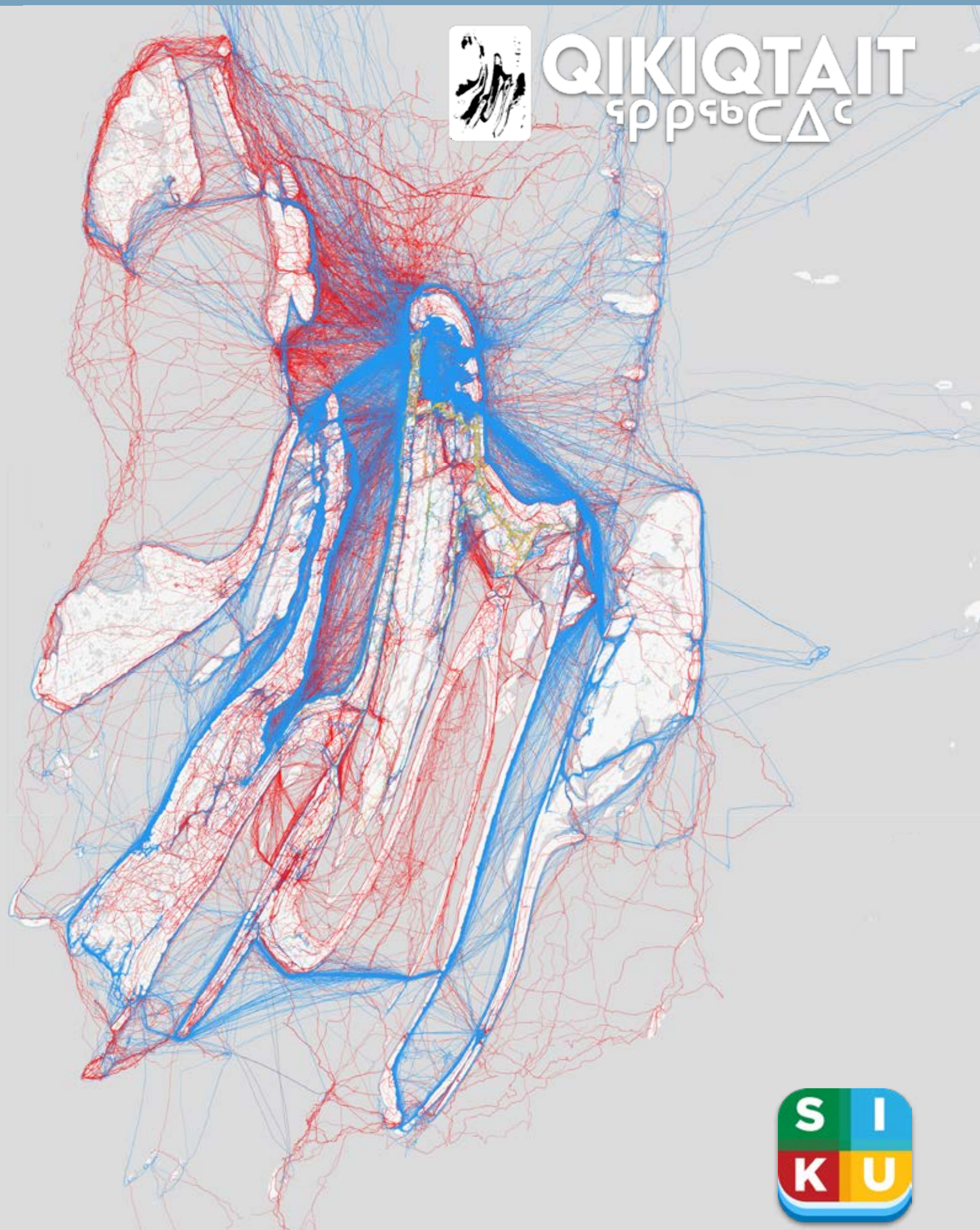
Total
Trips
5,380

Total KM
454,292

Total Hunting Trips by Date



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TRIPS BY SANIKILUARMIUT LAND USERS 2022-24 USING SIKU. BLUE = BOAT; RED = SNOWMOBILE; YELLOW = ATV TRIPS

This program is based on the long-term vision of Lucassie Arragutainaq and the late elder Peter Kattuk for how Inuit knowledge and observations can play a leading role in wildlife management, research and monitoring through the use of technology while demonstrating to government, industry and partners that Inuit have the knowledge and expertise to manage their resources in a way that southerners can also understand and respect. The outcomes of this program empower community leaders, including Lucassie Arragutainaq (HTA manager and chair of AES and the SQSC) to lead decision making and advocacy for Inuit-led stewardship at national and international levels, in addition to local self-determination in management of Qikiqtait providing equity for Inuit across the table from government, industry and academics. The Inuit Calendar of Resources below is based on the framework Lucassie developed for Voices from the Bay, now quantified annually with data from SIKU that allows knowledge-driven management of Qikiqtait.

Lucassie was awarded Inuit Recognition Award from ITK and the Polar Science Award in 2023 to recognize his career achievements for this body of work in Sanikiluaq and across the region in support of Inuit-led conservation and stewardship. These outcomes, supported through AES and HTA partnership with QIA, will continue to play a key role in informed Inuit-led stewardship and management of Qikiqtait and setting new precedents for Inuit-led conservation.



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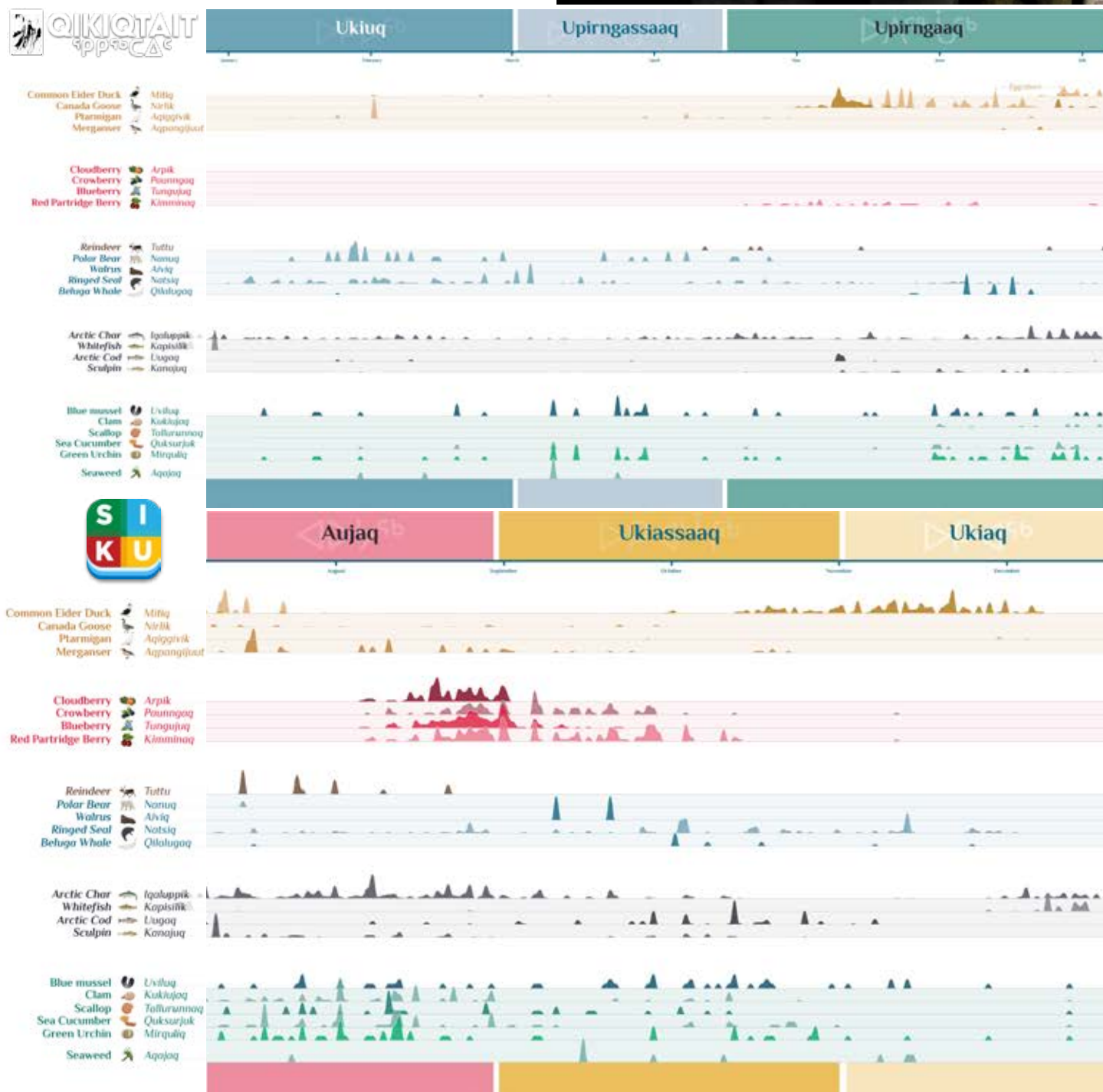


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The detailed drill down on the Qikiqtaik Inuit Calendar of Resources with SIKU below shows the time series data for each group of wildlife, which is being used on an ongoing basis by the HTA for wildlife management and will guide the stewardship of Qikiqtaik for the benefit of future generations.

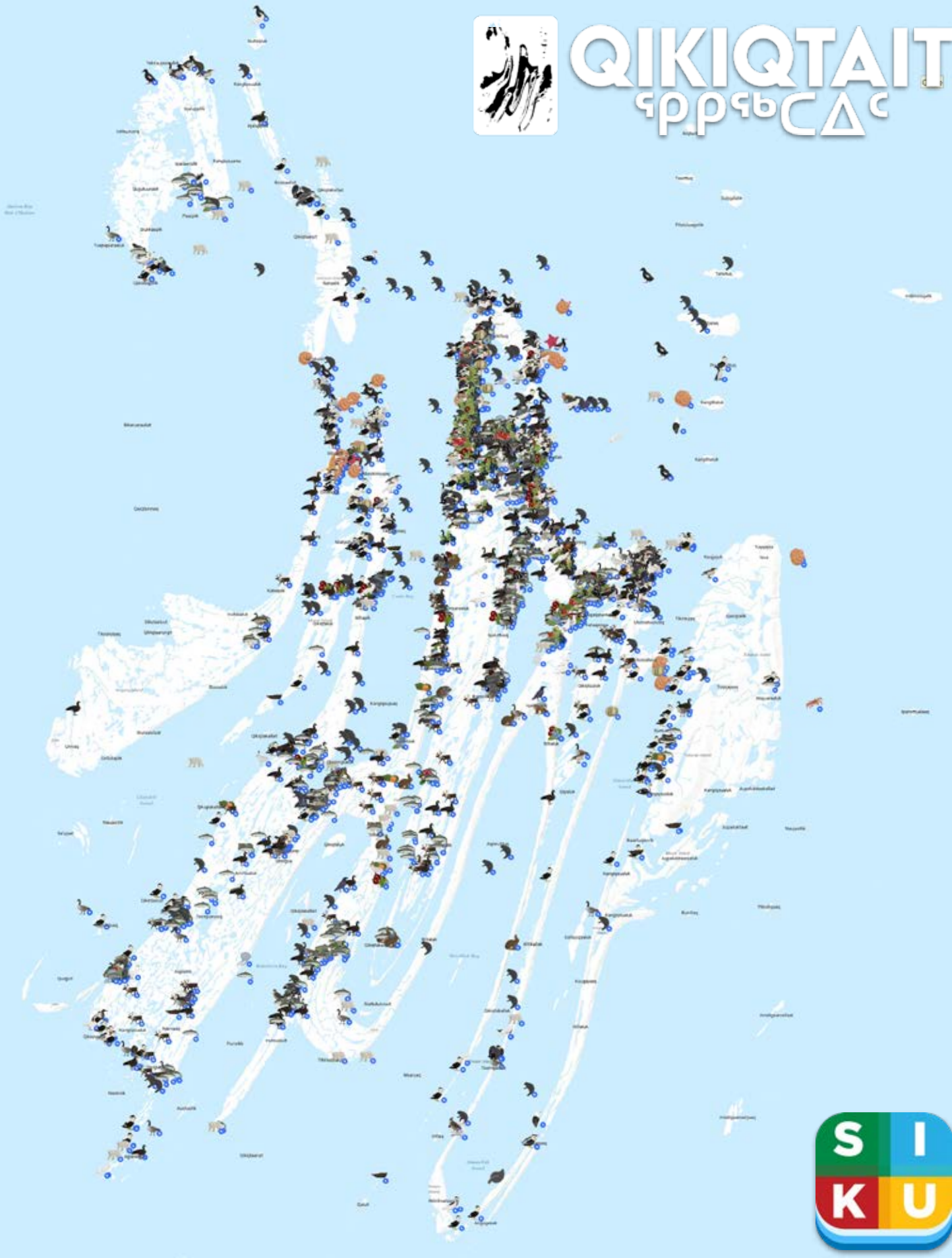
Results of Qikiqtaik programs overall were presented by Lucassie, Lisi and Simeonie at a variety of conferences and meetings across the country and internationally, including at the 2024 Arctic Change conference in Ottawa, where Lucassie is pictured with PJ Akeegok, Premier of Nunavut.





QIKIQTAIT

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of Canada

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