



Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board

Wildlife Viewing Guidelines

General Wildlife Viewing Ethics

1. Respect wildlife by not disturbing animals, when an animal changes its behaviour due to your presence, you are too close.
 - a. Use binoculars, spotting scopes, and cameras with telephoto lenses to view and photograph wildlife.
 - b. Learn the spatial needs of species and their alarm signals before you approach them.
 - c. Do not attempt to feed or touch wildlife.
2. Respect wildlife habitat, do not alter, damage, or destroy potential animal habitat.
 - a. Avoid trampling or damaging vegetation, walk on designated paths or in vegetation free areas when possible.
 - b. Clean all gear before entering and leaving new areas to avoid the spread of invasive species.
 - c. Leave the land and waterbodies as you found them, make sure to gather all garbage before leaving an area. Waste can be a bear attractant and can put yourself and others at risk.
3. Respect land users and be aware that others are using the land to provide food for their families.
 - a. If you are interested in fishing or hunting ensure that you are following all federal, provincial, and First Nations laws. This includes following permitting procedures and harvesting seasons for non-indigenous people.

Polar Bears

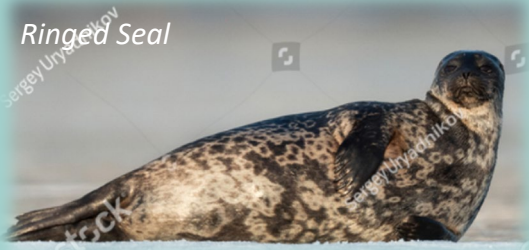
The Polar Bear is the largest terrestrial carnivore in the world and is suited for life in the Arctic and sub-Arctic, spending most of its time on the ice. In the EMR, you might spot Polar Bears on the ice of James Bay and Hudson Bay during the winter and spring or on offshore islands during the summer. Polar Bears are listed as a *Species of Concern* under the Federal *Species at Risk Act* and as a *Vulnerable Species* under Quebec Legislation.



When viewing polar bears, it is important to not change their behaviour. Indications of changed behaviour include the bear raising its head, focusing its gaze on you, changing its body posture, moving away from you, or charging you or your vehicle. To avoid disturbance, view using binoculars and approach from downwind, using minimal lights and noise. It is not acceptable to harass polar bears to move them into sight. Never approach a swimming polar bear.

Seals

Seal species that you might encounter in the EMR include the ringed seal, harbour seal, and bearded seal. Ringed seals are the most common and abundant marine mammals in James Bay. During the summer, you can find seals in search of fish in James Bay and local rivers. Seals also enjoy resting on islands, shorelines, or rocks and will often return to the same resting location multiple times.



When viewing seals in the water, you must maintain a distance of 50 m from the seal(s) and view them for less than 30 minutes. If you encounter a seal with pups or a lone pup, increase your distance. Pups are often left alone when mother seals are in the water feeding; they are not abandoned and must be left alone.

Whales

James Bay is the southernmost occurrence of Beluga in the eastern sub-Arctic. In the EMR, you will find beluga whales in groups of six or less during the summer. The presence of polynya (ice-free areas) and abundant food resources enable the beluga to remain in eastern James Bay year-round.

Beluga Whales are listed as *Threatened* under the federal *Species at Risk Act*. They must be viewed at a distance of 400 m or more. If you accidentally approach a beluga within 400 m, move away slowly until you have reached an appropriate distance.



Migratory and Sea Birds



Within the EMR you will likely see an array of migratory birds which are protected federally under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*. Additionally, you will encounter sea birds, which come ashore to nest or live in coastal habitats year-round.



When viewing bird colonies, you must be aware of the birds' behaviour. If a bird adopts an alert posture or emits alarm calls, takes flight or moves away, or actively defends the nest, move away quickly and quietly without making sudden movements. Additionally, avoid the use of recordings, calls, or whistles to attract birds.



