

PEARD BAY

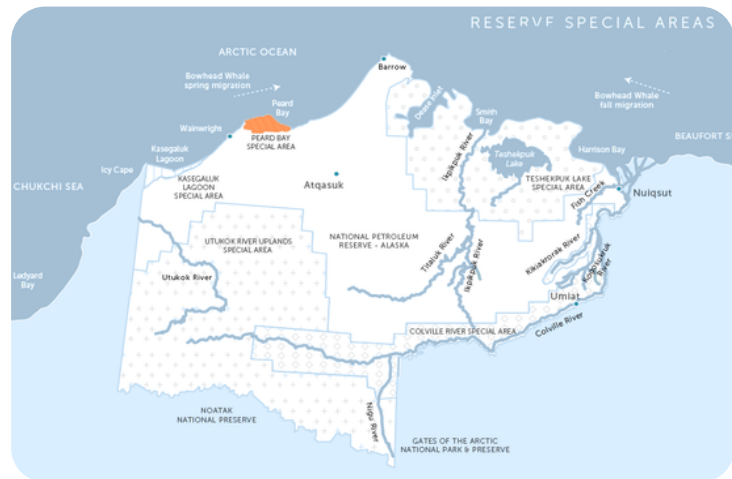
Peard Bay Special Area

Land of 1,000 lakes

About



The newest of the Reserve's Special Areas, Peard Bay encompasses **107,000 acres of the bay and surrounding wetlands** between Utqiagvik and Wainwright.



This area includes **high densities of ice seals and polar bears**, and the **highest density of spectacled eider nesting areas in Alaska**.



Tens of thousands of shorebirds, especially red phalaropes, move through Peard Bay after breeding.

Peard Bay also provides haul out areas for **ringed and bearded seals** and is characterized by **thousands of small thaw lakes filled with meltwater from thawing permafrost**.

Photo: Florian Schulz

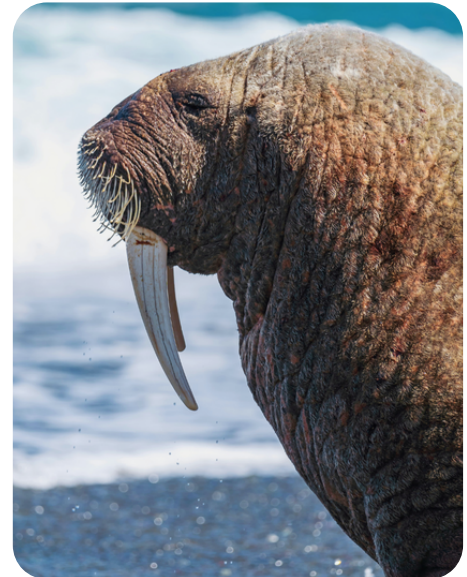
Threats to this Special Area

FOSSIL FUEL EXTRACTION

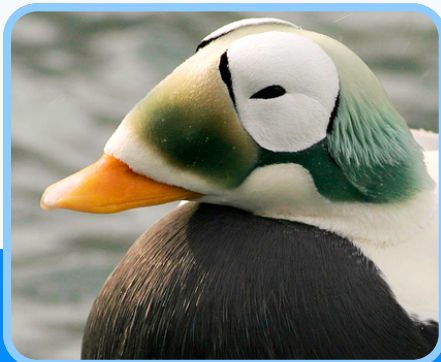
One threat to the Peard Bay Special Area is **potential fossil fuel extraction in the Arctic Ocean** – **there is currently no prohibition against developing an infrastructure corridor, such as a pipeline**, to transport oil from **offshore drilling** through Peard Bay and into Alaska’s interior or across northern Alaska to facilities at Prudhoe Bay.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is also having a profound impact on the region – **rising temperatures and the disappearance of sea ice** is causing more and more marine mammals, such as **seals and walrus**, to haul-out on the mainland, resulting in greater vulnerability to predators and hunters. In addition, **melting permafrost is removing a critical buffer between coastlines and the impact of ocean waves**.



As permafrost disappears, coastal erosion could become significant, **destroying wildlife habitat and nesting areas** and **disrupting local communities**.



The **coastal denning and feeding habitats** for **threatened polar bears** also become more important every year as **sea ice levels continue to decline**.