



Wild rhubarb grows naturally along steep river banks such as up the Arctic Red and Mackenzie rivers. Although wild rhubarb is common within its range, it is considered

ts'ii gyüü' (Gwich'ya Gwich'in dialect)
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Wild Rhubarb

Aconogonon (was Polygonum) alaskanum

sensitive in the NWT because the GSR is at the eastern edge of its range, which is small and patchy.

The rhubarb plant is ready to eat in mid-June. When young, it can be eaten raw, after first



Photo: Alestine Andre, GSCI

removing the leaves from the plant, and peeling off the outer skin. It is very crunchy and juicy. Once the plant has gone to seed or has many white flowers (seedy tops), it is too dry to eat. The leaves can be used medicinally on burns.

In June lots of people go on the shore and up the little creeks to pick wild rhubarb. It's very easy to find. Just look for last year's tall growth which is now dead and the new growth is coming up from the bottom. To harvest it you pick it from the bottom. Once you wash it you just cut off the root ends and then chop it up into about half inch pieces, leaves, flowers and all. Then you can either add it to fish broth and fish eggs which makes a great soup or put them in large zip lock freezer bags and use it in the winter. (Antoine Andre⁴).

Threats: Rhubarb may be declining around Tsiigehtchic due to increasing landslides. Rhubarb seeds can be scattered to allow the plant to grow in less threatened areas, such as near camps. Continued use of rhubarb as a traditional food is a good way to spread awareness.

Numerous other plants and animals are considered potentially at risk or sensitive in the Gwich'in Settlement Region (GSR), including:

- Woodland Caribou (Boreal population)
- Woodland Caribou (Northern Mountain population)
- Grayheaded Chickadee
- Harlequin Duck (Western population)
- Horned Grebe (Western population)
- Rusty Blackbird
- Dolly Varden (Northern form, i.e. Rat River char)
- Alaska Sagebrush
- Turner's Buttercup
- Grizzly Bear
- Wolverine
- Peregrine Falcon

For more information on species at risk in the NWT, see: <http://nwt-species-at-risk.ca>

CONTACTS:

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Range map data and silhouettes of pikas and short-eared owls provided by Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories. Wild Rhubarb photos provided by Alestine Andre, GSCI, and outline and range map contributions from Porsild A.E. & Cody, William J. (1980) Vascular Plants of Continental Northwest Territories, Canada. Ottawa, National Museum of Natural Sciences

Please report any sightings of these species at risk to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca.



Gwich'in Social & Cultural Institute



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Nan S'ridatr'igwijiinlik
Gwà'an Nin Duulee Nijnji



SPECIES AT RISK
in the Gwich'in Settlement Area

Photos: Shutterstock



Collared Pikas are a small, solitary animal related to rabbits. They spend much of their time gathering herbs and grasses from meadows to

Collared Pika (Rock rabbit)

Ochotona collaris

make hay-piles to supply food during the winter. They need to store up food for the winters as they do not hibernate. Their hay-piles can be seen on rocky mountain sides, and their loud call "meeeeeep" can also be heard if one is walking in the mountains.

In the GSR, pikas can be found in the Mackenzie Mountains and all along the Richardson Mountains. You can also see them in the mountains along the Dempster Highway around the NWT/Yukon border and south of Chii Akàn (Churchward Hill, north of Engineer Creek).

They had [collared pikas] too — rock rabbits, those guys call them. Because you hear them, but you don't see them. (Frederick Blake Jr.¹)

Threats: The greatest threat to the Collared Pika in other areas is climate change, including changes in spring precipitation and higher summer temperatures. It is unclear how climate change is affecting the Collared Pika in the NWT. If you see this animal or its store of winter food, please show respect by leaving it alone and reporting the sighting to: WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Range Map for Collared Pika



NAN SRÌDATR'IGWIJÌINLIK GWÀ'ÀN NIN DUULEE NÌINJÌI

Zhik nakhwanànkat Sṛidatr'igwijiinlik gwizhìt jidii nin duulèe nìinjii geenjit aii Adachoo K'àdagwidaadhat chan ts'àt aii Dinjii K'àdagwidaadhat nakhwanànkat gwizhìt chan ts'àt aii juudin diiyeenjit nan hàh guk'agwaadhat gi dilii (GRRB) gòo zrit agadanh nihkhàh gah gwitr'it t'atr'ag wah'ih. Nihkhàh zrit jii jidii tthak nilii, dàgòonch'uu, nits'òo geenjit dàgwidjìn'e' gòonlii, guk'atr'àhnahtyaa gòo nankat tthak duulèh sṛinatr'igwihèe'aa geenjit, akoots'at duulèe nin làt tthak nìinjii geenjit gwich'ì gwitr'it t'atr'agwah'ii.

Aii juudin diiyeenjit nan hàh guk'agwaadhat gidilii guk' àgwàhaadhat, guk'àndeht'inahtii ànts'at goonee'aa gidilii jidii tthak geenjit zhàn gòonlii gwehkhè' gahgidandaii eenjit t'agwahnùu.

SPECIES AT RISK IN THE GWICH'IN SETTLEMENT AREA

The Federal and Territorial governments and the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB) share responsibility for the conservation of species at risk in the Gwich'in Settlement Area. They work together to identify, assess, list, protect and recover animals and plant populations and their habitats that are in danger of disappearing from the wild.

The GRRB provides direction, coordination and leadership by approving designations and management plans for species at risk.

Quotations are from the following sources:

- 1 Headwaters of the Arctic Red River Project Phase II 2006
- 2 Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge of the Mackenzie Gas Project Area Project 2004
- 3 Aklavik Heritage Sites Project 2007
- 4 Elders Biography Project 1999

This brochure was produced by the GSCI with financial support from the Species at Risk Stewardship Program, Government of the Northwest Territories.

Information provided by Gwich'in participants and the following sources: <http://nwt-species-at-risk.ca>
<http://plants.gwichin.ca>

SPECIAL CONCERN



Short-eared owls are about the size of a ptarmigan and can be found across the GSR between April and late October, although they may even overwinter if there is enough to eat. A good way to identify them is to watch for their particular flight pattern: when hunting above grassland and marsh, they have moth-like flight with deep wing beats. They sometimes even hover in place.

Short-eared Owl (Mouse owl)

Asio flammeus

The feathers from diving birds like owls, but more often eagles, were prized in the past by Gwich'in hunters for use on arrows as they would travel quietly through the air. Like ravens, owls may steal snared rabbits.

And that owl, too, is another one... it will tell you if it's going to storm (Buster McLeod²). *My people say it even speaks Gwich'in* (Liz Hansen²).

Well, today you know you have plane surveys so that you could know where the caribou are [but in] them days it was not like that... Jijuu Mary Husky used to tell me when they see that owl, she say they talk to that owl. "Which way is the caribou?" they ask that owl. And if he turned his head [in a] certain way, they know that's the way. Sometimes it didn't move its head, it just stayed like that. Soon as if he move his head looking up that way, everybody start getting excited about going [hunting for caribou] (Annie B. Gordon³).

Threats: There are not many threats to this owl in the NWT, except human disturbance of their nesting sites. They build their nests on the ground, so if you are aware of a nest, please show respect by leaving the owl's nest alone so it can raise its young ones. Approaching the nest may cause the owl to leave it for good.

Photo: © Doug Dance Nature Photography

