

earth for the Summer life which has already started to push its way upward through the moss.

Birds have come North to nest and rear their young during this period of intense activity; seal pups leave their dens and slip into the sea where they will remain for the rest of their lives; clouds of mosquitoes come to torment—fortunately for only a month; lush grasses lay a thick carpet on valley floors and alternating Summer rains and sunny days give added color and growth to the mosses. The general lack of developed soil encourages a northern tundra void of trees and other forms of high vegetation.

The climate and topography of the area make it extremely unlikely that agriculture will ever be a consideration. This harsh natural environment will also curtail considerably other developments such as mining or reindeer herding. However, in spite of the fact there has been little settlement in the Arctic, it has been the home of the Eskimo population for a number of centuries. These curious and resourceful people have learned to live with the unfriendly climate and geographic facts and subsist successfully on the resources of both the land and sea. Probably we are to eventually take this lesson from our Eskimo residents and in so doing avail ourselves of the opportunity to participate in an expansive future development of this vast northland.

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XIII FAUNA AND FLORA

The greatest resource of the northland, aside from its human one, has always been the fauna and the flora, both of which are unique to this distinctive part of the world, the Arctic barrens. The Eskimos moved across the wastelands only because new areas rich in game kept presenting themselves farther and farther to the East until the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and Davis Strait had been reached.

Even before the snows have gone, Arctic flowers spring to life.

And of course the abundance of game was related to the presence of a flora which would support a large number of animals.

Throughout the whole of the North wildlife forms an extremely important part of the native economy, even in areas where there is considerable employment. The flesh is used for food, skins for boots and clothing, sinews for thread, bone and antler for tools and implements, ivory for weapons and fur for barter.

The wildlife is set aside primarily for the use of the native people through the device of game laws and the establishment of game preserves. The North-West Territories Game Ordinance and the Migratory Birds Convention Act apply, sea mammals are protected under the Fisheries Act; special Regulations govern the annual take of walrus, belluga and seal, and larger whales are protected by international agreement. Fortunately in a land so vast and sparsely settled the population has subscribed closely and willingly to the conservation laws which they know have been made for the protection of the wildlife which is so important to them.

The Arctic Fox (*Alopex lagopus*) is the small animal which brought the Hudson's Bay Company into the North as its first white residents. Over half a century ago the prices of this pelt were high, consequently the economic advantage made

