



## Study specifics

**Region:** Central and southern Yukon

**Study Areas:** 60 Mile west of Dawson, Mt. Nansen west of Carmacks, and Kusawa Lake Territorial Park.

**Survey Sites:** 185

**Overall site occupancy:** 62%

### Project partners:

- Government of Yukon, Department of Environment
- Environment and Climate Change Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service

### For more information, please contact:

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# Collared Pika Occupancy Survey 2020

## Project objectives

The purpose of the project was to increase our understanding of Pika distribution and occurrence in Yukon. Our effort focused on multiple study areas at different latitudes so that we could study the influence of climate change on Pika populations.

## Project background

Collared Pika is listed as a species of Special Concern under Canada's Species at Risk Act. Collared Pika inhabit cool alpine environments. The main threats to their survival are environmental and habitat changes predicted to occur with climate warming.

The global range of Collared Pika is limited within northwestern Canada and Alaska. Yukon is the primary steward of this species in Canada .

Previous monitoring of Collared Pika in Yukon has largely been limited to just one area (Tombstone Territorial Park).

## Study design

We chose three study areas based on what we believed was good habitat for Collared Pika. These areas had not previously been surveyed. Surveys consisted of timed searches of Pika in alpine talus patches over several mountain ranges within each study area. For each survey site, we determined Pika presence or absence. Pika presence was determined through visual observation of Pika or their signs (hay piles, fecal pellets, etc.), or hearing their territorial call.

## Key findings

Collared Pika were detected at 149 of 185 sites, giving an overall occupancy rate of 62%. Occupancy rates differed among regions, with 60 Mile area having considerably lower rates (29%) than Kusawa (75%) or Mount Nansen (79%). Reasons for these differences are yet unknown.



Photo by J. Benjamin