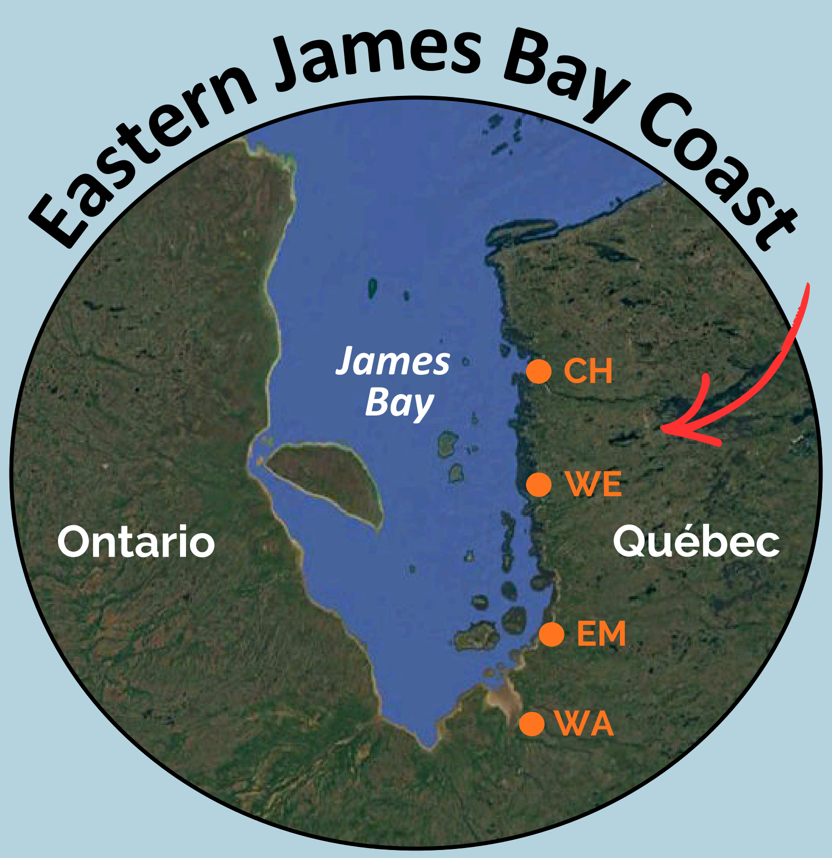
ᑳᔑ ᓂᐦᒑᐅᒋᐦᒻᐦ ᔑᑳᐹᔥᑯᐦ ᑭᔮᐦ ᐊᓂᑎᐦ ᐋᑎ ᐃᔅᐦᒑᑦ ᐱᔮᔨᐤ ᐅᒑᐦ ᐙᐱᔖᒑᐦᒻ ᐄᒑᐦᒫᑳᒻ ᒉᐃᒥᔅ ᐯᐃᐦ

EEYOU COASTAL HABITAT COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

Logo created by Eeyou artist **Natasia Mukash**

What is the CHCRP?

The **Eeyou Coastal Habitat Comprehensive Research Project (CHCRP)** is an Eeyou-driven initiative focused on understanding changes in coastal habitats along the eastern coast of Eeyou Istchee (eastern James Bay, northern Québec, Canada). The project examines how coastal waters and rivers influence nearshore habitats such as seagrass and how these changes affect coastal wildlife, including migratory birds. It also supports the development of long-term monitoring strategies. The research brings together Eeyou Knowledge and scientific methods and involves researchers from six universities, regional, industrial, and federal partners, and four coastal Eeyou Nations—Waskaganish (WA), Eastmain (EM), Wemindji (WE), and Chisasibi (CH) (Kuzyk et al. 2026).



Eeyou coastal communities

Andrew Snowboy, Eeyou land user from Chisasibi taking measurements on a goose, (April 2025, photo F. LeTourneux)

Mary O'Connor, professor at the University of British Columbia, with Marcel Moses, and Cassandra Weapenicappo, Niskamoon Local Officer, in Eastmain (July 2024, photo C. Fink-Mercier)

What we do?

Researchers and Eeyou land users work together to explore the coast and share knowledge. Eeyou land users help collect valuable information and set up measuring devices for the project.

Illustrations courtesy of Align Illustration

How the CHCRP started?

Eelgrass (*shikaapaashkw* in *iiyiyiuyimuwin* [Eeyou language]) is a flowering marine plant (seagrass) that forms underwater meadows supporting coastal ecosystems, providing food for birds and habitat for fish. A major decline in eelgrass was observed in the late 1990s, coinciding with changes in *nisk* (Canada goose in *iiyiyiuyimuwin*) abundance.

Concerns about these changes and their impacts on Eeyou traditional activities led to action. Following a special assembly in Chisasibi, the Cree Nation Government, Hydro-Québec, and Niskamoon Corporation signed a Research Agreement on 4 August 2016 to study the ecology of the coastal region of eastern James Bay and its use by *nisk*. This agreement marked the start of the CHCRP. The project is expected to end in 2029.

CHCRP Symposium Chisasibi (September 2022, photo M. Leblanc)

Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing and validation are central to the CHCRP. Research results are first presented and validated through small community consultations and with project partners before being shared more widely and published in peer-reviewed publications.

Follow CHCRP on:

EeyouCoastalHabitats

eeyou_chcrp

Scan the QR code to visit the project website and access reports

www.eeyoucoastalhabitats.ca

Kuzyk et al. 2026. Eelgrass ecosystem collapse and social-ecological regime shift driven by hydropower development and climate change. Nat Commun. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-026-69553-3