

THE TOWLINE



Sketch by Jean Craighead George

North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 1

Fall, 2009

The North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management (DWM) introduces the publication of its first newsletter to be distributed to residents of the NSB. The Department of Wildlife Management facilitates the sustainable harvest of subsistence resources by encouraging participation of Borough residents in monitoring populations of fish and wildlife species on which we all rely.

Projects that DWM pursue are the result of your input through subsistence advisory councils, Borough assembly meetings, and phone calls from you - the hunters. In light of increasing industrial development and outside pressures, it is necessary for the Wildlife Department to monitor wildlife populations and to document your use of these resources. Data from our projects are used to mitigate conflicts between hunters' needs and the needs of private industry, as well as state, federal, and international agencies.

We want to help keep you informed of our ongoing projects, as well as those proposed, by using this newsletter. We also want to encourage feedback from you by providing our Departments' contact information within this newsletter. See our website for more detailed information (www.co.north-slope.ak.us/departments/wildlife/).

Quyanaqpak!



Photo credit: C. George

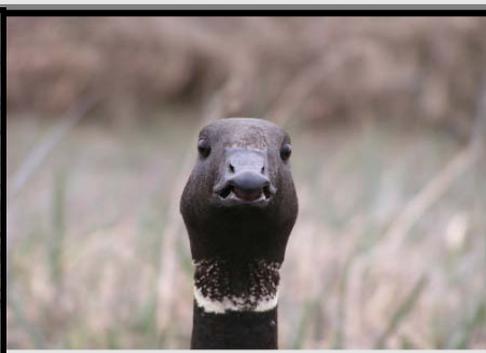


Photo credit: Jeff Wasley



Photo credit: C. George

Agviq Research

❖ Plans are underway for an ice-based bowhead whale abundance survey or "census" in the spring of 2010. Visual as well as acoustic data using hydrophones will be used to estimate population size. A full census of bowheads is required every 10 years by the IWC.



Photo credit: C. George

❖ The BOWFEST feeding ecology project explores the important bowhead feeding area northeast of Point Barrow. The study includes aerial surveys, satellite tagging, oceanographic measurements, plankton surveys, and bowhead stomach examinations. Stomach contents, whale movements, and plankton surveys are compared to physical factors in areas known to be used by bowheads for feeding. This information will aid in our understanding of how their food concentrates in the Barrow area and how the bowheads find this food. This project will provide baseline data regarding current use of their habitat for feeding.



Photo credit: B. Person

Subsistence Harvest Documentation

The NSB's Subsistence Harvest Documentation Project includes the hire of local subsistence specialists in each community who survey and map harvest information.

These data are confidential on a household basis and are summarized at the community level. The data document the level of harvest

in each community that is required to meet your cultural and nutritional needs. This project depends on your cooperation and enables greater local participation in the management of NSB resources. Reports from this project help represent subsistence users when dealing with state and federal agencies that may wish to establish harvest quotas or other harvest guidelines. The project also enables informed decisions on the management of fish and wildlife resources so you can help protect them for future generations. Good information depends on your cooperation so please cooperate with your local subsistence specialist! **Many thanks to all community members** who helped us by providing information on these surveys!

Natchiq, Ugruk and Aiviq Feeding Ecology

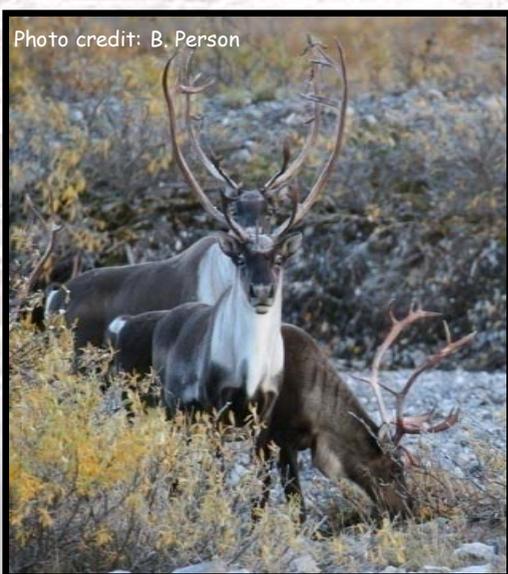


The NSB-DWM has been sampling harvested ringed seals, bearded seals and walrus taken from both Barrow and Wainwright over the last two summers. These samples are used to form a biological "baseline." By learning more about these animals, we should be able to

better predict and measure potential impacts that may occur resulting from things like climate change and offshore development. Results of the study will come in over the next several years. **Thanks to all of the hunters and their families** who assisted with the collection of these samples - we could not do this without you and appreciate your support.

Tigiganniaq Study

During the summer 2009, arctic fox were fitted with satellite collars in Prudhoe Bay and near Teshekpuk Lake in order to compare the winter movements between these two groups. If you catch a fox with a collar, **please save the carcass and collar** and report it to Brian Person of NSB-DWM. We hope to understand differences in the winter diet of these two groups of animals by sampling their tissues. This study is a joint effort between the University of Alaska Institute of Arctic Biology and the NSB-DWM.



Tuttu Research

The Department of Wildlife Management, in conjunction with Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Bureau of Land Management, has been deploying satellite telemetry collars on caribou from the Teshekpuk Lake Herd since 1990. We are currently tracking over 30 caribou, and it appears that their winter distribution will largely center between Wainwright, Atkasuk and Barrow.



Photo credit: Atkaan Crew

Congratulations Atkaan Crew!

In February of 2008, the AEWFC awarded one bowhead whale from their block quota to the village of Point Lay. After an unsuccessful attempt during the first spring, hampered by poor ice conditions, the village prepared once again for the hunt in the spring of 2009. Atkaan crew, with Julius Rexford as their captain, brought in a 49' 5" female on May 5th, 2009. Captain Thomas Nukapigak's crew assisted in the effort and the community worked for several days to butcher the whale and haul the meat 14 miles back to the village. The last time a bowhead whale was taken in Point Lay was 72 years ago in 1937.

Congratulations to the whaling crews and to Point Lay!

- ◆ More studies - information on these projects coming in a future newsletter!
 - Bowhead Hearing and Smelling Sensory Project
 - Determining the effects of wintering areas on caribou
 - Breeding biology of king eiders
 - Movement patterns and distribution of gulls
 - Effects of grazing by geese on tundra vegetation
 - Cumulative impacts of industry development on the traditional subsistence lifestyle

- ◆ We thank the NSB Assembly and Mayor Itta for their continued support of the Department of Wildlife Management - Quyanaqpak!!

North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management

P.O. Box 69 Barrow, Alaska 99723
Phone: (907) 852-0350
Fax: (907) 852-0351

Website: <http://www.co.north-slope.ak.us/departments/wildlife/>

Director: Taqulik Hepa (Taqulik.Hepa@north-slope.org)
Deputy Director: Harry Brower, Jr. (Harry.Brower@north-slope.org)

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Barrow, Alaska 99723
Permit No. 28

BOXHOLDER