

# THE **KIDS** TOWLINE



Sketch by Jean Craighead George

North Slope Borough

Department of Wildlife Management

Volume 1, Number 1

Newsletter for **KIDS**

Fall, 2009

This is the first newsletter of the North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management (DWM) and it is sent to all residents of the North Slope to keep them informed of our activities. This special version is made just for you, the students!

The DWM helps to make sure that **subsistence resources** are healthy and plentiful, like caribou, whales, geese, fish and more. Due to resource development on the land and water, it is necessary for the DWM to carefully monitor **wildlife populations** and the use of these resources. Residents participate by helping to keep track of the wildlife species on which we all rely.

We want to help you learn about the wildlife on the North Slope and understand what it is like to be a **scientist**. We encourage you to ask questions that you have about the animals or plants on the North Slope. For more information, email the Outreach Coordinator at [leslie.pierce@north-slope.org](mailto:leslie.pierce@north-slope.org) or call 852-0350, or check out our website (with more info to be added soon!) at [www.co.north-slope.ak.us/departments/wildlife/](http://www.co.north-slope.ak.us/departments/wildlife/).

**Quyanaqpak!**



Photo credit: C. George

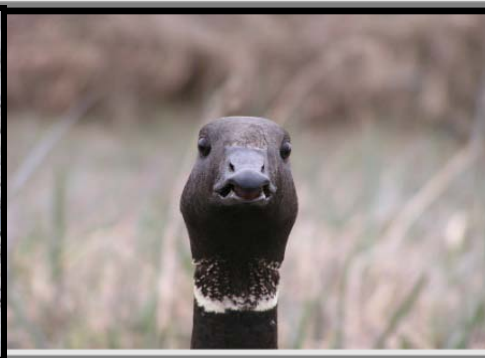


Photo credit: Jeff Wasley



Photo credit: C. George



# Agviq Research

❖ This spring, a “**census**” will be taken of **bowhead whales**. To do that we will stand on a high pressure ridge of ice and try to count all of the whales that swim past our perch. We also put special microphones, called **hydrophones**, in the water to listen to the whales. This will help us to estimate the size of the population .



❖ The **BOWFEST feeding ecology** project explores the important bowhead feeding area northeast of Point Barrow. To help us figure out how bowheads find their food (and why the food is in that place!), first we examine the stomachs to see **what** the whales are eating. Then, we fly over the area to see **where** they are feeding. We visit that area by boat and measure the temperature, pH, and other factors, plus we scoop up some of the organisms that are being eaten! Finally, **satellite tags** are placed on a few whales so that we can determine where they go when they leave our area. Does being a whale biologist sound like fun?



## Subsistence Harvest Documentation

The Subsistence Harvest Documentation Project includes local **subsistence specialists** in each community who **survey and map** harvest information. Information collected from each household is confidential. Do you like to hunt?

Why is this important? The harvest information from each community helps to determine **cultural and nutritional needs**. It also allows for greater local participation in the management of NSB wildlife resources. That means that these reports are used when dealing with agencies that may wish to set up harvest quotas or other harvest guidelines. The information also helps to protect wildlife resources for you and for future generations. **Many thanks to all community members** who helped us by providing information on these surveys!



## Natchiq, Ugruk and Aiviq Feeding Ecology



Photo credit: Floyd Davidson

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 impacts that may occur as a result of 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 helped 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. We hope to learn more about the differences in the **winter diet** of these two groups of arctic fox. If your family catches a fox with a collar, **please save the carcass and collar** and report it to Brian Person of NSB-DWM. Be very careful when handling these animals because they can carry **rabies** and other diseases!



Photo credit: B. Person

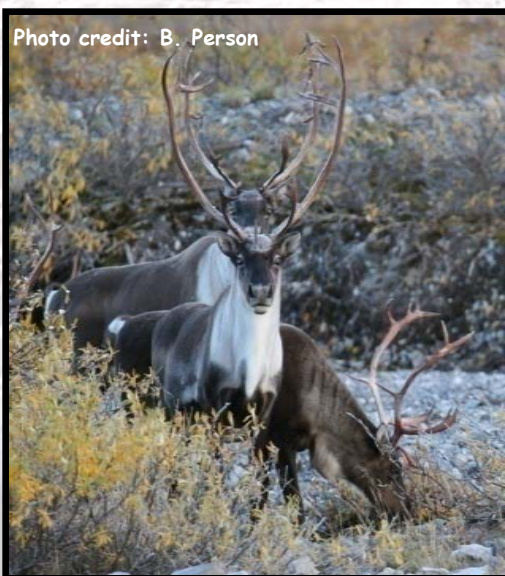


Photo credit: B. Person

## Tuttu Research

The NSB-DWM, in conjunction with Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Bureau of Land Management, has been putting **satellite collars** on **caribou** from the Teshekpuk Lake Herd since 1990. Right now, we are tracking over 30 caribou, and it looks like they are wintering mostly between Wainwright, Atqasuk and Barrow. Have you seen any caribou this fall? What's your favorite way to eat tuttu?

---

---



## Congratulations Atkaan Crew!



Photo credit: Atkaan Crew

In February of 2008, the AEW (Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission) awarded one bowhead whale from their **block quota** to the village of Point Lay. After an unsuccessful attempt

during the spring of 2008, 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 5<sup>th</sup>, 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 and muktuk 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!

### ◆ Some Key Words:

- ◆ **Baseline** - a starting point for measuring something.
- ◆ **Ecology** - the study of how plants and animals interact in their natural surroundings.
- ◆ **Resource** - a natural source of materials used by people, like water, plants, animals, oil, coal and natural gas.
- ◆ **Population** - a group of living things of the same species that travel together and produce young together.
- ◆ **Satellite collar**- a collar that sends a signal up to a satellite and then down to a computer to tell the location of the animal. It works like a GPS!
- ◆ **Species** - a group of living things that are the same in many ways, and can produce young together.
- ◆ **Subsistence** - to gather the things needed for living, like food, shelter, and clothing.
- ◆ 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 )