

Aklavik Inuvialuit describe the status of certain birds and animals

on the Yukon North Slope, March 2003



- American Robin **Kuyapigaqtuŕutin**
Arctic Fox **Tigiganniaq**
Arctic Ground Squirrel **Sikrik**
Brant **Nirglingaq**
Common Eider **Qauraviq**
Greater White-fronted Goose **Nigliq**
Grizzly Bear **Aktaq**
Lemming **Qilakmiutaq**
Long-tailed Duck **Ahaliq**
Moose **Tuttuvak**
Mouse and Vole **Avingnaq**
Red Fox **Kayuqtuq**
Red-necked Phalarope **Livalivaufaŕaq**
Shrew **Ugŕuknaq**
Snow Goose **Kanuq**
Snowy Owl **Ukpik**
Varying Hare **Ukalliq**
White-winged and Surf Scoters **Aviluqtuq**
Willow Ptarmigan **Qargiq**
Wolf **Amaguq**
Wolverine **Qavvik**

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www.taiga.net/wmac/aklavikreport/index.html



Parks Canada

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The Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) includes Inuvialuit and government representatives, and makes recommendations on the management of wildlife on the Yukon portion of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR).

This study and report are important to WMAC(NS). We need to monitor how well the environment is doing through the senses of people who have been active on the land for many years, as well as through measurements taken by scientists. This is particularly important as the climate changes, contaminants flow north, pressures on migratory species increase elsewhere on their range, and industrial activities expand in the region.

The project clearly demonstrates the cooperative approach to wildlife management required by the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) and the commitment of WMAC(NS) to meeting that objective. WMAC(NS) provided funding and logistical support, coordinated the report production, and hosted the public meeting. The Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee (AHTC) provided community support, encouragement, and ideas. Parks Canada (Western Arctic Field Unit), the Yukon Government's Parks Branch and the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development suggested interviewees and approaches. The Yukon Government Department of Environment and NatureServe Yukon provided design, interviewing, and writing support. Community experts provided the information and reviewed the results. Almost 20 years after the IFA was signed, this is the proper way to conduct this kind of work in this area.

All council members appreciate the support for this study by Inuvialuit and researchers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lindsay Staples". The signature is written in a cursive style and is located below the text of the opening comments.

Lindsay Staples,
Chair,
WMAC(NS)





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The Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee speaks for Aklavik Inuvialuit active on the land. We provide community-based advice to WMAC(NS), the Inuvialuit Game Council and other groups in the Inuvialuit Final Agreement and Settlement Region.

This report is important to us. There have been many interviews over the years. However, only a few of the many reports about the region include the knowledge and experience of hunters and trappers from Aklavik. This is a good start, and a new approach to wildlife research that we enthusiastically support. We appreciate the support and commitment of Barney Smith, Yukon Government's Community Information Coordinator, who conducted the interviews and prepared this report.

We did have some disagreements over the right words for the birds and animals. The HTC went over the language with local people and came to a consensus on the majority of it.

Evelyn Storr,
Chair,
Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee



Thank you

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Fisheries Joint Management Committee

Introduction

This report summarizes information about how certain animals and birds are doing on the Yukon North Slope and in the western Mackenzie Delta. This information comes from ten interviews and a public meeting conducted in Aklavik, NWT, in March and April, 2003.

The work was done for four reasons. First, there was a widely shared interest by the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee (AHTC) and the agencies represented on the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) in honouring the knowledge and experience of the many skilled hunters and trappers in Aklavik with a report that described not only the animals, but how they are known. The second reason was to check how birds and animals were doing and to see if any of them needed management attention. The third was to provide a current source of local interview information that could be used to update and expand the Yukon North Slope Wildlife Population Status Reports (a component of the Yukon North Slope Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan). The new species at risk legislation requires aboriginal traditional and community knowledge to be used in species assessment, so this work may help the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) to complete their assessments. Finally, there was a need to provide an example of an inexpensive way to do and write up a regional, multi-species assessment based on local knowledge.

The ten people who were interviewed for this report were selected on the advice of the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee. They and others suggested people currently active on the land throughout the region, hunting, trapping, fishing or travelling. Those selected had also spent enough time on the land over a number of years to be able to detect changes in species numbers and distribution. These people are experts in their community. A more detailed description of how this project was conducted can be found at www.taiga.net/wmac/aklavikreport/index.html.



Aileen Horler



Fisheries Joint Management Committee

The report is in three sections. The first section describes how people use the land and have gained their knowledge of the animals. This section also describes how to read the tables. The second section contains the results of the interviews and the public meeting. The information on the 21 species selected for the study is presented in a series of tables along with some summary comments. There is also a table that provides additional information about other animals on the North Slope. The report concludes with some background information on the region, and an appendix with the informed consent form.

Interview forms and narratives describing typical days during seasonal activities are stored with the Aklavik HTC and the interviewees. The HTC has the list identifying the code letters of local experts.

How people know about these species

The Inuvialuit of the western Arctic have relied on the region's wildlife for hundreds of years. Aklavik and other Inuvialuit seasonally harvest fish, beluga, caribou, moose, furbearers, grizzly bears and waterfowl, among other species, across the Yukon North Slope and in the Mackenzie Delta. Some people also gather berries and other plant parts. While most Inuvialuit now live in the communities, many travel to seasonal camps to hunt, trap and fish. Traditional gathering places in the mountains and along the coast are still in use. Aklavik residents hunt and travel in the mountains, foothills, and coastal plains as well as on the rivers, estuary, and ocean. They know which species can be found where and when, and which ones are absent. Binoculars are important tools to spot animals in the distance.

People are out on the land in all seasons. In March, hunters begin to take long day trips into the mountains to the west of Aklavik looking for returning cow caribou. Also in March, elders host 'On the Land' programs where they take groups of students to established camps in the delta. They travel on snow machines to muskrat trapping areas and on trails to seasonal camps.

While only a few hunters look for polar bears on the offshore ice, the hunters who receive grizzly bear tags go out to hunt for about a week sometime between early April and mid-May. They go once the warming weather and emerging ground squirrels indicate that the large male grizzlies have come out of their dens. These hunters travel by snow machine on long day trips of 100 to 300 km from camps on the coast. They can see animals miles away in the clear air and level open landscape.



Barney Smith



Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Many species of waterfowl migrate into these productive ecosystems. Ducks, geese and swans begin to arrive in mid-May as the rivers open. People see and hunt the arriving waterfowl in the waterways on the west side of the Mackenzie delta from Aklavik to the Blow River when they are out hunting muskrats. Travel at this time of year is by a combination of snow machine and boat as the rivers open.

Families move out to and along the coast in late June and July. They stay in cabins, mostly in the Shingle Point area, until about mid-August. From the camps, people do not often go inland or up the river valleys. They fish, hunt beluga and look for caribou along the coast. They also regularly go along the coast to creeks to get fresh water. A few people travel by boat farther northwest along the coast, and some families travel along the entire Yukon coast to and from Kaktovik in mid-July as the ice, fog and sea conditions allow. A few people take tourists by boat along the coast. Animal tracks are often seen on the gravel beaches, but it can be hard to tell how fresh they are.

Geese are hunted between the west channel of the Mackenzie and the Blow River in late August and September. Once the snow is on the ground and there is some ice on the delta channels, hunters may return to the coast to look for grizzly bears and caribou on the way to camps at Shingle Point.

In the winter, people see signs of wildlife near town, beside the ice roads, and along the trails when traveling to their fishing and trapping camps. Trapping begins in November, although it is not as intensive now that fur prices are low and gas is \$1.30 per liter.

Inuvialuit are employed as rangers at Herschel Island Territorial Park and as wardens at Ivvavik National Park. They record their observations of plants and animals on an ongoing basis during patrols throughout the year. Wardens typically do three patrols, each a week long, in April and early May, and travel along the Firth River and coast in June and July. Sometimes wardens travel by boat farther northwest along the coast.

This is only a general description of the seasonal activities of Aklavik Inuvialuit. For each species, more detail is provided about the types of sign and sightings over the year that help inform active hunters and trappers about changes in the numbers, range, habitats and condition of each bird and animal.



Aileen Horler

Barney Smith

Aileen Horler



Aileen Horler

What the tables mean

Grizzly Bear

Ursus arctos

Ak'faq

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Late April, May – numbers same as before. Hard to tell. Sees one large male track on typical hunt day.	April – sees most in mountains.	Slopes and river valleys. Dens on slopes above rivers.	April – 2 cm fat.
B	Summer – sees 2-3 on Herschel, increasing.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
D	Late April, May – steady over past 15 years. Abundant enough that he can select for males in April.	April – mountains, foothills, coast.	April – often in valleys and rolling hills. Tracks often follow creek beds down to coast.	Pelts excellent.
E	Late April, May, Summer – more all the time. Quota too small, not needed. Problems increased after quota came.	Sees them on April hunts in Richardson Mountains and in summer near Shingle Point.	Did not ask.	Spring – not too fat. Fall – 3 inches fat, good eating.
F	Summer – sees more at Running River outlet, but does not think they are increasing.	Used to see on coast only in mid-August. Now sees every day from June 21 to August 15.	Thinks vegetative feed at coast may be better now than before.	They rarely bother camp. May come into camp area in fall.
H	Summer – Numbers are increasing over past 20 years in the delta.	Sees them while boating in the delta and on hunts to flats, coast, foothills.	They dig roots in August.	Did not ask.
I	Late April, May – no change in numbers. Early May – sees 2-3 fresh bear tracks each day in 180 km hunt south from Shingle Point or Herschel.	May – mountains, foothills, coast.	All along foothills, mountains, in rivers on flats and coast.	Did not ask.
J	April – sees most tracks in Firth River valley. May – sees bears and sign along Babbage River valley. June – is seeing more bears and sign along Firth River. Summer – sees bear and sign along Firth River valley.	Mostly sees them in Firth River and Babbage River valleys, occasionally on coast.	Dens in headwater valleys.	Did not ask.
MTG	Has seen grizzly bear dens in the delta. Bears are staying out a little longer in the fall in recent years, until early November, in the Fish River vicinity.			

Best estimate of numbers in terms of “more”, “less” or “the same”.

Mostly for hunted species, concerning their fat levels.

Letter code to identify interviewee. Only the interviewee knows his or her letter.

Range is the place where this bird or animal was seen. Habitat is the type of terrain or vegetation.

Comments made by individuals and recorded at May community meeting, and notes made during reviews of the draft report over the summer.

Interviewer did not ask.

Describes activities, travel, camps, routes, and how people see these birds and animals or their sign.



How people know about grizzly bears

Hunters who receive grizzly bear tags go out to hunt for about a week sometime between April 10 to mid-May, once the warming weather and emerging ground squirrels indicate that the large male grizzlies are beginning to come out of their dens.

Hunters travel by snow machine in long day trips of 100-300 km from camps on the coast. They see grizzly bears and their tracks in the valleys, foothills and along the coast.

As the snow melts and patches of ground appear, more bears come out, but they are harder to see and travel becomes more difficult. This snowmelt takes longer to the northwest.

In the summer months, local families move to the coast to stay in cabins, mostly in the Shingle Point area. They see the odd bear on the shore or slopes, and sometimes have to deal with bears attracted to camps. The beach gravel reveals bear tracks but it is hard to tell if they are fresh.

Herschel Island Territorial Park rangers and Ivvavik National Park wardens keep records of bear observations. Tourists visiting Ivvavik National Park are required to complete a bear observation survey.

Bears are sometimes seen when people are hunting geese between the west channel of the Mackenzie River and the Blow River in early September.

Once the first snow has fallen and there is some ice on the delta channels, holders of a grizzly bear tag may look for a bear and caribou on the way to camps at Shingle Point.

What local people are seeing

Spring hunters are seeing few fresh bear tracks each year but similar numbers, mostly inland 50-75 km.

More tracks are being seen west of the Babbage River. More of the tracks seen west of the Babbage River are of smaller bears.

Some hunters feel that grizzly bears are more numerous than they were 20 years ago.

Grizzly bears seem to be moving and using the land in the same ways they always have.

Summer sightings are increasing in some areas of the coast. Vegetation changes there may make food more available.

The bears do not seem to be preying on moose, but they have been seen following muskox.

The bears harvested by hunters in the spring are not too fat. They are in the same condition as before.

Concerns and comments

The quota for grizzly bears is too small.

Hunting boundaries are hard for older hunters to locate.

Damage to camps in the delta is unacceptable.

Summarizes comments in tables including different ideas and changes in numbers, range, habitat, and condition.

Covers all threats to birds and animals and comments people wanted to mention.

For more detail see description of methods at www.taiga.net/wmac/aklavikreport/index.html

American Robin

Turdus migratorius

Kuyapigaqtuûutin

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	May and June – sees 3-4 at delta camp. Summer – hears them at camps at Shingle Point and Ptarmigan Bay. Always been around. Fewer now.	May and June – migrate down channel. July and August – in delta near camp, but not abundant.	Has never seen nest.	Did not ask.
B	Summer – one nesting record on Herschel. Cannot say trend.	Did not ask.	Nest was in a building.	Did not ask.
C	Spring – hardly hears them in spring in Aklavik and delta in recent years. Summers – more long ago. September – does not see any at Shingle Point.	Did not ask.	More inland than on gravel beaches and shorelines. Used to be seen with black birds same size as robins.	Did not ask.
E	Not changing. Remembers seeing them as a child in 1930s in delta but not on coast.	Does not see at Shingle Point. Sees them at his delta and Fish River camps.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
F	May – dozens pass through in delta. Decreasing.	Spring – sees in delta. None or rare at Running River coast. Lucky to see on coast.	Unsure where they nest.	Did not ask.
G	Hard to say. Sees little birds every summer.	Sees them at his delta camp. Never sees them at Shingle Point.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
H	Spring – always sees them. No change in numbers in delta.	Spring – sees them as they fly through delta. Hardly any seen in summer. Sees in fall in groups of up to 7 as they head south.	Does not know.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Saw lots of robins 10 to 15 years ago. Sees fewer in mid-summer, but this could be due to leaves on bushes and trees that make them harder to see.</i>			

How people know about American robins

Robins have distinctive markings and songs. Many people know these birds and await them, especially in the spring when everyone appreciates the return of songbirds.

Robins arrive in mid-May as the river opens. People see and hear them when they are out hunting muskrats and waterfowl from shore or boat in the west channel of the Mackenzie to the Blow River.

In late summer, robin families group together and move south at about the same time as people are returning to Aklavik from the coast.

What local people are seeing

People have long appreciated the songs of robins as dozens of them pass through Aklavik in May on their way north. One person recalled her grandmother describing the spring call with the words she spelled as “guuyapiaq suuratin suuratin”, similar to the species name provided.

A few robins are seen in the summer by people active in the delta. People with camps on the coast that are not on sandspits occasionally see robins.

Robins are seen as they pass by Aklavik on their way south in the fall.

Concerns and comments

Two elders said that numbers were down.



Cameron Eckert

Arctic Fox

Alopex lagopus

Tigiganniaq

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Winter – most years none, rare in delta. Most years catches none. Caught 5 in 1998, 2 in 2002. April – Never sees them inland on spring bear hunts.	November to February – rare to see them in delta. Thinks late ocean freeze-up means they have to move inland to find food. March to April – never sees them or tracks on spring bear hunts along coast and inland. Summer – saw some 10 years ago near Demarcation Bay and west.	Ocean ice. Delays in fall ocean freeze-up may be a problem. March and April – can be found on active ocean ice.	Never sees sick ones. White foxes seem nervous of coloured foxes.
B	Summer – Numbers vary on Herschel. Not sure.	Present on Herschel all summer.	Most fox dens occupied by white foxes.	Did not ask.
C	Numbers vary a lot.	Summer – never sees them. Must have young inland. December – Foxes come to caribou gutpiles between Shingle Point and Running River.	There is an old saying that a lot of white fox will come when the old black ice comes in.	Did not ask.
D	Summer – steady on Herschel. Ratio of coloured to white is 1:1. Winter – a few in recent years in delta. Year round – sees on ocean ice.	In November when ocean ice forms, many foxes travel out on ice.	Did not ask.	Dead foxes found on Herschel and along coast are always white foxes and always have white fur (winter).
E	Does not know. People don't trap them.	Summer – den farther north, not around Fish River or delta. Last few winters people catch them in delta looking for food.	They have young on land. They follow polar bears on ice and eat scraps.	Never sees sick ones.
G	Summer – sees more at Running River outlet, but does not think they are increasing.	Did not ask.	Never sees in summer at Shingle Point. Never sees dens.	Never sees dead ones.
H	Now very very low on Shingle Point. People are catching 2 or 3 a year in delta.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
I	Not seeing as many on Herschel.	There are more white fox than coloured on Herschel. Winter-spring – all along coast. Summer – sometimes on islands. More of the foxes in northwest are white, not coloured.	Late April – sees on outer edge of Yukon/NWT border foothills. Possible denning location.	Finds dead ones with white fur on Herschel. Does not touch.
J	Cannot tell.	April – along coast only near Herschel. None on coast over to Alaska or inland. Summer – not in Firth River valley.	Did not ask.	Found dead one on coast at Ptarmigan Bay with white fur.
MTG	<i>No additions or comments.</i>			

How people know about Arctic fox

Foxes travel a lot. When people are traveling they see white fox sign when the snow is soft.

Trapping begins in November in the delta. People trap as far west as the Fish River in some years. Some people would trap white fox on the coast if the price was higher. They are much easier to trap than coloured foxes as they are less wary. All trappers take foxes in snare and conibear sets until the pelts begin to show wear in February. White foxes would be caught in traps if they were present.

Although only a few Aklavik hunters are out on the sea ice looking for polar bears, on these hunts they see the tracks of foxes near the open leads and active ice.

People who go out and harvest muskrats in the delta occasionally see foxes and their dens.

In late April and early May, spring bear hunters travel widely on the coast and inland, and see tracks of foxes but do not keep counts. During the summer months, people traveling along the coast or staying at the cabins there see the odd fox on the shore or slopes, but foxes do not come to camps. The beach gravel is too coarse to show fox tracks. People know regular fox den locations. They would probably see the browner Arctic fox if these foxes were around.

What local people are seeing

Arctic fox are mostly seen in the summer months on Herschel Island. The odd one is caught in the delta in the winter, particularly in the years when the ocean ice freezes late.

People do not know about changes in numbers or habitat.

One April observation in the foothills by the NWT/Yukon border could be evidence of denning, but this was not confirmed.

Dead ones have been found mostly on Herschel Island, all in white pelage.

Concerns and comments

People are not getting out on the sea ice much anymore.



Arctic Ground Squirrel

Spermophilus parryii

Sikrik
Siksik

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Doesn't notice how many there are unless they cause problems.	Summer – some areas more than others on coast. May – based on sign and sightings, more inland.	Drier places.	April and May – tasty.
B	None on Herschel.	Elders say they were once on Herschel.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
C	Summer – numbers steady. Does not notice die-off.	Some at Shingle Point. More on shore south of Tuktoyaktuk. They do not bother camps. Lots along coast. April/May – sees their tracks near creeks. They stick their heads out of holes in nice weather on slopes.	Did not ask.	Does not hunt them. April – mother used to eat them.
D	Steady. Does not notice big fluctuations.	None on Herschel. Everywhere he lands on coast he sees them. Inland on low rolling foothills and south-facing slopes of mountains.	Summer – sees tracks along beach. April – sees them in exposed places on south-facing slopes in mountains and on rolling hills.	Did not ask.
E	Numbers never change. April – sees lots inland. Summer – sees all the time on the coast.	Not in delta. All along coast. Inland in hills.	Did not ask.	They come out early. Used to eat them.
F	Not as many as there used to be at Running River outlet and coast nearby.	Summer – on coast near Running River. People see them everywhere they stop.	Colonies seem to be on points along coast. Not inland in this area. Slumping banks may be a problem.	Did not ask.
J	Abundant, no change. They chew on gear.	All along Firth River floodplain until 15 km from coast.	River banks.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Saw ground squirrel hole in delta.</i>			

How people know about Arctic ground squirrels

Hunters who receive grizzly tags go out to hunt sometime between April 10 and mid-May for about a week, when the warming weather and active ground squirrels suggest the bears will be out of their dens.

Hunters see ground squirrels and their tracks on or near snow-free, dry slopes as they travel by snow machine in long day trips of 100-300 km from camps on the coast, particularly in May.

Families used to hunt and eat ground squirrels in the spring, but not anymore.

The locations of colonies of ground squirrels are well known to people who spend time during the summer at cabins on the coast. People watch bears, foxes and raptors hunting them.

Occasionally people have to trap or harvest them if they get under cabins and damage gear.

What local people are seeing

There aren't any ground squirrels on Herschel but there used to be.

Ground squirrels are widespread on the North Slope in drier hillsides or on slopes along coast and inland. They are abundant in the Firth River valley.

Numbers do not vary much from year to year.

Ground squirrels are active in late April.

Concerns and comments

Ground squirrels damage gear sometimes.



Cameron Eckert

Brant

Branta bernicla

Nirglingaq

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	August – may see up to 2 groups of 50 each in Blow River areas	They migrate to the Yukon coast from the Alaskan coast, and back again. Summer – sees most west side of coast, Ptarmigan Bay area. August/September – sees them at Blow River delta.	Never sees nests. Ocean shore beaches.	Did not ask.
B	Summer – sees them on Herschel. Not sure of numbers.	Mid- to late May – They arrive on Herschel from Alaska. Some are there after September 15.	Unsure if they nest on Herschel. Some on shore past moulting time.	Did not ask.
C	Early September – numbers seem steady. 15-20 in a bunch, never a larger group.	Not in delta. Early September – sees on coast near Shingle Point.	Grassy edge beaches on ponds and lakes near coast.	Do not taste as good as Greater White-fronted or Snow Geese.
D	Numbers seem steady. Dozens, not hundreds.	Summer – Babbage River flats. Unsure whether sees moulting or nesting birds. Sees moulting birds west side of Herschel and mainland.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
G	Not sure.	Don't come this way. They go over Alaska. They used to fly over Herschel in mid-August way back long ago.	Does not know where they nest.	Did not ask.
J	August – few. Not many. Groups of 20-30.	August – sees them in Firth River and Malcolm River deltas, not in Clarence Lagoon.	Swamps.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Just sees them around ocean in summer.</i>			

How people know about Brant

As the ice breaks up, these small dark ocean geese fly north following the coast of Alaska and arrive on the Yukon coast in small numbers.

People traveling along the coast in boats during the summer months may see them feeding near where they nest in June and July or moult in late July and August. Most of this human activity is near Shingle Point and to the southeast.

A few families, rangers and wardens travel by boat farther northwest along the coast, and some families travel to and from Kaktovik, Alaska, in mid-July as the ice and fog and sea conditions allow.

Geese are hunted between the west channel of the Mackenzie River and the Blow River, in early September. These hunters may take the odd Brant if it passes over low, but the tastier and more numerous yellowlegs and snow geese are preferred.

What local people are seeing

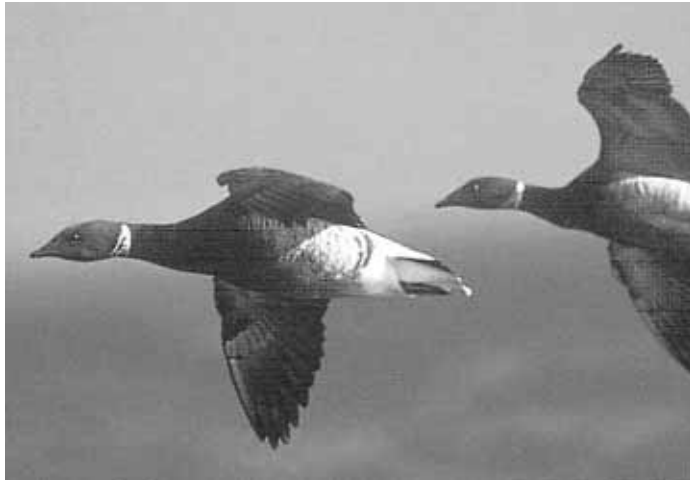
These geese come over from Alaska in the spring and probably nest near the Blow River and other areas in small numbers.

They moult along the coast, and leave Herschel in September.

These dark small geese are distinctive, but are not easy to see.

Concerns and comments

The small numbers seem to be the same as in previous years.



Ducks Unlimited Canada

Common Eider

Somateria mollissima

Qauraviq

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Not that common.	A few at Shingle Point, mostly Herschel and to west.	They nest along shore in sticks and grasses. Eat shrimps.	Did not ask.
B	Declining on Herschel. About 100 nests. Gull and raven predation important.	Does not see males. Females on 3 nests at Ptarmigan Bay.	They nest on shoreline in grasses and sticks. Entire spits disappear with rare ice events.	Did not ask.
C	Not sure.	Far to the west on coast and on Herschel. Does not go there now.	Prefer ice and cold water.	Did not ask.
D	Not a lot – much fewer than long-tailed ducks or scoters.	Around Herschel and to west. Does not see them east of Herschel.	They nest on islands. Arctic foxes and 2 pairs of ravens make their rounds every other day at Pauline Cove looking for nests. Eiders seem to be nesting closer to buildings.	Fishy tasting – doesn't hunt them.
F	Less uncommon to see nests now, Blow River to delta.	They nest on islands. More west of Shingle Point. None Running River spit. They nest among other birds Blow River to delta.	Storm in July 2002 flooded out nests on Escape Reef (Seagull Island).	Did not ask – doesn't hunt.
G	Not sure – seagulls harm nests.	Herschel. July 2002 – 1 nest on Shingle Point, 6 babies, 5 flying by later.	Did not ask.	Doesn't harvest them.
I	Summer – numbers not changing on Herschel.	Sees no nests at King Point or Blow River. Possible nests at Stokes Point. Sees nests at Seagull and islands on coast and also on Herschel.	Did not ask.	No one hunts them.
J	Stable. Only sees females, never males. July – 15 nests near camp on Nunaluk Spit.	Sees nests at Nunaluk Spit, Clarence Lagoon, Komakuk. Sees no nests at Ptarmigan Bay, Phillips Bay.	4-5 eggs in nests. Is not seeing changes in nests. Storms can wash water right over Nunaluk Spit, but storms this severe are usually in August when baby eiders on ocean.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>No additions or comments.</i>			

How people know about Common Eiders

As the ice breaks up, these large ducks fly north following the coast of Alaska and arrive on the Yukon coast. From early to mid-July, the females lie on their nests in the grass and sticks on spits and islands. Once the chicks hatch, the mother and chicks quickly move out of the nest onto the ocean. The males fly west along the coast in late July and August, returning south by following the coast back around Alaska.



Dick Vuijk

People traveling along the coast often pick types of habitats similar to those of the Common Eiders for their camps and boat landing sites. These sites usually have fewer mosquitoes, boats can land more easily on the beach, and the gravel makes a good base for buildings. Most of this human activity is near Shingle Point and to the southeast, so people have few opportunities to sight these birds along the shore to the northwest.

A few families, rangers and wardens travel by boat farther northwest along the coast, and some families travel to and from Kaktovik in mid-July as the ice, fog and sea conditions allow.

Geese are hunted between the west channel of the Mackenzie River and the Blow River, in early September. If eiders were there, these hunters would see them.

What local people are seeing

People only spoke of the female Common Eiders that they see nesting and, after mid-July, see on the near shore with their little ones.

Most of the nesting on Herschel Island is in the grass and sticks on the gravel. Common Eiders probably nest close to the buildings to get away from the foxes.

A few other nests are seen in other locations along the coast, mainly on spits and islands such as Shingle Point and Escape Reef (Seagull Island).

Concerns and comments

Predation by gulls and ravens is a worry, and by foxes, particularly on Herschel.

Unusual ice build-up and ocean currents alter the size and location of spits.

Unusual summer storms can raise ocean levels and flood nests on low islands.

Rangers on Herschel warn visitors not to frighten females off nests, as gulls and ravens may get the eggs.

Greater White-fronted Goose (Yellowlegs)

Nirliq

Anser albifrons

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Spring, summer, September – can't estimate. Numbers "good" in May. No change apparent. Sometimes they fly down channel for 4 hours in groups of 20.	May – fly down west channel and along coast to Blow and Babbage Rivers nesting areas. September – common between Blow River mouth and delta.	September – They feed mostly on flats on grass roots, berries. May – channel, mud bars and open water at mouths of creeks.	Fatter than Snow Geese. May – very fat.
B	Summer – doing OK on Herschel.	Late May – arrive on Herschel .	They are good at hiding and well camouflaged. Has not seen nest or goslings. Ponds and marshy areas.	Did not ask.
C	Less than before. Most water birds fewer. Group sizes 10-30. Timing of peak in numbers in spring and fall varies a bit, so people may think numbers are changing more than they really are.	Does not see nests on coast. They nest on Kendall Island. September – hunts near Coney Lake. They come up into delta then. May – hunts on mud bars.	They like grassy muddy areas. They pull out grass and eat the roots. Habitat seems the same. They are wild, so hard to watch close up.	Quite fat in May and September.
D	Steady, lots.	Spring – hunts down river 40-50 km. Fall – hunts edge of coast, Tent Island, Police Cabin.	No changes. They land all over. Moult in Roland Bay and Long Lake in July.	Did not ask.
G	Increasing.	Did not ask.	Few nests at Running River. Not sure, one or two.	Did not ask.
I	Not sure.	Not sure.	Nest on Babbage River and Spring Creek areas.	Not sure.
J	Did not ask.	June/July – Firth River delta. Late August/September – closer to delta. Hard to see. Could be in foothills with Snow Geese.	June and July – muddy, swampy area.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Sees some nests around Niaquluk Spit. Some years they take different migration routes in September, closer to the mountains and away from the delta.</i>			



Dan Sudia

How people know about Greater White-fronted Geese

“Yellowlegs” have distinctive markings, travel in big flocks and make distinctive sounds. People know these birds and there is a long tradition of hunting them, mostly in both the spring and fall. They are regarded as fatter, tastier, and smarter than Snow Geese.

In early May, some hunters travel by snow machine on the frozen rivers to places where incoming streams provide open water and sandbars where the geese land. The hunters use snow block blinds on the ice or simple blinds made of willows. They occasionally use decoys made of mud and plastic bags on the mudflats.

Yellowlegs arrive on the North Slope in early to mid-May. Spring bear hunters returning along the shore sometimes see them flying along the coast looking for open water.

By mid-June, when hunters are looking for bull caribou on the coast at the NWT/ Yukon border, yellowlegs are nesting and flying on their pond and lake nesting grounds just inland from the coast. People are not wandering around these marshy nesting grounds.

People traveling or staying at camps see waterfowl near the coast.

In the past, families stayed at camps until mid-September, hunting caribou and geese and picking berries. They would hunt the geese as they flew low over the coast on their way to feed on berries and grasses in the flats. Now, most families return to Aklavik in mid-August, but a few hunters return to their camps to hunt both Snow and White-fronted Geese. They harvest them from brush blinds or bushes as the geese fly over low. Sometimes they use decoys.

Yellowlegs migrate south when the first snow falls.

What local people are seeing

Most people said that the numbers of yellowlegs are steady. One person said there has been an increase and another said there has been a decrease.

Yellowlegs are still abundant and available in both the spring and fall.

Their fall feeding pattern is similar to Snow Geese.

Yellowlegs are fat in May and fatter than Snow Geese in the fall.

They appear to spend the summer inland in marshy areas all along the coast.

Concerns and comments

Yellowlegs have better eyesight than Snow Geese and are more wary.

Hunting is much harder now as the birds fly over higher and land farther inland.

Grizzly Bear

Ursus arctos

Akᓄᓇᓂ

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Late April, May – numbers same as before. Hard to tell. Sees one large male track on typical hunt day.	April – sees most in mountains.	Slopes and river valleys. Dens on slopes above rivers.	April – 2 cm fat.
B	Summer – sees 2-3 on Herschel, increasing.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
D	Late April, May – steady over past 15 years. Abundant enough that he can select for males in April.	April – mountains, foothills, coast.	April – often in valleys and rolling hills. Tracks often follow creek beds down to coast.	Pelts excellent.
E	Late April, May, Summer – more all the time. Quota too small, not needed. Problems increased after quota came.	Sees them on April hunts in Richardson Mountains and in summer near Shingle Point.	Did not ask.	Spring – not too fat. Fall – 3 inches fat, good eating.
F	Summer – sees more at Running River outlet, but does not think they are increasing.	Used to see on coast only in mid-August. Now sees every day from June 21 to August 15.	Thinks vegetative feed at coast may be better now than before.	They rarely bother camp. May come into camp area in fall.
H	Summer – Numbers are increasing over past 20 years in the delta.	Sees them while boating in the delta and on hunts to flats, coast, foothills.	They dig roots in August.	Did not ask.
I	Late April, May – no change in numbers. Early May – sees 2-3 fresh bear tracks each day in 180 km hunt south from Shingle Point or Herschel.	May – mountains, foothills, coast.	All along foothills, mountains. In rivers on flats and coast.	Did not ask.
J	April – sees most tracks in Firth River valley. May – sees bears and sign along Babbage River valley. June – Is seeing more bears and sign along Firth River. Summer – sees bear and sign along Firth River valley.	Mostly sees them in Firth River and Babbage River valleys, occasionally on coast.	Dens in headwater valleys.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Has seen grizzly bear dens in the delta. Bears are staying out a little longer in the fall in recent years, until early November, in the Fish River vicinity.</i>			

How people know about grizzly bears

Hunters who receive grizzly bear tags go out to hunt for about a week sometime between April 10 to mid-May, once the warming weather and emerging ground squirrels indicate that the large male grizzlies are beginning to come out of their dens.

Hunters travel by snow machine in long day trips of 100-300 km from camps on the coast. They see grizzly bears and their tracks in the valleys, foothills and along the coast.

As the snow melts and patches of ground appear, more bears come out, but they are harder to see and travel becomes more difficult. This snowmelt takes longer to the northwest.

In the summer months, local families move to the coast to stay in cabins, mostly in the Shingle Point area. They see the odd bear on the shore or slopes, and sometimes have to deal with bears attracted to camps. The beach gravel reveals bear tracks but it is hard to tell if they are fresh.

Herschel Island Territorial Park rangers and Ivvavik National Park wardens keep records of bear observations. Tourists visiting Ivvavik National Park are required to complete a bear observation survey.

Bears are sometimes seen when people are hunting geese between the west channel of the Mackenzie River and the Blow River in early September.

Once the first snow has fallen and there is some ice on the delta channels, holders of a grizzly bear tag may look for a bear and caribou on the way to camps at Shingle Point.

What local people are seeing

Spring hunters are seeing few fresh bear tracks each year but similar numbers, mostly inland 50-75 km.

More tracks are being seen west of the Babbage River. More of the tracks seen west of the Babbage river are of smaller bears.

Some hunters feel that grizzly bears are more numerous than they were 20 years ago.

Grizzly bears seem to be moving and using the land in the same ways they always have.

Summer sightings are increasing in some areas of the coast. Vegetation changes there may make food more available.

The bears do not seem to be preying on moose, but they have been seen following muskox.

The bears harvested by hunters in the spring are not too fat. They are in the same condition as before.

Concerns and comments

The quota for grizzly bears is too small.

Hunting boundaries are hard for older hunters to locate.

Damage to camps in the delta is unacceptable.



Lemming

Lemmus sibiricus, Dicrostonyx torquatus

Qilakmiutaq

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Not sure. Sees the jaegers hunting them but does not wander in the tundra much in the summer.	Not sure.	Not sure.	Did not ask.
B	Summer – Numbers vary on Herschel. Sees none in some years.	Did not ask.	Higher places in the willows. Increases in lemming habitat expected with fewer snow banks, more willows, grasses and sedges.	Did not ask.
C	Not sure.	Thinks there are more, farther down coast. Some at King Point.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
D	Hard to say. Voles more abundant than lemmings.	Sees on hills at cabins near Shingle Point in summer and on Herschel.	Around buildings, under lumber on Herschel.	Did not ask.
E	Not sure.	They are all over on the coast and at camps.	They hide from foxes inside logs that are rotten. Kids like to lift logs and look for young ones.	Did not ask.
I	Summer – Numbers vary a lot on Herschel. Lots in 2000, numbers dropped on 2001, fair numbers in 2002.	Did not ask.	Creeks, brushy areas, flat areas with lichen and water. Tops of hills. Sees nests when snow melts in flat areas near coast.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Saw one white lemming near Langley Island drilling rig this winter.</i>			



Parks Canada

How people know about lemmings

Inuvialuit families spend the summer on the coast at camps on gravel spits that are not good habitat for lemmings. Children are not encouraged to wander on the mainland and few families walk in wetter, spongy tundra where lemmings live.

People know that mice, lemmings and shrews are around, but they do not pay much attention to them. People do not like them around camps. They do not take cats out to camps, but they do train dogs to kill rodents.

The visitors who wander over Herschel in the summer often surprise lemmings and see them run away and quickly disappear in the shin-high plants. Visitors can see the melon-sized grass nests and evidence of burrows on the ground under the snow in depressions where the snowmelt is delayed.

In the summer people watch hawks, owls, cranes, jaegers, and foxes move over the tundra looking for mice and lemmings.

The people who are moving logs or lumber in the summer often see the nests of mothers with young.

What local people are seeing

Even though lemmings may be one of the most abundant animals on the Yukon North Slope, it is hard to find people in Aklavik who know much about them or want to talk about them.

People do not pay much attention to lemmings. People are usually not in habitats where lemmings are common, except on Herschel.

Lemmings are probably widespread. Numbers on Herschel vary between summers.

Lemming nests are seen in hollow logs and under boards.

Concerns and comments

No one expressed concerns.

Long-tailed Duck (Old Squaw)

Ahaliq

Clangula hyemalis

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Unsure.	Summer – mostly on ocean near Herschel and farther west.	Uncertain – maybe they nest on beach in sticks. Not much of a nest.	Unsure.
B	Stable on Herschel.	They pass through Herschel and stop over. They moult offshore.	No nests on Herschel. They nest in beach areas where there is driftwood. Logs provide protection.	Did not ask.
C	June – lots. But used to be more.	Summer – does not spend time on inland lakes and west on coast.	Summer – lots on lakes inland.	Fat when taken in May and June.
D	Steady. Lots in moulting groups. Equal numbers of scoters and long-tailed ducks in moulting groups off Herschel.	They breed in inland lakes along coast. Sees big rafts of moulting birds with scoters off Herschel.	Colder, deeper ocean water with ice.	Fat in May. Taste fishy later. Does not hunt in fall.
F	June – sees them in Shingle Point coast area and east. Not in the hundreds, decreasing. July – some, not a lot in ocean.	July – in ocean along coast.	They nest inland in swampy areas in delta to Blow River.	Does not hunt.
G	Used to be lots long ago. Does not see many now.	Sees them after you leave tree line in delta.	They nest in Shallow Bay, lakes, rivers. They moult on ocean, all along shore side. Not many now.	Did not ask.
J	In groups of 50.	Nunaluk Spit and Herschel vicinity.	On ocean.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>No additions or comments.</i>			

How people know about Long-tailed Ducks

Ahaliq have distinctive markings and long tails and make unusual sounds, like their Inuvialuktun name. People know these birds and remember where and when they see them.

These ducks arrive up the Mackenzie in mid-May as the river opens. People see them in the waterways on the west side of the Mackenzie delta from Aklavik to the Blow River as they hunt muskrats and waterfowl from shore or boat. Travel at this time of year is by both snow machine and boat as the rivers open and people wait for ice to leave shore near cabins close to Shingle Point. A few hunters harvest these ducks as they arrive in the area. They hear the sounds of these ducks nesting on inland lakes.

During the summer months, people traveling along or staying at the cabins on the coast see groups of moulting sea ducks on the ocean.

Fall goose hunters on the coast near the Yukon/NWT border see these ducks flying south.

What local people are seeing

Individuals who spend time near Herschel in July and to the west see these ducks in groups of 50, often with scoters, floating in the ocean. Numbers seem stable.

People living in July near Shingle Point see fewer on the ocean there than long ago.

Concerns and comments

There are general concerns about lesser numbers of many waterbird species in the Shingle area.



Parks Canada

Moose

Alces alces

Tuttuvak

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	April – inland. Unsure if changing. Sees them in groups of 2 to 5. September – around Blow River, not sure if changing.	Generally they are moving out of foothills into flats and delta area. April – sees them in floodplains, willow patches on slopes and draws along coast.	Willow areas along channels, foothills. Willow areas in floodplains, draws, slopes.	September – fat bulls, few twins.
D	Increasing in delta. Hard to say on rivers.	Winter – sees tracks throughout valleys, hillsides inland in delta. Present year round. Summer – saw one in 1989 on Herschel. Not there other summers.	Willows.	April – calves about half the size of mother. Usually one calf, sometimes twins.
E	Increasing in delta and on Fish River. Very very few 1900-1940, saw them way south in mountains, too far to hunt them with dogs.	Delta. Fish River.	Burning forests push moose into new areas. Willow flats never burn.	Did not ask.
F	Summer – increasing over long term in Blow and Running River valleys near coast. Bears hang around but do not bother moose.	Summer – They move across tundra between Blow and Running River valleys.	Since early 1970s, tall willows have spread 5 to 10 miles north to coast in Running River valley. Moose have followed.	One calf per cow mostly. Once saw twins in Blow River.
G	More on North Slope Rivers. More in Delta.	Big fire somewhere, moose moved out, so more in delta.	Did not ask.	Starting to see twins in delta. No twins seen elsewhere in fall.
H	Going up a lot in delta. In 9 hours, sees 3-4 fresh tracks on trap line in winter.	More north of tree line in delta.	Increase came after big fire elsewhere.	One cow in 20 has twins. Can't tell if more or less.
I	Same in mountains east of Aklavik in March and on spring bear hunts inland from coast. March – scattered in bunches of 5-15 in willow creek areas. Early May – numbers quite high south of Herschel. 10-15 in certain areas scattered along valleys.	Willow foothills, mountains and river valleys in delta.	Willow areas.	Did not ask.
J	Increasing in Babbage River valley and to the west. April – sees lots in groups, 90-100 km from coast, near the Babbage River fish holes.	Summer – along Firth and Babbage Rivers, and along coast. They migrate into mountains in winter.	April and May – in creek drainages up high where there is not much snow.	Has never seen cow with twins in the past 9 years in the Babbage River valley and to the west.
MTG	<i>Sees moose daily at Running River mouth area between the end of June and the end of August. Couple of moose seen on Herschel. Many more now (three times more) compared to 20 years ago. Moose are abundant at Bird Camp (Tent Island).</i>			

How people know about moose

Aklavik Inuvialuit are caribou people. Only two families routinely harvest moose each September. If no caribou are around, a small moose may be harvested in the summer for meat if it is seen on the shoreline.

Moose leave obvious tracks everywhere they travel except on some habitats in the summer. It can be hard to judge how fresh the tracks are in the tundra and gravel.

Once the snow has fallen, people see tracks near town, beside the ice roads and beside the trails and channels used to reach fishing and trapping camps.

In March, hunters on snow machines take long day trips (200 km) into the mountains to the west of Aklavik looking for returning cow caribou. They see moose sign on these travels.

Spring bear hunters see moose and their sign in willow river flats as they travel by snow machine from the coast. While they may harvest a caribou, they do not harvest moose as the volume of meat is too great for their toboggans.

Some families keep track of cow moose and calves they regularly see each summer.



Werner Stebner

What local people are seeing

Moose have been on the North Slope as long as people remember, but were found more in the far south in mountain valleys decades ago. Now they are regularly seen all year in tall willow areas in river valleys, all the way to the coast, but they are not abundant.

Moose have been seen on Herschel.

Delta moose are more abundant and increasing. About one in 20 cows has twin calves, and most cows seen in fall have calves. Moose numbers increased in the delta following a big forest fire.

Concerns and comments

People said in these interviews and those conducted regularly by the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op that the moose in the hills taste better than the moose taken in the delta. One moose hunter said that boiling removes this willow flavour. Harvesting them in the winter, and letting them sit for a few hours before skinning, also removes this flavour.

In the past 20 years, tall willows have been able to grow 15 km north in the Running River valley, all the way to the coast. This may be because the climate is changing.

Mouse and Vole

Microtus sp., Clethrionomys sp.

Avingnaq

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
B	Summer – they do not fluctuate on Herschel like lemmings.	Did not ask.	Wetter areas. Environmental changes will affect their habitat	Did not ask.
D	Summer – steady on Herschel. See trapping study.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
E	Numbers vary quite a bit.	Always in camps, even at Shingle Point. Summer – on coast.	Did not ask.	Did not ask. Does not think cranes eat them.
H	Down in delta though numbers go up and down a lot. Quite a few last year. Still around. Sees tracks in snow.	More at camps in the delta than at shore camps.	In snow at grassy edge of lake. Summer – sees around camp.	Did not ask.
I	Summer – hard to tell on Herschel. More voles than lemmings. Numbers vary year to year.	Did not ask.	Snow level is important to voles.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Has started to see more at Shingle Point in the past two summers. There are more in the spring than in the summer. Sees five or six young in July in nests that are now found any possible place where it is dry, such as under logs or floorboards. Some mice cache roots of wild rhubarb for winter in mud and muskeg areas .</i>			

How people know about mice and voles

Inuvialuit families spending the summer at camps on the coast work hard to keep 'mice' from their buildings and value dogs that kill them. Cats are not taken to camps. Children are not encouraged to wander on the mainland and few families walk in wetter, spongy tundra where they would see these small animals. People know that mice, lemmings and shrews are around, but they do not pay much attention to them.

Mice are not good to have around camp as they can damage stored food and gear.

The visitors who wander over Herschel in the summer often see voles run away and quickly disappear in the shin-high plants.

In the summer people watch hawks, owls, cranes, jaegers, and foxes move over the tundra looking for mice and lemmings.

The people who are moving logs or lumber in the summer often see the nests of mothers with young.

What local people are seeing

People interviewed did not want to talk about mice.

Mice and voles are widespread in the delta, along the shore, on the tundra and at pond edges.

Concerns and comments

People do not want mice and voles inside buildings.



Alice Kenney



Carol Arey

Carol has spent her summers at Shingle Point from the time she was six days old and considers the North Slope her home. Her family has cabins at several places along the coast to Alaska. Carol spends time hunting and fishing in the summer with her mom, children, brother and other family members. Carol was the only woman to be part of the crew hunting bowhead whales from 1993 until a whale was harvested in 1996. She has been active with the Aklavik HTC, the Arctic Borderlands Co-op and WIMAC(NS) for many years. Carol is currently the President of the Aklavik Community Corporation.



Mervin Joe

Mervin was born in Inuvik in 1964. He grew up in Aklavik, hunting and fishing with his family on the west side of the delta as well as trapping above Aklavik into the Richardson Mountains. He lived in Inuvik at various times as he grew older. Mervin has been working for Parks Canada includes patrols in Inuvik National Park from March to October. Mervin continues to spend time at his family camps between Aklavik and Inuvik.



Danny A. Gordon

Danny was born in 1935 at Barter Island, Alaska. His family moved 1942-43, living at Herschel Island and other locations while trapping all over the area. Danny settled in Aklavik in 1943 and has lived there ever since. He has been a trapper since he was a young man. He hunts most species in the region, including polar bear, from his camps at Shingle Point and in the Mackenzie Delta. Danny is a bowhead whaling captain and was part of the crew that harvested the bowhead at Shingle Point. Danny served for many years on the Aklavik HTC and WIMAC (NS).



Frank Eianik

Frank was born in Aklavik in 1953 and spent his school years in Inuvik. Frank has camps at Shingle Point and in the delta where he goes hunting, whaling and ranger on Herschel Island for 15 years. He currently runs an outfitting business, guiding tourists and providing contract support to wildlife studies. Frank has served on numerous boards and councils, including WIMAC(NS), the Herschel Island Planning Committee and the Aklavik Community Corporation. He has been the President of the Aklavik HTC and was a member of the Inuvialuit Game Council for 12 years.



Donald Aviugana

Donald was born in Aklavik. He spent 28 years in Inuvik but has been living back home in Aklavik since 1982. Donald spends time in the summer fishing at Shingle Point or whaling at Bird Camp. He hunts caribou and geese and has spent many years trapping. Donald is a member of the Inuvialuit Game Council, the Aklavik Elders Committee and the Aklavik HTC. He spent six years on WIMAC(NS) and 10 years on the Porcupine Caribou Management Board.



Lee John Meeyok

Lee John was born on the coast near the Komakuk DEW Line site. His family moved to Aklavik when he was a baby and he has lived there ever since. Lee John's main camp is at Shingle Point. From there he does a lot of boating in the summer, and hunting in the spring and fall. Lee John hunts polar bears, grizzlies, caribou and other species. He was a ranger on Herschel Island from 1982-1998 and again in 2002 and 2003. He is good at identifying birds, animals and plants.



Wilson Maiegana

Wilson was born at Shingle Point in 1948. He was raised and has lived all his life in and around Aklavik. Wilson lives most of the year at his camp 23 miles down river from Aklavik, where he hunts and traps. He does not get out to the coast much, but does travel into the north Richardson Mountains. He is now one of the last full-time trappers living out of town. Wilson has occasionally taken a job as a wildlife monitor at the industrial camps.



Jacob Archie

Jacob was born at Kay Point, on the north coast of the Yukon, in 1932. His family moved to Shingle Point in 1938 and to the delta in 1940, about 30 miles below Aklavik. This was the first time he saw trees. In 1966, he and his family moved to Aklavik. He has trapped all his life, mainly from his camps near Aklavik, on the Fish River and at Shingle Point. Jacob hunts caribou, moose, ducks and geese, rabbits, ptarmigan and grizzly bear. He once hunted a polar bear near Herschel. He served on the Aklavik HTC for many years.



Danny C. Gordon

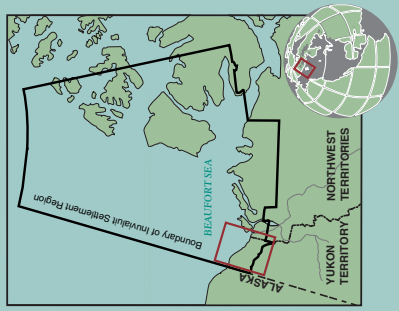
Danny was born at Barter Island, Alaska and spent some of his childhood at Point Barrow. Danny traveled to Canada by dog team with his family when he was 10 years old. They lived at a number of places along the coast, including Herschel Island, for almost two years, living off the land. Danny arrived in Aklavik in 1948 where he has lived ever since. Danny has four cabins along the coast that he uses when traveling and hunting in the summer and winter. He also has a cabin in the delta that he uses every fall when he and his wife are trapping. Danny has served on the Inuvialuit Game Council and is currently a member of WIMAC (NS) and the Aklavik HTC.



Ricky Joe

Ricky was born and raised in Aklavik, where he has spent most of his life. He has camps at Shingle Point and on Nupayuk Channel in the delta. Ricky hunts all species, including polar bears, seals and beluga whales. He has been a trapper but has stopped for now until the fur prices improve. Ricky worked as a ranger on Herschel Island for three seasons. He has also been a casual employee of Parks Canada. Ricky has participated as a fieldworker in studies on grizzly bears and sheep and has served on the Aklavik HTC.

Yukon North Slope



Red Fox (Coloured Fox)

Vulpes vulpes

Kayuqtuq

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	November 2002 – very low in delta. Got 12, normal is 20. High in 1998 was 59. Almost always catches males. Of 10 caught, 4 are cross, 5 are red, and 1 is silver. April – Numbers vary inland. Sees many tracks in foothills and mountains.	They move and migrate all the time. Scavengers. Stay a few days. November-February – all over delta. May-June – delta dens.	April – fox hunt areas frequented by mice, ptarmigan, rabbits. Sees dens on mounds beside river channel while boating. Sees pups at dens, but not on every trip.	Has caught 3 in past 10 years with sores on rump and lips and no guard hairs. Does not touch these. Buries them in snow. None seen with rabies.
B	Summer – Numbers vary on Herschel. Not sure.	Present on Herschel all summer.	Most fox dens occupied by white foxes.	Did not ask.
C	Winter – Numbers vary. Lots in 2000/01, low in 2002/03. Cycle same as rabbits. Get sick and die off.	Summer – hardly ever sees them. Late May/early June – when he hunts muskrats in delta sees foxes with young pups.	They are shy even on Shingle Point. Never sees them near camps. Winter – catches in snares set for lynx near outlets of big lakes.	Has seen sick ones and leaves them alone. Suggested rabies may be cause.
D	Steady. Coloured to white ratio on Herschel is 1:1.	Widespread, but not on Shingle Point.	Traditional den sites. April – sees them inland and on coast. When skidooring always sees foxes.	Never sees sick or dead red foxes.
E	Numbers steady but they vary between years. Colours: 6 red, 3 cross, 1 silver.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.	Saw dead ones in 1977/78 – rabies? Skinny. One died on his porch at Fish River.
F	Summer – not as many as before near Running River and on coast. Numbers vary between years.	Slopes and foothills in Running River valley.	They avoid camps, are timid.	No sick ones seen.
H	Numbers low in delta. Hard to tell if still dropping. High in 1998/9.	More in treed areas in delta than north of treeline or on coast.	Sees dens on banks of lakes.	Late May – in dens sees 6 or 7 pups. Mostly good shape and fat. No sick ones.
I	Low numbers. Varies between years. Numbers and ratio of coloured to white foxes increases to the SE along coast.	April – tracks all over inland from Shingle Point and on Herschel. Summer – sees them sometimes near buildings and scattered along mainland coast, near Shingle Point.	Did not ask.	Mostly cross and silver, not many red on mainland. More red ones in delta.
J	Cannot tell trend. April/May – sees odd one on coast while snowmobiling west of Babbage River.	April/May – Babbage River valley and coast. Summer – Firth River valley.	Sees den in Firth River valley.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>No additions or comments.</i>			

How people know about red foxes

Red foxes (including coloured, cross and silver foxes) travel a lot. When people are traveling, they see sign of these foxes in most areas when the snow is soft.

Aklavik Inuvialuit have separate words for the various “coloured fox.”

The general word for fox is *kayaqtuq*. Silver fox are *marraq*, cross fox are *kiasigutilik*, red fox are *aupilaqtaq* and blue fox are *qianraq*.

All trappers take foxes in snare and conibear sets until the pelts begin to show wear and sunburn in February.

Delta families and school groups that go out and harvest muskrats occasionally see foxes and their dens in the delta.

In late April and early May, spring bear hunters travel widely on the coast and inland and see tracks of foxes, but they do not keep counts. They are able to distinguish these tracks from the smaller white fox tracks.

During the summer months, people traveling along or staying at the cabins on the coast see the odd fox on the shore or slopes, but foxes do not come to camps. The beach gravel is too coarse to show fox tracks. People know regular fox den locations near their camps.

What local people are seeing

More coloured foxes are seen on the southeast compared to the northwest side of the North Slope.

Numbers are low now, but were high in 1998, and vary between years.

Tracks are frequently seen on spring bear hunts, mostly inland in foothills and mountains.

Sick animals are occasionally trapped and one was found dead near a cabin.

Concerns and comments

No one expressed concerns.



Red-necked Phalarope

Phalaropus lobatus

Livalivauñaq

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Summer – numbers way down. Not too many left. September – sees in groups of 20 on coast at border and in channels before they fly south.	July and August – used to be abundant near Escape Reef. Saw them while boating to and from Shingle Point. August – saw 30 in bunch at Kay and King Point. September – fewer at mouth of delta.	Sees them on water, circling, eating shrimp near surface. Ocean areas with currents.	Did not ask.
B	Sees thousands on Herschel. Unsure if numbers changing.	June – small flocks on rivers in delta. Summer and fall – ocean eddy areas near spits.	They nest in grassy sloughs at edge of wild rye and pond edge, in indent on ground. Dampness may be a risk.	Did not ask.
C	Summer – hardly any now at Shingle Point area and in delta. September – sees lots at King Point.	Delta to King Point and west.	They go around and around on the water. It helps them find what they eat.	Did not ask.
D	A few at Shingle Point and Running River. Lots at Herschel sand spits. Thousands counted on south side of Herschel in 1990 or 91.	Did not ask.	Sand spit areas.	Did not ask.
E	Summer – sees lots at Shingle Point, 20-30. No changes. When ice goes out, sees no changes in numbers at river delta.	Did not ask.	Ocean.	Did not ask.
F	Hundreds on coast east of Running River. No change.	More between Blow River and delta than west of Running River.	Sandpits, shallow water, mudflats. May – habitat improves. More vegetation so more bugs.	Did not ask.
H	Same in the delta.	Hardly ever sees them on SE coast. July/August – on river channels.	July and August – sees them on beach in river, on ponds, after water levels drop.	Did not ask.
I	Going down.	Summer – mostly sees them on Herschel. Sees some on Phillips Bay and occasionally Shingle Point.	Spring – sees small numbers and groups after ice has moved out. Also sees them in summer, early fall.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Sees bunches of Red-necked Phalaropes along the coast around Kay Point and Herschel.</i>			

How people know about Red-necked Phalaropes

'Snipes' have distinctive markings, and swim in circles. People know these birds and remember where and when they see them. During the interviews, people looked at the bird book and distinguished these birds from the other phalaropes. The name phalarope is not used.

These birds arrive in mid-May as the river opens. People see them in the west channel of the Mackenzie to the Blow River as they hunt muskrats and waterfowl from shore or boat.

During the summer months, people see 'snipes' swimming around sand spits, mudflats and islands.

What local people are seeing

Interviewees looked at the phalaropes in the bird identification book and confirmed the 'snipes' they were talking about were Red-necked Phalaropes. (Some details about Red Phalaropes are in a later section of this report. See "Comments about other animals.")

Individuals spending time in July near Herschel Island reported lots of 'snipes' in similar numbers and habitats as before. One person said there are fewer. Another commented there were 'thousands' on Herschel.

Individuals in the Shingle area in July gave different reports. Most said there are lower numbers than before, but these birds are still regularly seen. The two oldest people interviewed said numbers were way down compared to years ago. Others said that these birds are common and regularly seen, particularly on the coast west of Shingle.

People reported seeing a few groups in the delta and Mackenzie River channels in the summer and during migration time.

Concerns and comments

People interviewed wanted to know why they circled, and how this improved their feeding. (This behaviour stirs up the small invertebrates they eat.)

One person thought that the increasing brushiness on the coast would lead to more bugs for the 'snipes' to eat.



Cameron Eckert

Shrew

Sorex tundrensis, Sorex ugyunak, Sorex monitulus

Ugruknaq

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Winter – knows how many there are by how fast they steal whitefish bait in mink sets. Saw lots in the winter of 2001/02. Numbers vary between years. Summer – sees them swimming across channels in delta while boating. Not uncommon.	Winter – sees them all over the place in delta.	Did not ask.	Active, assumes they are healthy. March 2003 – found one dead under snow, 2 inches long including tail.
E	Lots around. Does not notice changes.	Did not ask.	Sees mice swimming but not shrews.	Did not ask.
G	Unsure.	Remembers them in cabins in delta and Ptarmigan Bay area.	Does not see them swimming.	Did not ask.
H	Has not seen for years. Come and go. Down now.	Sees them all over delta and coast.	Hard to say what their natural habitats are. They come into cabin and climb on him.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Never sees them on the coast. In the fall and winter they squeeze through a half-inch wide crack in his cabin in the delta.</i>			

How people know about shrews

People think 'mice' when they see the tiny tracks in the snow, hear small sounds in the cabin at the night, or are surprised by the little brown shapes that scurry away. They also think 'mice' when they notice the wake of the vigorous little swimmers, watch their dogs pursuing something, or see the predatory birds pounce to the ground. Unless they see the smaller size and pointy nose, or know these little carnivores are the ones after their fish bait in their traps, they do not think 'shrew'.

What local people are seeing

Fish is a common bait in traps and shrews eat this bait to the bone. Trappers understood that this activity was related to the abundance of shrews.

One of the trappers noted that in some years shrews were very abundant and quickly removed much of the fish bait from mink sets in the delta.

When people lived in cabins made from logs, they saw shrews more often, as the shrews could get in more easily and run around.

People remember seeing them all over the delta and coast, but could not say much more.

One person had seen one swimming across a channel in the delta.

Concerns and comments

One person said he did not like shrews in his cabin. He reported that he had been bitten, and they kept him awake some nights climbing over him. He called them 'pointy-nosed damn nuisances'.



David Nagorsen

Snow Goose

Chen caerulescens

Kanuq

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Increasing. Sees lots. May – fewer coming down west channel in delta. Lots 30 years ago. Overall numbers are up.	September – They used to feed on land at coast and fly in low. Since 1993-95, they fly over high, land, and feed inland many miles. May – They migrate north on east side of delta.	September – sees them in berry areas in foothills. May – They land on open water patches near mud bars at creek mouths in channel.	Good eating geese. Fat when harvested.
B	Increasing.	Late May – They pass through coast . September – They stage on coast, not on Herschel.	Fall staging happens all along berry-rich areas along North Slope mountains. Drier permafrost may shift berry-rich areas and geese.	They are skinny when they arrive early September. Leave 2-3 weeks later with much fat, even in groin and neck.
C	Has not seen the big increase that biologists say is happening. Feels numbers are the same.	Areas used have changed over the years. Mud bars and lakes get more willows so they land on other bars.	Late April, early May – They land on mud bars. September – They land on grassy mud bars. There is no change in the amount of willow and mud bars, they just shift around over the years as the river and ocean currents change.	End April, early May – quite fat. September – fat.
D	Seem to be more. Has never seen blue ones. Not worried about numbers.	Spring – They pass through delta and disappear north. September – They come in to mainland, east coast. First snow – They start south.	September – They feed well inland, out of sight, on berries.	Did not ask.
E	Lots more.	Fall – They come across from Sachs Harbour. Long ago never saw them much around King Point.	Shallow Bay – At dusk they fly back from uplands to islands at coast where there are fewer foxes and white owls. More inland feeding on berries, puddle grass.	Ones shot are fat. Finds dead young ones that can't make it floating in ocean. Does not eat these.
F	More.	Mid-September – They used to arrive at coast near Shingle Point. Now arrive later and land elsewhere.	Did not know.	Did not know.
G	More! People not hunting them much anymore. Can't get to them in foothills, won't let you sneak up.	They just come over from Sachs Harbour, land with young ones late August and September.	They land on foothills and little lakes, eat lots of blueberries and aqpiit (yellowberries). Habitat is not affected by increase in geese. Swamp grass grows back.	Fat, no change.
I	More.	September – sees them all along the foothills. Lots behind Phillips Bay and Babbage River flats. September hunt – in Blow River vicinity after snow in foothills.	No impact on habitat yet. They eat mostly blueberries. Once snow covers these berries, geese go to marshy areas, closer to delta.	Fat, no change.
J	Increasing. Lots of land for them. Is not concerned	Mid-to late August – saw them 4 years ago behind Stokes DEW-Line site, farthest west point seen. Has seen them at Babbage River up to 10 km plus inland. Not many seen in Blow River area. Has seen most flocks in recent years south of Shingle Point.	Mostly sees them on flats near coast and inland.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Snow geese take different routes each year. Last year did not see many on the Mackenzie River delta. Usually sees lots around the end of the summer.</i>			

How people know about Snow Geese

Snow Geese have distinctive markings, travel in big flocks and make distinctive sounds. People know these birds and there is a long tradition of hunting them, mostly in the fall.

In early May some hunters travel by snow machine on the river to places where incoming streams provide open water and sandbars where the geese land. Hunters use snow block blinds on the ice or simple blinds made of willows. They occasionally use decoys made of mud and plastic bags on the mudflats.

Spring bear hunters sometimes see the Snow Geese flying along the coast looking for open water.

By mid-June, when hunters are looking for bull caribou on the coast at the Yukon/ NWT border, Snow Geese have moved off the coast to their nesting grounds further to the north.

In July and early August, people see groups of moulting sea ducks on the ocean near the coast. Snow Geese are not in this area at this time, but if there were any, people would see them.

In the past, families stayed at camps until mid-September, hunting caribou and geese and picking berries. They would hunt the geese as the birds flew low over the coast on their way to feed on berries and grasses in the flats. Now most families return to Aklavik in mid-August, but a few hunters return to their camps to hunt Snow and Greater White-fronted Geese. They harvest them from brush blinds or bushes as the geese fly over low. Sometimes they use decoys. Hunting is much harder now as the birds fly over higher and land farther inland.

Wardens and rangers fly in small planes and helicopters back and forth to their camps in Ivvavik and Herschel Island Parks from May to September, keeping well above the ground to avoid disturbing animals. They see the white Snow Geese on the hillsides and flats in the foothills across the North Slope.

As the first snow falls, Snow Geese migrate south. Aklavik residents are active on the rivers at this time and are looking for waterfowl.

What local people are seeing

People are seeing increases in the numbers of Snow Geese.

The spring migration route over the Delta has shifted to the east side in the past 10 years, but the timing is the same. This shift east means that fewer Snow Geese fly down the west channel area near traditional hunting camps, so they are less available for people to hunt.

Snow Geese never stay on the coast for the summer.

The geese are skinny when they arrive back on the coast in August. They quickly fatten up on berries and roots of swamp grass. In the past 10 years this feeding has definitely shifted farther away from the camps at Shingle Point and Running River. As a result, fewer birds are harvested. This shift is possibly due to drier permafrost and fewer berries.

The geese are feeding on fall berries and swamp grass farther inland and west over to the Babbage River.

Concerns and comments

No one expressed a concern about the increasing numbers of Snow Geese. They saw no sign that the geese were damaging the North Slope range.

It is more challenging to harvest Snow Geese now as they feed on berries farther inland and fly north on routes that do not take them over traditional camps.



Jim Hawkings

Snowy Owl

Nyctea scandiaca

Ukpik

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Summer – Numbers vary quite a bit between years. Lots in 1990. Assumes related to mice. Winter – saw 2 (white, grey) in delta in 2002/03. Numbers vary. Saw a lot 10 years ago in delta. No one hunts them now. April – not uncommon to see sitting on a hump in flats inland from Shingle Point.	Summer – more farther west, especially on Herschel. Winter – sees infrequently while trapping in delta. April – occasionally sees them on flats all along coast.	Winter – usually sitting on a hummock or branch overlooking open areas. Summer – all over the flats, see them sitting, really stand out.	In 1940s, parents used to catch two in fall, always fat, for Christmas dinner. Very tasty. They were attracted to a post with a bit of caribou fur on it and would be caught in a small trap.
B	Unsure. Can be 30 to 50 on Herschel some years. Numbers vary between and within summers a lot.	Arrive Herschel late June to first week July. Rare to see in September. A few nest on Herschel. May be summer staging/hunting area, not nesting.	They perch on knolls to hunt. Be careful assuming that owls seen in summer are nesting.	If lemming cycle down they may mate but not raise young.
C	April – sees odd one once in a while, always alone. Doing ok. Winter – not uncommon to see them during his infrequent trips.	Few in delta. Sees on flats near coast near Shingle.	Near big lakes and wide-open flats, sitting where they can see a long ways. Looking for lemmings.	Did not ask.
D	No change. Few.	Summer – spread out on mainland. Mostly on south and west side of Herschel. April – sees one on mainland between Shingle Point and Herschel, every other trip.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
E	Does not see much in summer. Same I guess, not much change.	Summer – sees a few near Shingle Point. Doesn't see many at Fish River. Sees them once in a while in delta.	Sitting high on hills, looking for lemmings and ptarmigan.	Never sees gray ones. Father used to harvest white owls in winter at King Point.
F	Summer – rare in Running River, Shingle Point area. 2 sightings at Shingle Point in early July 2002 was first in many years.	Summer in this area. Never sees inland, rare on coast.	Beach – sitting, watching, hunting.	Did not ask.
H	Sees 1 or 2 a winter in delta, same as other years .	September – sees them along river bank in delta.	Flats and near willows.	Did not ask.
I	Summer on Herschel – 1999, 2000 really high, about 100. 2001, 2002 lucky to see 5 or 10. Late April/May – numbers vary between years.	Sees most on Herschel, but can see them occasionally elsewhere along coast and coastal plain.	May – flats, coast on mainland.	Did not ask.
J	Not seeing very many. Surprised how few. Not sure of trend.	April 2002 – one on Herschel. July – only one seen since 1993 on Firth River flats. Golden eagles most numerous raptors in Firth River valley.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>No additions or comments.</i>			

How people know about Snowy Owls

'White owls' are distinctive and well known, but they are not seen that often. People remember sightings. Sixty years ago, these birds were taken in the fall for special meals (shot or trapped on baited posts), but no one bothers them now. Their habit of sitting on humps or posts and their white colour make them quite easily seen.

Trappers in the delta occasionally see them sitting on logs or stumps between November and February.

Hunters or travelers often see Snowy Owls when they use binoculars to view the surrounding landscape. Hunters who return to the coast to hunt geese in September use binoculars a lot.

Spring bear hunters occasionally see owls in the flats as they travel by snow machine in long day trips of 100-300 km from camps on the coast.

Owls and eagles scare up flocks of waterfowl when they fly near them.

What local people are seeing

People see a solitary owl or two when on a trip. They are seen in almost every month of the year and always on the flats near the coast. Snowy Owls are rarely seen in the delta in the winter.

Two owls (one white and one grey) were reported to have been seen together in the delta in the winter of 2002.

Herschel was the only location where Snowy Owls were reported as being numerous in some summers (30-50, 100). The arrival of some birds in late June or early July may be too late for breeding.

Concerns and comments

No one expressed concerns.

Wayne Spencer



Varying Hare (Snowshoe Rabbit)

Ukalliq

Lepus americanus

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	April – no changes apparent inland.	Floodplains and brushy slopes in all river valleys. Not near camps on beach areas at coast.	Willow areas.	Did not ask.
B	None on Herschel.	They are on Richards Island so they should be on Herschel but are not.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
D	Numbers go up and down. Now they are rebounding. If lots in delta, then also in Blow River. Then they are all over the place.	None on Herschel. Delta and river valleys.	Willow flats.	Did not ask.
E	Floods kill them off in delta and they build up again every 10 years. Numbers constant near Fish River. Lots for 30 years.	Not too common farther south in trees and bush.	Willows important. Brush and trees no good.	Never sees sick rabbits. Fat ones at Fish River. Can harvest all year round.
G	Numbers vary but now are more. Coming back slow in delta. Floods in 1970s killed them off. Elsewhere – never die off. All the time they are there.	Not too many on Babbage River. Lots near Shallow Bay and Police Cabin foothills beside river. A few at Running River. Quite a few at Blow River.	In bad weather they go under snow bank.	Did not ask.
H	Coming up slowly in delta from low point in cycle. 1998 very abundant. Lowest in winter 2002.	Mostly south side of tree line in delta. Hardly any on flats. Quite a few in Cache and Fish Creeks.	Willows.	Did not ask.
I	Increasing in Deep, Blow and Running Rivers, as seen in May grizzly bear hunts.	Did not ask.	Creeks with willows. Numbers increasing since winter roads built in 1980s.	Did not ask.
J	Cannot say.	Has never seen any west of Babbage River. Rarely sees tracks or droppings at Joe Creek.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Saw a very big rabbit at camp at Blow River. Rabbits taken near coast at the Running and Blow Rivers areas are very fat.</i>			



How people know about varying hares

Aklavik Inuvialuit value 'rabbits' and harvest them in small numbers during the year, mostly when and where the rabbits are abundant and it is worth the effort.

Rabbits leave obvious tracks everywhere when they travel on soft snow.

Once the snow has fallen, people see tracks near town, beside the ice roads and beside the trails and channels used to reach fishing and trapping camps.

In March, elders host 'On the Land' programs where they take groups of students to established camps in the delta. They travel on snow machines to muskrat trapping areas and on trails to important camps. They teach students how to snare rabbits.

In March, hunters also begin to take long day trips into the mountains to the west of Aklavik looking for returning cow caribou. Others drive in trucks on ice roads or on snow machines along the edges of channels, looking for rabbits.

In April and May, spring bear hunters see rabbit tracks in the willow flats.

Rabbits are occasionally seen and harvested in the fall on caribou hunts in the mountains, and later by those trapping in the delta.

What local people are seeing

People were surprised that there are no rabbits found on Herschel, since they are known to be on islands in the delta.

People go down to the coast and hunt rabbits there, especially near Running River and Blow River. More are found in willow areas on the North Slope than in the delta.

Delta populations are greatly reduced by floods (for example, in the 1970s) and cycles. They were low in number in 2002 and are coming back up.

Rabbits are always quite abundant inland, except in the Firth River area, and have been increasing in recent years. Elders know of places on the Yukon North Slope where there are always lots of rabbits and they are always fat.

Concerns and comments

People said they miss eating rabbits.

White-winged and Surf Scoter

Aviluqtuq

Melanitta fusca, Melanitta perspicatta

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Summer – is still seeing lots of these scoters floating and feeding in big groups.	Uncertain about species. Big ones and small ones, some orange-billed and others white-winged. Hard to recall which are where.	Discussed, but not certain. Ptarmigan Bay and Herschel.	Spring – These “pie ducks” return quite fat and have good meat.
B	Summer – numerous. Surf Scoters near Herschel are twice as common as White-winged Scoters.	Suspects they mate on their way north and females go elsewhere to nest and males live and moult near Herschel.	Ocean.	Did not ask.
C	May and June – lots on Mackenzie River in pairs. Summer – Numbers vary. Too many to count. Lots. Fall – They concentrate on rivers as lakes freeze up. Groups are very large in fall, but not as many as there used to be.	Summer – sees floating groups off coast near Shingle and King Points. May and June – sees in channels in delta. Fall – sees in channels in delta.	They like it where the water is cooler and there is more to eat.	Normal. Fat in May/June and again in September.
D	Thousands in moulting groups off Herschel in July. Steady numbers	Spring – small groups in delta. July – Workboat Passage and Herschel area.	Did not ask.	Fat in spring and fall.
F	Spring – used to be hundreds, now lucky to see them. In summer there are thousands all along coast, moulting. Numbers are the same.	July – all along coast.	Does not know nesting habitat.	Fat in June.
G	Did not ask.	Sees them all over in ocean at Shingle and King Points. 200-300 in a bunch. All black ones in ocean mixed with white-winged ones.	Unsure where they nest.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Scoters have a fishy taste. Mostly sees them in the delta in the fall.</i>			

How people know about scoters

People know the three species of scoters when they look at the pictures of the males in the bird book, but call the ones they see 'black ducks' or 'pie ducks'. Several names are used for scoters. The general word for scoter is aviluqtuq. Black ducks are also called qangak or tafakfuaq. People value these birds because they are fat and tasty, and not too difficult to harvest on the river in the spring and late fall.

Scoters arrive in mid-May as the river opens. People see them in the waterways on the west side of the Mackenzie delta from Aklavik to the Blow River as they hunt muskrats and waterfowl from shore or boat. A few people harvest these ducks as they arrive in the area.

People see groups of moulting sea ducks on the ocean all along the coastline and in the ocean around Herschel in July.

In September, these ducks leave the delta late and concentrate on the river as the lakes freeze. Some hunters harvest them at this time.

What local people are seeing

Black ducks remain as abundant as ever as they pass through the delta on their way north. They moult in the thousands offshore, and pass through the delta on their way south.

Most people harvest larger pie ducks.

Large moulting groups are most often seen to the west, off Herschel. One person said most of these were males.

No one knew where these birds nest.

Concerns and comments

No one expressed any concerns during the interviews.

Sam Barry



Willow Ptarmigan

Lagopus lagopus

Qargiq
Nasaullik

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Winter – Numbers vary between years in delta but not on coast. Individuals, not big flocks. Medium numbers now. April – abundant inland, large flocks. Sees no changes. Consistently really good numbers in areas of Blow, Running and Babbage Rivers.	Willow Ptarmigan are mostly coast and inland. Some Rock Ptarmigan are inland. July – unusual sighting of group of 7. Five miles offshore, sitting on ocean. Seen while whaling, all took off.	Places with willows.	Did not ask.
B	Summer – common on Herschel. Cannot tell if numbers change between years. Does not see die-offs.	Willow Ptarmigan on Herschel.	Higher habitats and willow areas.	Did not ask.
D	Plentiful in habitats they like. Does not notice years with few.	Widespread and plentiful in delta and river valleys.	April – valleys with willows. Late September – riverbanks in delta.	Did not ask.
E	Does not see years with many or few.	Did not ask.	March – They move up into hills. Bunch up 100-200. Sees in flats with grass.	Easy to get.
G	Coming back slowly. Millions when he was a kid in 1940s. No years when they died right out.	Not many near Shingle Point. Lots at Running and Blow Rivers. Not too many at Babbage River.	March to May – mountainside willows. Generally willow creek valleys.	Did not ask.
H	Numbers down in delta. Lots 3 years ago.	More on coast than delta.	March – flocks of 100 on coast.	Did not ask.
I	Normal. Quite abundant when seen on May grizzly bear hunts south of Shingle Point and Herschel.	Did not ask.	April – Willow Ptarmigan in big bunches. May – some Rock Ptarmigan higher up, not in groups.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>No additions or comments.</i>			

How people know about Willow Ptarmigan

Aklavik Inuvialuit value ptarmigan and hunt them in small numbers during the year.

Ptarmigan leave obvious tracks everywhere when they travel on soft snow.

Once the snow has fallen, people see tracks near town, beside the ice roads and beside the trails and channels used to reach fishing and trapping camps.

Ptarmigan are often harvested as people drive along the side of channels on their snow machines or drive the winter roads.

In April and May, spring bear hunters see large flocks and hear the breeding birds display on their territories in the morning. The ptarmigan are changing colour then and are called *nasaukkik*.

Ptarmigan are seen and harvested in the fall on caribou hunts in the mountains, and later by those trapping in the delta.

What local people are seeing

Numbers in the delta in the winter were lower in 2002-03 than three years ago. All the ptarmigan that are seen are Willow Ptarmigan.

These birds are plentiful every April in willow habitats in North Slope valleys and mountain sides. These are mostly Willow Ptarmigan, but some of the smaller Rock Ptarmigan are seen higher up.

Concerns and comments

No one expressed concerns.

Rock Ptarmigan taste better.

People enjoy listening to and watching ptarmigan when these birds are courting.

Parks Canada



Wolf

Canis lupus

Amaguuq

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Much lower since snow machines became common due to heavy hunting. More in delta now that there are no caribou in Richardson Mountains. Summer – very rare to see on or near coast. April – inland from Shingle Point they are sometimes seen. They move a lot and numbers vary a lot between years. There is no trend.	Winter – have moved down from North Richardson Mountains to the delta, where they hunt moose. They moved because there are no caribou in North Richardson Mountains now over much of the year.	Did not ask.	April – has never seen any diseased, rabid.
D	Numbers seen vary inland and on coast. They are present if caribou around. Winter – more in delta in past 7 years when no caribou in North Richardson Mountains.	Widespread, if caribou present. Delta in winter.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
E	Around all the time but not too many. Sees odd one or pairs.	Fall – in delta killing moose as no caribou. Winter in hills near Aklavik.	Did not ask.	Never sees sick ones. Sometimes tame, hungry near camps.
F	Increasing in delta. Took dog last September from camp at West Channel outlet near coast. Found at Running River if caribou numerous.	Delta. More inland, not on shoreline. Cannot tell tracks on gravel beach.	Howling heard in August in 80s, early 90s and 2000 at Running River. Den may have moved inland after landslide.	Seem bolder. They let us see them more in the past few years.
H	Fewer in delta (no caribou to eat).	Did not ask.	Never sees tracks on river shore in August. Hears them howling near camp. No den seen.	Poops full of rabbit hair and ptarmigan bits, not moose.
I	Same. May – sees tracks occasionally each day on spring bear hunts. March – sees 2-4 fresh wolf tracks per 175-km hunt day. Sees wolves, but not often, on early June caribou hunt to Blow River vicinity.	Not sure.	Wolves in bigger packs west of Babbage River where they are not hunted as hard. March – smaller packs in North Richardson Mountains now.	March – wolves taken have some fat.
J	Numbers same on coast. Increasing in Firth River valley.	Many tracks, den in Firth River valley. Not too many at Malcolm River. Sees a few tracks, one sighting at Babbage River. Lucky to see one track between Herschel and the Alaska border.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Hunters keep wolf numbers down.</i>			



How people know about wolves

Aklavik Inuvialuit pay attention to wolves. They remember and discuss sightings, dens, howling, and kills.

Wolves leave obvious tracks everywhere in the snow as they travel. The size and number in the group can be determined by the tracks.

In the winter, people see tracks beside the ice roads and near industrial camps where they work. Tracks are also seen beside the trails and channels to the fishing and trapping camps. Trappers on snow machines pursue and harvest them if they see them.

In March, hunters also take long day trips into the mountains to the west of Aklavik looking for returning cow caribou. They pursue and harvest wolves if they see them or their fresh tracks and if the country is not too rough.

Hunters see wolves and their sign when out on the land for spring grizzly bear hunts in April and May. Generally, they will see wolves and their sign if caribou are around, but otherwise they don't. Hunters know regular den sites and check to see if wolves are there.

People moving along or staying at cabins on the coast hear wolves howling near camps in August if dens or rendezvous sites are nearby. People know the location of traditional wolf dens near the camps and often check if they are being used. They see the odd wolf on the shore or slopes, but never see them near camps.

The beach gravel reveals wolf tracks, but it is hard to tell if they are fresh. There is not a lot of mud and sand on the river shores until the river water levels drop in August and September.

A few families hunt geese in the waterways on the west side of the Mackenzie delta from Aklavik to the Blow River in early September. Wolves sometimes kill dogs at these temporary camps.

Many of the hunters had helped biologists collar and study wolves.

What local people are seeing

Most people felt wolves would be found on the North Slope if caribou were around.

With the absence of caribou in the Richardson Mountains in recent years and more moose in the delta, some but not all hunters felt that more of the wolves were in the delta hunting moose. However, wolves, their kills or sign of moose running were rarely seen in the delta because the bush is so thick.

Pack sizes may be larger in Ivvavik National Park, reflecting less hunting.

There are fewer wolves and smaller packs since people started to use skidoos to hunt them in the 1970s.

Overall, wolves are present but they are not too numerous.

Concerns and comments

One family lost a dog to wolves last fall. They are concerned that wolves have been getting more aggressive in the fall in recent years.

Tight radio collars left on wolves concerned one interviewee.

Wolverine

Gulo gulo

Qavvik

	NUMBERS	RANGE	HABITAT	CONDITION
A	Winter – all solitary, catches 0-4. Almost all male. Sees tracks infrequently. May – sees 5-7 fresh tracks per day on typical bear hunt day. No trend.	Winter – did not ask. April – sees sign every day as they travel in the foothills and mountains. Summer – rare to see near coast in summer. They do not bother meat, fish being smoked, garbage or gear at cabins.	Winter – cannot see them from a distance in delta, as bush is so thick. April – half of trails followed go into burrows in gulleys with willows and creeks. Summer – They live back in the mountains.	Winter – has never noticed missing toes. Most caught are fat. They do not bother cabins. April – have one quarter inch fat all over body.
B	Summer – common on Herschel.	Did not ask.	Mostly on west side and high points. Caribou calve there.	Did not ask.
C	Believes numbers have declined since snow machines replaced dog teams.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.	Did not ask.
D	Stable. April – sees them inland from Shingle Point and Herschel. Selects for males.	Widespread. Not on coast in summer.	Low rolling hills.	Very good.
E	Steady – not too many. Catches 2 males/year on average.	Mostly in mountains. Summer – never sees on coast.	Did not ask.	Always fat.
H	Numbers going up in delta.	Did not ask.	Never sees holes or burrows.	Always fat. 2cm on back and belly in winter.
I	March – sees 2-3 fresh tracks per 175 day of travel west of Aklavik. May – 3-4 in 180 km south of Shingle Point, and 6-7 in 180 km south of Herschel. More west of Babbage River since less hunting there. Early June – occasionally sees them on flats near Blow River vicinity.	All along foothills, mountains.	Summer on Herschel – northwest side	March – some fat. May – fur discoloured by sun.
J	Cannot tell numbers. Not sure if changing.	April/May – sees them on Herschel west to border. Never sees tracks. April/May – most tracks, 1-2 per trip, between Shingle Point and Herschel. Odd track each trip in Babbage River valley.	Sees burrow in spring at end of valley where snow builds up. April/May – sees most tracks along coast.	Did not ask.
MTG	<i>Snow melting and freezing rubs the hair off their undersides. Used to see lots at Stitichi Lake, but has not been there for quite a few years. Never sees them in the summer. Maybe they are in the mountains then. Does not often see them in the delta but saw tracks in 2001 about six miles north of Aklavik. They will take meat and fish. Has never seen them in garbage. Sees them in piled-up ice. They hunt sunning seals in April after breathing holes have collapsed and seals come up on ice.</i>			

How people know about wolverine

Aklavik Inuvialuit pay attention to wolverine. They remember and discuss sightings and tracks. Wolverine are worth a lot of money, so people do not pass up opportunities to harvest them between September and April.

People see signs of wolverine when they are traveling to their fishing and trapping camps in the winter and when they are hunting in the spring.

In March, hunters begin to take long day trips into the mountains to the west of Aklavik looking for returning cow caribou. They also hunt for grizzly bears in April and May. They travel by snow machine in long day trips of 100-300 km from camps on the coast. These hunters cross wolverine tracks and may follow them if they are fresh.

People moving along or staying on the coast in the summer almost never see wolverine.

It is rare for wolverine to bother the houses at the camps at any time of year.

What local people are seeing

People described a widespread distribution, with more wolverine being found in the foothills and mountains.

Wolverine are not that numerous. Fresh tracks of solitary animals are seen about every 40-80 km of snowmobiling in April and May. No trend is apparent.

All but one of the spring bear hunters who were interviewed felt they saw more tracks west of the Babbage River.

The wolverine that are harvested are always fat.

Wolverine are using burrows a lot.

Concerns and comments

One individual was concerned about a tight radio collar left on a wolverine.



Comments about other animals

American Wigeon Ugiuhiug <i>Anas americana</i>	MTG Sees a lot around Shingle Point. Sound “whew whew”.
Ants, 1 inch long	F Saw in Firth River valley in summer, 1995. Saw first one at Running River camp in summer, 2002. MTG Notices ants from up river going down the river. Black and red ones. Big ants also go down river. They fight amongst each other.
Beaver Kiqiaq, Pafuqtaq <i>Castor canadensis</i>	A Throughout delta. Summer at Running and Blow Rivers. Not in Babbage River. C Numbers way up now in delta as no one is trapping them. They are even building homes in the river, before they only used to build homes in lakes. This may be because some lakes are filling up with willows. E More in delta. J Has seen dam in headwaters of Firth River but never sees sign in Malcolm or Babbage Rivers. MTG Beaver house between First Creek and foothills.
Black Bear Iggarlik <i>Ursus americanus</i>	E Sees anywhere in delta and Fish River camp. Getting to be more. They live in hills. Don't travel in open country. Never sees them with cubs except once in March when he saw a mother with 2 tiny cubs. They were in a den in hole in ground among trees beside lake. Mother growled at him. Likes new 'kill-anytime' rule. H More black bears now in delta. Mostly sees them in fall on river shores. Dens in banks of old river channels. Has never seen brown-coloured ones. J Doubts they are present in Ivvavik Park, despite hair DNA evidence.
Bluethroat <i>Luscinia svecica</i>	D Has not seen. B Has never seen this bird in the delta, on the coast or at Herschel.
Canada Goose Uluagullik <i>Branta canadensis</i>	A Lessers – not too many. They nest in the Blow and Babbage River areas. A Greater (honkers) – Only sees the odd flock in August and September, mostly near Blow River. Never in summer. Suspects they fly in from islands. Sound really different from other Canada Geese. B They arrive late May/early June on Herschel. Saw 17 once. They moult on island and could nest there. Has not seen recently. Trend unsure. Foxes may prey on nests when abundant.
Caribou Tuktu <i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	F In fall and winter 2002/03 very fat, too fat. Heard of one cow taken with 4 fetuses.
Common Raven Tulugaq <i>Corvus corax</i>	A Very few and far between. Has seen one nest inland at Shingle Point in Deep Creek willows. B They nest on man-made structures and feed on garbage, so numbers increase with development. One raven can take out a whole colony of seabird nests. They are increasing on Herschel. G None at Shingle Point. H Few in delta, mostly at garbage dump at Aklavik. No change in numbers. They nest in spruce trees and have blue eggs. Hardly ever sees them on coast. I Lots in treed areas of the delta. On Herschel there are 1 or 2 families. They are occasionally at Shingle Point, and have been there all year. They are increasing on Herschel but elsewhere numbers vary. Ravens follow and help hunters. J Does not see ravens where he stops along coast over to Alaska border in the summer. In April he sees very very few inland near the Blow River or at Shingle Point. Not on Herschel in April. They nest in the Firth River valley about 40 km from the ocean. MTG They nest at Komakuk.



Parks Canada

Other animals (cont.)

Dragonflies	B Saw them on Herschel several years ago.
Great Blue Heron <i>Ardea herodias</i>	B One seen at Aklavik in the summer of 2001 or 2002.
Great Horned Owl Nikpayuq <i>Bubo virginianus</i>	A They nest close to his delta camp upriver from treeline. Never sees them but knows hooting call. Not that many. H Hears them summer and before freeze-up in delta. Not in February or March.
Gull Nauyaq (big), Nauyaat (small) <i>Larus sp.</i>	A Sees lots. 300 in June and July at Seagull Island. Numbers vary from year to year. Cannot say if increasing or decreasing. B Komakuk garbage dump closed so fewer gulls now than when this base was in operation. C Numbers about the same in the summer on the coast around Shingle Point area. Around all summer. D Spread out all over coast in summer. Lots at Shingle Point at whaling and fishing time. G Lots more seagulls at Shingle Point in summer. Noisy. H No change in small ones on river or big ones on coast in delta. They arrive right behind ducks. Small ones nest on river banks, in mud hollow. 1-3 eggs. I Numbers same. They arrive in the spring, right after ducks, in first 2 weeks of May. Sees them in the summer on Herschel and Seagull Islands and Shingle Point. They follow boats to get fish hit by propeller. Some wait too long to go south, freeze, and die. J Is seeing them in the same numbers as in previous years, all along the coast. Big and little ones nest along Firth River delta, 20 km from coast.
Gyrfalcon Kirgavik <i>Falco rusticolus</i>	B On Herschel.
Harlequin Duck <i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>	B On shore and interior of Herschel. Only males seen so far. Hens probably hiding.
Hoary Marmot Sik Sik Puks <i>Marmota caligata</i>	MTG Two people said they remembered seeing them back in 1960s and 1970s in the Babbage and Firth River areas.
Insects, general Qupilguq	F Sees and is concerned about new insects. Will start to take photos and notes. MTG Seeing yellow jackets more often in July.
Jaeger Isugnaq Parasitic Jaeger <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i> Long-tailed Jaeger <i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	A Summer, all along coast. Some in delta. Usually sees in pairs until July. After that up to a maximum of 30 in group. Migrate up and down delta in ones or twos. I They arrive on Herschel about June 4 and leave in August. They do not migrate down the Mackenzie valley. Lots in the summer on the coast and on Herschel. Numbers are not changing. Tamed ones at Pauline Cove have returned for years.
King Eider Qingalik <i>Somateria spectabilis</i>	A Saw one male dead on ice near open water at the mouth of the Babbage River on April 26, 2000. There were two golden eagles jumping up and down beside it. Has a photograph. B Found 40-50 dead around Herschel on ice in late spring in 1985, 1986, or 1987, when ocean ice had no open water. C Has seen them at Holman, but never on coast near Shingle or King Points or delta in June-September. D Has only seen at Herschel 2-3 times, in June. They stop briefly and pass on by.



Parks Canada

Other animals (cont.)

Lynx Niutuyiq <i>Felis lynx</i>	A Sets 30 traps or snares each winter in delta, Highest catch of lynx was 49, This year was 14, mostly males. Always fat, oily. Numbers go up and down, and this is hard to predict. They are caught in sets on lakes and rivers. No particular habitat. Killed two males on sea ice near Herschel in 1999. It was very unusual to see them on the ocean ice, and it was the only time ever seen in this area.
	E Numbers vary between years. He snares them. Sometimes sees sign of families of 6 to 7. Pelt value can be pretty high some years.
Marten Qavviatchiaq <i>Martes americana</i>	A In 40 years has only caught one, a male. They prefer rolling hills and land, not lakes and delta.
	E Has only caught one or two in past 40 years, both males, both Fish River area.
	H Has never caught one in delta. More common east side of delta.
	J Has never seen tracks or sightings in Ivvavik Park over past 9 years.
Mink Itigiaqpak <i>Mustela vison</i>	A Peaked in 1998/9 in delta. Caught 70 (about 50 male) in 25 traps. Numbers going down since. Caught nine this year and there were few tracks. Not concerned. Best place to trap is at creek coming out of lake, maybe because minnows like these places. Mink travel around a lot.
	H Coming back slowly in delta. There were lots in 1989 or 1990, low in 1995, and there are few mink now. Once saw one way out, swimming in Shallow Bay. They catch fish in creeks.
	J Has never seen them on the coast, in the Firth River valley or on rivers east of Mackenzie.
Muskox Umingmak <i>Ovibos moschatus</i>	B Cannot say if too many but thinks counts miss many of them.
	C Saw one mid-June near Coney Lake. Watched 20 caribou heading down to lake where there was a solitary large muskox. When the caribou spotted it or smelled it they turned around and ran off. Caribou do not like the smell of muskox. When caribou see muskox at a distance they may think a muskox is a grizzly bear.
	F Saw first one in Running River area 30 years ago. Visiting Alaskan elder warned us that they would cause problems for caribou. There were 8 near Red Mountain, then 30. Now 50 live there and caribou have not been in these mountains in past 5-10 years. Since fewer muskox near Kaktovik, people are seeing caribou coming around more. Caribou avoid muskox. Muskox bigger threat to caribou than oil exploration in ANWR.
	I Sees a group of 40-50 at Willow Creek. They stay on tops of hills and slopes facing south and southeast. Many young and small ones in group. Not in brushy areas. They clean out an area before moving on (eat grass to the ground) so bigger population may be a concern. One inch fat in March. In small bunches or pairs on Herschel in early May, but very few west of Babbage River, where they are also in small bunches. Numbers are the same. Sometimes sees 1-5 muskox, in pairs, in Blow River vicinity in early June.
	Used to see more sign and sightings of muskox on spring bear hunts inland 10 years ago. (Several hunters said this in narratives of spring bear hunts.)
	MTG The name "Umingmak" came originally from the word for woolly mammoth.
Muskrat Kivigaluk <i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>	D Lots in delta now. There is much less trapping.
	E People should trap them more around here, then there will be more.
	H Lots in delta. None 2 years ago. Increase started last year, now lots of muskrat houses. Livers go bad and turn white when there are too many.



Parks Canada

Other animals (cont.)

Peregrine falcon Qilgiq <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	B Five nesting pairs on Herschel in the summer of 2002.
Polar Bear Nanuq <i>Ursus maritimus</i>	I They avoid hunters by running towards open water or rough ice. Has not seen dens inland.
Porcupine Qingnarluk <i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>	MTG Have been seen around Running River. Also have been seen past Fish River (no trees around).
Red Phalarope Aukruaq <i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	A Sees very few of these in summer. Not like it used to be. Are they farther west?
	B Sees these bigger brighter birds, usually in pairs, in the spring on Herschel.
	I They summer on Herschel in small bunches or groups.
Red Squirrel Haqalataiyiq <i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>	H Lots of squirrels this year in the delta.
River Otter Pamiuqtuuq <i>Lutra canadensis</i>	A Twenty years ago only they were only upriver from Aklavik. Now they are moving north on the Mackenzie River. They are hard to trap. It is hard to judge numbers from tracks as they move around so much and travel under ice. Saw 6 different trails this winter. Has never seen on coast. Farthest north seen was at the start of Shallow Bay.
	B Not on coast. On Firth River by fish hole in 1986 or 1987. Have always been in delta. Not sure if increasing.
	C More abundant now and are increasing in delta. Never used to see them. They are bad animals. They eat muskrats. They live in beaver and muskrat houses. People are starting to see them along coast, but this person has not.
	D Sees their slides in delta, but there are not very many. They are not along the coast or in the ocean.
	F Has never seen them in the Firth River above fish holes in August. Occasionally sees tracks in the early spring in delta. Has never seen them or sign at Running River.
	E Is starting to see them more now in delta. Not many. Solitary. Has never seen them on coast. Never sees them on Fish River. They are dangerous and will charge you if you get too close to them when they are on ice. They go after muskrats in pushups.
	G Is starting to see them more in delta. For the first time even saw a family (3 together). People complain they kill and eat fish.
	H Twenty years ago none, 10 years ago very few. This year saw 10 tracks. Can clean a whole lake out of muskrats. They pile jackfish on lake ice in October. There are none in the ocean or in the Fish or Cache Rivers.
	I Saw on shore on Herschel in April 2000.
	J Very rare, is not seeing increase. Has only seen one since 1993. It was swimming at the Firth River fish hole, adjacent to Margaret Lake. Never sees tracks in snow or along coast, April and summer.
Rock Ptarmigan Niksaqtuniq <i>Lagopus mutus</i>	H Sees them in mountains. Taste better than Willow Ptarmigan.
	C Lots. Tries to get a few early each season. They taste like chicken until they start eating mice. Sees them near bird camp and whaling camp.
Sandhill Crane Tatirgaq <i>Grus canadensis</i>	E All along coast, same numbers. Only saw 2 pairs in delta. Enjoys springtime sounds as they arrive.



Other animals (cont.)

Shorebirds generally Aukruaq <i>Pluvialis sp</i>	F	Fewer seen in the summer in the Running River area. Does not know species.
	C	More black on head and neck than Black-bellied Plover in Peterson field guide. Used to be more on coast.
	D	American Golden Plovers nest anywhere on Herschel on long slopes and valleys. Numbers steady. Numerous. Shingle Point and delta.
Short-eared Owl Nikpayuq <i>Asio flammeus</i>	I	In coastal area early spring and into fall, but not common, with a few on Herschel and more near Blow River. Never sees nests. They fly most in evenings. Hard to say if numbers are changing.
	MTG	Two nesting around west channel for past 3-4 years.
Songbirds Tingmiagruit	D	In the summer there are lots of small birds near Aklavik and down to the coast. Numbers seem steady.
	F	In the spring in the delta, there seem to be fewer, but does not know species. There are some new species, but the names are not known.
Spruce Grouse Ittuktuuq <i>Falco pennis canadensis</i>	A	They are coming to delta more now than in past 50 years. They do not go north of treeline in the delta, except in the Coalmine Lake area.
	D	Many more now in the Richardson Mountains and in spruce forests on routes to the coast.
	E	Never sees on coast or Fish River. Once in a while sees Spruce Grouse in the delta. There are more of them closer to the hills.
	G	They are coming back to delta.
	H	There are more all the time in delta, but does not see very many. Sees two or three in bunch. All over delta, never north of tree line. Also in foothills, not in big hills. First appeared 10 years ago.
	J	Has never seen them in Ivavik Park over past 9 years.
Walrus Aviq <i>Odobenus rosmarus</i>	B	On Herschel occasionally.
Weasel Itigiat Short-tailed Weasel <i>Mustela erminea</i> Least Weasel <i>Mustela nivalis</i>	A	November-February – numbers vary in delta. Trapped 16 in 2003/3, but in 2001/02 got one. In the summer sees them on the coast, but not that many. Mostly sees them near Shingle Point camp on coast.
	G	Low numbers, not changing much. Used to catch lots in 1950s.
	H	Good animals to have in camp. Numbers vary a lot. More this year. Not on shore north of tree line in delta.
	J	None seen west of Babbage River. Cannot recall seeing tracks in April/May in park.
Wood Frog Naaraiq <i>Rana sylvatica</i>	A	Summer regulars near Aklavik.
	D	Saw huge ones for first time last fall in delta. Normally 1.5 inches long, last year (summer 2002) saw some 3.5 inches long.
	MTG	Started seeing frogs about 10 years ago at Sam Arey's River, 15-20 miles southeast of Inuvik.
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	D	Has not seen.
	B	Present in delta. Different from what people call canaries which are yellow coloured warblers (pikka pikani siginiq).

Additional Comments

Plants, new Nauriat	E	Not noticing new plants or changes in where plants are found, but they are green earlier.
Willows Uqpik <i>Salix sp.</i>	H	Growing taller all over delta. Delta country getting bushier.
	F	Tall willows are growing farther north, right up to the ocean shore, in the Running River valley.
	MTG	No leaves on willows in certain areas around Bennett's Channel near the end. Bushes stay brown last few years.
Sunburn Silanniq	E	Sun always bright and it fades fur (fox and mink by January, wolverine by March). His brother used to use lard to protect skin, stayed light. Sunburn is not worse now than before.
	J	Needs lots of sunscreen and sunglasses in April/May. This person feels he looks like a raccoon at that time of year.



Aileen Horler

Additional information about the region

- The Yukon North Slope is located in the northern region of Canada's Yukon Territory and encompasses the western portion of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. It is an area of land and sea stretching from Alaska to the Northwest Territories and includes all of the Yukon's mainland whose waters drain into the Beaufort Sea, as well as Herschel Island, other islands, and near-shore and offshore waters. One of Canada's most diverse Arctic environments and home to many species of wildlife, the area is of international importance. There are no roads or towns. Seasonal hunting camps are the only reminders of an active and enduring human occupancy.
- The Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) was established in 1988 as a result of the Western Arctic (Inuvialuit) Settlement Act, which arose out of the 1984 Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA). The IFA defines the responsibilities of the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) and the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee, in sections 12 (46) to 12 (56) and sections 14 (75) to 14 (79), respectively. A full version of the IFA can be found at www.taiga.net/wmac.
- There is a solid tradition of taking the time to learn from the Aklavik Inuvialuit and Gwich'in prior to wildlife studies. Reports from other projects based on interviews with the Aklavik Inuvialuit are available, or will be soon. These include reports on bowhead and beluga whales¹, sheep², caribou³, grizzly bears⁴, and swans⁵. A database of sources of documented Yukon North Slope traditional knowledge can be found at www.taiga.net/webdata/aklaviktk/.
- From 1989 to 1993, an oral history project was undertaken by the Inuvialuit Social Development Program. The main object of the *Herschel Island and Yukon North Slope Inuvialuit Oral History Project* was to document Inuvialuit use and knowledge of the Yukon North Slope. During the summers of 1990 and 1991, interviews were conducted with Inuvialuit elders along the Yukon North Slope and in Aklavik, Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk. Information collected included topics such as seasons of occupation, means of subsistence, habitation structures, trading activities, social life, and Inuvialuit involvement with the Anglican mission. The coordinator of the project and author of the report, *Yukon North Slope Inuvialuit Oral History*, is Murielle Nagy. For more information on this report, contact the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre in Inuvik at 867-777-2595 or at tukcultc@irc.inuvialuit.com.
- The West Side Working Group (WSWG) recently completed a traditional knowledge fishing study with 20 Inuvialuit participants from Aklavik and Inuvik. Carol Arey is the Chair of the WSWG. Richard Papik of Aklavik was the study facilitator and coordinated this project with a University of Manitoba graduate student, Melissa Marschke. The WSWG is currently developing an integrated fisheries management plan. For more information, contact the Fisheries Joint Management Committee in Inuvik (fjmc@jointsec.nt.ca).

- The Arctic Borderland Ecological Knowledge Co-op has been tracking environmental changes in the region since 1996 (www.taiga.net/coop). Their community-based monitoring program hires local residents to interview community experts who report their observations of animals, birds, fish, berries, and weather. This program has been operating in Aklavik, Old Crow, Arctic Village and Fort McPherson since 1997. In Aklavik, 20 Gwich'in and 20 Inuvialuit who are active on the land are interviewed each year, so few changes go undetected.
- The Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op also maintains a Database of Information Sources (yukon.taiga.net/borderlands). This is a database of references, including reports, file sets, map series, and data sets. It is an informal, annotated listing. Where possible, information on whom to contact or where the information is located has been included.
- The Aklavik Inuvialuit Community Conservation Plan was originally prepared in 1993 and updated in 2000. It identifies significant wildlife management issues by species, and assigns conservation requirements to specific areas in the Aklavik Hunting Area. The Aklavik Inuvialuit Community Conservation Plan was prepared by the community of Aklavik, the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) and the Inuvialuit Joint Secretariat. The plan can be viewed at www.bmmda.nt.ca/downloads.htm.
- Territorial and federal parks services are monitoring various aspects of the region's ecosystem. Wardens in Ivvavik National Park keep track of certain plants, animals and birds in standard ways, and keep notes of unusual birds and animals. Annual reports of research and monitoring in national parks in the Western Arctic that include information about programs in Ivvavik National Park are available from the Parks Canada headquarters in Inuvik (867-777-8800 or Inuvik.info@pc.gc.ca) or can be downloaded from www.emannorth.ca/reports.cfm. More information on Ivvavik National Park can be found on their website at www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/yt/ivvavik/index_E.asp.
- Rangers at Herschel Island Territorial Park also participate in monitoring programs. Current monitoring programs build on 14 years of data already collected by the Herschel Island Territorial Park rangers. These data include wildlife sightings and systematic surveys of black guillemots, breeding birds, and bird nests. Various components were added to this existing monitoring regime beginning in 1999, and include vegetation species abundance, biomass and phenology, ground and permafrost temperatures, and wildlife locations by vegetation and terrain units. For information on Herschel Island Territorial Park programs, contact the park's office in Inuvik (867-777-4058 or Richard@permafrost.com).
- Biologists with the Canadian Wildlife Service, Government of the Northwest Territories and Government of Yukon regularly conduct wildlife research and monitoring on the Yukon North Slope and the surrounding area. Industry and university supported projects are also undertaken. Contact the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) for more information on the projects currently underway (wmacns@web.ca).
- The Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) prepared a Yukon North Slope Research Guide in 2001. As a result of both the Inuvialuit Final Agreement and the increasing responsibilities devolved to territorial governments, more permits, licenses, and review processes are now required for conducting research on the Yukon North Slope. Expectations of both researchers and communities regarding the conduct of research have also changed in the past few years. This guide is a resource document for both researchers and communities. It attempts to clarify expectations and develop common understandings that will help communities and researchers work together. It also provides information and references related to conducting research on the Yukon North Slope and adjacent areas, including the Gwich'in Settlement Area of the Northwest Territories. The Guide can be found at www.taiga.net/wmac/researchplan/index.html.



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- A book written about the 1991 bowhead whale hunt describes the history of the coast and Aklavik people and their use of the land and sustenance activities⁷. Whaling peaked between 1880 and 1910, white fox trapping peaked in 1920-30, and families moved to and from Kaktovik and Barrow before 1950.
- A book describing the natural history of the Western Arctic was published in 2002⁸. This book includes sections on the land and water, as well as on plants and animals. A guide book to the Western Arctic was also published in 2002⁹. Both of these books provide lists of further reading and references for the region.
- There are two bird books available for the region. A reference book on birds of the Yukon Territory was published in 2003¹⁰. A bird book for the Mackenzie Delta is also available¹¹.
- An ethnobotany project for the Inuvialuit Settlement Region is currently underway. The project is a cooperative effort between The Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre, the Aurora Research Institute and Parks Canada. This group expects to publish a book by 2005 that will be more than just about plants. They are trying to gather stories about the times when people used the plants on a regular basis. For more information on this report, contact the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre in Inuvik at 867-777-2595 or tukcultc@irc.inuvialuit.com.
- The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment Project (ACIAP) coordinates circumpolar research in climate change and provides information on projections from many models for this region. Information on the ACIAP can be found on their website at www.arctic-council.org/acia3-7.asp.

Endnotes

¹*Bowhead Whale Traditional Knowledge Study* and the *Beluga Whale Traditional Knowledge Study*. For information contact the Fisheries Joint Management Committee in Inuvik (867-777-2828 or fjmc@jointsec.nt.ca).

²A study by the Government of Northwest Territories, Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Inuvik. The study coordinator was John Nagy (John_Nagy@gov.nt.ca). Jerome Gordon did the Aklavik interviews.

³The National Science Foundation Community Sustainability Project has a library of reports that can be found at www.taiga.net/sustain/lib/reports/index.html. These include the 1998 report *Local Caribou Availability* by Gary Kofinas and Steve Braund.

⁴See Grant MacHutchon's 1996 report for Parks Canada, *Grizzly bear habitat use study, Ivvavik National Park, Yukon*. This report includes a 6-page summary of interviews. The report is available by contacting Parks Canada headquarters in Inuvik (867-777-8800 or Inuvik.info@pc.gc.ca).

Also see the *Grizzly Bear Traditional and Local Knowledge Summary Report: Aklavik HTC*. Draft report prepared by the Government of Northwest Territories, Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Inuvik Region, Inuvik, NWT, 13 November 2002. (John_Nagy@gov.nt.ca).

⁵*Local Observations of Tundra Swans (Cygnus columbianus) in the Mackenzie Delta Region, Northwest Territories, Canada*. Heather A. Swystun, University of Northern British Columbia (hswystun@permafrost.com). This project started in 2001. Heather has interviewed 31 individuals. Four youth and three adults have participated in the ground fieldwork.

⁶For a further description of the Co-op also see *Community Contributions to Ecological Monitoring: Knowledge Co-production in the U.S.-Canada Arctic Borderlands* by Gary Kofinas with the communities of Aklavik, Arctic Village, Old Crow, and Fort McPherson, 2002. In Krupnik, Igor & Dyanna Jolly (Eds.), *The Earth is Faster Now: Indigenous Observations of Arctic Environmental Change*. Fairbanks, Alaska: Arctic Research Consortium of the United States.

⁷Freeman, M.R., E.E. Wein, & D. Keith. 1992. *Recovering Rights—Bowhead Whales and Inuvialuit Subsistence in the Western Canadian Arctic*. Published by the Canadian Circumpolar Institute and Fisheries Joint Management Committee. Edmonton: University of Alberta Printing Services.

⁸Black, Scott, and Alan Fehr (Eds.). 2002. *The Natural History of the Western Arctic*. Published by the Western Arctic Handbook Committee, P.O. Box 2085, Inuvik, Northwest Territories, X0E 0T0.

⁹Black, Scott. 2002. *Canada's Western Arctic*. Published by the Western Arctic Handbook Committee, P.O. Box 2085, Inuvik, Northwest Territories, X0E 0T0.

¹⁰Eckert, Cameron, Pam Sinclair, Wendy Nixon, and Nancy Hughes. 2003. *Birds of the Yukon Territory*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

¹¹Aurora Research Institute. 2002. *Field Guide to the Birds of the Mackenzie Delta*. Available from the Aurora Research Institute, Box 1450, Inuvik, NT. X0E 0T0 or 867-777-3298. Ummarmitutun names in this book came from Martha Harry and Leonard Harry.

Appendix 1 – Informed consent form



Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)
P.O. Box 31539, Whitehorse, Y.T. Y1A 6K8 Canada
Telephone: (867) 633-5476 Fax: (867) 633-6900
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YUKON NORTH SLOPE – WILDLIFE STATUS INTERVIEWS 2003

What is the purpose of this interview project?

One of the purposes of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) is to use Inuvialuit knowledge and experience with other knowledge to protect and preserve arctic wildlife and the environment.

- The IFA established the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee to speak for you about animals and your rights and interests to the Inuvialuit Game Council.
- The IFA established the Wildlife Management Advisory Council North Slope (WMACNS) for Inuvialuit and government officials to work together on wildlife management plans and make recommendations about harvest quotas, habitat protection, development proposals.
- Every few years the WMAC(NS) writes reports about the status of animals on the Yukon North Slope – reports about how the animals are doing. Then, if necessary, management plans or decisions are made to protect the animals and protect Inuvialuit harvesting opportunities. Many people want to read the WMAC(NS) reports because they are also concerned about the animals and environmental changes.

This interview project asks a dozen people about certain animals at certain times of year. A meeting at the end of the project presents a summary from all the interviews and other Inuvialuit not interviewed can make comments.

What kind of questions will be asked?

- The questions look at changes and concerns about numbers, condition, range and habitat of certain animals on the North Slope.
- No questions are asked about songs, stories, your harvests, medicinal uses, or secret places. You can refuse to answer any question.

What records are being kept or reports written, and how will they be used?

Where will my name appear and who will know what I said?

- The interview sheets are returned to you to keep and make corrections. Another copy will stay with the Aklavik HTC for safe keeping. Your interview number, not your name, is on these sheets. No one can see these sheets without your or the AHTC's permission.
- The summary report will include the ideas of everyone who answered the question. It will also include ideas other people raise in the discussion. Your name will be listed in the summary report, if you desire it, along with others who were interviewed to show who participated. Your name will appear nowhere else in the report. The report will be given by WMACNS and the HTC to anyone who wants to read it, use it, and copy it.

Where can I find out more about this project and the people involved?

- Interviewer Barney Smith at 867-667-5918 at the Yukon Government Fish and Wildlife Branch in Whitehorse.
- Lindsay Staples, Chair of WMACNS at 867-633-5476 in Whitehorse.
- Evelyn Storr, Chair of the Aklavik HTC at 867-978-2723.

I agree to this, _____, date _____



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