



# Wildlife Watch

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (NORTH SLOPE)  
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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## Garbage Threatens the Beautiful Beaufort

The amount of garbage drifting around the world's oceans and washing up on beaches has become an issue of increasing concern over the last few years. Of most concern are the plastics and other materials that do not break down for many, many years. Some of this "drift" garbage can harm marine animals—plastic bags get stuck in the throats of birds and rope and nets strangle marine mammals and fish. Beaches littered with bits of rope, nets, old margarine tubs and disposable diapers are not at all appealing!

### *How much of a concern is this in the Beaufort Sea?*

Environmental Protection (Environment Canada) staff from Whitehorse, Inuvik and Yellowknife have conducted several drift garbage surveys along the Beaufort Sea coast. The most recent occurred in the summers of 1989 and 1990. The staff studied the coastline from Nuvorak Point near the tip of the Tuk Peninsula to the Alaskan border. Researchers flew the coastline by helicopter, recording all the plastic and non-degradable items that they could see washed up on the coastal beaches. Seven stretches of beach were also surveyed on foot, and all human-made objects found were recorded.

Many small items not visible from the air were found in the ground surveys. The items most commonly found were pieces of styrofoam of all colours and sizes, including pieces of styrofoam cups, assorted floats and buoys, broken bits of plastic—especially outboard motor oil bottles and dredge collar fragments, plastic bags, poly tarps and rope. Non-plastic items included fuel drums and propane bottles—and even a bunch of balloons from a political campaign in Alaska! A few pieces of fishing line and nets and one disposable diaper were also found.

### *What can we conclude?*

The amount of garbage in the Beaufort Sea is not nearly as great as it is off the B.C. coast or in the Atlantic off the maritime provinces. However, plastic and other persistent debris is accumulating along the entire Beaufort coast. Some of this debris is from industry—oil exploration and marine transport. Other items are clearly camp garbage or garbage disposed of from boats. Every stretch of beach that was checked—no matter how windswept, no matter how isolated—had at least a few items of plastic garbage mixed with the driftwood or was half-buried in the sand.

We must all work together to make sure that the garbage does not pollute the North Slope coastlines.

### **Planning Our National Park**

Park management plans are needed to give direction to park managers.

The plan for the Northern Yukon National Park will be a commitment to the public of Canada, including the Inuvialuit, from the Minister of the Environment regarding park use and protection. It will outline how managers will protect natural and cultural heritage values, and will specify the type and degree of management needed to ensure the environment is protected. For example, it will list the type, character and location of visitor facilities for the main visitors to the park.

Three Inuvialuit sit on the Advisory Committee—Rene Arey, Barbara Allen, and Alex Aviugana (Danny A. Gordon and Billie Day are alternates). The Chief Park Warden for the Park and the Park Planner (Dave Murray) also sit on the Committee.

Over the next year, the Advisory Committee will be

meeting with the public to talk about the future of the Northern Yukon National Park. Watch for the first meeting in Aklavik, or contact one of the Aklavik reps to let them know your concerns!

Fisheries and Oceans Canada will continue to be the lead agency in the overall management of commercial, subsistence and sport fishing for anadromous (char, cisco, and witefish) and marine fish in the ISR.

The Canadian Parks Service will be the lead agency for fisheries management in the Northern Yukon National Park.

Management of inland fish on the Yukon North Slope (not in the National Park) will be undertaken by the Yukon Department of Renewable Resources. The Department will also support Fisheries and Oceans Canada in the management of anadromous (for example, char) stocks in the area.

Regional management plans for fish stocks on the North Slope will be prepared jointly by the government agencies. Although FJMC will be the most actively involved group to review these management plans, the WMAC/ NS will also review the plans. As well, the co-management groups will consult each other before they advise the government on fisheries issues on the North Slope.

This is the first time government agencies and the co-management groups have formed a working agreement on fisheries since the signing of the IFA. The agreement will be reviewed annually to ensure that it meets the needs of government and the IFA co-management groups.

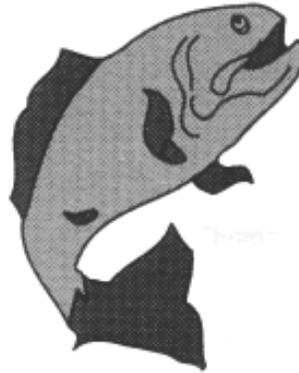
### **Working Together to Better Our Fisheries**

The signing of the IFA in 1984 changed the roles of many existing management agencies and created new co-management groups in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. How each of these groups work together must be clarified to ensure cooperation.

Government agencies, the Fisheries joint Management Committee, and the Wildlife Management Advisory Committee/North Slope have developed a working agreement that addresses their new cooperative working relationships on the Yukon North Slope.

Before the agreement was developed, two main problems relating to fisheries management on the North Slope were noted. These were:

- a lack of understanding about the overlapping roles of IFA bodies and existing management structures of the federal and territorial governments; and,
- conflicts between the IFA and existing government laws.



In forming the agreement, government agencies and the co-management groups (FJMC and WMAC/NS) agreed to:

- a common understanding of the role of the Canadian Parks Service, Fisheries and

Oceans Canada, the Yukon Department of Renewable Resources, the Fisheries Joint Management Committee, and the Wildlife Management Advisory Council/ North Slope, and,

- establish cooperative principles for these bodies to work together effectively.

Management and enforcement of regulations remains in the hands of federal and territorial government agencies. The role of the co-management groups, WMAC/NS and FJMC, is to review research and management programs and to consult with the communities on priorities. The FJMC will continue to carry out research in the Settlement Region.

### **Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)**

- **Inuvialuit Game Council:** Danny C. Gordon; Herbert Felix; Alternates: Billy Archie, and Carol Arey
- **Government of Canada:** Joan Eamer, Canadian Wildlife Service; Alternate: Alan Fehr, Parks Canada

- **Government of Yukon:** Brian Pelchat, Renewable Resources; Alternate: Dorothy Cooley, Renewable Resources
- **Chairperson:** Lindsay Staples
- **Secretariat:** Aileen Horler

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