



# Wildlife Watch

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (NORTH SLOPE)  
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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## The North Slope Conferences

Every year for the last three years, people have travelled from the Inuvialuit Settlement region, Old Crow, Whitehorse, Alaska and Ottawa to meet and talk about the Yukon North Slope. The third conference, held in Whitehorse last October, was, to many, the best of the three meetings.

The first conference was held in Dawson in 1989. People from the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee and the Inuvialuit Game Council met for the first time with other First Nations', government, industry and non-government groups to talk: about the new co-management groups involved in managing the North Slope. It was at this meeting that everyone met the members of the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) and the other IFA co-management groups.

At the second conference, these groups met again to talk about their long-term interest in the Yukon North Slope. Industry told us of the nature and prospects of North Slope development, and the Aklavik HTC said it wanted to be sure that the North Slope stayed healthy and that fish and wildlife were protected. The first two meetings were very good because many of us were able to meet and talk about our concerns and interests.

At the third meeting we took the next step. As Lindsay Staples, Chair of the WMAC(NS), said, "At the first two conferences we talked about who we were and where we were going, and at the third meeting we talked about how we were going to get there." Over the first two days, people spoke about how to cooperate to best conserve: the region.

Finally, on the last day, people discussed whether they should meet again at another conference. More information on what was said at the conference is below.

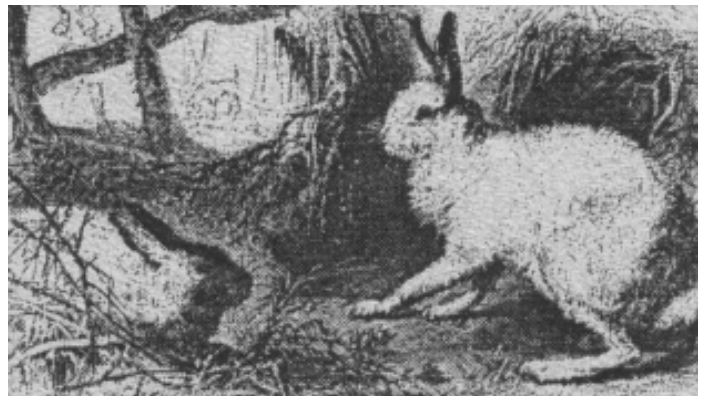
### Working Together - Cooperative Conservation Management

People who live and use the North Slope all know how big- the area is. Wildlife, like the Porcu-pine caribou, travel all over the North Slope - into Alaska, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories.

What happens in one place can affect animals and people across the region. Development of oil and gas in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will likely affect the wildlife and people of the Northern Yukon. Other developments can also impact on the area - an oil spill in the Beaufort Sea, for example, could wash up on the shore along the North Slope.

Wildlife can't stop development. Controlling development - making sure it doesn't hurt the environment and is good for everyone - is something that only we, people, can do. This is what everyone talked about at the third North Slope Conference.

There are many types of borders and boundaries that cross the North Slope ecosystem: two park boundaries, an international border, two territorial boundaries, Inuvialuit and Gwich'in traditional territories, and several communities. Everyone has different interests, but we must all try to work together.



Elizabeth Leighton, from Alaska, told people at the conference that we need to do four things to work together:

- identify what our problems and concerns are;
- talk to the right people about our problems;
- make cooperative agreements (like the polar-bear agreement) to help us plan for the future; and
- get everyone involved.

Many people agreed with these points and talked about how to find the right people - especially in the communities. It was stressed that we need to take time to listen to each other and to share information and ideas. Everyone also thought that governments need to make firm commitments as to what they will do to help protect the North Slope.



## Conservation Measures for the North Slope

The second part of the conference was about what kind of things we can do together to ensure conservation. We must be sure to recognize the importance of the area - its wildlife, habitat and the people who live there - and we must not forget how important the North Slope is, even to people

We need to remember that the North Slope is one big ecosystem - not a collection of smaller areas divided up by all sorts of boundaries and borders. Everything is connected to everything else in the ecosystem, which means that what we do in one area of the North Slope can affect other areas.

People at the conference also talked about how we need to identify key habitat areas for wildlife, and how we need to continue counting fish and wildlife populations through harvest studies and other research to be sure that they are healthy and that there is enough food available. We also need to think about just how much room there is for development on the North Slope - one or two tourist operations may be okay, but would 100? What about industry - some small development projects may be good, but how much should there be? These are questions that we have to answer. The WMAC(NS) is working to make sure that these concerns and other ideas are addressed in the North Slope Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan.

## Future of the North Slope Conference

When the Inuvialuit Final Agreement was signed, both the Inuvialuit and government agreed to meet once a year to talk about the North Slope. The first three meetings have been good. At the third conference last fall, it was decided that people should go on meeting, but maybe not necessarily at big conferences. Smaller meetings in different places might be better because it would allow more people to discuss the issues. The Inuvialuit Game Council and the governments of Canada and the Yukon agreed that another conference will be held within the next three years, but that smaller meetings could be held each year.

## Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan

We have just about finished the second draft of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan for the North Slope. It has taken us a long time to get the plan done, but we think it will be very useful for Inuvialuit people living in the area, as well as for other North Slope user groups and for government agencies. You will have a chance to see a copy of the plan and to comment about it in the very near future.

### 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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