Wildlife Watch

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (NORTH SLOPE)
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Council Questions Gulf at Kulluk Hearings

In early June, 1990, the WMAC(NS) appeared at the public hearings of the Environmental Impact Review Board. The hearings were called to assess the three-year drilling program proposed for the Beaufort Sea by Gulf Resources Canada.

In its presentation, the Council expressed concern about the incremental effects of development in the area and the environmental damage that may occur from a blow-out If a blow-out happens, Gulf stated that the worst case spill would release 40,000 barrels of oil for 66 days. This would be ten times larger than the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in Alaska. Company representatives also said that in the event of blow-out, they could not predict where oil would come ashore or how Gulf would clean up the damage.

Although the risk of a blow-out appears to be low, the risk to the environmnent, wildlife and, ultimately, to harvesters appears to be high. Many uncertainties are associated with the project: Where will the oil go if it is spilled? Will Gulf Canada have enough money to clean-up the spill? Would the company be able to compensate hunters and restore the environment following a blow-out?

Concerned that Gulf Canada could not answer many of these questions, the Council asked that these questions be addressed before the project is approved, to be sure that the drilling program will not harm the wildlife or the people who depend

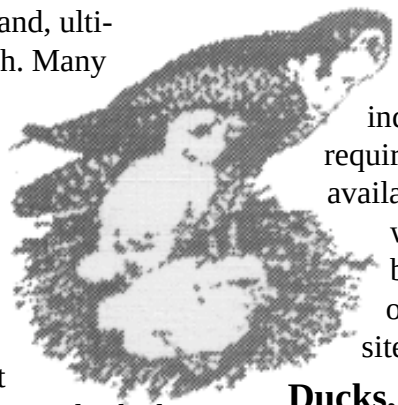
upon the environmnent.

The Future of Stokes Point

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement states that industry can use Stokes Point as a base until February 21, 1991. Gulf Canada wishes to continue using Stokes Point well after this time. The company believes that Stokes is important to its operations and to increase safety when travelling by air in the Western Beaufort.

Over the past few months, Gulf has met with Northern Yukon National Park staff, the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee, and the WMAC(NS) to talk about their plans. The Council is particularly concerned about how industrial use at Stokes will affect conservation on the entire North Slope.

The Council supports the sunset clause in the IFA which says that industrial use of Stokes Point will be temporary. However, the Council would like industry to state clearly what its support requirements are and what options are available for meeting these needs. Only with this information can a decision be made as to whether a site is needed on the coast and where to place the site.



Ducks, Geese, and Swans - What Do We Know?

Over the past few years, the federal government has been using IFA (Inuvialuit Final Agreement) implementation funds to study nesting and staging birds on the North Slope. The following story gives

a brief report of these studies.

Thousands of waterfowl use the North Slope each year. One species of swan, the tundra swan (qugyuk), three species of geese - the Canada (uluagullik), white-fronted (niglik) and the brant (nigliknak) - and eleven species of ducks breed on or near the coastal plain. For snow geese (kanguq), the coastal plain is a critical staging area before their fall migration. As well, sea ducks, such as the oldsquaw (ahaanliq) and surf scoter (tuungavik), occupy the near offshore during their summer moulting season. Of all waterfowl using the North Slope, the tundra swan, the white-fronted goose, and the snow goose are the most important.

Approximately 1500 tundra swans breed each year on the coastal plain. The swans annually migrate from their winter home on the Atlantic coast of the United States, arriving on the North Slope in the early spring. White-fronted geese also travel long distances before they settle on the coast to breed. Thirty-forty thousand yellow-legs - almost 10% of all the white-fronted geese in North America - travel each year from their wintering grounds in Texas, Mexico, and Guatemala to breed on the North Slope.

One of the most important waterfowl species for hunters, the snow goose, uses the north coast every fall. On the Slope, over 200,000 geese feed and build up fat reserves to help them travel to their wintering grounds. Known as the Western Canadian Arctic Population, the North Slope population is thought to represent 10% of the entire North American snow goose population.

Because they can see long distances, most waterfowl are easily disturbed - and consequently harmed - by people and low-flying aircraft. The greatest threat to waterfowl populations, however, comes from pollution. Waste oil, garbage and leaking fuel can damage food sources and water quality on which the waterfowl depend.

The Canadian Wildlife Service has the primary responsibility for managing migratory waterfowl in Canada. Management is done cooperatively by Canada, the United States, and Mexico through the Migratory Birds Convention Act. Within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, the Wildlife Service works with the Yukon and Northwest Territories governmnents, as well as with the Wildlife Management Advisory Councils for both the North Slope and the Northwest Territories, to manage the waterfowl. Together these groups seek to protect the ducks, geese and swans while also ensuring that traditional harvesting can occur.

If you have any questions or concerns about waterfowl in your area, please let the HTC and the WMAC(NS) know - we need your help!

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
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