

ARCTIC BORDERLANDS ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

COMMUNITY REPORTS 2013-2014



(L-R): Desmond Rogers, Rose Mary Arey, Cheryl Wright, Leighanne Lennie, May Andre, Dorothy Ross (not present here: Rebecca Pokiak, Dennis Frost, & Mildred Allen)

MAY ANDRE

FT. MCPHERSON, NT

Most of the harvesters interviewed spent most of their time out on the land. Everyone loves our land. All my interviews are from different areas of our land.

General things notices about weather in 2013

We had extreme weather conditions. There were sudden changes in the weather – one day it would be cold and the next day hot. There were sudden winds with lots of south, north, and west winds. We had another very bad flood. A lot of cabins and other properties were ruined. Some cabins floated away and there were more floods than usual. The water stayed high all spring, summer, and fall. Construction was on hold because of rainy conditions. There was lots of rain in the Yukon and this kept our water high.

There were lots of rain and very strong winds in the fall. The ferry shut down often and it was pulled on in mid-December which was the latest ever. There was lots of fish even when the water was high. The fall was warm and the snow would then melt. The lakes froze then thawed. There were not many thunderstorms in 2013.

Berries

There were lots of yellow berries, blueberries, and blackberries. There were not too many cranberries, and most were small. Everything depended on what area you went to.

Fish

Whitefish were very abundant last year. The average whitefish harvested per person was 100 to 200. There were lots of crooked backs and conies. We were getting the type of fish that we usually get after ice is formed but when there was no ice. After ice formed, there were hardly any fish. Everyone met their needs for fish.

Birds

There were less sea ducks or the same as before. There were more geese depending on the location. Ptarmigan and grouse were the same in abundance, cranes more, and snipes less. Loon numbers were the same or less and in some areas there were more heard. Swans were the same in abundance. Shorebird observations depended on where you went – some people said more, others less. Most people did not know about falcons. There were more seen around Road River and other areas. Some said there were more eagles depending on where you went. Others saw less. Hawks seem to be increasing in some areas. There were fewer owls reported. Most interviewees did not know about woodpeckers, nighthawks, and kingfishers, though some said there were less. One nighthawk was seen below Happy's.

There was a bird that looks like a robin but it was all brown. There was a blackbird and a grey bird that looked like a robin. One person saw a snowy egret.

Some people said birds came late indicating bad weather. Waterfowl came early, though in other areas they came late. All birds left early. Someone saw a big seagull at Ogilvie on December 21st. There seemed to be more robins, blackbirds, and cranes from the Yukon. Crows are making nests in and closer to town. There were not too many eagles and seagulls. There were more geese on the Peel and Mackenzie Rivers. There were less black ducks and arctic terns, but more mallards.

Caribou

Most people did not know about caribou in the winter (January, February, and March), as it was too far to travel and gas was too expensive. Caribou abundance in the spring was the same, though some people said less. In the summer, caribou came earlier than ever. On July 9th, they came in the thousands and most were in good condition. They were all spread out in different areas. In the fall there were more caribou and they stayed around, mostly by the horseshoe.

Nearly everyone met their needs in 2013. Most interviewees reported caribou in good condition. Some physical abnormalities were seen in the fall. Some caribou had bad livers, cysts, or sores, and some were limping with swollen joints. Most reported harvesting healthy caribou.

Insects

Most everyone reported fewer mosquitoes, flies, and other insects due to cooler weather. There were more wasps, butterflies, and grey moths. There were wasp nests all over. The sand flies came early. In one area there were lots of mosquitoes even though the grass was cut. There were more insects at Jay Goodies. There was a flying beetle that was orange and black in colour. There was a one-inch grey and brown spider observed.

Caribou predators

Most interviewees did not know about golden eagles. There were more grizzlies and less or the same numbers of black bears. Some people thought wolf numbers were the same, others said less. There were more wolves observed up the river. There were fewer lynx and wolverine, though more wolverine were observed in the mountains. The number of caribou kills sites increased because of predators like bears and humans.

Mammals

There were fewer muskrats, squirrels, mink, weasels, wolverine, lynx, red fox, black bears, black bear cubs, moose, and otters. In certain areas of the delta there were more otters. There were more beavers, rabbits, martens, grizzlies, grizzly cubs, and caribou. Some red fox were seen in some areas. There were more or fewer wolves depending on where people were. Most interviewees did not know about sheep, though some said there were more.

Unusual Wildlife or Wildlife Habitat

There was lots of erosion on the banks of lakes, rivers, and creeks. It was hard to get up on the bank in the winter to get wood with skidoos. The permafrost is melting fast. There were lots of sand bars showing up where there were none long ago.

One person saw a grizzly on November 5th. There was not much snow on the hills so it did not have ice on its fur. A fisher was seen near the Tombstone. It is the same size as a porcupine and very fast. There was more erosion in the Rat River area and there were less Dolly Varden. There were more nighthawks at Rat River.

There was more vegetation, and the shrubs were larger and dense. The leaves were turning different colours, and much earlier in the fall.

Due to global warming, everything seems to be changing. There were extreme weather conditions, early fish runs, more wasps, more moths and butterflies, different insects (yellow mosquito, flying beetle with orange and black colours, one inch grey and brown spider) and early caribou migration. There was a black bird that looks the same as a robin, with no red colour on it. In some areas there are more robins, black birds, and hawks from the Yukon. There were more grizzlies and cubs and the hunters could not go very far as they were aggressive and dangerous. There were lots of lemmings. One person trapped a white fox. Some people were wondering why there are less moose. One person said the wolves were killing the moose. Long ago muskrat houses were bigger and had lots of muskrats in them. Now their houses are smaller.

The caribou migration was the earliest yet in the first week of July. There were lots in August. Fish with eggs started their runs when there was still no ice. There was hardly any fish after the ice was formed. Some people caught pickerel. Some said there were less otters because there were less fish in lakes and there were less otters in the delta. There were lots of fish and the runs were early and longer.

The temperature was 10° above for some days in October and mosquitoes and butterflies were seen. There were very dangerous icy conditions too and the highway to Eagle Plains was closed because vehicles could not climb the icy hill. There was lots of overflow in November, making it hard to trap. There were lots of north, south, and west winds and some 90 kilometre an hour winds. The ferry was shut down December 18th and there was a very late fall.

Everyone said the survey was a good experience and were willing to be interviewed again.

Mussi cho to all the interviewees.

Dennis Frost

Old Crow, YT

It is a pleasure to present a summary of the valuable information collected in Old Crow, Yukon between January 16th and 24th, 2014, which one elder described as "...based on our survival and existence along with the land." This past year, we have had tremendous amount of change in Vuntut Gwitch'in traditional territory. The statement made by these local observations can be abbreviated to: a rapid and obvious change in climate and environment is occurring, and it has effects on local ecosystems and the traditional Gwitch'in lifestyle.

Land

One way in which the landscape is changing is through soil erosion. Trails that have been used for perhaps thousands of years are eroding due to melting permafrost. In wintertime, trails in and out of rivers and lakes are damaged to the point where snow machines cannot access the trails. This bank erosion is caused by large waves, the movement of ice flows during torrential winds and landslides in springtime as the ice goes out. Similarly, lakes are taking on different shapes caused by the sinking of land and drainage of water. One side effect of this movement of land and water is the loss of old travel routes.

The loss of old travel routes is not only pertinent to humans, but also to caribou. Caribou herds are finding it difficult to follow trails that were used for millennia as short cuts to important destinations. Snowmobiles and animals are wearing their trails, and this is causing run-off entering the trail so that creeks may even form so there is a damaged area. This has caused the caribou to wander into more rugged terrain in order to begin new trails. This adversely affects pregnant cows because breaking trail can harm their young, and this is when they require easy travel to the coast and their calving grounds.

Plants

Another effect changing climate has on travel routes and other aspects of life is the altering vegetation. Plants that used to be much smaller and shorter such as willows are growing rapidly. This affects the ability for caribou to reach their food, as well as their ability to walk easily to the coast. Also, the tree line is rapidly shifting north and to higher altitudes.

Birds

Another significant observation is the introduction or increase of certain species of migratory birds into the Old Crow Flats and the coast. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of seagulls causing a reduction in population in other birds, notably ducks in the Flats. This is due to seagulls feeding on eggs and young birds. Also, scientists are increasingly visiting the coastal area where caribou calves are born. They report an increase in the presence of the Golden Eagle, which is apparently having a devastating effect on the calves. The changing bird populations are a concern to the Gwitch'in because we have a special relationship with the caribou and ducks, and they are both important sources of traditional food for us.

Fish

The fish seemed to be doing well this year; from spring whitefish to ice fishing, everyone seems to be harvesting enough. This harvest includes six to seven hundred lingcod (loche) caught by women in the community.

Caribou

Caribou are wintering near the community this year; therefore, hunting was relatively easy compared to some other years for those who went out. People have said they spent less at the grocery store as a result. Furthermore, less gas was used because the animals were much closer to town.

Mammals

The moose population seems to have dropped recently due to predation by wolves. The wolf population has increased, as there are many wolf packs around. Additionally, snow machine trails make it easier for wolf packs to form. Few community members are trapping the wolves. It is estimated that around fifteen wolves were reported as snared and one or two were shot.

Other species are being trapped as well. Martin and mink were trapped in some areas with good results. According to our stories, these animals travel over great distances compared to others. Foxes are low in number and we do not know why this is as hardly anybody is trapping them. Wolverines are thriving as only a few are being trapped. This fur is used for parkas in our community. Lynx are numerous especially where there are lots of rabbits. This past year the beavers have been effectively protected in certain areas due to low water level, especially on lakes. In Old Crow Flats there still seems to be a very high muskrat population, according to student researchers from McGill University.

Unusual Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

Community members are concerned about the introduction of new species. Large white owls, muskoxen, different coloured birds, and insects were mentioned. Weather has also been a little different this past year with lots of wind, cooler nights in June and July helping to keep the bugs down. The Porcupine River broke up around May 14th this year, and soon after the migratory birds arrived, followed by the summer songbirds. One last question posed by community members is: where have all the frogs gone? Some think that this is unusual and this issue should be researched, as it is possible that this species could be a good indicator for some of the changes being witnessed.

Finally, the community reported that Arctic Borderlands should expand into the schools. Furthermore, there should be large gatherings bringing knowledge from other areas together. We would like to continue working on this, especially with the elders.

Thank you, Mahsi' choo. Yours in unity, Dennis Frost

Desmond Rogers

HTC Inuvik, NT

First of all there were a lot of the people that were talking about the weather change and how it is warmer in all seasons and that there is more erosion on the land every year. There was one person who said he had to move his house every year due to erosion. Another person had to make a whole new portage to his camp because in front of his house there used to be a runway, but with all the erosion it is just a cut bank now.

Birds

A couple of people observed that geese are taking different routes because they used to travel right by their camp, but now they have not seen them in the past couple years. Only one person noticed that they see different birds around, but they cannot identify them in the bird book.

Fish

I was talking to an Elder and he said the water was so warm in the past summer that he could not even keep fish because they were so soft from the warmth of the water. Others said they have not noticed anything different about fish last year.

Berries

Most of the interviewees were talking lots about berries where the knuckles are coming in early, and where they grow fast so you have to go pick them fast. If not, they lost out are got very few. Cranberries were very poor for most of the interviewees as it was a very warm summer. There was not much time to pick, as by the time they went out they were already falling off the branches because they were dried out.

Caribou

There were lots of caribou hunters who did not notice the abundance of others kinds of caribou as they just stick to hunting one kind and are not keeping track of the other caribou. One interviewee told me that when they are out hunting they notice that some people are leaving good meat on the land that is still good for human consumption.

Mammals

Most of the interviewees did not notice any changes with local mammals. There was one person who shot an albino wolverine (white). Some interviewees said that it is getting harder to hunt and trap mammals as the land is changing. Banks are getting higher and higher due too excessive erosion and willows grow so much they have to cut their portages out every year.

Thank you.

Dorothy Ross

RRC Aklavik, NT

Weather and Berries

There were a lot of cold months for winter with a late freeze-up and a hotter summer than usual. There were not as many berries picked this year, maybe because the yellow berries and cranberries were a little late.

Fish

Fishing is mostly done in summer and fall. The fishing was very slow because of a late freeze-up. There were some red marks on the fish that Elders were asking about.

Birds

All the birds arrived about the same time, although some left a little later. There were some strange birds seen that were black and yellow.

Caribou

It was a good year of hunting for caribou. There were a couple caribou that seemed wounded and hunters noticed some with sores. Caribou predator kill sites were not high. All hunters met their needs.

Insects

The mosquitoes were about the same as other years.

Land

There was erosion on the land with a lot of land droppings. The rivers are getting wider and more creeks are causing the riverbanks to have more mudslides.

Mammals

Mammals were mostly the same. Beaver were seen more than usual. There were no changes noticed for grizzly and black bears. Wolves and lynx were the same and the trapping season was a good.

All participants were happy to be involved, as they are the ones that are in many parts of the region doing traditional practices. I would like to thank all of the participants as I enjoyed visiting and listening to you all and also big thanks to the Arctic Borderlands.

Rose Mary Arey

HTC Aklavik, NT

Berries

Some people reported that cranberries were small and hardly seen. *Uqpiks* were good but one person said they were ripped right away. One person said there were more raspberries found this past season.

Insects

One person reported a new kind of bug. It is like a wasp/bumble bee /yellow jacket that lives under ground. Most interviewees reported more mosquitoes and noseemus, a little bug that bites hard.

Birds

One person reported seeing magpies around the Inuvik area.

Fish

It was a good season for most of the harvesters who were catching a lot of Dolly Varden.

Mammals

There were more beavers and muskrats reported by one person down below the coastal area. There were more otters.

Caribou

Most people reported that there was more caribou this year and it was a good harvest for most. One person reported a very bad caribou where the skin was bald in some parts and it had a bad smell. They did not even want to get close to since it was very sick. One person reported finding a bad liver. There were more cows than calves, but not many bulls.

Weather

We had an early spring and late fall. There was a lot of erosion of land, with lakes opening up to the river and others also drying up.

Cheryl Wright

RRC Inuvik, NT

Introduction

I would just like to say that I am happy that I was given this opportunity to report this year's activities for the Arctic Borderlands Survey. This is my first year reporting.

Time on the Land

Most of the harvesters that I interviewed were part-time harvesters with an exception of a few that live out on the land full time, although they still maintain a house in Inuvik. There were a couple of Elders who have camps out on the land and stay there for a couple of weeks at a time but live in town also. There were not harvesters that stayed out at the camp full time.

Most of the trips out on the land were on weekends, holidays and day trips to hunt, trap and fish.

Weather

Most of interviewees reported that we had warm weather all last year right up until November. It did not snow until the last part of October to the beginning of November. People were still driving their boats in October, which is quite unusual due to the weather being so warm. We got a few windy days but no major blizzards were reported.

The weather is always changing. It was very hot during the summer with not much rain.

Changes on the land

The harvesters observed a lot of erosion to the banks due to the weather and ice break ups in the spring. The water level seems to be dropping more and more creeks are drying out. There were lots of cave-ins and banks sliding down. There was also a lot of flooding in the springtime.

Porcupine Caribou

There seems to be less people going out hunting caribou due to the location, equipment, time and cost of gas. If you want to go hunting you usually have to go way up in the hills past Fort McPherson and the caribou are further away from the road. They could be migrating along a different route. The few harvesters who did hunt caribou reported that there seemed to be less caribou now but saw no concerns to their overall health.

Berries

Due to the weather being so hot and dry there were no cranberries around. You might find the odd patches, but most reported there were none. There were lots of blueberries and blackberries. There seemed to be a lot of knuckles around the coast or way up the Dempster past Fort McPherson, but most find it too far to go just to pick berries.

Fish

Not much was reported on fish. Most people seem to just fish once in a while when they set nets. Most gave away their fish to family or friends. Very few are fishing for their dogs as was the case long ago. One person reported that he saw some type of sturgeon or a snake around Wrangling River that hit his boat and he had never seen anything like it before.

Mammals

There seems to be more wolves, moose, grizzlies, rabbits and beavers now, but less muskrats are being seen. One person also reported seeing a seal or *Uguyook* weighing about 400 pounds, and you do not normally see seals in the Delta. A couple of others saw sightings of smaller seals around too.

Birds/Insects

According to most, there seemed to be less and less songbirds and woodpeckers. One Elder reported that, "there use to be so many song birds long ago that a person couldn't sleep" now, it is quite lonely in the bush with no songbirds around. Another person reported fewer birds around

because there were not as many mosquitoes and bugs for them to eat. There seems to be more strange insects also. One person reported that they saw strange fluorescent bugs that they have never seen before. There seemed to be a lot of ants – not like long ago when there were no ants at all. There were different types of flies around and strange bugs that are not normally seen. One harvester stated that he has saw a strange looking bird and caught it so that could bring it to the research center for them to look at. He also said there are lots of birds that live on the coast that are now hanging around the Mackenzie River eating fish.

Closing Remarks

In closing I would like to say that I enjoyed interviewing the Gwich'in harvesters and they too enjoyed sitting around talking about their life on the land. Most of them also stated that if they had a note pad or some sort of calendar, they would mark things down with all of the changes throughout the year. That way next year they would have more information to provide. Most also stated that this was a good experience and would do this survey again in the future and all information collected is helpful.

Leighanne Lennie

Tsiigehtchic, NT

Introduction

Most of the participants spent their time fishing, with hunting and hauling wood as secondary activities. Berry picking and trapping were the least of all activities being done on the land, followed by harvesting bark and camping. Fishing is usually done throughout the summer and early fall. Trappers are out after this is done and stay out until about February. And then ratting starts. Only a few people go out for this activity, as there has not been many in the past few years.

Weather

For weather, the seasons are coming and going faster this year. The summer was either too hot or really raining. We had rain right up to November, with hardly any snow this fall. Other comments were that the summer was too hot with too much high water and lots of driftwood. There was not as much wind and thunderstorms as there used to be. There has not been much snow either. We are now dealing with overflow in the winter on lakes and creeks, and this too has been seen on the highways for a few years now.

Berries

There has not been many people going for berries, but when they do, it seems to be a good turn out with excellent abundance and good quality for the blueberries. I did not hear many remarks on cranberries. I did have someone who happened to be picking blackberries and gooseberries and they also had good abundance and quality. I had about 5 or 6 people that picked berries out of the twenty.

Fish

Twelve out of the twenty interviewees were fishing and they were out all summer making dry fish, and fishing in the winter for the egg fish and for some for their dogs. Unusual fish caught were pickerel and one trout. One person has reported some soft fish but they were not too sure what it was from. Others say fish were good this year and also very late.

Birds

For birds, people think that they are taking a different route, as there was little to none. Five out of twenty people went geese hunting and all their needs were met. Unusual birds include the rusty blackbird, as well as a red bird and a yellow bird. Migration arrivals seemed to be the same, but when it was time to leave, it warmed up again so the birds were back and stayed late. Some comments included that there were hardly any birds this past year, and that there used to be all different kinds that people do not see anymore.

Caribou

Caribou remained the same or less, with them being scattered all over and hard to get. There was one report of white spots but everything else seems to be all right.

Caribou Predators

For their predators, they seem to be the same to more up in the mountains. Grizzly and black bear seem to be the same to less around the community. There have been a couple reports of a predation sites but no events.

Mammals

As for mammals, they seem to be the same to less, with more rabbits, red foxes, and wolves around the community.

All have said it was a good experience and would do it again. Some of the comments and suggestions are that you should be giving out logging books or calendars to help participants to

keep track of what is going on out on the land or unusual changes. Another person suggested that they should add a bit more gas, as it is not worth it for those who are always out on the land. Another comment included that this is a good thing to be keeping track of changes and weather. We can really see it now, how things are changing and that is something that would be useful in the days ahead as more changes are upon us.

Mahsi.

Mildred Allen

Arctic Village, AK

Over the years I have been with Arctic Borderlands doing climate change surveys and it has been interesting and a good experience for me.

Introduction

Everyone here in Arctic Village depends on caribou, moose, and some fishing for grayling, which they love to do in the fall and spring when grayling come around. This year I went and visited twenty people in their homes for an hour or so and the ages ranged from 20 to 60 years for those who go out. Some or all went out once or twice a week and some camp from the end of July to the end of August for ground squirrels and caribou. They dry their meat at camp. People with ATVs bring dry meat and fresh meat to the village or to other villages to share. Even a small portion is good. But some people do not have transportation to go out or they are working summer jobs and then go out in the wintertime. Only a few trap, but more people are trapping because marten, wolves, and fox are growing in abundance in the south of Arctic Village.

Fish

People said it was a good year for fishing. People help put in fishnets about 20 to 30 miles upriver on the Chandalar River. They live up there and dry fish, but when they come home they send someone to check the fishnet for whitefish (Broad). That is how they share and stock up for winter and for dogs. Just about everyone have dogs for pets or for mushing.

Weather

2013 had a very warm spring and fall with no snow. It was unusual that there was a lack of snow in October and November. If it snows then it melts right away, so we are using ATVs practically all the winter months and this was also unusual for here. Spring was warm but snow came heavily in December and January. Then the sun came out in the first week of February and stayed sunny until the snow melts. This was also unusual for February and March. Early spring and summer were a little chilly and there was less rain than in other years.

Berries

Maybe half of the people go out to pick berries around the Arctic Village area or upriver. Only some people had enough to last all winter. Blueberries were good and stayed longer. Cranberries were not good. They did not have enough rain or sun to fully grow. That was the first year for this to happen, but maybe in higher ground they grew better.

Only a few people harvest sap that is used when they pick berries or camp out. Some camp up in the mountains – maybe ten people go out further from there to hunt past Old John Lake or around that area.

Birds

Hunting for ducks was the same as in other years. Geese flew high up to the coastal area. Only a few land which makes the hunters happy. The hunters move around lakes and build fires usually around midnight – that is when they hunt for ducks. In the last few years ducks have been scarce, which is unusual. Eagles, hawks, and owls are seen only once in awhile. It is a treat when you spot one flying over! One person said a woodpecker came and pecked at his house every summer. He said it was annoying! Otherwise there was no change for songbirds. They came late and departed late. It was unusual that birds were not abundant in our area. There were fewer birds in the summer. There were less ptarmigan. They move so fast it was hard to go after them in the deep snow. A few sandpipers are returning, which is good.

Caribou

Spring caribou season was good. Meat was excellent so it was a good year. In the fall there was less, but people saw more bulls. The caribou went through to the Venetie area and stayed awhile.

Then in the spring (April), they moved back to the coastal areas. In the fall of 2012 my father said they lined up on *Dachanlee* (Timberline Mountain) to head up to the coastal area. We had some baby caribou for him, he was so happy. It has been hard for us to lose our father but he always said take care of yourselves and take care of our land which we depend on.

It was unusual to have less caribou in the fall and we had to wait until spring to stock up. Hunters had to go farther south to get caribou.

Insects

Some said there were fewer bugs in the summer because it was chilly. There were hardly any bees or flies. Mosquitoes seemed to be the same.

Caribou Predators

As usual wolves were the main predators for caribou. People said other predators, such as ravens and foxes, clean out what wolves leave behind. There were hardly any bears around. Only a few were spotted last year with cubs. They go along the river and creeks. So do moose. It was a good year for moose.

Mammals

There were fewer people hunting for rabbits and ground squirrels. You must have patience when you hunt them. That is why these young hunters build fires and stay out there. Some said muskrats are coming back. There were some beavers, weasels, and wolverines, but not all hunters spotted them. People saw wolverine tracks south of the village. Fox were the same as in other years as they are always around.

Land

It was an unusual year for weather and this meant there were soft spots around the rivers and lakes. Everyone confronted soft spots on the lakes so they had to be careful when they went out. Some people had to walk back because their machine was stuck in a soft spot (*teedhaa*) on the lake. Permafrost is thawing faster than in other years. There is more erosion and the trails are getting rough with willows that are growing thicker. People said that more cottonwoods are the reason we are getting more moose. Caribou do not care for willows and some people said they have less hair on them because of willows.

With climate change occurring we are still losing a lot of lakes because they are draining out more quickly. These are lakes that our grandparents lived off of for decades. This is very unusual and a loss for everyone so people are sharing stories and bringing culture into schools so the next generation do not lose our traditional ways.

Overall people enjoy warmer winters, which means less wood to burn. They go out more often even when it is hard to get gas. People said they liked to be interviewed. It is good.

Rebecca Pokiak

Tuktoyaktuk, NT

Introduction

This winter I completed twenty interviews with Inuvialuit members from Tuktoyaktuk. The ages ranged from early 20s to late 70s. All individuals were very interested and co-operated very well. A majority of them were the same individuals that have been interviewed in the past with the exception a few who I had to replace with a new member because of a lack of interest this year.

Weather

A lot of the individuals had seen the same weather patterns. A lot more wind throughout the whole year made it especially hard to go out during the summer months for whaling and in the late summer, around September, for caribou hunting. They have also mentioned that there was a very bad icing event sometime in October where it was so dangerous everywhere. Everything in town was closed, including the school and all the offices and stores. It was just too dangerous and slippery to go anywhere. There was an inch or so of ice all over everything. There was also another bad icing in May of last year. Again, there was an inch or so of ice on everything in sight.

Berries

A few people went berry picking, but overall the quality and abundance was extremely poor for *ukpiks* and cranberries last year. The blueberries were “alright”. Most people did not meet their berry picking needs because it was such a bad berry year.

Fish

There were a lot of the same concerns with fishing last year as well. There were a lot of whitefish, crooked back, and coney, but it was unsafe to set a net under the ice until really late because the freeze up was so late. Most people missed the herring run for both cisco and blue herring. Two or three individuals were able to meet their needs with three of them fishing for dogs and trapping for bait as well. There was only one or two char caught in the nets here and people are also seeing a lot more jackfish in their nets.

Birds

The response regarding the birds was mixed. Some say there are more of the different species; others say less and some say the same. One person said they saw a really colourful bird that looked just like the “Fruit Loop” bird. The beak was as big as the body and it was flying across the Mackenzie River as he and his family were driving back from Inuvik. He said maybe someone’s pet flew away. There were a few more sightings of the little yellow warblers as well. For game birds, most individuals say their migration patterns are really changing as well.

Caribou

The hunters from Tuktoyaktuk harvest the Bluenose Herd, not the Porcupine Herd. The caribou seemed to be in really good shape for most of last year. There were only two or three people who saw any physical abnormalities. One noticed that the lungs of the caribou were really dark all of last year. Most individuals have also said they seem to see more caribou now than in the past few years. Other than that, the caribou were very healthy. There were only a few hunters who saw predator kill sites throughout the year.

Insects

Surprisingly, most people also said they have seen fewer mosquitoes last year. They say they stayed very late though and there are so many different looking bugs around. There were big hair eaters and wood buds but not as many wasps and bumblebees.

Caribou Predators

For caribou predators, there are more eagles being seen along with falcons, more wolves, and

wolverines. Some people said they do not see them all the time, but they see a lot more tracks of the different animals and see them in a lot of different areas now.

Mammals

Most people had not hunted or trapped all the different species listed on the last page of the survey. Mainly there were just the two trappers I interviewed who trap full time and a few others who trap from town. More people are getting moose and they are also saying that the beavers are taking over. Even though they do not hunt them, they see them everywhere now, even in the harbor.

The interviews went very well again this year and everyone said they would do this again and it was a very good experience. Most people also said they would like to see these studies continued because this information is so important for the Mackenzie Delta and all the smaller communities. Also the information being collected will get better and better with the consistence of the interviews.

Thank you.