

Kinngait Trip Report (November 19 – December 2, 2004)
Summary of Gita Laidler's Second Research Trip for "Ice, Through Inuit Eyes"

Purpose of the trip: to meet and interview community members (elders, active hunters, and other local experts) about sea ice, and to experience the ice myself as it is forming.

Purpose of this report: to update the community members of Kinngait on: i) who I interviewed; ii) topics discussed in the interviews; iii) interview highlights; and, iv) my future research plans.

Who I interviewed →

With the help of Pootoogoo Elee translating, the following people consented to being interviewed, and provided a valuable contribution to this research project (shown in alphabetical order).

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| ○ Matthewsie Joanasie | ○ Aleka Parr | ○ Ningeoseak Peter |
| ○ Sandy Kelly | ○ Etidlouie Petaulassie | ○ Mikisiti Saila |
| ○ Oqutaq Mikigak (2 interviews) | ○ Qatsiya Petaulassie | ○ Quvianaqtuliaq Tapaungai |

Topics discussed →

- Previous experience with researchers, or results of previous research
- Inuktitut terminology linked to sea ice conditions, travel, and use
- Wind and current influences on sea ice formation and movement
- The importance, and uses, of sea ice
- Wildlife uses of the sea ice
- Hunting on sea ice
- Noticeably warm or cold years and/or rare or notable sea ice features/events
- Scientific methods of studying the ice, and how (or if) Inuit and scientists should work together
- The meaning of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*

Interview highlights →

- Approximately 52 Inuktitut words relating to sea ice were described and explained, on top of the 60 words already discussed in the spring, 2004 research trip
- It is hard to predict weather conditions/changes today, and even weather forecasts are not consistently accurate enough to be reliable
- Sea ice continues to be a very important travel platform ("highway") to access hunting grounds and harvesting areas – for both marine and terrestrial wildlife
- Sea ice travel safety is a concern, more accidents seem to be happening
 - Always bring a harpoon to check ice thickness
 - The radio should be used more to communicate dangerous ice conditions
 - Hunters are not familiar with conditions or changes around traditionally dangerous areas because they were instructed to avoid such areas
 - Snowfall hides dangerous ice conditions, and contributes to such conditions by insulating newly formed ice so it is worn out from the currents underneath
 - Moon cycles and tidal stages have a strong influence on ice conditions and safety

- Noticeable changes
 - Winds are coming from all directions (instead of predominantly northwest winds) and seem to be stronger, which creates rougher ice conditions
 - Some areas do not freeze as solidly as they used to, and thus some trails are no longer safe to be traveling on – people are forced closer to the mainland
 - Air temperatures do not seem to be warming, but perhaps warmer ocean temperatures are influencing ice to form later and break up earlier
 - Less ringed seals seem to be caught these days
 - More bears are noticed around town, potentially linked to the limitations imposed by quota systems (hunters used to catch any animal they see)
 - Soap stone mines are accessible (by boat) a month early, in July instead of August
 - Over 50 years ago elders were saying that ice and weather conditions would change drastically in the future, so for some people current changes are expected
- Concern was expressed for submarine testing or military activity effects on wildlife
- There is considerable interest in working with scientists to study the sea ice
 - Studies like this one should have been done 10 or 20 years ago
 - More frequent interaction between community members and scientists is desired
- There is dissatisfaction with the use, and intended meaning, of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*
 - There should be more interaction between elders and youth

Future research plans →

- **January, 2005** → third research trip to Kinngait (January 10 - February 1...*completed*)
- **January - April, 2005** → transcribe, organize, and analyze interviews from November and January trips; copy original audio and video files to be deposited in Kinngait during the spring research trip; digitize the maps drawn in interviews; acquire satellite imagery of the Hudson Strait area; plan and organize future research trips.
- **May, 2005** → return to Kinngait for a 2-week field research trip, and to collaboratively revise Inuktitut terminology and interview gaps.
- **July - December, 2005** → finalize transcripts and digitized maps; begin detailed analysis of information collected.
- **Spring, 2006** → make final results available; undertake a reporting trip to Kinngait once results have been fully reviewed (with Pootoogoo Elee and my committee members).

Thank you for hosting me in your community, and for supporting this research project. A special thanks is extended to all those who participated in the interviews and sea ice trips. I am very grateful to the Nunavut Arctic College and The Hamlet Office for allowing the use of their buildings for interview space. I would also like to thank Mangitak Kellypalik and Atsiaq Alasuaq for the hands-on learning opportunities provided by two "walking interviews" around town and on the newly formed ice to take pictures and video of sea ice conditions.

I really enjoyed my time in Kinngait, and I look forward to returning and working with you in May. Feel free to contact me any time with comments, questions, or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Gita J. Laidler