

Kinngait Trip Report (January 10 – February 1, 2005)
Summary of Gita Laidler's Third 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 through sea ice trips.

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).

- Etulu Etidlouie (2 interviews)
- Ashevak Ezekiel
- Jimmy Manning
- Paulassie Pootoogook
- 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* (IQ)

Interview highlights →

- Approximately 30 Inuktitut words relating to sea ice were described and explained, on top of the 112 words already discussed in the spring and fall, 2004 research trips
- Traveling or hunting by boat is quite frequent due to the nearby open water, year-round
 - Walrus hunting is mainly done by boat, during the fall season
- Cracks in the sea ice will often form between islands, or at most points of land
 - the Inuktitut names for cracks change over the season, as the ice conditions change (i.e. crack re-freezes vs. water remaining in the crack)
- Sea ice travel safety is a concern
 - The best way to travel on the sea ice is with a harpoon
 - Ice moving through Hudson Strait can be blown into the inlets and around the islands by south winds, preventing travel or hunting by ice or boat
- Moon cycles and tidal stages have a strong influence on ice conditions and safety
 - The full and new moons create stronger currents which tend to wear away the ice from underneath

- Noticeable changes
 - 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 and have less time to use the trails
 - Warmer ocean temperatures may be influencing ice to form later and break up earlier
 - The weather is no longer predictable
 - 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
- It is important that community members are informed of the ice conditions, even if some people are not using the ice at all
- There is interest in getting more traditional teachings into the schools so that the younger generations can learn more about ice conditions, safety, travel, and hunting (but there is also frustration due to lack of government and/or financial support)
- There is considerable interest in working with scientists to study the sea ice
 - Community members would like to get ice forecasts and to be informed of study results
 - Scientists would learn about ice more quickly if they asked, and involved, elders
- There is dissatisfaction with the use, and intended meaning, of IQ
 - IQ means so many things, it depends on the person, and the community

Future research plans →

- **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 Atsiaoq Alasuaq and Quvianaqtuliaq Tapaungai for the hands-on learning opportunities provided by two sea ice trips to the floe edge 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