

**Igloolik Trip Report (October 27 – November 15, 2004)**  
*Summary of Gita Laidler's First 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 trips on the sea ice, to the floe edge.

Purpose of this report: to update the community members of Igloolik 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 Theo Ikummaq translating, the following people consented to being interviewed, and provided a valuable contribution to this research project (shown in alphabetical order).*

- |                               |                              |                       |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ○ Samuelie Ammaq              | ○ Eugene Ipkanak             | ○ Daniel Qattalik     |
| ○ David Angutikjuaq           | ○ David Irngaut              | ○ Anthony Qrunnut     |
| ○ David Aqiaruq               | ○ Enuki Kunuk (2 interviews) | ○ Augustine Taqqaugak |
| ○ Zacharias Aqiaruq           | ○ Herve Paniaq               | ○ Abraham Ulayuruluk  |
| ○ Maurice Arnatsiaq           | ○ Nathan Qamaniq             | ○ Louis Uttak         |
| ○ Theo Ikummaq (2 interviews) |                              |                       |

**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 Qaujimajatuqangit*

**Interview highlights →**

- Approximately 155 Inuktitut words relating to sea ice were described and explained
  - Moving ice conditions and characteristics have more names than landfast ice
- Tendencies towards later freeze-up and earlier break-up were observed; however, it was noted frequently that no two winters are the same, and that ice conditions/timing are closely linked with lunar cycles
- The presence of multi-year ice can impact summer temperatures, and ice conditions throughout the year
- Open water is maintained throughout the winter by strong currents
  - these can be dangerous to travel around, but are also good hunting areas

- This fall, stronger southeast winds, more overcast conditions, and increased snowfall have created unique ice conditions (i.e. taking longer to freeze, rougher ice, and more dangerous due to snow accumulation among the rough ice)
- A harpoon is the most reliable way of gauging ice safety and traveling by dog team is considered safer, and easier to get out of dangerous situations, than traveling by snowmobile
- Hunting, and traveling to hunting/harvesting locations, are the main uses of the sea ice today and are considered crucial to community life
  - It is also noted that hunting may occur less often because there isn't the same need for marine mammal fat for heat, light, and food (for both dogs and humans)
- It would be beneficial to both if Inuit and scientists work together - hunters know the ice as it is day to day, and scientists can "see" the ice where people may not travel
- Satellite imagery is used quite a bit by hunters for planning summer boat routes
- Documenting Inuit knowledge of the sea ice is considered an important to help youth learn, but could never replace the essential learning that comes through constant use
- The use, and intended meaning, of the term *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* is not well understood, and varies considerably for each person
- It is very important to bring back research project results, through means such as:
  - written report and/or posters (bilingual, Inuktitut and English)
  - radio show and/or community presentation
  - individual updates to each person interviewed

#### Future research plans →

- **January - April, 2005** → transcribe, organize, and analyze interviews from November trip; copy original audio and video files to be deposited in Igloolik on the next research trip; digitize the maps drawn in interviews; acquire satellite imagery of the Fury and Hecla Strait area; plan and organize future research trips.
- **June, 2005** → return to Igloolik for a 3-week field research trip, and to collaboratively revise Inuktitut terminology and interview gaps.
- **July - December, 2005** → transcribe, organize, and analyze interviews from June trip; finalize transcripts and digitized maps; begin detailed analysis of information collected
- **Spring, 2006** → make final results available; undertake a reporting trip to Igloolik once results have been fully reviewed (with Theo Ikummaq 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 Department of Environment for allowing the use of their biology research lab for interview space. I would also like to thank Theo Ikummaq for the hands-on learning opportunities provided by two sea ice trips to take pictures and video of sea ice conditions.*

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

Sincerely,

Gita J. Laidler