

Igloolik Trip Report (June 6 - 27, 2005)
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, to experience the ice myself through trips on the sea ice, and to review interview maps/transcripts and Inuktitut sea ice terminology.

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; iv) the revisions process; and, v) 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).

- John Arnatsiaq
- Arsene Ivalu (2 interviews)
- Jaipiti Palluq
- Levi Qaunaq
- George Quviq Qulaut

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 18 Inuktitut words relating to sea ice were described and explained, on top of the 155 words already discussed in the fall 2004 research trip
- Current strength, wind strength and direction, snowfall, and the presence or absence of multi-year ice are all important determining factors in freeze-up timing and conditions
 - The prevailing wind seems to be shifting from the NW, more towards the North
 - Winds did not used to blow consistently for more than three days, but with the wind shift also comes more prolonged windy, or non-windy, periods of time
- There are three important reefs near Igloolik that play a role in determining the location and stability of the floe edge
- Polynyas are dangerous because the currents can wear out the ice from underneath
 - Currents are believed to be more influential on the melting and break-up of sea ice (i.e. wearing out from underneath, or causing collisions which break the ice) than the heat from the sun

- The number of pressure ridges, cracks, and breathing holes in an area will determine the accumulation of water on the ice as the snow is melting (i.e. presence or absence of drainage options)
- The multi-year ice around the community is mainly coming through Fury and Hecla Strait (i.e. clean, white appearance), and not as much from Foxe Basin (i.e. dirty, sandy, yellowish appearance) anymore
- Hunting, and traveling to hunting/harvesting locations, are the main uses of the sea ice today and are considered crucial to community life
 - The presence of multi-year ice in the summer is an aid for boat navigation, offering some protection from winds (lessening the wave action)
 - The amount of snowmobile, helicopter, airplane, boat, and ship traffic is considered to scare animals (e.g. seal, walrus, etc.) away from the community, or frequent travel/flight routes
- There is recognition that scientists are trying to consider Inuit knowledge in their studies, but it is felt that they do not use the full amount of information shared
- The use, and intended meaning, of the term *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* is not well understood, and varies considerably for each person

Revisions Process →

- Revised spellings/meanings of Inuktitut sea ice terms with the help of Theo Ikummaq
- Clarified hand-drawn maps to ensure correct labeling, with the help of Theo Ikummaq
- Dropped off audio tapes of individual interviews to John MacDonald at the Nunavut Research Institute – these are available for community members to listen to, or use

Future research plans →

- **June, 2005** → apply for additional funding to support the full revision of sea ice terminology and the ordering of these terms into seasonal chronology
- **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 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 meeting room 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 will provide another update on project funding status, and results progress, by September or October, 2005. Feel free to contact me any time with comments, questions, or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Gita J. Laidler