

Pangnirtung Trip Report (February 1 - 21, 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 Pangnirtung 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 Andrew Dialla 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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|--------------------|--------------------|
| ○ Levi Evic | ○ Jamesie Mike |
| ○ Mosesee Keyuajuk | ○ Jackie Nowdlak |
| ○ Mosesee Nuvaqiq | ○ Joeelee Papatsie |

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* (IQ)

Interview highlights →

- Approximately 15 Inuktitut words relating to sea ice were described and explained, on top of the 166 words already discussed in the spring and fall, 2004 research trips
- 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
 - Snowfall hides dangerous ice conditions, and contributes to such conditions by insulating newly formed ice so it is worn out from the currents underneath
 - Channels tend to be dangerous due to thinner ice caused by the funneling of the water (i.e. stronger currents)
 - Alternative inland travel routes are required to get around certain areas which have dangerous ice after a snowfall, or in early spring (due to strong currents)
 - Polynyas (areas of open water during the winter) tend to be dangerous to travel around, but are also important hunting areas

- It is important to know which way to travel if you get stranded on moving ice
- 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, and these moons even affect inland river flow
- Some well-known shoals and small islands are not shown on the topographic maps used in interviews
- Multi-year ice coming from Lancaster Sound is blown closer to Cumberland Sound by northwest winds in the fall, summer breezes push it into Cumberland Sound, and the ice “migrates” out in August (but this is not a yearly occurrence)
- River flow speeds up sea ice deterioration in the spring (especially when it has a high sediment load)
- It is important to be aware of weather and weather changes to know about ice conditions and safety
- Concerns were expressed that submarines and underwater sounders affect wildlife
- There is considerable interest in working with scientists to study the sea ice
 - Inuit knowledge needs to be more recognized and accepted by scientists – this is slowly changing from past attitudes which disregarded Inuit knowledge
- 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 December and February trips; copy original audio and video files to be deposited in Pangnirtung during the spring research trip; digitize the maps drawn in interviews; acquire satellite imagery of the Cumberland Sound area; plan and organize future research trips.
- **April, 2005** → return to Pangnirtung 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 Pangnirtung once results have been fully reviewed (with Andrew Dialla 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 Hamlet Office and the Hunters and Trappers Association for allowing the use of their buildings for interview space. I would also like to thank Andrew Dialla for the hands-on learning opportunities provided by a sea ice trip between the stormy February weather we had for most of the trip.

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

Sincerely,

Gita J. Laidler