



JULY 2006 NEWSLETTER

Sahtu Renewable Resources Board



The Sahtu Renewable Resources Board is proud to present a new section in our Newsletter called Northern Wildlife Stories. These articles will cover a wide range of Northern fish and wildlife that live in the Sahtu or to the North. The articles are written by McKenzie Mountain School's Yvonne Meulenbroek and she will tell you about different kinds of animals - some you've seen before and some you haven't. This issue features a marine mammal that lives in the arctic waters to our north called the narwhal. Have you ever seen a narwhal tusk?

BOSWORTH CREEK MONITORING PROJECT

The Bosworth Creek Monitoring Project is a fish habitat study and water quality monitoring project. Nigel Gregory, Aisla Phillips, Mark Meulenbroek and Yvonne Meulenbroek from Mackenzie Mountain School will identify the critters and plants that live in and around Bosworth Creek and record any changes that might occur over the next few years. This is VERY important because Climate Change is real and already creating change in the North. Monitoring local habitats provide a means to identify these changes that may then lead to recovery or restoration programs.



DFO Biologist Briar Young explains stream-bed composition to Aisla Philips and Yvonne and Mark Meulenbroek with Peter Brunette.

Bosworth Creek flows out of Jackfish Lake and runs along Discovery Ridge before turning south to join the Mackenzie River within the town limits of Norman Wells. Bosworth Creek has played an important role in the history of Norman Wells. A weir was constructed at the site of the lower bridge on Imperial Oil Resources (ESSO) property to create a pond upstream. The pond supplied the oil refinery and the Town with water for many years. The weir was dismantled last year and now the river flows like it did before it was dammed.

The Bosworth Creek Monitoring Project is facilitated and supervised by the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is a major contributor by providing training and other resources to the project. Briar Young, Senior Environmental Assessment Officer and Peter Brunette, Habitat Biologist for DFO provided a field-workshop for Yvonne, Aisla and Mark on July 13th. Another workshop is planned for the spring.



Yvonne Meulenbroek, Aisla Phillips, Mark Meulenbroek and DFO Biologist Peter Brunette checking for minnows in a seine net.

Imperial Oil Resources NWT Ltd. is also a major partner in this project since some of the sampling and study will take place on their property where the weir was. They are very interested in supporting this project because it is a great opportunity to promote science and education to local youth. This will be a long-term project and the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board applauds the commitment by these four students as well as the cooperation and support from our partners.

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COMPANIES THAT CARE

Many thanks to NewsNorth for donating memory cards for our project cameras.

Thank you also to the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment

Yellowknife for providing funding for the development of a Sahtu-wide Traditional Wildlife Economy Program Curriculum. Thanks also to Fisheries and Oceans Canada for helping to undertake the first youth-based fisheries habitat project in the Sahtu Settlement Area. And thank you very much to Taiga Environmental Laboratory of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada for your invaluable contributions towards the Bosworth Creek Project.

CONGRATULATIONS

to the Leadership of Fort Good Hope for recognizing the importance of the Jr.

Canadian Rangers and supporting their program in your community.



NORTHERN WILDLIFE STORIES

NARWHALS *By Yvonne Meulenbroek*

All male narwhals have two teeth in their upper jaw. The left tooth grows out of the narwhal's mouth to form a hollow spirally shaped tusk which can grow to be up to 10 feet long. It is thought to be used for courtship of females and/or dominance rivalry. Rarely both teeth will spiral forming double tusks. Though it is not used in hunting sightings of this tusk reinforced the old legend of unicorns.



Male narwhals can grow to about 18 feet long and weigh between 1.5-3 tons. Females are slightly smaller at 13 feet and weigh only 1-2 tons. A baby narwhal weighs about 175 pounds and measures about 5 feet. These creatures have thick layers of blubber which insulate them from the frigid Arctic seas bordering Russia, North America and Greenland which they inhabit. The countless deep bays and inlets of northern Nunavut provide summer homes for Narwhals.

Narwhal means 'corpse whale' in Old Norse probably because of the mottled skin which covers the animal's body. However young calves are usually brown. They have cylindrical bodies and no dorsal fins which helps them to get around more easily under the ice. They also have round heads, short snouts and small mouths which help them to be streamlined as they swim and hunt. A Narwhal's dive can last from 7-20 minutes. They are very vocal and communicate with sharp clicks, squeaks and whistles. Narwhals hunt in pods ranging from 4-20 narwhals and use sound waves and their excellent senses of hearing and vision to find and trap their prey. Their main diet consists of fish, shrimp, squid and many types of crabs. Their average life span is 30 years but their maximum amount of years is 50.

Female narwhals reproduce from 5-35 years of age. They produce one calf every three years usually in July or August over a gestation period of 10-16 months. Every so often twins are born to the mother narwhal. The calves are nursed for 4 months after their birth. The mother and calf usually form a strong bond with each other and often move on to make a separate pod with a single strong male leading. This enchanting animal is not only hunted by the Inuit for its skin, oil, meat and tusks, but by sharks, Orcas and polar bears as well. There are less than 30,000 narwhals left in the world mainly due to commercial fishing. However the narwhal is a very important food source for the Inuit. Its clear burning oil was traditionally prized over seal oil that produces black soot and its sinew is considered to be the best for sewing by some people due to its length and strength.



WANTED: TRAPPER TRAINING INSTRUCTORS

The Sahtu Renewable Resources Board will once again facilitate Traditional Economy Programs in the schools this fall. Instructors for these programs must meet several criteria including instructor certification to qualify for employment. The Sahtu Renewable Resources Board is currently setting up a trapper training instructors workshop with the assistance of ITI and the Fur Institute of Canada. Anyone interested may contact Glen Guthrie at 867-587-2075 **OR** Box 381 Norman Wells NT X0E 0V0 **OR** rrco@srrb.nt.ca.

WILLOW LAKE DUCK BANDING PROJECT 2006

The Willow Lake Duck Banding Project will begin its 12th consecutive year next week at Willow Lake. This year the team will include students sponsored by the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board from Tulita, a banding assistant from the Tulita Renewable Resource Council, Richard Popko from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and U S Fish and Wildlife Service biologist John Bidwell. Ducks Unlimited Canada is also a funding partner this year for the first