

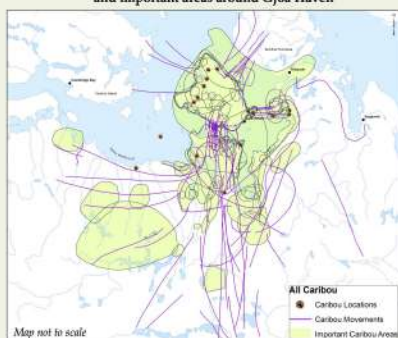
Background and Methods

Caribou are the lifeline of the land in most Inuit communities, and have been central to the seasonal hunting, survival, and culture of Inuit families for generations. This is certainly the case in Gjoa Haven, Nunavut, located on King William Island (KWI). Caribou health and implications for local diets, livelihoods, and cultural practices were identified as local priorities during planning workshops in Gjoa Haven in February 2010. We have spent the last five years (2011 – 2016) working together in an effort to address these locally identified priorities. In the process, we have facilitated 3 land camps, 39 interviews with Elders and hunters (including 31 that incorporated participatory mapping), and 5 verification workshops. The broader project sought to understand the connections between caribou, community, and well-being in Gjoa Haven, and revolved primarily around Elder-youth land camps as a way of sharing knowledge between generations, and between cultures.

To date KWI has been essentially overlooked in caribou research, and is shown as blank or as having uncertain status in the majority of herd ranges maps. In this poster, we share what we have learned from Inuit knowledge of caribou on KWI, organized according to three main themes: 1) local approaches to naming and distinguishing caribou in the region; 2) long-term caribou cycles on KWI; and, 3) seasonal caribou migrations on and off the island. We have much to learn from Inuit knowledge to "fill in the blank" that is KWI on most caribou maps. We hope this work serves as a starting point to draw more attention to the importance of caribou on and near KWI.



Compilation map of all caribou locations, movements,
and important areas around Gjoa Haven



"Perhaps even before I was born, there were a lot of caribou on that [King William] Island...When I was a child, there were not caribou spotted in that area [indicating on map]...I moved to Gjoa Haven back in 1970, and it's been years before we actually see a caribou on King William Island. Just recently, not too long ago, is when the caribou started moving onto the Island...and there's been caribou sightings since." (Jacob Atkichok, 2012)

Caribou on King William Island



The Elders told us that they learned from their Elders that there were lots of caribou on King William Island before guns were introduced (early 1900s - 1930s). The Elders also told us that during their childhood (1930s - 1960s), and during the time that people were moving into Gjoa Haven (late 1950s - early 1970s), there were no caribou on the island. After that, *kingiailup tuktuut* started coming back (around the early 1970s), followed by *iiuliup tuktuut* (late 1980s - early 1990s).

Contributors

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All text, illustration, and map content was compiled based on contributions during interviews (including participatory mapping) in 2012 and 2013. Contributors in 2013 and 2014 included: Gita Gwanama community members: Simon Okpakmo, Mary Agliriga, Donald Gigning, George Kamookak, Rosie Kieak, Jacob Atchikoh, Mary Kamookak, William Aglukgak, Jonathan Higinig, Lucy Nimiqtuqtag, Jacob Kestric, Teddy Carter, Bob Konara, Uriash Pukigpak, Tommy Tassak, Kyle Aglukgak, Abby (Annavik) Pukigpak, Jerry Angny, Walter Porter, Joseph Akok, Sasie Konara, Jonn Salierina, Miriam Aglukgak, David Sissak, Noah Siurimama, Leonie Alak, Robert Hunter, Robert Aulak, Paul Elsoehok, Leo Namumak, Peter Aglukgak, Kipag Aglukgak, Kipag Aglukgak, Kipag Aglukgak, Salomee Otsuakik, Peter Aklukkingwak, Martha Atchikoh, Alice Aglukgak, Paul Kamarmalik.

Seasonal Cycles

Elders and hunters described the seasonal cycles of caribou migrating from the mainland northwards to King William Island in the spring, towards their coastal calving grounds in Queen Maud Gulf. They use the ice to cross from Adelaide Peninsula to the island in May/June, but some also swim. In summer they can be anywhere on the island. They move back south in late August or early September, swimming across Simpson Strait or on the ice after freeze-up, to spend the winter inland. Some caribou stay on the island all year round, and hunters described feeling lucky that there are caribou close by all year (it's harder for hunters in Taloyoak or Kuguaruk).



Poster Created: November 15, 2016

Naming Caribou

It was most often described that "caribou are caribou", *tuktuit* in Inuktitut, and that they are not generally distinguished into herds like biologists do. Locally, the main way caribou are differentiated is based on where they are from or what they look like:

- **iluliup tuktuut** are "inland caribou" or "belonging to the mainland", and are considered to be the "big", "real", "regular" caribou (most closely related to scientists' descriptions of barren-ground caribou)
- **kingailaup tuktuut** are "island caribou" or "belonging to kingailaup" (a specific reference to Prince of Wales Island, meaning "the place with no mountains"), and are described as the "small", "white" caribou with thicker fur and shorter legs (most closely related to scientists' descriptions of Peary caribou) - not to be confused with a **pukiq** (rare albino caribou)
- **qungniit** are "reindeer" and sometimes referred to as "Alaskan" caribou, they have been seen to mix into herds of **iluliup tuktuut**, having escaped from reindeer herding operations around Tuktoyaktuk - they are clearly marked by ear clips or branding, as well as their longer hair, spotted fur, long body, and shorter front legs than back legs help to identify them
- there was also mention of a "hybrid caribou" by some active hunters, that may be a more recent cross-breed of **iluliup** and **kingailaup** caribou, but this would require further discussion to clarify because Elders questioned this in verification workshops
- **tuktuut** are also more specifically described by adding traditional Inuktitut place names to reference important habitat or hunting places, or directions that caribou are moving from/to

Compilation map of caribou hunting areas
around Gioa Haven



"I grew up in the era where caribou clothing is important to a family, and every part of the meat is eaten. If it's a caribou bull, the skin is used for bedding. So that's how they are used. It's just very important to a family" (Ruby Elechetoook, 2013)

Conclusions

Given the lack of caribou research on KWI, and the significance of local observations and long-term experience in decision-making, Inuit knowledge of caribou can make important contributions to co-management efforts. This starts with gaining context on naming and distinguishing caribou according to local Inuktitut dialects, important places, and traditional use areas. All of these need to be recognized as being closely related to the homelands of different -miut groups. The -miut suffix is added to a word to indicate "the people of (an area)" and Elders continue to identify closely with their -miut groups. So today, it is common for Elders and hunters to talk about their experiences of caribou hunting in relation to these traditional homelands, in terms of present as well as past land uses.

Acknowledgements

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