

Kinngait Trip Report (April 12 – 29, 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 Kinngait 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 Pootoogoo Elee 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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|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ○ Atsiaq Alasuaq (2 interviews) | ○ Oqsuralik Ottokie |
| ○ Mangitak Kellypalik (2 interviews) | ○ Paulassie Pootoogook (2 interviews) |
| ○ Eliyah Mangitak | ○ Kanayuk Solomonie |
| ○ Iqadluq Nunguisuituq (2 interviews) | ○ Simigak Suvega |
| ○ Adamie Nuna | |

Topics discussed →

- Previous experience with researchers, or results of previous research
- Experience with sea ice
- Inuktitut terminology linked to sea ice conditions, travel, and use
- Place/seasonal ice feature names
- Wind directions and influence on sea ice formation and movement
- Currents and influence on sea ice formation and movement
- The importance, and uses, of sea ice
- Weather prediction techniques
- Wildlife uses of the sea ice
- Hunting on sea ice
- Noticeably warm or cold years
- 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 60 Inuktitut words relating to sea ice were described and explained
- Much of the Inuktitut sea ice terminology is no longer being used and/or is not being passed along to the younger generation
- Noticeable sea ice changes:
 - the floe edge is closer to town, throughout the winter
 - the ice is thinner than it used to be
 - the ice is more watery

- the ice takes longer to freeze, forms about a month later, and breaks up sooner
- the snow on top of the ice is softer, and seasonal cracks are forming earlier
- It is hard to answer some questions because ice conditions have changed so much
- Open water is maintained throughout the winter by strong currents
 - these can be dangerous areas to travel near, or around
- A harpoon is the most reliable way of gauging ice safety, but other methods may include:
 - evaluating the wetness of the snow on the sea ice
 - checking ice thickness through a seal hole
 - note – it is hard to assess ice safety from a snowmobile
- It is hard to predict weather conditions/changes today
- It is very important to have first-hand experience on the sea ice
- Ice is a bringer of animals
- There is dissatisfaction with the use, and intended meaning, of *Inuit Qaujimagajatuqangit*
- It would be good for Inuit and scientists to work together – to improve access to information for Inuit, and for scientists to learn from those most experienced with sea ice (there is interest in working together, at an equal level)
- It is very important to bring back research project results, through means such as:
 - written report and/or posters (bilingual, Inuktitut and English)
 - video
 - radio show
 - individual updates to each person interviewed

Future research plans →

- **July – October, 2004** → I will transcribe the interviews and begin organizing and analyzing them. I will copy all the audio and video files to tape to be deposited in Kinngait on the next research trip. I will digitize the maps drawn in interviews, and acquire satellite imagery to investigate ice conditions/changes in different areas around Kinngait and the Hudson Strait area. I will plan and organize future research trips.
- **November, 2004** → return to Kinngait for a 3-week field research trip.
- **January, 2005** → return to Kinngait for a 1-month field research trip.

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 Mayor and SAO for allowing the use of the Hamlet Council Chambers for interview space when needed. I would also like to thank Kristiina and Timmun Alariaq for the hands-on learning opportunities provided by a dog team ride to take pictures and video of sea ice conditions.

I once again enjoyed my time in Kinngait, and I look forward to returning and working with you in November. Feel free to contact me any time with comments, questions, or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Gita J. Laidler