

2011 BIG GAME HARVESTING PROGRAM TUKTOYAKTUK, NT



Location: Nallok

Wednesday, March 2, 2011 – Sunday, March 6, 2011

**Report by:
Lila Voudrach
Renewable Resource Officer II
Tuktoyaktuk, NT**

2011 Big Game Harvesting Program

Program Coordinator: Lila Voudrach, RRO II – ENR

Guide/Instructors: Chuck Gruben
Jonas Lucas

Students: Effie Gruben
Cheeta Gruben
Julia Steen
Lori Felix
David Lucas
Bryce Cockney
Colten Gruben

Funded by: Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment

Administered: Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation



Summary of the Barren-Ground Caribou Regulations

To harvest caribou in the Tuktoyaktuk area, one must know the rules and regulations pertaining to caribou harvesting in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. There are three Barren-ground Caribou Management Zones within the Tuktoyaktuk Harvesting Area. Only those with aboriginal harvesting rights may harvest within the I/BC/06 and I/BC/08 Barren-ground Caribou Management Zones.

The border of the I/BC/06 Barren-ground Caribou Management Zone is located an estimated 70 miles Southeast of Tuktoyaktuk and about 17 miles south of Nallok, which was the base camp for the program. One may harvest caribou in this zone only with the use of a valid caribou tag which can be obtained from the local Hunters & Trappers Committee or the local Renewable Resource Officer.

The I/BC/07 Barren-ground Caribou Management Zone is a large area *that* includes much of the Tuktoyaktuk traditional harvesting areas, including Husky Lakes and Liver Pool Bay. No person shall harvest barren-ground caribou in this zone. Nallok is located right in the middle of this zone.

The I/BC/08 Barren-ground Caribou Management Zone includes the Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula. There are no restrictions to aboriginal subsistence harvesting. However, this zone is closed to all harvesting from April 1 to June 15. Nallok is an estimated 15 miles south of the I/BC/08 border.

Introduction

Funded by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment and administrated by the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation, the *2011 Big Game Harvesting Program* was designed to introduce youth to winter wilderness travel/survival, navigational skills, firearm safety, traditional knowledge and big game harvesting techniques. Seven high school students, between the ages of 15 and 17, were brought to Nallok (N69° 19' 40.8" W130° 53' 22.3"), which is estimated to be 63 miles southeast of Tuktoyaktuk, for five consecutive days, during which time they were introduced to winter travel, map reading, GPS navigation, firearm safety and a big game harvest.



Cheeta Gruben, Lori Felix, Bryce Cockney, David Lucas and Colten Gruben departed Tuktoyaktuk, traveling to Nallok.

Despite the wind chill factor, the skies were clear and the sun was shining.

About 15 miles southeast of Tuktoyaktuk, the group observed about 20 barren-ground caribou on the I/BC/08 Border. The guides decided not to harvest the animals and instead continue to travel to Nallok.

After a four hour drive to Nallok, the students were more than happy to remain inside the cabin for the rest of the evening.

Wednesday, March 2, 2011

With a wind chill of -44°C , the guides, Chuck Gruben and Jonas Lucas; RRO, Lila Voudrach and seven students Julia Steen, Effie Gruben,





Thursday, March 3, 2011

RRO Voudrach had planned to have three of the seven students navigate from Nallok to her cabin at Kugaluk River using Global Positioning System (GPS) Units. Kugaluk, about 17 miles south of Nallok, is just within the I/BC/06 Barren-ground Caribou Management Zone. Unfortunately, the wind chill was still below -40°C. The temperature made it difficult for the youth to navigate as the batteries in the GPS units froze almost immediately.

RRO Voudrach decided to take the youth to her cabin to warm up. While at the cabin, RRO Voudrach spoke to the youth about the Caribou Regulations and the three management zones.

Meanwhile, Chuck Gruben and Jonas Lucas took the remaining four students to the I/BC/06 border where they were hoping to observe and harvest caribou.

No caribou were spotted, however, the guides and youth did observe and harvest a moose. Shortly after the harvest, Chuck Gruben and one of the youth dropped off the two girls at RRO Voudrach's cabin so that they could warm up.

The three boys along with Lori Felix observed and assisted the guides/instructors in the skinning and butchering of the moose.

This was the first time the youth had observed a Moose harvest and they were amazed with its size.



After the meat was loaded into the big toboggan, the crew drove to Kugaluk, picked up the girls and traveled back to Nallok.

Friday, March 4, 2011

After completing chores around the cabin, the crew prepared for another trip to search for caribou. Instead of traveling south to the I/BC/06 zone, the crew traveled north to I/BC/08.

The guide, along with four students traveled to the Liver Pool Short Range Radar Site, located at N69° 36' 12.2" W130° 53' 24.8". The site is situated at a high altitude so when harvesters climb up to the site and look around with their binoculars, they can see for miles all around them. Unfortunately, the only caribou that were observed were on Thumb Island. Thumb Island is several miles south of the I/BC/08 border and well within I/BC/07.



Liver Pool Short Range Radar Site



The guides and youth returned to Nallok.

RRO Voudrach, Bryce, Julia, Effie, Cheeta and Lori stayed near the cabin to create a simple GPS exercise. Each student was taught how to plot a waypoint and how to go to a waypoint. The students each went out on their own to plot a single waypoint. The next step was to learn how to go to a waypoint. Each student went out and navigated to another student's waypoint using the GPS. The youth enjoyed the exercise and were interested in plotting and finding more waypoints.

Meanwhile, Jonas and Chuck took David and Colten southeast toward the I/BC/06 border to search for caribou. Once again, the guys returned without caribou.

Saturday, March 5, 2011

Chuck and Jonas took David and Colten on another trip toward I/BC/06.

RRO Voudrach stayed back at the cabin with the five students and did some map reading. The students had to point out where they traveled to during the past few days. RRO Voudrach then showed them exactly where they went and went on to speak to them about the importance of learning the Barren-ground caribou management zones.

A couple of the youth decided to go out and look for the remaining waypoints that were plotted on the GPS.

RRO Voudrach spoke to the students about safe handling of firearms and the importance of firearm safety. The students were then given the opportunity to fire three rounds with an open sight rifle at a target. After each student had a try, they were then given the opportunity to try firing a rifle with a scope. The youth really enjoyed themselves. RRO Voudrach supervised and ensured that the youth were practicing safe handling of the firearms.

Sunday, March 6, 2011

The guides and students were up early and preparing to travel back to Tuktoyaktuk. The weather was overcast and snowing when the crew began to travel north toward Husky Lakes. After reaching the west side of the Husky Lakes fingers, RRO Voudrach had to guide the crew using the GPS as the weather had gotten worse. The crew made it safely back to Tuktoyaktuk at 6:30 PM. It was definitely a trip to remember. The students came to realize how useful a GPS is when it comes to navigation.



Conclusion:

The 2011 Big Game Harvesting Program has proven to be a success. The core objectives have all been met. The students were given lessons in navigational skills, firearm safety, winter survival skills, conservation education and they have had the opportunity to observe and participate in a moose harvest.

The trip was cold and not easy for some of the students. They have all come to realize the importance of proper winter gear. The temperature did not rise above -40°C during time that was spent in the field.

The students enjoyed the map reading and GPS exercise. There are a few of the students that could have used more practice with the GPS so RRO Voudrach has agreed to set up an additional exercises within the community if the students want more practice.

I cannot stress enough the importance of knowing the rules and regulations pertaining to harvesting in the Tuktoyaktuk Traditional Harvesting Area. Therefore, I made sure that the youth were aware of the three Barren-ground Caribou Management Zones. This went well with the map reading because one must know where they are, to know which zone they are in. If we were given more time and if the weather was not so cold, it would have been nice to actually test the students' navigational skills.

The students were also very eager to learn about firearm safety and I am confident that they have all learned how to safely handle a firearm.

There were many caribou observed during the 2011 Big Game Harvesting Program. However, they were all within the I/BC/07 Barren-ground Caribou Management Zone which is a zone that is closed to harvesting. It was unfortunate that there were no caribou observed in the I/BC/06 or the I/BC/08 zones.

Fortunately, the students did have the opportunity to observe and participate in a moose harvest. This was the first time that many of the students have had this opportunity. The moose meat has since been cut up and distributed to each of the students as well as a number of elders in the community of Tuktoyaktuk.

Aside from the frigid temperatures and a lack of caribou, the students did enjoy their time spent at Nallok and surrounding areas. I hope that this program will encourage them to participate in future Take a Kid Harvesting Programs.





Acknowledgements:

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation Board of Directors for the continuous support and their generous donation.

Thank you to the guides Chuck Gruben and Jonas Lucas.

Very special thanks to the students that have participated in the program. You have made the trip very enjoyable. I am always happy to see such enthusiastic youth.

Thank you to the Tuktoyaktuk Canoe Club for allowing us to use the GPS units for the 2011 Big Game Harvesting Program.

Thank you to the Department of Industry Tourism and Investment for funding the program.

