

Improving Cooperation between Researchers and Northern Communities



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Cooperative Agreement with Barrow Arctic Science Consortium (BASC)

“Dedicated to the encouragement of research and educational activities pertaining to the North Slope and adjacent portions of the Arctic Ocean”

- Provide logistics support for projects in Barrow area
- Facilitate communication among researchers, agencies and residents on the North Slope
 - Set up meetings, provide outreach support, do “legwork” necessary for effective communication
 - Are responsive to email, letters and phone calls



Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC)

- Formed in 1977 to represent whaling communities and coordinate with agencies responsible for managing subsistence whaling through a grant from NOAA
- Protect and enhance the bowhead whale, its habitat, and the Eskimo subsistence whale hunt and associated traditions
- Undertake research and educational activities related to bowhead whales



Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC)

- Monitor subsistence bowhead whale hunt
- Enforce established quotas
- Punish infractions occurring during hunt
- Report to NOAA the outcome of hunts



Bering, Beaufort and Chukchi Seas: Competing and Complimentary Interests of Research and Subsistence Harvest

- **Research:** interactions of shelves, basins, ocean, ice and atmosphere; evidence of climate change; tremendous productivity that in turn lures marine mammals
- **Subsistence harvest:** marine mammals are important to coastal villages (e.g., healthful food, cultural practices)



Conflict between SBI and Whalers

Planning: Cruise track of spring 2002 voyage paralleled the bowhead migration route and neared the northwestern Alaska coastline during whaling

Communication: Whaling community was informed of cruise track in December '01, no researchers attended the February '02 meeting of AEWC, communication was not effective

AEWC and NSB Mayor objected to cruise on grounds that hunting success may be reduced if whales deflect from ship noise



Conflict Resolution

Cooperative effort between SBI scientists, AEWC and BASC to revise track and sampling procedure

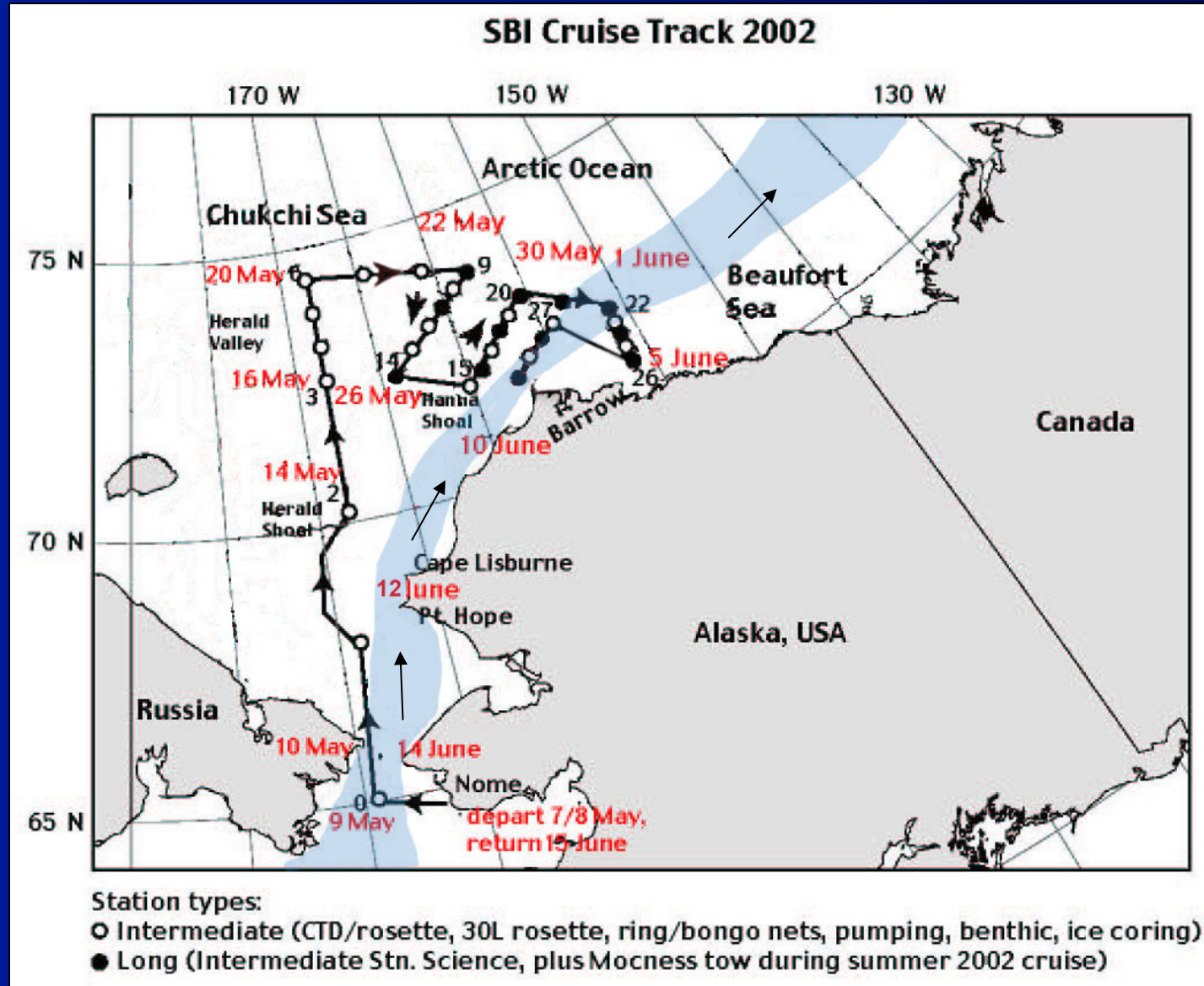
- researchers presented science plan in Barrow
- scientific plan altered, stayed close to schedule



SBI Cruise Track

Modified to avoid whale migration route

Whales migrate
north late April
to mid June
(blue region)



Arctic Section Meeting in Barrow

- Follow-up to conflict resolution with SBI cruise, the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, and the North Slope Borough
- Discuss a process that will prevent further conflict



North Slope Borough Mayor George Ahmaogak, Tom Pyle and Louie Tupas of NSF and Glenn Sheehan of BASC pictured in front of a bowhead whale skull, Barrow, Alaska, 26 June 2002.



Planning for the Future

- Develop a plan for cooperation and communication
- Early and continuing communication is necessary, during planning and during voyages to minimize impact of ocean and air traffic on subsistence hunting



- voyages evolve due to unforeseen circumstances
- whaling season varies with the migration of whales



Guidelines for Cooperation

- Inform researchers about sensitive areas and times for subsistence hunting (maps, dates, migration routes)
- Provide contact information and suggestions for how to communicate during science planning
- Establish how to maintain contact during voyages to keep track of ships and whales
- Provide information for village representatives about research community and who to contact with questions or problems





Whaling photos courtesy of Craig George.
SBI photos courtesy of Dave Forcucci.