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**Seals/Shungnak/Walrus**

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**Summarized by: Cecilie R. Ebsen**

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**Notes:**

00.0

[The host of this program appears to be looking at photos/showing slides, while he explains facts about seals. Each time a new slide is shown there is a beeping sound on the recording. In this summary each paragraph marks a change of slide]

This is the Seal program. Seals have adapted to marine life while at the same time keeping ties to land. Ribbon seals, ring seals, harbor seals, bearded seals, sea lions and fur seals are found in Alaska and are all studied in this program.

In 1972 Congress passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act [MMPA]. It put all marine mammals under federal protection and only Alaska Natives were allowed to hunt them thereafter. A ribbon seal [pictured] is about to slip into the water.

Pinnipeds can be found in all seas of the world, but the largest variety of these animals is found in coastal arctic waters and the Bering Sea.

A group of seals is called a pod. Alaska Natives use every part of the seal. In earlier times the fat was also used as oil in lamps.

The ribbon seal is rare. They can be up to five feet and weigh up to 200 pounds. They can stay under water for 27 minutes. They live from 23-27 years. Seals are part of most Eskimos' and Aleuts' diet.

02.00

The ringed seals live on thick ice. They are common on the land fast ice north of the Bering Strait. They live on the Arctic year round and are important to the coastal Eskimos, as they [the seals] live close to the shore.

Ringed seals are born in birth lairs, which are ice cages. They stay there until they are weaned five-six weeks after birth. The Arctic fox, polar bear and Man are their most common predators.

The spotted seal is closely related to the harbor seal of Southern Alaska, Washington, Oregon and California. Early Europeans called them sea dogs, because they have a long dog-like snout and make dog-like noises.

The harbor seal is an open-water seal. Eskimos say that these are the only kind of seal that will attack man.

The bearded seal is the largest hair seal. Eskimos call them “ugruk”, Yup’ik Eskimos call them “mukluk”. Mukluk, by accident, has come to refer to a certain kind of footwear. When an early explorer came to Western Alaska, he asked an Eskimo what he was wearing on his feet. The Eskimo replied “mukluk”, meaning it was made from bearded sealskin. However the visitor thought it was a name for all skin boots. The bearded seal’s skin is used for boat covering and rope.

04.30

Eskimos hunt with partners. The bearded seal is very big: more than six feet long and can weigh up to 800 pounds.

A variety of methods are used to hunt seals. A seal naps for 20 to 30 seconds then check for danger and then nap for 20-30 seconds again. In the summer, a hunter has to get as close as 25 feet before shooting the seal because the seal sinks quickly. In the winter they are fat and usually float when dead.

Seals have poor eyesight. A hunter will flap his arms like a seal’s flippers and lift his head now and then, as well as scratch the ice to attract the seals.

The hunter sometimes uses the seal’s claws as a lure. It is often used today by ice age hunters [sp?]. Seals make breathing holes. The seal punch these holes in the ice with their head and keep them open by gnawing with their teeth and scratching with their nails. A hunter will wait with the harpoon ready by one of these holes.

Alaskan Eskimos use dogs to find seals hiding near a breathing hole. The hunter will tie the dog up some distance from the hole so the seal cannot smell the dog when it comes up for air. The hunter may wait for hours for the seal to come.

06.35

In the past, seals were often caught by net. Eskimos set net near leads or under breathing holes. Leads are cracks in the sea ice that open up when the ice shifts.

The harpoon was the old weapon used to kill seals. Today it is still used to retrieve seals and keep them from sinking once they are shot. The shaft is six or seven feet long. The head used to be made of ivory or stone but are now made of steel. The head comes off when an animal is struck. A line is attached to the head and through a loop on the shaft so it is never lost.

07.20

Eskimos call their small boats kayaks. The Aleuts use similar boats called baidarka. These boats are often used for seal hunting. They are typically a long, narrow, low-sided craft, pointed in both ends. They fit one man. Their framework is wood, covered in de-haired ringed or bearded seal skins.

Umiaks are large, light, open boats. They can carry 20-30 people. Sometimes seals are harpooned while in the water, at other times the umiak is used to reach floating ice cakes with seals on them.

When a seal is killed, a few drops of water are poured into its mouth and its bones will be returned to the sea unbroken. Eskimos believed that the animals were happy to be killed for food as long as they were treated right. They would then tell other living seals who would also give up their lives.

Sea lions and fur seals are both eared seals, contrary to the all other seals. Eared seals can also walk on their flippers.

Each spring fur seals migrate from California to the Pribilof Islands of Alaska. They are escorted by the U.S. coast guard to protect them. Every year, a fishery service manager and a scientist supervise the harvest of the fur seal on the Pribilof Islands.

The big male fur seals are called bulls. They arrive first in May and find a beach they will defend as their territory. In early July females, called cows, arrive. Each bull tries to get as many cows as he can.

The females give birth to pups. A few days after birthing they mate again and carry their new pup for 12 months.

10.10

Today, the fur seals are managed as a farm. The platforms [on the Pribilof Islands] go right through the rockery – the name for the calving and breeding grounds.

The young males, called bachelors, are herded to the other side of the island for butchering. They are counted and only three-year old males, not needed for breeding, are killed.

40,000-60,000 bachelors are harvested by the Aleuts on St. George and St. Paul Islands.

Barrels [on photo] are full of fur seal hides from St. Paul Island. There are 85 hides in each barrel.

There are more ways than one to skin a seal. One way is to slit it from head to tail.

Once the large bans of skin has been pulled of the seal, they are cut into strips to make the thin rope called babish [sp? [babiche](#) Spelling]. Babish is used to make dog harnesses and harpoon lines. Today it is used to tying dog sleds together.

Stakes are used to stretch sealskins.

The skin of the bearded seal is very thick and can stand much wear and tear.

The Eskimo butcher the seal and pack it. The meat might be stored on the ice as reserves of food for later.

All parts of the animal is saved except the liver. The liver is so high in vitamin A that it is poisonous.

12.18

The stomach is used as a carrier case or float; the tendons are used as threat or line; and the fat is used as fuel.

Sealskin and stomach are stretched tightly over a round frame and used as a drum for the Eskimo ceremonies.

Sealskin is used for clothing and boots. Intestines are used to store food, as windows and for rain gear.

Floats are also made out of the seal bladder and stomach. These are also used to hold seal oil or any other liquid.

Bristles from the bearded seal are used to decorate facemasks and as tooth picks.

When the hunters go out, their boat is supplied with guns, harpoons and floats.

[The presentation on seals of Alaska ends here]

13.37

[Shungnak script]

The village of Shungnak is located on the Kobuk river, 200 miles east of Kotzebue.

Shungnak is only accessed by air for most of the year. In the summer, barges also travel up the Kobuk river from Kotzebue.

Shungnak is built along a high bank on the north side of the Kobuk river. Houses built along the bottom of the bank are flooded in the spring. Today new houses are built on the top of the bank.

A new home on top of the hill have wires fastened to the stove pipe to keep it from blowing away in fierce winds. Most of the area is tundra.

Jade is found near the village. A log house used to be a shop for jewelry. Caribou leggings used for mukluks are drying on the Arctic entry.

Dog teams are still common in Shungnak. Boys go out ptarmigan hunting or just for a run.

Although dog teams are common, snow machines are used for most work and travel.

The people depend on hunting and fishing. Most people buy their nets, but a few people, like Margaret Sheldon, make their own. Net making is an art.

In September, families go up river to traditional fishing camps. They fish for sea fish, salmon and white fish.

Salmon is dried. The smoke from the fire is used mainly to keep flies away but also helps to dry the fish.

Caribou is the main land animal used by the people.

Moose is also important. Barbara McMannus [sp? possibly McManus] correctly identified, Bernice Custer and Vera Douglas are butchering one [in photo].

Roots from the "Mashu" or Eskimo potato are picked and stored for winter. When Vera Douglas finds a place where a mouse has stored the plant, she leaves something as a substitute – like an apple.

Fish are caught through the ice. Josephine Woods fishes for grayling.

Before they got steel, Eskimos made knives out of rock or bone. Today, the ulu, traditionally a women's knife, is made from old saw blades and a caribou antler as handle. The other tool is an "ichuun" used for scraping hides.

Vera Douglas skins a ringed seal with an ulu. Since the sea is 150 miles away, the people trade for seal or buy them from Kotzebue or Kivalina

Edna Commack is using the "ichuun" to scrape a caribou hide for a parka.

Josephine Woods shows off her kuspuk. It is a pullover dress worn like a jacket.

From left to right: Josephine Douglas, Josephine Woods, Bertha Sheldon, Joan and Hannah [sp.? Spelling] Commack displays new kuspuks made in home-economic class at school.

Many types of mukluks are made and worn in the village. These are spring mukluks. The bottoms are bearded seal; moose hide tops; beaver trims and caribou ties.

These mukluks also have bearded seal bottoms.

These mukluks are made with seal and decorated with a design on cowhide. They have beadwork trim and a wolverine fringe.

School was first held in Shungnak in 1905. A BIA school was built in the 1930s. A few years ago the State shipped up portable trailer units now used as houses for teachers. There is a new school for grades 1 through 12.

School in Shungnak is like school in Fairbanks. Here Demaris Richmond [sp? Name probably Damaris] teaches a science class.

Young lady dresses up with a paper plate for a mask and old fur garments as clothes.

20.09

Christmas is celebrated in Shungnak. Santa and Mrs. Claus are surrounded by their reindeer

[End slideshow about Shungnak]

20.30

[Slide presentation on walrus begins]

[First slide] These animals are Pacific walrus. Together with sea lions and seals they are called Pinnipeds. Pinnipeds means a fin plus a foot.

The walrus is a seal-like animal with thick, heavy neck, broad short muscle, covered with heavy bristle. The males, known as bulls, weigh up to two tons. The females, known as cows, weigh up to more than a ton.

Calves are born at the end of April or the beginning of May. It remains with its mother up to two and a half years. They do not have the warm fur seal pups do, so they depend on their mothers for protection.

A walrus will never abandon an injured or trapped calf. A cow was seen by twelve men hacking at an ice fall with her tusk. She would chase the men away and then return to hack at the ice. Eventually she broke through the ice and saved her calf who had been trapped underneath it.

A cow has a calf every year in her prime. The cows gather together to form nursery herd. These herds are the largest groups of walrus and the first to migrate in the spring.

The herds migrate north in the spring and can be found in the Bering Strait. In the fall, they move south with the ice and many stay around St. Lawrence Island in the winter.

The herds will gather on large ice pans drifting in the migration direction. They will relax while they get a free ride. They have guards looking for any approaching dangers.

Walrus feed mainly on bottom dwelling creatures such as clams. These clams [pictured] are found along the rich Bering Chukchi platform. Walrus also eat snails, crab, shrimp, worms and seals. They catch them by brushing the sea bottom with their broad, flat, muzzles. The location of their food source keeps the walrus close to the seacoast.

The walrus have long tusks. It is used for climbing on to ice flows and land, and for fighting. The walrus [pictured] is showing of his tusks as a warning to not come any closer. Tusks continue to grow throughout the walrus' life, but daily wear wears them down.

The walrus ivory is one of the greatest treasures of the north. It was traditionally used to make tools. Today it is used to make art.

Up until 1979, ivory was often sold raw. When the federal government took over management of walrus in 1979 it became illegal to sell it to non-natives.

Walrus-watch begins in early spring along the Bering Sea coast. They are hunted during their migration north. The hunters try to spot the walrus south of their village so they can continue to drift with the current into their village and not have to maneuver their boats back against the current with their catch.

When a herd is sighted, hunters get in their umiaks and go. Earlier harpoons were used to kill the walrus. Today motors and guns are used. Walrus hunting continues to be dangerous. Sometimes walrus attacks the boats or the ice passages close, stranding the hunters on the ice. A sleeping herd can often be approached without trouble, because they do not fear the hunters or

their boats when the engines are turned off. They do not suspect the danger until the hunters shoot.

## 26.22

The hunters have to kill the walrus before it starts to move, because if the wounded walrus falls in the water it will be impossible to get it back up. When the living walrus have moved off the ice, the hunters move their boats to catch the walrus that are sliding into the water and anchor them to a dead walrus or a chunk of ice. Many walrus are lost because they slide off the ice. Other walrus sometimes even push the wounded or dead walrus into the water in an attempt to help them.

After securing the dead walrus, the hunters sharpen their knives and axes. They begin to butcher while they cook and eat some of the meat to stay energized.

Sometimes living walrus do not leave the ice right away. They may attack boats in the water, so the hunters pull them onto the ice. They will make noise to get the walrus to leave the ice. They are seldom shot unless they come close enough for the hunters to make sure they will not fall into the water.

When they are done butchering, the meat is loaded onto the boats. An umiak can hold three walrus inside and tow one or two behind. Air is blown into the body of the walrus so that it floats. The tusk, skin, flippers and meat are the most important parts. Bones may be discarded if the load is heavy.

Walrus calf hide is split into strips for strong rope. The hides are stretched, dried and used for umiak frames. The hides of bulls are not usually used for boat frames because they are scarred.

When the hunters return they divide the catch. The owner of the boat gets the ivory. The meat and strips of skin and blubber are sorted into piles and distributed between hunters or all villagers, depending on village custom. The people usually only eat the blubber, heart, liver and flippers, while the rest of the meat is saved for dog food.

The Eskimo drum is made of bone, wood and walrus stomach. It is played by striking a long stick against the bottom of the drum frame. The stick bends in the middle, hitting the walrus stomach frame.

The water proof parka is made from the intestines of the walrus. The seams are sewn with sinews, which swells closing the seams tight. The parka is worn on sea mammal hunts.