

APPENDIX C

The 2004 Spring Walrus Harvest at Little Diomedede, Alaska
Field Report to USFWS-MMM (Anchorage)

By
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Diomedede: Spring 2004

The spring walrus harvest at Diomedede was monitored May 8 – June 16th by Gay Sheffield (Alaska Department of Fish and Game) for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of the Marine Mammals Management (MMM) office's Walrus Harvest Monitoring Project (WHMP).

Unusually warm temperatures, frequent rain and fog, combined with a rapid retreat of the main pack ice, and characterized the hunting conditions during the monitored period. Hunters commented that the animal movements through the region were approximately three weeks early. Extensive rubble ice surrounded the island during April and most of May. Open water and walrus were reported in the Bering Strait region during late April and the beginning of May however; both were inaccessible to hunters due to the rubble ice surrounding the island.

Although boat hunting began May 12th, walrus were successfully harvested only during May 21-30th (Appendix 1). During this period, a total of 45 walrus (42 adults and three calves) were landed. Eighty-nine percent of the non-calf walrus harvest consisted of adult bulls. Seventy-four percent of the 19 walrus hunting trips resulted in the retrieval of at least one non-calf walrus (Table 1). The average non-calf walrus harvest per successful walrus trip was three animals (Table 1). The average total harvest per boat captain was eight walrus (6 males, 1 female, 1 calf) (Table 2). Hunters donated teeth from 95% of the non-calf harvest and uteruses from 60% of the non-calf females to the WHMP (Table 3). Other marine mammals harvested during the monitored period included 36 seals (Table 4).

Instead of a WHMP hunter meeting, the monitor met with each boat captain at the start of the hunting season to describe the samples to be collected, review the types of data that would be collected (i.e., duration of hunt, etc.), explain the new USFWS wasteful take

policy, distribute sampling supplies, and answer questions. All USFWS sampling supplies were located on Diomedede at the start of the monitoring period. A hunter incentive ticket drawing was held at the end of the walrus hunting season for the Kawerak, Inc. sponsored prizes that are awarded to the selected boat captains before the end of the summer. The USFWS Skandic Ski-Doo snow machine was surplused and the broken sled was removed from the island. The USFWS Polaris 550 snow machine has been stored at the “standing place” meeting area until it can be moved closer to the washeteria for storage until needed for the WHMP in spring 2005.

Table 1. Summary of walrus hunting trip effort during the 2004 Walrus Harvest Monitor Project at Diomedede. Trip success is the percentage of successful trips.

<i># of non-calf walrus retrieved per trip</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>10	Success 74%
<i># of trips</i>	5	5	2	3	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	19 Trips

Table 2. Sex, age, and total number of walrus harvested by boat at Diomedede during spring 2004.

Boat ID	N	Males	Females	Calves
A	18	15	2	1
B	-	-	-	-
C	-	-	-	-
D	23	20	2	1
E	-	-	-	-
F	4	2	1	1

Table 3. Summary details of specimens of walruses harvested and samples volunteered by hunters at Diomedes during the spring harvest in 2004.

ID #	Sex	Age	Date	Teeth	Uterus	Anomalies
D04-056	F	Adult	21-May	X	-	-
D04-058	M	Adult	21-May	X	-	-
D04-050	M	Adult	21-May	X	-	-
D04-048	M	Adult	21-May	X	-	-
D04-049	M	Adult	21-May	X	-	-
D04-046	M	Adult	21-May	X	-	-
D04-072	M	Adult	21-May	X	-	-
D04-007	F	Adult	21-May	X	X	-
D04-047	M	Adult	21-May	X	-	Liver
D04-060	M	Adult	24-May	X	-	-
D04-051	M	Adult	24-May	X	-	-
D04-044	M	Adult	24-May	X	-	-
D04-057	M	Adult	24-May	X	-	-
D04-055	M	Adult	24-May	X	-	-
D04-052	M	Adult	24-May	X	-	-
D04-053	M	Adult	24-May	X	-	-
D04-121	M	Adult	24-May	X	-	-
D04-122	M	Adult	24-May	X	-	-
D04-128	M	Adult	24-May	X	-	-
D04-073	F	Adult	24-May	X	X	-
D04-127	F	Adult	26-May	X	X	-
D04-129	M	Adult	26-May	X	-	-
D04-130	F	Adult	26-May	X	-	-
D04-006	M	Adult	27-May	X	-	-
D04-077	M	Adult	27-May	X	-	-
D04-045	M	Adult	27-May	X	-	-
D04-079	M	Adult	27-May	X	-	-
D04-075	M	Adult	27-May	X	-	-
D04-074	M	Adult	27-May	X	-	Skin
D04-126	M	Adult	27-May	X	-	-
D04-135	M	Adult	29-May	X	-	-
D04-131	M	Adult	29-May	X	-	-
D04-140	M	Adult	29-May	X	-	-
D04-136	M	Adult	29-May	X	-	-
D04-133	M	Adult	29-May	X	-	-
D04-076	M	Adult	29-May	-	-	-
D04-078	M	Adult	29-May	-	-	-
D04-005	M	Adult	29-May	X	-	-
D04-004	M	Adult	29-May	X	-	-
D04-124	M	Adult	30-May	X	-	-

Table 3. (continued)

ID #	Sex	Age	Date	Teeth	Uterus	Anomalies
D04-123	M	adult	30-May	X	-	-
D04-082	M	adult	30-May	X	-	-
TOTAL				40	3	2

Table 4. Harvest date and the number of walrus, bearded, ringed, spotted, and ribbon seals landed at Diomedes during the spring monitoring period 2004.

Date	Walrus	Bearded	Ringed	Spotted	Ribbon
12-May-04	0	1	4	0	0
13-May-04	0	0	1	0	0
16-May-04	0	1	0	0	0
21-May-04	11	2	0	0	0
22-May-04	0	0	1	0	0
24-May-04	11	0	0	0	0
26-May-04	4	0	0	0	0
27-May-04	7	10	3	0	1
29-May-04	9	2	1	5	0
30-May-04	3	2	0	1	0
5-Jun-04	0	0	0	1	0
TOTAL	45	18	10	7	1

Appendix 1. Sex and age of walrus harvested near Diomede during spring 2004 by date.

ID #	Sex	Age	Date
D04-056	F	adult	21-May
D04-058	M	adult	21-May
D04-050	M	adult	21-May
D04-048	M	adult	21-May
D04-049	M	adult	21-May
D04-046	M	adult	21-May
NOID	M	calf	21-May
D04-072	M	adult	21-May
D04-007	F	adult	21-May
NOID	F	calf	21-May
D04-047	M	adult	21-May
D04-060	M	adult	24-May
D04-051	M	adult	24-May
D04-044	M	adult	24-May
D04-057	M	adult	24-May
D04-055	M	adult	24-May
D04-052	M	adult	24-May
D04-053	M	adult	24-May
D04-073	F	adult	24-May
D04-121	M	adult	24-May
D04-122	M	adult	24-May
D04-128	M	adult	24-May
D04-127	F	adult	26-May
D04-129	M	adult	26-May
D04-130	F	adult	26-May
NOID	M	calf	26-May
D04-006	M	adult	27-May
D04-077	M	adult	27-May
D04-045	M	adult	27-May
D04-079	M	adult	27-May
D04-075	M	adult	27-May
D04-074	M	adult	27-May
D04-126	M	adult	27-May
D04-135	M	adult	29-May
D04-131	M	adult	29-May
D04-140	M	adult	29-May
D04-136	M	adult	29-May
D04-133	M	adult	29-May
D04-076	M	adult	29-May
D04-078	M	adult	29-May

Appendix 1 (continued)

ID #	Sex	Age	Date
D04-005	M	adult	29-May
D04-004	M	adult	29-May
D04-124	M	adult	30-May
D04-123	M	adult	30-May
D04-082	M	adult	30-May

DIOMEDE: 2004 SPRING HUNTING CONDITIONS

May 8: Gay Sheffield began monitoring the spring hunt. Overcast with wind SE 10-15 kts. with drizzle and snow showers. The ocean is inaccessible due to extensive rubble ice around the island.

May 9: Overcast morning with 10-20 kts from the southeast with rain and snow showers.

May 10: Overcast morning with 15-20 kts from the southeast. Fog with drizzle and occasional snow showers.

May 11: Dense fog with the wind from the south 20 kts. The ice from Big Diomede broke off from the middle valley on north with the ice on the north side of Little Diomede beginning to come off.

May 12: Overcast morning with a southeast 15 kt. wind dying by evening and swinging northeast 5 kts. Thousands of Sandhill cranes seen migrating to the west. Hunting occurred. Hunters harvested a bearded seal and four ringed seals.

May 13: Overcast morning with a northeast wind 5-10 kts, a steady rain, and dense fog in the morning and evening. Hunters returned in the early morning with one ringed seal. The ice that remained between the islands broke off, only shore ice remains, with open water on the horizon.

May 14: Overcast with SE 15-20 kt and fog. The ice that remains between the islands is anticipated to go out if the wind increases. A large whale, possibly a bowhead, was reported. No hunting occurred.

- May 15: Overcast with broken sun, NE wind 25-30 kts, with heavy rain and fog at times. By evening the wind calmed to N 5 kts. Savoonga alerted the Diomedea Search and rescue to report a lost boat that, by evening, was successfully located. No hunting occurred.
- May 16: Overcast with an east wind (20 kt?) and rain showers. By evening, the wind swung south and was accompanied by a steady rain. One bearded seal harvested. Hunters reported seeing several bearded and ringed seals.
- May 17: Overcast with a south wind 30-35 kts and mixed rain/snow showers. Wind eased to 20 kts in the evening. Shorefast ice has been broken up and only remnants that grounded remain. No hunting occurred.
- May 18: Overcast with southeast wind 25-30 kt., fog, and swells. Northern pintail reported. Crested and least auklets rafting near the village. Auklets arriving in large numbers in the late evening. No hunting occurred.
- May 19: Overcast wind SE 20-25 kt, fog, and snow showers. Harlequin ducks and a whimbrel reported. Several walruses swimming north reported. No hunting occurred.
- May 20: Wind S 20 kt with fog. Snow and rain showers in the morning. A gray whale reported swimming north between the islands. No hunting occurred.

May 21: Calm with dense fog. By evening the wind increased to NNE 10 kts with rain showers throughout the afternoon and evening. Scattered ice from the south is on the horizon. Hunters found animals on ice 12 and 17 miles SW of the village. Eleven walruses and two bearded seals harvested. One of the walruses and calf were harvested in the water. To the north of the island, hunters reported seeing no ice and only ringed seals in the water. Ancient murrelet reported.

May 22: Dense fog with a southeast wind 15-20 kts that calmed by evening. Heavy rain showers in the morning. Scattered ice that passing to the north throughout the day is empty – no animals. Only one ringed seal pup harvested. A very strong northwesterly current reported. Hunters from Wales report hearing walruses passing in the fog.

May 23: Dense fog with a ENE 20 kt. wind. Heavy rain showers in the afternoon. By evening, the wind swung to SSW 5-10 kts and the fog remained. No hunting occurred.

May 24: Calm morning with SE 5 kts breeze and fog. Heavy rain showers in the morning. By evening, the wind shifted to northeast 20 kts. accompanied with rough seas. Hunters located ice 11 miles southeast of the village. Eleven walruses harvested. One of the bulls had clams in the stomach.

May 25: Overcast with broken sun. Wind NE 25 kts. Krill in dense patches between the island in the lee of the wind. Several gray whales seen passing through the area northbound. No hunting occurred.

May 26: Northeast wind 20-25 kt and overcast easing by evening to a northwest breeze 5 kt. Scattered ice seen on the southern horizon. Four walruses harvested.

- May 27: Overcast with broken sun. North wind 20 kts with snow showers in the morning. Scattered ice in the area. Hunters report that there are logs mixed with this ice. Two boats from King Island reported hunting in the area. Seven walruses, ten bearded and three ringed seals, as well as a ribbon seal were harvested. Hunters returned in the afternoon as the wind increased and the seas became too rough. By afternoon, the only animals seen were spotted seals.
- May 28: Overcast with broken sun. North wind 25-30 kts with snow showers in the morning. Scattered ice in the area. No hunting occurred.
- May 29: Fog in the morning clearing to overcast by afternoon. Wind northerly 15-20 kt. Scattered ice in the area. Nine walruses, five spotted seals, and two bearded seals harvested. Hunters reported that all the walruses seen were adult bulls. Fulmars seen.
- May 30: Overcast with a low ceiling. Wind NE 20-25 kt with fog in the afternoon and evening. Several pieces of ice grounded in front of the village. Three bull walruses and two bearded seals, as well as a spotted seal were harvested.
- May 31: Overcast with a northeast wind 25 kt with rain. No ice on the horizon. Dense fog in the evening. No hunting occurred.
- June 1: Overcast with a northeast wind 20-25 kt. Local fog in the evening. Boats from Breviq Mission reported traveling north of Wales in an attempt to locate walruses. Boats from Shishmaref reportedly are traveling 65 miles north of their village in an attempt to locate walruses. No hunting occurred.

- June 2: Overcast with a northeast wind 20-25 kt. Fog in the morning. No ice on the horizon. By evening, the wind calmed and the sun broke through. No hunting occurred.
- June 3: Sunny and calm. No hunting. Hunters waiting for ice. Several gray whales passed near the islands. Several harbor porpoise and an eastbound bald eagle reported in the area. One boat traveled to Wales to transfer people and supplies.
- June 4: Sunny and calm morning increasing by evening to northeast 10 kt. Hunters waiting for ice. Several gray whales passed near the islands. One boat went hunting close to the island and reported minke whales, pilot whales, harbor porpoises, and ringed seals in the area.
- June 5: Sunny with a northeast wind. No ice on the horizon. One spotted seal pup harvested. A white wagtail reported.
- June 6: Sunny with a northeast wind 25-30 kt. No hunting occurred.
- June 7: Sunny with a northeast wind 25-30 kt. Fog in the afternoon with the wind swinging to the east 30 kt. By evening, very small pieces of ice were seen in the fog. No hunting occurred.
- June 8: Foggy and breezy with an east wind 25-30 kt. Dense fog in the afternoon that continued into the evening. No hunting occurred.
- June 9: Dense fog throughout the day. Some local sun in the afternoon close to the island. No hunting occurred.

June 10: High overcast with north wind 25-30 kts. No ice in the area. No hunting occurred.

June 11: High overcast with north wind 25-30 kts dropping by evening to 15 kts. Ice from the Gulf of Anadyr is anticipated to arrive if the wind blows from the south. No hunting occurred

June 12: Northerly breeze at 15 kt. No hunting in the morning on account of the swells. One small boat went hunting behind the island and returned having seen no game.

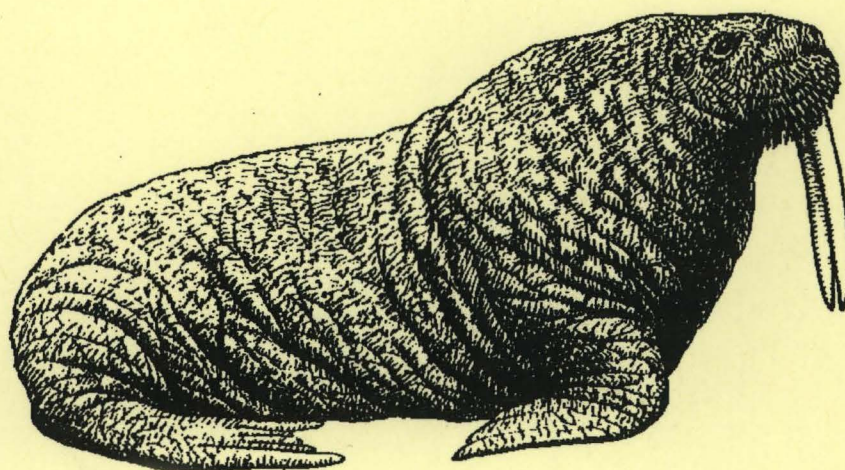
June 13: Wind N 5-10 kt with a slight swell. Boats went to check crab pots. No Hunting occurred. Travel to the mainland is not possible on account of high waves at Wales. Several gray whales were seen traveling northbound between the islands.

June 14: Foggy morning, calm seas, and with a slight swell. By late afternoon the wind swung SW 5-10 kt. A boat tried to travel to Wales but returned shortly as became too windy toward the mainland. No hunting occurred. No more ice is anticipated to arrive.

June 15: Overcast morning with rain and wind SW 15 kt. No hunting occurred.

June 16: Overcast morning with a S wind 5-10 kt. By mid-morning the fog rolled in for the entire day. There were light rain showers during the evening. No hunting occurred.

2004 Walrus Harvest Monitor Project Annual Summary



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