

The Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission and the Communities of the Western Arctic Bowhead Whale Stock



Since 1977, the Bowhead Whale Subsistence Harvest has been under the jurisdiction of the International Whaling Commission



Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission AEWC

- The AEWK, in Cooperation with the U.S. Government, provides local management of the Bowhead Whale Subsistence Harvest in the 11 Alaskan coastal villages that depend on Bowhead Whales.
- Management rests on scientific research into the health of the Western Arctic Bowhead Whale Stock.

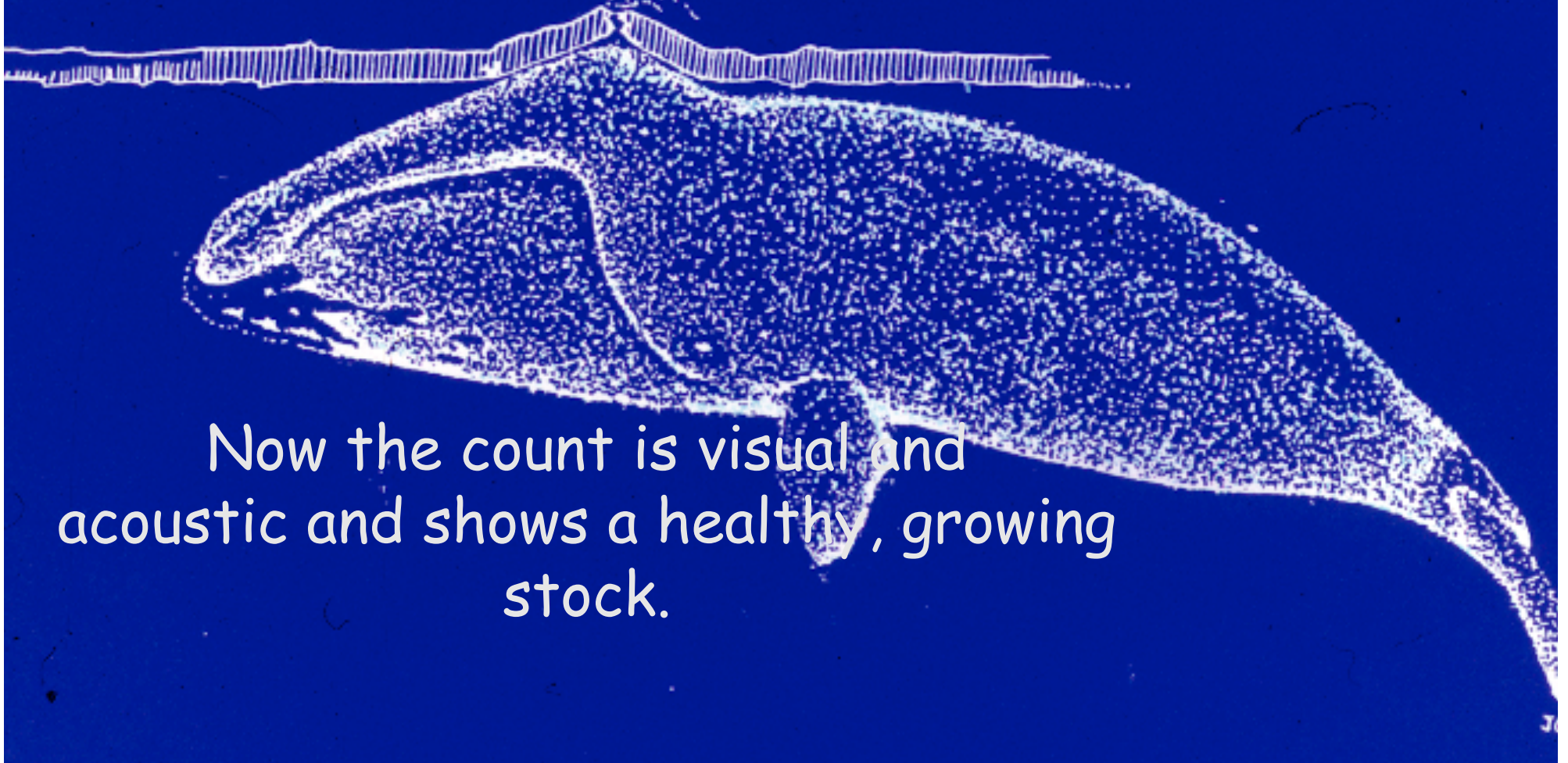
Local Knowledge Provides the
Foundation for Bowhead
Whale Science.



Whales migrate through spring
ice leads.

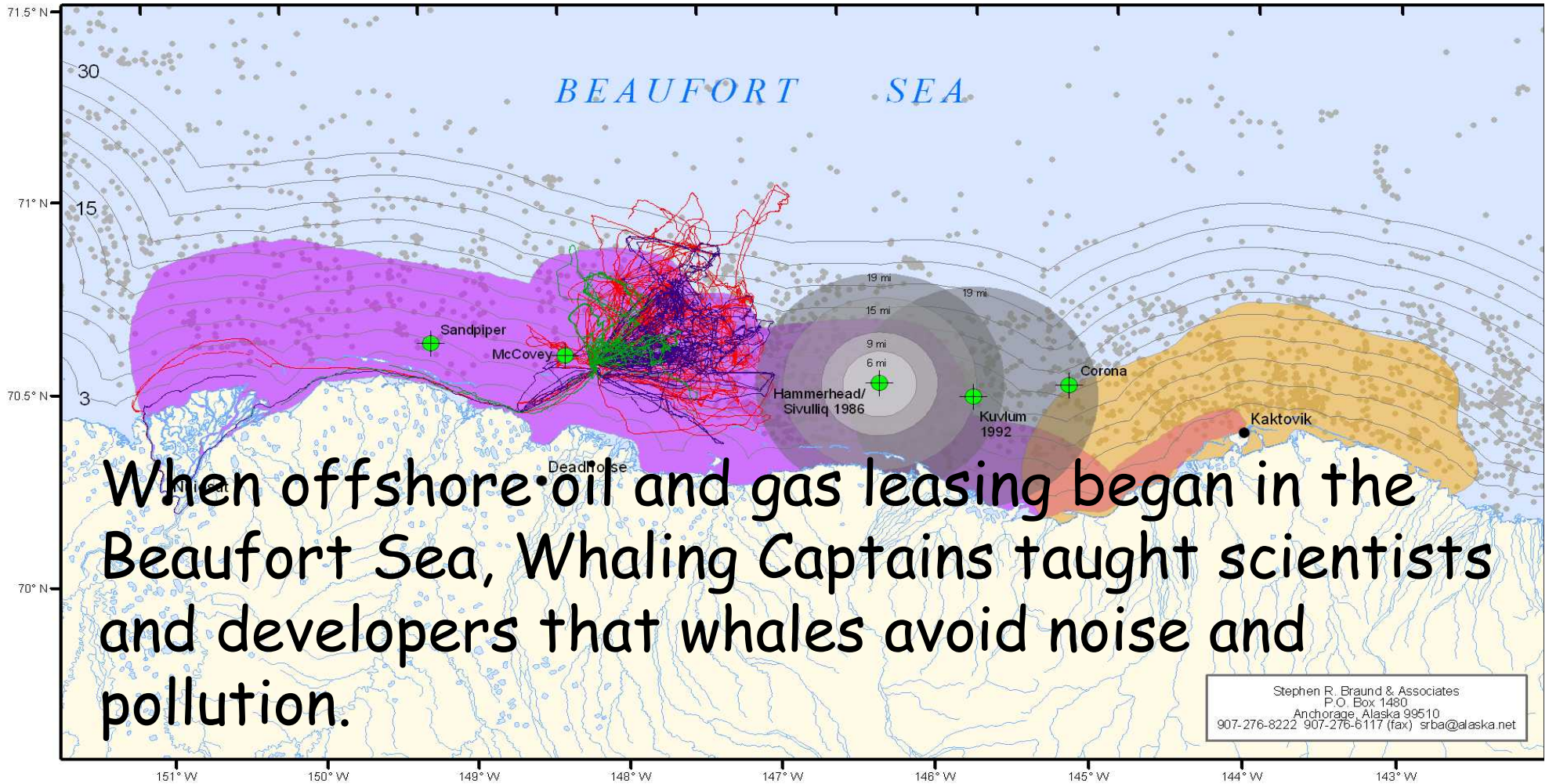
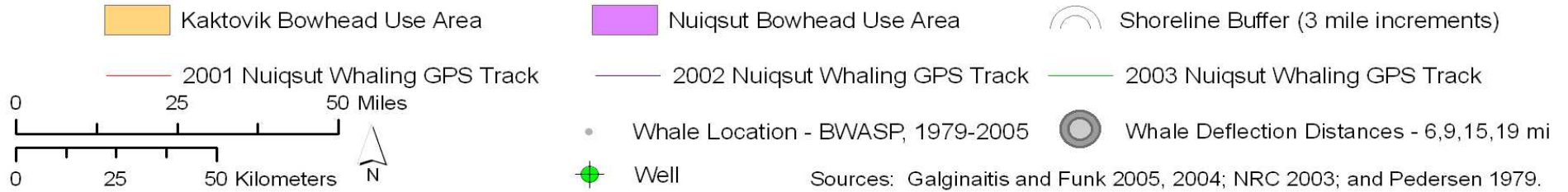
Scientists originally tried
counting whales from
airplanes and concluded
the stock was going
extinct.

Whaling Captains taught
scientists that whales also swim
under the ice.



Now the count is visual and
acoustic and shows a healthy, growing
stock.

Figure 10 - Kaktovik and Nuiqsut Subsistence Use Areas for Bowhead



When offshore oil and gas leasing began in the Beaufort Sea, Whaling Captains taught scientists and developers that whales avoid noise and pollution.

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Hunters Know the Marine Ecosystem

- Hunters know marine ecosystems and Native food systems in a way that scientists cannot.
- AEWEC Whaling Captains participate in research by advising on study design and data interpretation.
- Whaling Captains and other hunters often participate in data collection as well.
- Research results are presented to the IWC Scientific Committee and the Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Subcommittee.

Advocacy within the International Whaling Commission

- The AEWC works with other Aboriginal Subsistence Whalers to advocate for recognition of whaling as a right:
- To cultural practices and preservation,
- To food security,
- To support their communities from locally available resources.

The Challenge and Opportunity of Climate Change

- With ice retreat, western science researchers increasingly want to study the Arctic Ocean.
- The AEWG is working to establish local resource management meetings as venues for researchers to exchange information with hunters.

Teach Others the Value of the Indigenous World View

- Researchers can only see the world through the fragmented lens of western science.
- The AEWCC holds three public meetings per year. Exchanges with researchers now occupy at least one full day of these meetings, often more.

Quyanaqpak!

