

Caribou on White Island

David Tukturjuk

Repulse Bay

- Our ancestors have occupied White Island for centuries. The following people passed away on the Island: Akkuardjuk, Siutinnuaq, Katuqaq brothers, their parent Kamuukaq. They are buried there.
- Also Pujjuut and family, as well as Qipaniq and their mother Arnaujaq and family, as well as our family, who are descendants, use the Island. We travel there by boat and it takes one hour to reach it during the summer.
- We travel there to hunt the following species – walrus, beluga, bearded seal, ring seal, harp seal, as well as char that migrate back to the lakes.
- Also the Arviq HTO built two cabins, for Inuit to use, several years ago.
- The caribou hides have several uses: as bedding, clothing, folded in half, used to sit on on a qamutik and stuffed with plants used as a float during the summer. White Island caribou don't travel very far, they are similar to the mainland caribou as they also cross over to the mainland.
- We also know where it is best to anchor off the Island.
- We mainly hunt the caribou for food. There are times when there is no caribou on White Island this we also are aware of.
- Before Inuit were run by government policies, they harvested animals, whether they were terrestrial, marine, etc., what they needed, and utilized every bit of the harvested animal. We as Inuit still do that. The meat of the caribou, if used properly, is edible. During the summer when the meat can spoil easily, we dry the meat so that it will not spoil.
- Also the hides of yearlings are used for clothing, the hides of bulls are used for bedding (immature bulls that are not yet fully grown but are large and smaller than a mature bull) also used as the first layer of the mat; used as a sitting platform on a qamutik. We have use for the hides during the summer, winter. The hides can also be used as floats. When I was a boy unable to swim, while traveling on a lake, I fell into the water. I was dressed in caribou skins so I did not sink. My travel companion who was older had to be rescued first as he was sinking and I did not go sink when I was a boy. The caribou hides are very useful.
- We harvest caribou from White Island only for sustenance. We don't harvest many, we harvest the one that are on the shore (not many) and we don't harvest them all. Their hides are good during the summer. The residents of Repulse Bay go there while hunting walrus, ring seal, bearded seal, beluga; when there is caribou we harvest them for food only. We

hunt caribou on the mainland for clothing as we always have caribou around. We only harvest caribou from White Island for food when they are available and they are not always available on the islands. When the ice is solid between the island and mainland some caribou cross over as well as wolves. They do cross over and they now believe the residents of Repulse Bay because we know this for a fact. They cross over when the ice is formed between the mainland and the White Island as well as Southampton Island.