

Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Subsistence Harvests and Fishes, Old John Lake, Alaska

Abstract: Old John Lake is a major fishing site for residents of Arctic Village. Before the village was established, it was an important site for subsistence activities by the Gwich'in people that occupied the area. For this project, seventeen elders and knowledgeable residents of Arctic Village were interviewed to gather information about the history of the Old John Lake region and their observations and experiences in the Old John Lake area. Fishing activities centered on the use of fish nets to harvest several species of whitefish and the use of hooks through the ice to take lake trout. Pike, grayling, suckers, and burbot are also resident fish species in the lake and were used for subsistence. A variety of other subsistence activities also took place at Old John Lake including trapping, hunting for caribou and moose, and gathering for plants and berries. Residents have recently expressed concerns that changes in the Arctic climate may be adversely affecting fish populations in Old John Lake and these changes are discussed.

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