

Whaling quota to be discussed at AEWC meet

An unpopular whaling quota will be among the chief topics of discussion this week as whalers from across Northern Alaska gather in Barrow for a

three-day meeting of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission.

Recent scientific studies have placed the whale population

much higher than previous estimates made by the National Marine Fisheries Service, and whalers would like to see the quota dropped for this coming season.

Under the quota, which was set by the International Whaling Commission, Alaska Eskimos could land only 45 whales over a three year period from 1981 through 1983. The limit for this year would be 18 whales. The quota was established by the IWC on the basis of a bowhead population estimate of about 2300 whales, made by the NMFS.

A more recent scientific study sponsored by Sohio places the number of bowhead

at about 3,850 animals. A North Slope Borough study indicates similar numbers. Whalers feel that with these numbers, the quota, which last year resulted in Barrow landing no whales, cannot be justified.

Besides the session on quotas, other workshops will deal with the history and development of the AEWC, bowhead whale research, development, federal, international and local relations, and weapons improvement.

Welcome speeches will be delivered by AEWC Chairman Roger Silook, North Slope Borough Mayor Eugene Brower, and Barrow Mayor Nate Olemaun. The meeting will begin

at 9:00 a.m., Wednesday morning, February 9, and last through Friday, February 11. Alaska Senator Ted Stevens will deliver the keynote address Wednesday afternoon. Senator Frank Murkowski will address the group the following day.

Among other speakers will be Dr. John Burns, the director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Robert McVey, the Alaska regional director of NOAA.

Evening entertainment will be provided by Barrow and Wainwright Eskimo dance groups. All activities will be held in the Barrow Community Center.