

Flapper the hooded seal saved by pipeline workers

ANCHORAGE—Flapper got his Christmas present a little early, and it was the best there is. It was his life.

Hopelessly lost and facing certain death from predators or freezing on the icy wastes of the North Slope, he was spotted and rescued by oil workers when his time was fast running out.

This was no ordinary character but one of a very special breed of Arctic wanderers—a seal. But not just any old seal; it is one which has raised the eyebrows of marine biologists.

It is a North Atlantic hooded seal, which must have swam across the top of the world to end up marooned at Prudhoe, at least 300 miles from the nearest open water.

His salvation came because of the quick eyes of John ("J.C.") Holtan, supervisor of BP Alaska's Construction Camp Number One. Holtan was driving

back from the Deadhorse Airport with Tom Yeager, another BP camp supervisor, when he noticed a shape about 30 or 40 feet off the road, about a quarter mile south of Alyeska's pump station Number One.

He stopped the truck to investigate and found the seal covered in snow. It was lying on its belly keeping its flippers off the ice.

"The first thing I saw were its eyes; they were big brown ones, the size of coffee cups," said Holtan. "As we got near, it moved itself and let out kind of a roar. It was very much alive but I don't know how long it would have remained so."

Holtan called Slim Gilchrist, BP's deputy field coordinator, who subsequently organized a rescue party comprising general helpers Leslie Itta of Barrow and Don Saville, Chris Boskofski, Martin Dickey and the

general helpers' lead man, Wendal Wilson.

Dennis Ames, who was born and raised on a ranch in Oklahoma and is now a truck foreman for Kodiak Oil Field Haulers, was also with the party.

By this time Tom Graham, senior materials expeditor, had dug up a suitable crate from the warehouse into which they had decided to load the animal, which became known as Flapper, the unflappable.

Then the fun started. Flapper did not like all the noise and showed his displeasure by snapping. The rescue team treated him with great respect. Ames, using his old ranch-hand expertise, stood five feet behind and neatly lassoed Flapper round the neck and then slipped the rope over his tail.

Then they eased him into the crate and took him to BP's old warehouse near the Mukluk Camp.

While they were deciding what to do next, Holtan got some fresh salmon from the camp kitchen to tempt Flapper to eat; but he was not interested in food.

Slim Gilchrist called Charlie Wark, BP's Prudhoe Bay field coordinator in Anchorage, to check on the next step. And Charlie got in touch with the State Fish and Game Department in Fairbanks.

Flapper was shipped down to John Burns, a marine mammals biologist, on a Hercules aircraft

which had just offloaded at Prudhoe.

And then the surprise... Flapper was no ordinary bearded, ringed or spotted seal whose natural habitat was the Beaufort and Bering Seas, but a lost North Atlantic hooded seal.

Burns said: "The only explanation for his presence at Prudhoe would seem to be that he had wandered from his normal range in the northern North Atlantic and reached Prudhoe either through the Northwest Passage or along the coast of Siberia."

He may then have gone up a river and got trapped when the ice came in behind him. He was doomed and would not have lasted long there on the frozen tundra, being subjected to freezing and all kinds of predators.

He was just a wandering lost soul." Burns added that seals herd up mostly during the breeding season and the rest of the time "are sort of solitary."

According to him, Flapper appears to be a young sub-adult male, say between two and three years old, roughly six feet long and between 250 and 300 pounds in weight.

"We don't know exactly because we haven't been able to get near enough to find out, but we are going to tranquilize him and take his weight and measurements as well as blood samples. For the moment he is feeding voraciously; in fact he's

eating everybody out of house and home."

Burns said that from the standpoint of the work being done at the university "to have such an unusual representative from a different species and from a vastly different geographical area is exceptionally good fortune."

"The people I am associated with here have never seen a live hooded seal—nor had I—and for a biologist seeing one for the first time is like a botanist with his first iris comparing it to a rose; it is a very fortunate experience."

The university has a mammals colony of 14 seals (fur, ringed, spotted and harbor) and Flapper will join that community until his future is decided.

He is now biding his time in a tank at the university's Institute of Arctic Biology.

Governor appoints Lisa Rudd

Governor Jay Hammond has appointed Lisa Rudd of Anchorage to fill the vacancy in the Alaska House of Representatives created by the death of Representative Willard Bowman on December 3.

In making his appointment, Hammond said, "I received a list of five outstanding candidates from Anchorage Democrats for this vacancy, anyone of which would have done a good job. I must select just one."

"By law, my appointment must be confirmed by the Democratic members of the House of Representatives, therefore I had requested a list of nominees from the party and said I would appoint from that list. I have done that."

"I selected Lisa Rudd because of her commitment to human rights and equal employment opportunity and because of her broad experience in both State and local affairs."

"In addition to the support of the Anchorage Democrats, Lisa also was endorsed by the Alaska Black Caucus. I think she will do an outstanding job in representing Willard Bowman's constituency in the Alaska House of Representatives."

Ms. Rudd has served as Director of Equal Employment Opportunity for the Anchorage Borough School District, and she was coordinator of Education Programs with the Alaska Native Foundation.

She was a member of the Anchorage area Charter Commission in 1971-72. She currently is a member of the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights and is a member of the Governor's Equal Employment Opportunity Committee.

Ms. Rudd is a member of the Community School Committee at Service-Henshaw secondary school and is Director, Area G Homeowners and Landowners Organization.

She is affiliated with the Anchorage Branch, NAACP, the Alaska Federation of Natives, the Anchorage Chapter of the National Organization for Women, the Anchorage League of Women Voters and the American Society for Public Administration.

Ms. Rudd, 42, is married and has two daughters.

HELLO, OLD BEAN!

Don't cook two different packages of dry beans together. Older beans take longer to cook than fresher ones, and a mixed batch will cook unevenly.

Arctic peoples confab . . .

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Along with power comes responsibility.

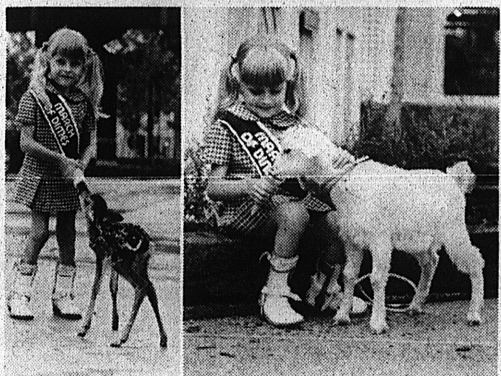
Concerns to be discussed at the international conference will be such things as transportation, energy, business development and the rising expectations of indigenous circumpolar peoples.

Since the land and sea play a vital role in the every day life of these peoples, the conservation

and preservation of the Arctic environment will be an underlying theme of the conference with such matters as solid waste disposal and community sanitation being given high priority.

Public health in the circumpolar area will undoubtedly also be discussed.

DOWN HOME WITH TAMMY



KIDDING AROUND. An animal lover, Tammy Patterson, March of Dimes National Poster Child, has her hands full with this little billygoat. Both little dears, Tammy and Delilah the Fawn became fast friends.

Although she was born with multiple birth defects, March of Dimes National Poster Child Tammy Patterson of Mt. Pleasant, Tenn., leads an active life. The bouncy, giggly, six-year-old pixie loves to tell riddles, ride her bicycle, do puzzles, color, and help her mother with the gardening. Tammy and her family live on a 12-acre farm outside of Columbia, Tenn., where they have pigs, cows, ducks, and rabbits. Now in first grade at Hay Long Grammar School, Tammy wants to become a nurse when she grows up. As National Poster Child, she represents more than 200,000 American youngsters born each year with physical or mental handicaps.



NO ONE CAN BURST THEIR BUBBLES. Balloon blowing can be loads of fun for chimps as well as children, as Tammy Patterson, March of Dimes National Poster Child, and her friend, Bo, proudly point out.



HAY, "DAZE." Tammy Patterson, March of Dimes National Poster Child, is high in the hay. A victim of multiple birth defects, Tammy represents more than 200,000 handicapped children born each year in the U.S.



CLOWNING AROUND. While visiting Nashville's Opryland, U.S.A., March of Dimes National Poster Child Tammy Patterson became pals with Boscoe the Clown and Charlie the Macaw from South America.