

No accord reached on whale jurisdiction dispute

Neither side has changed its mind in the disagreement on the role of the Alaska Eskimo

Whaling Commission and the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope in governing the whal-

ing activities of the North Slope.

The ICAS maintains that a two percent of population quota will be the annual take of the bowhead and the AEWEC maintains that the captains will adhere to the agreement they made to limit their take to 45 bowhead over a three-year period.

The ICAS two weeks ago sent a telegram stating that the ICAS was directing all U.S. representatives involved in research on the North Slope to "confirm themselves to the ICAS before conducting research.

The ICAS says that the AEWEC will be re-chartered this fall and until then, the whaling captains will not abide by the whale-take quota worked out by the AEWEC. That quota calls for 45 whales to be taken over a three-year period with 69 strikes during that time.

Raymond Neakok, executive director of the ICAS, said last week that the AEWEC will "give us a program of their by-laws that the ICAS would have to verify and review to object to or to change."

Neakok said that the captains also have agreed to abide by a two percent harvest of the known bowhead whale population. The lowest estimated bowhead population is set at 2,500 by the National Marine Fisheries Service in Seattle. That estimate is disputed by the captains, however.

At two percent of the 2,500 population, the annual harvest would be 50 whales.

Neakok said the captains will no longer abide by the quota established by the International Whaling Commission.

"We don't hunt by numbers . . ." He spoke of the health conditions of the Inupiat people and said the U.S. Government doesn't "want to find out about our health here. That's what happens when they put a quota on whales . . . we are dying off . . . We're not going to sit back and say 'kill me.' That period is over since the early 1950s," said Neakok.

"People have got to understand that if we are to survive as Inupiat people we cannot let the government that is killing us govern our diet. That's dictatorship."

Neakok said that with the ICAS action "we will not have a quota. We will go ahead and hunt in our traditional and historic way within our freedom of religion."

But, Eugene Brower, president of the Barrow Whaling Captains, said the Barrow captains will adhere to the IWC-set quota and not the two percent set by ICAS. Barrow whalers can take five whales under the IWC-AEWEC quota.

As he did two weeks ago, Brower said that the ICAS "doesn't control the captains. As far as we are concerned ICAS can scream all they want. They can't re-charter the AEWEC. They can talk all they

want.

"They don't speak on behalf of the captains on any quota."

Neakok also said that the one scientist out on the ice supervising census activities has not presented himself to the ICAS as requested.

The fisheries service is limited on the activities being conducted on the ice this year because of cutbacks in federal funding for bowhead research. The North Slope Borough and the captains themselves are conducting the census with the help of the scientist.

Marie Adams, executive director of the AEWEC, said that the captains from the other North Slope Villages agree with the position taken by the Barrow Captains and will abide by the quotas established for this year by the AEWEC and IWC.

She said that Savoonga, which took its first whale last week, struck and lost a second whale and has stopped activities.

Captains and crews from Gambell and Wales are out and Wainwright is about to go out. Kivilina is waiting for leads to open and Barrow is open, she said.

In last week's article on the dispute, the Tundra Times stated that Brower was chairman of the AEWEC. Brower was replaced as chairman by Roger Sillok of Gambell this winter. The Tundra Times regrets the error.