



SUBSISTENCE FISHING — Two women near the village of Ambler are netting under the ice for white fish following the ages old manner of subsistence. The activity is on Kobuk River in Northwestern Alaska. — National Park Service Photograph by ROBERT BELOUS.

Leave It Be—

Subsistence Lifestyle

By DONN LISTON

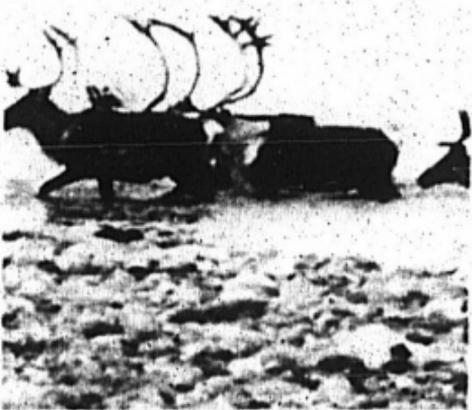
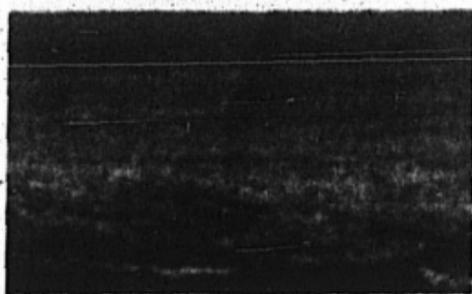
Native subsistence lifestyles don't have to be thrown out of National Parks and Monuments, according to a spokesman for the U.S. Park Service who provided an inside view of the issue as it affects Alaska Natives.

Robert Belous showed a number of slides and spoke on the subject of Native subsistence during the Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission's regular meeting in Anchorage Thursday and explained a new position on the issue now being taken by his agency.

"I think the Native people, the Native culture, are important aspects of Alaskan life," Belous said at the conclusion of his presentation. "My job for the last eight years has been to represent their culture and needs. Hopefully it will insure that actions of the future reflect a new kind of recognition."

Belous said he did not think the Native Claims Act is felt by most Alaska Natives in the same way that it is being felt by Native corporation executives "in these board rooms with mahogany tables." He said in his travels throughout the state he has found there's a "grasping for roots" by Native persons attempting to realize their Native self.

The presentation began with pictures of a walrus hunt, with a walrus-skinned boat, in icy wat-



MIGRATING CARIBOU— Remnants of the Arctic caribou herd have just crossed the Noatak River in Northwestern Alaska heading toward Kobuk River villages during their annual fall migration.

— National Park Service Photograph by ROBERT BELOUS

ers of the Chuckchi Sea. The pictures illustrated dramatically the subsistence needs for Alaska Natives who face the challenge of

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their lifestyle every day.

"This is a culture in its surroundings," Belous said. "Knowledge like this does not come out of a handbook — let's learn more about them instead of expecting to put our values on them."

Because his agency "has a special concern for history and the background of people in these areas," according to Belous, it has changed certain criteria for National Parks and National Monuments; which now include subsistence lifestyles.

But subsistence hunting may not be compatible with trophy hunting, according to Belous, who asked the planning commission and others in attendance at the Z.J. Loussac Library conference room to try and "understand before we invoke our man-

Finally, Belous related a new consciousness of Alaska subsistence hunters about the frailty of caribou resources, the threat to water quality in some areas as development increases, and other growing concerns that may threaten their very existence.

"As we look down the road to the division of Alaska, we must join together in our efforts to recognize all of the natural resources which exist in Alaska," Belous said. "Maybe then we can move into the future without erasing the past."

The presentation resembled presentations which Belous says he has been making to policymakers in Washington, D.C.