

Mmmm, fresh muktuk —

Eskimos are hunting whales from Barrow to Gambell

Eskimo whaling crews have enjoyed some successful hunting in villages from Gambell to Kivalina to Point Hope and Barrow in northwestern and northern Alaska during the past two weeks. An unconfirmed report over Barrow Radio has even said that the village of Noatak, an inland Eskimo village in the NANA Region, fielded a whaling crew and caught one whale this week.

The first whale of the season was caught by a crew from Gambell, on St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea, on April 22. Billy Webber of Point Hope is reported to have caught a whale on May 2 or 3 of last week. The

Tundra Times was unable to reach Point Hope by telephone this week as RCA AlasCom reports Point Hope's toll phone out of service. Baker Aviation of Kotzebue, which flies frequent charter trips to Point Hope and other Northwestern Alaska villages, told the Tundra Times yesterday that the Webber catch had been confirmed. Baker Aviation also reported that the Victor Swan crew of Kivalina caught a whale May 9.

Nine whales have been reported caught by crews from Barrow according to information from Mayor Eben Hopson and Rosita Worl of the North Slope Borough, who were contacted

by the Tundra Times May 10. The Burton Rexford crew took the first whale at Barrow on May 2 which measured some 37 feet. Rule of thumb for estimating whales' weight is to consider one ton of weight for each foot. Harry Brower caught a 29 foot whale on May 3.

Sizes of the remaining seven Barrow whales caught were unavailable at press time. David Brower's crew took a whale on May 5. Crews led by Benjamin Itta and Jacob Adams also scored whale kills May 5 at Barrow.

Joash Tukle caught a whale also in Barrow on May 3. Two

(Continued on page 6)

whales ...

(Continued from page 1)

Barrow crews caught whales on May 8. Raymond Kalayauk and Roxy Oyagak both recorded catches on that date. An unconfirmed report from Barrow indicates that Arnold Brower recovered a whale May 10 which his crew previously killed. Brower's crew will not be credited with the catch until the explosive bomb which killed the whale is examined to determine that it is Brower's whale.

Eskimos up and down the northwest coast are excited about the opportunity for a change of diet to fresh muktuk, whale meat and whale steaks. Eskimo whaling crews in small walrus skin boats are hunting this spring much as their ancestors have for thousands of years. Native whaling is permitted under provisions of the Marine Mammal Act which outlaws other non-traditional types of whaling practices.