

Outsiders shouldn't dictate Natives lifestyle

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Whaling Captain's Wife

I was a speaker in the ladies group at Barrow during the Whaling Captains meeting there in February. I talked about a women's role in village households, nutrition and of how women prepare foods.

As a whalers wife I am not happy with the agreement the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission made with the federal

government. It is pretty hard if somebody says something about our foods which we eat.

It hurts.

There are our traditional foods of which other foods could not have been used in their place of because there were no other foods available. Today there are other foods, but these are also foods we grew up with.

These foods are a part of our culture.

We don't try to take away

other peoples' foods, but they are doing it to us.

I always tell the federal government scientists that they don't know much about the animals living in the seas or on land that God made for us to hunt and to eat and use. They don't know how many, like when they counted them.

I told them that I will really believe them when they will be able to count all the hair on my head in one minute with their

hands. And they never say anything to me.

Perhaps it is the strength of a woman and of all women who have based their convictions from their life's experiences, that stopped short these men from another culture for a few moments. Women who have lived, loved and worked with their husbands, families, friends and others in the village to live successfully in a lifestyle different from many other lifestyles.

Perhaps it is the knowledge accepted by many individuals who care and have an interest in keeping alive our subsistence lifestyle to know a little about everything like counting whales, knowing whale migration routes and exploring and dissecting the logics to whale counting procedures, and all the limitations whale counters have experienced so far. After all in today's world, information is disseminated quickly to the masses.