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# NUNIVAK REINDEER MISSING

## 2,000 or More Nunivak Herd Missing, May Have Drowned in Bering Sea

By LAEL MORGAN  
Staff Writer

NUNIVAK—Missing—some 2,000 to 6,000 reindeer from Nunivak Island, Nobody's sure where they went. Islanders hope it's a miscount. Some think the animals may have wandered into rotten ice and fallen into the Bering Sea. Or perhaps a reindeer rustler is loose in the frozen North.

Whatever the reasons, that's just the beginning of reindeer industry problems since islanders took over operation of Bering Sea Reindeer Products from the Bureau of Indian Affairs last year. Their financial report shows a net loss of \$21,112.86 for last season and their slaughter facility has just been condemned by the state.

The IRA Council, which operates the business for the village of Mekoryuk, met last week to discuss radical changes in operations. Meeting with them was their advisory Reindeer Committee, made up of people representing state, local and federal interests.

The Nunivak herd numbered 9,000 head according to a survey made in 1968 by the state Department of Fish and Game. The

maximum head counted via aerial survey this spring was 4,100 and the sight and photo count differs 600 head.

"I would not say it's an accurate count," challenged Fred Don, vice president of the IRA. "According to my estimate there are 8,000 deer and Charlie Spudd (chief herder) thinks 6,000."

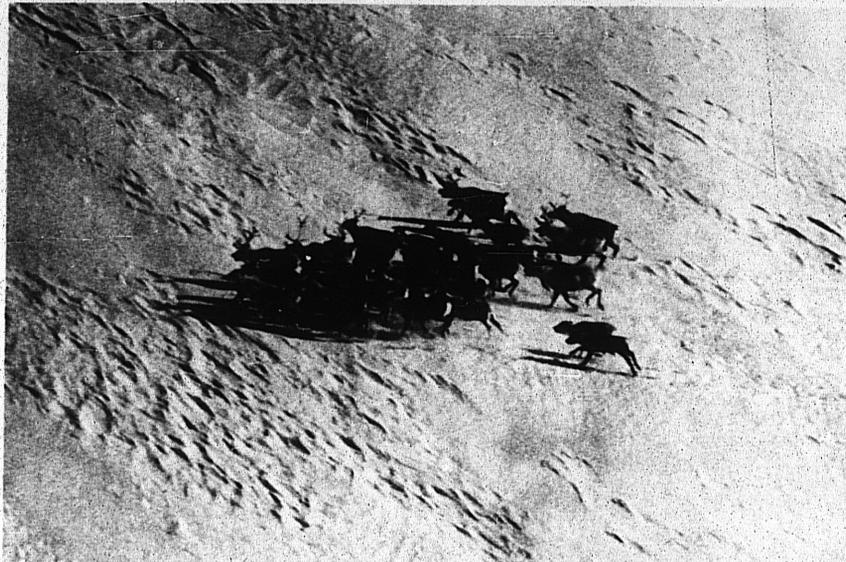
Augie Reetz, former commissioner of Fish and Game now on the Reindeer Committee, seemed dubious. The survey was taken on a sunny day against snow and the flight patterns was reported fairly thorough, he noted.

"It seems doubtful, if conditions were as good as reported, the figures are wrong. I suspect you need to take a look at the slaughter program for next year," he said.

"I would say it is possible we could lose that much," said Joe David, former herd manager who was relieved of his job by IRA but who still serves on the advisory committee. "Because this time we didn't have any winter herders. I know the deer sometimes go out on the ice and lick the salt. It could happen like that."

"Due to the fact that funds were low, we did not have win-

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HOW MANY REINDEER CAN YOU COUNT?—That's the big question on Nunivak Island where a recent aerial survey showed 2,000 to 6,000 deer missing. Some islanders think the count was not

accurate. It was done with a series of photos like this, made on a sunny day against a snow background. It will be reshot this week, weather permitting.

## Pilot Station Spurns Flood Assistance

PILOT STATION—The main street has turned into a canal. A boat is needed to get to the school. Waders are a must in the business district. But the independent villagers aren't complaining.

"Only a nut would holler for help," Norman Kelly, postmaster, said as he paused in the midst of carpentry. "We've got plenty of food. Brought it up from the store and we're doing O. K."

The reason Pilot Station has kept its cool in the midst of record high water is a new, hillside housing development due for completion this summer through the Alaska State Housing Authority. The faster the waters of the Yukon rose the faster the villagers worked.

Clyde Frances managed to move his wife and six kids into a well completed home just five days before high water and the

Kellys moved in about the same time with finishing work yet to be done.

As waters recede, home owners are mucking out their

old dwellings and putting them back in shape. Two general stores are already open for business and Kelly has a new flag flying over his lowland post office.

## U.S. Corps of Engineers Target Of Bitter Criticism in Bethel Area

BETHEL—An angry indictment was made against the U. S. Corps of Engineers at a meeting of the Economic Development Committee Friday.

"It is impossible to import an expert on the Kuskokwim breakup from out of town," charged Peter Guinn.

"What we were getting was false information" echoed Tim Williams, head of the Akiak village council.

"They told me through KYUK there was a little jam at Akiachak. Little jam! Here it was over 10 miles long. Our kids were drowning. I was scared of that. Two kids almost drowned." "My daughter and another

girl," his wife put in.

"We were under water nearly a week. What information I got from the Corps of Engineers ... bum! No good!"

"It's the first time KYUK has

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## Egan Appoints Emil Notti Deputy Health and Welfare Commissioner

JUNEAU—Gov. William A. Egan last week announced the appointment of Emil Notti of

Sitka as deputy commissioner of the Department of Health and Welfare.

Notti, 38, took over the post on the first of the month.

Egan said Notti "brings impressive credentials to this job because of his varied experience in posts concerned with the needs of people. I am very pleased he has accepted this appointment."

Dr. Frederick P. McGinnis, Health and Welfare Commissioner, said Notti "will provide the type of additional leadership and direction needed for the diverse programs vital to all Alaskans. He comes to the post well qualified and will serve Alaska with great distinction and effectiveness."

The new deputy commissioner was president of the

Alaska Federation of Natives from 1967 to 1970. He ran for the Democratic nomination for Secretary of State in the 1970 primary election.

He has also served as State Rural Affairs Commission chairman, on the White House conference on Nutrition, on the Anchorage Borough School Board, as a director of the Jesse Lee Home and the Campfire Girls, on the 1967 Anchorage centennial committee, and as president of the Cook Inlet Native Association.

His previous jobs include employment with the Alaska State Human Rights Commission, Bureau of Land Management, and Federal Aviation Agency.

He now owns an electronics business in Sitka which will be

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## Kotzebue Eskimo Dance Class May Compete in Eskimo Olympics

KOTZEBUE—The Eskimo Dance class at Kotzebue Day School has been invited to the Eskimo Olympics and may accept ... if they think they're good enough.

Charles Perry, Principal of the school, said the group would have funds to make the trip.

"As far as getting there, there's no problem. But they want to try and develop the group," he explained. They've formed a summer class with John Merritt as acting principal. They'll also be practicing Eskimo games."

The class began in April as part of a federally funded bicultural program.

A little more than a month later they gave their first public performance which won rave reviews from townfolk and visiting officials from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Anyone who has seen them in action is willing to bet they'll make a fine showing at the Olympics without a minute's more practice. But if it's encouragement they need, we'll give it to them.

With Paul Green as head teacher and the enthusiasm of all concerned, the Kotzebue kids are likely to come home with some honors.



EMIL NOTTI