

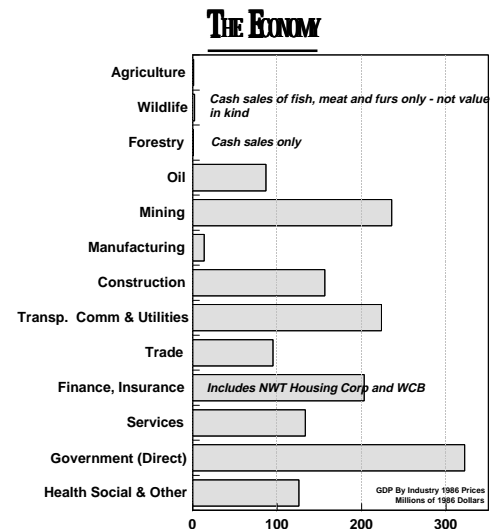
WILDLIFE

Domestic and commercial wildlife usage is an integral part of the NWT economy in terms of its support of traditional culture and import replacement value.

1. OVERVIEW

The NWT is home to a wide range of wildlife. Caribou, muskox, wolves, arctic fox, polar bears and grizzly bears live in the barrenlands. The arctic coast and ocean is home to large marine mammals such as whales, walrus and seals. Forested regions are inhabited by big game animals such as caribou, Dall's sheep, bison, and moose, and furbearers including lynx, fox, beaver, marten, muskrat, and a host of other species. Over 200 species of birds breed and stage in the NWT. Some of our wildlife species, such as the Peary Caribou, are found nowhere else in the world.

Wildlife has sustained aboriginal populations in the NWT for thousands of years, providing food, clothing, shelter, tools and goods for trade. Today, harvesting of wildlife continues to be of critical importance to aboriginal families. Although subsistence use of wildlife is seldom acknowledged in economic statistics, its value to NWT residents is significant. Harvesting of renewable resources for domestic use is the largest economic activity undertaken by aboriginal residents in the NWT. More than 90% of aboriginal households consume country foods, over 70% of aboriginal households hunt or fish and nearly 25% of aboriginal households trap furbearers.



WHAT'S INSIDE

- 1. OVERVIEW 1
- NWT TRENDS 3
- 2. GLOBAL AND NATIONAL TRENDS 4
- 3. INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS 4
- 3.1 INTRODUCTION 4
- 3.2 RESOURCES 4
- 3.3 HUMAN RESOURCES 5
- 3.4 CAPITAL & INVESTMENT 6
- 3.5 INFRASTRUCTURE 7
- 3.6 MARKETS 8
- 3.7 REGULATIONS AND TAXATION 10
- 4. CONCLUSIONS 11

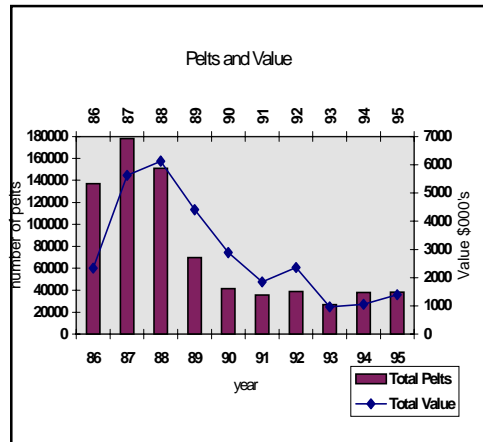
The economic importance of harvested wildlife would be clear, if those same food items had to be purchased. The value of the subsistence food harvest is estimated to be \$50 - \$55 million a year in terms of imports replaced. This replacement value represents one important part of the contribution wildlife makes to the NWT economy. Money spent on imports is a loss to the northern economy. The sustainable use of local resources needs to be a primary objective in any economic development strategy.

The seasonal income from trapping can be measured, but the full economic value of trapping is difficult to quantify. Trapping provides harvesters with cultural and social benefits from using traditional skills and knowledge through participation in an active, healthy way of life. Trapping also provides a benefit to government and wildlife managers, through the extensive information provided by trappers about furbearer populations.

Non-commercial use of wildlife is important to other NWT residents as well, as both a source of food and recreation. Both hunting and non-consumptive uses of wildlife contribute significantly to the quality of life enjoyed by NWT residents. Wildlife also forms



Caribou are a critical resource for the domestic economy. They are the primary food source for many aboriginal families and an important supplement for many households.



The number of pelts harvested and their value has been declining in recent years.

the basis of much of our tourism appeal. Visitors come from across Canada and the rest of the world to have the opportunity to view or hunt wildlife in our pristine wilderness.

Some wildlife species, such as caribou and muskox, provide opportunities for commercial development. Small-scale harvests for the sale of meat have been carried out where wildlife population levels permit and communities have expressed interest.

Two private game ranching facilities are currently operating in the NWT: A fenced facility currently operates in Fort Resolution with about 100 wood bison and an open range operation near Tuktoyaktuk with a reindeer herd of an estimated 12,000 animals.

An increase in responsible wildlife harvesting for commercial use has the potential to add significant economic benefits to this sector. Throughout the NWT, co-management boards have been set up to share wildlife management responsibilities between aboriginal user groups and government. This has provided an opportunity to integrate traditional knowledge and science for the benefit of the wildlife resource.

NWT Trends

NWT wildlife is harvested for subsistence use and commercial sale. Subsistence harvesting provides food for the individual or family. Commercial harvesting is for the purpose of sale, either within the NWT market (domestic commercial) or for export

(commercial). Other harvesting includes local non-aboriginal hunting as well as outfitted hunts for food and trophies.

Subsistence harvesting, as provided for in government policy and land claim agreements, has priority over barter and commercial uses of wildlife. Commercial harvests have been more limited because of the inaccessibility of the resource, the distance to markets, and the risks associated with these ventures. Prior to 1990, only minor commercial harvests were conducted.

In 1990, there were two major developments that enhanced commercial development of the wildlife sector: the establishment of the Economic Development Agreement (EDA) between the federal and territorial governments; and the creation of the NWT Development Corporation as a strategic economic development investment arm of the government.

In the export sector, the Inuvialuit harvested and promoted export sales of musk-ox meat from Banks Island until 1992. The single largest musk-ox harvest occurred in 1991 with upwards of 2,000 animals harvested and shipped to southern Canada for processing and sale. Sales were not as strong as anticipated and the harvest was discontinued. A similar scale harvest has been carried out on Southampton Island for three years, with 2,000 caribou harvested the first two years and 3,500 estimated for the current year. Markets for this harvest have been consistent and are gaining in strength.

Overall, the game meat sector now produces gross revenues to harvesters exceeding \$1 million. Most of these benefits flow to residents of smaller communities. It may be possible to increase benefits by increasing the amount of processing done in the north. Both the Kitikmeot and Keewatin regions are well suited for expansion into further processing as both will shortly have plants which meet the regulatory standards necessary for domestic and export markets.

Bison ranching was totally government supported for capital and operating costs until 1995, totalling more than \$1.6 million. At that time the existing stock was turned over to a joint venture between the Fort Resolution First

Nation and a private business person. Government no longer contributes directly to this operation. The reindeer operation in Tuktoyaktuk has operated as a private business without government support since the mid 1960's.

Outfitting big game hunts provides both direct benefits to outfitters, and spin-off benefits to other sectors of the tourism industry. Tourists visiting the NWT to participate in outfitted hunting spend more money in the NWT, on average, than any other visitor segment, and the requirement for all non-resident hunters to use a local outfitter and guide ensures that much of this money flows directly to NWT residents. It is estimated that more than \$7.5 million is spent on outfitted NWT hunts each year. A recent study of Barren Ground Caribou Outfitters showed that, based on the annual harvest of approximately 400 caribou each year, each hunt provided 15 person days of direct employment and an additional 10 days of indirect employment for NWT residents.

Participation and production in the fur harvesting sector have always fluctuated. In recent years, harvest levels, participation rates and income earned have decreased. This is partly due to a drop in fur prices, but harvests were also affected by other factors, including competition from the wage economy, natural wildlife population cycles, and efforts by the anti-fur lobby to discredit the sector. In an effort to offset some of the negative impacts of falling prices, there have been a number of initiatives to increase the utilization of NWT fur products, including development of the manufacturing and craft sectors, and promotion of fur both inside and outside the NWT.

The NWT fur industry has also taken aggressive steps to update trapping technologies and handling techniques to ensure NWT harvesters continue to place high quality, high value furs in the marketplace.

Ringed, harp and bearded seals are the three species of seals that are most important to Inuit, with ringed seal comprising the majority of the harvest. Prior to the 1980's the commercial sealskin harvest was an important part of Inuit communities' economy,

particularly in Baffin. Sealskin markets collapsed in the early 1980's, as a result of the sustained efforts of animal rights groups to end commercial sealing in Atlantic Canada, with devastating effects on Inuit communities. While subsistence harvest of seals continued to be important, NWT commercial sealskin harvests dropped drastically from 42,000 skins in 1981 to an average of 1,500 in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Recent indications are that there is renewed interest and acceptance of sealskin products in the market place. Harvest levels have increased to approximately 6,500 per year as of 1996/97, with support from the department's fur price program. Six thousand of those skins sold at the December fur auction.

Trends in other sectors have also had an impact on wildlife and fur. For example, the increased interest in non-renewable resource exploration and development has highlighted the need for good quality baseline data on wildlife and habitat, and the need for an integrated approach to resource management and development.

2. GLOBAL AND NATIONAL TRENDS

A 1991 survey found that the vast majority of Canadians (86%) felt it was important to maintain abundant wildlife populations for their own intrinsic value. Canadians spent 1.3 billion days and approximately \$5.6 billion enjoying wildlife-related activities in 1991, including both hunting and non-consumptive activities. Non-consumptive activities were particularly popular, with 74 percent of Canadians actively participating in wildlife activities such as watching, photographing, studying or feeding. The amount of time spent by Canadians on non-consumptive wildlife related activities has been steadily increasing over the past ten years, while participation in hunting has been declining.

Recent consumer surveys and indicators point to increasing fur prices, which coincide with a natural upswing in furbearer populations. Consumer spending is increasing as economic conditions improve, and this should be reflected in increased returns to harvesters.

3. INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The wildlife sector is of vital importance to the people and economy of the NWT. Traditional harvesting for food provides a significant alternative to store-bought meat and fish. Commercial activities, such as trapping and commercial harvesting, provide opportunities to earn income that are compatible with traditional skills and lifestyles. Wildlife is important from a tourism perspective and provides opportunities for recreational hunting as well as non-consumptive activities such as wildlife viewing, and photography.

3.2 RESOURCES

The wide variety of wildlife resources provides the NWT with an enormous, high quality and valuable renewable resource. The nutritional quality of game meat is far superior to imported meat, providing an excellent, low-fat source of protein. Northern furbearers are recognized for producing some of the highest quality fur in the world, and the opportunities for experiencing wildlife in a pristine northern wilderness are unparalleled.

However, while the NWT is rich in its wildlife resource, species are not uniformly distributed across the territory. Each species requires specific habitats and conditions, and many species, such as the barren-ground caribou, are highly mobile.

In some cases, we have a good understanding of population size, range, habitat needs and sustainable harvest. For example, since caribou is a major food source



for many NWT residents, populations are carefully monitored. Most barren-ground caribou populations appear to be stable and could support higher harvest rates without exceeding sustainable yields. But some populations, such as the Peary Caribou of the arctic islands, are at risk.

Muskox populations are thriving. Populations have grown steadily since the early 1900's, when they had almost been hunted to extinction. The carefully managed muskox populations are now large enough to sustain both subsistence harvesting and a commercial meat harvest. Muskox provide a good example of the importance of careful resource conservation and management.

Fur bearing animals vary by region and are generally plentiful. However, furbearers experience natural population cycles, independent of harvesting activity, and must be carefully monitored to ensure overharvesting does not occur when populations are low. Most furbearer populations could currently sustain higher levels of harvest without adverse effects.

Ringed seals are the most abundant and widely distributed seals in the NWT. About one million ringed seals are estimated to live in Canadian arctic waters and potentially could sustain harvests of up to 50,000 animals per year, similar to harvests conducted prior to the 1980's collapse of the seal markets.

In the case of some populations of bears, Dall's sheep, and others, there is insufficient information available on population size and trends, and habitat needs, to confirm higher harvest levels are sustainable.

NWT wildlife resources are co-managed by government and wildlife users who work together to monitor populations and regulate harvesting. But to effectively manage wildlife resources, managers need reliable, up-to-date information to ensure that wildlife use is sustainable under changing conditions. Changes in environment, migration routes, birth rates, and disease can have serious impact on commercial and subsistence harvesting. This information is obtained through regular

population surveys and other monitoring, and through close consultation with wildlife users and harvesters.

The NWT's human population is growing rapidly, putting increasing pressure on wildlife resources and habitat. New industrial opportunities are also emerging that may affect wildlife use or habitat. It will become increasingly important to have good baseline data on wildlife populations and habitat use.

We need a more effective way of assigning a value to our wildlife resources. A strict economic accounting does not incorporate many of wildlife's greatest benefits. A method of recognizing and evaluating these benefits is needed if NWT residents are to enjoy maximum value from this resource.

3.3 HUMAN RESOURCES

The wildlife sector provides opportunities to participate in productive activities that use traditional skills and knowledge, promote cultural and family values, and enhance self-esteem. The skills needed for subsistence harvesting and fur trapping are widespread throughout the NWT and have long been used to sustain families and communities. However, with increased urbanization and competition from the wage economy, fewer residents will learn the skills necessary to harvest.

The skills used for subsistence harvesting can also be applied to income-earning pursuits such as fur trapping, outfitting and commercial meat harvesting. However, specific training is required to ensure a competent level of service or production. The GNWT has provided trapper training workshops for many years in trapping techniques and pelt handling, and as a result, the quality of our raw furs continues to improve.

Outfitters require training in tourism/ guiding skills to be effective guides, and commercial meat harvesting requires project-specific training to ensure consistency, quality, and marketability of meat products. More ongoing training programs are needed in both these areas.

There is also potential for NWT residents to earn income from the secondary processing of fur and meat. The NWT Development Corporation provides training in fur handling and manufacturing and a pilot project is now manufacturing NWT fur coats on a small scale. The secondary processing of meat products would increase employment in this sector but would require appropriate training and infrastructure.

All commercial meat intended for sale outside the NWT must be inspected and most meat sold within the NWT is now inspected as well. Specific training in meat inspection would help develop the northern expertise and eliminate some of the need to bring in southern inspectors for harvests.

The monitoring and management of the resource will become increasingly important with greater wildlife utilization, and as urban and industrial development as well as global environmental change impact wildlife and habitat. The skills, tools and information available to wildlife management agencies in communities, aboriginal organizations and government will continually need to be upgraded and increased through training and technological advances.

There is also a need for more public conservation education about wildlife and wildlife management issues. Greater public education about our wildlife resources will result in a greater appreciation and hopefully greater use of the resource. This would



increase both the social and economic benefits derived from wildlife, and promote more responsible use of our resources.

3.4 INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL

Together, the GNWT and aboriginal groups are managing wildlife resources to ensure that NWT residents will continue to benefit from the sustainable use of wildlife for generations to come. With ongoing effective management, wildlife resources can continue to be a key element in the diversification of the economic base. Given the importance of wildlife to communities, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has provided assistance to individual harvesters as well as regional organizations in the form of organizational support, Nunavut and Western NWT harvester income support programs, Hunters and Trappers Organization support, and other activities related to development of the sector.

Subsistence harvesting does not provide cash income, however, harvesters need snowmachines, traps, camping gear, rifles and other related gear, which involves a considerable outlay of cash. Equipment purchases are financed through wage employment or assistance from government or aboriginal organizations. The equipment can also provide opportunities to participate in domestic commercial harvests and fur harvesting, although fur harvesting requires additional trapping equipment.

To assist fur harvesters, the GNWT has recently introduced a fur pricing program that guarantees harvesters a minimum price for properly handled fur. This helps harvesters to plan for equipment purchase and replacement.

It may be possible to increase the market value of NWT fur. Currently, premium NWT furs are combined with lower quality southern furs and sold together as a lot at southern auction houses. Investment in a northern fur collection centre, where NWT fur would be

sorted and graded prior to being sent to auction could result in an increased selling price for NWT furs.

The GNWT has also been a strong supporter of trap research and development. The fur industry has been faced with many challenges over the past decade. One of the most pressing has been the need to develop new traps and trapping techniques to meet public demand for more humane trapping. There are now a number of humane traps that have been approved for use in North America, and the GNWT has sponsored an active program of providing harvesters with the new humane traps in exchange for their old traps. The NWT is a world leader in trap research and implementation of humane trapping methods.

Outfitting, for both hunting and non-consumptive wildlife tourism, offers business opportunities for NWT residents. However, it also requires a high level of investment in infrastructure, equipment, operations and marketing. A number of factors discourage outfitters from making that investment. Outfitter licences are only valid for one year and often do not give exclusive rights to an area, making it difficult to plan long-term operations or obtain financing for major expenditures. Uncertainty about land use permits and the impact of land claims also make outfitters reluctant to invest. As a result,



many wildlife based tourist facilities are at a competitive disadvantage.

Commercial meat harvesting requires a much larger investment in facilities. The lack of infrastructure (processing facilities, roads) and the high cost of operations has made commercial meat harvesting difficult to develop as a private business. To assist this sector, the government has invested in portable abattoirs and meat plants in a few communities, and the NWT Development Corporation has made significant investments in wild meat and fish processing plants suitable for processing products for both the domestic and export commercial markets. Furthermore, the abattoir in Hay River processes domestic meat such as hogs, but may also process wild game such as muskox, caribou, or bison to serve domestic commercial markets. However, these facilities are limited in number and are not always the most appropriate for harvesting a highly mobile resource. More portable processing facilities, that can be easily moved to follow a herd, are needed if commercial harvesting is to become more widespread and more efficient.

3.5 PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The development of public infrastructure such as roads, airports, power and provision of health, water and communications services is essential to the growth of communities and success of businesses. While physical infrastructure developments bring advantages they also can have a negative effect on habitat and wildlife. For example, the construction of a hydro electric generating dam may reduce the cost of power, but may have widespread environmental effects.

More roads and sources of power would make the development of the commercial game meat and wildlife viewing sectors more feasible and economic in the short term. The same developments, however, do hold dangers as increased road access in Canada has almost

always led to increased harvesting of all types - both legal and illegal. The challenge would be to balance harvest allocations, other impacts and the loss of wilderness, which could eventually downgrade the tourism potential.

The responsibility of government to continue to improve environmental assessment and monitoring capability is an essential element of public and industrial infrastructure development. Mitigating the effects on the environment must continue to be a requirement of such developments.

3.6 Markets

The subsistence food harvest has met local needs for countless years. It is important to support and encourage subsistence use instead of relying on costly imported products. A means must be developed of assigning appropriate value to the non-monetary benefits of wildlife.

With respect to commercially harvested meat, market perception differs greatly inside and outside the NWT. In most markets within the NWT, game meat is viewed as regular fare and is purchased as a replacement for imported meat products such as beef and pork. To effectively compete with meat products imported from southern wholesalers, NWT game meat must be competitively priced, highly visible, and widely available in a variety of different product forms. Given the high costs of harvesting game meat, it is often



difficult to deliver a competitively priced product to market.

Outside the NWT, game meat is viewed as "exotic" and can demand high prices. However, to develop and maintain a high end market we must be able to consistently deliver a top quality product that meets consumer expectations. Caribou meat seems to be well received in export markets and is gaining in popularity. Musk-ox, on the other hand, has yet to find a consistent niche.

Chief export markets for game meat include the U.S., Europe and some regions in the Pacific. To date, Canada has been a relatively poor market for game meat because of a general preference for domesticated meat. Attitudes are shifting, however, as game farming increases product availability and awareness, and concerns over healthy living increase. NWT game meat is lean and nutritious and comes from free-ranging herds, which appeals to markets seeking a "pure" product.

Live wood bison export provides the highest return. A reasonable market for bison meat does exist, but the export of live animals provides up to five times the return compared to meat. The market may get even stronger if an initiative to allow wood bison imports into the USA is successful. The reindeer herd near Tuktoyaktuk has not been commercially harvested since the mid 1980's.

Price remains a determining factor in the development of this sector. Overhead costs of getting product to market are very high because of the level of investment required to stage and process a major harvest. Some major pieces of specialized equipment are underutilized for the rest of the year. Higher prices may be achieved as products gain broader market acceptance. Better returns may also be achieved if infrastructure is used for longer periods of time and value-added processing, which would generate increased wages, took place in the North.

Markets for tourism-based uses of wildlife

are primarily outside the NWT. Southern Canada, the US, and Europe are primary markets for both consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife activities. Visitors coming to enjoy wildlife-based activities provide not only direct benefits to outfitters, but also spin-off benefits to the transportation, hospitality, service and retail sectors.

The traditional markets for consumptive wildlife activities have been big-game hunters. Although hunters tend to spend more per capita than other visitors, their numbers have been stagnant or decreasing over the past few years. In addition, there have been an increasing number of outfitted hunting products from around the world introduced to the marketplace, increasing competition in an already highly competitive field. Changing attitudes towards hunting, an aging population, increasing urbanization, a sluggish economy and increased competition have all had an impact on markets for NWT hunts. In contrast, demand for non-consumptive wildlife activities has been steadily increasing. NWT wildlife-based tourism businesses have an opportunity to capture a share of this growing market.

Because the cost of traveling to the NWT is high and products like outfitted hunts are expensive, the NWT needs to be marketed based on the quality and uniqueness of the experience. It cannot compete on the basis of price. However, this means that NWT products must also be able to consistently deliver on

these promises. Most NWT outfitting businesses are only marginally profitable. They cannot afford to develop and deliver extensive marketing campaigns, particularly to a global market. Assistance is needed for proper training, product development, and marketing.

The market for NWT furs is global, and virtually all NWT furs are sold through a well established external marketing system - the international raw fur auction houses. The NWT produces a premier quality of fur, and the highly competitive bidding of the auction system ensures NWT furs receive fair market value. However, the development of a northern fur collection facility could result in better prices.

Markets and current prices for most NWT furs are strong. However, there are a number of marketing challenges facing NWT fur. The international fur market is fickle and subject to the dictates of fashion. This influences demand and price as different species come in or out of vogue.

The wild fur industry must also deal with ongoing competition from fur ranchers, who benefit from the efficiencies of organized mass production, and have an impact on prices throughout the marketplace. To counteract these impacts the NWT has made continuing efforts to enhance trapping and fur handling techniques, to provide a highly visible, high quality fur product in strategic markets, and to ensure supply remains consistent in both volume and quality.

After more than a decade of decline, the NWT fur industry rebounded in 1995 and 1996. Both volumes and prices for fur were strong in 1996 and returns to harvesters were improving.

Renewed interest in sealskin products is being shown, particularly in eastern Asian countries. Marketing research suggests there is a potential to sell up to 30,000 skins at auction for projected prices of \$30 to \$35 per skin in 1997/98, with projected potential increases in the following year. The Department of



Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) has promoted sealing over the past few years through incentives to harvesters by supporting efforts to improve processing of raw products, such as better tanning methods of the hides and assistance to produce value-added products. Support to the sealing initiatives also includes Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and NWT, national and international Inuit organizations. Prior to the most recent initiatives, there was no commercial demand for seal pelts. The preliminary outlook for the sealskin market has some positive potential, although the market has not been proven and will continue to have an element of risk.

3.7 REGULATIONS AND TAXATION

The NWT is recognized as a world leader in the successful co-management of wildlife resources. Wildlife management in the NWT is a responsibility shared between government and user groups, including community-based Hunters and Trappers Organizations, regional organizations, and various wildlife management boards. Regulations, restrictions and quotas are based on recommendations reached through extensive consultation and are subject to a wide range of federal and territorial legislation.

There are few restrictions on subsistence hunting or trapping by aboriginal residents other than the requirement to hold a valid general hunting licence. There are no quotas or harvest limits set on most species, but harvesters are largely self-regulating through individual management practices based on personal observations and information provided by government personnel. In cases where conservation concerns dictate limited harvests, quotas are set by the GNWT in conjunction with the appropriate wildlife management boards, and quota allocation is decided by the boards and user groups.

Resident and non-resident recreational

hunting have a separate licencing system, which provides a means of monitoring the numbers of hunters and collecting harvest data. Limits are set on the number of animals that may be harvested by recreational hunters according to management and conservation needs. Non-resident hunters must use the services of a local outfitter and guide, ensuring NWT residents receive benefits from non-resident hunts.

Outfitting businesses (both consumptive and non-consumptive) must be licenced. Outfitting licences are issued by the GNWT in cooperation with the wildlife management boards and specify where, when and how the outfitter can operate. One of the difficulties facing outfitters is the fact that, in addition to an outfitter's licence, they also require a number of other permits, licences and leases, often issued by different departments or jurisdictions, each requiring a separate application process. This process could be better coordinated and simplified to offer outfitters a "single window" approach to licensing.

All game meat taken for commercial sale must be harvested under a commercial licence and commercial quota. Quotas are set and allocated by the GNWT in conjunction with the wildlife management boards and user



groups. Commercial game meat destined for sale outside the NWT is subject to federal inspection. In the past, all NWT export meat has been processed in southern facilities to meet federal inspection standards. However, the Rankin Inlet meat plant has received federal certification, and the meat plant in Cambridge Bay is also applying for federal certification. This will allow more processing to take place in the North.

Game meat commercially harvested for sale within the NWT is usually inspected during organized "pulse" harvests, either at the harvest site or at the plant by the plant manager. Harvest site inspections have adopted many federal inspection procedures, while plant inspections involve a standard industry quality control check.

The regulations covering commercial meat harvests are now out of date and require review and revision, especially if commercial game is to become a more important aspect of the wildlife sector. The federal and provincial governments are proposing legislative changes to harmonize meat inspection procedures to allow for a greater flow of goods to markets. The Government of the NWT will seek to negotiate entry for NWT meat products to the Canadian markets, which will make a much larger market available and reduce inspection costs. The need for protection of wildlife resources and habitat will continue to increase as human populations and development pressures grow. As the need to provide jobs to a rapidly growing population increases, and new industrial development opportunities are identified, it will become more important to ensure that wildlife is given appropriate consideration when making decisions about regulating development.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Wildlife populations will require continued monitoring to ensure sustainable harvest levels are not exceeded and that

underutilized resources can be identified for possible commercial use. With careful management and responsible use, the wildlife sector will continue to enhance the wealth and well-being of our residents.

A. GAME MEAT

Some barren-ground caribou populations and most muskox populations could support higher harvest rates without exceeding sustainable yields.

The nutritional quality of wildlife harvested for food is far superior to imported meat, providing an excellent, low-fat source of protein.

The commercial game meat sector already produces gross revenues to harvesters exceeding \$1 million. Most of these benefits flow to residents of smaller communities.

The regulations covering commercial meat harvests are out of date and require review and revision, especially those dealing with processing.

Both the Kitikmeot and Keewatin regions are well suited for expansion into further processing, as both will shortly have plants that meet the regulatory standards necessary for domestic and export markets.

Game ranching exists in Fort Resolution for wood bison and near Tuktoyaktuk for reindeer. Game ranching in the NWT requires high levels of investment in capital and operating costs compared to other wildlife ventures.

B. FUR

Northern furbearers produce some of the highest quality fur in the world. Markets and current prices for most NWT furs are strong. Opportunities for maximizing values should be examined.

Most furbearer populations could sustain higher levels of harvest.

Consumer demand and natural fur population cycles are on the upswing, providing opportunities for significant growth.

The GNWT has recently introduced a fur-pricing program that provides more certainty for harvesters.

Canada is a world leader in trap research and the NWT is a leader in the implementation of humane trapping methods, by providing harvesters with new humane traps in exchange for their old traps.

C. SEALS

Seals have contributed significantly to Inuit social, cultural and economic well being in the past.

Seals are an abundant resource, and historical annual harvest levels of more than 50,000 seals indicate considerable potential for growth if the demand is reestablished.

D. TOURISM

Canadians spent 1.3 billion days and approximately \$5.6 billion enjoying wildlife-related activities in 1991. Non-consumptive wildlife related activities has been steadily increasing over the past ten years, while participation in hunting has been declining.

Wildlife and wilderness form the basis of much of our tourism appeal.

The NWT needs to be marketed as a "best quality" and "unique" experience. It cannot compete on the basis of price.

Outfitted hunters spend more money in the NWT, on average, than any other visitor segment.

A number of factors which cause uncertainty regarding access to the resource, the land base and licensing are constraints to new investment.

Outfitters should be offered a "single window" approach to licensing.

E. ECONOMICS

Harvesting of renewable resources for domestic use is the largest economic activity undertaken by aboriginal residents in the NWT. More than 90% of aboriginal households consume country foods, over 70% hunt or fish and nearly 25% trap furbearers. The value of the subsistence food harvest is estimated to be \$50 - \$55 million annually in terms of imports replaced.

Subsistence harvesting is by far the most important allocation of wildlife resources, as laid out in several land claims agreements and as historically followed by government. A formal government policy on the commercial use of renewable resources would enhance future management decisions.

Subsistence harvesting does not produce cash income. However harvesters need snowmachines, traps, camping gear, rifles and other related gear, which involves a considerable outlay of cash. Equipment purchases are financed through wage employment or assistance from government or aboriginal organizations. The equipment can also provide opportunities to participate in domestic commercial harvests and fur harvesting, although fur harvesting requires additional trapping equipment.

Trapping provides seasonal income that can be measured, along with attributes which are more difficult to measure, such as cultural and social benefits through participation in an active, healthy way of life, and the self-esteem that comes from using traditional skills and knowledge.

In most markets within the NWT, game meat is viewed as regular fare and is purchased as a replacement for imported meat products such as beef and pork. To effectively compete with meat products imported from southern wholesalers, NWT game meat must be competitively priced. Outside the NWT, game meat is viewed as "exotic" and can demand high prices.

More portable processing facilities

which can be easily moved to follow a herd are needed if commercial harvesting is to become more widespread, and more efficient.

Preliminary marketing research indicates a potential for re-establishing a commercial market for seal products. The market is unproven and will continue to have an element of risk.

Any investment made in the commercial renewable resource sector must recognize the risk of reductions to the resource supply due to environmental or natural cycles and measures to mitigate such impacts must be established.

Both hunting and non-consumptive uses of wildlife contribute significantly to the quality of life enjoyed by NWT residents.

As the need to provide jobs to a rapidly growing population increases, and new industrial development opportunities are identified, it will become more important to ensure that the true value of wildlife is given appropriate consideration when making decisions about regulating development. This will require developing new yardsticks to measure both the monetary and non-monetary benefits that wildlife provides.

Increased use of wildlife for commercial, subsistence or tourism will provide more opportunities for trained northerners as scientists, officers, managers and assistants in the field.

F. RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT

The NWT is home to a wide range of wildlife composed of both abundant species and species-at-risk.

Wildlife management in the NWT is a responsibility shared between government and user groups, including community-based Hunters and Trappers Organizations, regional organizations and various wildlife management boards.

The NWT's human population is growing rapidly, putting increasing pressure on wildlife resources and habitat. New industrial opportunities are also emerging that may, in some cases, affect wildlife use or habitat. It will become increasingly important to have good baseline data on wildlife populations and habitat use as well as relevant economic data and analyses.

Harvesting at an increased rate demands that higher levels of all types of management information be made available to decision makers.

There is a need for more public conservation education about wildlife and wildlife management issues.