



Getting Warmer: Earth's Climate in the Future
<http://beyondweather.ehe.osu.edu>

A group of Native Americans lives along the coast of Alaska. They are called the Inupiat. Sometimes they call themselves the “people of the whale.” They mean the bowhead whale of the Arctic Ocean.

These people have lived near the Arctic Ocean for hundreds of years. Each year, they waited for the migration of the whales. Then they paddled small boats out into the ocean. They took **harpoons** made out of stone and bone. They hunted for one of these whales.

When the hunters killed a whale, they brought it back to shore. All the people in the village helped to pull the whale up onto the land. Then they cut up the whale and shared the meat. The jawbones were used to build the walls of houses.

But then whaling ships came from Europe and the United States. They killed many bowhead whales. Soon there were not many whales left. The whaling ships left and the Inupiat stopped hunting for a while. Finally, there were enough whales to hunt again.

Flesch-Kincaid RL = 3.5



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Later, rising seawater made the people move farther away from the ocean. This time, they used wood and stone instead of whale bones to build their houses.

Today there are more changes. The world is getting warmer. The ice that covers the Arctic Ocean is melting. The whales are following the shrinking ice to find food. The hunters are following the whales farther away from land. This can be dangerous.

Soon hunting the whales may be even more dangerous. Companies want to explore the ocean. They want to drill for oil where the whales migrate. Then the whales may go even further away from shore. The hunters will have to follow the whales out into the sea.

The people are not giving up. They are learning new ways to hunt. They have always been able to change and survive. They are still the people of the whale.

Glossary

harpoons – spears used in hunting whales and large fish

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