

SUPPLEMENT: DAILY CROSS ISLAND BOAT AND VESSEL ACCOUNTS, 2009

22 August, Saturday

American Discovery made a day trip to Cross Island from West Dock to take some pictures (after obtaining permission to do so). The *Arctic Wolf* traveled from West Dock to Cross Island for the setup of the generator, delivery of the gasoline and diesel supplies, telephone work, and other mobilization tasks. Because of the lateness of the day and the large number of polar bears seen on Cross Island, the *Arctic Wolf* stayed at Cross Island overnight and most of the mobilization work was actually done on 23 August. One or more Nuiqsut whalers served as polar bear watch for the mobilization effort.

27 August, Thursday

Of the six crews and eleven whaling boats that participated in the 2009 Cross Island subsistence whaling season, five crews and eight boats traveled from Nuiqsut to Cross Island on 27 August. Once they arrived at Cross Island they unpacked, cleaned their cabins, and inventoried the state of the equipment on the island. Some cabins had been damaged by polar bears and needed repairs in addition to cleaning. Most crews still had to prepare their *aviqpus* (floats) and bombs. Several more communal tasks also needed completion before a whale could be successfully landed and butchered. At least one new tow-line had to be prepared (eventually two new ones were made). An “eye” had to be prepared on the new cable that had been installed on the winch. The skid plate that the winch was mounted on had to be straightened, and to straighten the skid plate the winch house had to be moved a bit so that the loader could reach the skid plate. Some crews started preparing floats and bombs the day they arrived, but all the other tasks were deferred until at least the next day. No boats went scouting for whales on 27 August.

28 August, Friday

28 August started fairly windy, but by noon was calmer, although very foggy. The whalers talked about going out to look for whales but realized that they had quite a bit to do before they would be ready to actually land a whale. Thus, most crews did not go out scouting for whales, although conditions were reasonably favorable to do so. The *Arctic Wolf* made a trip from West Dock to Cross Island with a light plant for the butcher site, some food supplies, and a load of mattresses.

The NAP boat made the only extended scouting trip for this day. They indicated that waves and swells were moderate, and visibility was acceptable – although there was still quite a bit of fog. Their trip of 46.4 miles was mainly to the east of Cross Island, but also included a short search west of the island, and was conducted primarily at relatively high cruising speeds. There were about ten short periods of low speed when they were looking at potentially interesting areas that had drawn their attention for one reason or another. The NAP crew did not report seeing any whales, however, and did not draw any special attention to any of these areas when talking about their track. The only other boat to go out was the *Ipalook2* boat, and it went out only because someone saw what could have been a whale very close to Cross Island. They went out to see if this was a whale and returned almost immediately (a trip of 12 to 15 minutes) once they determined that the dark spot they had seen was a

low-lying island appearing and disappearing in the waves and swells (*anatuq*). This sort of “false positive” sighting seems to have been evident for the duration of the season. That is, by the end of the 2009 season the whalers reported the generally prevalent conditions for the 2009 season (large swells, skittish whales with few or no blows, low contrast lighting conditions for sightings) were the reasons for few whale sightings. In many cases they were uncertain if a whale had been sighted or not.

29 August, Saturday

More crews had prepared floats and bombs by 29 August, although the other (and larger) communal tasks remained undone. Three crews (four boats) went out scouting. One boat made two trips, but with only a short interval between them in order to refuel. The boats all left within a space of 40 minutes (7:17 to 7:56 am) and coordinated their activities for the entire period they were out, and all returned to Cross Island for the day within a period of 25 minutes (17:56 to 18:21). They all headed NE from Cross Island, in the direction where most whales have been landed in the past. Two blows were reported, both by the BO2 boat. The BO2 boat indicated that they saw the first blow about 4.5 miles from Cross Island (about 8:31am). This sighting was bracketed by two points where the BO2 boats reported a “whale smell”. This blow was seen only once and no other details were provided. The second blow was sighted by the BO2 boat at 9:15am. This was about 8.5 miles North of Cross Island. The other boats immediately changed course to go towards the BO2 boat to help follow this whale, but this whale/blow was not seen again and by 9:35am or so all boats turned to the north and started to look in that direction. The BO2 boat crew indicated that this was a big blow (maybe 8-feet), and hence a big whale, but they only saw it once and could not tell what direction it was going. Because of the size of the blow, they thought it was a different whale than the first one. While no other whale or blow sightings were noted, all boats reported seeing lots of whale birds, seals, and oogruks. Many such points could have been located and whalers pointed out only a few of these. Some boats also mentioned dead krill in the current near Narwhal Island. Most boats returned to Cross Island between 6:00pm and 6:20pm.

30 August, Sunday

All boats on shore.

31 August, Monday

All boats on shore.

1 September, Tuesday

Nine boats went out scouting on 1 September. The first boat left Cross Island about 7:41am and the last about 8:29am. Conditions were marginal or even rough at the start with 5 foot waves, but it started to calm down after lunch and was “real calm” about 3pm. It was calmer in the east than in the west (but the

boats spent most of their time in the east). While the whalers were out scouting for whales, the Arctic Wolf made a trip from West Dock to Cross Island with a load of lumber and other supplies for the whalers.

The BO2 boat was the first boat out and saw a whale about 1.5 miles from Cross Island at about 7:52am. This sighting encouraged the other crews to launch as soon as they could get ready. The BO2 boat reported that they only saw this whale once. When they saw it the whale was just floating in the water and they thought that it may have been sleeping. The whalers report that when whales sleep they just float like this one was. As they approached it the whale just went down and disappeared. It did not dive and they never saw a blow, and they could not tell what direction it may have gone. They also never saw it come up. This was the general pattern for the day – whalers would see a whale (or something black) and would approach it only to have it “go down” or disappear. They would not see a blow, and would not see the whale or object again. After seeing this whale, the BO2 boat headed east, following currents in places, until IP1 saw something at about 11:37am. The only other whale they saw was at about 11:50am, while on their way towards the IP1 boat, when they saw a whale in front of them and reported that they were going to it. It went down and they never saw it again.

The BO1 boat started by following the BO2 boat (leaving the island about 17 minutes later). However, one of their crew members became ill and they returned to the island to drop him off. They reported seeing a whale about 12 miles from Cross Island. They went out scouting a second time, heading north for about 8 miles and then E or NE. They reached about 14.7 miles from Cross Island and then started back to Cross Island in a fairly straight line. Up to that point they had “zig-zagged in order to search a wider path” since the whales were hard to spot and they could not see any blows. They turned back to Cross Island once it started to get windy. On the way back to Cross Island they looked for whales but saw none. They had to slow down while returning to Cross Island because of the size of the swells and the characteristics of the boat.

The IAN boat saw a whale about 8 miles from Cross Island and the other boats changed course to help look for it. As with other whales seen on 9/01, this whale was seen only once and “had no blow.”

Both IP crew boats left Cross Island together, but the IP1 had to return to Cross Island to drop off an injured crew member (bruised ribs from a prior day's activities). After heading out again, IP1 looked in areas where the other boats had seen whales, and then joined IP2. The IP boats then responded to the sightings of other boats, but did not see these whales. The other whalers again only saw these whales once, and after they could not be found all the boats headed towards Narwhal Island. There IP1 saw two whales playing around – or rather, one that was sort of breaching out of the water vertically while the other was floating on the surface some distance from it. They looked in that area for awhile, turned around, and could not see anything, so they turned north towards the reported position of a whale spotted by the NUK boats. They never saw this whale (and the NUKs saw it only once). IP1 then turned north towards two whales that TAL2 and NUK3 had seen while IP2 went to Narwhal Island, and then north for about 10 miles, and then ENE to join IP1 (and the other boats) in the most NE part of the day's travel. IP1 was following a current for a while and then went to check out the “20 mile current”, where they also met up with IP2 and transferred 15 gallons of gas to IP2. IP1 then went towards where NUK3 had spotted a whale but again IP1 did not see it themselves. At this point both the IP boats were

low on gas, so they headed back to Cross Island. They indicated that otherwise they may have stayed out longer.

The Taalak crew boats spent the entire day in close proximity to each other. The captain reported that they did not see anything (meaning whales) all day. Soon after leaving Cross Island in the morning, about 4 miles north, they encountered a “streak” of whale food that extended to the NE. They slowed down and followed this but saw no whales. One crew member remarked that the water was so red that he thought it was blood, but it was not. On the way back to Cross Island, the Taalak boats were further north and west than the other boats and were headed in the general direction of Northstar. One of the crew members of TAL1 thought that he may have seen a couple of blows in the direction of Northstar. TAL1 (but not TAL2) went about 3.4 miles from this reported sighting in the direction of Northstar, but did not see any sign of whales, and so turned and returned to Cross Island. They were still about 15 miles from Northstar when they turned for Cross Island. The captain reiterated that he himself did not see any signs of whales all day, but that every turn in his boat’s track except the last represented a reported sighting by another boat to which he had responded. The TAL2 boat also saw few or no whales – reporting that one crew member saw two different whales that they think were probably the same as those seen by the NUK3 boat, in the general area of tal2_090109a. Conditions were reported about the same as for other boats – pretty rough when they went out, but calming down as they went along. There were swells all day, although the last part of the day to the SE was calm and it was even calmer in the west. However, when they turned SE to head back to Cross Island, conditions became rougher.

Most of the discussion of the NUK boats activities was based on the track for NUK3. Early in the day the two boats were not traveling together, however, as the whalers wanted to cover more area since they were having such a problem resighting whales when they resurfaced (and in fact were not able to do so). NUK3 reported seeing “maybe 3 or 4 whales and then a blow towards Narwhal Island” and NUK1 reported seeing the two whales sighted in the east. They only located these sightings in a very general way, and were more interested in discussing two more general, interrelated, and vitally important issues – the strange behavior of whales so far during the 2009 whaling season and the problem of tug and barge traffic interfering with fall subsistence whaling activities.

While most of the whalers were out scouting for whales, one crew member who stayed on the island noticed a tug and barge (identified as the *Seneca*) NE of Cross Island at about 12:19pm. Once this was drawn to their attention, the whalers saw it as well and requested (strongly) that it change course and travel inside of the barrier islands. The barge was on its way to Barrow and the whalers were very concerned about the potential effects it could have on the behavior of the migrating whales. Once the whalers returned to Cross Island there was much discussion about why there were so few whale sightings, why they could not resight the few whales that they were seeing, if this was an indication of “strange” whale behavior, and if tug and barge traffic could be a factor or cause behind these observations. All agreed that there were few whale sightings, few or no whale blows were observed, and no whale was seen more than once. The various (non-exclusive) explanations offered were that there were simply few whales in the area, or that the whales were spooked or behaving in a strange way, or that conditions were such that spotting whales was difficult and “false positives” (false whale sightings) were likely. There was no consensus on the relative weight that should be given to each of

these factors. Some whalers thought that there were still relatively few whales, difficult spotting conditions, quite a few false whale sighting reports, and maybe some “spooky” whale behavior (possibly due to barge traffic, but also possibly related to other factors such as the presence of killer whales). Other whalers thought it more likely that most sightings were real, that all whales seen were “spooked,” and that barge traffic was a major factor in the difficulties they were experiencing.

2 September, Wednesday

All crews except NAP went out scouting on 2 September, with all possible boats. All spent considerable time on the water, from about 9.5 hours to somewhat over 15. Five boats (three crews) made two trips, with short stops on Cross Island to refuel between the two (IAN, IP1, IP2, TAL1, TAL2). Five boats (two crews) did not need to refuel and made only one long trip for the day (BO1, BO2, NUK1, NUK2, NUK3).

The first sighting of the day was reported by the IAN crew, of a barge (the Crowley barge *Avik*) to the south of them heading to West Dock, but still too close to the whaling area (about the 6:06-6:14am). This point could not be marked, since the IAN track was not collected and it was the only boat out at the time, but was probably reasonably close to Cross Island. It was not reported whether the barge was inside of the barrier islands or not. However, the Deadhorse Communication Center summarized the contact as follows:

The call was taken at approximately 5:59 am by the on-duty operator at the Deadhorse Com Center. Edward Nukapigak reported that a barge, later identified as the *Avik* (Crowley barge 160-4), was traveling several miles south of Cross Island and displaced a grouping of bowhead whales that were being tracked by the Nuiqsut Cross Island bowhead crews. The barge was contacted by the Com Center and moved out of the area. Crowley was again notified of the Com Center call-in protocol by Mr. Hickey (via email to Carolyn Macdonald) and Waska William Jr. (North Slope Borough Planning Dept.) also notified Crowley (Greg in Barrow) to stay clear of Cross Island and inside the Barrier Islands when possible.

IAN reported several whale sightings as well – about 9:01am, 10:10am, 11:40am, and 14:05am.

The first whale sighting was reported by NUK1 or NUK3 about 6.3 miles North of Cross Island (6:33am). NUK3 left Cross Island and headed north, and continued north after seeing this whale. They may have been following this whale, but more likely lost track of it. The next sighting, also by NUK3, was 16 miles North of Cross Island at about 7:48am. These were the only sightings reported by the NUK3 boat, although they scouted until about 9:29pm. They may have seen some of the other whales reported by other crews later in the day (about 16 and 20 miles from Cross Island), but did not remark on them. After they saw their second whale, they continued to the east (in response to a sighting by IAN) and then south to a point about 5.5 miles north of Pole Island (probably in the company of IAN). They then essentially retraced their path to the area of an earlier IAN sighting. They then responded to a sighting report by BO1 to their SW, and after losing track of this whale returned to Cross Island with most of the other boats.

Shortly after the NUK3 sighting, TAL2 reported a sighting at 7:58am and 11.2 miles WNW of Cross Island. TAL2 thought this whale went then east, so TAL2 went east but evidently never saw the whale

again, since they turned west again about 8:16am. TAL2 turned east again about 8:57, in response to the sighting of whales to the east. The TAL boats continued east until leaving at high speed in response to the IAN sighting about 10:10am. When the IAN boat saw a whale about 10:10am, it appears that all boats except the BO boats went to assist them – IP1 and IP2 from the north, NUK2 and NUK3 (and probably NUK1) from the west, and TAL1 and TAL2 from the NW. TAL1 developed motor problems and had to return to Cross Island, and TAL2 accompanied TAL1 for part of this trip, and then resumed independent scouting about 12:01pm when they saw some promising signs for whales and TAL1 was reasonably close to Cross Island (9 miles). TAL1 reached Cross Island about 1:54pm.

The whale seen by IAN was soon lost and may not have been seen again at all. The IAN boat and the IP boats seem to have left the immediate area in a southerly direction about 11:10am or so. NUK3 (and probably NUK1) left the area about 11:20am to head towards Pole Island. The NUK2 boat remained searching in the area until 11:30am, when it turned south and proceeded at high speed to join the IAN boat. IAN had reported seeing many whale birds about 11:30am, and at 11:40am reported a whale sighting. However, since the NUK2 boat actually looked for IAN and the other boats near Narwhal Island, NUK2 did not join the other boats until about 2:36pm. IAN, the IP boats, NUK3, and probably NUK1 scouted to the south, towards Pole Island. They do not seem to have seen this whale again, as there are no reports of other sightings. The boats proceeded mostly at “scouting speed” and appear to have been in reasonable proximity to each other. They were in close enough to each other to provide mutual assistance in the event of sightings. They probably was a whale while the boats were proceeding north, after going south to a point about 6 miles from Pole Island, and then turning and proceeding almost due north. The BO boats had joined the other boats in this area, having traveled at high speed from the north starting about 12:10pm until about 12:49pm when they reached the other boats. They then proceeded south to Pole Island and then north with the other boats. When IAN reported seeing a whale at 2:05pm, BO2 reported sighting a different whale at the same time. The boats were at scouting speed (in a NW or W direction) looking for these whales but did not report seeing them again.

The next whale sighting reported was about 4:13pm, 14.6 to 15.6 miles from Cross Island, by NUK1. It was first seen by IAN and NUK1. The BO and IP boats responded to the sighting, as did NUK2. The NUK2 and NUK3 boats were scouting together when this sighting was made. The NUK2 boat went to help find/chase this whale, while the NUK3 boat continued north at scouting speed.

About 4:36 the BO2 boat turned for Cross Island, to refuel and then go to West Dock to pick up a crew member at West Dock who needed transport to Cross Island. About 4:59pm BO1 saw a whale about 5.5 miles from Cross Island. BO2 was only 2.8 miles from Cross Island, but turned around to help find and chase this whale and the NUK2 boat came to help the BO boats from the NE, joining them at about 5:19pm. All the other boats either eventually joined (NUK1, NUK3, IP2) the BO boats in this general area or returned to Cross Island to refuel and then went out again to help the other boats (IP1, IAN, and the TAL1 and TAL2 boats once the TAL1 motor was fixed). The NUK2 boat stayed with the BO boats until about 5:50pm, when it headed back to Cross Island for the day. When the TAL boats went out on their second trip, both initially went north to join the IAN and NUK1 boats. About 5 miles north of Cross Island they split. TAL1 continued at high speed north to join IAN and NUK1 about 5:53pm while the TAL2 boat went SE at scouting speed to join the BO and other boats. TAL1 (and it is assumed the

IAN and NUK1 boats) then went south at scouting speed in the general direction of the other group of boats. About 4:42 the NUK3 boat had turned to the west and southwest. This brought his boat into the same area as the other boats had searched just after 4pm, but by that time those boats had lost track of their whale and had moved on to help BO1 with the whale they had seen closer to Cross Island. NUK3 continued scouting in this area until about 6:02pm, when they headed south at high speed towards where the most of the other boats were scouting (the IAN, NUK1, and TA1 boats were to NUK3's west). They reached the general area of the other boats about 6:45pm.

TAL1 reported spotting a whale at 6:49 pm and turned west to try to follow it. About 7:05pm the TAL1 boat (and it is assumed the IAN and NUK1 boats) decided to join the other boats and went "on top of the water" at high speed and slowed down in that general area at about 7:18pm. They either lost track of their whale (or never saw it again) or were called to go help the other boats. Soon after this, at 7:25pm it was reported that two groups of boats were chasing whales – IAN, NUK1, and TAL1 in one group and the BO boats, TAL2, IP1, and NUK3 in another. All boats in the "BO whale group" almost immediately changed direction at high speed for a position west of where one of the other boats had thrown a harpoon. It appears that the bomb did not explode and that the darting gun missed the whale, but all boats continued to concentrate on this whale. About 7:47:30 TAL1 had a potential opportunity to strike this whale again, but was not quite able to obtain the proper position, and they eventually lost track of this whale. It does not appear that the whale was definitively seen once it dived about 8:48pm (NUK3 sighting) or perhaps even 8:10pm. Boats headed back to Cross Island at different times. BO1 and BO2 went back at high speed about 8:08, so that they could then go to West Dock to pick up a crew member. IP1 headed west to Cross Island at scouting speed about 8:21, and once they were beyond the range of where they thought it likely to see the whale they had been chasing again, went to high speed at about 8:41. The NUK3 and TAL2 boats were scouting for this whale in fairly close cooperation with TAL1 and headed back to Cross Island in the company of TAL1 (9:15 and 9:08 respectively). The IP2 boat had left this area about 7:08pm to go refuel at Cross Island and did not return to help scout for the whale until about 7:55. They were scouting south of TAL1 and probably in the company of IAN when IAN reported seeing a vessel to the NE of Cross Island. This vessel's position was not well documented (but NW of where the whalers had been looking for the whale they were following). IP2 had gone from scouting speed to high speed about 8:34 and was following a course parallel to that of its course out from Cross Island. Just after 8:40, when IAN reported seeing the barge, IP2 altered course to the NW so that it returned to Cross Island from the NE, possibly gaining a better view of the object IAN and they had observed. It is possible that they saw the barge as early as 8:34, prompting their high speed, but no detailed account from the whalers was obtained. This vessel was actually a privately-owned 57' vessel traveling about 6 miles north of Cross Island and was instructed to move further out to sea by the Communications Center.

3 September, Thursday

Conditions were not particularly good for scouting, and seemed to worsen as the day went on. Nine boats went out scouting (14 boat trips – 5 boats made two trips each). All of the "two trip" boats came in for lunch and went out again in about an hour. All boats were back at Cross Island for the day by 3:11pm, so all second trips were quite short. No whales or potential whale sightings were seen in the afternoon.

The IP1 and IP2 boats were the first boats out, at 6:32am, as the captain had decided the night before to go out early unless conditions were very bad. The other seven boats all went out between 8:46 and 9:23, since conditions did not appear to be very good. Also, the first thing that the IP boats had seen was a barge at 6:58am. The barge was not identified and its position was documented only in an approximate fashion. The IP boats had left Cross Island heading ENE and were about 5 miles from Cross Island when they saw the barge. They reported that the barge was about 5 miles due north of them, was heading to the west and moving “pretty fast” and was quite loud. For this reason they decided to travel almost due east, directly away from the barge [and implying that this would give them the greatest chance to encounter whales not disturbed by the barge]. They proceeded east at 8-10 mph until about 7:04am (about 1.1 miles after seeing the barge) and dropped to scouting speed (3-4 mph). IP2 reported seeing a whale, but did not specify the time or place – but saw it soon before going to join IP1 since that boat also saw a whale. At 7:23am the IP boats saw a second whale. They were able to follow this whale for some distance, but eventually lost track of it. They then went at scouting speed towards the IAN boat, which had reported seeing a whale. The IP boats scouted in this area for nearly an hour. No points were marked, although IP2 located two whales or blows that were seen, but only one time each. These could have been the same whale, but were discussed as being different whales. They then scouted north and at 9:50am IP1 saw a whale and were able to follow it for a while. They saw a blow from this whale at 9:58. They saw another blow at 10:17am that they thought was the same whale. They continued north, following the whale birds and saw another blow to the north (but did not locate it – unsure if it was really an additional blow).

The TAL1, TAL2, and NUK1 boats all left Cross Island at the same time (9:23am) in a generally northern direction. TAL spotted a whale 5.5 miles from Cross Island at about 9:47am. TAL2 and NUK1 headed more north or NNW, as TAL2 had spotted a whale about 6.9 miles from Cross Island at about 9:56am. It is possible that the TAL1 and TAL2 whales were the same whale, but they were reported as different whales. TAL2 and NUK1 ended up north of Cross Island 10-12 miles between 10:30 and 11:00. The other seven boats were all east (BO2, BO1) or NE (IP1, IP2, NUK3, TAL1) of Cross Island. All the “eastern” boats except for BO2 headed towards TAL2 and NUK1 at high speed at about 10:31, as they had reported that they were seeing quite a few whales. The BO2 boat clearly was following some promising signs, but did not report any sightings and after scouting for a period of time and winding up about 9 miles due east of Cross Island at 11:46 just returned to Cross Island at high speed. All the boats from the east (except BO2) arrived in the vicinity of TAL2 and NUK1 between 10:45 and 10:59. The wind was increasing markedly, however (from less than 5 mph to 35 mph by early afternoon). Even though there had been two more sightings of what was thought to be the same whale conditions had deteriorated so much that by somewhat after 11am all boats had started back to Cross Island at scouting speed (conditions may have precluded higher speeds). Most boats had returned to the island by 12:43. The TAL1 boat and the NUK3 boat stayed out a bit longer to take an additional look at the area 6 to 7 miles NE of Cross Island. They were joined in this area after lunch by the NAP crew (using the IP1 boat), IP2, IAN, NUK1, and TAL2 (a few went more north than east). None reported any sightings. All boats were back on the island by 3:13pm.

4 September, Friday

Conditions for most of the day precluded scouting, due to high winds. In the late afternoon the winds abated and at least one boat was scouting between 5:00pm and 9:12pm, with individual boat trips ranging from 2 hours 42 minutes to four hours 1 minute. Most boats left Cross Island between 5pm and 5:30. BO1, BO2, IP1, IP2, and TAL1 headed NE. NUK1 headed almost due east. NUK3 headed NW. TAL2 did not leave Cross Island until about 6pm and headed north (towards NUK3). There were three primary sightings that influenced where other boats went – NUK1 east of Cross Island at about 6:02pm, NUK3 NW of Cross Island at about 6:09pm, and IP1 north of Cross Island at about 7:55pm.

The NUK1 boat headed east, saw the first whale of the day (or a blow) but probably only saw it once. The BO1, BO2, IP1, IP2, and TAL1 boats that had headed NE from Cross Island all responded and turned towards the NUK1 boat when it spotted a whale. The IP1 and IP2 boats broke off to the NW and NUK3 when they saw “their” whale. BO1, BO2, and TAL1 continued to the area of NUK1 but never saw that whale. NUK1 and TAL1 then scouted in a NW direction until about 7:25 when TAL2 spotted “something black” to the NW of them and TAL1 responded by traveling there at high speed while NUK1 continued at scouting speed. BO1 scouted in the area east of Cross Island a bit more, and decided to head back to Cross Island about 7:50pm due to conditions being marginal for the BO1 boat. The BO2 boat was responding to the NUK3 whale sighting but slowed and scouted in the area SE of Cross Island, and headed back to Cross Island when BO1 did. NUK3 had headed NW from Cross Island and saw two blows, and a little after that a whale about 4.7 miles from Cross Island. Although many boats responded to this sighting, this whale was seen only once. The boats in this area then dispersed to the north, with TAL2 being the most western and reporting a sighting about 7:25. This was not a definitive sighting and only the IP2 boat went over to look as well, and nothing more was seen. About 7:55pm IP1 saw a whale and the TAL boats helped search the area, but again the whale was seen only once. Other boats (NUK1, IP2) later searched the same area and reported no sightings.

Conditions were not good for spotting whales, and the whalers reported that the whales they did see were traveling fast and acting in a “spooked” way. They were traveling with their tails down, and no one had seen a whale dive and show its flukes this season (a “normal” way for a whale to dive, and noting how the flukes are positioned is one way to judge the direction a submerged whale will be swimming). There was quite a bit of discussion among the whalers as to the cause of the observed behavior of the whales, which one captain said was very similar to what they observed seven years ago [probably referring more to 2001 than 2002, but the two years were similar with 2001 being somewhat more extreme than 2002]. In 2001 (and to a lesser extent 2002) few whales were seen and all that were seen seemed to be spooked, were traveling fast, and difficult to approach. In that year, killer whales or some other source of disturbance was posited as a cause. For 2009, the whalers added barge traffic as a potential cause, since they had already seen quite a few barges while they were out scouting.

5 September, Saturday

No boats went scouting for whales, because of winds close to 25 mph. The *Arctic Wolf* made a trip from West Dock to Cross Island with gasoline and other supplies for the whalers.

6 September, Sunday

Conditions were marginal for scouting, but ten boats did scout for at least part of the day. Two boats, IP1 and IP2, essentially stayed out all day – 16.5 and 17.5 hours (although IP2 did make a very brief stop back at Cross Island to drop off a crew member and pick up a replacement). Two boats, BO1 and BO2, only scouted in the evening – about 5pm to 10pm or so. One boat, NUK2, went out only in the morning (5:30am to 11:12am). The other five boats took two separate trips, one in the morning (leaving 5:30 to 6:22am and returning around noon) and one in the evening (leaving 5:10 to 7:12pm and returning around midnight or 1:00am the next day). A few whales were seen, but not many, and a whale was struck late in the day but not landed. Since it was not found on the next or subsequent days, it was recorded as a struck and lost whale.

The NUK crew (NUK1, NUK2, NUK3) was the first crew to leave Cross Island, at 5:33am. The IAN boat left about 5:52am. NUK2 only went out in the morning. In the morning, these boats went north, then east and SE, then back NW, west, and back south or SE to Cross Island. The farthest they went from Cross Island was about 8.4 miles. NUK3 reported a whale about 7:50am, about 6.1 miles from Cross Island. When they slowed down where they estimated that the whale they had seen had been when they spotted it, they were 4.6 miles from Cross Island. This whale does not seem to have been followed for any great distance or time. After scouting in this area all NUK boats headed back to Cross Island at scouting speed. NUK2 used higher speeds than the other two boats and arrived at Cross Island about 11:12am. The other two boats arrived at 12:14pm and 12:28. The track from the IAN boat was not collected.

The TAL crew (TAL1 and TAL2) left Cross Island about 6:22am and headed north. About 7:00am TAL2 reported that “something splashed over here” and both TAL1 and TAL slowed down and searched SE and then north at slow speed (1-3 mph) until about 7:30. Neither boat reported seeing a whale. They then continued SE at higher speed (8-12 mph) until 7:52, which they increased speed to 20-25 mph about 7:52, towards the NUK3 whale sighting. They searched this area but could find no further trace of the whale. They then turned WNW towards where other boats had gone. TAL1 went further north than TAL2 and both started SW back to Cross Island about 11:00am at 16-20 mph (not top speed, but faster than their scouting speed of 1-4 mph) and arrived back at Cross Island somewhat before noon.

The Ipalook boats (IP1 and IP2) left Cross Island at 7:20am and 7:03am respectively and were the only boats to essentially stay out scouting most of the day. They headed south and then east from Cross Island. They were generally at more than scouting speed until they were about 5 miles from Cross Island, when they slowed to scouting speed. About 8:35am IP1 turned north towards NUK3 and the other boats and IP2 returned to Cross Island by going NE (to drop off an ailing crew member and pick up a replacement). IP1 maintained scouting speed while IP2 went at high speed. IP2 reached Cross Island at 9:20am and then left again almost immediately. They headed NE towards IP1 at about 8 mph, a fast scouting speed. They slowed for a short closer look about 10:50am, and then went to high speed at about 11:00am until they met up with IP1 about 11:19am. IP1 had changed course slightly to the west to meet IP2 and had been maintaining a fast scouting speed until they met, at which point they matched speeds at about 20 mph, implying that they may have seen something to the NE. Both boats slowed to scout slowly about 11:31am and IP2 reported seeing a walrus. About 11:43 both boats resumed scouting speed (4-6 mph) to the east. IP2 reported seeing many whale birds about 12:09pm and

repeated the observation about 12:12pm and slowed to less than 1 mph to search the area and wait for about 10 minutes (as did IP1). Both then resumed scouting to the east and south, and then eventually back west. IP1 may have seen something about 2:11pm, but neither boat reported a sighting, so if they did see something they were not sure about it. They continued west until about 3:35pm and then headed north again, with IP1 to the east of IP2. About 3:41pm IP1 remarked (over the radio) that it was getting calmer, and this may have influenced the decision of other crews to try scouting in the evening. They proceeded to the east until about 4:46pm, when they turned to the NW and scouted an area of approximately 4 square miles for about an hour. IP1 marked a point about 4:48pm that probably represents a whale sighting. While scouting this area IP1 talked with the BO crew (on Cross Island) and they agreed that when the BO crew went out scouting again that they would scout together in the direction of Narwhal Island. Thus, when the IP boats had searched for about an hour (until 6pm or so) they headed SE at scouting speed towards Narwhal and Pole Islands. They only turned east about 7:42pm when TAL1 reported seeing a whale. They had no other reported sightings before turning east, and all subsequent points pertained to the chase of the whale spotted by TAL1.

The BO boats both left Cross Island about 4:50pm and headed east at scouting speed – probably towards the IP boats. They did not report any sightings and turned back east when TAL1 reported a whale sighting. Their subsequent points all pertained to the chase of this whale, which they left early due to an injury to a crew member.

NUK1 and NUK3 left Cross Island to go scouting at 7:12pm. They headed NW and had just slowed to scouting speed (and seen a large bearded seal about 7:38pm) when they headed NE at high speed about 7:42pm – apparently in response to TAL1 sighting a whale. About 8:14pm both NUK1 and NUK3 changed course to the SW towards coordinates from the IAN boat. They briefly searched this area from about 8:30pm-8:34pm. They left at high speed towards the east where the other boats were all chasing the whale first seen by TAL1 at 7:45pm.

The TAL boats left Cross Island in the evening about 6:07pm and 6:11pm. They both headed east, with TAL1 at somewhat higher speed than TAL2, and TAL2 generally at 8-10 mph. At about 7:01pm TAL2 reported they “saw something black” and immediately turned north and towards TAL1. TAL1 reduced speed and searched their immediate area (east and north) until about 7:22pm, and TAL2 also briefly looked in this area when they approached TAL1. They did not see any follow up sightings and continued to scout north. At 7:41pm TAL1 saw a whale or something. At 7:45pm there was a report of a definite sighting of a whale going west. They had seen the dive and flukes, but no blow. The other boats all changed course at high speed to help with this whale. The whale was next sighted at 7:58pm, perhaps by the IAN boat or one of the TAL boats. The whale was seen again by TAL2 at 8:04pm and by an unidentified boat at 8:08pm. The BO2 boat was in the area and saw the whale to the east at 8:11pm. The two BO boats, the two TAL boats, and IP2 were in close proximity at this stage of the chase, and the IP2 boat soon joined them. They followed the whale south (about 8:19pm), ENE (8:24pm), and then north (8:31pm). They then headed at high speed to the SSW a little over half a mile (8:34pm) and scouted this area for six or seven minutes, when they then headed back NNE about 1.2 miles (8:43pm). Most of the boats (TAL1, TAL2, NUK1, NUK3, and IP2) fanned out and continued ENE to NE at about 8 mph. IP1, BO1, and BO2 reduced speed to less than 1 mph and scouted more in the immediate area –

IP1 to the north and the BO boats to the south. About 8:56 one of the BO boats (probably BO2) spotted the whale. All the other boats followed after the BO boats. Probably about 8:59 a crew member on BO1 was injured and BO1 dropped out of the chase to take him back to Cross Island. BO1, and all other boats, were ready to strike should the chance arise. BO1 was the first boat in the area, and may have been in a position to strike before the injury occurred. The next nearest boats were IAN (who spotted the whale at 9:07pm), NUK3, and NUK1. NUK3 sped up at from his location at 9:07pm, slowed and changed direction about 9:09pm, and struck the whale at 9:11pm.

IP1 marked several points after this, but the interpretation of some of them is problematic. There are also some points that can be located from the Communications Center log or field notes from radio messages. At 9:27pm the NUK crew was wanting to put another bomb in the whale. Events of the chase are not totally clear, however. The whalers kept contact with the whale until at least 10:05pm or so. NUK3 indicated they were still tracking the whale at 9:44pm. However, it appears that they lost track of the whale shortly after this, as the float had come off and most of the boats began scouting in a NW direction, and at 10:20pm whalers were discussing where to look. It was getting too dark to see and at 10:31 NUK3 heard the whale blow. TAL2 marked the last place they saw the whale at about 10:24pm. This probably was not the last such sighting, as people continued looking and at 10:59pm NUK3 saw the whale behind his boat. At 11:01pm NUK3 tried to put another float on the whale. They either missed or this float also came off, as NUK3 indicated at 11:08pm that they were right by the whale and the float had come off. IP1 marked where they last saw the whale at 11:38pm.

7 September, Monday

The day had relatively good conditions. The wind was less than 10 mph when the boats went out and conditions were reported to be good. However, then the waves got bigger and the wind increased, especially once the boats started back to Cross Island. For the smaller boats or those that did not cut through the waves that well, conditions were rough. The first objective was for boats to look for the whale struck the previous day. Nine boats went scouting. IAN left at 7:25am, NUK1 and NUK3 about 8:05am, and NO1, BO2, IP1, IP2, TAL1, and TAL2 between 8:43am and 9:22am. All returned to Cross Island between 3:09pm and 3:39, an indication that there was consensus that they were not seeing many whales and that conditions were not favorable. Some crews also wanted to make logistical trips to West Dock.

NUK1, NUK3, IP1, IP2, and most likely IAN all headed NE from Cross Island, to the approximate location of where they had left the whale struck on 9/06. TAL2 headed north. BO1, BO2, and TAL1 headed east. The boats that looked for the whale struck yesterday did not see it, but did encounter an oily sheen on the water, which they said often indicated where a whale had been struck or “down current” from such a strike. They also reported a strong smell of whale in the area of the strike. TAL1 went much further east (to an area north of Pole Island) than the BO boats (which remained north of Narwhal Island). TAL1 then circled north and west and was then in the general area of the “northern boats.” NUK3 marked a point about 12:19 and may have seen a whale traveling east, but did not report it to the researcher or the Com Center. They did not see anything afterwards, and when BO2 sighted a whale to the SE, all of the “northern boats” boats responded to the BO2 whale sighting (12:24pm) by

changing direction and heading to that area. NUK3 and the IP boats were at high speed while NUK1 was at 10-15 mph. Thus the other three boats arrived in the area of the BO2_090709a sooner (12:48pm) than did NUK1 (1:20pm). There were several repeat observations of the whale – 12:35pm, 12:42pm, and 12:54pm. There were not more certain sightings of this whale, although the boats remained in the area at slow scouting speed until 1:30pm (and some boats a bit later). All boats were heading east towards Cross Island by 1:23pm, but maintained scouting speeds. About 1:55pm NUK1 evidently saw something and all boats responded by changing course and speed towards NUK1. Five of the boats were south to WSW of NUK1, one was SSE, and one was east (position of the IAN boat is unknown). This whale was not resighted (and there may have been some doubt about the initial sighting), and all boats resumed an eastward course towards Cross Island by 2:24pm (most by 2:15). There was general consensus that all sightings were of the same whale, although it was going different directions at different times, and for most sightings only one boat (and sometimes only one crew member) saw it. Most boats maintained scouting speeds until between 3:00 to 3:30pm, and then sped up until they reached Cross Island.

8 September, Tuesday

Winds increased from about 15 mph on 7 September to about 35 mph on 8 September, and no boats went scouting for whales.

9 September, Wednesday

Winds increased to almost 45 mph on 9 September, and no boats went scouting for whales.

10 September, Thursday

It had been very windy 9/08 and 9/09 (30 to almost 45 mph) and 9/10 started with lower, but still high, winds of 20 to 25 mph. These fell to near zero to 5 mph in mid-day, but with sharply falling barometric pressure and thick fog. Only the IP2 boat went out scouting, as IP1 was borrowed by the NAP crew to go to Nuiqsut to pick up a motor for their boat (since their motor was not repairable on the island). IP2 spent most of the trip at 10 mph or more, and never slowed to less than 6 mph, and reported no sightings. The trip was from 12:50pm to 3:23pm, also an indication that conditions were not good for seeing whales, and not expected to improve. The TAL1 boat made a trip to West Dock for water and to pick up boxes, and the IP2 boat did go out in the evening to help the IP1 boat on its way back from Nuiqsut.

11 September, Friday

Ten boats went out scouting – all but the NAP boat (still disabled). Eight boats went out between 5:55am and 6:31am. IP1 and IP2 were the last boats out at about 7:16am and 7:33am, in response to the BO boats seeing a whale NE of Cross Island and the TAL and NUK boats seeing a whale ENE of Cross Island. The BO boats had headed NW from Cross Island, while the TAL and NUK boats had headed east and then a bit north after they saw a whale. When IP1 left Cross Island it headed east towards the TAL/NUK boats. IP2 left Cross Island to the NE towards the BO boats. The IP2 boat only paused briefly

in this NE area and joined the BO boats in traveling at high speed to the east to join the other boats from the north. They had evidently lost track of the whale the BO crew had been chasing (more details below on this BO whale and the NUK/TAL whale). It is assumed that the NUK3 boat had a track similar to that of NUK2, but the GPS for NUK3 was never turned on.

IAN and NUK1 were the first boats out at about 5:55am and headed east. NUK2 and NUK3 left about 6:00am and also headed east. All of these boats were in the same area when one of the NUK boats saw a whale about 7:10am. BO1 and BO2 were the next boats out at about 6:18am and headed NE (probably to search a different area than the IAN and NUK1 boats). They turned to the east and increase their speed about 7:11am, when NUK1 reported their sighting. BO1 saw a whale, probably about 7:27am, to the east. BO1 and BO2 slowed to look for this whale. This is also about the time IP2 left Cross Island and this sighting is probably why IP2 headed towards the BO boats rather than the NUK/TAL boats, as had IP1 when it left Cross Island about 7:16am. The BO boats scouted to the east from about 7:30am to 7:57am, when one of the BO boats saw the whale again to the west of them. They did not see this whale again, and continued west at "fast scouting speed" until about 8:05am, at which point they both increased speed and headed towards the TAL/NUK boats. This is about the time that the IP2 boat joined the BO boats.

Information on the chase of the NUK/TAL whale is not very detailed. NUK1 headed east from 5:55am (when they left Cross Island) until about 7:01am, when they turned SE. About 7:10am they saw a whale. About 7:20am the whale was probably seen again going to the north. IAN and NUK3 were probably with the NUK1 and NUK2 boats, but the other boats were still heading towards them and are not yet in the area. NUK2 probably saw the whale again about 7:27am. The TAL1 and TAL2 boats reached this area about 7:29am. At about 7:37 one of the TAL boats probably saw the whale again. All of the boats in the area headed mostly south until about 7:41am, when the whale was apparently seen again and all boats sped to the west for a short distance. IP1 joined these boats about 7:54am and they all followed the whale south. TAL1 reported striking the whale about 7:59am. The boats then followed the whale south, with boats trying to place more bombs to kill it. The BO1, BO2, and IP2 boats joined the other boats between 8:32am and 8:38am. TAL1 put a second float on the whale about 8:39am (or perhaps as early as 8:04am). The whale was officially declared dead about 8:52am.

The coordinates given for the strike were N70 31.157 W147 29.2545 but these coordinates were given by the TAL2 boat and using all the information available an alternative strike point has been estimated as N70 31.289 W147 29.323. These two points are about 0.2 mile apart. The kill location coordinates were given as N70 29.898 W147 28.317. The distance between the strike and kill points is about 1.6 miles.

The wind increased greatly just before the whale was struck. Thus, although the graphic summary of 2009 Cross Island whaling activity shows the average wind speed while boats were out scouting on 9/11 as about 15 mph, most of that time was during the tow, after the kill. Average wind speed prior to the strike was 12.3 mph. Average wind speed after the strike was 16.1 mph. Six boats participated in the tow – TAL1, TAL2, NUK1, IP1, IP2, and BO2. Conditions were too rough for BO1 to help with the tow

and other boats had other reasons to return to Cross Island ahead of the tow. The tow reached Cross Island about 2:20pm. The whale was a female and 49'0" long.

12 September, Saturday

Eight boats went scouting on 9/12, with the TAL boats staying to butcher the whale they had landed the day before, and the NAP crew's boat still being disabled. Conditions were favorable for scouting, with the wind less than 5 mph for the entire day. Seven of the boats left in the morning between 8:30am and 9:26am, and returned between 6:40pm and 7:55pm. One boat had a shorter trip from about 12:15pm to 7:14pm, and another boat actually took two trips as it came back to Cross Island to refuel. Whalers saw more whales than on the previous day, but it is not certain that all were documented on the tracks or in the discussions with the whalers, and overall relatively few whales were seen.

All boats left Cross Island headed NE or ENE. The pattern of the tracks was influenced by the first whale sightings of the day, which were made by the one boat for which there is no track. The first sighting was about 9:45am and all boats out at the time responded to it. Most boats scouted the area heading NE, although IAN stayed in the area and to the NW. NUK3 either stayed with IAN or NUK1. When IAN spotted a second whale at about 11:54am all boats except NUK3 responded by heading towards it at high speed (IP2 leaving Cross Island about 12:15pm). This sighting was about 4.6 miles NW of the first sighting and was assumed to be a different whale. NUK3 continued to the NW and west. Most boats did not stay in this area very long, and the BO boats never reached it, since BO2 saw a whale at about 12:19pm while heading towards the IAN boat and changed course towards it. The other boats joined the BO boats in this area or further to the east. Boats scouted east, NE, and NW of the initial area of sighting and saw the whale again. From this point all boats (except NUK3) followed this whale to the east. They could not see a blow, but the whale was coming up only once and then diving again, rather than the normal pattern of several short dives and appearances followed by a longer dive. The boats followed it east until they judged that it was too far from Cross Island. About 4:00pm BO1 (and the other boats) turned to the SW. They were all at high speed and headed towards Narwhal Island, probably to scout the area north of Narwhal Island. In the meantime, NUK3 had traveled to the NW and about 2:12pm reported seeing a boat. About 2:25 NUK3 reported that the vessel was the *Mikkelsen Bay* and gave his coordinates. Probably because of the boat, NUK3 then turned to the SE and headed towards the other boats. About 2:50pm NUK3 reported seeing a bearded seal. NUK3 did not report any other sightings, and traveled mostly at high speed, but did periodically slow down to scouting speed for brief periods of time before reaching the area of the other boats at about 3:43pm. NUK1 reported seeing a whale about 4:17pm. Other boats also saw this whale. IP2 indicated that they saw a big whale with no blow. This point seems to have been the last sighting of the whale first seen by NUK1. Boats then scouted a bit to the east, SE, and NE before most boats turned back towards Cross Island between about 5:30pm and 6:00pm, some at scouting speed and others at high speed. NUK1 and NUK3 stayed in the area longer than the other boats and then also returned to Cross Island.

13 September, Sunday

Conditions were good for scouting on 9/13, with winds generally less than 5 mph (although stronger than the day before). Seven boats went out scouting as the day before – those that went out the day before except for NUK2. NUK2 later went out to help with the tow of a landed whale. Four boats made two trips each, returning to Cross Island primarily to refuel. All left in the morning between 6:51 am and 7:26am, and returned in the evening between 4:30pm and 6:38pm. NUK3 struck and landed a whale, and the three NUK boats towed it into Cross Island about 4:30pm (IP1 helped tow part way but left the tow about 1:37pm, just before NUK2 joined the tow about 2:48pm).

IP1 and IP2 left Cross Island headed north for 16 or 17 miles and then turned east. BO1, BO2, NUK1, NUK3, and probably IAN headed NE or ENE. BO1 spotted a whale about 8:05am. This sighting did not attract other boats, however. IP1, IP2, and NUK1 stayed to the north of the BO boats, while NUK3 had been going faster and was well to the east of them. IAN may have been near NUK1 or NUK3. The BO boats may have been able to follow their whale for a while, but when NUK3 reported seeing a whale about 10:00am IP1, IP2, and NUK1 (and IAN) immediately increased speed to join NUK3. BO1 and BO2 delayed doing so until 10:18am or so, staying in an area at low speed to see if they could pick up the trail of the whale they had been following. Since they did not see this whale again, they also then went east at high speed to join in chasing the NUK3 whale. The NUK3 boat radioed their coordinates to the other boats about 10:09am. The reported time for that NUK3 struck the whale is 10:35am but it seems likely that it may have been a bit earlier. Similarly, the Communications Center recorded that the NUK3 boat used their shoulder gun about 10:39am when it seems likely to have been a little earlier. The whale was declared dead no later than 10:55am. The whale was seen to be a small whale (later measured as a 20'4" female), so that if possible the whalers wanted to land a second whale as well. BO1 (and presumably the IP2 boat, since they were very close together) saw a different whale about 10:49am and instead of helping with the tow went after this whale.

The accounts of the chase of the whale that was landed are somewhat difficult to reconcile in detail. There were at least two whales together, but whether they were together at all points in the chase is not clear. Some boats saw two whales sooner than did other boats. It is not clear if the whale that BO1 saw was the second whale or a third whale. In any event, BO1, BO2, IP1, IP2, and probably IAN followed this whale north at high speed at 10:58 – soon after the NUK3 whale was declared dead. IP1 turned back to the NUK3 whale about 11:11am to help with the tow, as the NUK1 and NUK3 boats wanted at least one other boat to help them. They called the NUK2 boat to come out to help but due miscommunications NUK2 did not meet the tow until 2:54pm or so. The boats that followed the BO1 whale north made a loop about 6.1 miles to the NE, but seem to have lost track of it and then headed back to Cross Island to refuel. On the way back to Cross Island BO1 saw something about 2:00pm, and BO1 made an "extra" loop about 5.1 miles to the NW. BO1 did not report sighting anything of interest. This delayed BO1's return to Cross Island and, with conditions getting more marginal, BO1 did not make a second trip.

On the tow back to Cross Island, IP2 saw a whale at about 1:36pm and left the tow to look around at about 1:40pm, but did not report seeing anything of interest. IP2 then returned to Cross Island at high speed, rather than rejoining the tow, since by that time NUK2 had tied in to the tow and the tow was not that far from Cross Island.

BO2 made a second trip of about 2 hours to the north and NE, and reported no sightings. IP1 and IP2 made second trips of 3.5 and 2.5 hours to the east, to areas where whales had been seen before. They also reported no sightings of interest.

The captains decided to call a “cease fire” and end their season, even though they had one strike left. They did not specifically indicate the reasons why, but the relative lack of whales and somewhat difficult whaling conditions (wind and swells) were certainly important factors. Also, some crew members had been on Cross Island for over two weeks and had run out of subsistence leave, or had other employment or personal obligations. The captains arranged for the demobilization barge to pick up the butchered whale and equipment on 14 September (Tuesday).

14 September, Monday

Most crews had finished their butchering chores by the end of 14 September, but the NUK crew still had some of their crew shares to box, and the NAP crew still had to work on their boat. The four other crews (IAN, BO, IP, TAL) left Cross Island for Nuiqsut on 14 September and arrived in Nuiqsut.

15 September, Tuesday

The NUK and NAP crews left Cross Island for Nuiqsut and arrived in Nuiqsut.

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 1, 2009

To: AEW, Deadhorse Com Center, Kaktovik Com Center

From: William Hickey, AES Beaufort Sea Com Center Project Mgr.

Subject: For-the-Record: Report of Vessel Conflict with Cross Island Subsistence Bowhead Hunt

- On September 1, 2009, Isaac Nukapigak contacted the Deadhorse Com Center to report a vessel conflict in the Cross Island area. The call was taken at approximately 12:38 pm by Emily Panigeo, the on-duty operator at the Deadhorse Com Center. Mr. Nukapigak reported that the barge “*Seneca*” (barge 250-10), operated by Crowley, was traveling northeast of Cross Island and displaced a grouping of bowhead whales that were being tracked by the Nuiqsut Cross Island bowhead crews. Reportedly, the barge caused the whales to disperse while transiting through the area.

- After the call, Ms. Panigeo hailed the vessel *Seneca* using VHF Channel 16 and announced to the vessel radio operator that they disrupted the bowhead whales in the area. The *Seneca* crew reportedly contacted the Crowley North Slope Operations Manager, located in Deadhorse, by phone. The Crowley staff in Deadhorse directed the *Seneca* to leave the area immediately to avoid any further conflicts with the bowhead hunters of Cross Island.

- Emily contacted William Hickey at 1:25 pm to report the incident. Mr. Hickey confirmed with Emily that the incident was properly logged into the Deadhorse Com Center Call Log Book. Between 1:40 pm and 1:56 pm, Mr. Hickey contacted the Crowley offices in both Anchorage and Deadhorse to discuss the incident. In Anchorage, Mr. Hickey was directed to speak with Bill Hill (Director of Business Development). Mr. Hill was not available so Mr. Hickey left a voice message with Mr. Hill summarizing the incident and requesting a discussion of the matter at his earliest convenience. Mr. Hickey spoke to Jim Deal with Crowley in Deadhorse and Mr. Deal concurred with the communication scenario described by Ms. Panigeo. Since the Crowley North Slope Operations Manager, Randy Daniels, was not available Mr. Hickey asked Mr. Deal to pass on the message to call Mr. Hickey when convenient.

- Since Crowley is not a signatory to AEW’s 2009 Conflict Avoidance Agreement, they are not required to radio the Com Centers on a routine basis (i.e., every 6 hrs). Crowley routinely provides vessel schedule information by email to both the Deadhorse and Kaktovik Com Centers. Mr. Hickey recommended to Mr. Deal that, in the future, it would be preferable for Crowley vessels to contact the Com Centers by VHF radio via Channel 16 when in proximity to Cross Island or Barter Island given that the bowhead season is underway.

*Please contact Mr. Hickey at 907-339-7617 to discuss this incident further.

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 3, 2009

To: AEWG, Deadhorse Com Center, Kaktovik Com Center

From: William Hickey, AES Beaufort Sea Com Center Project Mgr.

Subject: For-the-Record: Report of Vessel Conflicts with Cross Island Subsistence Bowhead Hunt (*Avik* and *Begger* incidents)

- On September 2, 2009, the Deadhorse Com Center reported two isolated vessel conflicts in the Cross Island area. Both of these incidents are also noted in the 9/2/09 Daily Report for the Com Center Program.

- The first call was taken at approximately 5:59 am by Emily Panigeo, the on-duty operator at the Deadhorse Com Center. Edward Nukapigak reported that a barge, later identified as the “*Avik*” (Crowley barge 160-4), was traveling several miles south of Cross Island and displaced a grouping of bowhead whales that were being tracked by the Nuiqsut Cross Island bowhead crews. The barge was contacted by the Com Center’s Ms. Panigeo and moved out of the area. Crowley was again notified of the Com Center call-in protocol by Mr. Hickey (via email to Carolyn Macdonald) and Waska William Jr. (North Slope Borough Planning Dept.) also notified Crowley (Greg in Barrow) to stay clear of Cross Island and inside the Barrier Islands when possible.

- The second call was taken at approximately 9:13 pm by Elizabeth Ipalook, the on-duty operator at the Deadhorse Com Center. Isaac Nukapigak reported that a vessel, later identified as the *Begger* (privately owned, 57’ boat), was traveling roughly 6 miles north of Cross Island heading west and was disturbing bowhead whales that were being tracked by the Nuiqsut Cross Island bowhead crews. The vessel was contacted by the Com Center’s Ms. Ipalook and moved out of the area.

- Since Crowley and the private vessel owner *Begger* are not signatories to AEWG’s 2009 Conflict Avoidance Agreement, they are not required to radio the Com Centers on a routine basis (i.e., every 6 hrs). Crowley routinely provides vessel schedule information by email to both the Deadhorse and Kaktovik Com Centers. The crew of the *Begger* was not aware of the active whale hunt or the Com Center Program (although the Com Centers are addressed in the U.S. Coast Guard’s regional Notice-to-Mariners).

*Please contact Mr. Hickey at 907-339-7617 to discuss this incident further.