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HERDING OF REINDEER IN RELATION TO BIRDS AND  
MAMMALS ON THE NORTHERN SEWARD PENINSULA

John M. Wright

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Alaska Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit  
University of Alaska  
Fairbanks, Alaska

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The tending or herding of reindeer poses little threat to nesting birds. During the nesting period, the movements of the reindeer are controlled by the herders only once, in late June or early July, when the animals are rounded up and corralled for antler cutting. In the past few years, the use of helicopters for rounding up and driving of reindeer at antler-cutting time has increased dramatically. In 1978, a helicopter was used almost exclusively on all of the reindeer ranges. Fixed-wing aircraft, boats, and all terrain vehicles (ATVs) are used to a lesser degree. Fixed-wing aircraft are used to spot the reindeer initially, and to fly workers and equipment to and from corralling areas. Boats are used to transport workers and equipment. ATVs are occasionally used to aid the helicopter in driving the herd once it nears the corral. The use of ATVs is limited because of their poor reliability and because helicopters are so efficient. Evidence of prior ATV use is rare on most reindeer ranges; traditionally used ATV trails were seen on just one range.

Limited use of helicopters will probably have little impact on most nesting or brooding birds. Certain species which depend on constant nest attentiveness or covering of eggs for protection from predators, such as loons, geese, and ducks, would be most affected by low overflights by helicopters. Loss of eggs to avian predators would probably increase if these species were flushed. Fixed-wing aircraft and boats would have a similar effect, though more limited in area due to lower noise levels. ATV's may trample nests in addition to flushing nesting birds.

Reindeer herding is but one part of a herder's subsistence life style (see Stern et al. 1977). Herding takes time away from other subsistence activities, including waterfowl hunting and egg gathering, but these other resources are utilized when the opportunity arises.

Spring waterfowl hunting is a popular activity in Shishmaref. Fresh waterfowl are relished by the people of Shishmaref after a long winter of frozen reindeer and dried bearded seal meat.

Hunting of flightless ducks and geese, predominantly Pintails, occurs in July. Most are shot from boats but some "drives" may still be organized.

Egg gathering, particularly the eggs of Glaucous Gulls, eiders, geese, and cliff-nesting seabirds, is a common subsistence activity of the people of Shishmaref and Deering. The deltas of the Serpentine, Sinyevik ("Sanaguich" on the maps, lying between the Serpentine and Arctic Rivers), and Arctic Rivers are searched by families from Shishmaref who have traditionally used these areas. The people of Deering collect eggs from the sea cliffs near their town.

Egg gathering undoubtedly has the greatest impact on nesting birds

of any subsistence activity. Glaucous Gulls are probably least affected because their eggs are most avidly sought early in the season, allowing time for renesting, and because there appears to be a surplus of breeding-age birds. Waterfowl eggs are collected in mid-June, once breakup has progressed sufficiently to permit boat travel to the river deltas. Small areas on the deltas are traditionally searched. Frequently nesting waterfowl are hunted at the same time as eggs are collected. Waterfowl eggs are usually collected after clutches are completed and so late in the season that renesting is unlikely. Nesting densities of Black Brant, and Common and Spectacled Eiders may be depressed locally on the Serpentine, Sinyeavik, and Arctic River deltas (for observations on egg gathering at Cape Espenberg see Schamel et al. 1978:245-246).

Large predators occurring on reindeer ranges are pursued and eliminated by herders. Wolves are uncommon on the Seward Peninsula and herders remove them as soon as the wolves reappear. Grizzly bears (Ursus arctos) are considered a threat to the herd at calving time, thus bears are hunted about the calving areas in spring when snow conditions permit travel by snow machine.

A more complete report of subsistence activities in the Chukchi-Imuruk Region may be found in Eisler (1978).

## Literature Cited

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