5 TRADITIONAL CULTURE

5.1 Introduction

In common with all cultures, the Inuvialuit and Dene cultures include knowledge, skills, disciplines, beliefs and values. Of these, beliefs and values are the most important, because they inform what life is about and how it is to be lived. Knowledge, skills and disciplines make it possible for individuals to act on their beliefs and values, to be themselves and live a culturally determined good life.

Traditional culture is of prime importance to many Aboriginal people because it is their:

- principal source of pride, worth, distinctiveness and identity
- basis for harvesting the benefits of and meeting the challenges of surviving on the land they respect and love
- primary defence against the prejudice and discrimination sometimes shown by those from other cultures

Indicator data showing adherence to traditional beliefs and values is currently not available for the study area communities.

Indicators of culture can be seen in people's behaviour. Culture is reflected in activities that are shaped by beliefs and values, activities that make use of traditional knowledge, skills and disciplines. What people do and are able to do thus serve as indicators of their involvement in traditional culture. The following activity-based indicators are used in this section:

- involvement in traditional harvesting
- the amount of country food consumed
- the ability to speak a traditional language

Section 1.5, Historical Background and Political Organization provides an overview of the historical backgrounds of the Inuvialuit and various Dene peoples. Included is information on:

- the Inuvialuit and Dene cultures
- contact with Euro-Canadians
- the changes induced by these many contacts over time on the Inuvialuit and Dene livelihood and culture

An inevitable result of these contacts is that some monetary income is now a necessity for Aboriginal people. Those who harvest wildlife are now active in a dual monetary and traditional in-kind economy.

Hunting and fishing, and consuming country food are discussed in the context of the dual economy, an important feature throughout most of the study area. Trapping is discussed because, by Euro-Canadian standards, it is lonely, hard and dangerous work. The trapper must have most of the same lore, skills and disciplines that were essential to the survival of forebearers in the pre-contact millennia. Language retention is taken as an indicator of cultural retention because appreciation of traditional, deeper, spiritual relationships can best be comprehended in traditional language terms.

The data presented in this section is from published statistical compilations. Additional information will be documented in ongoing traditional knowledge studies.

5.2 Baseline Conditions – Inuvialuit Settlement Region

5.2.1 Participation in Traditional Harvesting

Data from two sets of surveys by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation show that participating in harvesting country food indicates involvement in the dual economy. More precise data was obtained by the Inuvialuit Harvest Study, which surveyed all of the ISR communities, including Inuvik. This survey provided information on harvesters and the numbers of animals taken, by species.

Table 5-1 provides community-specific information from the Inuvialuit study on the ISR Aboriginal harvesters in the ISR for 1988 through 1997. The information includes:

- the number of people on a harvester list
- the percentage of these who were active harvesters in a particular year
- the response rate from these harvesters

There is no explanation for why the numbers on the harvest lists increased steadily from 1988 to about 1994 or 1995 and then decreased in most communities. However, it is clear that there has been a decline in the percentages of those on the list who actually harvested. The most recent data is now seven years old, but in 1997, the ISR communities, including Inuvik, there were 880 on the harvester lists, and about 405 active harvesters in 1997. The highest participation rates were in Holman and Paulatuk, and the most consistently high rates were in Sachs Harbour. The distance of these communities from the regional distribution centre of Inuvik, increases the interest in harvested food in comparison with expensive store-bought foods.

Table 5-1: Harvesters in the Inuvialuit Communities

Location	Details	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
ISR	Number on harvester list	705	737	754	863	868	871	947	1,156	1,051	880
	Active harvesters (%)	69	65	65	59	59	52	50	38	39	46
	Response rate (%)	76	95	94	93	98	96	92	95	55	93
Aklavik	Number on harvester list	163	162	162	158	160	162	245	254	170	147
	Active harvesters (%)	87	72	68	68	61	52	30	32	31	37
	Response rate (%)	99	99	99	97	99	99	83	93	95	97
Tuktoyaktuk	Number on harvester list	119	129	138	143	141	141	151	228	229	228
	Active harvesters (%)	94	62	55	73	77	73	68	42	36	47
	Response rate (%)	80	99	86	94	96	92	89	83	64	95
Holman	Number on harvester list	82	93	93	154	156	156	155	130	122	125
	Active harvesters (%)	79	81	77	55	54	58	65	68	81	74
	Response rate (%)	95	98	98	95	97	95	100	100	100	100
Paulatuk	Number on harvester list	63	64	67	81	80	79	81	85	87	86
	Active harvesters (%)	94	89	88	74	75	70	77	75	60	57
	Response rate (%)	100	100	100	98	100	100	100	99	93	100
Sachs Harbour	Number on harvester list	56	58	57	74	72	73	81	56	54	59
	Active harvesters (%)	75	66	65	53	67	52	46	66	63	68
	Response rate (%)	95	96	98	91	92	95	91	98	98	96
Inuvik	Number on harvester list	222	233	240	255	261	275	271	421	415	242
	Active harvesters (%)	30	33	57	42	42	31	36	18	22	27
	Response rate (%)	39	88	92	89	99	94	97	96	85	89

NOTE:
Inuvik is in the GSA, not the ISR, but it was included in the ISR survey

SOURCES: Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (2003), Joint Secretariat (2003)

In 1993, 1998 and 2002, the GNWT Bureau of Statistics collected a second set of harvester data. The surveys during these periods differed in that they:

- contained data much less detailed data than in the previous surveys
- included the total community populations, non-Aboriginal as well as Aboriginal. This includes sports hunters and fishers, and those harvesting to sustain traditional subsistence patterns.

Table 5-2 shows that in 1998, 56% of Inuvialuit community residents had hunted or fished, thus gaining income in-kind in that year. The percentages involved were higher in the coastal communities than in Aklavik. The highest involvement was in Holman, at 73% in both 1993 and 1998. In 1998, percentages of those involved increased in the other four ISR communities.

Table 5-2: Adults Who Hunted or Fished in the Inuvialuit Communities

Location	1993 (%)	1998 (%)	2002 (%)
Northwest Territories	18	42	41
NWT Aboriginal communities total[1]	42	48	51
ISR total	49	56	–
Aklavik	30	36	–
Tuktoyaktuk	54	60	–
Holman	73	73	–
Paulatuk	56	64	–
Sachs Harbour	57	69	–
NOTES: – = data not available 1 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories, except Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise Percentage of population, aged 15 years and older			
SOURCE: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (1999, 2002b)			

Information on the amount of wildlife food harvested and consumption of country food is available from Inuvialuit Harvest Study and GNWT surveys. The Inuvialuit study collected comprehensive data on quantities of fish and game taken, by species, for the years 1988 through 1997.

Table 5-3 shows the results of the Inuvialuit study for 1993 and 1997, with the data combined into a manageable number of species categories, and into winter, spring, summer and fall quarter hunting periods. This data shows a substantial income in kind, reflecting heavy involvement among the Inuvialuit in the Beaufort Delta in the traditional component of the dual economy. However, the

1993 harvest was substantially larger that the 1997 harvest. Specifically, the 1993 harvest yielded about:

- 0.88 caribou per person compared with 0.65 caribou in 1997
- 34 seals per person compared with 22 seals per person in 1997
- 2.2 fish per person compared with 2.0 fish per person in 1997

However, more birds were harvested in 1997, with about 4.3 birds per person compared with 2.8 birds per person in 1993.

Table 5-3: Harvest Data for the Inuvialuit Communities

Species	1993					1997				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Mammals	925	1,049	1,450	847	4,271	1815	449	711	1,385	4,360
Whale	0	16	104	1	121	121	0	0	130	251
Seal	44	504	445	33	1,026	1,026	47	215	361	1,649
Caribou – woodland, barren ground	751	413	812	686	2,662	493	261	393	830	1,977
Moose	8	3	13	11	35	0	2	9	4	15
Muskox, Dahl's sheep	111	83	75	111	380	152	114	92	58	416
Bear – polar, grizzly, black	11	30	1	5	47	23	25	2	2	52
Mammals, Furbearers	1,551	1,394	51	2,494	5,490	163	184	945	2,726	4,018
Fox, wolf	997	173	0	2,129	3,299	1,187	142	184	783	2,296
Lynx	31	0	0	23	54	97	0	0	49	146
Mink, marten, wolverine	76	6	0	216	298	150	21	0	113	284
Beaver	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Muskrat	301	1,089	0	0	1,390	1,192	8,305	0	0	9,497
Hare and rabbit	146	126	51	126	449	116	9	184	152	461
Birds	78	6,221	1,443	823	8,565	152	12,081	289	323	12,845
Grouse, ptarmigan	78	58	134	823	1,093	152	250	42	323	767
Goose, swan	0	5,853	1,156	0	7,009	0	10,951	162	0	11,113
Duck	0	310	153	0	463	0	880	85	0	965
Fish	387	6,983	39,256	19,736	66,362	212	4,715	39,396	15,143	59,466
Char, whitefish, grayling, trout, cisco, salmon	337	6,762	36,759	16,654	60,512	205	4,409	36,737	11,180	52,531
Other fish – burbot, cod, pike, walleye, herring, flounder, sucker	50	221	2,497	3082	5,850	7	306	2,659	3,963	6,935
SOURCE: Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (2003)										

There is less harvesting in the winter in the ISR, in comparison with regions farther south. However, the largest numbers of seals are taken during the winter. Many whales, caribou, polar bear and muskox are also taken during winter, which is also the prime fox-trapping period. Many geese, ducks and muskrats are taken during the spring. Summer is the prime fishing season, and the beginning of serious caribou hunting. The most successful caribou and whale hunting, and much of the fishing are during fall.

Although winter has the lowest level of harvesting activity, it is during this period that the most productive trapping and seal hunting, and much caribou hunting takes place. Usher (2000) provides data on the average edible weights of the wildlife species harvested by the Inuvialuit. Using these values, the total edible weight of the harvests by Inuvialuit and the average annual yield for the decade of 1988 through 1997 was calculated. This average annual value was 332,457 kg harvested per year, or about 110 kg per person per year.

Table 5-4 shows that the harvested total edible weight and weights per capita of mammals, birds and fish for 1993 were 92 kg and 82 kg for 1997. The fact that these two numbers are so much lower than Usher's average for the decade, 110 kg per person, indicates a decline in either the availability of animals or the harvesting effort.

Table 5-4: Total and per Capita Edible Weights of Harvested Wildlife in the Inuvialuit Communities

Species	1993		1997	
	Total (kg)	Total per Capita (kg)	Total (kg)	Total per Capita (kg)
Mammals	185,647[a]	61	163,868[a]	54
Birds	14,929	5	20,194	7
Fish	76,492	25	62,751	21
Total	277,068	92	246,812	82
NOTE: a Excludes polar and grizzly bear, which are commonly not eaten				
SOURCE: Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (2003)				

A monetary value for the ISR wildlife harvest was calculated based on the cost of replacing the edible mammal, bird and fish with store-bought beef, chicken and fish. The Inuvik prices used were:

- beef blade roast at $10.29/kg, adjusted to $10.50/kg for boneless blade roast
- whole chicken at $7.19/kg, adjusted to $11.00/kg for boneless chicken
- haddock fillets at $10.16/kg, reduced to $10.00/kg

The Inuvik price index was taken as the base because the replacement prices used for game were Inuvik prices. An adjusted price index for each ISR community

was calculated as the price index for each community, relative to the Inuvik price index. This relative index for each community was then weighted by the number of harvesters in that community, and the weighted average of these community-specific adjusted price indices was calculated as follows:

1. The food price index of each community was divided by the Inuvik price index.

2. This quotient for each community was multiplied by the number of hunters in each community.

3. The resulting values for each community were totalled.

4. This total was divided by the total of the harvesters in these communities.

The resulting weighted price index figure for the ISR was then used to weight the Inuvik replacement price of mammals, fowl and fish. Each of these weighted replacement values was multiplied by the usable weight of the ISR total mammals, fowl and fish harvests, resulting in the total ISR replacement value of mammal, fowl and fish harvests. The sum of these three total values is the replacement value of the ISR total harvest.

The ISR harvest study included Inuvialuit harvesters in Inuvik. Therefore, Inuvik was included with the five ISR communities in calculating the index figure of 1.22, which reflects the ISR regional food price index for Inuvik replacement costs The average price index, weighted by the number of harvesters in each community, was 22% higher than for Inuvik.

Accordingly, the wild food replacement costs, with Inuvik store values for beef, chicken and fish (using the weighting determined previously) were increased by 22% to give regional replacement value figures.

Table 5-5 shows the edible weights, which were multiplied by these regional replacement cost figures and totalled. The same replacement costs per kilogram were used for 1993 and 1997. This procedure yielded total replacement costs for the edible Inuvialuit wildlife harvests of $3,514, 699 for 1993 and $3,142,577 for 1997.

Table 5-5: Replacement Values for Wildlife Harvests by Inuvialuit Harvesters

Species	1993		1997	
	Total Harvest (kg)	Harvest Value ($)	Total Harvest (kg)	Harvest Value ($)
Mammals	185,647	2,374,025	163,868	2,095,512
Birds	14,929	209,086	20,194	282,831
Fish	76,492	931,588	62,751	764,234
Total	277,068	3,514,699	246,812	3,142,577
NOTE: See the text for details about deriving replacement costs per kilogram for mammals, birds and fish				
SOURCES: Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (2003), Usher (2000)				

Table 5-6 shows data from GNWT surveys conducted in 1993, 1998 and 2002. These surveys provide some information on the percentage of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal households that consumed country food. In 1998, about 72% of the populations in the ISR communities reported a diet of half or more country food. The percentage was highest in Holman and lowest in Sachs Harbour.

Table 5-6: Country Food Consumption in the Inuvialuit Communities

Location	Households Where Country Food is Consumed[1] (%)		
	1993	1998	2002
Northwest Territories	29	30	33
NWT Aboriginal communities[2]	73	68	70
Inuvik[3]	30	31	35
ISR total	71	72	–
Aklavik	–	–	–
Tuktoyaktuk	71	71	–
Holman	68	83	–
Paulatuk	85	72	–
Sachs Harbour	69	44	–
NOTES: – = data not available 1 Half or more of the food consumed is country food 2 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories, except Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise 3 Inuvik has been included for comparison			
SOURCE: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (2002a, 2002b), Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (2003)			

5.2.2 Trapping

Table 5-7 shows that between 1987 and 1993, average income per trapper in the Northwest Territories Aboriginal communities as a whole declined sharply, to a maximum of one third of the 1987 average, not adjusted for inflation. Generally, this explains the equally sharp decline in the percentages of adults actively trapping in the Aboriginal communities. In addition, as individuals adjust to community living, there is less of a tendency to undertake the hardships of running a trapline.

Table 5-7: Active Trappers and Average Income in the Inuvialuit Communities

Location	Trappers[1]				Average Annual Income[2] per Trapper			
	1987 (%)	1993 (%)	1999 (%)	2002 (%)	1987 ($)	1993 ($)	1999 ($)	2002 ($)
NWT Aboriginal communities[3]	47	18	18	14	2,514	672	919	991
Aklavik	90	22	17	10	1,124	455	1,071	380
Coastal communities	40	15	18	10	1,086	1,152	501	1,326
Tuktoyaktuk	34	8	14	4	1,415	1,132	438	807
Holman	61	42	35	23	626	997	544	1,582
Paulatuk	51	4	2	0	907	2,116	676	0
Sachs Harbour	21	13	19	5	993	2,138	507	338

NOTES:
1 Males, aged 25 to 59
2 Income not adjusted for inflation
3 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories, except Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise

SOURCE: GNWT RWED (1987, 1993, 1999, 2002)

Trapper earnings increased from 1993 and 2002, except in 1999 in the coastal communities. However, these dollar values are not adjusted for inflation, and increases in trapping expenses have not been factored in. Thus, the purchasing power of the earnings in later years has declined, and the percentages of adults actively trapping in ISR communities have fallen sharply. Trapper percentages have fluctuated somewhat since then, but the lower levels appear to be permanent. Since 1987, the declines in all of the Inuvialuit communities have been steep. Although there is continuing trapping in Holman, by 2002 only 23% of the age 25 to 59 base group was involved.

It has been reported that trapping in Holman, the most traditional of the Inuvialuit communities, is declining as the costs of snow machines and fuel needed for trapline transportation increase, whereas the prices paid for furs decline. This, in turn, causes a decline in the number of people who have the knowledge, skills and discipline required for serious trapping. In fall 2002, Holman residents indicated

only about a dozen serious trappers were active in the community (Holman residents 2002, personal communication).

Average annual income per active trapper in the coastal communities has increased since 1999, in contrast to Aklavik where it remains low. The situation has changed since the 1966 to 1967 trapping season when average per-trapper earnings, primarily from trapping white foxes, peaked at over $12,000, i.e., about $65,000 in 2001 dollars, in Sachs Harbour (Usher 1971). Not a single white fox was trapped in Sachs Harbour during the 2000 to 2001 season.

5.2.3 Aboriginal Language

In 1999, 34% of residents in the Arctic coastal communities over age 14 spoke an Aboriginal language, down from 50% reported for 10 years earlier (see Table 5-8). In Holman, the most isolated community, 58% were still adept in their mother tongue. In the other three coastal communities, 28% were Inuvialuktun speakers in Sachs Harbour in 1999, with 27% in Paulatuk and 25% in Tuktoyaktuk. In Aklavik, only 19% were competent in their native tongue.

Table 5-8: Aboriginal Language Speakers in the Inuvialuit Communities

Location	1989 (%)	1994 (%)	1999 (%)
Northwest Territories	56	50	45
Aklavik	22	28	19
Coastal communities	50	39	34
Tuktoyaktuk	38	30	25
Holman	96	71	58
Paulatuk	32	25	27
Sachs Harbour	38	26	28
NOTE: Percentage of Aboriginal people, aged 15 years and older			
SOURCE: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (2003e)			

Sachs Harbour residents acknowledged that fewer people now speak Inuvialuktun there because of strong southern influence, and because parents encourage their children to speak English, believing the children will be disadvantaged if they don't speak it well (Sachs Harbour residents 2002, personal interview). Although Holman had the highest proportion of Inuvialuktun speakers in 1989, since then there has been a continuing decline. A Holman senior administrative officer reported that although young people there can understand Inuvialuktun, many cannot or do not speak it (Holman senior administrative officer 2002, personal communication).

Although quantitative and anecdotal sources indicate a continuing loss of Inuvialuktun speakers, for over a century there have been strong inducements for Aboriginal people to communicate in English. The Inuvialuit leadership has reiterated the concern of the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre about preserving fluency in Inuvialuktun (Winfield 2002, personal communication).

5.3 Baseline Conditions – Gwich'in Settlement Area

5.3.1 Participation in Traditional Harvesting

The Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board has not provided data on numbers of active harvesters for recent years. Table 5-9 shows the available findings from the GNWT surveys in 1993, 1998 and 2002. These surveys show that 38% of the adult population in the Gwich'in Aboriginal communities, including both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents, reported having hunted or fished in 1998.

Table 5-9: Adults Who Hunted or Fished in the Gwich'in Communities

Location	1993 (%)	1998 (%)	2002 (%)
Northwest Territories	18	42	41
NWT Aboriginal communities[1]	42	48	51
BDR total	44	49	44
BDR less Inuvik	54	52	54
Inuvik	34	46	34
Gwich'in Aboriginal communities total	10	38	–
Fort McPherson	31	35	–
Tsiigehtchic	35	58	–
NOTES: – = data not available 1 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories, except Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise Percentage of population, aged 15 years and older			
SOURCE: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (1999, 2002a)			

As with the ISR, two sets of survey data provide indicators of the wildlife harvests in the GSA. The Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board collected more detailed and precise data for 1996 to 2000. The respondents included all the Gwich'in harvesters living in Beaufort Delta communities, i.e., Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic, Inuvik and Aklavik.

Table 5-10 provides this data in somewhat aggregated form. It shows that the Gwich'in obtained a large harvest of wild game and fish in 2000, although the 1996 harvest was substantially greater. In 2000, the caribou kill amounted to 0.65 caribou per person (all ages), only half the 1.3 amount per person for 1996. In 2000, seven fish were harvested per person compared with 24 in 1996, 1.4 geese were harvested per person compared with 4.0 in 1996, and 0.03 moose were harvested per person in both 1996 and 2000.

Table 5-10: Harvest Data for the Gwich'in Communities

Species	1996					2000				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Mammals	916	341	304	397	1,958	168	59	647	278	1,152
Whale	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Caribou – woodland, barren ground	902	334	286	391	1,913	134	53	635	273	1,095
Moose	13	2	14	6	35	34	2	11	5	52
Dahl's sheep	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Bears – black, brown	0	5	3	0	8	0	4	1	0	4
Mammals, Furbearers	877	1,558	58	1,108	3,601	685	228	16	421	1,350
Fox, wolf	18	3	0	2	23	2	3	0	0	5
Lynx	63	0	0	51	114	21	0	0	11	32
Mink, marten, wolverine, ermine, otter	279	0	0	659	938	139	0	0	234	373
Beaver	15	137	0	1	153	7	72	7	0	86
Muskrat	341	1,308	0	0	1,649	0	5	0	0	5
Hare and rabbit	161	110	58	389	718	516	147	9	176	848
Porcupine	0	0	0	6	6	0	1	0	0	1
Birds	8	1,808	351	102	2,269	116	3161	304	20	3,601
Grouse, ptarmigan	4	3	11	88	106	116	25	0	20	161
Goose, swan	0	685	117	0	802	0	2177	170	0	2,347
Duck	4	1120	223	14	1,361	0	959	134	0	1,093
Fish	47	1,623	21,098	38,525	61,293	35	846	6,908	3,955	11,744
Char, whitefish, crookedback, grayling, trout, cisco, salmon	2	999	16,186	29,438	46,625	0	182	2,009	1,897	4,088
Other fish – walleye, herring, flounder, sucker, jackfish, coney, loche	45	624	4,912	9,087	14,668	35	664	4,899	2,058	8,143
SOURCE: Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (1998, 2000)										

Table 5-11 shows the harvested total edible weights and weights per capita of mammals, birds and fish for 1996 and 2000. Applying figures from Usher (2000), these harvests yielded a total of 130,065 kg of edible meat, or about 77 kg per person.

Table 5-11: Total and per Capita Edible Weights of Wildlife in the Gwich'in Communities

Species	1996		2000	
	Total (kg)	Total per Capita (kg)	Total (kg)	Total per Capita (kg)
Mammals	82,390[a]	49	51,334[a]	31
Birds	2,206	1	5,915	4
Fish	86,753	52	72,815	43
Total	171,348	102	130,065	77
NOTE: a Excludes polar and grizzly bear, which are commonly not eaten				
SOURCE: Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (1998, 2000)				

A monetary value for the GSA wildlife harvest was calculated based on appropriate weighting of the cost of replacing the edible mammal, bird and fish with store-bought beef, chicken and fish. Inuvik prices were used and a weighted average price index figure was calculated (see Section 5.2.1, Participation in Traditional Harvesting (ISR)). As the Gwich'in harvest reports do not contain figures for active harvesters, the ISR's weighted replacement value figures were also used for the GSA.

Table 5-12 shows the wildlife harvest edible weights, multiplied by the regional replacement cost figures, and totalled. The same replacement costs per kilogram were used for 1996 and 2000. For the Gwich'in, this procedure yielded total replacement costs for the edible wildlife harvests of $2,141,033 for 1996 and $1,626,107 for 2000.

Table 5-12: Replacement Values of Wildlife Harvests by Gwich'in Harvesters

Species	1996		2000	
	Total Harvest (kg)	Harvest Value ($)	Total Harvest (kg)	Harvest Value ($)
Mammals	82,390	1,053,589	51,334	656,452
Birds	2,206	30,892	5,915	82,849
Fish	86,753	1,056,552	72,815	886,806
Total	171,349	2,141,033	130,064	1,626,107
NOTE: See the text for procedures for deriving replacement costs per kilogram for mammals, birds and fish				
SOURCES: Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (1998, 2000), Usher (2000)				

Table 5-13 shows data from GNWT surveys conducted in 1993, 1998 and 2002. These surveys provide information on the percentage of all households, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, reporting that more than half of the food they consumed was country food. In 1998, about 80% of the populations in the GSA Aboriginal communities reported that half or more of their diet was country food. In Inuvik, the comparable figure was 31%.

Table 5-13: Country Food Consumption in the Gwich'in Communities

Location	Households Where Country Food is Consumed[1] (%)		
	1993	1998	2002
Northwest Territories	29	30	33
NWT Aboriginal communities[2]	73	68	70
BDR total	51	51	51
BDR less Inuvik	73	69	66
Inuvik	30	31	35
Gwich'in Aboriginal communities total	76	80	–
Fort McPherson	82	81	–
Tsiigehtchic	46	73	–

NOTES:
– = data not available
1 Half or more of food consumed is country food
2 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories, except Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise

SOURCE: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (2002a, 2002b), Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board (2000)

5.3.2 Trapping

Table 5-14 shows that the percentage of trappers aged 25 to 59 years decreased from 82% to 14% between 1987 and 2002 for the Gwich'in Aboriginal communities. There was also a decline in trapping in Inuvik. None of the communities has shown signs of returning to pre-1993 trapping levels.

Table 5-14: Active Trappers and Average Income in the Gwich'in Communities

Location	Trappers[1]				Average Annual Income[2]			
	1987 (%)	1993 (%)	1999 (%)	2002 (%)	1987 ($)	1993 ($)	1999 ($)	2002 ($)
NWT Aboriginal communities[3]	47	18	18	14	2,514	672	919	991
Inuvik	14	4	3	4	1,821	432	729	676
Gwich'in Aboriginal communities total	82	20	15	14	1,819	275	618	667
Fort McPherson	84	19	15	14	1,502	278	672	685
Tsiigehtchic	68	22	18	15	3,856	268	377	583

NOTES:
1 Males, aged 25 to 59
2 Income not adjusted for inflation
3 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories, except for Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise

SOURCE: GNWT RWED (1987, 1993, 1999, 2002)

All these factors can be seen in the low levels of average income per trapper. Although trapper income was about $1,500 in Fort McPherson and twice that in Tsiigehtchic in 1987, it decreased sharply thereafter. Since 1993, trapper earnings have remained low.

5.3.3 Aboriginal Language

Table 5-15 shows that between 1989 and 1999, there was a decline to about 28% of Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic residents aged 15 and over who could speak an Aboriginal language. The proportion of Aboriginal language speakers among Inuvik Aboriginal adults remained at about 25%.

Table 5-15: Aboriginal Language Speakers in the Gwich'in Communities

Location	1989 (%)	1994 (%)	1999 (%)
Northwest Territories	56	50	45
Inuvik	26	25	25
Gwich'in Aboriginal communities total	33	26	28
Fort McPherson	31	24	27
Tsiigehtchic	43	40	31

NOTE:
Percentage of Aboriginal people, aged 15 years and older

SOURCE: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (2003e)

5.4 Baseline Conditions – Sahtu Settlement Area

5.4.1 Participation in Traditional Harvesting

The Sahtu Renewable Resources Board has not provided data on numbers of active harvesters for recent years. Table 5-16 shows the available findings from the GNWT surveys in 1993, 1998 and 2002. These surveys show that 45% of the adult population in the Sahtu Aboriginal communities, including both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents, reported having hunted or fished in 1998. The percentages for all adult residents in the Sahtu Aboriginal communities increased between 1998 and 2002, from 46% to 53%, at the same time there was a decline in harvesting in Norman Wells, from 44% to 38%.

Table 5-16: Adults Who Hunted or Fished in the Sahtu Communities

Location	1993 (%)	1998 (%)	2002 (%)
Northwest Territories	18	42	41
NWT Aboriginal communities[1]	42	48	51
SSA total	28	45	48
Norman Wells	8	44	38
Sahtu Aboriginal communities total	37	46	53
Fort Good Hope	33	39	–
Déline	41	53	–
Tulita	32	45	–
Colville Lake	71	56	–
NOTES: – = data not available 1 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories, except Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise Percentage of population, aged 15 years and older			
SOURCE: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (1999, 2002b)			

The Sahtu Renewable Resource Board and the GNWT each conducted a survey pertaining to wildlife harvests in the SSA. Table 5-17 shows the Sahtu Board's survey results for harvests of active hunters for the years of 1998 and 2001. These harvest studies provided details on the species and numbers taken for food. As the study began in April 1998 and there is no data for the first quarter of that year, no trends can be established by comparing the 1998 and 2001 harvests.

Table 5-17: Harvest Data for the Sahtu Communities

Species	1998				2001				
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Mammals	317	215	468	1,000	1,676	412	248	507	2,843
Caribou – woodland, barren ground	284	81	444	809	1,626	380	135	476	2,617
Moose	26	130	24	180	50	27	109	30	216
Muskox, Dahl's sheep	2	3	0	5	0	0	4	1	5
Bears – grizzly, black	5	1	0	6	0	5	0	0	5
Mammals, Furbearers	471	277	1,719	2,467	544	530	546	1,196	2,816
Fox, wolf	0	0	13	13	13	5	0	38	56
Lynx	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	4
Mink, marten, wolverine	0	0	776	776	437	4	0	646	1,087
Beaver	247	2	12	261	4	235	49	2	290
Muskrat	199	0	0	199	0	44	0	2	46
Hare and rabbit	25	275	918	1,218	89	242	497	505	1,333
Birds	2,653	1,611	1,528	5,792	68	5,896	587	178	6,729
Grouse, ptarmigan	177	704	1,389	2,270	48	51	72	114	285
Goose, swan	810	59	3	872	0	2,845	84	0	2,929
Duck	1,666	848	136	2,650	20	3,000	431	64	3,515
Fish	3,082	11,143	6,522	20,747	1,065	3,444	7,125	3,664	15,298
Char, whitefish, grayling, trout, cisco, salmon	2,259	10,616	6,009	18,884	1,053	3,316	6,938	3,311	14,618
Other fish – burbot, cod, pike, walleye, flounder, sucker	823	527	513	1,863	12	128	187	353	680
NOTE: The harvest survey began in April 1998. Therefore, no harvest data is available for the first quarter of 1998.									
SOURCE: Sahtu Renewable Resource Board (1998, 2001)									

The 2001 data, which includes the harvest data for the whole year, clearly shows the great contribution harvesting has made to the 1,800 Aboriginal residents of the SSA. For each resident, an average of 1.5 caribou, 1.7 geese, 2 ducks, almost 9 fish, and 0.13 moose were harvested in that year. Furs were obtained from almost 1,500 furbearers, excluding rabbit and hare. Some of these animals, e.g., beaver, were eaten.

The quarterly data shows that in 2001:

- over 60% of caribou kills were during the first three months of the year, and were quite evenly spread across these months
- harvesting of the most valuable furbearers also occurred during the first quarter
- duck and geese were taken primarily during the spring
- fish were taken all year, but the summer months were the most productive, with the equal size spring and fall harvests combining to produce about the same number as that of the summer harvest

Traditional harvesting is an all-year activity among the Sahtu, with:

- caribou hunting and trapping of high-value furs primarily in the winter
- duck and geese hunting and beaver trapping in the spring
- moose hunting and fish catching in the summer
- caribou hunting, rabbit and hare snaring and high-value fur trapping in the late fall

Table 5-18 shows the total edible weights and weights per capita of mammals, birds and fish harvested for 1999 and 2001.

Table 5-18: Total and per Capita Edible Weights of Wildlife in the Sahtu Settlement Area

Species	1999		2001	
	Total (kg)	**Total per Capita** (kg)	**Total** (kg)	**Total per Capita** (kg)
Mammals	171,165	95	134,462	75
Birds	8,286	5	6,577	4
Fish	42,613	24	20,977	12
Total	222,064	124	162,016	90
SOURCE: Sahtu Renewable Resource Board (1999, 2001)				

A monetary value for the SSA wildlife harvest was calculated based on appropriate weighting of the cost of replacing the edible mammal, bird and fish with store-bought beef, chicken and fish. Inuvik prices were used (see Section 5.2.1, Participation in Traditional Harvesting (ISR)). This was necessary because the Sahtu Harvest Study reports did not provide information on numbers of people harvesting in each SSA community. Therefore, it was not possible to

calculate a regional price index, by weighting the price index for each community by the number of hunters in that community.

The procedure was to calculate a price index for the region by weighting the individual community price indexes by their population sizes. This was then compared to the ISR price index, and the SSA price index was 32% higher than that for the ISR. The Inuvik dollar replacement costs for beef, chicken and fish were accordingly increased by 32% to obtain replacement cost figures for the SSA. Table 5-19 shows the harvest values obtained by multiplying the replacement values of $3,208,775 for 1999 and $2,320,686 for 2001.

Table 5-19: Replacement Values of Wildlife Harvests by Sahtu Harvesters

Species	1999		2001	
	Total Harvest (kg)	**Harvest Value** ($)	**Total Harvest** (kg)	**Harvest Value** ($)
Mammals	171,165	2,375,936	134,462	1,866,471
Birds	8,286	146,753	6,577	116,482
Fish	42,613	686,086	20,977	337,733
Total	222,064	3,208,775	162,016	2,320,686
NOTE: See the text for details about deriving replacement costs per kilogram for mammals, birds and fish				
SOURCE: Sahtu Renewable Resource Board (1999, 2001)				

The 2001 Sahtu harvest data substantiates the survey finding that 87% of Sahtu Aboriginal community residents reported that in 2002, half or more of the food they consumed was country food. Table 5-20 shows this percentage has increased steadily since 1993.

Table 5-20: Country Food Consumption in the Sahtu Communities

Location	Households Where Country Food is Consumed[1] (%)		
	1993	1998	2002
Northwest Territories	29	30	33
NWT Aboriginal communities[2]	73	68	70
SSA total	40	58	65
Norman Wells	14	25	31
Sahtu Aboriginal communities total	51	76	87
Fort Good Hope	47	72	–
Déline	34	83	–
Tulita	66	77	–
Colville Lake	94	97	–

NOTES:
– = data not available
1 Half or more of food consumed is country food
2 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories, except Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise

SOURCES: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (2002a, 2002b), Sahtu Renewable Resource Board (2001)

5.4.2 Trapping

As with the ISR, GSA and DCR, the data in Table 5-21 indicates a sharp decline in the percentage of men engaged in trapping in the Sahtu Aboriginal communities. It declines from 82% in 1987 to 26% in 1993. Between 1993 and 2002, no more than 33% were engaged in trapping. However, by 2002 the percentage of Sahtu Aboriginal men trapping was more than twice that in the ISR and GSA Aboriginal communities. The greatest involvement was in the small and isolated community of Colville Lake, where almost every year 90% or more of males aged 25 to 59 years were trappers. In contrast, only 4% of men in Norman Wells were trappers in 1987, and this declined to 1% in 2002.

Table 5-21: Active Trappers and Average Income in the Sahtu Communities

Location	Trappers[1]				Average Annual Income[2]			
	1987 (%)	1993 (%)	1999 (%)	2002 (%)	1987 ($)	1993 ($)	1999 ($)	2002 ($)
NWT Aboriginal communities[3]	47	18	18	14	2,514	672	919	991
SSA total	53	16	17	21	4,052	915	1,540	1,633
Norman Wells	4	1	2	1	1,449	846	1,040	1,747
Sahtu Aboriginal communities total	82	26	26	33	4,120	917	1,540	1,630
Fort Good Hope	88	21	25	31	3,851	1,566	1,538	1,916
Déline	75	20	23	33	3,825	307	1,116	1,390
Tulita	79	27	20	24	3,184	803	1,124	845
Colville Lake	100	77	95	93	7,858	1,059	2,742	2,254

NOTES:
1 Males, aged 25 to 59
2 Income not adjusted for inflation
3 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories except for Yellowknife and Hay River

SOURCE: GNWT RWED (1987, 1993, 1999, 2002)

Average incomes per active trapper in the Sahtu communities were relatively high in comparison with Gwich'in and Inuvialuit trapper incomes. For the Sahtu Aboriginal communities, the data shows a decline from about $4,100 per trapper in 1987 to about $1,600 in more recent years.

5.4.3 Aboriginal Language

Table 5-22 shows that between 1989 and 1999, the proportion of Sahtu adults in Aboriginal communities who reported they could speak an Aboriginal language declined from 86% to 64%. Even so, in 1999, almost two thirds were still proficient in their mother tongue. The data shows that language retention is strongest in Déline, where 93% of adults could still speak their language in 1999.

Table 5-22: Aboriginal Language Speakers in the Sahtu Communities

Location	1989 (%)	1994 (%)	1999 (%)
Northwest Territories	56	50	45
SSA total	86	68	64
Norman Wells	52	36	29
Sahtu Aboriginal communities total	88	73	68
Fort Good Hope	81	54	48
Déline	98	96	93
Tulita	82	61	63
Colville Lake	95	96	76
NOTE: Percentage of Aboriginal people, aged 15 years and older			
SOURCE: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (2003e)			

The school principal in Fort Good Hope reported concern among parents and Elders that fewer and fewer young people were speaking Slavey. The language is taught in schools, but most students know only some Slavey words, and few, if any, can speak it fluently. To promote cultural education and teachers' appreciation of the importance of Slavey language for traditional reasons, the principal has sponsored a program for teachers to go out on the land with community members (Fort Good Hope principal 2002, personal communication).

5.5 Baseline Conditions – Deh Cho Region

5.5.1 Participation in Traditional Harvesting

Detailed information is not currently available on:

- numbers of active harvesters
- types of animals harvested
- edible weights of harvested mammals

Table 5-23 indicates that 41% of adults hunted or fished in the DCR communities in 2002 and 42% in 1998. A lower rate, 18%, was reported in 1998 for Kakisa and a higher rate of 67% for Trout Lake.

Table 5-23: Adults Who Hunted or Fished in the Deh Cho Communities

Location	1993 (%)	1998 (%)	2002 (%)
Northwest Territories	18	42	41
NWT Aboriginal communities[1]	42	48	51
DCR total	32	42	44
DCR, excluding Fort Simpson	42	44	44
Fort Simpson	16	37	44
Fort Providence	49	43	–
Fort Liard	64	53	–
Wrigley	8	34	–
Nahanni Butte	74	42	–
Trout Lake	43	67	–
Jean Marie River	33	58	–
Kakisa	65	18	–
Hay River Reserve	15	42	–
West Point Reserve	–	–	–

NOTES:
– = data not available or too small to be expressed
1 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories, except Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise
Percentage of population, aged 15 years and older

SOURCES: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (1999, 2002b)

Table 5-24 shows that about 61% of DCR households reported that in 2002, half or more of the food they consumed was country food. This was an 18% increase over 1993. Data for specific communities varied in 1998, from a low of 22% for Nahanni Butte to 100% for Kakisa.

Table 5-24: Country Food Consumption in the Deh Cho Communities

Location	Households Where Country Food is Consumed[1] (%)		
	1993	1998	2002
Northwest Territories	29	30	33
NWT Aboriginal communities[2]	73	68	70
DCR total	43	46	61
DCR, excluding Fort Simpson	52	49	79
Fort Simpson	30	42	40
Fort Providence	46	57	–
Fort Liard	59	40	–
Wrigley	–	53	–
Nahanni Butte	100	22	–
Trout Lake	75	48	–
Jean Marie River	61	31	–
Kakisa	79	100	–
Hay River Reserve	55	58	–
West Point Reserve	–	–	–

NOTES:
– = data not available
1 Half or more of food consumed is country food
2 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories, except Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise

SOURCES: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (2002a, 2002b)

5.5.2 Trapping

Table 5-25 shows that as for all of the ISR, GSA and SSA communities, the percentages of men from the DCR communities engaged in trapping declined after 1987 and 1993. After 1993, the percentage of men involved in trapping in the larger communities decreased through to 2002. However, trapper percentages declined more gradually in most of the smaller communities for that same period. The dominant pattern is seen in the data for the DCR as a whole. In 1987, 67% of the men were trappers, whereas by 2002 only 25% were trapping.

Table 5-25: Active Trappers and Average Income in the Deh Cho Communities

Location	Trappers[1]				Average Annual Income[2]			
	1987 (%)	1993 (%)	1999 (%)	2002 (%)	1987 ($)	1993 ($)	1999 ($)	2002 ($)
NWT Aboriginal communities[3]	47	18	18	14	2,514	672	919	991
DCR total	67	35	30	25	2,876	602	814	628
Fort Simpson	44	18	21	19	1,965	523	870	768
Fort Providence	69	29	31	19	1,560	281	851	210
Fort Liard	99	69	41	19	3,707	853	754	662
Nahanni Butte	78	59	31	29	4,765	759	827	489
Wrigley	100	65	43	24	3,031	574	513	684
Trout Lake[4]	94	63	90	90	8,867	967	687	974
Jean Marie River	92	73	45	38	1,256	236	1,522	646
Kakisa[4]	87	20	23	64	4,723	165	870	790
Hay River Reserve	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
West Point Reserve	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

NOTES:
– = data not available
1 Males, aged 25 to 59
2 Income not adjusted for inflation
3 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories except for Yellowknife and Hay River
4 These very high percentages may reflect errors introduced by random rounding of low frequencies, and perhaps other indeterminate errors as well (see Section 1.8.3, Limitations of Low-Frequency Data)

SOURCE: GNWT RWED (1987, 1993, 1999, 2002)

This pattern was confirmed by the GNWT RWED area manager, who reported a decline in trapping because of sharply reduced earnings. The data indicates a consistent pattern of declining earnings per trapper between 1987 and 2002, with few exceptions. Moreover, the ranks of experienced trappers are reduced as increasing numbers become too old to continue trapping activities (GNWT RWED area manager 2002, personal communication).

5.5.3 Aboriginal Language

Table 5-26 shows that in 1999, 65% of Deh Cho adults reported they could speak an Aboriginal language, down from 78% a decade earlier. Language retention was strongest in somewhat remote Wrigley (92% in 1999) and in Trout Lake (91% in 1999), which, unlike the other Deh Cho communities, has no highway access.

Table 5-26: Aboriginal Language Speakers in the Deh Cho Communities

Location	1989 (%)	1994 (%)	1999 (%)
Northwest Territories	56	50	45
DCR total	78	70	65
Fort Simpson	72	61	55
Fort Providence	68	64	61
Fort Liard	89	82	79
Wrigley	100	96	92
Nahanni Butte	98	99	75
Trout Lake	100	62	91
Jean Marie River	83	67	62
Kakisa	86	85	68
Hay River Reserve	–	–	–
West Point Reserve	–	–	–
NOTES: – = data not available Percentage of Aboriginal people, aged 15 years and older			
SOURCE: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (2002e)			

5.6 Baseline Conditions – Industrial and Commercial Communities in the Northwest Territories

5.6.1 Participation in Traditional Harvesting

Table 5-27 indicates that in 2002, about 39% of the adult population in Yellowknife and 30% in Hay River hunted or fished for subsistence or recreation.

Table 5-27: Adults Who Hunted or Fished in Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise

Location	1993 (%)	1998 (%)	2002 (%)
Northwest Territories	18	42	41
NWT Aboriginal communities[1]	42	48	51
Yellowknife	8	40	39
Hay River	10	41	30
Enterprise	–	–	–
NOTES: – = data not available 1 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories, except Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise Percentage of population, aged 15 years and older			
SOURCE: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (1999, 2002b)			

Table 5-28 shows that the proportion of the population reporting that half or more of the food they consumed came from the land was 16% in Yellowknife and 18% in Hay River in 2002, which is substantially less than the Northwest Territories Aboriginal communities' percentage of 70%.

Table 5-28: Country Food Consumption in Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise

Location	Households Consuming Country Food[1] (%)		
	1993	1998	2002
Northwest Territories	29	30	33
NWT Aboriginal communities[2]	73	68	70
Yellowknife	10	11	16
Hay River	29	20	18
NOTES: 1 Half or more of food consumed is country food 2 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories, except Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise			
SOURCE: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (2002a, 2002b)			

5.6.2 Trapping

Virtually all trappers in the Northwest Territories are of Aboriginal descent. Although Yellowknife and Hay River are essentially nontraditional communities, both have sizable Aboriginal populations. Table 5-29 shows that the percentages of adult males who were trappers in Yellowknife and Hay River declined between 1987 and 2002, although in 1999 the percentage for Hay River increased slightly. Further declines in 2001 and 2002, which was a period of elevated employment, suggest that trapping numbers are inversely responsive to other work opportunities, reflecting the mixed traditional and wage economy.

Table 5-29: Active Trappers and Average Income in Yellowknife and Hay River

Location	Trappers				Average Annual Income[1]			
	1987 (%)	**1993** (%)	**1999** (%)	**2002** (%)	**1987** ($)	**1993** ($)	**1999** ($)	**2002** ($)
NWT Aboriginal communities[2]	47	18	18	14	2,514	672	919	991
Yellowknife	3	1	1	0.4	1,856	162	849	650
Hay River	10	3	6	5	1,336	295	763	881
Enterprise	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

NOTES:
– = data not available
1 Income not adjusted for inflation
2 All study area communities in the Northwest Territories except for Yellowknife and Hay River

SOURCE: GNWT RWED (1987, 1993, 1999, 2002)

In Yellowknife and Hay River, average fur sale income per trapper declined, with fluctuations as in the other study area communities. Average earnings in Yellowknife between 1987 and 1993 fell from $1,856 to $162. Although average earnings increased in Yellowknife and Hay River in 1999 and 2002, they continued to be low.

5.6.3 Aboriginal Language

Available data shows that the use of an Aboriginal language is declining in the Northwest Territories. This pattern is evident in Yellowknife and Hay River. Table 5-30 shows that in Yellowknife, 37% of Aboriginal residents spoke an Aboriginal language in 1989, compared to 22% in 1999. In Hay River, these figures were 34% in 1989 and 29% in 1999.

Table 5-30: Aboriginal Language Speakers in Yellowknife, Hay River and Enterprise

Location	1989 (%)	1994 (%)	1999 (%)
Northwest Territories	56	50	45
Yellowknife	37	34	22
Hay River	34	30	29
Enterprise	–	–	–
NOTES: – = data not available Percentage of Aboriginal people, aged 15 years and older			
SOURCE: GNWT Bureau of Statistics (2003e)			

5.7 Baseline Conditions – Dene Tha' First Nation in Northwestern Alberta

5.7.1 Participation in Traditional Harvesting

The Dene Tha' are actively involved in the dual economy. The whole First Nation has only 43 registered traplines and 43 accredited trappers. However, it is reported that enthusiasm for trapping is seen in the large number of young trappers, 247. This includes four women, and 50% of men aged 15 to 64 years. Dual economy participation is also reflected in DTFN trappers taking employment in the oil and gas industry if furbearers are scarce or the fur market is bad. Trappers are usually involved in seasonal work, such as slashing (Chateh residents 2004, personal communication).

The traditional component of the Dene Tha' dual economy is also seen in the importance of harvested game, bird, fish and plant foods. Moose is the most important game animal to the Dene Tha' and moose meat is a staple in their diet. In addition to moose, the Dene Tha' frequently hunt:

- caribou
- deer
- bear
- beaver
- rabbit

- grouse
- migratory birds during their migration stopovers

The Dene Tha' fish during the summer on local lakes, and ice fish in the winter on local rivers and lakes (DTFN residents 2002, personal communication). Most eat wild meat and plant foods. Delicacies include:

- beaver tail
- bone marrow
- eggs
- liver
- kidneys

Meat is shared among family and community members, particularly during feasts, tea dances, wakes and assemblies (DTFN residents 2002, personal communication).

Plant products consumed as food or medicine include (DTFN residents 2002, personal communication):

- mint
- Labrador tea
- juniper
- wild onions
- wild turnips
- wild radishes
- red willow bark

5.7.2 Trapping

Many active trappers reside in Chateh, Meander River and Bushe River, despite the economic unpredictability of the fur trade. However, no hunters' and trappers' organization has been established. The Dene Tha' trapping areas extend as far south as Paddle Prairie and extends beyond the Northwest Territories boundary to the north. (DTFN residents 2002, personal communication).

Many Dene Tha' trappers still maintain their traplines during the winter, despite the current low fur prices. More Dene Tha' trappers would return to their traplines if prices were to rise, because this is a preferred way of life for many of them (DTFN 2002). Trapping for lynx, marten and fox takes place in January and February, and beaver and muskrat are trapped in the spring.

5.7.3 Aboriginal Language

Like the Dene in the Northwest Territories, the Dene Tha' people in Alberta speak Athapascan Dene. However, three different dialects are spoken:

- the Dene Tha' dialect, which is spoken in Chateh and by some in Bushe River
- the Meander dialect, which is spoken in Meander River and by some in Bushe River
- the Beaver dialect, which is spoken in the eastern areas of the DTFN territory and in northeastern British Columbia

Most people in Chateh speak Dene, as does half the population in Meander River. About 75% of parents speak Dene to their children. However, Bushe River is a relatively new community where the Dene language is less common because many residents are young people. The Dene language is taught in cultural programs in the reserve schools, but these are not available in the High Level schools attended by children from Bushe River. The locally operated radio station, which broadcasts in Dene, also contributes to language retention (DTFN 2002 and DTFN residents 2002, personal communication).

Table 5-31 shows that 70% of the total on-reserve Dene Tha' population spoke only Cree in 1996 and 67% of children aged 0 to 14 spoke only Cree in the same period, indicating that the more isolated a community, the more likely the home language will survive.

Table 5-31: Languages Spoken by the On-Reserve Dene Tha' (1996)

Language	Registered Males 15+	Registered Females 15+	Registered Children (0–14)	Non-Registered	Percentage of Total Population
Total population (No.)	430	385	460	55	100
Nonofficial languages (%)	86	84	71	18	77
Dene only (%)	78	75	67	0	70
Cree, South Slave only (%)	8	8	2	0	5
English and an Aboriginal language (%)	5	5	4	0	5
Total mother tongue is Aboriginal (%)	91	90	75	18	82
Total home language is Aboriginal (%)	77	73	67	0	69
SOURCE: Statistics Canada (1996)					

5.8 Baseline Conditions – Industrial and Commercial Communities in Northwestern Alberta

Currently, no information is available on the resource harvesting activities and indications of Aboriginal cultural retention among the relatively few First Nations people living in High Level, Rainbow Lake or Zama City.

5.9 Synopsis

5.9.1 The Focus on Traditional Values

Distinctive, demanding values characterize Inuvialuit and Dene traditional cultures. The concept of *the earth is our Mother* is central. The earth is to be loved, respected and cared for. The bounties of mother earth are to be shared. No one should be hungry unless all are hungry. Decisions should be arrived at consensually, with everyone having an opportunity to speak and be heard. Adhering to a traditional culture involves a demanding way of life, living near and in harmony with the environment and its harvest benefits. The environment is harsh, often uncomfortable, and potentially dangerous most of the year. The wild foods that the earth supports, and that support people, may be undependable.

The focus of traditional values, lore, skills and disciplines has always been on survival in the difficult environment that is home to the Inuvialuit and Dene. Survival involves knowing:

- where and when to find food and other resources
- how to read the weather and other environmental conditions
- how to travel safely
- what to do to survive in an emergency

Spiritual values, and implementing the lore, skills and disciplines essential to survival on the land, are the core of traditional culture.

The aspects of Inuvialuit and Dene culture essential to successful harvesting and surviving emergencies on the land could be effectively transmitted in English. However, all aspects of Aboriginal culture are conceptualized far more precisely in the Aboriginal languages. Some really cannot be translated into English, e.g., spiritual relationships and appreciation of the essence of the Inuvialuit and Dene.

Traditional culture thus involves two aspects:

- the valuing and conceptual aspect intrinsic to an Aboriginal language

- the knowledge, skill and discipline requirements of harvesting and surviving on the land

For years, Euro-Canadians ignored the significance of the resource harvests, thus devaluing traditional culture. Traditional foods are now recognized as important both economically and nutritionally.

5.9.2 Participation in Traditional Harvesting and the Dual Economy

Participating in the dual economy refers to involvement in the traditional harvesting economy, i.e., hunting, fishing and gathering, and the monetary economy. Indications of participation in the dual economy are seen in data on:

- unemployment and potential labour supply
- hunting, fishing, consuming country foods

The traditional and monetary economies are now typically symbiotic, in that traditional harvesting commonly makes use of expensive equipment, which can only be purchased with wage income. Examples are:

- snow machines
- all-terrain vehicles
- small boats and outboard motors

The meat harvested by resident hunters in the Northwest Territories had an estimated replacement value in recent years of $1.5 million per year (GNWT RWED 1999). Harvested food, free but for the costs of the harvesting process, is important because of:

- its nutritional value – it is nutritionally superior to meat from domesticated animals (Usher 1976)
- the dietary preferences of most Aboriginal people
- low income levels
- elevated cost of store-bought food in the North

Traditional harvesting also has immense symbolic and cultural significance to Aboriginal people, and this is an additional strong inducement to participate in the traditional economy.

5.9.3 Trapping

The GNWT RWED has devoted considerable efforts toward sustaining trapping as a lifestyle and promoting the economic viability of trapping and traditional harvesting. As early as the 1970s, the government provided active trappers with a pre-payment sum or *grubstake* amounting to 10% of the trapper's expected earnings. During the 1990s, a pricing program was introduced under which a

trapper who brought in furs that passed a quality test received an initial payment, followed by a final payment when the fur auction house forwarded earnings from sales. The GNWT RWED also has funds for supporting trapper training programs and issuing trapper education publications.

Despite GNWT RWED efforts, trappers face serious obstacles from the low prices now paid for furs and the high costs of equipment. With white foxes typically bringing only $20 to $25, coloured foxes only about $50 and marten about $60 to $70 (April 2003 prices), and with the increased prices of snowmobiles and fuel, it is very difficult for a trapper to have a profitable season.

The incomes of trappers are affected by:

- furbearer cycles
- prices that furs bring at auction
- increasing overhead costs of equipment, supplies and fuel

The auction prices for furs are affected by trends in fashions, and in recent decades by the campaigns of animal rights activists. Moreover, as life in trapping communities has become more comfortable, the hardships of running long traplines have increased relative to life in the community.

The percentage of adult males aged 25 to 59 who trap is affected by many influences, including fur cycles, prices paid for furs and other economic opportunities. In addition, the changes introduced by GNWT RWED in the 1990s, to increase the viability of trapping as an occupation, likely resulted in some changes in record keeping. Earlier trapper and fur harvest data was based on fur tags issued to trappers, but following the introduction of prepayments to trappers, the harvest data has been based on information from the auction houses to which the GNWT sent the furs for sale.

The GNWT RWED trapping data for 1987 to 2002 is based on fur export licences issued and fur auction sales data. This data shows that between 1987 and 1999 there was a steady, sharp decline in the proportions of men who were trapping – from about 47% in 1987 to only about 18% in 1999. Thereafter, this figure decreased to 14% in 2002. The clear explanation for the decline is found in the sharp reduction in average income per trapper, from about $2,500 in 1987 to about $1,000 in 2002 (dollar amounts not adjusted for inflation). This decline was greatest in the Inuvialuit communities, where only 10% of adult males were still active trappers in 2002. Trapper earnings were highest in the SSA, where about 21% of adult males were still trapping in 2002. Although trapper earnings in 1993 were low in the GSA and DCR, trapper percentages were higher in the DCR in 2002. In the Northwest Territories as a whole, the number of active trappers tended to be higher in the smaller communities. Even so, by 2002, some communities had no active trappers.

5.9.4 Aboriginal Language

Language retention is an indicator of cultural retention because appreciation of traditional, deeper, spiritual relationships can only be comprehended in traditional language terms. The Aboriginal languages are better adapted and more suited to effective resource harvesting, although the lore, skills and disciplines can be communicated in English. However, as the presented time-series data shows, retention of Aboriginal language is declining throughout the study area. The impacts of Euro-Canadian culture are pervasive in:

- educational settings
- most television programming
- work settings
- dealings with government officials and service providers

As a result, Aboriginal language facility is declining throughout the Northwest Territories and northwestern Alberta communities.

Retaining Inuvialuktun in the Inuvialuit coastal communities has declined among adults, from 50% to 34% between 1989 and 1999. Dene language facility eroded:

- among the Deh Cho from 78 to 65%
- among the Sahtu from 86 to 64%
- among the Gwich'in from 33 to 28%

In 1996, 70% of the Dene Tha' said their mother tongue was Dene and 55% said their home language was Dene.

Currently, it appears that there has been considerable reduction in trapping activity and language retention. However, current retention rates continue at relatively high levels, considering the strength of Canadian cultural and economic influences that are at variance with the traditional values, skills and practices of Aboriginal people.