

Did we get it wrong?

Inuvik Drum is committed to getting facts and names right. With that goes a commitment to acknowledge mistakes and run corrections. If you spot an error in *Inuvik Drum*, contact the editor at (867) 777-4545 or e-mail inuvikdrum@nnsi.com.

NEWS Briefs

Arctic Energy and Emerging Technologies trade show planning

The Town of Inuvik will be hosting its second annual Arctic Energy and Emerging Technologies trade show June 12-14.

Text on the trade show's website explicitly references the changing times in Inuvik, writing that the region is "faced with new realities regarding our energy options, our efficiencies and our participation in the global economy."

The closing keynote address will be made by Dr. Roberta Bondar, Canada's first female astronaut and the first neurologist in space.

Other sessions and speeches include topics on nuclear science, carbon pricing, and bringing LNG to Arctic communities.

Funding available for First Nations and Inuit students

The Government of Canada announced a funding increase to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program by \$90 million over two years, starting in 2017-18.

The program provides funding for First Nation and Inuit students to pursue post-secondary education.

It aims to help students succeed in completing their studies and accessing better job opportunities by addressing the pressure of expenses such as tuition fees, living allowances and otherwise.

"Education is the key to opening many doors and leads to better health and economic outcomes," stated Carolyn Bennett, minister of indigenous and northern affairs, in a news release.

Youth matter conference returns

After being fully booked last year, the YOUTH MATTER! conference is returning to Inuvik this August.

The regional youth empowerment event will provide a week of workshops and activities under the theme mind, body and soul.

Youth 12-29 are encouraged to apply by sending a cover letter to: tsnowshoe@gwichin.nt.ca.

All expenses are covered.

Deadline to apply is May 31.

Groups encouraged to sign up for cleanup

The 2017 community cleanup will be taking place May 26 to June 4.

Community groups are encouraged to sign up for one of the 13 zones, which will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis.

The event provides non-profit groups and organizations an opportunity to raise funds in exchange for cleaning part of the community.

Successful cleaning of a zone will earn a group \$400.

Contact skrug@inuvik.ca to register.



Environment Canada crew band geese together. From left to right are Trevor Lucas, Jeff Knetter, Marie Fast and Eric Reed. Danica Hogan photo

Hunters, load those rifles

Environment Canada encourages spring snow geese hunt to keep population at bay

by Stewart Burnett
Northern News Services

Environment Canada is encouraging hunters to go to town on snow geese this spring, as the population's growth continues to pose a threat to Northern environments.

"We're trying to encourage hunters to go out and take advantage of this abundant resource," said Eric Reed, population management biologist with Environment Canada.

"Our preferred approach for controlling the growth of these populations is to encourage harvest and consumption of the birds."

To this effect, the organization has implemented a spring harvest period in the territory for the third year in a row.

That timeline extends from May 1 to June 30 on the islands in the territory and May 1 to May 28 for the mainland.

The rules apply to non-aboriginals, as aboriginal harvesters are not tied to these regulations in the first place.

Hunters will need a migratory bird hunting permit, and any issued for fall 2016 will still be valid for the spring season. The daily bag limit for snow geese is 50 with no possession limit.

Environment Canada is also opening up the ability to apply for a permit to hunt snow geese in a

migratory bird sanctuary.

"We want to reverse the increases in population size for those overabundant species," said Reed. "That's why we're opening up the possibility of hunting in the migratory bird sanctuaries. We want to be clear it's not an open invitation to go hunt in the sanctuaries. They need to apply for a permit, which may or may not be granted."

Sanctuaries in the territory are on Kendall Island, Anderson River and two on Banks Island.

There are three populations of lesser snow geese in Canada. The mid-continent population breeds everywhere east of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, all the way to Baffin Island, and migrate mainly through the middle of the continent.

The population that flies through Inuvik and the delta is the Western Arctic population, and over 95 per cent of those birds nest on Banks Island.

"Based on the experience we've had in other regions, we determined that it was time to (put) that designation in place, and that allows us to implement those special conserva-

tion measures, such as a spring season," said Reed.

Snow geese damage the environment through their feeding habit, he said.

"We want to reverse the increases in population size for those overabundant species."

Eric Reed

In the spring, the geese travel to their breeding ground and uproot wide swaths of plants, drying out the land and negatively affecting vegetation in the area.

"It's a very long process for vegetation to become reestablished in those areas," said Reed.

Later in the season, when the plants start growing, the geese will graze them to the ground.

Changes in human agricultural practices are the main reason for the explosion of geese populations, said Reed.

The geese have nearly unlimited food supplies in agricultural areas with no predator threats.

"Right now they're gorging in the prairies and accumulating a lot of reserves," said Reed. "They can put on a lot of fat and they bring that up to the breeding grounds, and they are able to use those reserves they acquired in spring staging areas to produce a clutch of eggs and to incu-

bate their eggs."

Because the large geese populations draw attention from other creatures, shorebirds also become threatened from foxes encountering their nests in the same areas as the geese, he said.

In the 1960s, the Western Arctic snow goose population was about 105,000. In 2002 it was 570,000. The last count, in 2013, estimated it to be 429,000.

Including Russia and other nesting areas, there are probably over one million of the birds overall, said Reed.

Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board chairperson Eugene Pascal said community members harvest snow geese quite a bit in the spring and fall.

"They usually migrate over us during the fall and spring," he said. "A majority of them fly on the east side of the delta. We have a few that fly over the delta and close to the mountains. Those are the ones we harvest."

Pascal said he hasn't personally seen much of the damaging effects of the snow geese because their route takes them some distance from the communities.

"It's something we are concerned about, the damage that they can do to the environment because there's so many of them," he said.