

ABSTRACT

The Nunamiut Iñupiat of the north-central Brooks Range are one of the few Alaska Native peoples for whom fish played a relatively modest role in their overall subsistence resource base. Despite the fact that they are one of the most studied peoples in the nation, relatively little attention has been given to Nunamiut fishlore, perhaps precisely because of this unusual status.

This report, therefore, attempts to at least partially remedy the oversight, by corraling and compiling otherwise widely scattered and incidental information on fishing practices that was previously collected by earlier researchers and observers, with some original research of the present writer.

By virtue of the author's background as an archaeologist and an inherent bias towards material culture, the heaviest attention is given to descriptions of traditional fishing technologies and techniques. Nevertheless, considerable attention is also given to characterizing the physical environment in which the Nunamiut live and its impact upon their fishing practices, both past and present, as well as tracing shifts in fishing emphasis, activities, species, and areas through time. Also finding a place within are treatments of traditional methods of storing, processing, and preparing fish as well as a glimpse of their role in the Nunamiut oral tradition.

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