

The Northern Circumpolar World

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Northwest
Territories Canada

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

MacQuarrie, Bob.

The northern circumpolar world

Includes index.

ISBN 1-895073-20-0

1. Arctic regions—Geography—Juvenile literature. I. Title.

GF891.M32 1996 909'.091'3 C96-910348-4

Notes on 2008 revision

I would like to extend my gratitude to the following educators who participated in the revisions of this book in 2008:

Gillian Dawe-Taylor

Merril Dean (again !)

Jill Taylor

Chris Pyke

Deborah Maguire

We would also like to thank Bob Worsley from Info Networks for all his assistance with the technical side and desktop publishing.

John Stewart

Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator



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Appreciation

I would like to thank people who contributed to the preparation of this book.

Educators in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Government of the Northwest Territories, were particularly helpful in providing direction and offering useful suggestions throughout the project. These include Jean-Marie Beaulieu, Debby Dobson, Barbara Hall, Brian Menton, and Kathy Zozula.

For sharing personal experience and information gathered during their travels, I would like to thank Irene Johnson (Yukon), Ben Nind (Greenland), and Clive Tesar (Siberia). My thanks to Dean Cluff, Polar Bear Biologist, Department of Renewable Resources, GNWT; Anne Gunn, Caribou Biologist, Department of Renewable Resources, GNWT; and Helmut Epp, Director, NWT Centre for Remote Sensing, GNWT.

A very special thank you to several generous people who provided comments and/or information on drafts of particular chapters: Barbara Phillips, Intermediate Program Coordinator, Yukon Department of Education (Chapter 2, Yukon); Aleqa Hammond, Representative of the Secretariat to the Cabinet, Greenland Home Rule Government (Chapter 3); Tryggvi Jakobsson, Head of AV, Media Department, National Centre for Educational Materials, Reykjavik, Iceland (Chapter 4); Carl P. Salicath, First Secretary, Embassy of Norway in Ottawa (Chapter 5); Otto H. Larsen, Counsellor, Embassy of Denmark in Ottawa, Louise Nabe Larsen and Inge Lise Hammer (Chapter 6); Amelie Heinsjö, Information Officer, Embassy of Sweden in Ottawa (Chapter 7); Outi Polón, Attache, Embassy of Finland, Ottawa (Chapter 8); Allison Abraszko, Reference Librarian, US Embassy in Ottawa (Chapter 10); Johanne Tungilik, Habitat Technician, Department of Renewable Resources, GNWT (Chapter 14); Ron Graf, Assistant Director, Wildlife Management Division, Department of Renewable Resources, GNWT (Chapter 15); Elisa Hart, Arctic Archaeologist, and Tom Andrews, Subarctic Archaeologist, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife (Chapter 16).

Finally, thank you to the educators and students who offered constructive criticism and advice after reading a draft of the completed text. These include Geraldine Balzer, Jean-Marie Beaulieu, Sean Daly, Merrill M. Dean, Debby Dobson, Ellie Elliot, Diane Essery, David Harrison, Brenda Illaszewicz, Ted Johnston, Arnold Krause, Duane Magoon, Howard Marshall, Kurt Mineault, M S Naidoo, Christine Purse, and Norman Vaughan.

Advice offered, though always appreciated, was not always followed. Therefore, all shortcomings and errors remaining in the text, as well as any views expressed or implied, are the responsibility of the author and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Government of the Northwest Territories.

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NOTE 1: The neutral designations BCE and CE are used in this book. BCE stands for “Before the Common Era” and CE stands for “the Common Era.” These designations refer respectively to the same time periods as BC and AD.

NOTE 2: Where dollar figures are used to describe values of trade and commerce, they are expressed in US currency and the numbers have been rounded off. Population and life expectancy figures are estimates, and have also been rounded off. Trying to be exact in these matters is an impossible task since different sources provide slightly different numbers and since the numbers change from year to year (indeed, population figures are changing daily). In any event, the figures are useful only for comparative purposes at a particular point in time, and these purposes are adequately served by rounded figures.

NOTE 3: Terms and concepts that are in bold type have been defined in the glossary.

Foreword

*September 1
Tuktoyaktuk, NWT, Canada*

Dear Friends:

At last ! Nine other lucky students and I are in Tuktoyaktuk on the shore of the Arctic Ocean. In our group are: Niels Aalborg, Marry Dillon, Jens Hammer, Alfrida Myrdal, Jimmy Nevak, Johannes Qukausiqtog, Reino Saarinen, Fjóra Vilhjálmsdóttir, Larisa Yakovlev – and me! Alice Bohnet is our teacher-chaperone.

Each of us comes from a circumpolar country. Circumpolar countries are quite different from one another in culture and language, but fortunately all of us speak, read, and write English.

We are excited because we have been selected to take part in a very special expedition. Our journey will take us around the northern circumpolar world. We will travel in the arctic and subarctic regions of Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States (Alaska). Our journey is sponsored by our various governments and by northern businesses.

First, we'll visit the area of the Beaufort Sea, learning about the Arctic Ocean. Next we'll travel southwest to the Yukon. Then we'll move eastward through the lands surrounding the Arctic Ocean. In each country we'll be billeted with families that have one or more English-speaking members. We'll travel by bus, boat, airplane, and sled. Sometimes we'll even put on our backpacks and hike. We'll spend a few weeks in each circumpolar country visiting places of interest. We're sure to meet many new people and see some very interesting sights !

We're expected to work, too. We'll keep a record of our journey. As we travel, we'll ask questions and watch and listen carefully. We'll learn all we can about the people, their jobs, and their ways of life. We'll learn about the plants and animals that inhabit the Arctic and the Subarctic. We'll learn about the land we walk on and the weather we experience. We'll make notes and take photographs. We'll even record what we see with a digital video camera!

We will return home in March. We'll sort through all the information we've gathered, examine it carefully, and try to draw some conclusions about our experiences. Each of us will then write a report about a different feature of the northern world. We'll send our reports to each other for comment. Then the reports will be put together in a book for students all over the North. We really want to do a good job on them!

Would you like to join us on this adventure of a lifetime? Let's go!

THE NORTHERN CIRCUMPOLAR WORLD



These are the countries that we will visit as we explore the northern circumpolar world. The polar ice pack is a permanent feature of the Arctic Ocean. The sea ice (average fall minimum) shown on this map, and many others in this book, recedes in the spring and advances in the winter.