

H. STUART INNES (1953 – 2000)

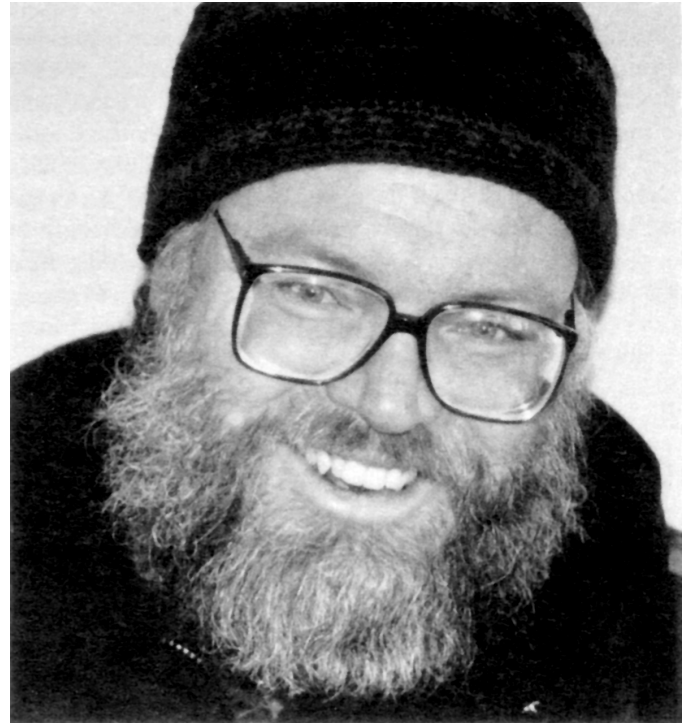
Dr. Stuart Innes (Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans), along with Dr. Malcolm Ramsay (University of Saskatchewan), died in a helicopter crash near Resolute Bay, Nunavut, on 21 May 2000. Both Stu and Malcolm are remembered with affection and admiration for their boundless energy and devotion to their scientific endeavours in the Arctic.

Those of us at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) remember Stu as an outspoken and talented scientist who loved the Arctic. His research interests were diverse and included population ecology and modeling, reproduction and physiology, genetics, and contaminants. He authored and co-authored numerous papers for various journals and other publications. He was also a leader on international, national, and regional projects and committees.

Stu began his research career at the University of Guelph, where he completed both his undergraduate and graduate programs. Under the supervision of Dr. Dave Lavigne, Stu completed a Master of Science degree on gray squirrels. He later focused on the swimming energetics of seals for his Ph.D., under the supervision of Dr. Keith Ronald. Before starting his Ph.D., Stu had worked on manatees in Guyana; after finishing that degree, he worked briefly at the International Tuna Commission in California.

In 1989, Stu arrived at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Freshwater Institute in Winnipeg, Canada, where his expertise on seals and statistics was needed. Although his research at DFO was directed primarily toward the ecology of ringed seals, his interests quickly expanded to include most arctic marine mammals. He worked on the sampling designs for aerial surveys of Beaufort Sea belugas, High Arctic belugas, and Hudson Bay-Foxe Basin bowheads. He collaborated with Glenn Williams (Iqaluit, Nunavut) to develop a mark-resight estimate of High Arctic narwhal abundance using aerial photographs. He was involved in developing the use of contaminant profiles as a method for identifying beluga stocks and worked with Dr. Rob Stewart on haul-out behaviour of walrus. More recently, he collaborated with Dr. Dave Barber (University of Manitoba) on projects examining the impacts of climate change in the Arctic and with Dr. Peter Outridge (Geological Survey of Canada – Ottawa) and Dr. Erik Born (Greenland Institute of Natural Resources) on stable isotopes in minke whale baleen. On his own time, Stu was working with Dr. Lavigne and several Russian scientists, including Drs. Yuri Timoshenko, Vladimir Chernook, and V.M. Bel'kovich, on harp seal surveys in Russia.

In addition to working on a variety of research projects, Stu also played a major role in providing advice to fishery managers. He participated in regional assessment meetings on marine mammals where stock status was discussed and developed advice for fishery managers, including arctic co-management boards, on sustainable harvests. Stu regularly attended National Marine Mammal Peer Review



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Committee meetings, where he helped to evaluate methods and results of Canadian marine mammal research. Internationally, he was a long-standing member of the Canada-Greenland Scientific Working Group and attended and participated in other international fora, including the International Whaling Commission Scientific Committee and North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission.

Through his ringed seal studies, Stu became interested in the predator-prey interactions of polar bears and ringed seals. To solve the problem of finding seal lairs, he acquired and trained dogs to find lairs by scent. At last count, he had five such dogs: two black labs, two golden retrievers, and a Chesapeake Bay retriever. Over the years, he also trained graduate students. His students have examined questions about ringed seal distribution and habitat selection by ringed seals in relation to prey selection by polar bears. It was this interest that resulted in his collaboration with Dr. Malcolm Ramsay. They were tagging bears to examine their predation patterns by retracing the bears' movements and their selection of ringed seal lairs. Stu was using his trained dogs to find seal lairs that bears did not depredate to compare with seal lairs that were opened by bears. It was after a day spent tagging bears around Lowther Island near Resolute Bay, Nunavut, that the accident occurred.

Doubtless, anyone who met Stu quickly realized that his knowledge of issues concerning the Arctic was both broad and deep, and there was no limit to his interests regarding Arctic marine mammals. A dedicated scientist, Stu spent

three to four months a year conducting research in remote Arctic field camps. He had great respect for the people of the North and their land. This respect revealed itself in many ways, including his ongoing efforts to learn Inuktitut. Even his dogs were given Inuktitut names. He frequently lived and worked alongside Inuit, and he understood and promoted the value of incorporating their knowledge and experience into scientific studies.

Stuart had a highly inquisitive mind and a real appetite for life. His joys were simple: good friends, dedicated colleagues, and the loyal companionship of his dogs. His sudden passing is a great loss to his family, friends, and colleagues. He will long be remembered by all those fortunate enough to have known him.

The Freshwater Institute Staff Association has established a travel bursary for students in Arctic marine mammalogy. Donations in memory of Stuart may be made to this fund at the Freshwater Institute, to the University of Guelph, or to the University of Manitoba.

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