Juk drink dettit gweedhaa Arctic Refuge (Nijin gwats’an gwandall goodlit) Ginjik tyah Chiitsal gwaheelyaa, izhit geenjit gwilii t’agwahee’yaa, Chiitsal Arctic Refuge gwideek’it gwats’an yeenin 49 Nahkat Gwachoh ts’a’ chuu choh gwataa K;iinin Nahkat daazhyaa goolil datthak chan t’agarahnyaa. Chiitsal nall dinkii Arctic Refuge. Izhit geenjit deeniindhan?

OK, that's a good question.

I grew up here since 1935, I was born, and then I remember since 1941, I grew up with all the birds we had, and around middle of May, the spring time, they are coming back.

In this country here, and we name all of them we know or recognize them, every one of them when they arrive.

How we recognize them is because of how they sing, they're all a different way. Each bird got their own song and then we know which one is singing.

And then I was remembering 1941-40, and there's plenty of birds in this country.

So we name each one of them.

And they lived with us all summer and they were nesting around here.

The kind of weather conditions, sometimes it’s really strong wind and raining, but we know which dates the birds will arrives in our country.

*The difference now today, is they’re getting declined. And, another problem is birds, they don't sing anymore.*

*They're kind of pretty quiet and you can see them here and there, I see them here and there, but then they don't sing.*

And that’s when birds arrival here, we used to live in the tent, out in the lakes and rivers, for the muskrat.

And we (were) having hard time to sleep because it was so noisy all night, they (birds) call each other.

And so uh, so some of the, it's like ptarmigan.

It's nesting, too.

So well, there's a male ptarmigan usually sits on top of the trees, watching the females nesting.

And they fight each other, they go after each other with noise, so it was pretty hard to sleep.

So now, a lot of other animals are declining.

So for the future, we want to see our children to see that.

And what kind of birds we have, we got all the pictures, some of the pictures we have, and sometimes we saw them and they don't know which bird, you don't know the name of it, but we call our language. And we named each one of them.

So this is kind of far North.

And the weather is different than Lower 48. It's little bit chilly, all the time.

So that's that.

Nesting time, that all the birds. Little one nesting and then survive, in this country and coming back every year on this Refuge.

Thousands of geese and others are still surviving and looks like there’s more, but all the other kind of ducks are declining, some of the ducks, we don't even see them.

----Second question---

Jidii ginch’yaa Ch’’iitsal eech’ini’in? Tsa’ jidii eech’ini’ in vaghandak ni’iiji geegwanddak.

*Yeah, our favorite bird is a robin.*

*There is still a few robins around here, not very many like before.*

Also the snipe, everywhere you go, that once they spotted you, they make noise and tell the other birds that humans (are) coming.

Arctic Terns, there’s a lot of them around here, but not very many left around here.

Also swallow, bank swallows, there’s thousands and thousands of them.

And almost along the river, on the bank, they make holes, and that’s where they are nesting.

And two different kinds nesting along, you know that frame house, or the log cabin house, they’re nesting there. I still see some, but not very many, and on other banks, cliff swallows, there are not very many around here. *That’s another favorite one because they kind of fly low over us all the time, so we played with them all the time when we were kids.*

Third question-----

Vashrall k’ll diik’iindhat dai’, ch’anjaa naii niki’ee chiitsal gwandak kwaii naagwagwaandak? Naatr’aheek’yah tsa’ jidii chiitsal ch’ihka eet’iindhan vagwandak eegwandak.

Oh yeah, there’s a legend story, Probably from the way back, maybe 10,000 years.

But the chickadee story, that’s a good one. During that time, thousands of years, nothing is written down but that story is uh, all the animals and birds, communicate with one another.

So the hunters, when the caribou hunter, or the moose hunter. When the baby caribou, and moose, and unborn thing, and all the birds gather and talk about what they’ve been eating.

I think humans evolved with that, a long time ago, like birds, gathering. They talk about what parts of the caribou they’ve been eating, but there’s one thing they don’t want to eat- the little caribou baby, the unborn baby.

So the chickadee is the one who disagrees with what they’re saying. So you know when the old people, a lot of them have problem with teeth, they don’t have teeth and can’t eat the hard one. It’s hard for chewing, the hard one. So chickadee told them, he said, you guys are wrong. How about that baby caribou, the unborn one, the elder should eat that. So there’s nothing wrong with it. So after he mentioned this, they disagreed with him, with chickadee.

I remember I grew up with caribou harvest time when they killed caribou and they bring back the unborn one for the older people to eat. So that’s a bird story about chickadee.

You know the Camp Robber (Canada Jay) also, they lived with us forever, he’s still around here. When there was hardships and hard times without food, and um, sometimes not only Camp robber, but also the Raven. When the people hunt and hunt and there is nothing, sometimes it’s really hard for them- nothing to eat. But the raven or Camp Robber they know which direction it (caribou) was coming, so they sent a message to the human.

So there's a lot of different story about that birds all that, and the signs of different birds, the way they act, they know, people understand them, making noise, or flying, so people always watch them.

The Refuge is a nesting place, like I’m talking about the geese, speckled and other kind, and also around here, there’s a lot of nesting going on, and everyone knows that this is kind of far, far north, so onwards, really big, but over towards Canada and the north slope and the Kongakut River, I learned a lot about different kinds of birds that are nesting there.

Fourth question----

Vashrall k’oo gwa’an chiitsal nall haa nats’ah ts’a’ juk gweendaa ch’ijuk gweedhaa izhit geegwandak. Jaghall juk gweendaa gwiintx’oo ch’ijuk gweedhaa?

Well that you know that caribou, and the sheep and the moose and many other kind that was dealing with the weather here. And caribou, moose, and sheep-dall sheep- they live kind of a better life with cold weather. When a lot of bugs and a whole area, the caribou are right on top of high mountains with the wind, and so are sheep. The moose are always halfway up the mountain, I’ve seen them, when there are too many bugs. It’s not much different with birds. Birds, they’re not much different with the ones that live with us in this country. So, even that after they come back from the South, in May or June, sometimes it will blizzard again for a couple of days, it’s really cold and snowing, but they are still happy because of the weather.

It’s like I was down in the Lower 48. I feel the same way, in cold weather and breathing, Seattle is not too bad but when I come back, I start feeling the weather. When I come home, I grew up with cold weather, it helped me a lot. Maybe the reason why people live long time up here, it’s not much different than human. So now, it’s kind of hard for me to stay inside the house when it’s cold. This year I asked my grandson, “how do you like the weather?” He said, “it’s too warm, I’m not feeling good.” Exactly true, that’s the way I feel. So when it’s a little bit cold, maybe 5 to 10 below, 20 below and when we’re inside, sometimes we don’t feel good, something is wrong, and then go out and work and you feel better about sickness and (laziness). It’s probably the same way birds like it up here and there’s a lot of bugs.

Fifth question----

Juu ch’ihxok gaa Nijin gwats’an gwandall goodlit (Arctic Refuge) ch’ihxok gaa gwaah’in kwaa, izhit gwa’an doonch’yaa jidii gaanaandall datthak vaa gwahandak? Aii nats’ah ts’a’ vaagwahandak? Gaaheendall geenjit.

Well we’ve been here more than 10,000 years, like I’m talking about weather. Nobody likes 70 below. Sometimes 75 below. But people here, they love that kind of weather, they don’t even think about that kind of weather, they dress up for weather. Down in the Lower 48 people grow up with warm weather. They’ve never been up here. A lot of them can’t deal with this kind of weather. And when my son travels to the Lower 48. How do you guys live with igloo? We don’t have stove. All we got is firewood. Burn fire. If I don’t think that anybody doesn’t know weather and live, you can try to live in Alaska, and a lot of them never come back. How can you deal with this kind of weather? You can watch Athabascan, and Inupiaq people, and southeastern native people, how they live. So if you want to live up here, if you want to try it, they could check the weather. So whatever we have, we live with it. *We are connected to a lot of things*. We got to know everything. I don’t think without any help they can live in a remote area, it’s going to be hard. If you don’t know up north, if you plan to go up there, without questions, if you don’t ask questions, than you might never come (back), because you gotta ask the native people about a lot things.

If you don’t know how to live up north, without question, you might never come back alive because of the weather.

Arctic, probably 200 miles to the Coastal Plain, there’s the Brooks Range between us. Arctic (Refuge) is on the south side and very, very beautiful country. Thousands of people used to live around here, generation to generation, all of them enjoy this scenery- the lakes and water- all the environment is clean. I spent time over on the other side, people watching all the caribou and birds and everything, all other kind of animals. It was a beautiful country, those people there, they don’t want to leave because of the scenery and people used to live there for thousands of years and they live up to 110-120, one lady to 130 (years old). They enjoy this country so much and they take care of themselves. In the summertime, they take care of themselves. They know a lot about safety. They are teaching a lot about cold weather, blizzards, north winds, all of that. There’s no other kind of clinics, we don’t have one for thousands of years, but they know how to survive in this country because it was beautiful, and we’ve been eating a lot of foods. *We are healthy and happy people for many years.* When I mention that I spent time on the first river, over on the Crow flats, on this side, on the boundary line. I spent 3-4 days with other two (people), we saw a lot of animals, all kinds of animals. That’s when I call, I talk to them and they say to us, “this is the area, the breeding place” and the breeding place means we (need to) look after that, and the next, maybe 10 more or the next generation after us, they could see what we’ve been talking about and they can see the real wildlife, not just a picture. *I’m sharing all the things I know, the important things I know, from the stories. I want the world and certain people to, to know, what we know up this way.* Thank you very much.