

*View from top of one of Tuktoyaktuk's pingos*

found a butchered whale carcass just down the beach — fortunately downwind of my camp.

Being windbound is an integral part of tripping. Travel days provide a time to push yourself physically, which I like to do not by travelling fast but by travelling long days and letting those endorphins kick in — my drug of choice. But windbound days provide the counterpoint: a chance to catch up on sleep. Sometimes I sleep for 48 hours or more and feel like I'm hibernating — such a peaceful existence. The best pre-trip advice I received for travelling in this area came from WCA members Bev and Joel Hollis: "Bring a good book; you can count on being windbound."

Behind the pebble beach of my windbound camp was a marsh covered with the fluffy white tops of cotton grass, and ringed with wildflowers. But looking across the marsh I could still see Whitefish Pingo which reminded me that I wasn't travelling very fast.

Around 3 a.m. of the next day I was finally able to paddle again. The winds had died, so the sea was pretty calm. No belugas were around me now, although I did see one washed up on shore. But the strangest flotsam was the desiccated remains of a polar bear.

A cold rain was settling in as I neared the pingos of Tuktoyaktuk. You can avoid a stretch of exposed coast by

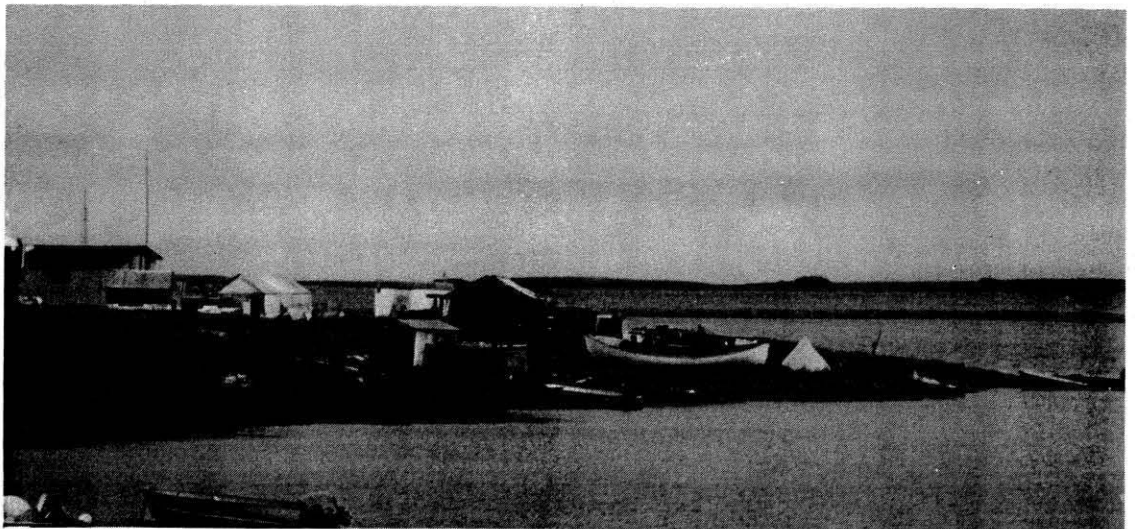
paddling in behind the pond-filled barrier islands which separate Tuk's pingos from the sea (NM718770). Despite the rain I felt compelled to climb one of the pingos. The light rain gave the landscape a surreal feel as I looked from my pingo back towards another one. I could have stayed there all day.

With mixed emotions I approached the sheltered harbor of Tuk on 20 July. I was glad to have gotten here

on time, but I didn't want to stop paddling. I wanted to stay in the waves and swells with the belugas and seals.

Approaching Tuk I saw three tents on an exposed gravel bar. They belonged to some young people who'd flown in to see the town, and were now leaving due to the constant rain and cold. As a campsite it wasn't too inviting; not just that there was no shelter from the wind, but there was also a bulldozer noisily pushing gravel around. I talked with the workers and asked where to camp and got the standard Inuit answer: "Just camp anywhere." I parked the kayak in a slough and walk about the older part of town.

Some of the residents were really excited to see me: they thought I was the solo kayaker for whom the coast guard had been searching for the past few days. The coast guard didn't find the kayaker but he paddled into his destination on his own a couple of weeks later.



*My pyramid tent in old part of Tuktoyaktuk*