

Innu Kaishitshissenitak Mishta-shipu
Innu Environmental Knowledge of the Mishta-shipu
(Churchill River) Area of Labrador in Relation to the
Proposed Lower Churchill Project

Report of the work of the Innu Traditional Knowledge Committee

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Report to Innu Nation

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1. Introduction

In August 2006, an Innu Traditional Knowledge Committee (ITKC) was constituted by the Innu Nation under the terms of a process agreement with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro (NLH) (see Terms of Reference, Appendix 1). The purpose of the ITKC was to document Innu Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in relation to the proposed Lower Churchill Hydro Generation Project (Project), as well as Innu propositions related to the potential impacts of the Project. TEK and impact propositions may be considered by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro (NLH) and the Innu Nation in the environmental assessment of the Project.

In preparation for the ITKC work, an extensive review of relevant literature concerning TEK was undertaken with the view to identifying useful methodological approaches and comparative data. A methods statement was prepared for review by the NLH and Innu Nation task force, which guided the conduct of ITKC meetings and supplementary interviews with ITKC members.

Throughout the ITKC work, we recorded a great deal of information that dealt in general terms with the biota of the Innu territory in Labrador. In fact, from my perspective, the work amounted to an introductory course in Innu natural history. I learned that *mashk^u* (black bear) can hear ants in rotting trees, *akushamesheu* (osprey) is a suicidal bird at times, male *atik^u* (caribou) eat *ushkuai-pishum* (tree fungi) in order to harden their antlers for the rut, and *utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) are found in great numbers wherever there are concentrations of *utshashumeku-esh* (eastern pearl mussel). Such information has been included in this report even though it may not always pertain directly to the Mishta-shipu area, in the expectation that it may be of use to environmental impact assessment researchers and planners.

This report starts with an overview of definitions of some key concepts and methods. Considerable attention is paid thereafter to a discussion of how Innu members of the ITKC know what they know. The discussion includes a brief summary of their direct land use experience in the Mishta-shipu area that is the most important component of their TEK. It also includes an inventory of several additional types of input into their knowledge formation such as information sharing among community members, interaction with western-trained biologists, and the mass media. This discussion sets the stage for the presentation of Innu environmental knowledge about the study area and more generally about the land and biota in Innu territory. The last section of the report deals with Innu discourses about the potential environmental impacts of the hydro project. A linguistic analysis of a sample of discourses is undertaken in order to explore some of the nuances in Innu thinking about such impacts and notions of cause-effect, inference, analogy and other cultural-cognitive processes.

2. Definitions

While the social science, environmental and biological literatures use a variety of terms to label "traditional knowledge" (e.g. Indigenous Knowledge, Local Ecological Knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge), the best label of convenience is "Traditional Ecological Knowledge" (TEK) because of its frequency of use. The term is often used with the caveat that the notion of "tradition" is not intended to imply a static, nonadaptive body of knowledge (Usher, 2000:186). Nor is it intended to constitute a pure category in contrast to other forms of knowledge particularly those that are "non-traditional." In practice, it can be difficult to determine if a particular knowledge is derived from direct or shared observations of the environment or from some other source such as interaction with western-trained biologists or nature programmes on the television. This matter will be discussed at greater length below.

Most students of TEK would agree that there is no single, accepted, legal or official definition of this body of knowledge (see Furgal, Fletcher, and Dickson, 2006:14-15; MVEIRB, 2005:6; and Usher, 2000:185-186). According to Berkes (2000), TEK is, "a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment." Usher (2000) provides one of the most refined discussions of TEK focused entirely on its role in environmental assessment (EA). In his view, TEK "refers specifically to all types of knowledge about the environment derived from the experience and traditions of a particular group of people" (ibid.:185). He advances a useful typology of TEK that shapes the methods outlined below. In summary, Usher distinguishes four TEK categories (ibid:186):

1. *knowledge about the environment.* "This includes statements of fact about such matters as weather, ice, coastal waters, currents, animal behaviour, traveling conditions...which are typically based on (a) empirical observations by individuals of specific events or phenomena; (b) generalized observations based on numerous experiences over a long time; or (c) generalized observations based on personal experience reinforced by accounts of others both living...and dead" (ibid.:186). This category of TEK "ranges from specific observations to explanatory inferences, constituting explanations of what people observe and the relations and connections among them, or more broadly, an understanding of why things are as they are." Knowledge concerning plant types and distributions and animal habitats, anatomy, behaviour, sounds, senses, and locomotion, alimentation,¹ and reproduction (e.g. Clément, 1995), as well as indicators of ecosystem health (Parlee, et al. 2005) fall under this category.

2. *knowledge about the use of the environment.* This includes "factual knowledge about past and current use of the environment (e.g. patterns of land

¹ The provision of nourishment or other necessities of life.

use and occupancy, or harvest levels), or other statements about social or historical matters that bear on the traditional use of the environment and hence the rights and interests of the local aboriginal population in the regional environment” (ibid.186).

3. *values about the environment*. These are “culturally based value statements about how things should be, and what is fitting and proper to do, including moral or ethical statements about how to behave with respect to animals and the environment, and about human health and well-being in a holistic sense” (ibid.186).

4. *the foundation of the knowledge system*. This category of TEK deals with the “culturally based cosmology - foundation of the knowledge system – by which information derived from observations, experience, and instruction is organized to provide explanations and guidance.”

Usher notes that repeated observations of the environment over time are key to good quality TEK. “The circumstances that foster TEK are neither uniformly distributed nor permanent among aboriginal communities. In places where, for whatever reason, few if any members of the community have recent or current experience of a particular area or phenomenon, there may not be much TEK that will be useful to environmental assessment” (ibid.,187).

While TEK is a label of convenience to describe the focus of this study, the term “environment” must also be considered such a label, because there is no lexical item for this term in the Innu language. When translating “environment” into Innu-aimun, it is often divided into representative constituents such as *assí* (land, vegetation), *aueshish* (animals), *namesh* (fish), etc., and translators must reiterate each of these terms every time the idea of “environment” is expressed. We have a similar problem with “plants/flora” which is usually glossed as either (1) *assit nete kanitautshiki* or (2) *assit nete kanitautshisht*, meaning “that which grows in the earth.” In the former case, “that” refers to flora that have an inanimate gender in Innu grammar, while in the latter case it refers to animate species. In both cases, they include botanical taxa such as *mishtik*² (tree), *shakau* (shrub, bush), *atishi* (small shrub, small bush) *mashkushu* (herbaceous plant, grass, fern, etc.), and *uapikun* (flower).²

² See Clément (1990, 1998) for in-depth discussions of Innu botanical taxa. Clément (1998:38) recorded *kanitautshiki tshekuana assit* in Utshimassit (Davis Inlet). It derives from the inanimate intransitive verb *nitautshin* – something (inanimate vegetal) grows. *kanitautshiki tshekuana assit* is the inanimate form of the expression. Clément says that *kanitautshisht* is the nominalized verb used for animate flora, in which case it would have to be based on an animate intransitive verb *nitautshishu* – ‘s/he (animate vegetal) grows’. This verb is not found in Drapeau (1991), however, the dictionary contains *nitautshu* with the same meaning and gender. The nominalized form of this would be *kanitautshit* (Marguerite MacKenzie, personal communication).

3. Methods

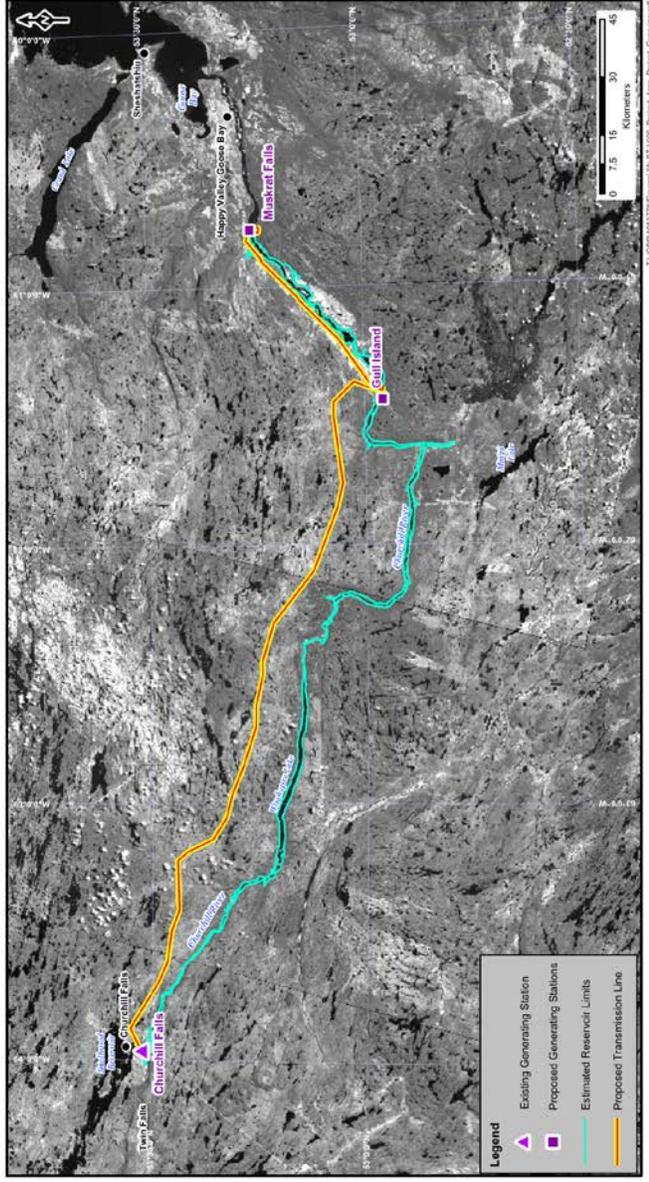
This is a general overview of the methods used to guide the work of the ITKC. More detailed explanations are provided at various places in the report where relevant.

The ITKC was constituted in November 2006 with ten Innu residents of Sheshatshiu. However, two people participated no further than the initial meetings of the committee due to ill health. Committee members included Atuan Penashue, Ishpashtien Penunsi, Katinen Pastitshi, Mani-Matinen Nuna, Mishen Jack, Nishet Penashue, Pien Penashue, and Shimun Michel, all older people who were raised on the land. Their ages ranged from 58 to 82 with an average age of 73 years old, and all of them have direct experience of living, traveling, hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering in the Mishta-shipu area. Only one of these people has a functional command of English. Co-facilitation and interpretation was provided by Jean-Pierre (Napess) Ashini, who contributed his own experience and knowledge to the process from time to time.

From mid-November to mid-February, a total of eleven focus group sessions were held with the ITKC members - four with the men, four with the women, and three with the entire group. In addition, fourteen separate interviews were held with six of the ITKC members to obtain detailed information about the biota of the Mishta-shipu area as well as more general biophysical information of relevance to the study. All sessions were digitally recorded, and careful notes were kept by me in a field diary at all times. Thirty-six excerpts of narratives from the group sessions and individual interviews were sent to Anne Rich for close transcription and translation in order to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of Innu discourse particularly in relation to propositions concerning the potential impacts of the hydro project.

The geographic extent for the study focused on the Mishta-shipu valley from Patshishetshuanau (Churchill Falls) to the mouth of the river, covering the area that would be affected by the Muskrat Falls and Gull Island dam structures as well as transmission lines within or near the valley (Map 1). Various incidental references to animals and plants in other parts of the territory were noted as was general information concerning animal behaviour, reproduction, predator-prey relationships, alimentation, etc. Topics for discussion in the focus group meetings

Map 1. ITKC study area showing the limits of the proposed reservoir and transmission line corridor (source Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro)



were chosen by me, however, there was some deviation from this plan on occasion in order to deal with specific questions raised by ITKC members. A semi-directive interview technique was used in the individual interviews (see Huntington, 1998).

Formal eliciting procedures, inspired by the methods of semantic ethnography, were adopted for certain aspects of this inquiry, but only to a small extent given the time limitations of this study (see Black, 1967; Tyler, 1969). Such procedures entail a systematic, controlled question-response method in which questions are formulated in the informant's language in order to elicit his/her semantic categories, and to avoid ethnocentric imposition of outsider (etic) ones. The researcher needs to understand exactly what question an informant is responding to, which is why the question has to be formulated properly in the first place. Learning how to ask the right question in the informant's language is the starting point in this method, and it is here that bilingual co-researchers can be of immense help (Black and Metzger, 1969). In the case of the ITKC work, for example, Napess Ashini advised me on how best to ask questions related to taxonomic classification and species identification. A stable question-response unit employed in attempting to identify *aiapish* was: T1 *tshinuemeu-a* T2?, where T1 is a term for one bird species and T2 a term for a second.

Question: *Aiapish tshinuemeu-a shesheshu* (Is unidentified bird related to greater yellowlegs)? Response: *Ehe* (yes).

Question: *Aiapish tshinuemeu-a kumushkuashit* (Is unidentified bird related to Wilson's/common snipe)? Response: *Ehe* (yes).

Question: *Aiapish tshinuemeu-a nutapashkueshu* (Is unidentified bird related to whimbrel)? Response: *Ehe* (yes).

Question: *Aiapish tshinuemeu-a teshtueshtshish* (Is unidentified bird related to spotted sandpiper)? Response: *Ehe* (yes).

Question: *Aiapish tshinuemeu-a kakatshu* (Is unidentified bird related to northern raven)? Response: *Muat* (no).

Question: *Aiapish tshinuemeu-a mitshishu* (Is unidentified bird related to bald eagle)? Response: *Muat* (no).

It was tempting at this point to jump to the conclusion that *aiapish* is a type of shore bird given the results of contrasting the unidentified species with other birds named thus far. However, this conclusion was found premature once the question was asked for *pipitsheu* (American robin). This species, which is not a shore bird, was also associated with *aiapish*. The question, then, was what criteria are applied in the relational thinking of the informant to contrast one bird with another? If habitat (e.g. feeding or nesting along a shoreline) is not a

criterion, then what characteristics of these species apply in making contrasts? It turns out that the informant was classifying these birds on the basis of seasonality.³ The common raven and the bald eagle are *pipun-pineshish* (winter bird) whereas *aiapish*, the shorebirds, and the American robin are all *nipin-pineshish*, and that is why they are related to one another, on the basis of their common seasonal occupation of the landscape. In this case, the question was of limited use in identifying the species; we learned that it is a migratory bird but nothing more.

I cite this example in order to illustrate some of the complexity underlying TEK research, where even something as superficially simple as the identification of bird species often requires a detailed method of inquiry. However, such methods are necessary if we strive for a good understanding of the emic (“folk”) models at play.⁴

A schedule of the ITKC meetings and what was discussed during them is presented in Table 1 below. The ITKC meetings started with a review of Innu place names in the Mishta-shipu valley, that derive from a large database of such names presently being validated by the author and ethnolinguist, José Mailhot. Given the fact that the majority of the ITKC members are cartographically illiterate, and one member is blind, a reliable database of place names is a prerequisite for georeferencing environmental knowledge and land use in the study area. These names serve as anchor points for organizing memories about the land (Armitage, 2005).

Having established the toponymic infrastructure for subsequent discussion, the ITKC was asked to describe in general terms the state of the environment today compared to years gone by. One purpose of this discussion was to obtain some understanding of what might constitute ecosystem health indicators for the members. As noted by Berkes (1999), ecological indicators are one way that Aboriginal people conceive and talk about environmental change. Parlee, et al. (2005:165-166) note that “the percentage of body fat of birds, caribou, and other animals at harvest is one ecological health indicator which appears to be common among many indigenous groups, including the Cree of northern Quebec...the Gwich’in of Alaska...and the Maori of southern New Zealand.” Similar ecological health indicators have been noted with respect to Innu discourses about the impacts of military aviation on wildlife (Armitage, 1994).

³ Innu divide the year into four seasons using terms that are all transitive inanimate verbs – *pipun* (‘it is winter’), *shikuan* (‘it is the time of melting snow’), *nipin* (‘it is summer’), and *takuatshin* (‘it is fall’) (Drapeau, 1991, my translations).

⁴ The term “emic” refers to the native, local or unconscious models or theories or natural and social phenomena, whereas the term “etic” refers to outsider, conscious, or scientific models and theories of these phenomena. More detailed explanations of these terms can be found at <http://faculty.ircc.edu/faculty/jlett/Article%20on%20Emics%20and%20Etics.htm>.

Table1. Schedule of ITKC activities.

Meeting week	Dates of meetings	Subject/purpose
1	16-17 Nov. 06	introduce purpose of ITKC, review place names, describe state of the environment
2	20,22 Nov. 06	document TEK
3	28,29 Nov. 06	document TEK, discuss data from biological survey
4	5, 7 Dec. 06	present project description, discuss potential project impacts
5	24 Jan. 07	present project description, discuss potential project impacts
6	7 Feb. 07	meeting with Task Force, discuss project description & potential project impacts, address questions of ITKC members
7	26 Apr. 07	report back to ITKC members

During the second and third group sessions, documenting Innu knowledge about the environment (animals, plants, habitat, etc.) in the study area was the priority. The Innu Nation's GIS specialist assisted with data recording during one meeting, where participants were asked to identify animal and plant locations on digitally projected basemaps, with the GIS specialist entering data directly into a GIS data base. However, this approach was abandoned during subsequent meetings because all but one of the participants could not read maps. Usher's category 2 TEK, "factual knowledge about past and current use of the environment" was also obtained from ITKC participants during these sessions in order to provide a good understanding of the empirical, observational basis upon which their knowledge is grounded. Information concerning Sheshatshiu Innu animal and plant taxonomies were documented to a very limited extent, and only with the goal of organizing species lists according to emic categories.

Working with the ITKC members in focus group sessions and as individuals facilitated the recording of general knowledge of the species found in the valley and their habits and habitats based on longer-term experience, and shared knowledge from other community members who have land use in the Mishtashipu area. Their values about the land, animals, and plants were recorded, as well as information about their "religious ideology" and "epistemology" that informs inferences about environmental change (Usher's Category 3 and 4 TEK).⁵ As we shall see below, Innu values were expressed through various moral or ethical statements about human relations with animals and the land in general.⁶

The religious ideology of traditionally-minded Innu is discussed at length toward the end of this report, but in the meantime remember that older Innu hold a special relationship between humans and animals, where animals are considered to be "persons," and where there is not the division between culture and nature

⁵ Innu epistemology refers to Innu ways of knowing about reality.

⁶ Innu Elders often object to biologists using tranquilizer darts to immobilize caribou and black bears, and to "hook and release" sports fishing techniques. Such objections derive from the Innu moral system which is based on respect for animal masters (see more on this topic below).

that informs so much of the thinking of people of European ancestry.⁷ With respect to Innu epistemology, the culturally-based reasoning (inductive analogy, generalization, association, speculation, extrapolation, etc.) of the ITKC members was explored in order to understand the manner in which propositions are advanced concerning the predicted impacts of the Project on the environment.

Data derived from biological survey of the Mishta-shipu area were tabled for the consideration of ITKC members during the third sessions in order to supplement their knowledge of the environment in the project area, especially given the fact that they have not traveled there in recent years. These data consisted of (1) the locations of furbearer species obtained during an April 2006 furbearer winter use survey conducted by Sikumiut Environmental Management Ltd.⁸ (2) an inventory of terrestrial species for the hydro project study area obtained from Minaskuat Limited Partnership, and (3) fish species distribution mapping from AMEC Americas, Earth and Environmental. The list of avian species in the inventory of terrestrial species was reviewed at length with two ITKC members to determine if Innu know of these species in the study area, and if lexical items for the species exist in Innu-aimun.

The hydro project description (see Map 1) was presented to the ITKC at the beginning of the fourth and fifth sessions focusing on the following components:

- two dam complexes, one at Manitu-utshu (Muskrat Falls), the other at Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Lake);
- the reservoirs behind these dams, with special attention to the new shoreline to be created by the reservoir, the geographic extent of the flooding, the habitats to be inundated, and winter draw-down;
- the two transmission lines, one from Manitu-utshu to Tshiashku-nipi, the other from Tshiashku-nipi to Patshishetshuanau (Churchill Falls).

Photographs and maps of the dams, transmission lines, other infrastructure, and reservoirs (obtained from NLH) were used to help inform the ITKC members about project features.

ITKC members had a good understanding of how hydro dams produce flooding and create reservoirs behind them, given the fact that they are already familiar with the Upper Churchill Project, and have visited various locations around the perimeter of the Smallwood Reservoir. Nonetheless, it was important for them to understand clearly the differences in flood regimes between the Smallwood Reservoir and Mishta-shipu valley. Whereas relatively minor increases in water levels inundated great expanses of territory in the case of the Upper Churchill

⁷ See Armitage (1992) and Speck (1977[1935]) for the Innu, and Feit (1988), Scott (1996), and Tanner (1979) for the closely related, neighbouring Cree. See Ingold (2000) for a more general discussion of differences in thinking between Aboriginal and European peoples regarding the nature-culture “divide.”

⁸ The survey did not obtain data on the locations of beaver lodges.

project, the geographic extent of the flooding is expected to be much less with the Lower Churchill Hydro Generation Project given the steep sides of the river valley.

Once the project description had been presented, members of the two ITKC groups were asked to consider the possible impacts of the Project upon the land, biota and other ecosystem components within the study area. Nachel Nuna, who is a fully literate Innu-aimun-English translator, assisted with this process during one session by recording the propositions concerning potential project impacts on flip-chart paper in Innu-aimun. Detailed notes concerning the project impact discourses were kept by me throughout the meetings, and extracts of some of these discourses were subject to close transcription and translation as noted previously. Marguerite MacKenzie, a Memorial University linguist who specializes in Algonquian languages, was consulted thereafter with respect to a linguistic analysis of the transcribed material.

Throughout this process, close attention was paid to the ways in which the ITKC members talk about the impacts (discourse) of the Project. Definitive cause-effect versus speculate statements, inferences, predictions and the like were noted. More will be said about this in the section dealing with Project impact discourses below.

In February 2007, the NLH and Innu Nation Task Force met with the ITKC to review the project description, answer questions about the Project, and hear directly from the members about their concerns. The discussion provided additional information concerning Innu thinking about the Project impacts which has been incorporated in this report.

A final meeting with the committee was held in April 2007 to report the results of the study, clarify certain questions concerning Innu vocabulary, and to discuss ethical considerations related to anonymous data sourcing in this report. ITKC members gave their permission to list their names as participants in the study, but asked that specific information concerning observations and impact propositions not be attributed to them directly. As a result, all attribution throughout this report has been coded so as to maintain the anonymity of individual sources of information.

4. Limitations

To varying degrees, Innu knowledge of animal habitats, anatomy, behaviour, sounds, senses, locomotion, alimentation, and reproduction has been recorded from Innu Elders resident in Mingan (Clément, 1995) and the former Davis Inlet (Clément 1998). Innu botanical knowledge was documented by Clément (1990) for a sample of Mingan Elders. Like his work on Innu zoology, Clément's ethnobotanical study was a major study entailing many months of fieldwork among the Innu and subsequent analysis. Documenting or validating this same

knowledge with Sheshatshiu Innu Elders could not be undertaken in any systematic way given time constraints. Therefore, it is assumed that general knowledge related to animal, plant and fish species possessed by Sheshatshiu Innu is more or less the same as the knowledge of their neighbours to the north and south.

Time constraints, as noted in various places throughout this report, posed the major limitation on the amount of environmental knowledge that could be elicited from the ITKC members. In addition, the close transcription and translation of Innu narratives is a time-consuming and expensive proposition, and both time and budgets conspired to limit the volume of Innu discourse that could be examined in detail. Finally, as will be clear from the summary land use biographies below, extensive land use by ITKC members in most of the Mishta-shipu area concluded in the early 1970s, which means that their empirical, observational experience there has not been updated in any significant way for thirty or more years. Under the circumstances, we cannot expect ITKC members to be able to contribute detailed observationally-based information to the current study for the years that they were absent from that part of the territory.

It is important to note that I have not been concerned with determining the veracity of Innu knowledge claims about the environment in relation to some external standard, for example, a western scientific one. The goal is to make sense of Innu knowledge about the “natural environment,” with a particular emphasis on the Mishta-shipu (Churchill River) area. The focus, therefore, has been an “emic” versus “etic” one, concentrating on Innu (insider) understandings, constructs, or conscious models of the natural environment. Furthermore, I have no interest in attempting to demonstrate that Innu knowledge about the land, animals and plants is comparable to western science (cf. Clément, 1995), as such a comparison is beyond the mandate of the ITKC, and would require significant input from people with botanical, zoological, and ecological expertise. I shall return to this point in the conclusion of the report.

A number of academic critics have observed that TEK research is a distillation of knowledge that is embedded within complex social relations and knowledge structures, and that the representation of TEK in reports such as this one decontextualize and therefore distort the knowledge (Ellis, 2005; Nadasdy, 1999; Stevenson, 1996). “A whole array of stories, values, social relations and practices, all of which contribute substance and meaning to aboriginal people’s relationship to the environment, must be ‘distilled out’ of TEK before it can be incorporated into the institutional framework of scientific resource management” (Nadasdy, 1999:7). This criticism has some validity in my view, and it should be kept in mind when reading this report. However, any act of ethnographic representation is an unavoidable exercise in distillation, and we do not stop sifting through the overwhelmingly rich detail of human experience simply because it is impossible to represent this richness in its entirety. Nonetheless, we must recognize that a report of this nature cannot do full justice to lifetimes of

experience on the land, and all the nuances of Innu thinking and discourse about the natural world.

5. Epistemology: how Innu know what they know

As noted previously, TEK does not constitute a pure category in contrast to “non-traditional” forms of knowledge. According to Usher, “[c]ontemporary TEK explanations can hardly be unaffected by aboriginal people’s knowledge (scientific or otherwise) of the wider world” (2000:185).⁹ In practice, it can be difficult to determine if a particular knowledge is derived from direct or shared observations of the environment or from some other source such as interaction with western-trained biologists or nature programmes on the television. In the case of the ITKC members, most of their knowledge concerning Mishta-shipu and other parts of their territory is derived from life experience on the land, while their inferences and deductions about the impacts of the proposed Lower Churchill Project derive at least in part from their observations of the impacts of the Upper Churchill Project. All of the ITKC members either participated in the commercial whitefish fishery at Lobstick Lake or visited the location post-flooding and were therefore in a position to witness some of the environmental effects of Smallwood Reservoir creation. In fact, no one in Sheshatshiu has to travel very far to observe these effects. With the damming of Meshikamau-shipu (Naskaupi River) at its headwaters, Upatauatshetshuan (North West River) now routinely freezes over whereas it never used to do so in the days before damming. Furthermore, one can sometimes taste salt water just above The Rapids at the end of Kakatshu-utshishtun (Grand Lake) at high tide.¹⁰

Despite the importance of direct experience, the evidence is clear that Innu Elder knowledge is derived from a variety of additional sources. Oral tradition, which refers to the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, is one such source. For example, one ITKC member said “I went as far as Minai-nipiu-paushtik^u but I heard stories from my grandparents about their hunting north and south of Uinukapau (Winokapau Lake)” (P1.28.11.06). Another member said she learned a great deal about Mishta-shipu from her husband’s father who was a recognized expert in the region given his lengthy history of land use there. “They had different names for brooks and portages that came from Shimiu Pastitshi. Shimiu learned these from people who came before him” (P2.29.11.06). Knowledge of medicinal plants and their uses was transmitted among women from older to younger generations. “*Assiuashik^u*” is the name of the medicine. It has real medicine in it which is good to treat child fevers and stomach flu. I learned this from the old women, and I have kept this knowledge all along. They are like

⁹ Usher cites the example of “field science programs [that] have been employing aboriginal Northerners since at least the 1960s, including some who are elders today. They are aware of what scientists actually do and find out, and even if they do not agree, they have considered scientific knowledge critically against their own” (ibid.:185). See also Stevenson (1996:280-282).

¹⁰ I have had a number of conversations with Settler/Metis and Inuit people in North West River in which they shared the same observations of the impacts of the Churchill River project.

doctors; all the Innu women were like that” (P2.7.12.06). Knowledge acquired from older Innu may have been reinforced by direct experience, as indicated by another ITKC member who said, “I believe what they told us, because I have seen this. Our teachers were our parents, grandparents. That’s how we learned, from the stories they told us. That’s what I teach my children” (P3.8.2.07).

Of course, everyday information exchange among community members is another important part of the process of accumulating environmental knowledge. For example, information concerning the location of migrating caribou is often circulated among the Innu in this manner, from reports by hunters or travelers on the Trans-Labrador highway who encounter caribou, or from neighbouring non-Innu, as well as government websites that publish maps showing the locations of satellite collared caribou. As a result, older Innu who are no longer mobile can keep track of caribou movements with information from family and other community members, and can thereby offer advice to hunters about where to direct their hunting efforts.

Information exchange among communities, sometimes quite distant from one another, provides building materials for knowledge construction as well, as the following examples indicate.

Stories I heard from outside. Like an old guy from Winnipeg talking about the area where the land has been flooded by the government. Everything has been destroyed. The old guy was a hunter; he used to trap and eat beaver. And all the animals that were on their land are gone. He hasn’t seen any animals that they eat. I’m concerned that the same thing is going to happen when they flood Mishta-shipu (P1.26.4.07).¹¹

The same person learned about *ueuepitshu* (walrus) second hand when he was shown a photo of one by Mark Mucko at his cabin at the mouth of Akaneshau-shipu (English River). Mucko had killed the animal somewhere on the north coast of Labrador (P1.26.1.07).

New technologies such as bush radio may be used to facilitate this information exchange. For example, P1 and other men had been out hunting from their camp at Kauipushkakamat when they came across some caribou tracks. After following these tracks for a considerable distance, they gave up the chase and returned to their camp where Shimiu Pastitshi told them that had they continued in the direction they were going, following the caribou tracks, they would have encountered an *ushakatik*¹¹ (place where there are always caribou). At this point P1 called the camp at Mitshishu-utshishtun on the bush radio to talk with

¹¹ Of course, the repetition of such propositions locally may constitute “opinion leadership” and may play an important role in generating a consensus around a given issue. One of the methodological problems with focus groups is that opinion leadership in the group is difficult if not impossible to control. Consensus may emerge where it never previously existed, and group members may formulate opinions in this context that they did not previously hold.

Mushuau-Napess. He told Mushuau-Napess what Shimi Pastitshi had said, that there was an *ushakatik*^u near his camp, whereupon Mushuau-napess went there and killed some caribou. “It happens all the time. Innu will tell other Innu, who are unfamiliar with an area, where *ushakatik*^u is, so that they can look for caribou there” (P1.8.12.06).

Nowadays, a variety of other communications media in addition to bush radio are at the service of people in Sheshatshiu, and these often contribute to the process of environmental knowledge formation. Print and electronic news media, television entertainment, community radio and province-wide open-line shows have all have an influence upon what members of the ITKC think about the Mishta-shipu and the impacts of dams. For example, in the fall of 2006, P2 saw a television news report about jammed ice on Mishta-shipu and flooding at Mud Lake. One of her children or grandchildren translated the report for her. Her comment? “Sometimes there’s jammed ice by a shoal near the outlet of Mud Lake. This blocks the river and causes the water to rise. But this only ever happened in the spring, never in the fall. I don’t understand why the water was so high. The water reached a house on a high bank. The people of Mud Lake were scared and concerned about the flooding” (P2, 7.12.06). This same individual had much to say about large otter or seal-like creatures called *uenitshikumishiteu* that reside at Manitu-utshu, and in attempting to describe what they look like, she said they look a bit like the subterranean creature in the horror movie “Tremors” (1990) that she had once seen on television.¹²

Another ITKC member said that although he does not know how *utshashumek*^u (Atlantic salmon) eggs turn into the mature fish, he had noted that wherever there are lots of *utshashumek*^u (Atlantic salmon), there are also lots of *utshashumekuesh* (eastern pearl mussel). Salmon may grow from these shellfish he thought, and some of his evidence for this inference came from a television programme he had seen, where White people were shown eating shellfish. The contents of the shells they were eating from may have been young salmon (P4.6.2.07).

A bilingual member of the ITKC had watched the news reports of the catastrophic tsunami that hit Indonesia in December 2004. He remembered that people had reported that the birds went silent just before the tidal wave hit, which was evidence of animal sentience of some kind. “Animals know about impending catastrophe as was the case when the tsunami hit Indonesia last year” (P6.5.12.06). He reasoned that the animals in the flood zone along Mishta-shipu would know of the impending flooding once the dams had been completed, and may well vacate the area in advance.

¹² I projected a trailer for this movie to the ITKC members and P2 confirmed that this was the movie of the creature that reminded her of *uenitshikumishiteu*. P2 said that the way that the movie monster moves through the ground is not quite the same as *uenitshikumishiteu*. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0100814/trailers-screenplay-E12106-10-2>

It is important to remember that the current environmental assessment of the Lower Churchill Hydro Generation Project is not the first time that Labrador Innu have participated in the assessment of the project. A version of the Project underwent a federal environmental review in the late 1970s involving public hearings in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Three of the current ITKC members participated in these hearings and one of them made two interventions before the Environmental Assessment Panel (FEARO, 1980).¹³ This process was a source of propositions about the impacts of hydro-electric development that complimented pre-existing ones formed by Innu in relation to the Upper Churchill Project. “Back in 1979 during the first environmental assessment of the [Lower Churchill] Project, the old people were still alive and they were totally opposed to it at the time” (P6.5.12.06).

In the late 1990s another attempt was made to move the Project forward, and a public consultation process was held in the Labrador Innu communities which resulted in the publication of two reports (Innu Nation, 2000; 2001). Numerous meetings were held with Elders and other community members where the potential impacts of hydro development were discussed. The corpus of propositions that emerged from this and other processes comprise a foundation of sorts for present-day deliberations on the same topic.

Another ingredient in the knowledge cocktail surrounding hydroelectric development on Mishta-shipu is Innu participation in various environmental monitoring and research initiatives. Although we have limited evidence of direct input from these initiatives into Innu knowledge concerning Mishta-shipu, it is reasonable to infer that they have helped to shape Innu perceptions of hydro dam impacts. For example, two of the ITKC members worked in the commercial whitefish fishery at Lobstick Lake in the late 1970s and early 1980s and observed biologists sampling fish for “contaminants,” presumably methylmercury. Methylmercury as a public health problem for the Innu probably owes its origins to this monitoring effort at the Smallwood Reservoir. Since then, in 2000, Sheshatshiu Innu participated in “Harvest and Country Foods Contaminant Study” in conjunction with the Atlantic Veterinary College in P.E.I. (Pollock, 2004).¹⁴ Another study concerning human body burden of methylmercury from fish consumption by researchers from the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) commenced in 2002.¹⁵ As remembered by one ITKC participant, “a

¹³ See the transcripts of the Panel hearings in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, September 12, 1980, Vol. X.

¹⁴ “The general purpose of this study was to assess, in collaboration with Innu hunters and their families, the health of important wildlife species harvested by Innu hunters in Labrador in relation to tissue concentrations of environmental contaminants measured in the animals” (Pollock, 2004, abstract).

¹⁵ This is a reference to a study in 2002 directed by Sylvie de Grosbois, Institute of Environmental Sciences and Collaborative Mercury Research Network, Université du Québec à Montréal. Five members of the ITKC provided hair samples. They had not been told of the results of the study as of the time of the ITKC meetings (ITKC.5.12.06) (see Canuel, et al. 2006). Two ITKC members

woman came on the radio and asked for people to give hair samples. People were paid \$100 each for hair samples. They were checking mercury levels” (P6.5.12.06). Five members of the ITKC gave hair samples to the UQAM researchers.

In addition to participating in these studies as passive research subjects, several of the ITKC members have also participated directly in various research projects and biological surveys as research assistants. Two ITKC members were consultants to the archaeological team conducting historic resource assessment of the Project in the late 1990s. Some ITKC members participated in aerial transect surveys to count caribou and migratory waterfowl. Another survey, presumably conducted by the provincial wildlife division, involved killing a large number of caribou. “We once worked with some biologists testing caribou. We killed about 500 George River caribou so they could be tested, and we gave meat to hospitals and Innu people in Sheshatshiu. The biologists threw away the fetuses. They were not counted. I told the biologist that he didn’t know anything about caribou” (P3.5.12.06).

One bilingual member of the ITKC has extensive experience with western biologists, having worked for many years as a conservation officer and fisheries guardian. In the spring of 2006, he participated in the furbearer survey along Mishta-shipu conducted by Sikumiut Environmental Management for NLH. He reported that they saw caribou tracks west and south of Kaku-shipu (Fig River) as well as lots of signs of beaver, partridge and porcupine (P7.24.1.07). The ITKC co-facilitator has worked as a guide at hunting and fishing camps, in mineral exploration, and as a co-researcher in a forest harvesting and wildlife study in the Grand Lake road area.

Yet another source of data for members of the ITKC is the authoritative corpus of narratives from the oral tradition known as *atanukan* (*atanukana* – plural).¹⁶ On several occasions during the meetings of the ITKC or interviews with individual members, *atanukan* were referenced as explanations for the physical and behavioural attributes of animals. One Elder explained, for example, that “the caribou has a big artery attached to its heart. If you cut it open, in the artery, you will see what Missinak^U [master of aquatic species] did to the caribou. When the

participated in the Lobstick commercial whitefish fishery and knew that fish had been sampled back then.

¹⁶ Savard (2004:22) explains *atanukan* thus: “One finds this term in numerous Algonquian languages....It is a classic genre that we recognize in the ancient works upon which our cultures were erected (the Gilgamesh epic, the Old Testament of the Bible, etc.). The purpose of these stories is to juxtapose two orders of reality: on the one hand, the collection of rules permitting the reproduction of the society in which the audiences for these stories reside; and on the other, nothing less than the totality of the cosmos (day and night, seasonal cycles, life and death, variation in animal and plant species including our own, etc.)....All civilizations (Mesopotamian, Hebrew, Greek, Chinese, Japanese, Arab, Hindu, Inuit, Toungouz, etc.) have created such works (my translation). For more discussion of this term, see Drapeau (1984-85) and Vincent (1982:11-16) for the Innu, and Ellis (1995), Morantz (2002) and Preston (2002:254-257) for the James Bay Cree.

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caribou was drinking water, Missinak^u had an otter go in the caribou, and you can see otter tracks inside the caribou” (P3.28.11.06). Another ITKC participant asserted that Innu history really does come from *atanukan*, even though some people say that the stories are just parables. “For example, Kuekuatsheu [wolverine, the trickster] was always making mistakes. Every time he visited his brothers, he abused his welcome. When visiting beaver, he sacrificed a *auetiss* [juvenile beaver]. He cooked it. He had been told to throw the bones in the water. He broke the *auetiss*’ claw nail, and ever since then, beavers have a crack in their nails. Kuekuatsheu did that to *auetiss*. *Mashk^u* (black bear) used to see a long ways, but he’s nearsighted because of Kuekuatsheu. It’s the same with the caribou which didn’t have scent before. However, Kuekuatsheu made the caribou smelly. This is Kuekuatsheu’s legacy” (P6.6.2.07).

Any reference to *atanukan* leads us directly to the realm of Innu religious ideology. In talking about Innu religion, it is important to note that traditionally-minded Innu make no distinction between religious and non-religious ideas and practices; they are not compartmentalized realms of experience and rationality. We will return to this matter at greater length later in the report. In the meantime, we need only consider the point that for the ITKC members, animal masters are able to convey important information about their whereabouts and willingness to be hunted or fished through a number of communications media including dreams, the shaking tent ceremony, drumming, scapulimancy, oracles and other signs (Armitage, 1990; Speck, 1977[1935], Tanner, 1979).

As a divinatory technique, the shaking tent was perhaps the most powerful in terms of its ability to establish relations with animal masters and other beings. The last shaking tent ceremony was held at Ushkan-shipiss, a tributary of Mishtashipu, in November 1969 by a shaman (*kamanitushit*) named Uatshitshish, the father of the one of the ITKC participants who was present for the ceremony. Not long before, he had conducted a shaking tent ceremony at a camp on the portage by Manitu-utshu. According to his daughter, “[t]he reason my father performed the shaking tent is because the hunters asked if there were any animals nearby to hunt. He told them about nearby black bears and they killed four of them. There were hardly any caribou in the area at that time” (P2.29.11.06). Another ITKC member pointed explicitly to the information-gathering role of the shaman: “The *kamanitushit* has power. He’s like a scientist, a person who knows things, by using the shaking tent, to know where animals are. He had power to see animals.... you could hear animals in the shaking tent, because it is like a radio, and the *kamanitushit* would bring them in” (P1.5.2.07).

Dreams can also be a source of information concerning animals, according to traditionally-minded Innu. One ITKC member said, “In the past, Innu spent so much time in the country; the dreams came from the animals and the land” (P1.5.2.07). Another member spoke of the predictive power of dreams. “We believe in dreams. For example, I was once at Kameshtashtan [Mistastin Lake] with Massen and Aputet. There were no caribou there for a month, however, one

morning before we left camp, Massen had a dream about naked women. We spent the day chasing caribou on an island. I guess the caribou didn't want to be killed, so we gave up the hunt. When we got to the other side of the lake, we saw many caribou, mostly does, and there we killed four. We returned to our camp and skinned them, and there before us were four does without hides. They were naked. That's what the dream foretold, I guess" (P6.6.2.07).

ITKC member land use experience in the Mishta-shipu area

As noted above, most of what the ITKC members know about the environment is based upon direct experience living in the Mishta-shipu area. However, with the exception of some trips to the valley at various points over the last decade in relation to historical resource and environmental assessment, it would appear that none of the ITKC members have spent much time in the Mishta-shipu valley since the early 1970s. The following is a brief summary of the land use biographies of each of the ITKC participants in relation to Mishta-shipu.

An important aspect of Innu land tenure worth remembering here is that Mishta-shipu appears to have been both an important travel corridor as well as the dividing line between two regional subgroups of Innu who traded at the Hudson's Bay Company store in Sheshatshiu/North West River. According to Mailhot (1997:142-144),

two local bands – northern and southern – traditionally occupied the Lake Melville region. These were sets of interrelated families beyond which one went to find a spouse, failing which one ran the risk of marrying a blood relative. In nomadic days these were the only territorial groups of the Sheshatshit band....The Lake Melville territory, as a matter of fact, consisted of two main divisions corresponding to the two groups. One lay north of the Churchill River and Lake Melville, the other to the south....Each zone had several routes reaching into the hinterland and also several fishing places situated at river mouths, where the families of either group would meet periodically.....It should be noted that the Churchill River allowed access to both zones.

Innu who lived south of Mishta-shipu had strong kinship connections with Innu who settled in villages on the Quebec North Shore. Among the Innu, this population is called *Mashkuannuat* after the important Catholic mission called Musquaro located between Natashquan and La Romaine. Innu who lived north of the river had close relations with members of the Moisie band, whom the Innu refer to as *Uashaunnuat*. In the days before settlement, members of this band traded out of Sept-Iles and Sheshatshiu/North West River (ibid., 138).

P2 (unilingual)

Born in 1930 in the Atatshi-uinipek^u (Lake Melville) area, P2 spent much of her

youth in the Akamiuapishk^u (Mealy Mountains) region, living at various lakes including Enakapeshakamau, Mishtashini, Nekanakau and Iatuekupau. She also spent time at Ukaumau-nipi by way of Mishta-shipu (Mailhot, 1988:48). Following her marriage to P3 in 1944, she traveled up Mishta-shipu on a number of occasions with her extended family to inland areas such as Ukaumau-nipi and Kamassequakamat. In c. 1947, their travels took them as far upstream Mishta-shipu as the outlet of Uinukapau (Winokapau Lake) where there was an *amatshuatakan* (ascending portage) to the highlands south of the river. From the portage, they traveled lake by lake until they got to Kamassequakamat, paddling until freeze-up, whereupon they traveled by foot and snowshoe. Kamassequakamat is where Mishta-napeu (Matiu André) had a small outpost from which he sold staples to Innu in the area (P2.29.11.06). Her eldest daughter was a baby at the time, which dates this land use to about 1947. Manatueu-shipiss, Manitu-utshu, Mekenitsheu-shipiss, and Mud Lake were also focal points for camping and harvesting activities in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s.

Her family used to camp on the portage by Manitu-utshu when traveling up and down Mishta-shipu, and her father, Uatshitshish conducted a shaking tent ceremony here on one occasion. In the fall of 1969 she and her family camped at Ushkan-shipiss, between Manitu-utshu and Tshiashku-nipi. This is where Uatshitshish conducted his final shaking tent ceremony, probably the last one to be conducted anywhere in Innu territory in Labrador and northern Quebec. Following settlement in Sheshatshiu, P2 and her family continued to spend time in *nutshimit*, in the Akamiuapishk^u region, at Mishta-mishkumi, and at Mud Lake.

The last time she lived along the shores of Mishta-shipu was sometime around 1971 when the family camped that fall on a long sandy bank called Kaishpanikaut,¹⁷ just downstream of Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Lake). Here, they fished pike, whitefish, lake trout, burbot and suckers. The men trapped beaver, and hunted geese and other migratory waterfowl in the area. Their hunting activities extended as far upstream as Tshiashku-nipi and as far downstream as Kamitinishkau-shipiss. P2 and her husband stopped going to *nutshimit* about ten years ago when the effects of old age confined them to the village.

P3 (unilingual)

Born in 1926 at Iku-shipiss on the southern shores of Atatshi-uinipek^u (Lake Melville), P3 spent most of his youth in the Mishta-shipu and Tshenuamiau-shipu (Kenamu River) valleys, along the shores of Atatshi-uinipek^u, and in the Akamiuapishk^u (Mealy Mountains) highlands. He also saw the Penipuapishk^u (Red Wine Mountains) area during his youth (Mailhot, 1988:48). Following his marriage to P2 in 1944, he traveled up Mishta-shipu on a number of occasions with P2, her parents and other family members to inland areas such as

¹⁷ This toponym was recorded during a 1980 mapping project in a slightly different location from that identified by the ITKC participants (LAMAP database, Innu Nation).

Ukaumau-nipi and Kamassekuakamat. His land use biography is identical to that of P2 following his marriage (P3.1.12.06).

P7 (bilingual)

Born in 1949, P7 is the son of P2 and P3, and therefore, his land use biography is similar to that of his parents for much of his youth. He remembers hunting caribou with his father in a marsh area near Manatueu-shipiss (Traverspine River) in the fall of 1960-61 at which time they killed 15 of the animals. That same fall, the family established a base camp at the narrows on the south side of Mishta-shipu just below Etuat-shipiss from which they pursued a number of hunting and fishing activities.¹⁸ In the fall of 1969, shortly after his marriage, he, his wife and first child lived in the Ushkan-shipiss area with other family members, at the time when his grandfather, Uatshitshish, conducted his last shaking tent ceremony. He killed caribou at the mouth of Tepiteu-shipu that fall. In the 1970s, he harvested and camped on Mishta-shipu as far upstream as Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Lake), by way of canoe on the river as well as by accessing the area from camps established at nearby locations on the Trans-Labrador highway such as Etuat-shipiss.¹⁹ P7 also acquired knowledge of the Mishta-shipu area in the context of his work over the years as a conservation officer, fisheries guardian, and by working on biological surveys including the furbearer survey conducted by Sikumiut Environmental Management for NLH in the spring of 2006. In the post-settlement period, he lived and harvested at Akamiupishk^u (Mealy Mountains) at various lakes in the headwaters of Nutapineuanu-shipu (Eagle River), as well as at Mud Lake.

P4 (unilingual)

P4 was born near Nipississ (Nipishish Lake) in 1929 (Mailhot, 1988:12-13). In the pre-settlement period he frequented the area between Sheshatshiu and Meshikamau (Michikamau Lake) with his parents, and saw Meshikamau before the flooding, traveling there via Meshikamau-shipu (Naskaupi River). He also traveled in the Akamiupishk^u (Mealy Mountains) region, almost as far as Nutapineuanu-shipu (Eagle River). He traveled up Mishta-shipu four times prior to his marriage in 1949, and spent a year in the area south of Uinukapau (Winokapau Lake). His family had traveled up Mishta-shipu as far as the portage by Kamakatinat utshu, which starts just above Tshiashku-paushtik^u and comes out at the mouth of Minai-nipiu-paushtik^u. From there they traveled to the Nipissu (Dominion Lake) area, then south of Umishtatai-nipi, going east as far as some burned hills to the southwest of Uinukapau. They trapped furbearing animals along the way and killed some caribou near Umishtatai-nipi. Arriving in the burned hills area, they killed many more caribou and spent the winter. They appear to have made at least one trip to Matiu André's store at

¹⁸ Dated by reference to the birth date of Charlie Andrew (Aug. 1951).

¹⁹ Andrew, Gregoire, and Sakauye, 1979 fieldnotes and map biographies.

Kamassekuakamat while living in this region.²⁰ His sister died at Minai-nipu-shipu (Minipi River) in this period, and her body was taken back to Sheshatshiu for burial (P4.24.1.07). He also hunted on the highland above Uinukapau in the days before he got married, and he once traversed Uinukapau on the ice. However, he never paddled there in the summer or fall.

After settlement in Sheshatshiu commenced, he worked on the construction of the Twin Falls hydro facility (c. 1960) (P4.30.11.06). A short while later, he worked at Churchill Falls for three summers where he was involved in drilling rocks for core samples. When the Sheshatshiu Innu band council started an outpost programme in the 1970s, he lived at various locations in the country including Kamashkushkatinau-nipi, Kauashikanepinanut, Kukamessat-kataht, Mitshishu-utshishtun, Pepaukamau, and Shatshit.

P8 (unilingual)

Born in 1943, P8 lived in the Kamassekuakamat area in c. 1947 with her parents, P2, P3, and other families. Her father was ill at the time and died upon this arrival at Happy Valley-Goose Bay that year. She was subsequently adopted by her “grandparents,” Shushepish and Ishkuessish, who taught her much about Innu history in the Mishta-shipu valley. She learned more about the region from her parents-in-law after her marriage in the early 1960s. Her father-in-law was highly respected for his knowledge of Mishta-shipu and the lands to the south of the river, due to his extensive land use there. Her memories of living on Mishta-shipu extend as far upstream as Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Lake) (P8.1.12.06). She and her family lived at Ushkan-shipiss in November 1969 when Uatshitshish conducted his final shaking tent ceremony. P8 lived at a few different locations in the country in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s which were accessed by charter aircraft under the band council’s outpost programme. These include Kamashkushkatinau-nipi, Katshinukamaut-nipi, and Minai-nipi (Minipi Lake).²¹

P9 (unilingual)

P9 was born in 1932, and traveled as far up Mishta-shipu as the outlet of Uinukapau (Winokapau Lake) with her father and mother (P9.1.12.06). Following

²⁰ P4 provided a similar summary of his travels in this area in 1979: “I have been to many places and another one is right here somewhere (indicated on map), south of Winokapau Lake. It is barren-like there and that’s where we had caribou. We had winter camp there.....Little Mecatina River is called Natuakamiu-shipu in Innu. We have traveled along here when we went out from the country to North West River. Then we made a detour (through the use of portages and paddling along rivers and lakes), finally reaching Gull Lake and down the Hamilton River (indicated on the map). That was about twenty years or thirty years ago; when Goose Bay was built up then” (Andrew and Sakauye interview, 5 Feb. 1979).

²¹ The Sheshatshiu Innu band council outpost records label this lake “Little Mud Lake,” suggesting a proximity to Mud Lake. However, I am unable to locate a Katshinukamat-nipi anywhere near Mud Lake. We have a lake by the name of Katshinukamat-nipi on NTS map 13G/05, about 35 km to the east of Mud Lake, but we cannot be sure if this is the same lake where P8 and family resided.

the ascending portage referred to by P2 above, they traveled overland to Kamassekuakamat passing Kakupi on the way. The men killed a lot of caribou about two days walk from Kamassekuakamat, so they moved camp to the location of the kill. When they finished preparing the caribou meat, they traveled north to Uinukapau where her father's uncle, Tuminik, had a camp, on a small lake in the highlands to the north of the lake. Tuminik was trapping in this area. After that, they traveled on the high ground back towards Sheshatshiu, descending to Mishta-shipu at the west end of Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Lake), at which point they were running out of food. The construction of the Goose Bay airfield had just started at this point, which dates this land use to about 1941.

P1 (unilingual)

Born in 1930, P1 remembers spending a lot of time with his grandfather in the Mishta-shipu valley downstream of Manitu-utshu in the period before 1941. They fished *tshinusheu* (pike), *matamek^u* (brook trout), *kukamess* (lake trout), *makatsheu/mikuashai* (suckers), *atikamek^u* (whitefish), and *utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon), trapped *amishk^u* (beaver), *utshashak^u* (muskrat), and *pishu* (lynx), and hunted migratory waterfowl and small game such as *kak^u* (porcupine) and *uapush* (snowshoe hare) at various places along this stretch of the river, especially up Mekenitshiu-shipiss (McKenzie River) and Manatueu-shipiss (Traverspine River). He was married in c. 1951, and shortly thereafter traveled as far upstream as Minai-nipiu-shipu (Minipi River) (P1.8.12.06). At this point his group traveled over land to Minai-nipi (Minipi Lake) where they hunted and trapped all around the lake.

They hunted and trapped upstream as far as Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Lake) and downstream as far as Manitu-utshu when their base camp was at the mouth of Tepiteu-shipu. They also hunted and trapped away from the river on both the north and south sides. They had established a camp here in September and returned to Happy Valley in March.

There were hardly any White people at Happy Valley in the early 1950s, and P1's group often camped where Maxwell's bar is now located. They also camped at the mouth of Manatueu-shipiss. A lot of other Innu were living up the river at the same time, but he does not know where their base camps were located. They include Tshetshishepateu, Shimun Gregoire, Tshishenniu-Ishpashtien and their families. They encountered each other along the way and dispersed to different locations.

Shimiu Pastitshi spent lots of time up Mishta-shipu and he was the "real expert" about the valley and surrounding territory. He hunted and trapped in the area between Mishta-shipu and Natuakamiau-shipu (Little Mecatina River) as well as Akamiuapishk^u (Mealy Mountains) region, including Iatuekupau. His land use north of Mishta-shipu did not extend trap as far as Kaishikashkau (Disappointment Lake).

P5 (unilingual)

Born in 1924, P5 did not visit the Mishta-shipu valley as a young man. However, he traveled up Mishta-shipu as far as Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Lake) and the mouth of Minai-nipiu-shipu (Minipi River) after he started to trade out of Sheshatshiu in the late 1930s.²² He also lived in the headwaters region of Meshikamau-shipu (Naskaupi River) as far as Meshikamau (Michikamau Lake) in this period. His first wife passed away in the vicinity of Tshiashku-nipi in c. 1943 while his second wife died near the mouth of Mishta-shipu in c. 1945, probably at Mud Lake (Mailhot, 1988:10). At one point in the 1940s, members of his group killed 12 caribou at an *ushakatik*^u ('where there are always caribou') on the high ground up Mekenitsheu-shipiss (McKenzie River). The men would leave their families for up to 20 days to hunt and trap at more distant locations (P5.8.12.06). He also resided in the Tepiteu-shipu area (P5.1.12.06, 8.12.06), and he saw Uatshitshish conduct a shaking tent ceremony at Manitu-utshu.²³

He took up wage employment in about 1963 and therefore did not participate in the band council's outpost programme which commenced the following decade. He visited Patshishetshuanau (Churchill Falls) by way of the Trans-Labrador Highway, and in 1999 he saw many areas along Mishta-shipu by helicopter as a consultant to archaeologists conducting historic resource assessment for the proposed Churchill River Project.

P6 (co-facilitator/interpreter, bilingual)

Born in 1960, P6 has extensive land use experience throughout much of the Labrador Innu territory despite his relatively young age, having lived at more than 20 different locations over the years. These include Maikan-nipi and Kaishikashkau (Disappointment Lake), Kauashikanepinanut, Kauassenekausht, and Utshimauapeu-nipi in the Penipuapishk^u (Red Wine Mountains) area, latuekupau in the Akamiuapishk^u (Mealy Mountains) area, Ashtunekamik^u (Snegamook Lake), Ashuapamatikuan (Shipiskan Lake) and Shapeiau (Shapiro Lake) in the border region between Sheshatshiu and Natuashish, and Kameshtashtan (Mistastin Lake) in the far north. He lived at Lobstick Lake in the fall of 1973 with his grandfather Shimun Pone and Shamani Andrew's family, not long after the creation of the Smallwood Reservoir. His experience in the Mishta-

²² P5 told A. Andrew and B. Sakauye (interview 12 February 1979) that the Innu "have many travel routes to different destinations; like, for us, when we go out to the Hamilton River to Minipi Lake, we would use many portages because of many long turns and rapids.... Traverspine River (Manatueu-shipiss) was a route we took and came down from the country when we came out. I have not seen all the Hamilton River, but I have seen the Churchill Falls from another route.... I have also seen Gull Lake (Tshiashku-nipi) and the Minipi River (Minai-nipiu-shipu)" (I have corrected the toponym spellings).

²³ P5 interview with Y. Labreche, 11 October 1999.

shipu valley is limited to some time at Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Lake) and a camp at “Penitenemi-shipiss” (“Mile 95”) on the Trans-Labrador Highway, from which he hunted caribou as far south as Uinukupau (Winokapau Lake).

In his youth, P6 kept his ears open and mind alert whenever his parents and grandparents were talking about animal behaviour, habitat, hunting practices, and Innu history, and he is therefore a good example of the power of oral tradition to transmit large volumes of knowledge between generations. Starting in the 1980s, he occasionally took employment as a guide at sports fishing and hunting camps, and on mineral exploration teams. He also worked on a forest harvesting and wildlife study related to forest management in Forest Management District 19 in Central Labrador.

6. Knowledge content: what Innu know about Mishta-shipu

Having discussed how members of the ITKC know what they know about the environment in the Mishta-shipu area, we shall consider now the content of that knowledge. This discussion of Innu environmental knowledge is by necessity incomplete, as noted at the beginning of the report. Time placed limits on our ability to explore many aspects of Innu knowledge in any depth, and furthermore, the “white room” setting of the focus group and individual interviews removed the ITKC members from contexts probably more conducive to remembering details about the land and its biota, for example, physical presence on the land in the context of travel, hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering activities. This report is therefore a distillation of Innu environmental knowledge.

For the purpose of this discussion, I have parsed Innu environmental knowledge according to a number of western scientific categories such as geography, taxonomy, animal behaviour and reproduction, predator-prey relationships, species distribution, habitat, and anatomy. These are etic not emic categories, as no traditionally-minded Innu person would organize the presentation of knowledge in this manner and, in fact, there appear to be no Innu terms for these categories. For example, Innu certainly possess a taxonomy for the classification of animal and plant species, and I present elements of this taxonomy in this report, but there is no word in Innu-aimun for “taxonomy” *per se*.²⁴

I wish to start the presentation of Innu knowledge content concerning Mishta-shipu with a listing of faunal and floral species that the ITKC members say are found in this region. I have organized these species to some extent according to Innu taxonomic concepts, however, I have not considered systematically the taxonomies employed by Sheshatshiu Innu, because taxonomic investigation

²⁴ Taxonomy deals with the way that organisms are classified, based on similarities and relationships among them. The system used by western science is based on the 18th century work of Carolus Linnaeus (the Linnaean system of classification), and takes into consideration not only shared, derived characteristics (i.e. homologies), but also their “phylogenetic” similarities referring to evolutionary similarities among species.

requires the use of extremely time-consuming, formal eliciting procedures as explained by Black (1967) in her ethnoscientific investigation of Ojibwa ontology and world view.²⁵ My flirtation with this method certainly supports this conclusion. Attempting to flesh out Innu taxonomy is a time-consuming pursuit not the least because of differences of opinion among Innu experts, due in part to the fact that they may employ different criteria when assigning a species to one taxon versus another. Determining these criteria is time-consuming in its own right. For example, one cannot conclude that all flying animals are *pineshish* when one knows that Innu classify *upau-apukushish* (bat) with the quadrupeds, because “it is related to *apukushish* (mouse)” (P1.25.1.07). One must determine what other criteria other than wings and capacity for flight is at work here. Similarly, one ITKC member placed *akushamesh* (osprey) in the same category as *mitshishu* (bald eagle), even though there is no named taxon for this class of birds, “because it has claws” (P1.25.1.07).²⁶

In any event, time limitations precluded the use of formal eliciting procedures in the present study except superficially, as a “spot-checking” tactic, or to facilitate in-depth investigation of a very limited set of issues.²⁷ Moreover, careful identification and classification of some species, in particular plants, requires the collection of specimens or fieldtrips due to the notorious difficulties involved in using photographs for identification purposes (Diamond, 1991). Field collection of plant and animal species was an impossibility given both time limitations and the season when ITKC meetings and interviews were held (fall-winter). Given these limitations, it is tempting to extrapolate from other parts of the Innu territory to Sheshatshiu, however, there is enough evidence of regional differences in taxonomic beliefs and lexical items for individual species to warrant caution.²⁸ At best, we can say that the taxonomic descriptions provided by Bouchard and Mailhot (1973) and Clément (1990, 1995, 1998) are reasonable approximations of the concepts held by members of the ITKC, notwithstanding any errors, omissions, and regional differences.

In order to make sense of my organization of the Mishta-shipu species inventory, let us review briefly some of the basics concerning Innu taxonomic concepts as described by the aforementioned authors (Bouchard and Mailhot, 1973; Clément, 1991, 1995). According to Clément (1990:26-27), at the most abstract level, traditionally-minded Innu divide the universe into three domains – *assi* (vegetation), *aueshish* (fauna), and *innu* (human being),²⁹ the first two being the

²⁵ See also Tyler (1969).

²⁶ See Black (1967) for a discussion of variation and stability in informant responses to taxonomic eliciting procedures.

²⁷ Black (1967:18, 45) spent 500 hours interviewing six informants over a ten month period using formal eliciting procedures.

²⁸ Furthermore, there appear to be some errors in Clément's data which give additional cause for caution in making any extrapolations (José Mailhot, personal communication).

²⁹ The place of various non-human beings such as *memekueshu* (cave creatures), *Mishtapeu* (attending “spirit”), and *Missinak^u* (master of aquatic animals) in this universe is not addressed by Bouchard and Mailhot or Clément. Some of these entities may belong to the *aueshish* class,

principal focus of this report. As far as fauna are concerned, Bouchard's and Mailhot's (1973) data from Ekuanitshu (Mingan) and Matamekush (Schefferville) indicate that the Innu have at least four parallel systems for classifying these species: (1) taxonomic; (2) hierarchical on the basis of whether the fauna have maleficent power; (3) a three-way division that associates fauna with particular seasons, namely *pipun-aueshish* (winter animal), *nipin-aueshish* (summer animal), and those that fall in neither of these categories; and (4) realms – *tipenitamun* - controlled by animal masters.³⁰

Innu taxonomic classification is my main concern in this report because of my practical interest in providing an inventory of fauna and flora, organized as much as possible according to Innu not western scientific thinking. Nonetheless, elements of some of these other systems of classification appear in various places throughout this report. For example, one ITKC member provided a seasonal classification of *pineshish* (non-waterfowl bird) – *pipun-pineshish* and *nipin-pineshish*, that is winter and summer birds respectively. He also touched on a parallel classification for waterfowl depending on whether they remain on the coast (*uinipeku-shiship*, coast waterfowl) or migrate inland (*nutshimiut-shiship* – country waterfowl).³¹ In another example, *uenitshikumishiteu* was placed in the *manitush* (maleficent) category even though it is thought to resemble an otter or seal, and is controlled by *Missinak^u*, the master of aquatic animals.³²

As far as *aueshish* (four-legged animal) is concerned, Innu distinguish between *Innu-aueshish* (Innu “wild” animal), and domestic ones (Bouchard and Mailhot, 1973; Clément, 1995:462). There appears to be no lexical item for “domestic animal” *per se* in Ekuanitshu (Mingan), but the concept is expressed as *kakanuenimakanit aueshish* (‘animal that one takes care of’). The Innu in Matamekush (Schefferville), on the other hand, use the term *kakusseshiu-aueshish* (‘White person animal’).³³ According to Bouchard and Mailhot (1973), the taxon *Innu-aueshish* is divided into six suprageneric taxa including:

while others may belong to yet another class for which there is apparently no label in the Innu language. *Mishtapeu*, for example, who resides in a place called *Tshishtashkamik^u* (the “other dimension” according to the co-facilitator) is neither human nor *aueshish*, so which class does s/he belong to? I did not explore this matter in the course of the ITKC work. One ITKC member proposed a more fundamental classification of living and non-living entities in the universe; those made by *Tshishe-manitu* (God) versus those crafted by humans. Presumably, *assi*, *aueshish* and *innu* all fall in the God-made category (P1.5.2.07).

³⁰ They caution the reader that their data are not definitive, and that it is premature to extrapolate them to other Innu groups (ibid.:39). Clément (1995:461-462) briefly discusses parallel classification systems, and points to other possible systems in addition to those identified by Bouchard and Mailhot, however, his exclusive focus in this publication is Innu faunal taxonomy.

³¹ An example of a *uinipeku-shipiship* species is *missip* (common eider). This person saw one once when his daughter brought one back from Unaman-shipu (La Romaine) on the Quebec North Shore (P1. 25.1.07).

³² Clément lists *uenitshikumishiteu* as a member of the *aueshish* class, and a type of *nitshik^u* (otter) (1995:447).

³³The term in Pessamiu (Betsiamites) is the same, from the verb *kakusseshiu* – “s/he is French Canadian” (Drapeau, 1991). *kakusseshiu-aueshish* include *uishuau-atik^u* (domestic cow), *pakakuan* (chicken), *kukush* (pig), *mantaish* (sheep), and *kapanakushkueu* (horse).

1. *aueshish* (four-legged animals, including black bear, caribou, beaver, wolf, etc.)
2. *missip* (waterfowl, including ducks, geese, loons, etc.)³⁴
3. *pineshish* (“birds”, including eagles, gulls, owls, etc.)
4. *namesh* (fish, including cod, trout, tadpoles, crabs, etc.)
5. *shatshimeu* (insects, including midges, dragon flies, domestic flies, mosquitos, etc.)
6. *manitush* (creatures with maleficent power, including toads, spiders, snakes, etc.).

However, Clément (1995:443-444) proposes a different classification, with *aueshish* distinguished from *manitush* as branches of an unnamed domain, on the basis of whether an animal is edible (*aueshish*) or inedible or harmful in some way (*manitush*). At this level, Sheshatshiu ITKC members appear to share the same binary classification *aueshish* and *manitush* on the basis of whether a species is edible or inedible (P4, P6.6.2.07). Beyond that, Clément's informants divide *aueshish* into two classes – *aueshish* (animals having *uaiash* – meat) and *namesh* (animals having *namesh* – flesh).³⁵ “Meat” animals are further divided into five orders in Clément's study – *aueshish* (four-legged animals), *missip* (waterfowl), *pineu* (*Tetraonidae*), *pineshish* (small birds), and raptors (no Innu lexeme).

As far as the domain *assi* (vegetation) is concerned, Clément (1990:27) argues for two primary subdivisions, based upon his work with Ekuanitshu (Mingan) Innu. The first I have already spoken of, namely, *assit nete kanitautshiki* or *assit nete kanitautshisht*, “that which grows in the ground” (animate and inanimate variants). These are generally plants with roots including *mishtik^u* (tree), *shakau* (shrub, bush), *atishi* (small shrub, bush), and *mashkushu* (herbaceous plant, grass, fern, etc.).³⁶ The second subdivision is *assi*, vegetation that covers the earth, rootless “plants,” as in the case of moss, certain lichens, rotten wood, and even *ashissu* (mud).³⁷ A number of generic taxa could not be placed in either of these two categories including rock tripe, puff-ball, old man's beard, and mushrooms.

Of course, some of the taxa in the Innu taxonomic system appear similar to Linnaean ones, for example, the taxon *aueshish* (four-legged animals) comprises

³⁴ The equivalent term in Sheshatshiu is *shiship*.

³⁵ Drapeau's (1991) dictionary defines *namesh* simply as fish, with no mention of fish “flesh.”

³⁶ See Clément (1990, 1998) for in-depth discussions of Innu botanical taxa. Clément (1998:38) recorded *kanitautshiki tshekuana assit* in Utshimassit (Davis Inlet). It derives from the inanimate intransitive verb *nitaushin* – something (inanimate vegetal) grows. *kanitautshiki tshekuana assit* is the inanimate form of the expression. Clément says that *kanitautshisht* is the nominalized verb used for animate flora, in which case it would have to be based on an animate intransitive verb *nitaushishu* – s/he (animate vegetal) grows. This verb is not found in Drapeau (1991), however, the dictionary contains *nitaushu* with the same meaning and gender. The nominalized form of this would be *kanitautshit*.

³⁷ As noted elsewhere in this report, ITKC members asserted that suckers eat *ashissu* (“mud”). This lexeme is an animate noun.

nothing but mammals. The significant differences in the two taxonomic systems are immediately apparent, however, when we see that the Innu include *mishtamek^u* (whales) in the category *namesh* along with *matamek^u* (brook trout), *utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon), *makatsheu/mikuashai* (suckers), and other fish species. In the Linnaean system, all birds are considered *Aves* whereas Innu divide them among separate orders, namely, *missip (shiship)* (waterfowl), *pineu* (grouse), *pineshish* (small birds), and an unnamed raptor category.

In the species inventories presented below (Tables 2-6), the identification of faunal and floral species that the ITKC members say are found in Mishta-shipu region must be considered tentative in many cases given the fact that there were no field trips or field collection of specimens. I relied on the Innu co-facilitator for direct translation of Innu lexemes for many animal species, in particular the four-legged animals and large bird and fish species.³⁸ Existing lexicons, including Clément (1990, 1995) and Drapeau (1991), were also consulted to help with the task of species identification.³⁹ We attempted to identify bird species, and find the equivalent English and scientific terminology for them using photos available on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website “All About Birds” (<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/>). For a small number of species, we listened to bird calls and watched video clips of the birds obtained from the same internet database. We also used photos of a number of fish species in order to determine if lexical items exist for them in the Innu language. With both birds and fish, we reviewed with ITKC members inventories of species encountered and/or expected to occur within the Mishta-shipu study area provided by consulting biologists working on Project baseline data collection.⁴⁰ ITKC members were not familiar with many of these species, in particular smaller fishes such as

³⁸ No competent interpreter has trouble thinking of the English names for *kakatshu* (raven) or *uapishtan* (marten) for example. There are many cases, however, where finding the correct English term for a species named in Innu-aimun can be problematic.

³⁹ Some minor adjustments were made to the scientific botanical names found in Clément on the basis of Ryan (1978).

⁴⁰ P. Trimper e-mail to P. Armitage, 27 Nov. 2006; furbearer data provided by Sikumiut Environmental Management via L. LeDrew e-mail to P. Armitage 19 Dec. 2006; fish data provided by AMEC Americas, Earth & Environment via L. LeDrew e-mail to P. Armitage 27 Nov. 2006.

Table 2. aueshish – four-legged animals

Innu name	English name	Scientific name	Notes
<i>amishk^u</i>	beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>	
<i>anukutshash</i>	red squirrel	<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>	
<i>apikushish, katshinuashkuanuieshit</i>	meadow jumping mouse woodland jumping mouse	<i>Zapus hudsonius</i> <i>Napaeozapus insignis</i>	
<i>atik^u</i>	caribou	<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	
<i>atshikash</i>	mink	<i>Mustela vison</i>	
<i>atshik^u</i>	seal (generic)		
<i>innatshik^u</i>	hooded seal?	<i>Cystophora cristata</i>	validate identity
<i>kak^u</i>	porcupine	<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>	
<i>maikan</i>	timber wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	
<i>mashk^u</i>	black bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>	
<i>matsheshu</i>	red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	
<i>mishtapush</i>	arctic hare	<i>Lepus arcticus</i>	
<i>mush</i>	moose	<i>Alces alces</i>	
<i>nitshik^u</i>	river otter	<i>Lutra canadensis</i>	
<i>pishu</i>	Canada lynx	<i>Lynx Canadensis</i>	
<i>pipun-atshik^u</i>	harp seal?	<i>Pagophilus groenlandicus</i>	validate identity
<i>pitshuatshik^u</i>	ringed seal?	<i>Phoca hispida</i>	validate identity
<i>shikush</i>	least weasel	<i>Mustela rixosa</i>	
<i>uapishtan</i>	marten	<i>Martes americana</i>	
<i>uapush</i>	snowshoe hare	<i>Lepus americanus</i>	
<i>utshashk^u</i>	muskrat	<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>	
<i>uinashk^u</i>	woodchuck	<i>Marmota monax</i>	
<i>upau-anukutshash</i>	northern flying squirrel	<i>Glaucomys sabrinus</i>	
<i>upau-apikushish</i>	probably the little brown bat	<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	
<i>nipiu-apikushish</i>	water shrew?	<i>Sorex palustris</i>	
<i>nashpatinisseshu</i>	star-nosed mole	<i>Condylura cristata</i>	
<i>tshinishtui-apikushish</i>	pygmy shrew	<i>Microsorex hoyi</i>	this name could refer to other shrews as well

Table 3. namesh – fish species

Innu name	English name	Scientific name	Notes
<i>atikamek^u</i>	lake whitefish round whitefish?	<i>Coregonus clupeaformis</i> <i>Prosopium cylindraceum</i>	"whitefish come in different sizes" – <i>atikamek^u</i> refers to more than one species?
<i>atshakashamekush</i>	cisco	<i>Coregonus artedii</i>	
<i>kauapishisht</i>	Atlantic rainbow smelt	<i>Osmerus mordax</i>	

<i>kaushkanusht</i>	three-spined stickleback?	<i>Gasterosteus aculeatus</i>	Settlers call it "kəshī". Drapeau records <i>kaushkanusht</i> as Atlantic herring <i>Clupea harengus</i> . validate identity
<i>kukamess</i>	lake trout	<i>Salvelinus namaycush</i>	
<i>makatsheu</i>	type of sucker		has white belly
<i>matamek^u</i>	brook trout	<i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i>	
<i>mikuashai</i>	longnose sucker	<i>Catostomus catostomus</i>	has red belly
<i>minai</i>	burbot	<i>Lota lota</i>	
<i>tshinusheu</i>	northern pike	<i>Esox lucius</i>	
<i>utshashumek^u</i>	Atlantic salmon	<i>Salmo salar</i>	
<i>utshashumek^u-esh</i>	eastern pearl mussel	<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>	classification as namesh uncertain, not found in Mishta-shipu. Salmon believed to come from this shellfish

Table 4. "bird" species

Innu name	English name	Scientific name	Notes
<i>shiship</i>	waterfowl		
<i>aiakuss</i>	greater scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	
<i>ashu-muak^u</i>	red-throated loon	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	called <i>kashakut</i> among Mashkuannuat
<i>auiu</i>	long-tailed duck, oldsquaw duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	
<i>inniship</i>	American black duck	<i>Anas rubripes</i>	
<i>kaiashinikanikutesht</i>	lesser scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	
<i>mishikushk^u</i> , <i>kapishkunatshstipest</i>	common goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	
<i>mishitshuk^u</i>	common merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	
<i>mitshikutan</i>	surf scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>	
<i>muak^u</i>	common loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>	
<i>nishk</i>	Canada goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	
<i>nutshipaushtikueshish</i>	Harlequin duck	<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>	
<i>shashteship</i>	black scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	called <i>kueshkeshepatam</i> in Uashat
<i>tshiashk^u</i>	gull (generic)		
<i>tshinash</i>	arctic tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	
<i>uapinniship</i>	common or northern pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	
<i>uapinnishipiss</i>	green-winged teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	
<i>umamuk^u</i>	white-winged scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca</i> or <i>Melanitta deglandi</i>	

<i>ushuk^u</i>	red-breasted merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	
pineu	partridge (generic)	Tetraonidae	
<i>innapineu</i>	?	?	same colouring as <i>uapineu</i> but it is larger when plucked (P1. 25.1.07). Clément (1995:531) identifies this as willow ptarmigan. Drapeau (1991) defines it as winter ptarmigan. validate identity
<i>innineu</i>	spruce partridge, spruce grouse	<i>Dendragapus canadensis</i>	
<i>kashkanatshish</i>	rock ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus mutus</i>	same as <i>amishkuapineu</i> which is a Lower North Shore Quebec Innu term (P1.25.1.07).
<i>pashpassu</i>	ruffed grouse	<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>	
<i>uapineu</i>	willow ptarmigan, white partridge	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>	
pineshish	small birds (generic)		
<i>aiapish</i>	?	?	possibly least sandpiper (<i>Calidris minutilla</i>) determine identity
<i>kakatshu</i>	northern raven American crow	<i>Corvus corax</i> <i>Corvus brachyrynchos</i>	<i>pipun-pineshish</i> <i>pipun or nipin?</i>
<i>kamushkuashit</i>	Wilson's snipe?	<i>Gallinago delicata?</i>	<i>nipin-pineshish</i> validate identity
<i>kanakuneu</i>	northern three-toed woodpecker	<i>Picoides tridactylus</i>	<i>nipin-pineshish</i>
<i>kaituassakuanishkueishit</i>	white-throated sparrow white-crowned sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i> <i>Z. leucophrys</i>	<i>nipin-pineshish</i>
<i>mishue</i>	pine grosbeak	<i>Pinicola enucleator</i>	<i>pipun-pineshish</i>
<i>mukamishu</i>	American bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	<i>nipin-pineshish</i>
<i>nutapashkueshu</i>	whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	<i>nipin-pineshish</i>
<i>pashpashteu</i>	black-backed three-toed woodpecker	<i>Picoides arcticus</i>	<i>pipun-pineshish</i>
<i>patshakaishkashish</i>	boreal chickadee	<i>Parus hudsonicus</i>	<i>pipun-pineshish</i>
<i>pipitsheu</i>	American robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	<i>nipin-pineshish</i>
<i>shakau-pineshish</i>	common redpoll? yellow warbler?	<i>Carduelis flammea</i> <i>Dendroica petechia</i>	<i>pipun-pineshish</i> validate identity
<i>shakuaikanish</i>	tree swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	<i>nipin-pineshish</i>

<i>shesheshu</i>	greater yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	<i>nipin-pineshish</i>
<i>teshtueshtshish</i>	spotted sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>	<i>nipin-pineshish</i>
<i>tipaikan-pineshish</i>	golden-crowned kinglet?	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>	<i>nipin-pineshish</i>
<i>tshatshakanu</i>	?	?	possibly rusty blackbird (<i>Euphagus carolinus</i>) or common grackle (<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>) determine identity
<i>uapinekushish?</i>	snow bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	<i>pipun-pineshish</i>
<i>uishkatshan</i>	gray jay	<i>Perisoreus canadensis</i>	<i>pipun-pineshish</i>
<i>utshissimanishu</i>	belted kingfisher	<i>megaceryle alcyon</i>	<i>nipin-pineshish</i>
	other birds		no supra-generic taxon identified for these species
<i>akushamesheu</i>	osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	
<i>kashakatasht</i>	barred owl	<i>Strix varia</i>	
<i>kukukueu?</i>	short-eared owl?	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	determine identity
<i>mitshishu</i>	bald eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	
<i>nutshineueshu</i>	gyrfalcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	
<i>papanatshish</i>	boreal owl	<i>Aegolius funereus</i>	
<i>pipitshish</i>	merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	
<i>uapikunu</i>	snowy owl	<i>Nyctea scandiaca</i>	
<i>uhu</i>	great horned owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	

Table 5. *manitush* – inedible, maleficent species

Innu name	English name	Scientific name	Notes
aməshkūtshish	whirligig beetle (generic)	<i>Gyrinidae</i>	
<i>amu</i>	bumblebee (generic)	<i>Apidae</i>	
<i>anik^u</i>	American toad	<i>Bufo americanus</i>	
<i>anishku-enik^u</i>	ant (generic)		uâpuîanuîutuâu (sleeping bag) = name of white larvae carried by ants. Relationship to <i>Aianishku-enik^u</i> unknown
<i>enik^u</i>	spider or ant (generic)		
<i>epik^u</i>	water insect (generic)		
kauîütət	?	?	type of spider with a big body determine identity
<i>kuakuapishish</i>	butterfly (generic)		
<i>missak^u</i>	horse fly, stout		
pîtshêpən	grasshopper (generic)		Drapeau (1991) records <i>kuashkuashkutipeshish</i> for grasshopper, Clément records <i>pitshemin</i>

puítütikuån	?	?	larvae found in throat of caribou determine identity
<i>shatshimeu</i>	mosquito, black fly (generic)		
<i>sheuekatshu</i>	dragonfly (generic)		
<i>teteu</i>	northern leopard frog	<i>Rana pipiens</i>	
tshishtaueshu	?	?	a stinging insect with a long, barbed tail. Resembles a smoky horntail or pigeon horntail determine identity
<i>umatshashkuk^u</i>	mink frog	<i>Rana septentrionalis</i>	
<i>uenitshikumishiteu</i>	?	?	large, orange/yellow otter-like creature, resides at Manitu-utshu
<i>uteshkan-manitush</i>	giant waterbug	<i>Lethocerus americanus</i>	
utshîtnâkuesh	blue-spotted salamander?	<i>Ambystoma laterale</i>	reported for neighbouring rivers such as Kenamu, Goose, Beaver, and Red Wine Rivers. It may be present on Mishta-shipu. Drapeau (1991) records <i>ushitshilauesh</i>

Table 6. *assit nete kanitautshiki/kanitautshisht* – that which grows in the earth⁴¹

Innu name	English name	Scientific name	Notes
<i>minishtik^u</i>	tree		
<i>assiuashik^u</i>	Canadian yew	<i>Taxus canadensis</i> Marsh	looks like fir boughs, therefore it is <i>mishtik^u</i>
<i>innasht</i>	balsam fir	<i>Abies balsamea</i> (L.) Mill.	
<i>minaik^u</i>	white spruce	<i>Picea glauca</i> (Moench) Voss	
<i>mitush</i>	trembling aspen	<i>Populus tremuloides</i> Michx.	
<i>sheshekatik^u</i>	black spruce	<i>Picea mariana</i> (Mill.) B.S.P.	
<i>uatshinakan</i>	tamarack	<i>Larix laricina</i> (Du Roi) K. Koch	
<i>ushkuai</i>	white birch	<i>Betula papyrifera</i> Marsh.	

⁴¹ In the case of berry plants, lexical items comprise two parts – the name of the berry, and a root *akashi* meaning “fruit/berry plant,” e.g. *uishatshimin* (redberry) + *akashi* (berry plant).

	mountain white birch	Corylaceae <i>Betula cordifolia</i> Regal	
shakau	shrub, bush		
<i>atikupepak^u</i>	tundra dwarf birch	<i>Betula glandulosa</i> Michx.	
<i>atushpi</i>	speckled alder	<i>Alnus rugosa</i> (Du Roi) Spreng.	
<i>mikuapepak^u</i>	red-osier dogwood	<i>Cornus stolonifera</i> Michx.	
<i>mashkuminakashi</i>	American mountain-ash, dogberry Showy mountain-ash	<i>Sorbus americana</i> Marsh. <i>Sorbus decora</i> (Sarg.) Schneid.	
<i>shakau</i>	mountain alder	<i>Alnus crispa</i> (Ait.) Pursh	
<i>uapineu-mitshim</i>	willow (generic)	<i>Salix</i> spp.	
<i>uikuapemuk</i>	?	?	unidentified type of alder with berries determine identity
atishi	small bush/ shrub		small shrubs that are hard to walk across
<i>assiminakashi</i>	black crowberry	<i>Empetrum nigrum</i> L.	found among lichen
<i>atuminakashi</i>	chuckley-pear, serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier bartramiana</i>	
<i>ikuta</i>	Labrador tea	<i>Ledum groenlandicum</i> Oeder	
<i>inniminakashi</i>	low sweet blueberry	<i>Vaccinium angustifolium</i> Ait.	
<i>innitshiminakashi</i>	skunk currant?	<i>Ribes glandulosum</i> Grauer	validate identity
<i>massekuminakashi</i>	small cranberry, marshberry	<i>Vaccinium oxycoccus</i> L.	
<i>mushuminakashi</i>	squashberry	<i>Viburnum edule</i> (Michx.) Raf.	
<i>nitshkuminakashi</i>	velvet – leaf blueberry	<i>Vaccinium myrtilloides</i> Michx.	
<i>pineuminakashi</i>	capillaire, creeping snowberry	<i>Gaultheria hispidula</i> (L.) Bigel	Uatshitshish used the leaves in the shaking tent, tied together around the top hoop of the tent (P4.6.2.07).
<i>shikuteuminakashi</i>	bakeapple	<i>Rubus chamaemorus</i> L.	
<i>uishatshiminakashi</i>	lingonberry, redberry, partridgeberry, mountain cranberry	<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i> L.	

unclassified in this study			
<i>ashtatshipek^u</i>	type of algae?	<i>Thallophyta</i>	identified as a kind of "seaweed." Drapeau (1991) defines it as "thallophyte (green vegetation) on stagnant water"
<i>atapukuat</i>	blue bead lily	<i>Clintonia borealis</i>	caribou eat them in summer. They look like a banana peel
kâkâuâtshî <i>kakauashit?</i>	type of alpine lichen?	<i>Cetraria nivalis?</i>	a plant that grows in marshes, thorny, has roots. Clément has <i>kakauashit uapitsheuashkamuk^u</i> – <i>Cetraria nivalis</i>
<i>kapiputepanit</i>	puffball mushroom (generic)	<i>Lycoperdon</i> spp.	recorded kâpîputest with ITKC members. <i>kapiputepalit</i> from Drapeau (1991)
kâuîshâkêpekêshâtshî	?	?	a plant that grows on the ground. Thin as thread.
<i>mashkushu</i>	grass (generic)		
<i>massekushkamik^u</i>	sphagnum moss (generic)	<i>Sphagnum</i> spp.	moss used for baby diapers
mâtâpek	?	?	a kind of water plant that grows in marshes
mêshêkêssi mêshêkêssia (pl).	?	?	looks like blueberry leaves, but no berries, grows close to ground. Porcupines eat it after the snow falls
<i>nissimin</i>	?	?	blue colour, looks like blueberries, grows in the barren areas of Akamiuapishk ^u , Penipuapishk ^u . Not clear if this plant grows in the Mishta-shipu area.
<i>pinashteshamuk^u</i>	plume moss "Knight's Plume"	<i>Ptilium crista-castrensis</i>	yellow moss in marshes and among tall trees, used around the edge of the tent in the fall
<i>pishim</i>	mushroom (generic)		
<i>shashapin</i>	seaweed (generic)		brown/black seaweed, looks like noodles
<i>uapitsheuushkamik^u</i>	caribou lichen, reindeer moss	<i>Cladonia alpestris</i>	
<i>uipitakashk^u</i>	cow parsnip	<i>Heracleum lanatum</i>	see close to salt water, in grassy areas, not many in the country

<i>uishakatshak^u</i>	fern (generic)	<i>Dryopteris</i> spp.	also called tshishiteu-nipisha (pl)
<i>uishatshipukua</i>	sheep laurel, lambkill	<i>Kalmia angustifolia</i> L.	
<i>ushkuai-pishim</i>	type of tree fungi	<i>Fomes</i> spp.	male caribou eat this fungus to harden their antlers for rut
<i>ussiteshu/ ushteshu</i>	waterlily	<i>Calla palustris</i> L.	<i>ussiteshu</i> is the spelling from Drapeau (1991)

the longnose dace (*Rhinichthys cataractae*) and a large number of passerines. They provided only generic terms for them such as *pineshish* (small bird) or *namesh* (fish).

Finally, it should be noted that this inventory does not contain the names of all species known to ITKC members. A number of species were identified in the course of our discussions such as *apishtiss* (brant - *Branta bernicla*), *missip* (common eider – *Somateria spectabilis*), *ueuepitshu* (walrus – *Odobenus rosmarus*) and *upimishui* (American eel - *Anguilla rostrata*), but are excluded from this inventory due to their absence from the Mishta-shipu region.

Readers are invited to consult Clément (1990, 1995) for information concerning the etymology of Innu lexical items for animal and plant species.

7. Landscapes: geography and habitat

In *nutshimit* there's lots of things Innu can do, but I know less about *uinepek^u*. Atatshi-uinipek^u (Lake Melville) is part of the ocean. The west end is more like *nutshimit*, but *tshishue-uinipek^u* ('the real ocean') is out at Uinuat (Rigolet). Along the coast is called *uinipek^u*, but salty, ocean water is also called *shiuapui*. The *naneu* ('shoreline, edge of water') is the dividing line between *uinipek^u* and *nutshimit*...*taukam* refers to deep water on a lake or at sea. The inland barren areas, the inland lakes, mountains, marshes, forests, everything named with Innu place names is part of *nutshimit* (P3.8.2.07).

A detailed description of Innu geographical concepts is beyond the scope of this report, nonetheless a brief overview will assist our understanding of Innu knowledge of the environment of the Mishta-shipu area. Readers are encouraged to consult Mailhot (1975) and Denny and Mailhot (1976) for more information on this topic. According to Mailhot (1975:314), "physical geography, in the conceptual universe of the Montagnais [Innu], constitutes a broad semantic system that is directly related to botany and various branches of physics." Geographical entities are designated by two parallel terminological complexes: (1) a "nominal paradigm covering twenty or more generic terms such as *shipu* (river), *meshkanau* (route, path), *shipek^u* (ocean), and *pakatakan* (portage) that effects a relatively simple delineation of geographic features" (ibid.:317, my

translation); and (2) a richer paradigm consisting of a large number of verbs based on the structure – root + medial + final. A simple example of a geographic verb paradigm is *mishikamau* ('it is a big lake'), parsed as *mish* (big) + *kam* (liquid) + *a* (referring to the "qualities of spatially extended inanimate subjects") (Denny and Mailhot, 1976:42).

The entire length of Mishta-shipu is situated within the geographic entity known as *nutshimit* ('the interior, hunting territory'). Its *shatshu* ('mouth, estuary') is at *uinipek^u* ('the sea, salt water, ocean'), a grammatical building block for the Innu place name for Lake Melville which is *Atatshi-uinipek^u*, meaning 'cut-off sea'. The headwaters of Mishta-shipu are on the interior plateau (*takutauat* - 'on the plateau'). *Nutshimit* encompasses numerous geographic entities that fit both the nominal and verb paradigms mentioned above. These include *utshu* (mountains), *shipu* ('river'), *nipi* ('lake'), *minashkuat* ('in the forest'), *minishtik^u* (island), *mushuau* ('it is a place without trees, it is barren ground'), *massek^u* ('marsh, wetland'), *massekupi* ('peat bog pond'), etc. *Nutshimit* is a part of *assi* which in certain contexts means 'land' or 'territory' in the geopolitical senses of these terms. However, *assi* also constitutes a taxonomic category comprising rock, sand, mud, lichen, moss, and other such vegetation (Clément, 1998:29). Another geographic entity, little known to younger Innu, is *Tshishtashkamik^u*, the land of *Mishtapeu* and other non-human beings who populate the traditional narratives known as *atanukan* (mentioned previously), and who were encountered routinely in the shaking tent ceremony.

7.1 Place names

The Innu imagination organizes physical space with the aid of these geographic concepts and the generic terms that label them. Place names organize this space in a parallel way, placing a social-cultural map upon the geographic, geological, and biological world encountered by the Innu. Such names often encode descriptive environmental and geographic information that remind people of locations rich in wildlife resources. Other place names reference historical and religious events. Although they are archived in rapidly shrinking oral traditions, they continue to provide portals to vast quantities of memory about particular places on the landscape.⁴² Travel across the landscape, way-finding, and the communication of travel routes are greatly facilitated by place names because they are linked to shared narratives about, and cognitive maps of, landmarks and other geographic entities along the routes (see Jett, 1997:491). Some place names record significant life events such as births, deaths and burial locations, where people camped, or places where canoe-making, salmon spearing, trapping, porcupine siniging and other forms of "economic behaviour" transpired.

Table 6 presents Innu place names along Mishta-shipu in consecutive order starting at *Atatshi-uinipek^u* (Lake Melville) in the east and moving upstream until

⁴² I mean "landscape" in a broader sense including terrestrial and marine topographies.

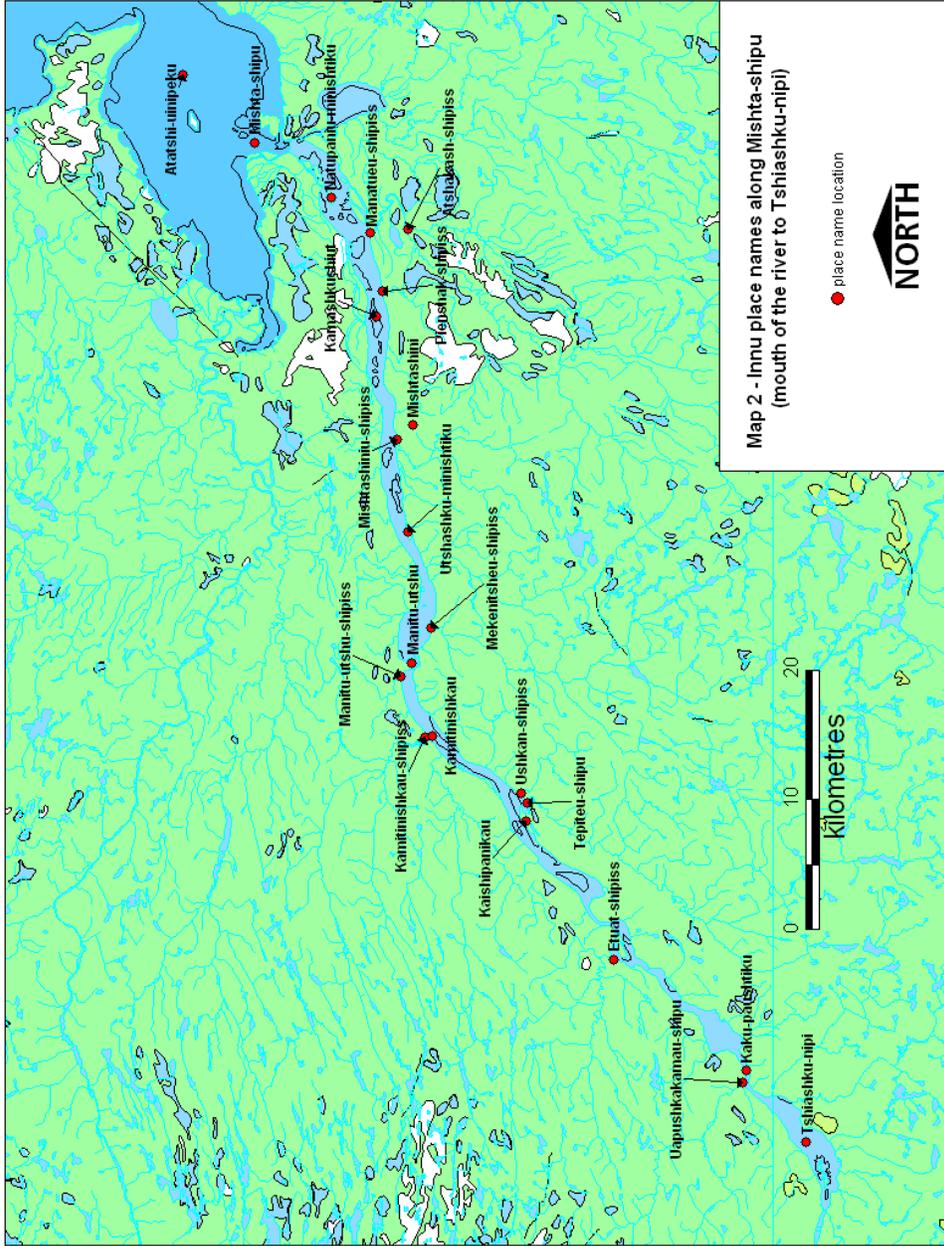
we reach Patshishetshuanau (Churchill Falls) (see Maps 2 and 3).⁴³ Two place names were collected during the ITKC work: (1) Manitu-utshu-shipiss, a tributary of Mishta-shipu located just upstream of Muskrat Falls; and (2) Kaishipanikau, a sandy terrace located just upstream of Tepiteu-shipu, between Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Lake) and Manitu-utshu. Another name, Mushumin-assi, just above Tshiashku-nipi was replaced with the preferred name, Assiuashiku-minishtik^u ('Canadian yew island').

Some of these names encode descriptive geographical information as in Kamashkushiut ('grassy place') and Kamitinishkau ('muddy place, small'), while others reference biota in the area as in Utshashku-minishtik^u ('muskrat island'), or refer to historical figures and non-human beings. For example, the name Uapushkakamau-shipu ('burnt area lake river') encodes information about the land surrounding the lake at its headwaters called Uapushkakamau, in this case a past forest fire, the traces of which may no longer be obvious to the eye. Etuat-shipiss takes its name from the late Edward Rich (aka Manitesh), the progenitor of the Rich family in Sheshatshiu and Natuashish who was employed at the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) post in Sheshatshiu between 1869 and 1876.⁴⁴ Pienshak-shipiss is named after the late Peter Jack, the father of one of the ITKC members. The late Tenesh Pastitshi, the mother-in-law of another of the ITKC members, is responsible for naming Katshakanupatau-shipiss, which means 'where an animal ran with its tail standing upright river (small)'. Tenesh saw a fox running across this river with its tail in the air. Manitu-utshu is the name given to the hill on the north side of Muskrat Falls, which the Innu believe to be the dwelling place of the giant, otter or seal-like beings known as *uenitshikumishiteu*, mentioned previously.

Uinukupau (Winokapau Lake) appears relatively early in the historic record for Labrador as "Lake Waminikapou" in Holme's 1888 account of his travels on Mishta-shipu (Holme, 1888). Henry Bryant (1893:38) recorded the name "Pat-ses-che-wan" in his 1893 account of his journey to the "Grand Falls" (Churchill Falls) of Labrador. Pat-ses-che-wan is a corruption of Patshishetshuanau meaning 'where the current makes clouds of vapour'. Minai-nipiu-shipu, which flows from Minai-nipi (Minipi Lake), also appears early in the fledging Labrador cartography as "Minipi River" (Eaton, 1896).

⁴³ The translations and correct spellings of these place names were provided by José Mailhot in the context of work on the Labrador Toponymy Project (LABTOP) database.

⁴⁴ Biographical information provided by José Mailhot for the Labrador Toponymy Project (LABTOP) database.



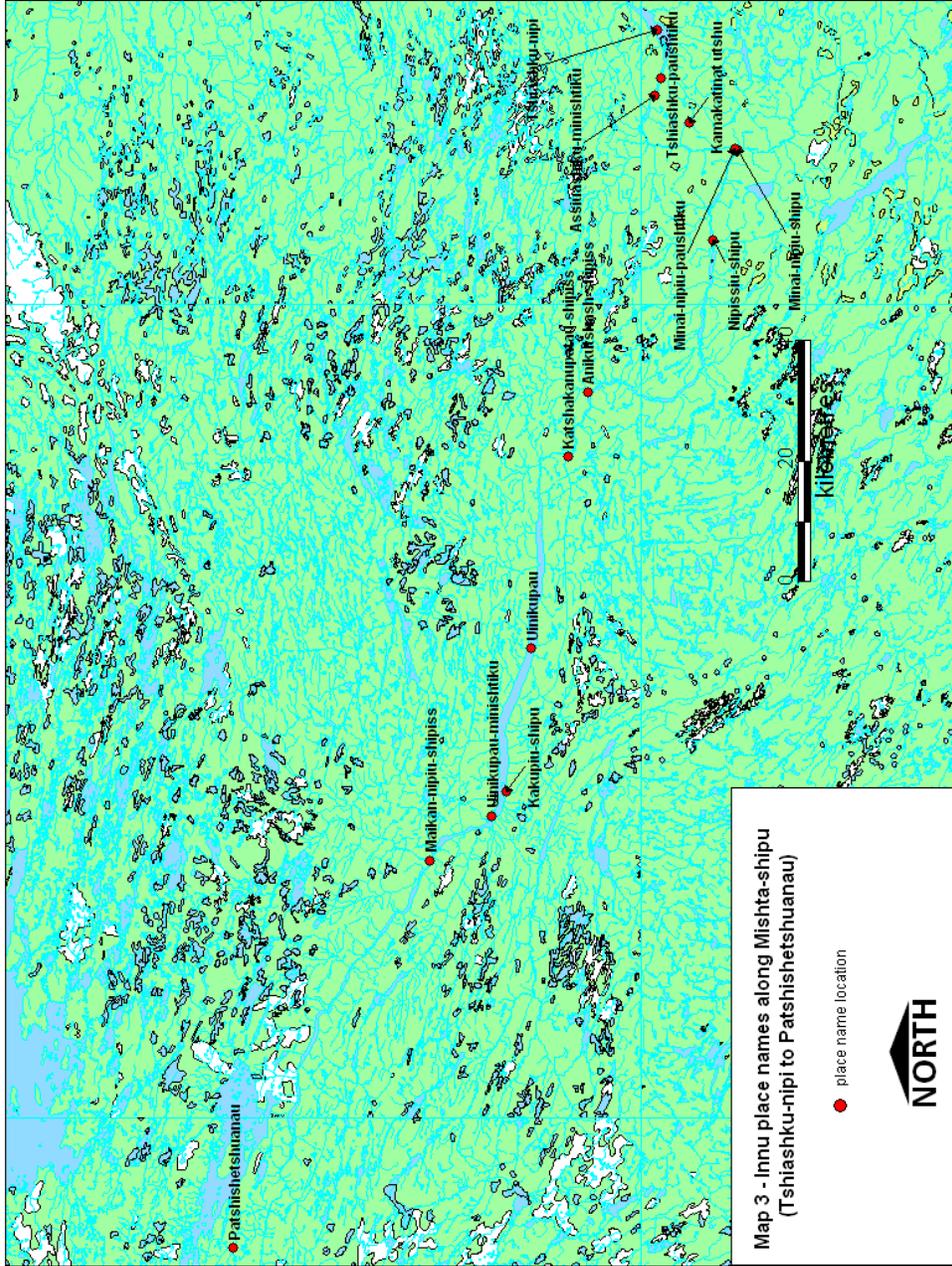


Table 7. Innu place names along Mishta-shipu (Churchill River)⁴⁵

Innu Name	Official Name	Translation	Feature
Atatshi-uinipek ^u	Lake Melville	Cut-off Sea	inlet
Mishta-shipu	Churchill River	Great River	river
Natupaniu-minishtik ^u	Man O'War Island	War Island	island
Manatueu-shipiss	Traverspine River	Swearing River (small)	river
Atshakash-shipiss		Mink River (small)	shipiss
Pienschak-shipiss		Pienschak River (small)	river
Kamashkushiut		Grassy Place	island
Mishtashini		Big Rock	mountain
Mishtashiniu-shipiss	Caroline Brook	Big Rock River (small)	river
Utshashku-minishtik ^u	Muskrat Island	Muskrat Island	island
Mekenitsheu-shipiss	McKenzie River	McKenzie River (small)	river
Manitu-utshu		Evil Creature Mountain	mountain
Manitu-utshu-shipiss		Evil Creature Mountain River (small)	river
Kamitinishkau-shipiss*		Muddy Place River (small)	river
Kamitinishkau*		Muddy Place (small)	point
Ushkan-shipiss		Bone River (small)	river
Tepiteu-shipu	Upper Brook	unknown	river
Kaishipanikau		pending validation	terrace
Etuat-shipiss		Edward River (small)	river
Kaku-paushtik ^u		Porcupine Rapids	rapids
Uapushkakamau-shipu	Pinus River	Burnt Area Lake River	river
Tshiaashku-nipi	Gull Lake	Gull Lake	lake
Tshiaashku-paushtik ^u		Gull Rapids	rapids
Assiuashiku-minishtik ^u		Canadian Yew Island	island
Kamakatinat utshu		Big Mountain	mountain
Minai-nipiu-paushtik ^u		Burbot Lake Rapids	rapids
Minai-nipiu-shipu	Minipi River	Burbot Lake River	river
Nipissiu-shipu		Little Lake River	river
Anikutshash-shipiss	Cache River	Squirrel River (small)	river
Katshakanupatau-shipiss	Shoal River	Where An Animal Ran With Its Tail Standing Upright River (small)	river
Uinukupau	Winokapau Lake	Willow Patches Near the Shore?	lake
Kakupiu-shipu	Fig River	Porcupine Dwelling River	river
Uinukupau-minishtik ^u		Willow Patches Near the Shore Island	island
Maikan-nipiu-shipiss	Metchin River	Wolf Lake River (small)	river
Patshishetshuanau	Churchill Falls	Where the Current Makes Clouds of Vapour	falls

7.2 General descriptive information for the Mishta-shipu area

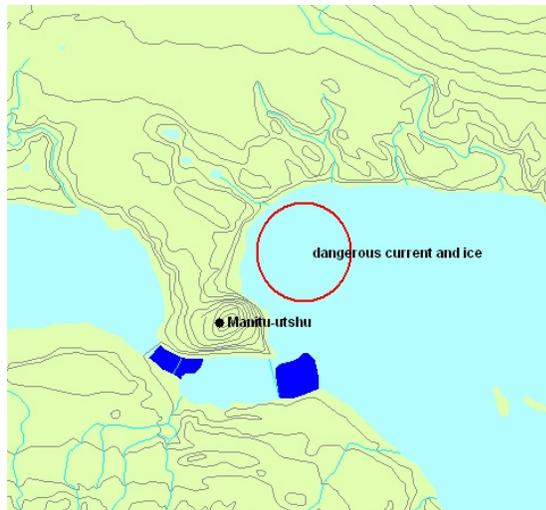
Little in the way of descriptive physical information was elicited from the ITKC members, who focused more on landscape features associated with animal, fish, and plant concentrations. However, a few points of interest were mentioned. For example, Uinukupau (Winokapau Lake) is a difficult place to live in the fall

⁴⁵ The spellings of place names marked with an asterisk* are tentative pending validation.

because the prevailing high winds jumble the ice, producing large, protruding chunks, which are hard to travel across (P4.30.11.07).

One person noted an ice jamming problem on Mishta-shipu near Mud Lake. On occasion, ice jams on a shoal near the outlet of the channel flowing from Mud Lake which blocks Mishta-shipu and causes the water to rise in the area, including at Mud Lake. Such ice jamming normally occurs in the spring, so the blockage that occurred in the fall of 2006, as reported in television news reports, was considered to be quite unusual (P2.7.12.06).

It was noted that the cove on the north side of Mishta-shipu below the rapids, and from where the portage commenced when traveling upstream, can be a very dangerous place in the spring (Map 5). The ice is packed on the south side of the rapids at Muskrat Falls, and as a result the current can be very strong in the cove near the portage. Innu avoided this area in the spring because one could easily be capsized by the current or crushed in ice. The late Etuat Rich⁴⁶ once saw some military men capsize in this area, with all hands lost except one.



Map 5. Location of an area of dangerous current and ice conditions in the spring near Manitu-utshu/Muskrat Falls

A short distance upstream, a sandy hill located by the mouth of Kamitinishkau-shipiss slipped into Mishta-shipu several decades ago, almost blocking the river. The parents of one of the ITKC members, while not being a direct witness to the event, had traveled through the area shortly after it had occurred (P3.7.2.07). The failure of the sandy structure was mentioned in the context of concern about

⁴⁶A descendant of the the aforementioned Etuat Rich who gave his name to Etuat-shipiss.

the potential effects of flooding on sand banks and other formations along the river.

7.3 Habitat

Just as there are no terms in the Innu language for “environment,” “plants” or “flora,” so too are there no terms for “habitat,” “ecosystem,” “ecology,” “ecological landscape unit” and a wide range of other terms from western biological science. The Innu language contains lexemes that reference landscape features in relation to concentrations of animal and plant species, but these terms do not translate neatly into western scientific terms such as habitat. The term *ashkui* is a case in point. It refers to a ‘clearwater area’, an area of open water surrounded by ice in the spring or fall.⁴⁷ Some *ashkui* may be open all year round due to the strong current there (e.g. off Netauakau [Sandy Point] near Sheshatshiu), while others only form at river junctions (*takuatuepan*), lake outlets (*kupitan*), or river and brook estuaries (*shatshu*) during fall freeze-up and spring break-up. *Ashkui* can be dangerous places due to the hazards they pose to travel across ice, and so for reasons of safety, people with experience in country living are knowledgeable about the locations of *ashkui* and how they change shape according to fluctuations in temperature, wind velocity, and precipitation. Moreover, Innu associate *ashkui* with *amishk^u* (beaver), *utshashk^u* (muskrat), *nitshik^u* (otter), *namesh* (fish), *mitshishu* (bald eagle), and *shiship* (migratory waterfowl), and as a result they established their spring camps near *ashkui* in order to take advantage of the species abundance there.

Members of the ITKC noted that the mouths of rivers and brooks along the length of Mishta-shipu are, generally speaking, productive places for various animal and fish species, not just when *ashkui* form, but at other times of the year as well. Frequent mention was made of large numbers of ducks and geese at the mouths of brooks in the spring. Lots of *utshashk^u* (muskrat) were known to frequent marshes near the mouths of these brooks (P1.19.11.06).

While *ashkui* labels an ephemeral geographic feature that exists only in relation to ice-laden water bodies, it contains no obvious reference to species abundance, because not all *ashkui* are equal in terms of the numbers of animals that may congregate there each fall or spring. The Innu use a number of other terms to refer to species abundance, all based on the initial *ushak-*,⁴⁸ and several of these terms were used to identify locations along Mishta-shipu where various species were plentiful. It is important to note that these terms only refer

⁴⁷ See <http://www.innu.ca/ashkui.html> for a linguistic analysis of the term. The characteristics of *ashkui*, according to Sheshatshiu Innu, have been described at length in a Gorsebrook Research Institute study by Fletcher, Breeze and Sable (2000). According to Innu interviewed for the study, *ashkui* first open on Mishta-shipu in March (Fletcher and Breeze, 2000:6).

⁴⁸ The k- palatalizes to tshi when it is followed by the front vowels i and e, but stays k when followed by the back vowels a and u (Marguerite Mackenzie e-mail to P. Armitage 11 May 2007).

to abundance; they imply nothing about the habitat or ecological relationships at each place.

ITKC members were asked to describe the characteristics of each *ushak*- (place of species abundance) with the view to identifying particular habitat features associated with each place. The descriptions that resulted are of a general nature and provide no definitive guide to habitat types that could be linked to a given lexeme. At best, we can say that the terms operate as conceptual filters that restrict the places where hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering efforts should be focused. For example, if one knows that *ushakashk*^u ('where there is always black bear') is generally a burned area with lots of berries, one will not bother to hunt bear in dense black spruce forests or other places that have few berry plants.

The following is the list of terms for places of abundance mentioned by ITKC members. It is not exhaustive, however, as it does not cover a number of such places listed in Drapeau's dictionary (1991) such as *ushakak*^u (porcupine), *ushakapishu* (lynx), *ushakapush* (hare), *ushakatsheshu* (fox), *ushakatshik*^u (otter), and *ushakitshashk*^u (muskrat).

Ushakamesh – 'where there is always fish'. In general, these are located at the mouths of brooks and at points, but they may also be found in deep water, just off-shore. ITKC members said that they used to fish *kukamess* (lake trout), *atikamek*^u (whitefish), *tshinusheu* (pike), *makatsheu/mikuashai* (suckers), *minai* (burbot), and *matamek*^u (brook trout) at the mouths of the brooks along Mishta-shipu (ITKC, 22.11.06). Wherever there is lake trout, there is also burbot (P9, 22.11.06). They noted that there are hardly any ponds in the Mishta-shipu valley, and so they would travel up the brooks away from the river to ponds at higher elevations where fish were known to be plentiful (P2, 17.11.06). They would identify new *ushakamesh* through experimentation – "Sometimes when you don't find fish, you keep checking in different places, leaving the hooks out over night to see what you get" (P6.26.1.07).

Ushakatik^u – 'where there is always caribou'. ITKC members said that the best places for *ushakatik*^u are where there are moss and lichen, and some *ushakatik*^u have reputations for being fairly predictable places to find caribou. "When caribou find a lot of moss on the hills, that's where they like to eat. So anywhere they go, they remember the hills where they ate previously. When Innu remember finding caribou in a particular spot, they return there again to look for the caribou" (P1.26.1.07). Although ITKC members or their relatives had killed caribou very close to Mishta-shipu in the past, and one member had tracked Penipuapishk^u (Red Wine Mountains) caribou as far as Uinukupau (Winokapau Lake), no *ushakatik*^u were identified on the floor of the valley. Excluding the higher elevation regions north and south of the river, kills sites for caribou were identified close to the southern shore of Mishta-shipu about 3.5 km downstream of Ushkan-shipiss, on the south side of Mishta-shipu across from the mouth of

Etuat-shipis, and in a marsh between Manatueu-shipu (Traverspine River) and Atshakash-shipiss, just upstream of the junction between the two rivers (P7.20.11.06).

Ushakamishk^u – ‘where there is always beaver’. These are places where there are lots of alder and willow bushes as well as birch and spruce trees that beaver like to eat. The beaver’s favourite food is willow, alder and *ushkatamui*, the rhizome of *ushteshu* (waterlily). “*Ushkatamui* is like cabbage for the beaver” (P1.26.1.07). Sometimes beavers move to new areas because the water is “no good” at their ponds. “After they create the reservoir, the trees die, like burned wood. There’s lots of food there for the beavers. When searching for beaver, you look for signs up a river, such as cuttings. In the spring, they peel the bark off black spruce and other trees” (P4.7.2.07).⁴⁹ “If beavers make one lodge, they keep reproducing, and they keep using the same lodge, where they feel secure. It’s like us. If someone builds a cabin, different people will use it. You trap the beavers out of a lodge, and new beavers will return to occupy it” (P1.26.1.07).

ITKC members said that in the old days, *amishk^u* (beaver) were found during the spring at the mouths of every brook along Mishta-shipu (P1.28.11.06). There are shoals along some of the rivers such as Manatueu-shipu (Traverspine River), and these are too shallow for beaver lodges, so they would have to travel up the brooks a little, looking for ponds with beavers in them (P1.19.11.06). Nonetheless, some particularly good beaver hunting and trapping areas were identified in the Mishta-shipu valley including a small channel behind an island on the north side of Mishta-shipu across from the mouth of Ushkan-shipiss (P7.20.11.06), along the lower reaches of Manitu-utshu-shipiss, as well as about three kilometres up Kamitinishkau-shipiss and Tepiteu-shipu. A narrow channel of water, disconnected from Mishta-shipu, just upstream of Kaishipanikau, was also considered a hotspot. Four or five lodges had been found in this location (P7.20.11.06). There are river channels near the mouth of Manatueu-shipiss (Traverspine River) that were good for beaver, and three lodges were located there at one time (P7.28.11.06).

Ushakashk^u – ‘where there is always black bear’. These are places where berries are plentiful in late summer and the fall, for example, in burnt woods. “The reason they like it here is because there are lots of red berries and blue berries in these burned areas. Their *uatashk^u* (dens) are usually far from their berry feeding areas” (P1.26.1.07).

One good place for *mashk^u* (black bear) was on the north side of Mishta-shipu just upstream of the junction with Kamitinishkau-shipiss. The banks of Mishta-shipu consist of red mud in this location. Black bears made dens in the hills just above these banks (P1.20.11.06).

⁴⁹ The word used here for “signs” was *nametau* which is a verb meaning ‘he leaves traces, marks of his presence’ (Drapeau, 1991, my translation).

Ushatshissu – ‘where there is always geese’. These include muddy flats near the mouths of brooks, as well as grassy areas, marshes with small ponds, and also barren hill areas with berries (P1, P6.26.1.07). One of the most important areas for *nishk* (Canada goose) was the mouth of Tepiteu-shipu and nearby Kaishipanikaut area located between Tshiasku-nipi (Gull Lake) and Muskrat Falls) (see below).

Ushatshineu – ‘where there is always partridge’. These are densely wooded points and along rivers where there is a good mixture of young and old fir trees. *Pineu* (partridges) will stay in these areas for long periods of time (P6.26.1.07). “The *innineu* (spruce grouse) are in the tall fir trees in sheltered areas along the sides of the rivers. On the points where there are lots of fir trees, that’s where you find lots of *innineu*” (P1.8.12.06).

While no lexical items were collected to identify concentrations of plant species, ITKC members did have general comments to make about their distribution within the territory. Some stands of large *minaiik*^u (white spruce) were identified by the committee and noted for providing nesting locations for *akushamesheu* (osprey). “Osprey are everywhere even on hydro poles. When we traveled up Mishta-shipu, we saw nests on white spruce trees along Mishta-shipu” (P3.24.11.06). Other tree species mentioned include *innasht* (balsam fir), *sheshekatshik*^u (black spruce), *uatshinakan* (tamarack) and *ushkuai* (birch). Most importantly for the ITKC is the presence of “strong medicine” plants in the river valleys (P2.29.11.06). Willows and dogberry are found in brooks or near salt water, and they are the few medicinal plants that grow outside the valleys, but they are not very strong (P9.29.11.06). ITKC members made special mention of a “rare” plant named *assiuashik*^u (Canadian yew) which they had seen on a small island just upstream of Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Lake). This and other medicinal plants are discussed below in the section dealing with “*Nutshimiu-natukun* (‘country medicine’).”

7.4 General species distribution

Members of the ITKC spoke in more general terms about a number of locations where they had hunted, trapped, fished, and gathered in the Mishta-shipu valley. Perhaps the most important of these locations was the area between Ushkan-shipiss and Kaishipanikaut, centred at the mouth of Tepiteu-shipu. The following is an enumeration of locations along Mishta-shipu where various animals and plants were harvested or observed.

Mouth of Mishta-shipu to Manitu-utshu

- *Innatshik^u* (hooded seal?), *pipun-atshik^u* (harp seal?) and *pitshuatshik^u* (ringed seal?) travel as far as Manitu-utshu. The only seal that goes far inland is *innatshik^u*, for example, as far as Atshiku-nipi (Seal Lake) (P4.20.11.06).⁵⁰
- *Kauapishisht* (Atlantic rainbow smelt) are found at the mouth of Mishta-shipu and into Mud Lake, but no further up the river (ITKC.20.11.06).
- “*Atikamek^u* (whitefish), *makatsheu/mikuashai* (suckers), *tshinusheu* (pike), and *minai* (burbot) are found on the brooks between Manatueu-shipu and Manitu-utshu” (P2.22.11.06; ITKC.20.11.06).
- “*Utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) go as far as Manitu-utshu. Innu caught salmon in nets below the falls. There were lots of seals in the vicinity of the small island just below the falls” (P1.20.11.06).
- “There were a lot of *nishk* (Canada geese) at Utshashku-minishtik^u in the fall” (P1.28.11.06).
- “*Uenitshikumishiteu* looks like the ‘sea lion’ on the match boxes. I saw them on the ice just below the falls at Manitu-utshu in the spring time. My father and grandfather saw it as well [on different occasions]. It can travel underground and make the ground move look like a wave. It is a very dangerous, powerful animal” (P2.7.12.06).

Manitu-utshu to Minai-nipiu-shipu

- In the stretch of river between Manitu-utshu and Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Lake), there are lots of *pashpassu* (ruffed grouse) where there are birch trees (ITKC.20.11.06).
- There are no *utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon), but there are *tshinusheu* (pike), *atikamek^u* (whitefish), *kukamess* (lake trout), *makatsheu/mikuashai* (suckers), and *minai* (burbot) in this part of the river (ITKC.20.11.06).
- There are lots of *amishk^u* (beaver) up this stretch as well. They build dams on the brooks (ITKC.20.11.06).
- *Atik^u* (caribou) stay in this area in the winter (ITKC.20.11.06).
- Above Manitu-utshu, there are *kukamess* (lake trout), *matamek^u* (brook trout), *atikamek^u* (whitefish), *tshinusheu* (pike), *minai* (burbot), and *makatsheu/mikuashai* (suckers) (P2.22.11.06).
- “A brook near Manitu-utshu is called Manitu-utshu-shipiss. It had *ushakamishk^u* (‘where there is always beaver’)” (P3.5.12.06).

⁵⁰ More research is required in order to clarify the identities of the seal species mentioned (in Innu-aimun) by ITKC members. Clément (1995) collected *innatshuk^u* for harbour seal (*Phoca vitulina*), and *pupun-atshuk^u* for harp seal on the Quebec North Shore (*Phoca groenlandica*), and *innatshik^u* for grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) and *pitshu-atshik^u* for ringed seal (*Phoca hispida*) in Utshimassit (Davis Inlet) (1998).

Manatueu-shipiss

- “We found *amishk^u* (beaver), *nitshik^u* (otter), *atshikash* (mink), *matsheshu* (fox), *mashk^u* (black bear), and *pishu* (lynx) up Mantueu-shipiss. There were *uapush* (snowshoe hare) everywhere, and *kak^u* (porcupine) on both sides of the river. In the spring, there were *nishk* (geese), *inniship* (American black duck), *muak^u* (common loon), *ashu-muak^u* (red-throated loon), *mitshikutan* (surf scoter), *shashteship* (black scoter), *aiiu* (long-tailed duck), and *mishtishuk^u* (common merganser) up the river. We put our nets along the river and caught *tshinusheu* (pike), *matamek^u* (brook trout), *kukamess* (lake trout), *makatsheu/mikuashai* (suckers), and *atikamek^u* (white fish). *Utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) goes up Manatueu-shipiss, as do seals, as far as the rapids. We found lots of berries, including *mushuminakashi* (squashberry), *shikuteuminakashi* (bake apple), *innitshiminakashi* (skunk currant?) in the marshes near the mouth of the river” (P1.19.11.06).
- “There are lots of *utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) and brook trout on Manatueu-shipiss (P4.20.11.06). I caught salmon at Manatueu-shipiss in the summer by canoe” (P4.6.02.07).
- “We used to spear fish up Manatueu-shipiss. There are steep rapids upstream where the *utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) cannot travel further. That’s where we speared the salmon” (P2.22.11.06).
- “We caught a lot of *matamek^u* (brook trout) up Manatueu-shipiss at freeze-up, and some of these trout were quite large. There is lots of *innasht* (balsam fir) along the river which is not very deep. Lots of *pineu* (partridge), *uapishtan* (marten), *amishk^u* (beaver), and *kak^u* (porcupine) – all kinds of animals. It is a good place for beaver and marten. There’s a big marsh near Manatueu-shipiss – that’s where we got *atik^u* (caribou). We killed caribou there in the fall or the spring when we came from Akamiuapishk^u (Mealy Mountains). Caribou calves are born in marshes” (P2.22.11.06).

Mekenitsheu-shipiss (McKenzie River)

- “We went up Mekenitsheu-shipiss where there were berries were along the shores of the river, on both sides” (P1.20.11.06).
- “We only traveled as far up the river as the big rapids. There was lots of water in this river in former days, and there were *utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) in the river as far upstream as the rapids. Here the salmon would get stuck. There used to be a lot of *pitshuatshik^u* (ringed seal?) up the river as well” (P3.23.11.06).

Tepiteu-shipu

- Tepiteu-shipu is a good place for *nishk* (Canada geese) in the spring and fall. There were lots of geese and ducks on the ice here by the *ashkui* (area of open water). The ice breaks up early at the mouth of the river (P1, P3.28.11.06).

- There is lots of *uapineu-mitshim* (willow) at Tepiteu-shipu (P1.5.12.06).
- There is lots of *uapineu* (willow ptarmigan) right across from the mouth of Tepiteu-shipu, and this spot is *ushatshineu*, a place where there are always partridge. There were lots of willow ptarmigan there in December. At this time of the year, the *innineu* (spruce grouse) are in the tall fir trees along the sides of the river (P1.8.12.06).
- There are all kinds of *ushakamishk^u* (where there is always beaver) in the Tepiteu-shipu area (P3.5.12.06).
- There are lots of *upau-apikushish* (little brown bat) in the Mishta-shipu area. They are found in areas with lots of white spruce (P2.29.11.06). There are lots of bats at Tepiteu-shipu (P9.29.11.06).
- One of the ITKC members once killed a *uapikunu* (snowy owl) at Tepiteu-shipu (P1.25.1.07).
- There is a good feeding area for *nishk* (Canada geese) at Tepiteu-shipu (P7.5.12.06).
- There are lots of the following fish at the mouth of the river – *kukamess* (lake trout), *matamek^u* (brook trout), *tshinusheu* (pike), *atikamek^u* (whitefish), and *makatsheu/mikuashai* (suckers), all fish caught in a net which was placed off the beach where we set up our tent recently on the visit to Ushkan-shipiss.⁵¹ “Back then, we got too many fish in the net so we didn’t put it out long. There were no *minai* (burbot) in the net, but my father saw burbot in this area in the past. One also finds *atshakashamekush* (cisco) in this area. They can be eaten – fried. You find this species (cisco) anywhere in the country. You also find a fish called *kaushkanush* (probably the three-spined stickleback)” (P7.23.11.06).

Kaishipanikaut

- There are lots of *mush* (moose) in the Kaishipanikaut area (P7.24.11.06).
- In the fall, *nishk* (Canada goose), *ushuk^u* (red-breasted mergansers), (*inniship*) American black ducks, *mishikushk^u* (common goldeneye), and *uapinniship* (green-winged teal) were killed in the Kaishipanikaut area. *Aiakuss* (greater scaup) and *kaiashinikanikutesht* (lesser scaup) are also found here. The ducks are the most plentiful here in the spring; not that many in the fall (P3.24.11.06).
- Kaishipanikaut is a good place for *nishk* (Canada goose) in the spring and fall (P1, P3. 28.11.06).

Etuat-shipiss

- There are *tshinusheu* (pike), *minai* (burbot), *atikamek^u* (whitefish), *kukamess* (lake trout), and *makatsheu/mikuaishai* (suckers) at the mouth of Etuat-shipiss. In the spring, when the water is high, you can see the fish in the shallow areas (P3.24.11.06).

⁵¹ This was the fieldtrip facilitated by NLH in October 2006 to Ushkan-shipiss, the last place anywhere in Innu territory where the shaking tent ceremony was performed.

- There are *uanan* (ouananiche – *Salmo salar*) in Lobstick Lake, but there appear to be none in Mishta-shipu (P2.22.11.06). However, there may be ouananiche at the mouth of Etuat-shipiss (P3.24.11.06).

Uapushkakamau-shipu

- *Kukamess* (Lake trout), *matamek^u* (brook trout) (on occasion), *tshinusheu* (pike), and *makatsheu/mikuaishai* (suckers) were caught at the mouth of Uapushkakamau-shipu. “Some of the suckers caught by a small island here were huge. We fished with a line, float and baited hook. Dry wood was used for floats. You could see the float bobbing up and down when the fish were nibbling at the bait” (P3.24.11.06).

Tshiashku-nipi

- All kinds of ducks are found here in the spring, migrating through from the south. Other species found here at this time of the year include *muak^u* (common loon), *ashu-muak^u* (red-throated loon), *shesheshu* (greater yellow-legs), and *nutapashkueshu* (whimbrel) (P3.24.11.06).

No specified location along Mishta-shipu

- *Shakuaikanish* (tree swallow) nests in river banks on Mishta-shipu (P3.23.11.06).
- *Utshissimanishu* (belted kingfisher) is a summer bird that eats small fish and nests in holes along the banks of Mishta-shipu (P1.25.1.07).
- There are two types of woodpeckers here: (1) *pashpashteu* (black-backed three-toed woodpecker) which stays all year long; and (2) *kanakuneu* (northern three-toed woodpecker) which spends only the summer months in the Mishta-shipu region (P4.1.12.06).
- A small bird called *shakau-pineshish* (possibly the common redpoll or yellow warbler) is another small bird found up Mishta-shipu in the summer (P3.23.11.06).
- *Shesheshu* (greater yellowlegs) is found everywhere including Mishta-shipu. They like the marshes and along grassy, muddy shorelines (P3. 23.11.06).
- *Pipitsheu* (American robin) is everywhere including Mishta-shipu.
- *Teshtueshtshish* (spotted sandpiper) and another bird called *aiapish* (possibly the least sandpiper - *Calidris minutilla*) are seen on sandy beaches along Atatshi-uinipek^u (Lake Melville), as well as along Mishta-shipu in summer.
- *Mishue* (pine grosbeak) lives in the area all year round. Innu used to eat this bird. (P3.23.11.06).
- *Kamushkuashit* (Wilson’s snipe) is found in the marshes up Mishta-shipu. You hear it in the spring time (P3.23.11.06).
- “*Uapinekushish* (snow bunting?) is seen in late March or April not in December, January, or February, and therefore it is *nipin-pineshish* (summer

bird). They are seen in flocks heading south in November, and yes, they are seen in Mishta-shipu" (P1.26.1.07).

- *Mukamishu* (American bittern) is found along rivers, but not many are seen inland (P3.23.11.06).
- *Kashkanatshish* (rock ptarmigan) are found in the barren areas on the mountains, for example, on *Penipuapishk^u* (Red Wine Mountains) and *Akamiuapishk^u* (Mealy Mountains). They eat *atikupemak^u* (tundra dwarf birch) which is like a small willow only smaller (P1.8.12.06). They have been seen in the *shakau* (bush, shrub) along the shore of Mishta-shipu, but they were probably just traveling through on the way to the barrens (P1.25.1.07).
- "You find *mishtapush* (arctic hare – *Lepus arcticus*) in the barrens but not in the south. Snowshoe hare are found in the south, including in the Mishta-shipu area" (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- Utshîtnâkuesh (possibly the blue-spotted salamander - *Ambystoma laterale*) is found in Labrador, and Innu have seen it at Kamikuakamiu-shipu (Red Wine River), Mitinissiu-shipu (Beaver River), Uashikanashteu-shipu (Goose River), and Tshenuamiu-shipu (Kenamu River). It could also be in the Mishta-shipu area (P1/P5. 28.11.06).
- "*Utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) can go up any small brook as long as there are no major falls. We saw *utshashumeku-esh* (eastern pearl mussel) in many brooks, but we never saw them in the brooks going into Mishta-shipu below Manitu-utshu, so the fish wouldn't spawn there. It is sandy at the mouths of these brooks" (P2. 22.11.06; P3. 23.11.06).
- *Upau-anukutshash* (northern flying squirrel) are found everywhere. There are a lot of them at the 7 mile mark along the road between Sheshatshiu and Goose Bay (P1.28.11.06).
- *Nipiu-apukushish* (possibly water shrew - *Sorex palustris*) are seen everywhere in the country. They live in the marshes, and they swim in small ponds. You see their paths, small ones, in the marshes. Foxes eat them. They can be quite large; up to two inches long. They might eat grass (P4.1.12.06).
- *Tshinishtui-apikushish* (pygmy shrew) are everywhere in the country, especially by brooks. They get into cloth and take it to their nests to keep them warm. That is why they take fur – for warmth. They can damage people's furs (P4.1.12.06).

Species not seen on Mishta-shipu

In asking the ITKC members about a wide range of species known to frequent the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, a number of them were said not to occur in the Mishta-shipu valley. The following observations pertain.

- *Nutshipaushtikueshish* (harlequin duck) are generally not seen on the calm sections of rivers, and are rarely seen on Mishta-shipu anywhere. They are found in rapids. They have not been seen at Tshiashku-paushtik^u but are known to frequent a river that empties into Mishta-shipu. This river is called Kaku-shipiss

(Fig River) (P1.6.12.06; 25.1.07).⁵²

- The baby *Nutshipaushtikueshish* can follow their mother's up the rapids six or seven of them in a line. There were a lot of them at Kakuqipapukunanut ('where someone capsized in the current') in the old days before Meshikamaushipu was dammed (P1.6.12.06; 25.1.07).
- *Upimishui* (eel) have never been seen up Mishta-shipu, but they have been seen in a small tributary of the Pukut-shipu (St. Augustine River) (P3.23.11.06). They have also been seen on Kamikuakamiu-shipu (Red Wine River) (P4.28.11.06).
- There are no *munaishan* (soft-shell clam?) in Mishta-shipu, nor a large char-like fish called *mēmīkushkētēu* that is found at Enakapeshekamau.
- There are no *shushashu* (arctic char) up Mishta-shipu although they are caught occasionally at Uhuniau (North West Point). There are lots of *papakatishu*⁵³ near Sheshatshiu and at the mouth of Tshenuamiu-shipu (Kenamu River), but these are never seen up Mishta-shipu (P3.23.11.06).
- *Auiu* (long-tailed duck) nest up north, not in the Mishta-shipu area (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- "We never saw *mitshikutan* (surf scoter) moult in the country, so we believe that it moults in the coastal area" (P1.6.12.06).

8. *Aueshish*: animal behaviour, intelligence and other observations

The members of the ITKC volunteered information that applies in general terms to all of the fauna in their territory not just to animals found in the Mishta-shipu valley. This information constitutes an Innu "natural history" of the fauna of Labrador, but what is presented here can only be considered a partial exploration of this knowledge base. Far richer descriptions have been provided by Clément in various publications dealing with Innu knowledge of individual animal species (e.g. 1985a, 1985b, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c, 1987-88, 1992) as well as his ethnozoology published in 1995. While some novel information was obtained from the ITKC members, much of what they shared during our meetings and individual interviews resonates closely with the descriptions collected by Clément. I have included examples of specialized vocabulary for various aspects of animal anatomy, behaviour, life-cycle, and reproduction, but this is only scratching the surface. Readers interested in learning more are invited to explore Drapeau's (1991) dictionary or the aforementioned publications by Clément.

⁵² The source of this information concerning the presence of harlequin ducks on the Fig River is most probably the co-facilitator's knowledge of biologist Ian Goudie's harlequin duck surveys there, which makes this a good example of the contribution of western scientific data to Innu knowledge construction.

⁵³ Unidentified species of flat fish. Clément (1995:545) lists a number of species for this lexeme including halibut, flounder, etc.

Why *mashk^u* (black bear) is intelligent and other notes

- “*Mashk^u* (black bear) is tricky. He’ll make “alarms” to help him hear you. One must be skilled in approaching the bear. Bear goes back and forth near his den, he back tracks, makes big circles. He approaches his *uatashk^u* (den) from the south, not the north, trying to get you to walk from the north so that he can get your scent. *Mashk^u* does it three times when the den is close. He will walk on fallen trees and jump away from the track. Sometimes, when the snow melts, there’s no tracks left. He does this all the time – he tries to confuse you. Walking around and around, backtracking, to steer people away from den. Sometimes *Mashk^u* sits just outside the den listing. He makes a kind of shield using his paws to keep you away. If you are getting close to the den, *Mashk^u* sends a partridge, as well as caribou and porcupine tracks to get one to stop thinking about him. He creates distractions in this way to throw one off the den. Finally, he points his ass at the hunters as they get very close. At this point, the bear is found” (P3.28.11.06).⁵⁴
- “*Mashk^u* eats berries first before going into the den. When he knows that the snow is coming, he looks for a den. *Ntūkât* means ‘looking’ and *māshk^u* *ntūkât* means ‘bear is looking for its den’. When he leaves his den, he can travel a long way, and he is very smart to know where to find his den again. Sometimes *mashk^u* walks days and nights to get to the den. The way he thinks, it’s as if he knows how Innu hunters think. He will find ways to trick Innu, so he doesn’t go in a straight line. He avoids detection in various ways, for example, walking on fallen logs. Sometimes fresh snow will melt, at which point you can’t see the black bear’s tracks. He may walk sideways and or backwards when the snow melts, so you won’t see the tracks” (P3.12.2.07)
- “*Mashk^u* is very intelligent. Before he goes in his den, he uses boughs. He does not take boughs from high up the tree; he takes the ones that are very close to the ground so as to be inconspicuous. The reason he doesn’t take branches higher up is so hunters can’t see the boughs; the cut marks are under the snow. They don’t leave a lot of signs. They also use moss in their dens, so they are not cold in winter. The bear is very *matenitam*”⁵⁵ (P4.7.2.07).
- “When Innu kill *mashk^u* at its den, a couple of years later another black bear will occupy the vacant den. They are like humans; they tell one another

⁵⁴ Similar descriptions of the black bear’s deceptive ways have been reported by Clément (1986:52-53) and Tanner (2007, 1979:148-150). An interesting point here is that the account of the bear’s efforts to confuse the hunter, including the use of “magic” to send forth distractions, is embedded overtly in an *atanukan* (myth) in Tanner’s account, whereas for the ITKC members, it is presented as empirical information concerning bear behaviour. As with the Cree, the Innu version may also derive from *atanukan*, one which was not elicited during the ITKC meetings. Nonetheless, this account serves as a good example of how *atanukan* can serve as authoritative “gospels” to explain animal behaviour and physical attributes, how empirical information concerning behaviour can be mythically based, or alternatively how the behavioural attributes of animals in myths can be empirically based (see Clément, 1995).

⁵⁵ The co-researcher glossed this term as ‘intelligent’. It is a transitive inanimate verb that Drapeau (1991) defines as ‘he feels something, senses the presence, the effect of something; he senses that something will happen’ (my translation).

where their dens are. Like me; I have a cabin on the Trans-Labrador Highway. When I'm not around, other people use my cabin. *Mashk^u* is like this, and it's the same with *atik^u* (caribou) and *amishk^u* (beaver). It's natural that they are like that" (P1.8.12.06).

- "When we are at the garbage dump, the black bears just stand close to us. They are not afraid. They eat at the dump. But in the country, they are wild; they are afraid of Innu. For example, in Akamiuapishk^u (Mealy Mountains) when the men hunted bear in a burnt area, the bear took off; they couldn't get close to it" (P2.29.11.06).
- "Only *mashk^u* can understand when Innu speak to him. Sometimes a bear claws a tree in the spring nearby its den, and Innu would find the claw marks. Innu would then find the den, and dig it out. 'Unuiu *nimushum* ('go outside grandfather)', Innu would say. *Mashk^u* would stick his head out and you would shoot him in the upper chest" (P3.12.2.07).
- "A black bear den is warm; like it has a tent stove" (P4.1.12.06).
- "Some *anishku-enik^u* (ant) can fly. But the ants are working insects. They build their house where they live. When *mashk^u* (black bear) comes along, he listens by the hollow trees, or ant hill, and he can hear the ants, so he bites a hole, and sticks his tongue inside to get at the ants" (P3.12.2.07).

Why *atik^u* (caribou) is intelligent and other notes

- *Atik^u* (caribou) is able to see its reflection in the water. "Caribou do this and it gives them information about the state of their antlers. The image they see is like a photo of themselves. It's a story/information about their antlers. [Depending on what they see], they may eat *ushkuai-pishim* (tree fungi) to harden their antlers, after they have scraped the velvet off them. This is when they are getting ready to rut in October" (P3.24.1.07).
- "Other animals were very intelligent/wild in the past.⁵⁶ The other older hunters say this as well. For example, the caribou would go a long way when they sensed danger. But they are not as intelligent/wild as they used to be. The caribou sit on the road, and don't care about the noise. In the past, when they heard noise, they would take off" (P3.12.2.07).
- The name of a male caribou that has lost its antlers in winter is *upinu*. A big stag with antlers in August is called *iapeutik^u* while a smaller male is called *kutəkuəniāpəshīsh*. *Ushkau-atik^u* is the name of the male at the beginning of the fall (*ushkau-pishim* - September) when it loses its antler velvet. In October, when the caribou is in rut, it is called *uishak^u*, and only the male caribou is called this. When the caribou fight (the two *iapeutik^u*), the loser goes off by himself and is called *mīnəkən*. After rut, around the last week of October or first week of November, the male is called *mīnāushnēu*. A mature female caribou is called *nushetik^u* while a two-year old female is called *pashetikush*. *Atshētiku* is the

⁵⁶ *Innishu* was translated as "intelligent," however, I could not sort out the semantic relationship between "intelligent" and "wild" in this context. ITKC members see some kind of correlation between an animal's level of intelligence and its wildness. The more tame an animal, the less intelligent it is considered to be. This matter requires further investigation.

name of the female caribou when she is pregnant and then gives birth. *Pinetik^u* is a cow that is giving birth. A caribou is called *umanishish* when it is a foetus, but from the time it is newborn to the time it is about one year old, the male or female caribou are called *atikuss*. A male calf is *napeu-atikuss*, and a female one is *nushetikuss*. *îatshâtîk^u* is the name of a caribou that is found separate from a main group that you have been following. “For example, when you kill a group of caribou (all of them), but then you encounter some other ones that are part of a different group, these are *îatshâtîkut^u*” (P4.30.11.06).⁵⁷

- The caribou are not always in herds. They would gather together for the rut in September. After rut they would separate into small groups or individual males (P4.30.11.06).

Why *amishk^u* (beaver) is intelligent and other notes

- Another animal that is *mishta-innishu* ('very intelligent') is *amishk^u* (beaver).⁵⁸ They make preparations for winter in the summer and fall. They construct their *uisht* (lodge) and gather food, with all the small trees gathered by the *uisht*. They make sure that some of the food sinks close to the *uisht*, under water. To make their *uisht* warm, they cover it with slush using their tails. They keep an air vent. The beavers know they will not come out of the water in the winter, so they keep their food under the water (P3.12.2.07).
- *Amishk^u* (beaver) makes *uat* (hole, *uata* plural) around the edge of a pond in order to hide (P8.7.12.06).
- *Amishk^u* is intelligent. For example, if you miss the beaver in the trap the first time, you won't be able to get it again, because it is now *mëshufau* (P4.7.2.07).⁵⁹
- A baby beaver is called *auetiss*, a two year old beaver is *pueuess*, a three year one is *patamishk^u*. An old beaver is called *tshishemishk^u*. An adult male beaver is called *napemishk^u* while the adult female is called *ishkuemishk^u*. A small, solitary beaver male or female is called *peikumishkuss* (P4. 30.11.06; P5/P1.6.12.06).
- Some beavers are very dark and are called *kashteuamishk^u* while some are an orange-yellow colour and are called *uishauamishk^u* but they are more an orange colour than yellow (P6. 30.11.06).
- Beavers sometimes make two dams and this is called *nishuau nâtuâtshöpëmut*. An area flooded by beavers is called *nëssëssn* (ITKC.5.12.06).⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Clément (1995:343) records *aiauatik^u* for solitary, male, adult caribou for Mingan, while Dominique (1979:53) records *utshematik^u* for Natashquan.

⁵⁸ Drapeau (1991) defines *innishu* as 'he is intelligent, informed, the age of reason; he (animal) is sly, wily, cunning, crafty' (my translation).

⁵⁹ This is probably the same word as *mishuieu* collected by Drapeau (1991) She defines *mishuieu* as 'he acts in such a way as to make him fearful and distrustful towards him, scare away' (my translation).

⁶⁰ Drapeau (1991) records *nissipeu* meaning 'it is flooded, submerged; *ushkutim* – beaver dam; *ushkutimitsheu* – he makes a dam, a dyke' (my translation).

- *Amishk^u* may open their dams a little to let water out, but if the water is low they shut their dams again. They regulate water levels (P3.5.12.06).

Why *maikan* (wolf) is intelligent and other notes

- “The other intelligent animals who make things, who do things to support themselves, are those who run around in the winter, for example, *maikan* (wolf) and *matsheshu* (fox). *Maikan* thinks like a hunter. When wolves see a caribou, one of them intercepts the caribou while the others wait. They do what Innu hunters do. One time I saw six wolves, and caribou in the marshes. The caribou were sitting in the marshes. They have their own paths, and if you chase them, they will follow these paths. The wolves must have seen the caribou feeding. Two of them waited on the paths used by the caribou. Two other wolves circled around the caribou and then chased them towards the ambush. This is what Innu hunters would do. This is *nâtâmükâtshêu* – walking around the caribou in order to chase them into an ambush. *Kâitâmükâtshet* is the name of the one who walks around to circle the caribou.⁶¹ *Ashuapameu* (*kâishuâpet*) is the name of the one who lies in ambush. The wolf makes the caribou head in “this direction” - *miam têtâmükak^u* – caribou are heading where you want them to go. Wolves can only kill one caribou at a time using this method. As soon as they finish, they find another caribou and set up the same ambush. It’s the same with Innu. All hunters don’t kill a lot at one time” (P3, P6.12.2.07). “This method always works when it’s deep snow. In summer, however, caribou can run in any direction, so you must figure out which way they are likely to run” (P3, P6.12.2.07).

Other intelligent animals

- There are times when the weather affects the behaviour of *uapush* (snowshoe hare) and *pineu* (partridge). For example, they are tame in the morning when there is no wind. When the weather is bad, they stick out their heads, and they are very “wild.” When they are “tame” (*nənūshkətshu*) you can get close to them. Only *uapush* and *pineu* are *nənūshkətshu* (P3.12.2.07).
- *Matsheshu* (fox) are *mishta-innishu* (‘very intelligent’). For example, sometimes they listen to mice in the marshes, and then they suddenly jump and squash the mice. Sometimes the fox just run along the shores looking for mice. The kits jump about like they are playing. Sometimes, they look for *utshashk^u* (muskrat) lodges (*uisht*), and they dig them out when they find them. They wouldn’t survive if they weren’t *mishta-innishu* (P3.12.2.07).
- *Utshashk^u* (muskrat) makes its own den and gathers food under water. They are *innishu* (‘intelligent’) in order to survive in the winter (P3.12.2.07).
- *Pishu* (lynx) is *innishu*. It is a night hunter. It sits on the side of *uapush* (snowshoe hare) paths waiting for them to run by during the night. It can see at night time. *Pishu* just claws it (P3.12.2.07).

⁶¹ Drapeau (1991) records the transitive animate verb *itamukueu* meaning ‘he makes the animals flee in such a manner, in a given direction in relation to someone’ (my translation).

- The animals that make preparations for winter are all certainly *innishu* ('intelligent') (P3.12.2.07).

Observations concerning reproductive behaviour

- *Uishikatshan* (gray jay) nests in January as does *patshakaishkashish* (boreal chickadee). They have their eggs in January. The gray jay nests are very hard to find; very rare. The gray jays nest in the rotten trees (P1.6.12.06).
- *Uapinniship* (northern pintail) nests up north, not in the Sheshatshiu or Mishta-shipu area (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- *Shashteship* (black scoter) nests inland, on small islands in lakes that are moss/grass covered and have alders. They have their nests in the grassy areas, outside of the alder (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- *Ashu-muak^u* (red-throated loon) has nests in grass on small islands as (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- *Inniship* (black duck) nests in marshy areas close to trees (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- *Mitshikutan* (surf scoter) nests in the vicinity of *uauak^u* (kettle hole). Some *uauak^u* have small islands that the surf scoters nest on because they are afraid of *matsheshu* (fox), *atshikash* (mink), and *uapishtan* (marten). Sometimes *tshiashk^u* (gull) eat their eggs (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- The male *mitshikutan* (surf scoter) abandons his wife and chicks and returns to salt water by himself (P1, P5, P6.6.12.06).
- *Umamuk^u* (white-winged scoter) are the same as *mitshikutan* (surf scoter) in that they nest on islands in *uauak^u* (P1.6.12.06).
- *Uapinnishipiss* (green-winged teal) nest inland. They have nests close to the woods, in marshy areas, beside the ponds. They lead their chicks to lakes as soon as they can walk to avoid the predators (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- *Nutshipashtikueshish* (harlequin duck) nests on grassy islands on rivers (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- *Mishikushk^u* (common goldeneye) nests in rotten trees. The female lays 12 to 15 eggs (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- *Mishtishuk^u* (common merganser) nests on islands in big rivers (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- *Ushuk^u* (red-breasted merganser) nests on islands in big rivers (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- *Aiakuss* (greater scaup) and *kaiashinikanikutesht* (lesser scaup) nest in grassy areas along the shores of lakes or on the islands (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- Only *nishk* (Canada goose) and *inniship* (black duck) have nests in marshes (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- *Muak^u* (common loon) nests on islands in marshy areas, or along shores (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- *Ashu-muak^u* (red-throated loon) nests by *massekupi* (marshy, ponds), and on islands (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- Ducks take their chicks to larger lakes to avoid *matsheshu* (fox) and other

predators (P1.6.12.06).

- Every duck uses grass for nest (P1.6.12.06).
- *Mitshikutan* (surf scoter) sticks its head out from a hole/nest where its eggs are (P1.26.1.07).
- *Utshissimanishu* (belted kingfisher) nests in holes along the banks of Mishta-shipu (P1.25.1.07).
- *Shakuaikanish* (tree swallow) nests in river banks on Mishta-shipu (P3.23.11.06).
- *Pashpassu* (ruffed grouse) are heard beating their wings in the spring when they are mating.⁶² Only *pashpassu* beats its wings when mating (P1.25.1.07).
- *Innineu* (spruce grouse) males have red eyes during mating in the spring. The male is called *napeu* and the female *ishkueneu*.
- *Makatsheu/mikuashai* (suckers) may spawn just below the rapids up Etuat-shipiss, from its junction with Mishta-shipu. There is a small portage there along the side of the rapids. Just below the rapids, we saw a lot of suckers there (P3.24.11.06).
- *Utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) spawn (*amiu*) close to rapids. Their *uakuana* (eggs) stick. After they spawn, the eggs turn into *esh* (shellfish), and what's inside the shell emerges as a fish. As the fish grows, the shell opens, and *utshashumek^u* comes out (P9.22.11.06).⁶³
- "*Utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) spawn in pools where they get stuck. I have seen a lot of *uakuana* (eggs) in pools.⁶⁴ I don't know how salmon have their eggs, except whenever there are salmon, there's lots of *esh* (shellfish) around, so perhaps the salmon grows from the shell. Perhaps they grow their scales inside the shells. There's a lot of *esh* at the mouth of Kaneshekau-shipiss (Cape Caribou River). Salmon go up that river" (P4.6.2.07; P6.22.11.06).
- There are some animals such as *uapush* (snowshoe hare) that have a kind of deformity, with their foetus in a lump on the side of the body. Sometimes *atik^u* (caribou) have this deformity as well. This rare phenomenon is called *pukøtshønishut*, and there is a muddy area along Mishta-shipu that bears this same name because it is lumpy. These animals are not sick. The caribou foetus develops in a lump on the side of the *napeu-atik^u* (male caribou), between the skin and the stomach. The *napeu-atik^u* dies, and the foetus comes out of this lump. It is a fully formed caribou when it emerges; it looks like an adult caribou, and it has antlers, but it is small. It looks like a small dog, but it is fully adult (P2,

⁶² The term provided for a ruffed grouse during the mating season is *uishakuneu*. Drapeau (1991) does not record this lexeme, but she does record cognate terms such as *uishakuapishu* (loup-cervier en rut), *uishakutsheshu* (renard en rut), etc.

⁶³ Clément (1998:62-66) recorded the same proposition in Utshimassit (Davis Inlet). "An elder also recalled a story to the effect that *utshashumekat*, salmons (sic), were once thought to originate from special shellfish found in the interland.... This could explain the name of that shellfish which is known in Utshimassit as in other Innu communities as *utshashumeku-esh*, 'the salmon shellfish', which corresponds to the eastern pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)."

⁶⁴ ITKC members provided the term *uakuana* for fish eggs, the plural form of an inanimate noun. Clément (1995:360) also recorded *uakuana*, plural inanimate noun. However, Drapeau (1991) collected *uakunat*, the plural form of an animate noun.

P9.22.11.06). This theory of certain animals being *matau* (abnormal) is discussed further in section 10.1 dealing with the state of the environment below.

Observations concerning alimentation

- “*Mukamishu* (American bittern) is found in rivers. It can dive. Eats toads. When dogs eat toads, they drool a strange fluid from their mouths. Slimy saliva. This is the only bird I know that eats toads” (P3.23.11.06).⁶⁵
- *Uishkatshan* (gray jay) eats black hairs (old man’s beard) on the trees (P3.23.11.06).
- *Uhu* (great horned owl) can kill *kak^u* porcupine and can swallow a porcupine head (P3.24.11.06).
- *Uhu* (great horned owl) and *uapikunu* (snowy owl) eat *uapush* (snowshoe hare), *pineu* (partridge), *kak^u* (porcupines), and *apikushish* (mice), but not fish (P3.24.11.06).
- *Nutshineueshu* (gyrfalcon) eat *uapineu* (willow ptarmigan), *innineu* (spruce grouse), and *uapush* (snowshoe hare) (P1, P5.6.12.06).
- *Kashkanatshish* (rock ptarmigan) eat *atikupemak^u* (tundra dwarf birch) which is like a small willow only smaller (P1.8.12.06).
- “The reason animals are attracted to *akushamesheu* (osprey) nests, is because the osprey drop fish sometimes, and the animals smell these ‘scraps’. As soon as the osprey feeds its young, it drops scraps and the *uapishtan* (marten) and *atshikash* (mink) feed on these scraps” (P3.24.11.06).
- *Akushamesheu* (osprey) is different than *mitshishu* (eagle) because they only eat fish. They build their nests close by fish concentrations (P3.24.11.06).
- *Shiship* (duck) and *nishk* (Canada goose) eat different types of berries (P1.28.11.06).
- *Pipitshish* (merlin) eats small birds like *pipitsheu* (American robin), *uishkatshan* (gray jay), etc. (P1.25.1.07).
- *Atshikash* (mink) eats *atshakashameskush* (cisco). *Nitshik^u* (otter) and mergansers (*ushuk^u/mishtishuk^u*) eat this fish as well (P3.23.11.06).
- *Matsheshu* (fox) eats berries and animals. *Uapush* (snowshoe hare) eat alder and birch boughs. *Nitshik^u* (otter) eat small fish. Martens eat berries and rabbits (P1, 28.11.06).
- *Matsheshu* (foxes) eat *nipiu-apukushish* (possibly water shrew - *Sorex palustris*) (P4.1.12.06).
- *Kak^u* (porcupine), *pineu* (partridge), *uapush* (snowshoe hare) eat from trees. Partridge eat berries (P1, 28.11.06).
- *Kak^u* (porcupine) eats birch, white spruce, black spruce, tamarack, balsam fir, trembling aspen, alders from the rivers. They eat grasses in the spring – first growth. Regarding trees the porcupine eats branches, needles, and bark. He eats this from the main trunk (P1, 28.11.06) *Kak^u* does not kill the trees. He just eats the bark. They eat something inside the bark. They start to eat this in early September. In summer they eat *shakau* (bush, shrub) and *uapikun* (flower plant).

⁶⁵ See also Clément (1995:260).

They eat the buds of *shakau* before they flower (P4.7.2.07). *Kak^u* also eat *mətsəkəssi(a)* [an unidentified leafy plant, lacking berries that grows close to the ground]. Its leaves look like *inniminanakashi* (low sweet blueberry) or *uishatshiminakashi* (redberry) leaves. *Kak^u* eat this after the snow falls, because the plant sticks out, and this is what they eat (P1.8.2.07).

- *Amishk^u* (beaver) eat birch, *mitush* (trembling aspen), balsam fir, black spruce, tamarack, and alders. Trembling aspen is the most favourite food. He eats the fresh grass in the spring. They also eat *ushkatamui* (water lily rhizome) (P1.28.11.06).
- *Amishk^u* (beaver) eat *utshashk^u* (muskrat) sometimes. The reason for this is because in the early spring, when the animals run out of food, the beaver may find a muskrat in its lodge, and it will kill and eat it. Same thing with otters; they may kill and eat young beavers (P3.28.11.06).
- *Utshashk^u* (muskrat) eats grasses (P1.28.11.06).
- *Mashk^u* (black bear) eat berries, fish and animals, including caribou, insects (ants, spiders, bees), young beavers, partridge, porcupine, young snowshoe hare. They eat plants as well; spring times – grasses as well as other types of new growth including pussy willow buds – *atimussat* (little dogs). “Bear breaks open a rotten tree to get at insects. Bear hears that there are ants in the rotting tree and so he breaks it up and sticks his tongue into it” (P1, P3, P7.28.11.06).
- “In the spring, *mashk^u* (bear) breaks up the beaver lodge to get at the beavers inside. He waits for the beaver to return to fix the lodge, then gets them. *Maikan* (wolf) eat beavers as well. Wolves and bear wait for beaver to leave the water to chew trees and they get them on dry ground” (P3.28.11.06).
- “If *mashk^u* (bear) eats porcupine quills he will die. I saw a dead bear outside its den in November. I found quills inside its stomach. There were quills in the bear’s heart as well. In the fall, the bear only eats certain foods – just berries and insects” (P1.28.11.06).
- “*Mashk^u* (black bear) does not defecate in his *uatashk^u* (den). He eats the layer just inside the bark of *ushkuai* (birch). He chews this *unatsheshk^u* (bark). It is a red colour, this inner bark and is called *ushkəntsheshkuā*. It is used to rub into caribou hide to make it red” (P1.28.11.06).⁶⁶
- “*Uinashk^u* (woodchuck) is like the bear in the way that it hibernates and eats birch bark to stop up its intestines to prevent defecation in its den during hibernation. Woodchuck are found in the western part of *Atatshi-uinipek^u* (Lake Melville)” (P6.28.11.06).
- “All animals are the same. All animals that eat different kinds of plants are thin (lean) in May. Not much fat on them. When it greens up in June-July, all the plant-eating animals get fat again. The young animals eat the new growth and are fat by the fall. This cycle repeats itself from one year to the next” (P3.28.11.06).

⁶⁶ See Clément (1995:288-290) for related information obtained from Quebec North Shore Innu concerning black bear hibernation and fecal or intestinal plugs.

- “Only *anukutshash* (red squirrel) eat cones. They also eat meat, for example, caribou meat. *Shikush* (least weasel) also eats meat....Squirrel also eats mushrooms” (P3.28.11.06).
- *Atik^u* (caribou) eat *uapitsheushkamik^u* (caribou lichen). It grows on top of hills, and sometimes on marshes, for example, small islands in the marshes. *Massekushkamik^u* (sphagnum moss, generic) is a type of moss in the marshes, but caribou doesn’t eat it (P6.26.1.07).
- *Atik^u* (caribou) eat *ushkuai-pishum* (tree fungi, probably *Fomes spp.*) after they scrape their antlers off (velvet). Eating the “mushrooms” hardens their antlers in readiness for rut. It also eats the mushrooms on the ground; the soft ones (P3.28.11.06).⁶⁷
- *Atik^u* (caribou) and *mush* (moose) eat *mâtâpæk*, a type of water plant that grows in marshes (P4.7.2.07).
- *Upau-apikushish* (little brown bat) eats insects, mosquitoes, butterflies; also a stinging insect that has a long barbed tail [that resembles a smoky horntail or pigeon horntail] (P6, P9.29.11.06).
- *Matsheshu* (foxes) eat *nipiu-apukushish* (possibly water shrew - *Sorex palustris*) (P4.1.12.06).
- Woodpeckers (*kanakuneu*, *pashpashteu*) eat a worm called *manitush*. Perhaps they know exactly where they are; smell them and therefore punch holes to get at them in the winter (P4.1.12.06). “This worm is found in rotten, dry trees. The worm can chew the inside of the tree, making paths. They leave a kind of sawdust behind them” (P6.1.12.06).
- *Makatsheu/mikuashai* (suckers) eat mud (P3.28.11.06).
- *Kukamess* (lake trout) eat mice, insects in or on the water such as butterflies, small fish such as cisco, small suckers and small burbot, as well as something that looks like mud. We have not seen lake trout eat frogs (P3.28.11.06).
- *Kukamess* (lake trout) eats *nipiu-apukushish* (possibly water shrew). I found one in the stomach of a lake trout at Penipuapishku-nipi (Hope Lake). Big lake trout eat *uatshishk^u* (muskrat) according to my grandfather who had found one in a stomach. It had been eaten head first (P6.1.12.06).
- *Tshinusheu* (northern pike) eats mice and insects such as butterflies” (P1.28.11.06). “Pike also eats fish – any kind of fish it can find and it eats toads (*anik^h*)” (P4.1.12.06).

Miscellaneous observations

- “*Akushamesheu* (osprey) is a suicidal bird because it can kill itself hunting. My father and uncle once saw an osprey accidentally claw its own head, and Innu hunters found dead ones with their claws stuck in their heads. It happens upon impact with the water” (P3.24.11.06).

⁶⁷ Anthropologist Robert Paine, who has worked with the Saami of Norway since the early 1950s, tells me that reindeer eat large quantities of mushrooms just before the rut and are hard to control at this time of the year (personal communication, 6 June 2007).

- “You cannot catch *atikamek^u* (whitefish) and *makatsheu/mikuashai* (suckers) on a big hook. You can only net these. I’m not sure if they take flies” (P4.1.12.06).
- *Uinashk^u* (woodchuck) have *uatik^u* (dens) as do *apikushish* (mouse), *tshinishtui-apikushish* (shrew), *atshikash* (mink), and *nitshik^u* (otter). They have holes in the ground (P4.1.12.06).
- “There’s some animals that stay outside and don’t take cover, for example, *pineu* (partridge), *atik^u* (caribou), *uapush* (snowshoe hare), *uapishtan* (marten), winter birds such as the gray jay and boreal chickadee. Pishu (lynx) doesn’t go under the snow; it sits on top of the snow to stay warm” (P4.1.12.06).
- *Atshikash* (mink), *nitshik^u* (otter), and *uapishtan* (marten) don’t come out very much in the coldest months. They stay in their *uatik^u* (dens) under the snow. Sometimes, otter and mink stay under the ice in air pockets along the shore (P1.24.1.07).
- Certain *manitushat* (insects) live in rotten wood in the winter, and they come alive again in the spring (P4.1.12.06).
- *Uapishtan* (marten), *nitshik^u* (otter), *amishk^u* (beaver), *utshashk^u* (muskrat), *atshikash* (mink), *shikush* (weasel), *anukutshash* (squirrel), *kak^u* (porcupine), *innineu* (spruce grouse), *pashpassu* (ruffed grouse) and *uapineu* (willow ptarmigan) live under the snow (P4.1.12.06).
- *Kak^u* (porcupine) makes holes under trees, or under rocks, in cracks in rock faces in cliffs (P6.1.12.06).
- *Upau-apikushish* (brown bat) it is a summer animal. It hibernates like a *apikushish* (mouse). It is related to *apikushish* (P9.29.11.06).
- “I saw *anukutshash* (squirrel) attack a small *kanakuneu* (northern three-toed woodpecker) once. The squirrel bit the bird all over its body. It would have killed the bird had I not killed the squirrel. I rescued the woodpecker. Squirrels eat birds” (P6.1.12.06).
- Animals stick out their tails when they sense danger (P2.22.11.06). Moulting ducks that do not fly are called *pashkuship* (P1/P5/P6.6.12.06). Last year’s *nishk* (Canada goose) sheds its feathers and has new ones in the fall. They do this every year. Geese do not moult the first year (referring to new borns), but in subsequent years they moult. All ducks are like this as well as geese. When the newborns migrate south and return the next spring, they moult (P1.6.12.06).
- *Shiship* (ducks) and *nishk* (Canada goose) arrive at different times in the spring. In general, the order of arrival is as follows: (1) *mishikushk^u* (common goldeneye); (2) *inniship* (American black duck), *uapinniship* (northern pintail), *uapinnishipiss* (green-winged teal); (3) *ushuk^u* (red-breasted merganser), *mishtishuk^u* (common merganser) *nutshipaushtukueshish* (harlequin duck), *kaiashinikanikutesht* (lesser scaup), *aiakuss* (greater scaup); (4) *nishk* (Canada goose); (5) *mitshikutan* (surf scoter), *shashteship* (black scoter), *umamuk^u* (white-winged scoter), *aiiu* (long-tailed duck); and (6) *ashu-muak^u* (red-throated loon), *muak^u* (common loon) (ITKC.26 Apr. 2007).
- The *tshiashk^u* (generic gull) in the country look white and clean, but the

ones around Sheshatshiu are dirty because they hang out at the dump. So it is hard to tell what kind of gulls they are (P6.26.1.07).

- *Pipunamu* is a big slinky salmon that migrates inland to various lakes in the fall, spends winter there and returns to the ocean in the spring. It is fat in the fall, and Innu would get it in the net.⁶⁸ It looks like a salmon, but it's not the real *utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) which goes inside in July. Innu used to find these fish close to Meshikamau, for example, up Amishku-shipu (Beaver River), Kamikuakamiu-shipu (Red Wine River), and Meshikamau-shipu (Naskaupi River). Not many of these are seen on Manatueu-shipiss (Traverspine River) and Mekenitsheu-shipiss (McKenzie River) (P4.6.2.07).
- *Nipinatamek^u* (sea run trout) goes inland as well.⁶⁹ It can be caught just below Manitu-utshu, on Mishta-shipu, not above, and it is found up Manatueu-shipiss (Traverspine River). Where the brooks and rivers meet Lake Melville is where you will find *utshashkumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) and *nipinatamek^u* (P4.6.2.07).
- *Utshashkumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) can go back out to sea again, and no person ever saw dead salmon on the rivers. They can feel the cold water and go back out again (P4.6.2.07).

9. *Nutshimiu-natukun* ('country medicine')

ITKC participants spoke frequently about their knowledge of *nutshimiu-natukun* ('country medicine') derived from various plants and animals found in the Mishta-shipu area as well as more generally throughout their territory. Much of this knowledge concerning the medicinal properties of plants and animals is shared throughout the wider Innu population in Labrador-Quebec, but it is now largely confined to a small and rapidly dwindling number of older people. Innu knowledge of country medicine has been documented to some extent in three publications, Malec, et al.'s *Nutshimiu-natukuna* (1982), Clément's *L'Ethnobotanique montagnaise de Mingan* (1990), and Inkpen's *Plant Medicine of the Innu*, which can be consulted for additional information and comparisons with the data presented here.

Systematic documentation of this body of knowledge is beyond the scope of the present study, and as a result, the data presented here cannot be considered complete by any stretch of the imagination. These data were volunteered by ITKC participants as examples of their expertise in country life, as ethnic boundary markers to distinguish Innu from non-Innu (symbolic opposition), and as icons of pre-settlement life when Innu enjoyed relative autonomy from Euro-Canadians and their institutions. Examples of country medicine were also volunteered in the context of concerns about the impacts of dam construction and flooding on these medicines (more on this topic later in the report).

⁶⁸ Drapeau (1991) defines *pipunamu* as 'saumon noir d'hiver' ('black winter salmon').

⁶⁹ Drapeau (1991) records *uinipeku-mashamekush* for sea trout. Innes recorded *nipanatimek^u* as a synonym for *uinipeku-matamek^u* (sea trout) (personal communication).

One ITKC participant stated that he is reluctant to describe country medicines in any detail because he believes that knowledge about such matters has been stolen from Innu people in the past and used for commercial benefit. “In Matamekush (Schefferville), Innu revealed *pitshuatik*⁷⁰ medicine to a non-Innu. The non-Innu person made medicine and then sold it to the Innu” (P1.5.12.06).⁷⁰

ITKC members appear to classify *nutshimiu-natukun* in terms of a hierarchy of strength in which some medicines are considered “stronger” than others, however, this matter was not systematically explored due to time limitations. Nonetheless, some differences in “strength” were mentioned by the participants. *Assiuashik*^u (Canadian Yew, *Taxus canadensis*) is considered to be one of the strongest medicines, while *uapineu-mitshim* (willow) and *mashkuminanakashi* (northern mountain ash) are considered to be less strong. The idea of “strong” medicine is conveyed through the use of the inanimate intransitive verb *shutshishimakan*, meaning “it is strong, solid” (Drapeau, 1991).⁷¹ While ITKC members also referred to country medicine as “real” or “good” (in translation), I did not record the lexical items for these terms in Innu-aimun.⁷²

If *nutshimiu-natukun* can be classified hierarchically in terms of strength, they can also be classified spatially, in the sense that the ITKC members believe that the strong medicines are found in river valleys while the less strong ones are found outside of these geographic areas, in highland and barren-ground places, for example. We heard repeatedly that “The valleys are the best places for medicines. *Uapineu-mitshim* (willow) and *mashkuminanakashi* (northern mountain ash) are the few medicines that are found outside the valleys, but they are not very strong” (P9.29.11.06).

Of all the medicines mentioned, one was considered “rare” – *assiuashik*^u (Canadian yew, *Taxus canadensis*), found on a small island on Mishta-shipu just above Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Island). Two ITKC members said that this island is called Assiuashiku-minishtik^u (Canadian yew Island), and this is where botanists found the plant in question while surveying the Mishta-shipu valley as part of the Project environmental assessment.⁷³

ITKC participants hold a theory concerning the transmission of medicine or medicinal properties from one species to another. Trees, berries, and other things that grow in the earth contain *natukun*, and animals including the beaver and otter eat these things that grow from the land. As a result, they contain *natukun* as well. Humans eat medicines directly in the form of berries and medicinal concoctions, but also by consuming animals and fish that contain

⁷⁰ I first heard of this concern about non-Innu stealing Innu recipes for *nutshimiu-natukuna* in Unaman-shipu (La Romaine) in 1982-83.

⁷¹ Inanimate intransitive (ii) verbs have an inanimate subject, but no object. *natukun* (medicine) is an inanimate noun, *natukuna* - plural.

⁷² “The rivers are important because that’s where the real medicine is. A lot of good medicine comes from the rivers” (P9.17.11.06).

⁷³ Susan Meades, personal communication, e-mail to P. Armitage 2 February 2007.

medicinal properties. Eating *nutshimiu-mitshim* (country food), much of which contains *nutshimiu-natukun*, is therefore considered an important requirement for wellness among these older Innu. “The kind of diet that Innu had [pre-settlement] is why they were healthy. They [the food] had a lot of medicine in them. Now that we have changed our diet, we are sick” (P8.29.11.06). More than 70 years ago, anthropologist, Frank Speck, noted this relationship in Innu thought between wellness and the medicinal properties of plants and animals:

We note a most important and logical belief, at least from the angle of native thought: that the food of the native game animals, the caribou, moose, bear, and beaver, being vegetal substance, and the vegetable kingdom being the original source of medicine agency, the virtues of plant pharmacy are conveyed from the original growths to man through this diet. No wonder, then, the proper food of the tribe being either directly wild fruits or indirectly vegetable through the diet of game animals, that with their food in whatever form consumed, the Montagnais-Naskapi are ‘taking medicine’. Thus, the native game diet is prophylactic to mankind. A deep significance lies beneath this doctrine (1977[1935]:78-79).

Examples of *nutshimiu-natukun* volunteered by ITKC participants are provided below. I have classed them under two headings: medicines that derive from animals; and those that derive from vegetal sources, that is, “things that grow from the earth.”

Aueshish natukun (animal medicines)

- *Uishinau-amishk^u* – beaver testicles given to a woman who is in labour to drink (P9.7.12.06) This concoction is called *uishinauapui*.
- *Uitui* (musk gland) is found in beaver, mink and otter. It is used to cure rashes (nitshik^u uïtuï), ear aches and infections (P8.17.11.06).
- The shell of *utshashumeku-esh* can be used as medicine. You crush the shell, boil it, and drink the liquid. It is used to cure bladder problems, if you can't pee. It makes one pee (P2.22.11.07).
- *Upimishu* (eel), found in salt water, can be used as a medicine for bad headaches. You place the skin over your forehead (P2.22.11.07; P3.23.11.06).
- The liver oil from *uanushui* (cod) can be used as medicine (P3.23.11.06);
- In fish you find *uishupui* (gall bladder). It's good for eye problems. Just put it in your eye (P9.29.11.06).
- The *uishupui* (gall-bladder) attached to the liver of the black bear is used for medicine. You use it to rub yourself” (P2.29.11.06).⁷⁴
- Wherever you are sick in your body, you eat the part of the bear that corresponds to the sore part of your body. You have a sore leg, you eat the

⁷⁴ It is like a liniment, said the interpreter.

bear's leg. The old women used to eat the hind legs of bear when they had sore knees and legs (P2.29.11.06).

- Another kind of medicine comes from the goose gizzard. It's a small round part, the size of a "jam jam," and is called *utishishk^u*.⁷⁵ You dry them, boil them, and drink the broth (P2.29.11.06).
- The tongue of *pashpashteu* (Three-toed woodpecker, *Picoides arcticus*) has strong medicine in it because of the kind of insects it eats. The tongue is used as medicine for adult toothaches. The tip of the tongue is placed in the cavity and the *manitushat* (infection) is removed (P3.5.12.06).⁷⁶

Kanitautshiki tshekuana assit - things that grow in the earth⁷⁷

- "My mother found a medicine that looks like balsam fir boughs. They grow along the ground near the river and are called *assiuashik^u*.⁷⁸ We crushed the needles, mixed with fat, warmed it up, put on a cloth, and placed on the forehead. My daughter, Enen, was seven-eight months old at the time and was sick, so I gave her this medicine. The next morning she was okay. There's a lot of this plant on an island just above Tshiashku-nipi [Gull Island]" (P2.29.11.06).
- Another good medicine is *mashkuminakashi* (Northern mountain ash) which is good for flu, coughs. It is found at Uhuniau (North West Point). You chew the berries. You can also boil the bark for a long time until it looks like molasses and apply on a cloth to the back. Used if you have a sore back (P2.7.12.06).
- "Once, at Uapush-shipiss, I cut my foot badly with an axe. The bleeding wouldn't stop, so my grandfather mixed *ushkuai-pishim* (mushrooms) with powder from a tanned caribou skin and tied this over the wound. The day after, they boiled *pitshuatik^u* and placed this on the wound, changing it regularly" (P8.29.11.06).

⁷⁵ Clément (1995:108) includes the same term in his presentation of Innu lexical items for waterfowl anatomy. Drapeau (1991:887) records *utishishk^u*, gésier d'outarde (goose gizzard).

⁷⁶ The term *manitush*, plural *manitushat* in this case, usually refers to a class of non-edible, repugnant animals and non-human beings including insects, worms, snails, slugs, reptiles, etc. so it is interesting to see it used to refer to the agent causing sore teeth. *Manitush* is also the Innu word for cancer.

⁷⁷ As noted previously, Clément (1998:38) recorded this expression in Utshimassit (Davis Inlet). It derives from the inanimate intransitive verb *nitautshin* – something (vegetal) grows. *Kanitautshiki tshekuana assit* is the inanimate form of the expression. When questioned about its application in Sheshatshiu, my informants there said that they, too, could use the expression to classify trees, shrubs, fungi, mosses, and fruit plants, given that there is no generic term, "plants," in Innu-aimun. Clément (1990:17) recorded an animate form in Mingan – *ashtshit nte kanitautshiht*, literally, "in the earth, those who grow."

⁷⁸ This is most likely *Taxus canadensis*, Canadian Yew. Clément (1990:95) records it as *ashtshiuashishk^u* and describes its medicinal properties. Malec, et al. (1982:43) include *assiuashikuat* in their inventory of Innu medicines. Drapeau (1991:82) lists *assiuashik^u* as "buis de sapin" (Canadian Yew). *Assiuashik^u* is an animate noun.

- “Red berries are good for teething. One of my daughters had teething problems so I found red berries under the snow. It took only a couple of days to heal up” (P1.5.12.06).
- Birch, tamarack, spruce and fir cones can be used as medicine for stomach problems. You drink one cup of a broth made from the boiled cones and you vomit (P8.17.11.06; P1.5.12.06; 24.1.07).
- There is a light layer, inside the bark of *minaik^u* (white spruce) that is good cough medicine. Chew it, and swallow the saliva but not the bark (P1.24.1.07).
- The round thing that turns into powder, *kapiputepanit* (kâpîputest), is good for infections and nose bleeds.⁷⁹
- *Ikuta* (Labrador tea) is used as medicine (preparation and application not specified) (P9.8.12.06).
- Kâuîshâkêpekêshâtshî (unidentified) is a plant that grows on the ground. It has thread-thin roots that come off the main root. It’s a medicine found anywhere (P3.8.2.07).

10. Mishta-shipu hydro project: discourses concerning potential impacts

In previous sections, we looked at how members of the ITKC know what they know, and then moved on to sample Innu knowledge concerning Mishta-shipu. The task now is to make sense of various propositions advanced by the ITKC about future impacts of the proposed Project. What are these propositions, upon what basis are they made, and in what context? An analytical tool known as “discourse analysis” will be used to assist with this task. I take note of Usher’s point that “The boundary between observation and inference is not always evident, however, because people may state as fact or consequence what scientists would characterize as inference or deduction” (2000:186).

“Discourse” is just another word for a written or spoken communication, a text, narrative, or conversation, and the study of discourse is a specialized field in the social sciences, so that one often hears the term “discourse analysis.” A detailed discourse analysis is beyond the scope of this report and would be a daunting task because it would require first and foremost a careful examination of large volumes of texts in Innu-aimun. Much of what is accomplished in discourse analysis, while of immense intellectual interest, is not necessary for our primary purpose which is to clarify Innu discourses concerning the anticipated environmental effects of the proposed project. Knowledge of the finer points of Innu rhetorical strategies, narrative styles, and other characteristics of their discourses are not necessary at this point in time, and so we shall restrict our focus to those aspects of Innu environmental discourse that relate to the potential impacts of the hydro project.

⁷⁹ This is most likely the puffball (*Lycoperdon spp.*). Clément (1990:99) records it as *kapiputepishiti* and says it is used for nose bleeds. Drapeau has *kapiputepalit* - champignon vesse-de-loup (puffball).

Whereas the discourse structures of other Algonquian-speaking peoples have been studied in various ways (e.g. Spielmann, 1998; Valentine, 1995), they have been analyzed only to a limited extent for the Innu, and then primarily for linguistic objectives (Baraby, 1999; Drapeau, 1984-85). As a result, we have little understanding of how all the elements that comprise these structures are constituted in the Innu imagination; how propositions, opinions, attitudes, models, and schemata constitute ideologies, these being cognitive reflections of their "social, political, economic, and cultural 'position' within the social structure" (van Dijk, 1987:194).⁸⁰ Furthermore, while Innu discourses concerning hydro-electric projects in Labrador have been part of the society-wide discourse about such resource developments for at least two decades, they have never been considered in a systematic manner in relation to Innu environmental knowledge.

At the outset we should remember that the discursive environment of the Innu is constituted through a number of communications media. These include interpersonal interaction and dialogue, as well as modern media of mass communication including local and regional radio stations (e.g. open line shows), news papers, internet chat groups, and television. Moreover, discourses by ITKC members are embedded in a discursive environment that includes a variety of often interrelated subject categories, as has been observed among other indigenous peoples.⁸¹ Ellis (2005:71) notes that "Traditional knowledge experts draw from a broad range of knowledge and experience when communicating. Environmental knowledge, cultural values, history, politics, and the broad concerns and aspirations of their people may often inform the speech of an elder or other land user participating in an environmental hearing or technical session." There is an historic component to this in that the current discursive environment is the result of 60 or more years of accumulating experience, individual contemplation, social interaction and discussion on the part of the ITKC members. Besides the Lower Churchill Hydro Generation Project, other discourses that they participate in relate to the Churchill Falls project and the flooding of Meshikamau (Michikamau Lake), the Voisey's Bay Mine-Mill project, commercial forestry operations such as Labrador Linerboard and even the Dickie Lumber Company operation, military flight training, highway construction, prosecutions of Innu under provincial game laws, settlement in government built villages, breakdown in the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, growth of various social pathologies and dependence on government institutions, and with this loss of personal and collective autonomy. Innu integration into the so-called global village of mass communication and consumer culture also helps give content and shape to this discourse environment.⁸²

⁸⁰ This definition of ideology follows van Dijk's interdisciplinary approach to discourse and reflects his interest in cognitive psychology. I also use a standard anthropological definition of ideology elsewhere in this report related to religious ideology following Tanner (1979).

⁸¹ Subject categories refer to single concepts such as "crime" or "education" which stand for a large social or political domain or a complex issue.

⁸² Pundits say that TEK is politicized because of its embeddedness in a broader discourse environment, however, this does not distinguish it from western science for which there is plenty

Discourse analysis focuses on major levels of “discourse structure, such as topics, overall schematic forms, local meanings, style and rhetoric, as well as their relations with cognitive processes of production and understanding, and their socio-cultural and political contexts” (van Dijk, 1991:x).⁸³ For the purpose of this study, however, I shall limit the analysis to two analytical units – propositions and themes.⁸⁴ Propositions refer to a conceptual structure comprising a predicate and one or more arguments. Thus the predicate “will ruin” can be combined with the arguments “flooding” and “country medicine” to form the proposition “flooding will ruin country medicine.” Themes (topics, macropropositions) on the other hand, are the global, overall meaning structures of a text derived from the propositions of the sentences of the text. The theme reduces the complex information of the text to its essential gist. Themes refer to specific events, actions and people. Hence, “travel” is the theme of the sequence of propositions “I went to Goose Bay,” “I bought a snowmobile,” “I put gas in the snowmobile,” “I went partridge hunting at Tshiashku-nipi on the snowmobile,” etc.

In examining ITKC member propositions and themes concerning predicted hydro dam impacts, I have wanted to pay careful attention to the ways in which these are expressed in the Innu language, in part because I have not always trusted the translation to convey all of the nuances in the original Innu-aimun. I first encountered this issue in the context of the environmental assessment of military flight training, where speculative comments about the impacts of low-flying jets were interpreted as definitive cause and effect statements. Maintaining a cautious stance *vis-à-vis* translations is important because some interpreters infer the intentions of the people they translate for, what they think speakers intend to say versus what they actually say, thereby over translating the narratives and reading more into them than had actually been stated. In addition, unbeknownst to the third party, some interpreters insert their own observations or opinions into the translation.

Given the fact that I am not a fluent speaker of Innu-aimun, I have had to count heavily on the interpretation skills of my co-researcher to communicate all the necessary subtleties of both the Innu and English languages. Furthermore, virtually all of the “data” for this report and the subsequent analysis relies on his interpretation and the English texts that they have generated. From the outset, I was anxious to ensure that the co-researcher paid particular attention to the

of evidence, and argument, to show that it, too, is socially constructed, and/or shaped by “non-scientific” variables (see Kuhn, 1970; and Wilson, 1999).

⁸³ To learn more about discourse analysis, see van Dijk (1987). Discourse analysis is sometimes confused with content analysis, which is based on inferences resulting from the systematic quantitative analysis of themes, sources, lexical items and other semantic elements across a corpus of texts or narratives (see Bardin, 1977).

⁸⁴ The topic under discussion, here, Innu discourses about environmental impacts is called a “semantic macrostructure” dealing with the overall meaning of a text. We do not concern ourselves with the “truth” or “falsehood” of Innu propositions.

different ways that sources of information or knowledge are marked linguistically in Innu-aimun so that they could be translated properly into their English equivalents. To this end, we discussed some of the nuances in interpretation required for the work in advance of the ITKC meetings and individual interviews, and the co-researcher appeared to have no problem appreciating these issues. Thus, his occasional footnotes throughout the meetings to the effect that a speaker was providing “an inference” gave me some reassurance that important linguistic nuances were being conveyed.

Nevertheless, it was deemed prudent to subject a number of the narratives from the ITKC participants to a more detailed analysis by means of word for word written transcription and a close translation (see Appendix 2). This was done both as a way of spot-checking the quality of interpretation provided by the co-researcher as well as a vehicle for the exploration of the grammatical markers for different types of knowledge and reasoning underlying the discourse. This is as close as we can get to the primary Innu discourses concerning the future impacts of the hydro project, keeping in mind that interpretations provided by the co-researcher are always one-step removed from these discourses because they are provided in English, and are frequently glosses or summaries of the statements made by the ITKC participants. With the exception of the transcriptions and close translations, the discourses analyzed here are removed one step further because the majority of them are not verbatim transcriptions of what the co-researcher said, but are my notes of the translations of the Innu-aimun discourses taken during the meetings.⁸⁵

Any in-depth discussion of Innu grammar is obviously far beyond the scope of this report, and in any event, the task of educating the reader about this grammar is better left to the linguists (Baraby, 1999; Clarke and MacKenzie, 2003; Drapeau, 1985). Nonetheless, it is worth touching on a few grammatical points that bear directly on the nature of Innu discourses concerning the impacts of the proposed hydro project. In addition, it is useful to identify key terms used in Innu-aimun to communicate about the project.

Most relevant to our interest in environmental impact discourses are the stylistic and grammatical strategies employed by the Innu to mark sources of information and which provide the means by which propositions can be made. As noted by Drapeau (1985:28, my translation), the Innu language “implements particular resources that permit the formal differentiation between the facts, information, knowledge of which is obtained by the direct experience of the speaker, and those which have been reported or brought to his attention in an indirect manner.” At the grammatical level, the Innu employ different verbal modalities to mark the status of the “facts” being reported. Indicative verb forms “occur in statements of fact or in questions relating to factual information” (Clarke and

⁸⁵ Linguist Marguerite MacKenzie played the major part in analyzing the transcribed narratives, with me looking over her shoulder, yet collaborating equally in the assessment of whether they were speculative, definitive statements of fact, or predictive.

MacKenzie, 2003:88). However, propositions “may be weakened in force by the use of prefixes or preverbs which represent meanings such as ‘futurity’ and ‘potentiality’” (ibid.). Moreover, a verb stem may take what are called “dubitative” endings that mark probability or logical deduction (ibid.). Such endings are routinely encountered in sentences involving possibility, e.g. “perhaps” or “maybe”.

Table 8 lists grammatical modalities in the Innu language that mark sources of information, that alert the listener to the type of evidence used by the speaker in formulating a given proposition.

A number of verbal modalities were employed by the ITKC participants in the examples of impact discourses presented in Appendix 2. A few of the discourses examined here dealt with the impacts of other hydro projects in Labrador with which the participants are familiar, namely, the Twin Falls and Upper Churchill projects. However, in those instances where the impacts of these projects were mentioned, the verbal mode used was either affirmative, real or subjective, based on direct experience.

Table 8. The system of modalities in Innu-aimun (Baraby, 1999)

Status of the proposition	Affirmed (certain)				Not affirmed (uncertain)			
	Real		Subjective		Possible			
position of the event in the world	By direct experience	By indirect experience	By direct experience	By indirect experience	By deduction (necessity)	By speculation (possibility)	Potential situation	Hypothetical situation (counterfactual)
Independant Present Past	Indicative	-tak -shapan	(ka) + -wâ	(ka) + -tak + -wâ (ka) + - shapan + - wâ	-tshe -kupan	tshipâ tshî-	tshipâ	tshipâ + - pan
Conjunctive	Indicative	-kwe					-i	-âkwe
Imperative Future	Present indicative	-me					-kan	

Most of the discourses included predictions about the impacts of the Lower Churchill Project. Here, the preverbs *tshe-* ('will') and *tshikut* (will be able) predominated, which indicates that the speakers are very certain about the project impacts. In the first example, the speaker is talking about beavers moving up tributaries away from the flooding.

**Nete iat apishish tshika ituteu, nete nitamit itetshe tshe itutet.
There elsewhere a little bit they will go, there upstream they will go.**

In the second example, the speaker predicts the impacts of the Lower Churchill

Project based on his knowledge of the Churchill Falls dam.

Eukun nipa-iat tshe ishinakuak
The same thing will happen

A measure of uncertainty is introduced into the prediction in this next example, where *tshipa* marks a potential situation, that is, the water body will most likely be flooded. The speaker is not absolutely certain that flooding will occur.

Eku tshipa nassipeu nipi.
The water body will most likely flood

In this example, the verbal ending –tshe shows that the proposition is based upon deduction.

Ekute anite muk minushitshe aueshish, tshia?
Some places the animals must still be good, right?

Namesh nipauin, tshia? Minushitshe nete uin eka tshipaikanit uin.
Especially the fish, right? They must be good there because there are no dams over there.

In the next example, the speaker speculates about the future presence of black bears in the Mishta-shipu valley. The terms *tshipa tshi* are the markers for a possible future state, uncertainty, speculation.

Tshipa tshi tau mashk uin, tshipa tshi mitshu nete minashkuat.
The black bear may still be there, it may be able to go in the forest and get its food there.

Throughout the discussions about the impacts of the Project, three terms stood out in terms of the frequency with which they were used, namely *uinnakuan* (dirty), *akushu* (sick), and *minushiu* (good).⁸⁶ One must be careful when interpreting Innu discourses concerning hydro dam impacts because interpreters frequently infer that “sickness” refers to methyl-mercury, or that the “dirt” that makes water or fish “not good” is “contamination” (i.e. mercury). Here are some examples of these concepts from Innu discourse.

uinnakuan (it is dirty, something inanimate is dirty)

Mitshu nenu kapiuaputeua tshekuanu nete nipit e-uinnakuak, eukunu nenu miatshit nete e-uinnakuanit tshekuanu
It eats what is dispersed in the water, the dirt, it eats that, the dirty thing in it.

⁸⁶ Remember that Innu-aimun lacks technical vocabulary for water chemistry, physiological processes, and the mechanisms underlying methyl-mercury bioaccumulation.

akushu (s/he, something animate, is sick)

**Ehe, nauitamakuitan, akushut namesh.
Yes, we were told, they are sick fish.**

minushiu (s/he, something animate, is good) versus *apu minushit*

Note the use of the non-affirmed verbal mode here, the *-tsh* verbal ending that marks deduction.

**Ekute anite muk minushit~~she~~ aueshish, tshia? Namesh nipauin, tshia?
Some places the animals must still be good, right? Especially the fish,
right?**

**Minushit~~she~~ nete uin eka tshipaikanit uin.
They must be good there because it is not blocked off (dams) over there.**

Several other key terms should be mentioned because of their important role in communicating propositions concerning the Project. Readers will note that a number of these terms are borrowed from the lexical repertoire normally used to talk about animal behaviour, beaver dams and damming being the best examples.

matenitam – he feels the effects of something.

matshi-natukun – poison, toxic chemical, often used to translate “contaminants” or “methyl-mercury.”

minuinniu – s/he (animate entity) is in good health (Drapeau).

nanutakanu – to be ruined/wasted, from the verb *nanutau* – he wastes, ruins, spoils, renders something unusable (Drapeau).

nassipitakanitshi – it will be flooded, from the verb *nassipeu* – it is flooded, submerged.

mitshu tshekuanu – s/he eats something. “Something” is often translated as “contaminants” (the nature of this “something” is inferred by the interpreter). But it is not always clear that the “something” is methyl-mercury, and we know of one case where the reference was probably an oil spill at Churchill Falls and not methyl-mercury. The interpreter infers the chemical nature of “something” on the basis of a possibly false assumption about what the speaker was thinking.

pikupanu – it is broken, demolished, damaged, spoiled (Drapeau).

tshipaikanau – it is closed off, from the verb *tshipaim* - s/he closes an opening, shuts something up (Drapeau). This term is used to refer to beavers building dams and thereby closing off brooks, as well as to humans building hydro dams. On occasion beavers may build two dams which is called *nishuau natuatshipaimut*.

10.1 State of the environment (environmental health indicators)

Prior to discussing the anticipated impacts of the Project, ITKC members were asked to consider the current “health of the environment,” that is the land, water, animals, trees, shrubs, and other biota in their territory. As noted above, their description of environmental “health” constitutes a benchmark by which to evaluate the anticipated impacts of the Project. It also provides some insight into what might constitute “ecosystem health indicators” for the ITKC members. As noted by Berkes (1999), ecological indicators are one way that Aboriginal people conceive and talk about environmental change. Parlee, et al. (2005:165-166) note that “the percentage of body fat of birds, caribou, and other animals at harvest is one ecological health indicator which appears to be common among many indigenous groups, including the Cree of northern Quebec...the Gwich’in of Alaska...and the Maori of southern New Zealand.”⁸⁷

The quality of an animal's body fat is certainly a consideration for Sheshatshiu Innu. For example, one ITKC member noted a difference in the fat of coastal versus inland country animals: “When the fat of the *shiship* (waterfowl) from the ocean gets smelly, the smell lasts a long time. *Utshashumek^u* (Atlantic salmon) comes from the ocean, and you can smell the fat. You can't keep it long. In contrast country ducks and fish don't smell of fat, and they keep longer” (P1.25.1.07). Various propositions concerning the quality of caribou fat and that of other animals have been noted with respect to Innu discourses about the impacts of military aviation on wildlife (Armitage, 1994).

ITKC members were asked to talk about the land, water, animals, trees, shrubs, berry plants, and other biota in territories that are distant from the Project where they have extensive land use, before talking about the project area specifically. However, the geographical range of the discussion wandered throughout the territory without a clear focus on any particular location. Most of this discussion related to the Akamiuapishk^u (Mealy Mountains) and Penipuapishk^u (Red Wine Mountains) regions as well as Sheshatshiu and the more barren area to the north at Kameshtashtan (Mistastin Lake). These are the areas where ITKC members have the most recent, direct experience. Here is a list of their observations about the current state of the environment.

⁸⁷ The quality of animal body fat is an Innu preoccupation.

***Tshishik*^u (weather)**

- “The weather is changing, and because of this there are new animals coming here. When I was in the country, I hadn’t felt the change yet. There used to be lots of cold weather in the past, but I haven’t felt the cold weather for some time. In the past I used to get frost bite on my face when out hunting” (P1, 26.2.07).

***Nipi* (water)**

- “The water in nutshimit tastes good especially in the brooks. The only place where one cannot drink the water is in beaver ponds. When you boil the water from a beaver pond it turns black. The trees are dead here, and insects eat beaver shit in the water. You can’t drink it” (P3, 16.11.2006).
- “The best water comes from brooks flowing from hills. You can drink water from marshes if you strain insects from it, but it’s not that good” (P1, 16.11.2006).

***Uinn* (subcutaneous fat) and *uin* (marrow)**

- “*Atik*^u (caribou) hardly have any bone marrow in the spring. The reason their marrow is like that is from walking a long distance. The old people used to say all caribou are like that after walking long distances” (P4, 16.11.2006).
- “Animals start to get fat again in June after green-up when they can eat the fresh growth” (P3, 16.11.2006).
- “In the spring, you expect some animals to be very thin which is related to them being cold during the winter. Male caribou are thin in early November after rut. I once found a skinny porcupine that had died on the snow, but there was nothing unusual about this. One October, my sons killed a beaver that was very thin by a culvert near Anikutshash-shipiss (Cache River) on the Trans Labrador Highway. It should have been very fat at this time of the year; beavers are normally thin in the spring only. There was something wrong with the beaver” (P1.16.11.2006).

Population fluctuations and movements⁸⁸

- “Sometimes porcupine populations crash. This is natural. When marten are gone, they come back again the next year. It’s normal that there are more one year than the next” (P1.16.11.2006).
- “All kinds of animals eat berries, including partridge, foxes, martens, and geese. Partridge are found everywhere. Sometimes willow ptarmigan are in the barren area, in Penipuapishk^u (Red Wine Mountains). After it snows, they move south to find willows. Sometimes they eat berries like many other animals. They move to areas where there are berries” (P3.16.11.2006).
- “Sometimes you won’t see animals in one area because they have gone somewhere else to find food” (P5.16.11.2006).

⁸⁸ I did not attempt to elicit a lexical item for this concept.

***Mishtikua* (trees), *shikaua* (bushes), *minakashi* (berry plants), *uapikuna* (flowers)**

- “I was last at Atshiku-nipi (Seal Lake) in the spring of 2006. The only difference in the land from former times is that in the past there weren’t many alders along the shore. Nowadays, there’s lots of alder along the shore because the water level has dropped. The animals are healthy and the water tastes the same” (ITKC.16.11.2006).
- “I don’t normally pay any notice to plants. In the country, everything grows normally, but near Goose Bay, the bake apples don’t grow as they used to. Nowadays, there are absolutely no bake apples at Uhuniau (North West Point). We used to go berry picking there. There has been nothing there for the last three years. Probably Goose Bay or the village [Sheshatshiu] has an effect on the bake apples’ (P1.16.11.2006).

***Manitushat* (reptiles, insects)**

- “In the past there used to be a lot of toads along the shore [at Sheshatshiu], but now there are no toads there. At my cabin at Mile 95 [on the Trans Labrador Highway] there are still lots of toads. There used to be more shore birds here as well. Also, there used to be a lot of dragonflies along the shore at Sheshatshiu, but there are hardly any now. Innu know the *utshashumek*’ (Atlantic salmon) are in when there are dragonflies” (P1.16.11.2006).

Animal behaviour⁸⁹

- “The caribou used to go a long way in the past when they sensed danger. But nowadays, they are not as intelligent as they used to be; they sit on the road. They don’t care about the noise. In the past, when they heard noise, they would take off. Noise was not a factor in the past, but now, there is too much noise, too many roads” (P3.12.2.07).
- “When we are at the dump, the black bears just stand close to us. They are not afraid. They eat at the dump, but in the country, they are wild, they are afraid of Innu. For example, at Akamiuapishk^u (Mealy Mountains), when the men hunted bear in a burnt area, the bear took off; they couldn’t get close to it. Now that the bear eats at the dump, you can’t eat it any more. Contaminated. [It is good] in the Akamiuapishk^u area where the bears don’t eat garbage. When Pinashue returned from Enakapeshakamau, he made bear fat and intestines for us, and they were good” (P2.29.11.06).
- “I worked for an outfitter in 1992 who said the Americans had an outfitter operation there at Atikonak River. They hunted caribou and fished. The caribou declined after they started to hunt the caribou there. There are lots of old caribou

⁸⁹ No lexical item was recorded for “animal behaviour.” However, the absence of a lexeme does not necessarily mean the absence of a concept. Black (1967) demonstrated this with her examination of Ojibway taxonomy that includes unnamed taxa. See also Clément (1995).

paths all over the marshes there. There used to be a herd there. I guided for two years there at Riverkeep Lodge. It used to be a big herd. Libby Camps is using the old caribou hunting camp as a fishing lodge.⁹⁰ It had been built by the Americans in the 1950s. An old White guy said that a lot of caribou had been killed by people at this camp and this precipitated the decline in the herd” (P6.30.11.06).

Miscellaneous observations

- “When I was last at Kamashkatkutinau-nipi with P1 in the late 1970s I observed no change in the land there. Nothing had been disturbed and there were no White people there. The fish were healthy, the *kukamess* (lake trout) were very fat and there was lots of caribou” (P4.16.11.2006).
- “I was recently at Kameshtashtan (Mistastin Lake). I had been there a long time ago. On my recent trip, it looked the same. There were lots of caribou, mostly does, two year olds, some stags, no calves. The caribou pass through there in the fall and then they rut in October after which time the stags are thin. The stags rut as soon as the does scrape the last of the velvet from their antlers” (P5.16.11.2006).
- “I camped at the mouth of Ashkashkuaikan-shipiss, a brook entering Kakatshu-utshishtun (Grand Lake). The Settlers call this brook ‘Waddies’. The land, and the animals there were the same as ever. The last time I was in the Akamiuapishk⁹¹ (Mealy Mountains) area I was at Enakapeshakamau. The land and animals there were the same as ever. There was nothing unusual about the animals, none were sick” (P3.16.11.2006).

To summarize the results of the discussion concerning the environment today, ITKC members identified a number of “environmental health indicators” including body fat, marrow fat in the case of caribou, water that tastes “good,” absence of disease in animals, and absence of animals that have not died for no apparent reason. A relative scarcity of some species such as toads, dragonflies, and bake apples may be seen as an indicator of problems in the normal state of affairs, attributed in part to proximity to Goose Bay and Sheshatshiu, although the agents directly responsible for these changes were not identified.

An important variable that surfaced in the course of ITKC discussions not mentioned above was the idea of abnormal, unusual, strange or uncommon, designated by the root *matau*.⁹¹ Anything that is *matau* is unusual in some way, and Innu dictionaries contain a number of terms that are constructed using this root. For example, the term *mataunakushu* means “he has an uncommon, curious appearance,” and is used for strange looking people as well as deformed children at birth.

⁹⁰ See www.libbycamps.com

⁹¹ It is component (root) of many lexical items, not a term in its own right.

The idea of *matau* is applied to animals that have died for no apparent reason (*mataunipu* - unusual death), but also to animals of unusual size, or displaying unexplained behaviour. ITKC members spoke of *matau-uapush* (a dwarf rabbit), *matau-kak^u* (dwarf porcupine), and *matau-atik^u* (dwarf caribou) (P2, P8, P9.29.11.06).⁹² *Matau-atik^u* is of particular interest. Innu Elders say that the dwarf is birthed from an adult male caribou.

There are some animals that have a deformity, a lump on the side with a foetus in it. These animals are not sick. Sometimes caribou have this deformity. The caribou foetus develops in a lump on the side of the male caribou, between the skin and the stomach. The *napeu-atik^u* dies and the *matau-atik^u* comes out of this lump (P9.22.11.06).

When it emerges from the lump, the newborn *matau-atik^u* looks like an adult caribou with antlers only it is a miniature version. It looks like a small dog, but is fully adult. Innu would sometimes see *matau-atik^u* where there are a lot of caribou. "It's like the caribou are protecting the dwarf. My grandfather Shimun killed a big stag. It had a lump on the side that contained a ball of caribou hair. That might have been part of the dwarf caribou" (P6.22.11.06).

Knowledge of dwarf caribou and other animals has been recorded elsewhere in Innu territory. For example, Innu trading out of Utshimassit (Davis Inlet) in the late 1920s told anthropologist William Duncan Strong (1930:9) that "the abnormal dwarf caribou called *mah-tákw ah-tée-hoos*, which they have occasionally seen and killed, are carried by the male caribou for six years in a skin sack attached to the belly. Then they are dropped fully developed and accompany the herd." Clément (1995:327-329) documented the same knowledge among Innu on the Quebec North Shore.

Knowledge of *matau-aueshisha* (unusual animals) may well overlap with beliefs and practices that we frequently label religious, and more will be said about this matter later in the report (see section on religious ideology). For the time being it is important to note that traditionally-minded Innu do not make particular distinctions between the sacred and the profane – knowledge of animals be they caribou or dwarf animals, or giant ones is a part of a unified belief system as far as the Innu imagination is concerned. Thus, when we consider what to ITKC members may be *matau-*, we seem to be faced with a continuum of unusualness, with the agency of industrial society at one end, human agency in the middle, and the non-human at the other. Where on this continuum of agency particular events and observations fall may not always be clear. Consider these examples.

- "Etuat Rich once called my grandfather on the radio to ask him if he ever heard of muskrat eating fish. He had left a sucker on the shore, and he saw

⁹² Clément (1995:327) recorded *nanatau-atik^u* for the dwarf caribou, *nanatau-kak^u* for dwarf porcupine, and *nanatauapush* for the dwarf rabbit. He notes that A.W.F. Banfield (1958) examined a dermoid cyst on a specimen sent to him by Innu.

muskrat tracks in the snow. The muskrat had been eating the fish. My grandfather said he had never seen this. Etuat thought this was an omen (*ashieu*).⁹³ His wife died that year” (P6.28.11.06).

- “Shushep Abraham and I were hunting at Mitshishu-utshishtun when we saw unusual otter tracks. The snow was about one foot deep, but the animals didn’t slide across the snow, they jumped. There were two of these animals, and their tracks, which looked like ordinary otter tracks and were the same size, went straight into the woods” (P4.28.11.06).

At times, the unusual can be fearful as the story of a white *utshishkatatak*^u (salamander) found up Tshenuamiu-shipu (Kenamu River) illustrates.⁹⁴

Have you heard a story from our grandfathers of a *utshishkatatak*^u on Tshenuamiu-shipu? They say it is small like an otter. I heard she got bitten by it, when she was removing the boughs from an old camp site. The late Austin [Settler man] told us he saw something there too, about the size of a baking powder container, but it was long and thin, white in colour. They used a salmon spear to puncture it. They cut it in half, but the pieces joined back together again on their own. They threw gasoline all over it, and lit it, and that killed it (P1, P3.28.11.06).

With the exception of unusual animals and events such as *matau-atik*^u and the white salamander, ITKC members said that they did not normally observe anything unusual about animals in the past. Some animals were crippled due to injuries or were not fat, but these were natural phenomena. Animals kill each other, and sometimes there is intra-species killing. For example, male caribou hurt each other in rut and subsequently die due to injuries. Their antlers get stuck together, and some drown. Predators such as the black bear wait by the rapids and hit *utshashumek*^u (Atlantic salmon), wounding them, so that they die later. Mink, otters, osprey, and eagles wound fish as well. ITKC members say that it is obvious when animals have been injured by predators because one can see the marks on their bodies. Osprey and eagles drop fish accidentally and then the fish die. Other factors also explain why fish die including old age. Some animals die from smoke inhalation during forest fires. These are all examples of naturally occurring mortality (P3.16.11.2006).

Nonetheless, in recent times, ITKC members say that they have discovered animals that have died for no apparent reason, contain growths, and show signs of sickness that they find quiet disturbing. If not stated explicitly, they infer that these unusual phenomena have something to do with the intervention of industrial society in their territory.

⁹³ *ashieu* – ‘s/he foresees the death of someone in acting thus’.

⁹⁴ Probably *Ambystoma laterale* which are native to these parts of Labrador. *Utshishkatatak*^u is also the generic term for lizard.

- Various animal species were found dead for no apparent reason. "Once I saw a *mikuashai* (sucker) that was sick. There was something growing in its stomach, but I don't know what caused this. I saw the sick *mikuashai* on a small lake between Kauassenekaush and Kuekuatsheu-ushui" (P4.16.11.2006).
- "My wife found a dead pishu (lynx) under a white spruce tree at Atshiku-nipi (Seal Lake). The fur was intact and it died for no apparent reason. It is unusual to see a dead lynx" (ITKC.16.11.2006).
- "Not long ago, I killed a small kak^u (porcupine). There was something growing on its liver, so we did not eat the porcupine. We never saw this growth in the past" (P4.16.11.2006).
- "You cannot tell if a caribou is healthy by the way it walks. You have to kill it to find out. Once, when hunting near Schefferville with Puniss, we killed a caribou. When we opened it up, it had something like black dirt on the surface of the lung. We had never seen that before" (P1.16.11.2006).

In the 1980s and 1990s, many Innu attributed unexplained animal mortality to low-flying military aircraft, and some of the ITKC members continue to posit some kind of causal relationship between mortality and jets.

- "In the past, we never saw unhealthy animals and no unhealthy fish. But since the military jets have been flying around, different Innu hunters have seen unusual death, dead animals, with no marks" (P5.16.11.2006).
- "I once found a dead moose at Shatshit, but I didn't check it out. I don't know what happened to it. The military jets were still flying at the time. The exhaust from the jets was ingested by the moose" (P4.16.11.2006).

Such discourse must be considered as part of an Innu assessment of the current state of the environment. One way to make sense of this discourse is to relate it to a type of inference that Western logicians label "argument by analogy." Copi states that "analogy is at the basis of most of our [Euro-American] ordinary reasonings from past experience to what the future will hold" (1961:338). It seems that Innu employ such inductive analogies when thinking about environmental impacts. A bare bones example of this, extracted from discourses about military flight training, may be represented as follows:

1. c. 20 years ago, there was no jet noise and exhaust fumes.
2. Innu never encountered animals that died for no apparent reason.
3. Today, there is jet noise and exhaust fumes.
4. Animals are found that died for no apparent reason.
5. Therefore the jet noise and exhaust fumes are causing animals to die.

Western-trained logicians also refer to this type of "argument by analogy" as "Mill's inductive Method of Difference" which is used to establish probable causal connections between agents of change and their effects. Copi describes that method thus: "If an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation

10.2 Observations of the Impacts of the Upper Churchill Project

Just as military flight training is part of the current environmental baseline as far as ITKC members are concerned, so too is the legacy of the Upper Churchill Project, with which all of the ITKC members have some kind of experience. Most of these experiences come from their involvement in the experimental commercial whitefish fishery at Lobstick Lake in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which is where they first learned about methyl-mercury, what they call *matshinatukun* (poison, toxic chemical). The damming of Mishta-shipu and other rivers in the territory and the flooding of Meshikamau (Michikamau Lake) and other lakes frequently evokes a number of political issues for older Innu including members of the ITKC. These include the physical damage to the Meshikamau area, the lack of consultation with the Innu and lack of compensation. Over the years, the project has festered as a major sore point for the older generation of Innu people, and as a result, any discussion about the hydro project is often framed by the earlier hydro-electric project. It is an anchor point for ITKC members with respect to their thinking about future resource developments in Labrador. The following summary by one of the ITKC members concerning the anticipated impacts of the Project illustrates this point.

The areas that the animals live [in the Mishta-shipu valley] will be affected when it is flooded. Not just us but also the animals will be affected. For example, the animals eat all kinds of berries and trees, which are plentiful in the river valley. It is not so good above the valley. All the bushes and trees eaten by animals are in the valley. The only animal that doesn't eat trees is the caribou, which eats *mashkushu* (grass). The trees provided materials for many tools. The impact will be huge as a result of the dam. Downstream to the mouth of the river and all the way to Uinuat (Rigolet) will be affected by contamination from the reservoir. We have seen the destruction from Meshikamau and this is the second project. We get our medicines from the trees and animals in the valley (P1.28.11.06).

The following are examples of observations and propositions advanced by ITKC members concerning the impacts of the Upper Churchill hydro project.

- “In the past, before Meshikamau was flooded, Upatauatshetshun (North West River) never froze over. There was strong current there before Meshikamau was flooded. But there is hardly any current there now, and one can taste salt water right up to Kakatshu-utshishtun (Grand Lake) when the tide comes in. Two years ago in the spring, when I was going over the small portage at Kakatshu-utshishtun [between Grand Lake and Little Lake], I could see the current running back into Kakatshu-utshishtun” (P1.5.2.07).
- “Everything changed after the flooding of Meshikamau. I can now walk along the shore on land I used to paddle over in the past” (P1.5.2.07).
- “After Meshikamau was flooded, I was driving around in a boat to set nets. We didn't know we were on top of old forest, and we wrecked our nets. When the

water receded, we could see where the land was, the soil came up, and trees floated. It was a very messy place. Very messy along the shore” (P1.7.02.07).

- “Where we had our camp close to the shore [of Mishta-shipu near Ushkan-shipiss] there were hardly any alders. Nowadays, there are a lot more alders” (P8.22.11.06).
- “There used to be a lot of *nutshipaushtikueshish* (Harlequin ducks) at Kakuqipapukunanut in the old days before damming and flooding of Meshikamau” (P1.25.1.07).⁹⁶
- “The fish have been affected already from previous damming. One can only eat fish from brooks that don’t flow from Meshikamau” (P2.17.11.2006).
- “When we were at Lobstick we could still eat fish from rivers that do not connect to Mishta-shipu” (P2.29.11.06).
- Tshaukuesh told us we cannot eat fish from Mishta-shipu because they are contaminated” (P2.29.11.06).
- “When working at the Meshikamau [Lobstick] fishery, we got our water from some kind of a well. We didn’t drink water from the reservoir because there were too many insects. It was dirty. We took water from brooks when we were hunting.
- “In the past, before flooding, you could see all the hills, but after flooding, the hills where they traveled are under water, and the animals that were there died” (P9.7.12.06).
- “The fish were good to eat before the roads and dams were built, and now the fish are no good to eat” (P2.7.12.06).
- “In the past, where we fished, there were a lot of fish, and we didn’t have to worry about what we ate. But after Meshikamau, we were told that they fish were no good, and we were afraid to eat the fish. We had all kinds of fish up Mishta-shipu except *utshashumek*” (Atlantic salmon)” (P2.7.12.06).

10.3 An inventory of impact propositions

Having devoted three days in group sessions with the ITKC participants discussing the potential impacts of the Project on the land, water, animals, fish, trees, bushes, berry plants, and other biota, it became apparent that the participants believe that these impacts are obvious. The land and the various animal and plants species that live there will be flooded, and animals that do not evacuate the flood zones will die. It was not surprising, therefore, to encounter a certain impatience on the part of ITKC members when I tried to parse the range of impacts into smaller units, for example, the particular impacts of flooding on every species known to them in the project area.

The impact predictions advanced by the ITKC members take the form of propositions, but the actual causal mechanisms by which impacts may occur are not always transparent. This certainly pertains to propositions dealing with

⁹⁶ Kakuqipapukunanut (‘Where Someone Capsized in the Current’) is the name of some rapids near the former outlet of Meshikamau (Michikamau Lake) where it drains into Meshikamau-shipu (Naskaupi River, NTS map 13L/03E).

animals that the Innu say will be “contaminated” as a result of flooding; where it appears that they subscribe to a theory concerning the transmission of harmful substances from one species to another. There is something in the water after flooding, they say, that is taken up in grasses, flowers, bushes, and other plants. Fish and terrestrial animals eat these plants, and Innu consume the fish and animals.

Whether this is an indigenous notion, that is, local invention, cannot be determined, but there has been lots of support for this theory going back to the Upper Churchill project. As mentioned previously, Innu were warned about methyl-mercury in fish and fish were tested as part of the commercial whitefish fishery in the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, some Innu have seen the CFLCO “Health Risk Advisory Sign” at Uinukapau (Winokapau Lake) advising people to limit their consumption of pike and lake trout “because of continued elevated mercury levels in the flesh of fish.”⁹⁷ Those who have not seen it have been told of its message. As noted previously, in 2000, the Innu Nation embarked upon a “Harvest and Country Foods Contaminant Study” in conjunction with the Atlantic Veterinary College in P.E.I. (Pollock, 2004). A cognate study was conducted in 2002 by researchers at the Institute of Environmental Sciences at the Université du Québec à Montréal concerning human body burden of methylmercury from fish consumption (Canuel, et al. 2006). Also, Innu are certainly aware of the well-publicized oil spill mentioned previously resulting from a fire at the Churchill Falls hydroelectric plant on Mishta-shipu in September 1999. Furthermore, Innu believe that there is something in tap water that can make people sick which is why bottled water is sold in large quantities.⁹⁸

All of this provides support for the notion that there is something in hydro reservoirs that amounts to a poison that will make fish, animals, and humans sick. There is no risk assessment, no idea that substances such as methyl-mercury are found naturally in the environment in low quantities, or that they become a potential health problem only when consumed in large quantities. ITKC members firmly believe that *matshi-natukun* (poison, toxic chemical) will be found in the Muskrat Falls and Gull Island reservoirs that will move up the food chain making fish and animals “no good” to eat.

Let us now review the various propositions advanced by ITKC members concerning anticipated environmental impacts.

⁹⁷ The text of this sign is reproduced in Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro’s Churchill River Power Project Information Package, April 26, 2000.

⁹⁸ I know of one family in Sheshatshiu that obtains its drinking water from North West River rather than from the tap in their house, and I have witnessed Innu getting water from Birch Brook near Gosling Lake.

Propositions related to *atik*^u (caribou)

- “*Atik*^u (caribou) will be driven away from the area because of noise from construction vehicles such as big trucks” (P2.7.12.06).
- “*Atik*^u (caribou) will sense/feel the destruction (damage to, breaking up) of the land and will not be seen in the area again” (P8.7.12.06).
- “The moss that the caribou eat will be scraped from the ground leaving only sand” (P8.7.12.06).
- “The food that the caribou eat will be contaminated. They will eat something that floats in the water. In the winter, it will be frozen and the caribou will walk around and eat the moss that is affected by the stuff that floats in the water. They eat the plants that grow early in spring, the plants that grow near the reservoir. They will drink the water from the reservoir” (P1.5.12.06).

Propositions related to *mashk*^u (black bear)

- “*Mashk*^u (black bear) dens will be broken up/destroyed. The water will flood their homes” (P2.7.12.06).
- “The bear can make its den elsewhere as long as the flooding does not occur in the fall” (P2.7.12.06);
- “The bears will go somewhere else, in the hills, to find something to eat” (P1.5.12.06).
- “The bear dens will be somewhere else, on top of the hills” (P1.5.12.06);
- “There is a low-land area just upstream of Kamitinishkasht where there are red, muddy banks. This used to be a good area for black bears. Their dens were on the hills. There was lots of partridge here as well. This will be under water” (P1.5.12.06).

Propositions related to *amishk*^u (beaver) and *shuniau-aueshish* (furbearers)

- “Mishta-shipu used to be good for *amishk*^u (beaver). If the flooding occurs in the fall, the beaver may not have enough time to move away, and their houses will be broken up/flooded. Otherwise, beaver will move away” (P4.16.11.2006).
- “There are all kinds of *ushakamishk*^u (places where there are always beaver), in the Tepiteu-shipu area and these will all be under water. They will move up the brooks when they realize that the flooding is occurring” (P3.5.12.06).
- “If the beaver have built their lodges before the flooding, they will have to be killed [doesn't explain why they must be harvested prior to flooding]” (P3.16.11.2006).
- “The fish will be eaten by otter and mink, so they will be affected too. Just as humans get sick from eating the fish, so too will the otters and mink that eat the fish” (P1.5.12.06).

Propositions related to *pineu* (partridge)

- “There will be no more partridge in the flooded area because fir boughs that they feed on will be destroyed” (P8.7.12.06).
- “Partridges can survive easily, but their young, their nesting areas will be affected” (ITKC.7.12.06).
- “There is lots of *uapineu-mitshim* (willow) at Tepiteu-shipu. This will be flooded and so there won't be *uapineu* (willow ptarmigan) there” (P1.5.12.06).

Propositions related to *shiship* (ducks) and *nishk* (geese)

- “Feeding grounds for geese will be flooded, e.g. at the mouth of Tepiteu-shipu where there is a good feeding area for geese (P7.5.12.06). There won't be any *ushatshiss* (places where there are always geese). The *nishk* (Canada goose) will feed somewhere else because their feeding area will be underwater” (P1.5.12.06).
- “Young ducks won't find a place to rest on the reservoir. Geese can survive as well, but they won't be in the reservoir” (P8.7.12.06).

Propositions related to *namesh* (fish)

- “The fish eat in the water, and they will eat contaminants in the water. Expressed at *mitshu tshakuanu* (eat something) that will make them sick” (P5.5.12.06).
- “Innu will not be able to eat the fish” (P5. 5.12.06).
- “Tree bark floats around after flooding and the fish eat this. It has an impact on the fish” (P5.16.11.2006).
- “Fish will die” (P1.7.2.07).

Propositions related to *nipi* (water quality)

- “The water will be no good and will be undrinkable (P5.16.11.2006; 5.12.06). We used to have clean drinking water” (P1.7.2.07).
- “The water would be no good due to mercury. There's no word for this in Innu-aimun” (P7.5.12.06).
- “We will see an increase in ‘contamination’. All the animals, for example, geese, that land in the water will be affected” (P5.7.2.07).
- Mercury levels will decrease over time (P7.5.12.06).
- The construction fuel spills will go in the water (P1.24.1.07).
- “You can't control insects. If you remove moss, you see all kinds of insects. The insects are in the trees as well. If you flood the land there's so many different kinds of insects. They'll all be floating around. In the marshes, there are insects in the water, but with the reservoir, there will be many insects in the water that do not belong there – land insects” (P1.5.12.06).
- “The flooding will not be as bad as Meshikamau, but it will be ‘contaminated’.

We won't be able to drink the water. We won't be able to use the animals and fish" (P1.24.1.07).

- "You buy water these days in the store, so there must be something wrong with the water in the taps. Animals can't buy water in the store" (P1.5.12.06).

Propositions related to *nutshimiu-natukun* ('country medicine')

- "All the different *natukun* ('medicine') will be destroyed" (P9.7.12.06).
- "All the things the animals rely on will be under water. The trees, berries, that we used as medicine will be wasted, all along the river. The berries grow mostly in the river valleys. Important berry plants will be under water" (P1.5.12.06).
- "*Mitush* (poplar) is real medicine. When they flood the areas where *mitush* and other trees are located, they will be destroyed. Alders and willows and berries that are on the bushes are medicine. These places will be under water" (P1.24.2.07).
- "That's the reason I feel connected to that river and feel strongly about the damming. It's because so much Innu medicine will be destroyed....I once used *pitshuatik*^u on my grandchild who was close to death; he couldn't eat at the time. The non-Innu medicine didn't work. I put the *pitshuatik*^u on his chest, and he was back to normal the next day....The reason Innu medicine works is because God made it, and the land, and the medicine comes from the land...Innu people treat their medicine with respect" (P9.17.11.2006).
- "There are real medicines that only grow in the river valleys. We should get these before they flood the river" (P2.7.12.06).

Miscellaneous propositions

- "A lot of dirt (dust) will cover the trees because of heavy vehicle traffic and the gases (fumes) from the vehicles will be in the air" (P8.7.12.06).
- "Trees will be destroyed" (P9.17.11.2006).
- "Animals will be killed" (P9.17.11.2006).
- "Many porcupines will die" (P9.7.12.06).
- "Lots of animals get their food along the shores of the river, for example, partridge and porcupine eat trees, the beaver eats alder. Some animals eat berries. The food that these animals eat will be affected by the flooding" (P1.16.12.06).
- "Many things will be ruined/wasted including trees and animals" (P1.16.12.06).

11. Ideology: Innu beliefs and Mishta-shipu

Religious ideology is a special kind of thought, namely, "motivated thought" which aims to totalize the information received by an individual concerning his/her natural and social environments, adding in the process additional levels of reality to that accessible through "common sense thought" (Armitage, 1992:64). As

Tanner notes, religious thought is “not unrelated to the practical goals of everyday life, but it stands apart from ‘common sense’ thought, in that it offers quite separate techniques to produce these goals” (1979:208).

As we shall see shortly, Innu religious ideology is a source of many environmental values, and provides building blocks in the Innu knowledge system as it relates to *Mishta-shipu*. In Usher’s terms discussed previously, environmental values are “culturally based value statements about how things should be, and what is fitting and proper to do, including moral or ethical statements about how to behave with respect to animals and the environment, and about human health and well-being in a holistic sense” (2000:186). The “culturally based cosmology” is a foundation of the knowledge system, according to Usher, “by which information derived from observations, experience, and instruction is organized to provide explanations and guidance” (ibid.). Both environmental values and the culturally based cosmology comprise TEK categories in his view.

Before I deal with specifics as they relate to *Mishta-shipu*, a brief overview of traditional Innu religious ideology is in order. In providing this overview, I write about Innu religious beliefs in the present-tense, recognizing that they have suffered considerable erosion over the last 50 years since the Innu were settled in villages.

The best place to start is with the animal masters. As noted elsewhere (Bouchard and Mailhot, 1973), traditionally-minded Innu possess a well-developed taxonomic system that divides animals into different categories. However, various animal species are also organized in a parallel classification based on kingdoms (*tipenitamun*).⁹⁹ Here, each animal kingdom is controlled by an animal being called *utshimau* (chief or master) or *katipenitak* (controller) (ibid.:61-62).

One encounters small variations in beliefs about the animal masters as one travels from one part of the Innu territory to another. For example, in Unaman-shipu (La Romaine) on the Quebec North Shore, many animal species are thought to have their own animal master. *Papakashtshishk^u* is the master of caribou, *Kakuapeu*, the master of porcupine, *Uapineu-napeu*, the master of partridge, etc. At the same time, individual species are represented by a single master on the basis of certain shared traits. Thus, *Missinak^u* is the master of aquatic species including fish and beavers. The master of caribou is the most powerful of all of these masters and hence controls all terrestrial species, including most mammals, and birds (Clément. 1995:440-441).

Innu living in Labrador do not use the term *Papakashtshishk^u* to refer to the caribou master, preferring instead *Kanipinikassikueu*. In general, they believe that the caribou master is more powerful than any of the other masters, however, this too is open to question as Henriksen discovered in conversation with the late Kaniuekutet (1977:6-7).

⁹⁹ *Tipenitamun* – ‘authority, responsibility, jurisdiction, domain’ (Drapeau, 1991, my translation).

Traditionally-minded Innu live in a perpetual cycle of exchange with the animal masters. In return for following certain rules of respect, the animal masters provide animals under their control to the Innu. The rules of respect include sharing meat and other animal products, disposing the uneaten remains in the fire, in trees or on scaffolds, handling the caribou marrow with extreme care during the ritual feast known as *makushan*, not wasting meat or over harvesting, making prestations to the masters in the form of decorated clothing and hunting equipment, and using deferential language when referring to or communicating with the masters. The need for respect is paramount,¹⁰⁰ and people who do not show respect run the risk of offending the animal masters, and starvation at least in the pre-settlement days.

The idea of respect for animals was mentioned on several occasions by ITKC members. For example, one person said, “You don’t leave bones around for dogs to eat. If we let a dog eat a partridge head, we won’t get any partridge again because the partridge boss will be mad. The younger generation doesn’t know what it’s doing; leaving caribou bones outside the house, disrespecting the bones. Things have changed so much” (P2.22.11.06).¹⁰¹ Another committee member said, “The most respected places were Akamiuapishk^u (Mealy Mountains) and Penipuapishk^u (Red Wine Mountains) because these are the places where caribou always were. They are like a super market. If someone breaks into the store, we’d get mad. If you don’t respect the caribou, perhaps they won’t go there. Nowadays, the government always seems to look after Innu animals,¹⁰² but in the past, the old Innu did this, from one generation to the next. We have been doing this long before government started to” (P1.5.2.07).

Many more elements of the natural world were respected in the old days than now, and even objects that non-Innu consider inanimate had to be respected, such as rocks. In explaining this practice, one of the ITKC members referred to an *atanukan* dealing with the infamous trickster character, Kuekuatsheu (wolverine), who conversed with a boulder that followed him around. The rock ended up rolling on top of him, and would not budge. So Kuekuatsheu had to call on *nanimissu* (thunder and lightning) to help him, by striking the rock, and splitting it in two. This story was related in order to explain why Innu believe that rocks are “living things” (P1.5.2.07). Having heard this account, another member of the committee remembered his grandfather chastising him for rolling a rock off a cliff. This was viewed as disrespectful towards the rock (P6.5.2.07).

¹⁰⁰ *ishpitenitam^u* – s/he respects something, *ishpitenimeu* – s/he respects someone.

¹⁰¹ Parlee et al. report that many Dené elders “attribute the absence of caribou in some years to a lack of respect shown for the land and animals; they believe that people must respect the caribou or they will not come back to them. That respect is demonstrated in many ways. Good hunting practices and proper harvesting and preservation of meat are some ways to demonstrate this respect” (2005:34).

¹⁰² He is referring to government wildlife management.

Respect is clearly at the core of the traditional Innu moral code, as noted by Henriksen.

Man and nature are part of one spiritual world. Hence, [Barren Ground Innu] behaviour is guided not merely by what White people call 'rational principles', but also by the spiritual and moral principles which exist in nature of which Man is an integral part. They believe that a hunter does not kill an animal against its will, but with its consent. Hunters and hunted are alike part of nature. As long as the [Barren Ground Innu] follow the customs of their people, as handed down from their fore-fathers, and they do not offend the animals and their spiritual masters, they will continue to live in peace with each other and with nature" (1977:8).

Many older Innu believe that a generalized lack of respect is the cause of a wide range of social problems in the Innu villages, and that a number of tragic events can be directly traced to specific acts of disrespect. For example, a house fire involving significant loss of life was linked to the actions of a male householder who had apparently disrespected *mashk^u* (black bear) by pouring gasoline into the den of a hibernating bear and setting fire to the animal. During the ITKC meetings in the fall, one of the committee members announced with considerable consternation and anger that someone had dumped a caribou carcass and large freezer bag of salmon at Uhuniau (North West River) which has road access from Sheshatshiu and North West River. "It's a sin," he said emotionally. "The community has gone a year without a suicide or a fatal accident, but what's going to happen now that there has been such a terrible act of disrespect? Why do people take too much animals if they end up wasting it," he asked? "It is very disrespectful to waste the animals like this. Innu like my father always respected the animals which they needed for their survival. The culture, the animals, must be respected" (P7.28.11.06).

Even horrific catastrophes in other countries such as tornadoes and the hurricane that ravaged New Orleans in 2005 are attributed to widespread disrespect towards the animal masters by Innu and non-Innu alike. In fact, the shaking tent ceremony discussed below can no longer be held, according to some Innu, because the *kakushapatak* (the officiant) would surely be punished by angry animal masters over the disrespect shown them in recent years. As a Euro-Canadian, trying to make sense of this kind of belief, I suggest that the Innu follow the thinking of their closely related neighbours to the west, the James Bay Cree, who "accept two seemingly incompatible versions of reality...by implicitly acknowledging two distinct levels of determination of events, one practical and commonsense, and the other ideological and revelatory" (Tanner, 2007).

It is important to note, here, that not only are "other-than-human" beings such as animal masters considered sentient, intelligent beings, the animals controlled by these masters are also considered to be sentient, although in varying degrees. At the top of the list is *mashk^u* (black bear), followed by *maikan* (wolf), *atik^u*

(caribou), *matsheshu* (fox), *amishkʷ* (beaver) and other species that share human attributes in various ways or which are given important roles in the *atanukan* narratives. Even *pîtshêpən* (grasshopper) has some level of sentience. “You can talk to them. If you give some molasses to them, they will spit something brown” (P2. 22.11.06). I have provided examples previously of Innu thinking with respect to the intelligence (*innishu*) of certain animals; the tricky *mashkʷ*, for example, that undertakes various deceptive manoeuvres in order to deflect hunters from his den. *Mashkʷ* understands human speech, even when the latter are not within earshot.

Another example, which was cited previously, and which remains somewhat opaque to me, is the idea that animals are able to see their reflections in the water. According to one ITKC member, “Caribou do this and it gives them information about the state of their antlers. The image they see is like a photo of themselves. It’s a story/information about their antlers. [Depending on what they see], they may eat *ushkuai-pishim* (tree fungi) to harden their antlers, after they have scraped the velvet off them. This is when they are getting ready to rut in October” (P3.24.1.07).

In addition to the animal masters, traditionally-minded Innu say that their territory was populated at one time or another with a variety of other beings including *Mishtapeu*, cannibals such as *Atshen* and *Meminteu*, giant beavers and eagles, various large, malevolent creatures in the *manitush* category, sneaking creatures like *Katshimaitsheshu* (aka *Uapanatshu*), cave/rock creatures like *Memekueshu*, and *Tshiuëtinishu*.¹⁰³ *Mishtapeu* is the attending, guardian spirit, a resident of *tshishtashkamikʷ*, mentioned previously, who comes to the assistance of a shaman and assists him in his “negotiations” with animal masters and battles with malevolent beings and hostile shamans. *Tshiuëtinishu* is a weather control being associated with the northwest winds. In addition to these non-human entities, Innu have also encountered spirit beings such as *atshakʷ* (ghosts, souls) and *Kameshtashtaniuniss*, a humanoid being found at Kameshtashtan.

Communication with the animal masters, *Mishtapeu*, and other beings is possible through dreams, the shaking tent, steam tent, scapulimancy (shoulder blade divination), oracles, omens, and other media (see Armitage, 1992; Savard, 2004:97-105; Vincent, 1973).¹⁰⁴ However, only people with power can communicate with these beings, and in this regard the shamans were the most

¹⁰³ See Vincent and Bacon (1978:92) “...the Montagnais territory has always been populated by multiple forms of life: neighbouring Indian groups whose members came in person or whose shamans sent their spirits in the form of animals, groups of maleficent beings which arrived from far away, and which may have been a Montagnais representation of Iroquois or other Amerindians, dangerous groups which had to be repulsed to the margins of the territory “ (my translation).

¹⁰⁴ For the closely related James Bay Cree, Tanner (2007) says that “the Cree who believe in these entities would say that in principle they are empirical phenomena, but that in order to be encountered either certain rare conditions must be met, or some skilled shamanistic ritual must be performed.”

powerful. Known as *miteu* or *kamanitushit* (or its euphemism *kamataukatshiut*) to the Innu, the shaman could be *kakushapatak* or *kamushtatet*, the former term referring to the person who conducted a shaking tent ceremony, the latter to someone with power but who did not do the shaking tent. Shamans played a key role in reminding people of the rules of respect, in maintaining relations with the animal masters and other beings, and in rectifying problems when people had committed transgressions.

Moreover, shamans had frequent encounters with non-human and spirit beings. They played a leading role in interpreting daily events in terms of the bigger world of religious meaning available to the Innu. Thus, when members of the hunting group heard mysterious singing or drumming or saw a human-like being in the mist while hunting, the shaman would make sense of such phenomena.

As noted elsewhere in this report, the last shaking tent ceremony in Innu territory was held at the mouth of Ushkan-shipiss in November 1969 by *Uatshitshish*, the father of the one of the ITKC members. She and three other members of the committee were witnesses to this ceremony. *Uatshitshish* had also conducted a shaking tent ceremony on the portage by Manitu-utshu. In both cases, he had been asked to ascertain the whereabouts of caribou, and other animals. Given the importance of the shaking tent to the older Innu, it is not surprising that the Ushkan-shipiss area should figure prominently in the memories of the people who witnessed the last one ever conducted - in that spot. This was made clear at the ITKC meeting with the NLH and Innu Nation Task Force in February 2007, when the shaking tent ceremony was explained to the NLH representatives. "My grandfather did his last shaking tent at Ushkan-shipiss. This will be under water. That's why we have to protect the land, because our grandfathers used this area" (P7.7.2.07).

In the days before settlement, animist beliefs, rituals, and experiences with animal masters and other beings embedded core values around which much of Innu society was organized. Speaking about Barren Ground Innu life in the interior, Henriksen noted that "Mythology, ritual life, hunting, the rules of sharing, leadership, and prestige are interconnected in such a way as to give a consistent frame of reference for one's choice of actions in the Barren Grounds" (1973:54). They combined to provide the context in which fundamental dilemmas in Innu society – sharing versus having, and interdependence versus autonomy – could be resolved. In contrast, life in the village with its alternative economic strategies and dependence on non-Innu institutions meant that these dilemmas could not be resolved easily, with envy, political strife, and other examples of lack of social cohesiveness the result (ibid.85-90). When the staples of life could be obtained through wage employment or social security payments, the need to maintain ongoing respectful relations with the animal masters ceased to be of great importance. This is why some older Innu say that in former days, people paid much more respect to animal masters, because it was a matter of life and death back then. One risked starvation if one did not pay due respect to animal

masters. The Innu were even careful not to mention the names of the masters for fear of offending them.¹⁰⁵

Nonetheless, despite profound changes in traditional beliefs, there are many Innu people in both Sheshatshiu and Natuashish who continue to have religious experiences of one kind or another both on the land and in their villages, including omens and encounters with spirit beings and other entities. This demonstrates that Innu religious expression is not a static, ossified lore, but a body of beliefs that continues to inspire the Innu imagination and inform behaviour, and will continue to evolve in the future.

There are many examples of the influence of Innu religious ideology in Innu discourses about Mishta-shipu and the potential impacts of hydro-electric development on the river. One of the most important ones relates to the *nutshimiu-natukun* (country medicine) found in plants and animals in the Mishta-shipu valley. A deeply rooted idea that healthy food, and healthy living depend on the consumption of medicine-containing animals and plants appears to permeate the thinking of older Innu, and this makes sense of their concerns about the “wasting” of the medicine in the Mishta-shipu valley through flooding. The idea that the power of *nutshimiu-natukun* may be weakened through industrial development, including “contamination” of water by methyl-mercury, is a correlate of this concern about wasting. Furthermore, the strong possibility that animals will drown or in some other way be hurt as a result of hydro development may well offend the core values of traditionally-minded Innu related to respecting animal masters and the animals they control.

The hint of retribution as a result of disrespect was suggested in two ways by ITKC members, and both point to the idea that future environmental impacts may be compounded by non-human agents. In the first case, one of the ITKC members spoke of the commercial horse-logging operation at Mud Lake that dates back about 100 years.¹⁰⁶ The non-Innu loggers left many logs behind, which drifted ashore, and piled up, creating a big mess. The man in charge of the operation died of sickness upon his return home. According to an ITKC member, “The man who did the work did a lot of damage from clearcutting. The person who damages the trees without a purpose, it’s like the trees killed him. That’s history. I don’t want this to be repeated” (P3.7.02.07).

The second case has been mentioned in passing at a number of places in the report so far. This relates to the large, otter or seal-like creature known as *uenitshikumishiteu*. The animal is classified in the *manitush* (malevolent animal) category and is controlled by *Missinak’*, the master of aquatic species. For older Innu, it is as real as any other animal, and they adduce empirical evidence

¹⁰⁵ P. Armitage *Tshishennuat* consultation in Natuashish concerning objects of religious significance, 1 April 2004.

¹⁰⁶ This is a reference to the commercial logging operation at Mud Lake by Dickie Lumber Company from Nova Scotia, in the period 1901-1910.

including eye-witness accounts, to support their propositions related to it. For this reason, including the animal in this discussion of Innu religious ideology does a certain disservice to their belief system, one in which no distinctions are made between the sacred and the profane, between religious and non-religious thought.

ITKC members said that *uenitshikumishiteu* live under the hill at Muskrat Falls called Manitu-utshu. In fact, the hill is so-named because of this animal; the toponym means 'evil creature mountain'. The hill is like a *uisht* (beaver lodge) and the entranceway is under the water. *Uenitshikumishiteu* can be very dangerous creatures and will attack people if they have been threatened or harmed in some way.¹⁰⁷ They can travel through the ground in the same way that a fish swims through the water, and they are thought to eat seals, of which large numbers used to congregate just below the falls. Innu once found seal bones by a shallow pond that was located at the top of Manitu-utshu. One ITKC member said he had visited the top of the hill in recent years and noted that the pond is no longer there. He thinks that it was drained by White people. One was seen on an ice-pan just downstream of Muskrat Falls by the father of one committee member. Another committee member was an actual eye-witness having seen a *uenitshikumishiteu* in the Manitu-utshu area. It was orange/yellow in colour. Shenum Pone saw four of them on one occasion, and Shimiu Pastitshi Jr. saw one on the smooth rocks at the side of the stretch of flat water between the two sets of falls at Muskrat Falls. Ishpashtien Nuna Sr. saw *uenitshikumishiteu* tracks in this area as well. Innu have also seen the tracks of *uenitshikumishiteu* along the shore in the cove on the north side of Mishta-shipu, just past Muskrat Falls. In addition, the animal has been seen a Netaukau (Sandy Point), and one of more of them is believed to have grabbed hold of a Settler's log boom on Kakatshu-utshishtun (Grand Lake) (P1, P2, P3, P7.24.1.07).

"Like any animal that can travel through the water, *uenitshikumishiteu* can travel through the ground. Once two men were hunting, and one of them killed a young *uenitshikumishiteu* whereupon the water started to bubble. The hunters took off. They could see the ground moving like water towards them. The one who shot the *uenitshikumishiteu* was killed, and his buddy heard him screaming. The fellow who hadn't shot the being wasn't bothered" (P2.24.1.07). "We have all heard this story about *uenitshikumishiteu* from the old people. It is very dangerous" (P1.24.1.07).

Uenitshikumishiteu appears in the lexicon of Innu from others parts of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. Unaman-shipu (La Romaine) Innu were familiar

¹⁰⁷ One of the ITKC members said that one should not harm any strange-looking animal in principle. "When I grew up in the country, older Innu told me never to shoot at an animal if it looked unusual or it could kill me. I was always warned about this. So I took a good look at the animal before I shot" (P6.24.1.07).

with the animal when I discussed it with them in June 2006, and Clément listed it as an unidentified type of *nitshikʷ* (otter) in his *aueshish* (animal) taxonomy based on interviews with Innu from Ekuanitshu (Mingan) (1995:447). However, the first written account of the animal is from William Duncan Strong's fieldwork in the Utshimassit (Davis Inlet) area in the late 1920s.

Two old men of the Davis Inlet band claimed to have seen one of these animals, called *wen-tsúk-ah-més-e-téy-oh*, in Seal Lake (on the Nauscaupee, not the Little Whale River drainage). The body was said to be blackish brown with white lower legs and feet, large ears, and the animal was of great size. It whistled *wheú-u-u*, on a low note, very much like the call of a quail, or so the Indians' rendition of the call sounded. This animal has not been seen for many years, but an old story tells of an Indian who killed the young of this species and was pursued by the mother otter who could swim under land as well as water. According to the story, she killed the man who destroyed her young, but his companion escaped to tell about it (Strong, 1930:9-10).

The fact that the "*uishʷ*" (lodge, dwelling-place) of *uenitshikumishiteu* is in Manituutshu was of special concern to the ITKC members because of the construction work proposed for the location. One end of the Muskrat Falls dam will be secured to it, and an access road and diversion tunnel will be built there. Committee members are concerned that the construction work will be disrespectful to *uenitshikumishiteu*. "I'm afraid that they might get mad and destroy the dam," said one person (P1.24.1.07). "It was never disturbed in the past, but it will be disturbed by construction," said another person (P2, 24.1.07). The consensus seemed to be that "*uenitshikumishiteu* won't let the project happen. If you don't touch the hill, destroy it, *uenitshikumishiteu* won't get mad" (P1, P2, P3.24.1.07). When asked directly, the committee members were unwilling to contemplate, or could not think of, any mitigation measures that would prevent *uenitshikumishiteu* from getting angry.¹⁰⁸

12. Conclusions

There is little doubt that more focused research using thorough ethnoscientific and other methods would add considerably to the TEK presented in this report, and would explore regional differences between the environmental knowledge of Sheshatshiu Innu versus their relatives on the Quebec North Shore for whom extensive ethnobotanical and zoological information has been obtained (see

¹⁰⁸ I note a parallel reported by Tanner (2007) for the James Bay Cree. "I was conducting research with several Cree youth and elders in an area about to be flooded by a hydroelectric reservoir. I was told about a water monster that is reputed to live in the vicinity of the rapids where the dam was to be constructed. During this conversation I was asked if I thought the hydroelectric project would be stopped by Hydro-Quebec if, during construction, the engineers were to discover clear evidence of the existence of the creature in question. However, this could also be interpreted as one of many Cree stories that make it a point to challenge the White Man's well-known skepticism about their spiritual beliefs."

Clément, 1995, 1991; Bouchard and Mailhot, 1973) A thorough research program would involve a year or more of interviewing knowledgeable Innu, field trips to investigate Innu botanical, geographic and zoological concepts such as *ushakatik*¹⁰⁹ ('where there is always caribou'), and the field collection of species for the purpose of rigorous identification, and anatomical examination. An interdisciplinary team consisting of an ethnographer, with significant input from a zoologist, botanist, ecologist, and linguist working closely with Innu experts would be in the best position to obtain detailed TEK data and elicit Innu concepts about the land and its biota.

As pointed out previously, the ITKC process is by design a distillation of Innu knowledge about the environment with a particular focus on the Mishta-shipu area.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, one of the goals of the Innu Nation and NLH in commissioning the ITKC is presumably to provide a vehicle for the Innu to have input into the environmental science of the assessment of the impacts of the hydro project. The assessment process is designed and controlled by people trained in western biological sciences with little experience in integrating TEK into their research designs. The question is, then, can the environmental knowledge and impact discourses presented in this report can play any role in the environmental assessment of the Project? For example, can they help identify vulnerable or rare species, assist in the formulation of testable impact hypotheses, or facilitate impact mitigation in some way?

Ultimately, such matters may best be addressed by the people tasked to conduct the biophysical impact assessment of the Project. Their interrogation of this report with the view to designing new field studies, comparing the results of existing studies with Innu knowledge, and developing testable hypotheses related to impact assessment and mitigation would hopefully be a productive exercise.

Although a comparison of Innu environmental knowledge and that derived from western scientific methods is beyond the mandate of the ITKC as noted previously, I would like to "kick-start" this interrogation by pointing to a number of potentially "useful" observations and propositions provided by ITKC members.¹¹⁰

- With respect to the identification of rare species, ITKC members said that they had identified *assiuashik*¹¹⁰ (Canadian yew, *Taxus Canadensis* March) on a small island just upstream of Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Island). This information is no

¹⁰⁹ Nadasdy's critique of the compartmentalization of TEK gives us reason to reflect upon the nature of this enterprise. "The imperative of incorporating TEK into the state management system has caused researchers to focus on extracting from communities only that kind of information which can be expressed in a few very specific ways – that is, in forms that can be utilized within the institutional framework of scientific resource management, such as numbers and lines on maps contained in reports, books, and other written documents – and then to interpret it in a manner consistent with the assumptions of scientific wildlife management" (1999:9).

¹¹⁰ "Useful" according to my criteria and biases. Biologists may well interrogate this report using different criteria.

longer novel because botanists conducting baseline data collection for NLH in relation to Project also found the species at this location. Is this the only known location of *assiuashik*^u in Labrador, and can the plants located on *Assiuashiku-minishtik*^u be transplanted as requested by one of the ITKC members?

- A number of “hotspots” were identified by ITKC members along Mishta-shipu where concentrations of various animal species were identified. *Amishk*^u (beaver) lodges were identified near the mouths of some of Mishta-shipu’s tributaries, and in small, protected channels along the main course of the river. Some of the ITKC members suggested that beaver would be able to escape the flooding and find alternative habitat, however, this may not be possible if the flooding occurs during the winter when the beaver are fully committed to their lodges and their winter food supply is under the ice. Can beaver be transplanted to productive habitat outside of the flood zone, and can the timing of the flooding be controlled in such a way to allow beaver to escape inundation and thereby reduce their mortality?
- Other denning animals such as *mashk*^u (black bear) and *utshashk*^u (muskrat) face the same predicament as *amishk*^u (beaver), and the same questions arise. Can they be transplanted pre-flooding, and can the flooding be controlled so as to give them time to establish dens and lodges in safe locations?
- Spring-time *ashkui* (‘open water’) at the mouths of tributaries were identified as good waterfowl habitat in the spring. Will reservoir creation alter the location of these *ashkui* and the timing of their appearance, and if so with what impacts upon waterfowl populations?
- *Nitshik*^u (otter) and *atshikash* (mink) sometimes live in air pockets under the ice along the shores of the river and its tributaries. These air pockets constitute habitat. What effect will flooding have upon such habitat and the species that occupy them?
- Partridge, porcupine and other species eat fir, willow, berries and other vegetation that will be flooded when reservoir creation occurs, and hence these species will lose access to food. What is an obvious consequence of flooding to the ITKC members begs the question as to the “significance” of the loss of habitat and food sources for the existing populations of these animals within the Mishta-shipu valley.
- I noted that the ITKC members advanced a theory concerning the transmission of *natukun* (medicine) or medicinal properties from one species to another. Trees, berries, and other things that grow in the earth contain *natukun*. Animals including the beaver and otter eat these things that grow from the land and so they contain *natukun* as well. Humans eat medicines directly in the form of berries and medicinal concoctions, but also by consuming animals and fish that contain medicinal properties. Surely, this theory invites us to remember the fact that the biota of the Mishta-shipu valley are part of an ecological community, and that the impacts of flooding must consider this community and the relationships among its members.

In conclusion, it is important to remember that the knowledge shared by ITKC members concerning the biota of Mishta-shipu as well as their propositions concerning the potential impacts of the hydro project are embedded within a knowledge structure and value system that is itself embedded or overlaps with their religious ideology. Tanner (2007) has noted the same with respect to the James Bay Cree. “Alongside pragmatic empirically-based knowledge about animals, explanations of environmental events can involve prophecies, divination, and the actions of spirits.” Thus, core values of respect for animal masters and the species they control, belief in the sentience of various animal species, and concerns about “wasting” *nutshimiu-natukun* (‘country medicine’) all derive from a broader, religious worldview. Taking these values and beliefs into account in planning and building the Project, for example, by attempting to design the project in a “respectful” way, according to Innu ideas of respect, or by mitigating project impacts in a way that is meaningful to the Innu in a framework of “respect,” could help some Innu come to terms with what is currently an unacceptable, yet inevitable project in their minds.

Finally, Labrador Innu have a history with hydro-electric projects in their territory, and it is not a pleasant one as far as older Innu are concerned. The damming of Meshikamau-shipu (Naskaupi River), Kainipeshiu-shipu (Kanairiktok River), and Mishta-shipu (Churchill River) and with this the flooding of Meshikamau (Michikamau Lake) and other lakes on the Labrador plateau have left a legacy that informs current Innu thinking about the potential impacts of the Project. This is a legacy that both NLH and the Innu Nation must acknowledge in communicating with the Innu population at large about the environmental assessment of the Project, and planning meaningful mitigation measures to minimize project impacts.

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Appendix 1. Terms of Reference for the Innu Traditional Knowledge Committee

8.1 Purpose

The Parties will work cooperatively to document and appropriately incorporate Innu Traditional Knowledge in the environmental assessment of the Potential Development. The objective is to develop an understanding of the environment and the potential effects of the Potential Development that is informed by both western science and traditional knowledge, and to promote a dialogue between both systems that is based on communication, cooperation and mutual respect.

To facilitate this, an *Innu Traditional Knowledge Committee* (ITKC) will be established, which will serve as the primary mechanism through which Innu Traditional Knowledge will be documented, shared and discussed.

8.2 Composition

The ITKC will function as an adjunct to the Task Force, working separately but parallel to it with linkages and interaction between the two groups as required and appropriate.

The ITKC will be comprised of 4-6 Innu Elders who are respected as authorities on Innu Traditional Knowledge, as identified by Innu Nation. Other individuals within the Innu communities will also be consulted as required and at the discretion of Innu Nation. The ITKC will be assisted by a qualified and experienced Facilitator / Researcher to be jointly agreed to by the Parties, who will coordinate its work and be responsible for documenting and reporting on the process and its results.

Innu Nation and Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro Task Force representatives, while not formally serving as members of the ITKC, will attend meetings and discussions as required and appropriate to provide project and other information directly and to answer questions.

8.3 Mandate

The ITKC shall discuss, document and provide the following information to the Parties through the Task Force:

an Innu knowledge-based description of the key ecological, historical and cultural features of the project area;

- information on how Innu use this environment;
- comments on the environmental studies that have been and will be

- undertaken for the environmental assessment;
- perspectives on how the Potential Development may affect those components of the environment that are most valued by Innu; and
 - comments on potential mitigation measures and their effectiveness, and on any likely residual environmental effects.

8.4 Information and Reporting

The ITKC will meet regularly, and the Facilitator / Researcher will provide regular status updates and reports on the above subjects to the Parties, according to a work plan and schedule to be agreed upon by the Parties pursuant to sub-section 1.4 of this Process Agreement.

The focus of the ITKC will be on documenting Innu Traditional Knowledge relevant to the environmental assessment. It is recognized that this information exchange must begin early and occur regularly, in order to ensure that it can be considered and incorporated in an effective and efficient manner prior to the finalization of the environmental assessment.

Intellectual property rights to Innu Traditional Knowledge shall reside with Innu Nation. The ITKC will make recommendations to the Parties concerning what elements of the Innu Traditional Knowledge documented by the ITKC may be directly incorporated into the public environmental assessment process. Innu Traditional Knowledge will be made public only in accordance with a Traditional Knowledge Protocol, which will be developed for the Parties by the Task Force pursuant to sub-section 1.4 of this Process Agreement. Innu Traditional Knowledge documented by the ITKC and discussed with the Task Force shall otherwise remain confidential. It is recognized that any such confidential information, while not cited directly in the environmental assessment, may be drawn upon through the Task Force discussions and taken into consideration in the environmental assessment as appropriate and agreed.

The ITKC will work closely with Innu Nation's community consultation team, and will prepare and present a summary of its work to the Innu communities for input prior to the finalization of the environmental assessment. The Parties will also jointly prepare and present a summary of this process and its results as part of any eventual public hearings conducted during the environmental assessment of the Potential Development.

It is also recognized that an important role of the Innu Community Representative(s) on the Task Force is to consult with the ITKC and the Innu communities on the environmental and technical work being conducted in relation to the Potential Development, and to bring this information and perspective to the Task Force discussions.

Appendix 2. Analysis of Innu impact discourses

The Innu-aimun in these texts has been edited to a minimal extent, meaning that little effort has been made to apply the rules of the new spelling system (standard orthography) to the text. My intent has been to analyze the way in which propositions are presented by Innu speakers as they pertain to hydro project impacts. Therefore, “correcting” the spelling of Innu terms was undertaken only when misspellings corrupted the meaning of terms. The assistance of linguist Marguerite MacKenzie in conducting this analysis has been indispensable.

P3, excerpt5dec2006-1.mp3, CD1, T1

In this text, the speaker uses a conjunct future marker - *tshe* (will) - to predict the impacts of the damming and associated flooding. The speaker is certain about these impacts. There is no conditional or any other qualification applied. There WILL be the same effects as those that resulted from the Churchill Falls project.

Nishuau natuatshipaimut, tshia?
They make two closings right?

mak nishuau pimu ushkutam.
and there are two dams.

Muk-ma ne tshitinau,
Like I am saying

eukun-a miam ne tshe ishinakuak ne
it will be the same for
[*tshe* - will - is the future marker. Conjunct future]

nete issishuetau nete Mishta-paushtikut.
in let's say Churchill Falls.
Nenua mak shipua ka pakuauai-na
The rivers there are dry - dried up.

E-ua nete tshe ishinakuak?
Is this going to be the same effect too?
[*tshe* - will - future marker]

Ishe uatenauatshe nete ut meshkanau
You have seen passing, driving on the road

Nas ka-pakuauai tshia?
The river is dry - dried up, right?
[*ka-p* is a present relative clause, subjective, it appears to be]

Meshek^u ne ashini
All there is, is only rock

ute pet ka-akuatinaua Mishta-Paushtukut
in the area - Churchill Falls.
[ka-a is a present relative clause, subjective, it appears to be]

mak ume Twin Falls kaishinikateu-a.
also here in Twin Falls, they call it.

Nas-en pakuaui iat.
It is dry there too.
[certain fact]

Ekunete tshepaikanitshi shipu, tshisseniten-a?
Now the closing of a river, you know

E-ua nete tshe ishinakushit mishtukut name ishpish nassipet
Are the trees going to be like that too, after the flooding
[tshe - will - future marker]

miam ne kaishinakushutshe Mishta-paushtikut katshipaikanua etapit mishtukut?
just like what happened to them at Churchill Falls the trees?

E-ua tshe itepit iat netshe mishtukut?
Will they be like that too, the trees?
[tshe - will - future marker]

P3, excerpt5dec2006-2.mp3, CD1, T2

In this narrative, the speaker makes a solid prediction about the flow of the water on Mishta-shipu using the analogy of beaver dam building. The future marker - *tshe* (will) is used without any qualification.

P6 - Ekunete nimushum P3 ka itan.
Okay, my grandfather P3.

Tshe nashtuten-a ne ka itan ne sheni kanitshi Tshiashkueshit
Do you understand that when Tshiashku-nipi (Gull Islands) opens (the Project)

tshe tshpish nashkunikanit ne nipi-a
the water will be let low
[tshe - will - future marker]

P3 - Miam nipa niteniten ne eshi tutak amishk^u, tshia?
It will be just like when a beaver makes its dam, right?

[*nipa* or *tshipa* - a marker of a potential situation, as in "it may be," "I suppose"]

Mate nitipaimuan nenu amishk^u.
I look at it just like the beaver.

Tipashkunikanitshe mate apu tshe tshi pashtupet.
It closes its dam so the water cannot go over it (dam).
[*nitshe* - marker for deduction. The speaker is certain about his statement]

Tanite tshika takun nete uet pimipanit nipi
Because it will let the water flow out
[*tshika* - future marker]

Nikakakuepinu iat tshia?
[unable to translate]

eukun uet tanite uet pimipanit nipi.
that's why the water can run through it.

Ishipaikanitshi tapue tshe papinit minuat nipi
If it closes the water will run in, of course
[the 'i' at the end of *ishpipaikanitshi* means 'if/when', subjunctive mode, suggests an uncertain future, unrealized action or event; *tshe* – will – future marker]

Kie peikun iat eukun tshe ishpanit ume Manitu-utshu.
This is the same thing that will happen at Muskrat Falls.¹¹¹
[*tshe* - will - future marker]

P5 and P6, excerpt5dec2006-3.mp3, CD1, T3

In this excerpt, the speaker presents a very solid, definite prediction about project impacts using the future markers, *tshe* (will), and *tshikut* (be able to).

P6 - Ne iat tshe ishinakuak Mishta-shipu tshe ui kuetshimitinau in,
nassipepitakantshi
If you have any questions what it will be like when it is flooded like Mishta-shipu
[*tshe* - will - future marker]

P5 - Eukun nipa-iat tshe ishinakuak
The same thing will happen
[*tshe* - will - future marker]

Apu tshikut tshi nita tshi apashtaiak ne ka itapashtaiak.
We will not be able to use it like we used to.

¹¹¹ Even though the name Manitu-utshu applies to the hill beside the falls, Innu also use this place name to refer to the falls at Muskrat Falls.

[*tshikut* - to be able, *apu* is the negative]

Eku *tshipa* nassipeu nipi.

The water body will most likely flood.

[*tshipa* - marks a potential situation, i.e. most likely to be flooding]

Nutam ka takuak nete tshekuan *apu tshikut* nita takuak minuat.

What was there before we will never be able to use it again.

[*tshikut* – will be able, *apu* is the negative, *nita* - never]

Kassinu tshekuan *apu tshikut* tshi mitshinanut.

People will not be able to eat what is there.

[*tshikut* - to be able, *apu* is the negative]

P5 and P6, excerpt5dec2006-4.mp3, CD1, T4

In this excerpt, the speaker expresses no doubt about the negative effects of the flooding. We see the use of the term *minushit* (good). Words containing *minu* are related to the quality of goodness, and throughout much of the discourse concerning project impacts, water, land, animals, fish and other qualities of the landscape are described as being "good" or "not good." The term *akushu* (s/he is sick) is used in relate to the state of animals to be affected by the project.

P6 - Ne ka tshetissishuenau, tshia, tshituk

Like you said before, right, he says

tshi nassipepatakanitshi *apu tshikut* minushit namesh.

after flooding, the fish will not be good.

[*tshi* in combination with the *-i* at the end of *nassipepatakanitshi* means 'when x will be completed. *tshikut* - to be able, *apu* - negative]

Ka-tshitissishuenau, tshia?

Like you said, right?

Tshekuan ne essishuein, tshituk?

What do you mean when you say this, he says?

Tshekuanu uet tshika ut minushit iteu?

Why won't it be any good?

['it' is an animate pronoun, as in fish; words containing *minu* are related to the quality of goodness, good]

P5 - Mitshu nenu *kapiuaputeu*a tshekuanu nete nipit

It eats what is dispersed in the water,

[*piuaputeu* - it is dispersed by the current]

e-uinnakuak, eukunu nenu miatshit
the dirt, it eats that
[*uinnakuan*, intransitive inanimate verb - it is dirty, something inanimate]

nete e-uinnakunit tshekuanu
the dirty thing in it

P5 - kue akushishkakut nenu
then it makes it sick

eku apu tapuetakanit tshe tshi muakanit.
then it is not allowed to be eaten.
['it' is animate referring to fish]

P3, excerpt5dec2006-5.mp3, CD1, T5

In this excerpt, the speaker asserts without a doubt that fish in rivers subject to hydro development are "not good," and deduces that fish in water bodies elsewhere in the territory are good because there are no hydro dams there.

Mate, mate ne namesh-tshia
For instance, the fish right.

namesh apu minushit umuenu shipunu.
the fish is not good on this river.
[very certain statement - fact]

Patush nenua ka-aishpanui shipua nete nutshimit
Only those other rivers that are in the country

nete katat shashish nameshit, matimekut mate ne Minai-nipit.
the fish (is good there because) it has been there a long time, trout for instance at Minai-nipit (Minipi Lake).

Shashish nenu katat ka kusset.
People fished there before.

Ka nutshikuat Tshishe-utshimau iat namesha
The fishery officers from the government

ne kanutameshet Katshimaitsheshu-a
one of the officers was Katshimaitsheshu
[Katshimaitsheshu is the Innu name for Mr. Cooper]

Katshimaitsheshu-a tan etatapuna mak nete etat e-nutshikuat nenu namesha?
Katshimaitsheshu how many years was he there looking after the fish?

Ekue itenimekupan, apu senimat neu Innut
He must have thought that the Innu had no knowledge of what
[*kupan* - marks past tense deduction]

shash nenu Innut tshissenimepanit, tshia?
but the Innu knew about it, right?

Kie umue Uapishkakamau iat umuenu taut matimekut
Also, there are trout at Uapishkakamau.

Kie nenu Mitshishu-utshishtun, iat nenu taut matimekut.
Also at Mitshishu-utshishtun, there are trout there too.

Kie nenu Anikutshash-nipi, iat nenu taut matimekut.
And at Anikutshash-nipi, there are trout there too.

Kie makatsheuat, mikuasheuat.
Also white sucker, longnose sucker.

Ekute anite muk minushitsshe aueshish, tshia?
Some places the animals must still be good, right?
[-*tsh*e suffix marks deduction; must be, probably/may be]

Namesh nipauin, tshia?
Especially the fish, right?

Minushitsshe nete uin eka tshipaikanit uin.
They must be good there because there are no dams over there.
[-*tsh*e suffix marks deduction; must be, probably/may be]

P1 and P6, excerpt5dec2006-6.mp3, CD1, T6

In this excerpt, the speaker starts with a more speculative assessment of project impacts on black bear, marking his uncertainty with the non-affirmative, uncertain modal – *tshipa tshi*. He has arrived at a conclusion as a result of speculation, so that conclusion is a possibility, not an absolute certainty. However, he then moves into the solid prediction mode. Bears and geese WILL move to higher ground.

P6 - Ekue tan tshe ishinakuak tshi nassipitakanitshi, tshituk?
What impacts will do to animals after the flooding, he says?
[*tsh*e - will - future marker]

P1 - Tshipa tshi tau mashk^u uin, tshipa tshi mitshu nete minashkuat.
The black bear may still be there, it may be able to go in the forest and get its

food there.
[tshipa tshi - uncertain, speculative modality]

P6 - Eku tan tshe tit anitshe nishkat, tshituk?
What will happen to the geese, he says?
[tshe - will - future marker]

Nete man kaishpanutshe, katautshe nete nishkat, tshia,
When the geese would fly to where they were before, right,
[*man* - would, repetitive action; -*tshe* suffix on *kaishpanutshe* marks deduction]

shiakunitshj kie mak tekuatshinitshi
in the spring or fall?
[-*I* suffix on the end of *shiakunitshi* marks an unrealized action, as in when it will be spring]

Tan tshe tit tshituk, nishkat?
What will happen to the geese, he says?
[tshe - will - future marker]

P1 - It nipa tshika taut, tshia, nete ishpimit itetshe
They will go in another direction, right, in the upper land
[*tshika taut* - they will be]

nete nipissa kai-takunui, tshika ishpanut.
where there are small lakes and that is where they will go.
[*tshika* - future marker]

P6 - Tan tshe tit anitshe ushakashk^u nassipenitshi, tshituk?
What will happen to places where there are always black bears when flooding takes place, he says?
[tshe - will - future marker, *ushakashk^u* - place where there are always black bears]

P1 - Minashkuat nete tshika taut, pashtuteut, takut nete tshika it [rest of word illegible].
In the forest, they will go on top, they will stay on top.
[*tshika taut* - they will be]

P3, excerpt5dec2006-7.mp3, CD1, T7

In this excerpt, the speaker asserts that beavers will move up tributaries to Mishta-shipu to escape flooding, but he is uncertain about whether these tributaries will be blocked off as a result of the project. He is certain that the beavers will no longer be found on Mishta-shipu.

Umue issishuenanu tshisseniten, tshia,
What we are saying here, right,

Mishta mitshenua neta-she ka amitshueshkasht, tshia?
There are many of them in the upper area, right?
[“them” refers to beaver places as will be apparent shortly]

Neta-she takun peik, tshia, Manitu-utshit akutuessinu ekuata etakuak peik
There is one, right, at Manitu-utshit the one

minuat nete ka matshiteuatauakaua
another one is at the sandy point

eukunen, tshia?
right there, right?

Minuat nete ka upeneukauaua
Another one is at shoreline.

Minuat takun ne ushakumishk^u.
Again there are the places where there are always beavers.

Minuat ka amitshueshkasht takun.
Another one is at along the river bed.

Minuat nete takun niteim shipissit, tshia?
Another one is at the small river, right?

Mak nete pekuteikanit tekuak
And another where there is a large depression

nuam nete tamatum ekute tekuak.
the others that are under water.

Mishta mitshet nekan ushakamishkua nete tamatum
There are many places where are always beaver underwater there.
[The speaker talks in the present tense, but the time period could be past, because once past tense is used at the beginning of a discourse, a speaker can shift tense to the present. English speakers employ this style as well in using the simple present in vivid narratives (e.g. “There’s a loud bang behind us. Then I hear John crying. Nancy is upset....”).

Apu tshika tshi nita tshi tat.
They will never be there.
[*tshika* - future marker]

Nete tshika itashamu nitamit nenu shipissin.
They will go upwards north/upstream of the small river.
[*tshika* - future marker. The translator supplied “north” for *nitamit*, however, this term means “upstream.” The speaker may mean that the beavers will move upstream small rivers that empty into Mishta-shipu until they reach higher elevations]

Minuat nete nitamit tshika tshipaim put
Again there upstream will be closed off perhaps
[*tshika* – future marker; *put* – perhaps]

kie nipissinu put.
and there is flooding perhaps.
[*put* – perhaps]

Muk nenu apu tshikut tat neta katat man.
They will never be there.
[*tshikut* – will be – future maker, *apu* – negative]

Nete iat apishish tshika ituteu,
There elsewhere a little bit they will go
[*tshika* – future marker]

nete nitamit itetshe tshe itutet.
there upstream they will go.
[*tsh*e – future marker]

Tanite tshipa tshi tau neta
How could it be there
[*tshipa tshi* – uncertainty, speculation]

tamatum nenu tshika takunua ushakamishk^u?
that will all be underwater, places where there are always beaver?
[*tshika* – will – future marker]

P1, excerpt5dec2006-9.mp3, CD1, T9

Here, the speaker predicts the future with certainty. The partridge WILL no longer be there. The partridge’s food, willow, WILL BE under water. The certainty of the prediction is expressed with future markers such as *tshikut tshi* (will be), and *tshika* (will).

P1 - Pineut mishta mitshetut tekuatshinitshi.
There are lots of partridge in the fall.

Nutam tamatum takunua shakau, tshia?

All the bushes [alder, willow] will be underwater, right?

Apu tshikut tshi tat nete uapineu.
The partridge will no longer be there.
[*tshikut tshi* – future marker, *apu* – negative]

Peter A. - Tanite?
Where?

P1 - Nete ka matshiteue shikaua - kamassieukauaua
At the point bushes - where there is a marsh

nutam tamatum tshika takun, apu tshikut takuak.
all will be underwater, it will not be there.
[*tshika* – future marker, *apu* - negation]

Peter A. - Uapineu-mitshim?
Willows?

P1 - Ehe, uapineu-mitshim.
Yes, willows.

Mishtikut nete muk tshika taut iat
There will only be trees left there too.
[*tshika* – future marker – will be]

P6, excerpt5dec2006-10.mp3, CD1, T10

In this excerpt P6 speculates about the relationship between mercury, described as *matshi-natukun* (poison), and hair loss. Someone who consumes mercury MAY experience hair loss; it is not certain. He also frames his proposition as “opinion” (what he thinks), inviting, perhaps, contradictory or affirming opinions from others.

P6 - Nitautshin nete tshekuan, tshia?
Something grows from there, right?

Muk nameshit nenu mitshut, *mercury*.
Only the fish eat this, mercury.

Apu tshissenitaman nipa ishinikaten matshi-natukun put, tshia?
I don't know how to call it, poison perhaps, right?
[*put* – perhaps]

Eku nenu mitshet nenu Innu
If a person eats/consumes this

tan etutakutshe nenu, uashekapinitshe nenu put
that person can have a hair loss, perhaps.
[*nitshe* - marker for deduction; *put* – perhaps]

Nitenimau.
That is what I think.

P1, excerpt5dec2006-11.mp3, CD1, T11

The speaker makes solid predictions about the impacts of the hydro project. Everything will be under water, and everything will be ruined. There is no speculation or doubt about this prediction.

P1 - Issishuek ne tshekuan etenitamek tshitukunu, tshia?
Say something that you are thinking about, right?

Ne ma, tshi nassipitakanitshi tan etenitamek tshe ishinikuak name
After the flooding takes place what do you think will happen after
[*tshe* – will – future marker]

tshi nassipetakanitshi assi?
the flooding of the land?

Nete aiashkat tshe ishinakuak
What will happen in the future?
[*tshe* – will – future marker]

Miam ne P7 kaishi uauitamua.
Just like P7 said about it before.

Eukun ne tshe ishinakuak.
It is going to be just like that.
[*tshe* – will – future marker]

Kassinu tamatum tshika takun tshekuan.
Everything will be underwater.
[*tshika* – will be – future marker]

kassinu tshika nautin tshekuan.
everything will be ruined.
[*tshika* – will be – future marker]

Nete ka aitut aueshish, kassinu tamatum tshika takun.
And where the animals were, all will be underwater.
[*tshika* – will be – future marker]

Kie natukuna, kie minna
And the medicines, and berries

nutam nete takunua, kapimutauakuau.
they are all there, on top of this river.
[the translator said the “top of this river” refers to the “upper part.” Upstream?]

Nete shipit, tshia? Nutam nete takunua minna, tshia?
The river, right? There are all kinds of berries there, right?

Kie nete kaminashkuaua, apu takuaki nete minna
And in the forested area, there are no berries there

muk nenu ka kashteuai takunua
except black berries only.

P1 and P6, excerpt5dec2006-12.mp3, CD1, T12

In this excerpt, we obtain some insight into the history of Innu concerns about “sickness,” “poisons” or “contaminants” in fish. The speaker had observed some fish sampling work in the context of the commercial whitefish fishery at Lobstick Lake in the late 1970s and early 1980s.¹¹² The speaker claims that he was told that the “fish are sick” and he speculates about the part of the fish where the sickness is located. He deduces (“I suppose”) the location of the “sickness” based on the part of the fish where the samples were taken from – the dorsal area.

P6 - Tshi uitamakuitau akushut namesh nete shashish ueshkat, tshituk?
Were you told the fish were sick, before, in the past, he says?

P1 - Ehe, nauitamakuitan, akushut namesh.
Yes, we were told, that the fish are sick.

Tshekuanitshe ne-ne, niupatinikuitan tshekuan, right?
What was it that was shown to us, right?

Ne atikamek^u uinamesheu ne Akaneshau.

¹¹² “In cooperation with the Federal Dept. of Fisheries, the Project staff conducted some test fishing at Lobstick in July for the purposes of procuring samples for analysis at the Federal Fisheries Laboratories in St. John’s. The results of these analyses were satisfactory in terms of cyst counts but considered inconclusive because of the small number of specimens examined” (Report on Progress and Present Status of Michikamau Fisheries, LEAP Project 1975-1981, to John McGrath, Dept. of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development, by Ben Andrew and Andrew Adam, Sheshatshit Band Council, July 2, 1981). In the summer of 1974, stomach samples were taken from various fish species at Lobstick and Sandgirt Lakes with the view to exploring the feasibility of a commercial gill net fishery (Bruce, 1975).

The White person cleaned the white fish.

Ekute nete nianituapatamuat ushpishkunit nenu namesh, tshia?
He was looking at the back of the fish, right?

Tshe tshi takunit utakushim uiesh, right?
To see if it came from the back somewhere, right?

Eukuta nipa neta takunitshe namesh utakushun.
I suppose that is where the fish's sickness is located.
[*nipa* – I suppose (contracted expression); -*tshe* suffix – deduction]

P6 - Tshe tshissenimatau-a uet nanitussenimakanit ne namesh?
Did you know that he tested the fish?

P1 - Ehe, nissenimatan, nutshimaminan uapamepan.
Yes, we knew, our boss saw him too.

Kananituakapeusht ka ishinikatakanit, ka utshimamitutshit.
Kananituakapeusht was his name, our boss, then.