

Combining local, indigenous and scientific knowledge to enhance wildlife health surveillance

WOAH's Training Workshop
National Focal Points for Wildlife, European Region

June 27th, 2023

Matilde Tomaselli – Research Scientist, POLAR

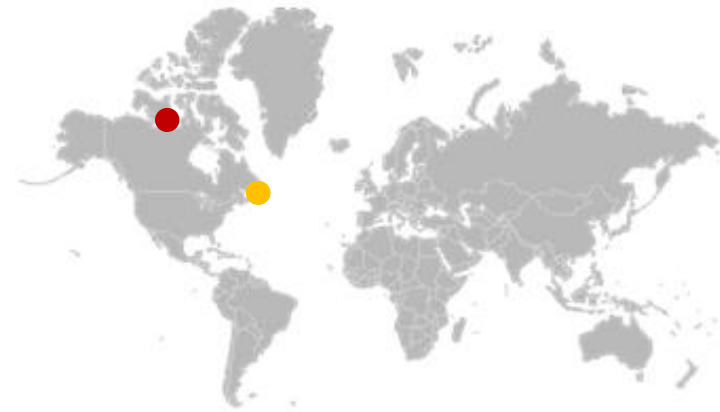


POLAR
POLAIRE



Polar Knowledge
Canada

Savoir polaire
Canada



Polar Knowledge
Canada

Savoir polaire
Canada



Matilde Tomaselli, DVM PhD

Research Scientist and Wildlife Health Specialist

Canadian High Arctic Research Station

Polar Knowledge Canada



EDUCATION:



**UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI MILANO**

Dr. Lanfranchi
Dr. Ferrari



UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS PALMAS DE GRAN CANARIA
Facultad de Veterinaria

Faculty of Veterinary Medicine



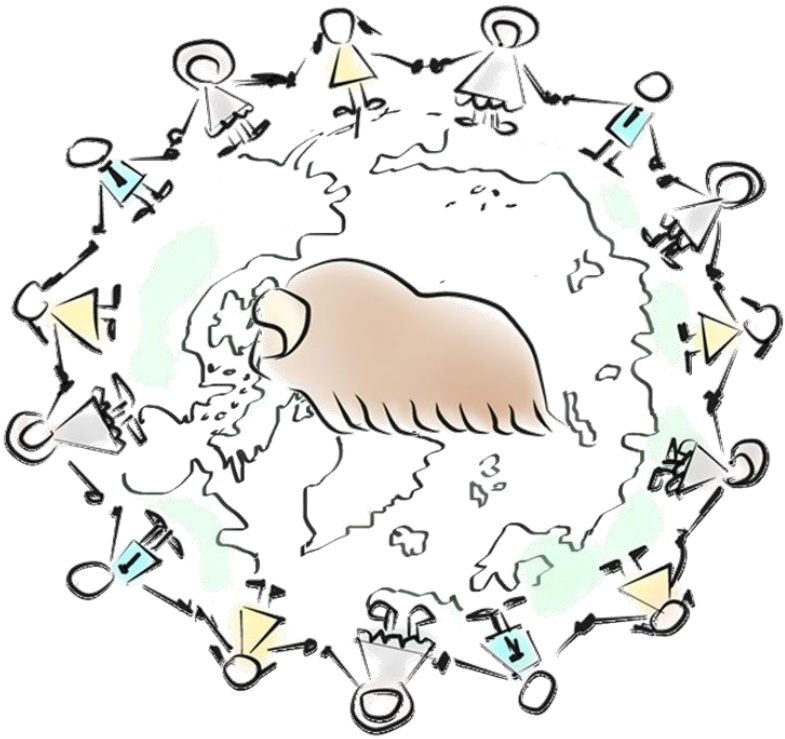
**UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY**

Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
Department of Ecosystem
and Public Health

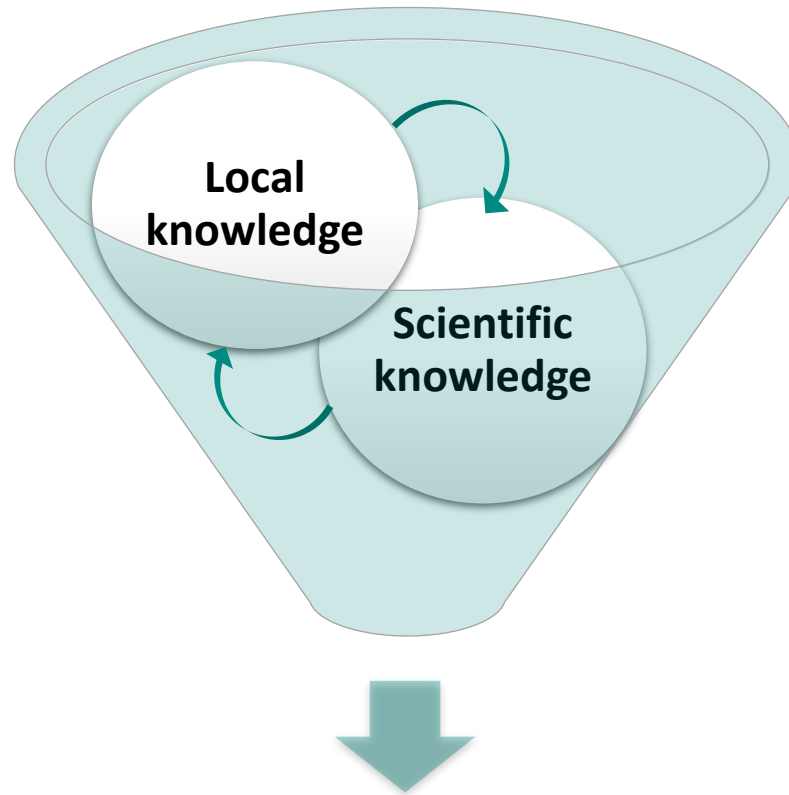
Dr. Checkley
Dr. Kutz

PhD thesis: "Improved Wildlife Health and Disease Surveillance through the combined use of Local Knowledge and Scientific Knowledge"

MUSKOX HEALTH PROJECT

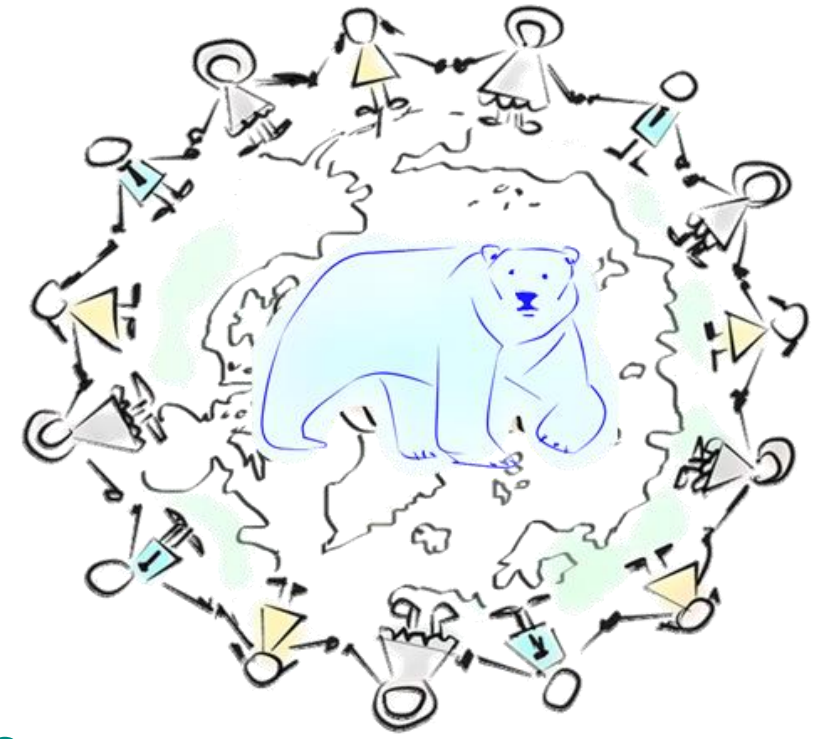


Access [here](#)



**Participatory
Wildlife Health Surveillance**

POLAR BEAR HEALTH PROJECT



Access [here](#)

INTRODUCTION

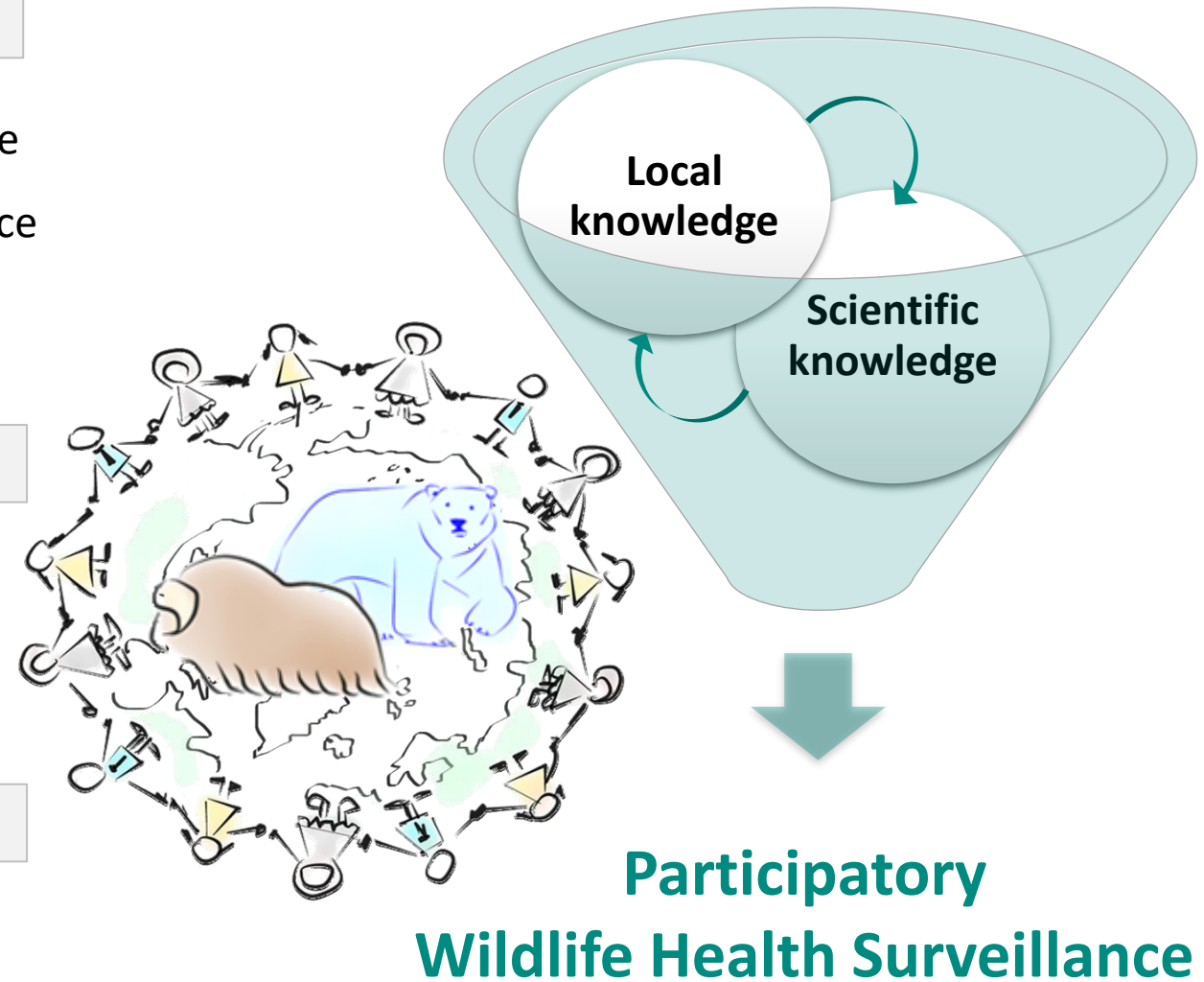
Importance of and challenges for wildlife health surveillance
Traditions referenced for combined approach: LK and Science
The working context: The Canadian Arctic

PS FOR WILDLIFE HEALTH IN ACTION

The Participatory Muskox Health Surveillance Project
Participatory epidemiology on polar bear health

CONCLUSION

Lessons learned: broader application and added values
Strengths and challenges



Acknowledgements : supporters, funders and partners



Polar Knowledge Canada



Environment and Climate Change Canada



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

ITraP



ᓄᓇᑭᓴᑦ ᑕᑕᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᑕᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ
Nunavut General Monitoring Plan
Nunavunmi Tamainni Takuurivangnikkut Pamaiyutaanni
Plan de surveillance générale du Nunavut



ᐅᑕᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᑕᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ

Pangnirtung Hunters & Trappers Organization

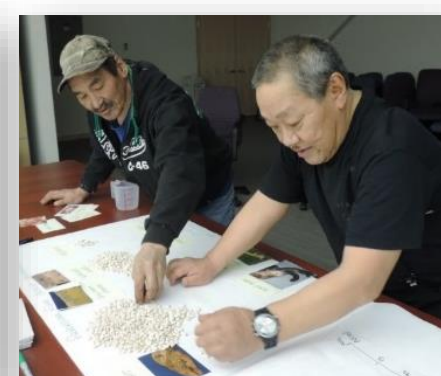


NSERC
CRSNG



CANADIAN
WILDLIFE HEALTH
COOPERATIVE





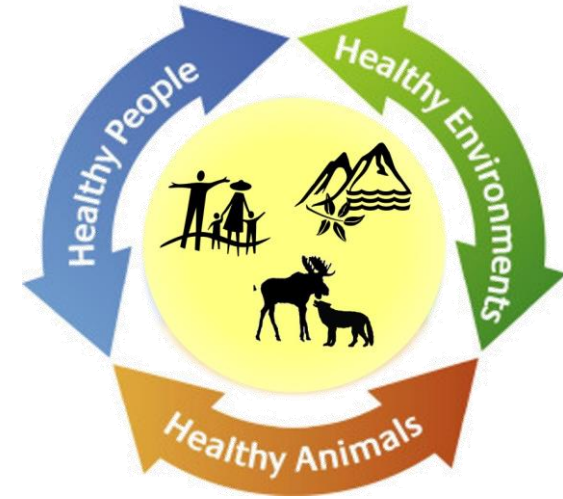
*This work was made possible by
collaboration with residents of northern communities
and their generous intellectual contributions*



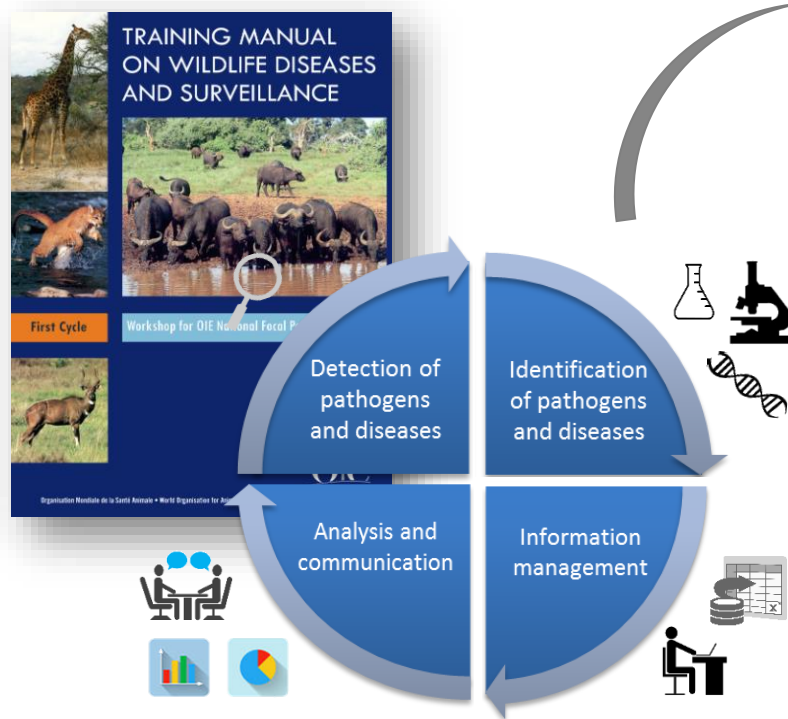
Veterinary Surveillance

“is the ongoing collection, collation, analysis of information related to animal health, and the timely dissemination of this information so that action can be taken”

OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, 2017



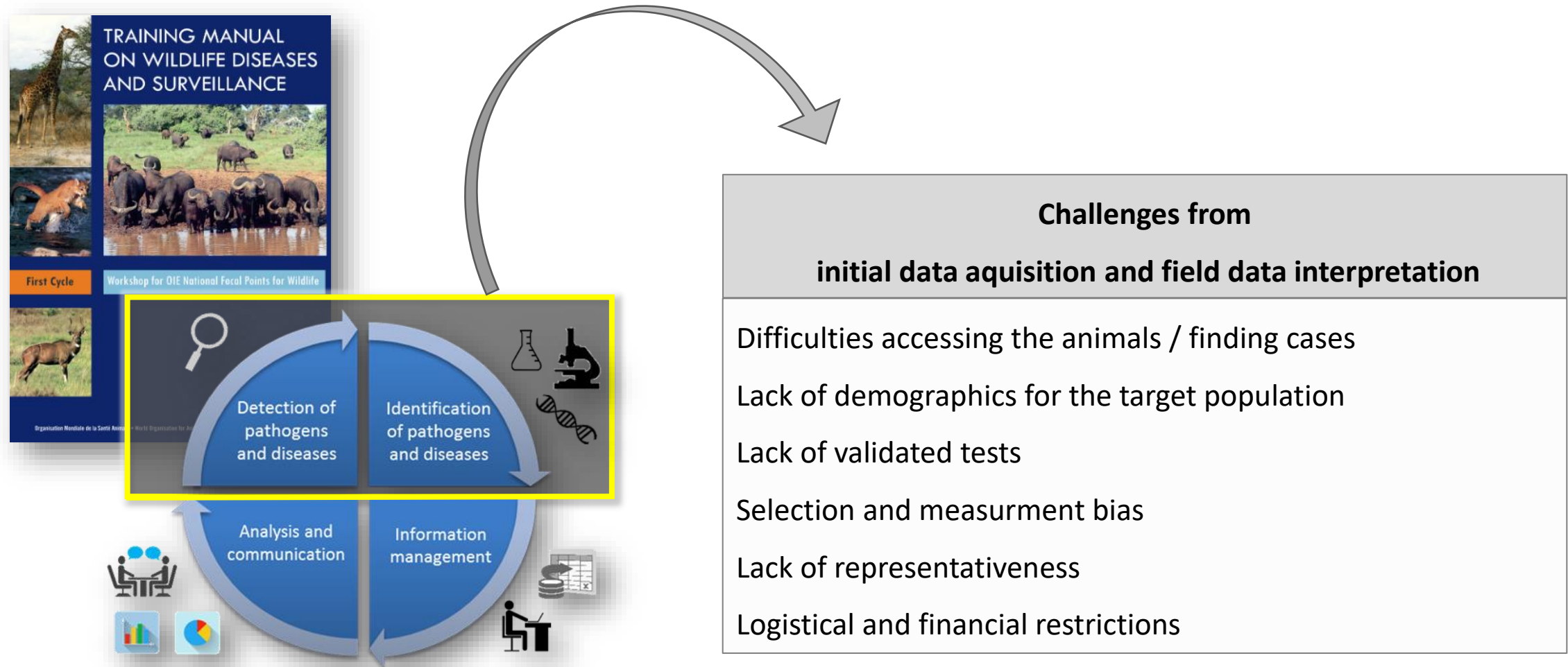
Picture credit University of Alaska



Adapted from OIE, 2010

Interventions
Wildlife management (animals, habitat)
Wildlife and biodiversity conservation
Safeguard human and animal health

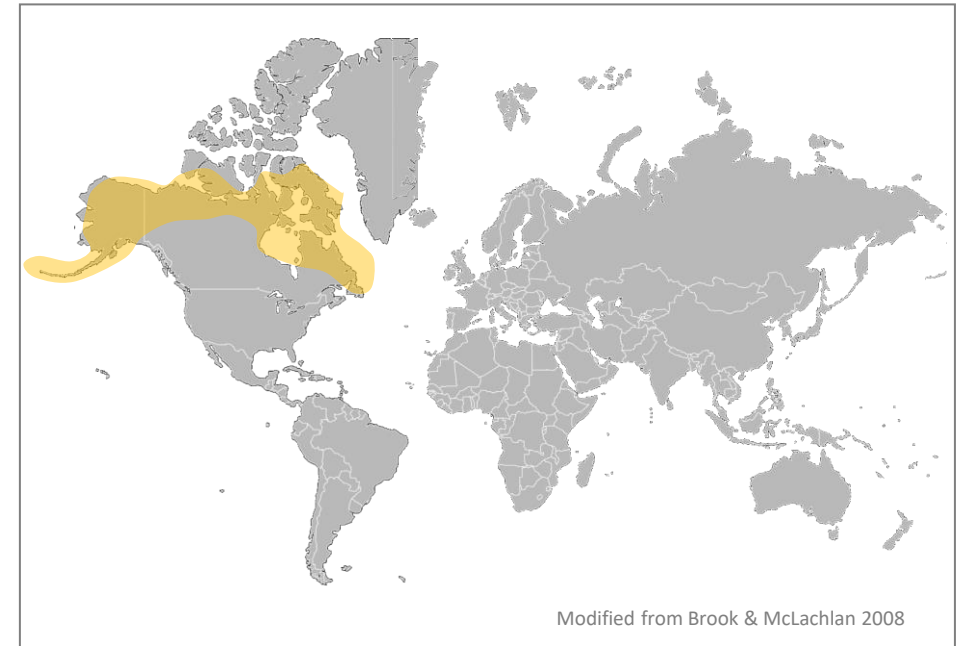
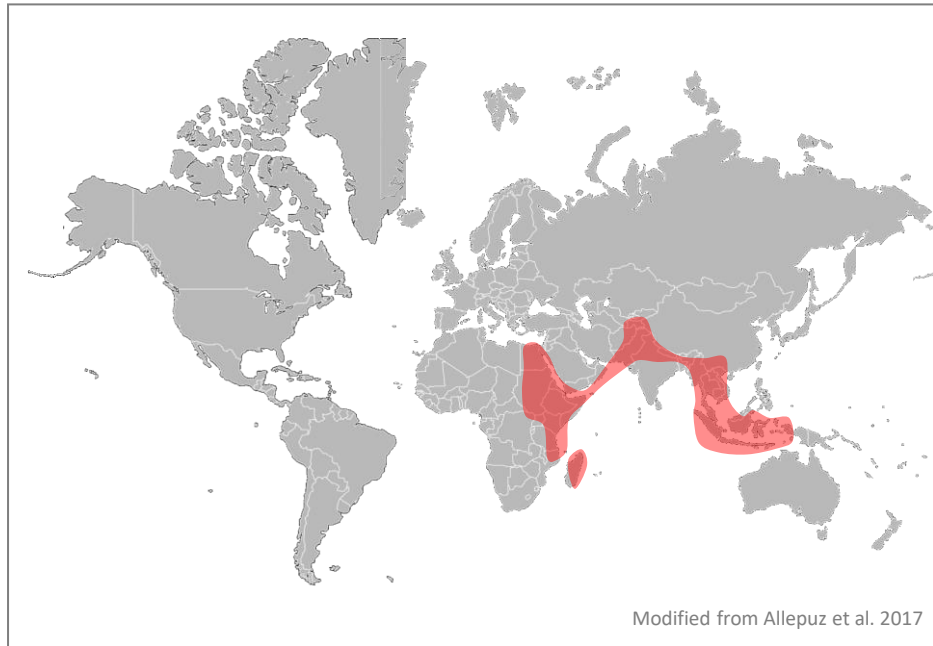
Peterson and Ferro 2007; Artois et al. 2009; OIE 2010



Adapted from OIE, 2010

Participatory surveillance for livestock diseases

Adaptive management of natural resource



Ethnoveterinary knowledge

Ecological knowledge

Participatory surveillance (PS) for livestock diseases**Ethnoveterinary knowledge**

Participatory epidemiology (PE) on livestock diseases
Sensitive and timely tool to identify cases of disease

+ conventional veterinary diagnostics

*Used to confirm 'cases',
increasing the specificity of the surveillance*

**Participatory appraisal techniques**

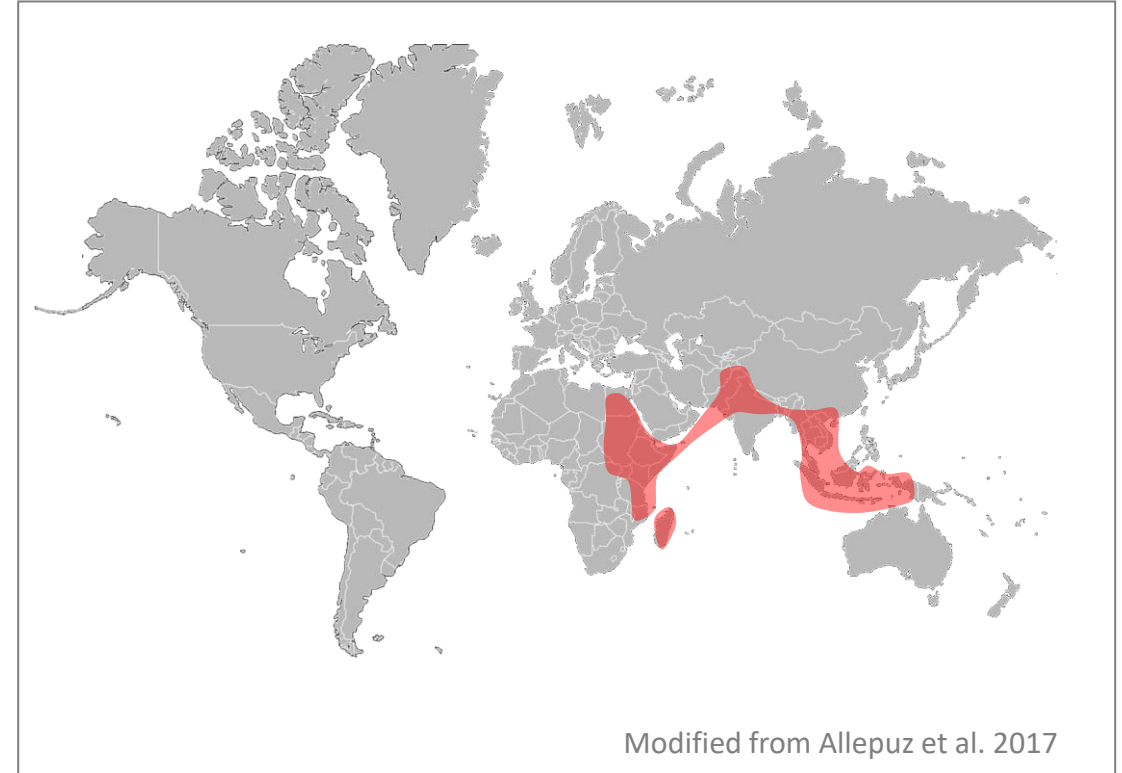
e.g., semi-structured interviews, graphic and scoring exercise

Participatory surveillance (PS) for livestock diseases**Ethnoveterinary knowledge**

Participatory epidemiology (PE) on livestock diseases
Sensitive and timely tool to identify cases of disease

+ conventional veterinary diagnostics

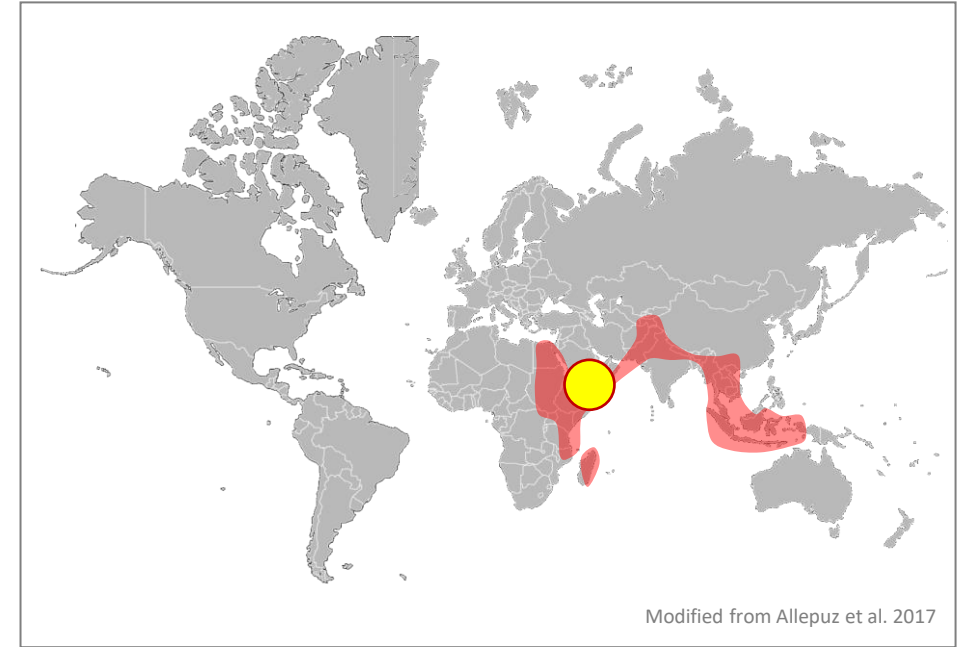
*Used to confirm 'cases',
increasing the specificity of the surveillance*

**Participatory appraisal techniques**

e.g., semi-structured interviews, graphic and scoring exercise

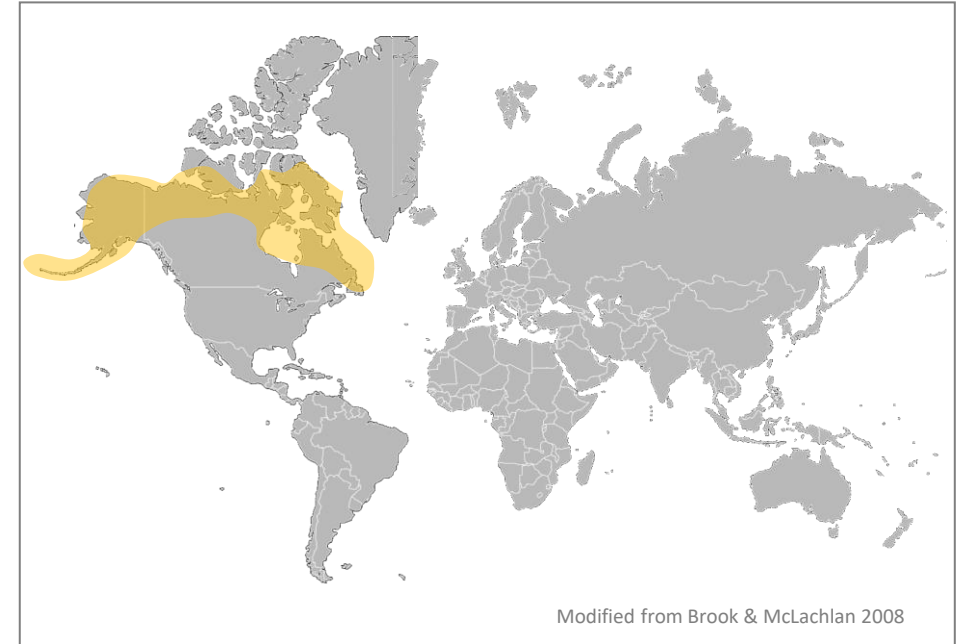
Participatory surveillance for livestock diseases

2011 – Global eradication of rinderpest
'Cattle plague'



Rinderpest Eradication: Appropriate Technology and Social Innovations

Jeffrey C. Mariner *et al.*
Science 337, 1309 (2012);
DOI: 10.1126/science.1223805

Adaptive management of natural resource**Ecological knowledge****Wildlife co-management systems****Used to complement scientific information on***Wildlife distribution, abundance and trends**Wildlife behavior and body condition**Interspecific interactions**Ecosystem and habitat changes***Qualitative methods**

e.g., interviews, workshops,
collaborative fieldwork, questionnaires

Dismissed as anecdotal knowledge
Validation with Western Science

**Participatory surveillance
for livestock diseases**

Ethnoveterinary knowledge

**Adaptive management
of natural resource**

Ecological knowledge

Robust qualitative research design

**Novel application of traditional and local knowledge
for wildlife health surveillance**



Inuit harvester Julia Ogina, of the Kitikmeot Inuit Association (left), shares her knowledge on muskox health with wildlife veterinarian Matilde Tomaselli (right), in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, Canada.

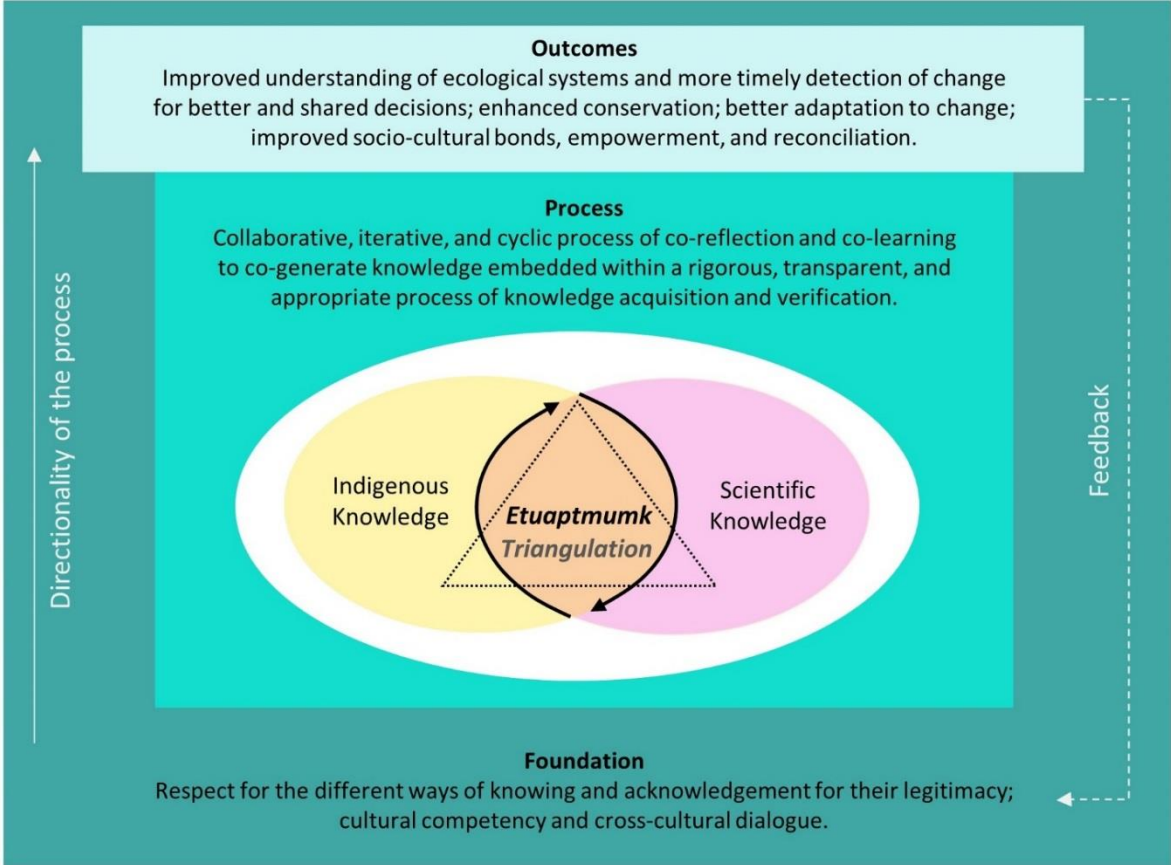
BRIDGE: INDIGENOUS AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

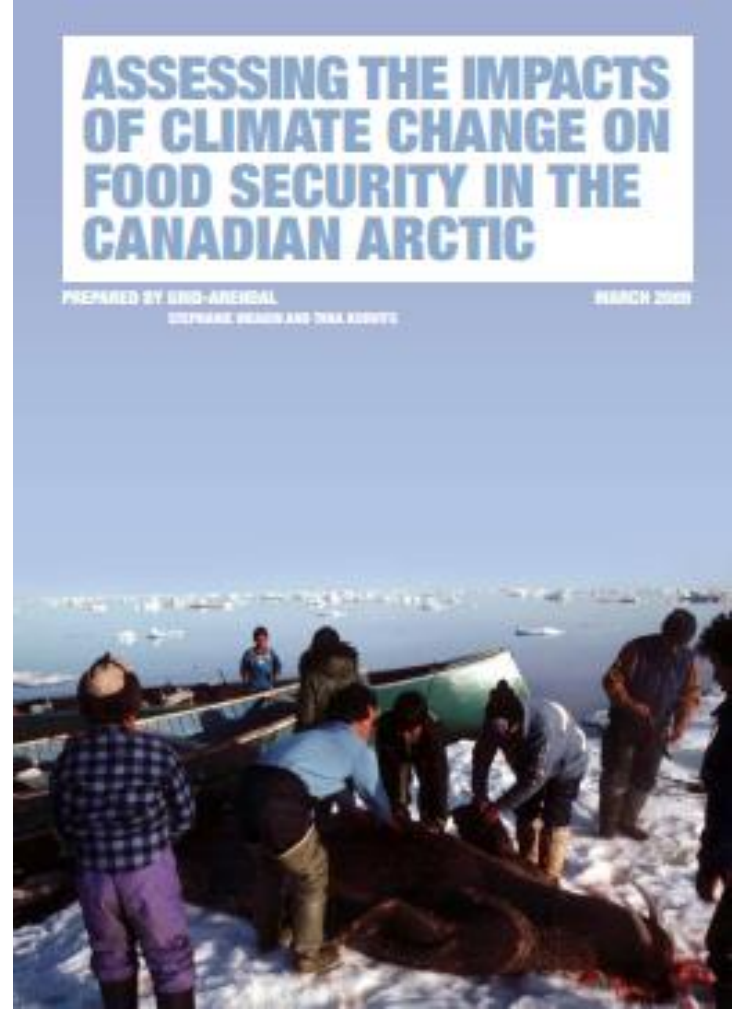
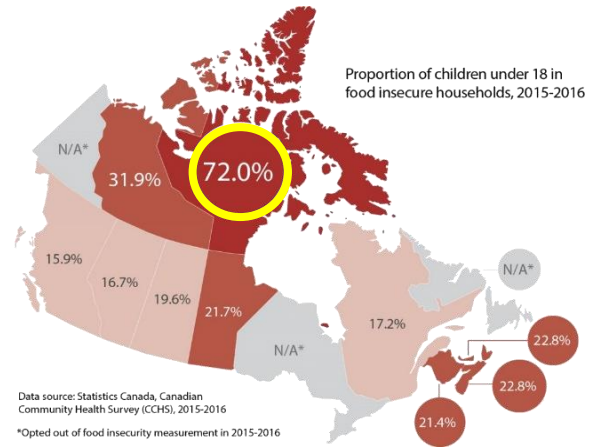
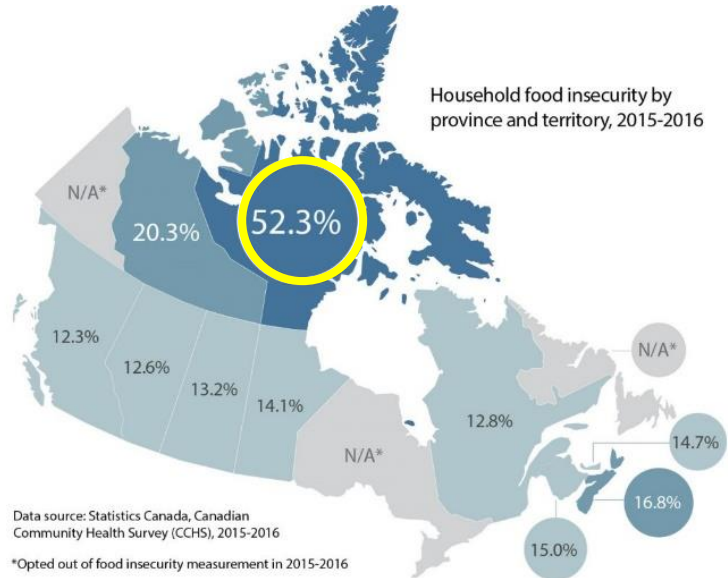
“Two-eyed seeing” supports wildlife health

Bridging Indigenous and scientific knowledge improves wildlife surveillance and fosters reconciliation

Kutz S and Tomaselli M. *Science*, 2019.

Pathway to enable cogeneration of knowledge







Library of Congress Archives



Iqaluktutiak Heritage Society



Iqaluktutiak Heritage Society



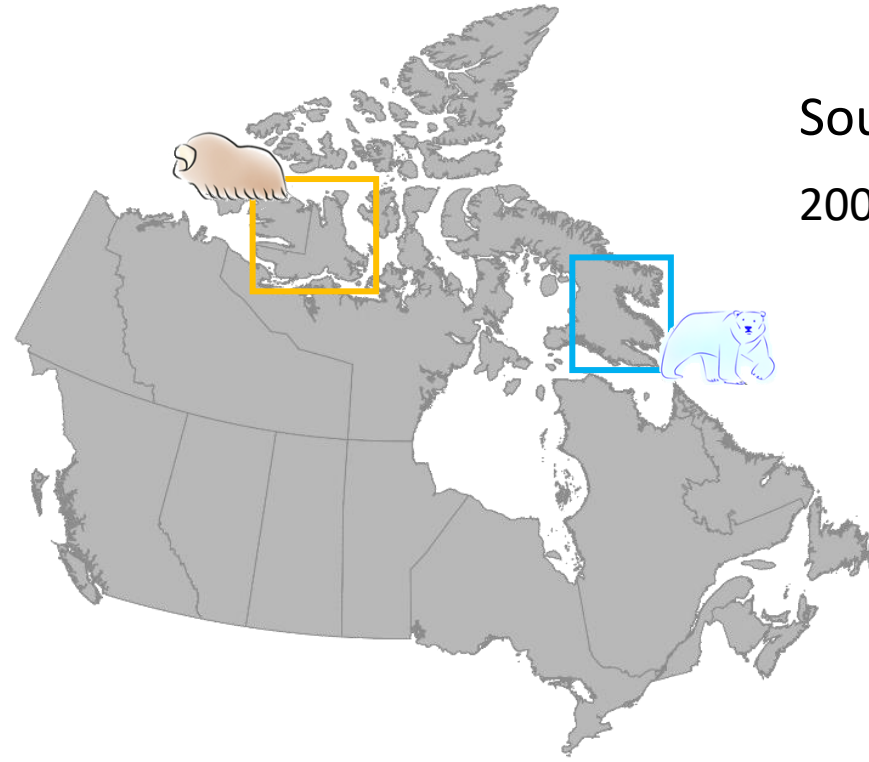


Victoria Island
217,291 km²

1 community:

Cambridge Bay (Iqualuktutiag)

2,000 people

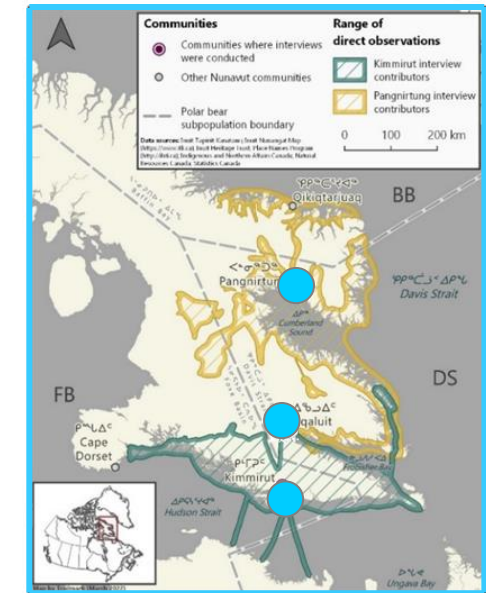


South Baffin Island
200,000 km²

3 communities:

Kimmirut, Pangnirtung and Iqaluit

From 400 to 5,000 people





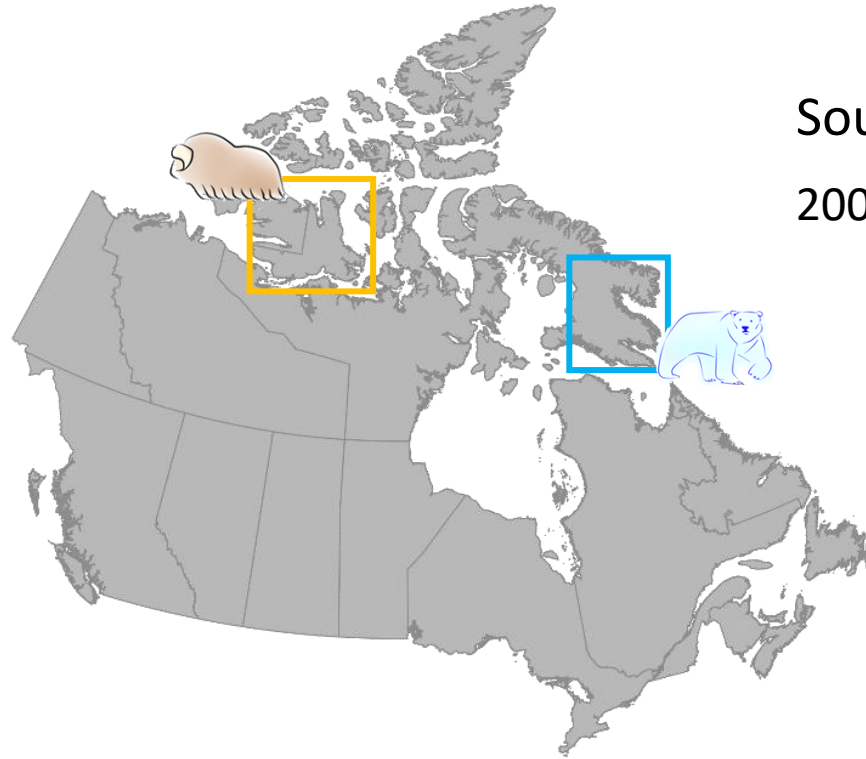
Victoria Island

217,291 km²

1 community:

Cambridge Bay (Iqualuktutiaq)

2,000 people



South Baffin Island

200,000 km²

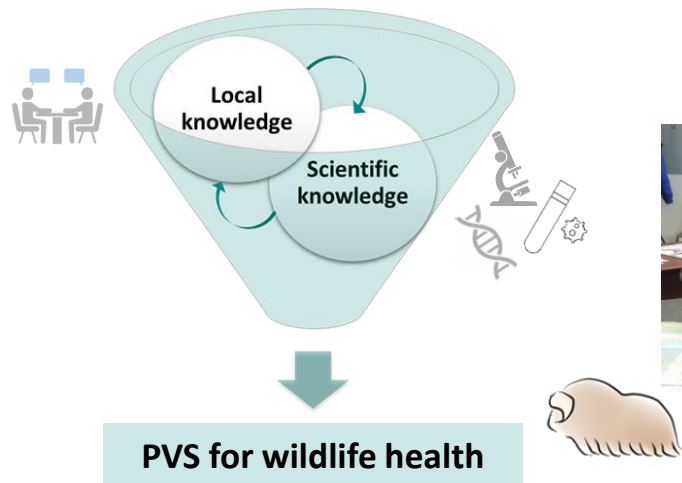
3 communities:

Kimmirut, Pangnirtung and Iqaluit

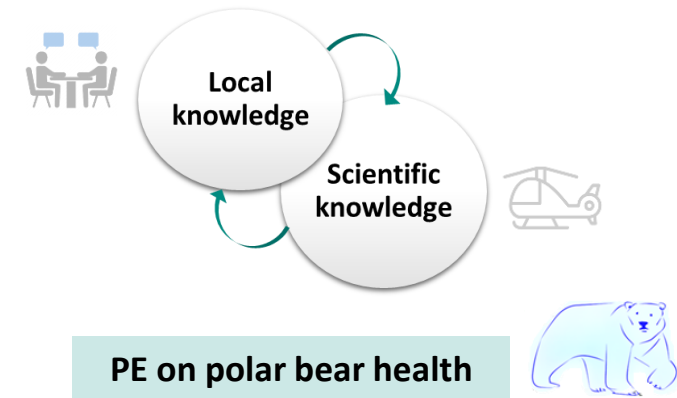
From 400 to 5,000 people

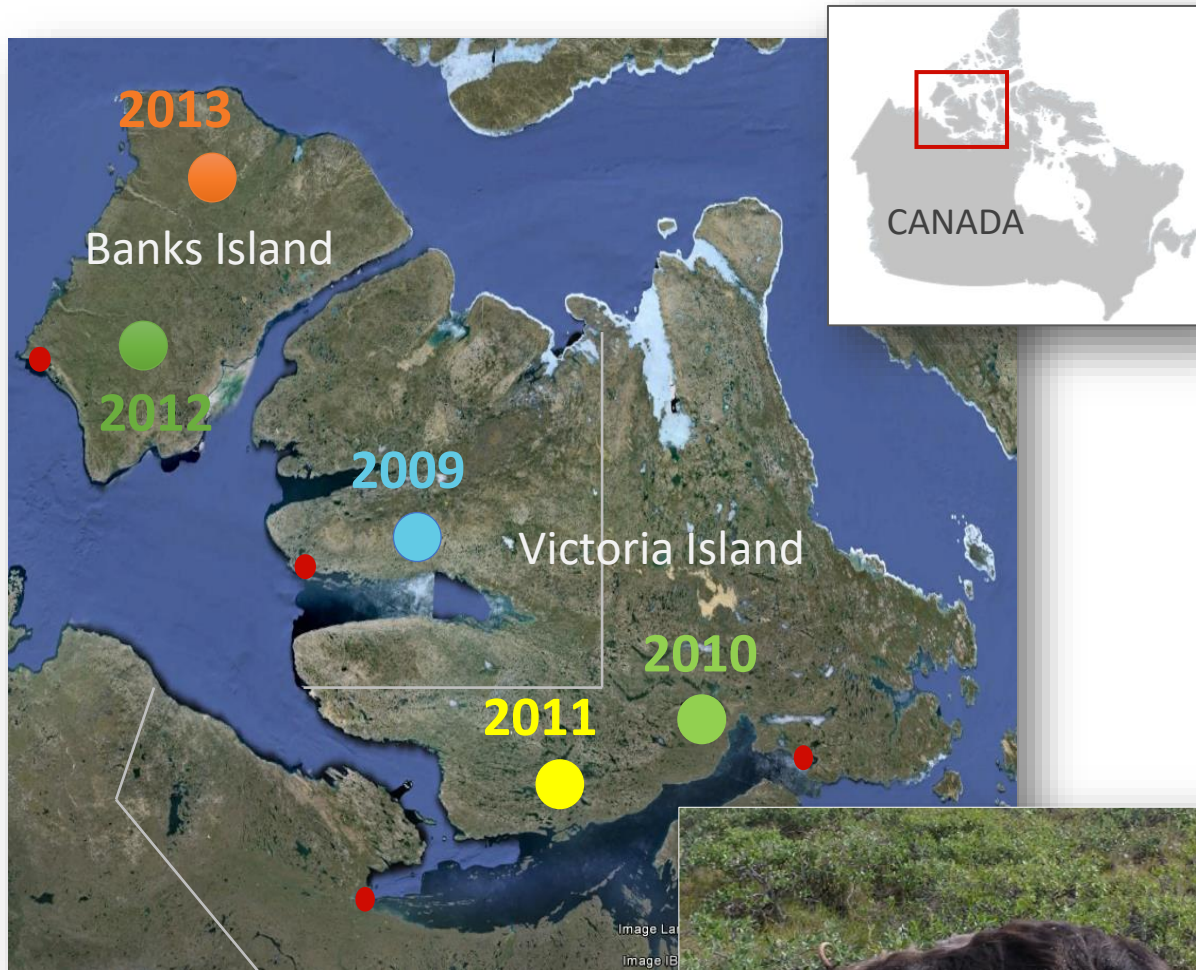


What happened to muskoxen?



Inuit knowledge on polar bear health





● Communities



Photo credit S. Kutz

Muskox – *Ovibos moschatus*^{1,2}

- Cold-adapted ungulate
- Early 1900s almost extinct
- 1917 active management
- Recolonization of range

Recent concerns

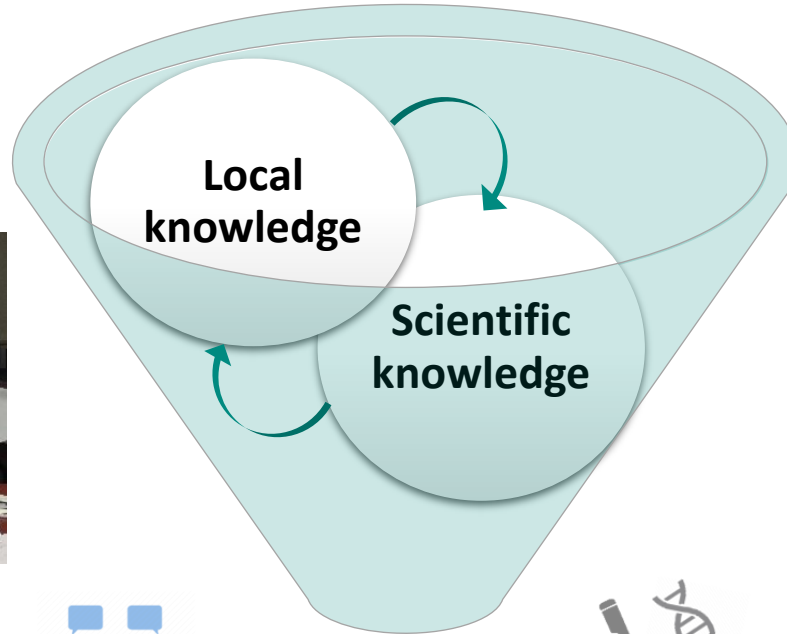
- Lungworm emergence and expansion³
- Die-off events
*Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae*⁴
- Halt to commercial harvest

INTERVIEWS
with key informants



Individual interviews
Group interviews
Participatory activities

Feedback sessions



Participatory Muskox Health Surveillance

**HUNTER-BASED
SAMPLING**

**FIELD DISEASE
INVESTIGATIONS**

**TARGETED
SCIENTIFIC STUDIES**



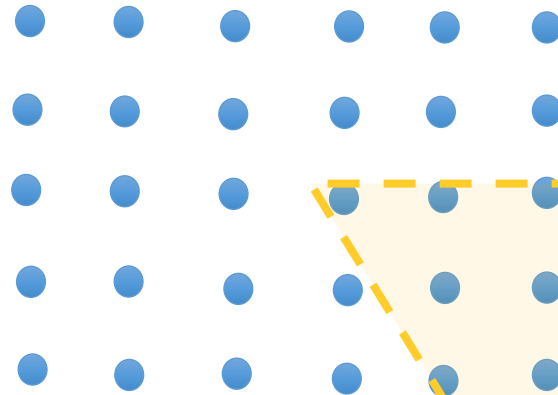


**INTERVIEWS
with key informants**



Robust qualitative research design

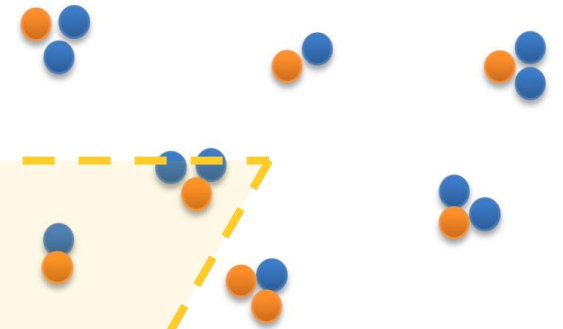
1. Individual interviews



**Understand the local context
Baseline on animal health**

Key knowledge holders (KH)
N defined by thematic saturation

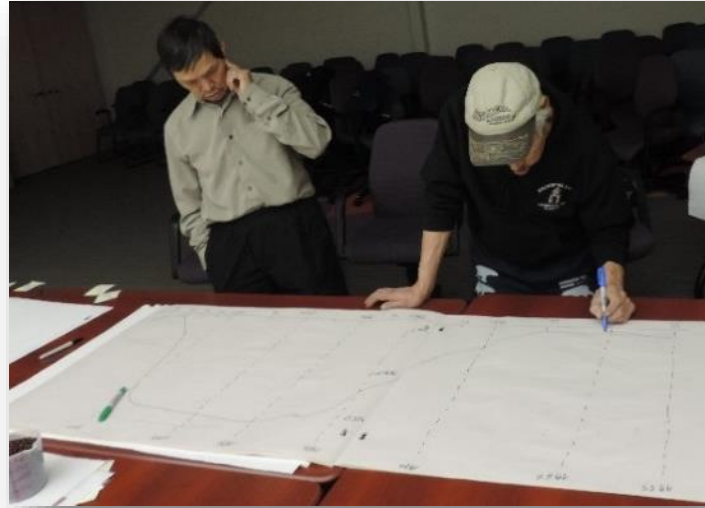
2. Small group interviews



**Quantitative information
on animal health**

PE activities
Inclusion of new KH

3. Feedback of analyzed/summarized information



Participatory mapping

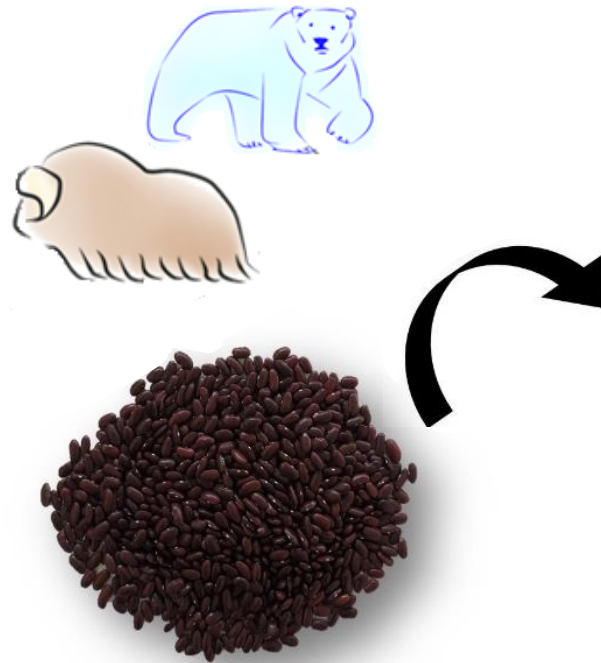
Participatory drawing

Timeline of events

Seasonal calendars

Proportional piling





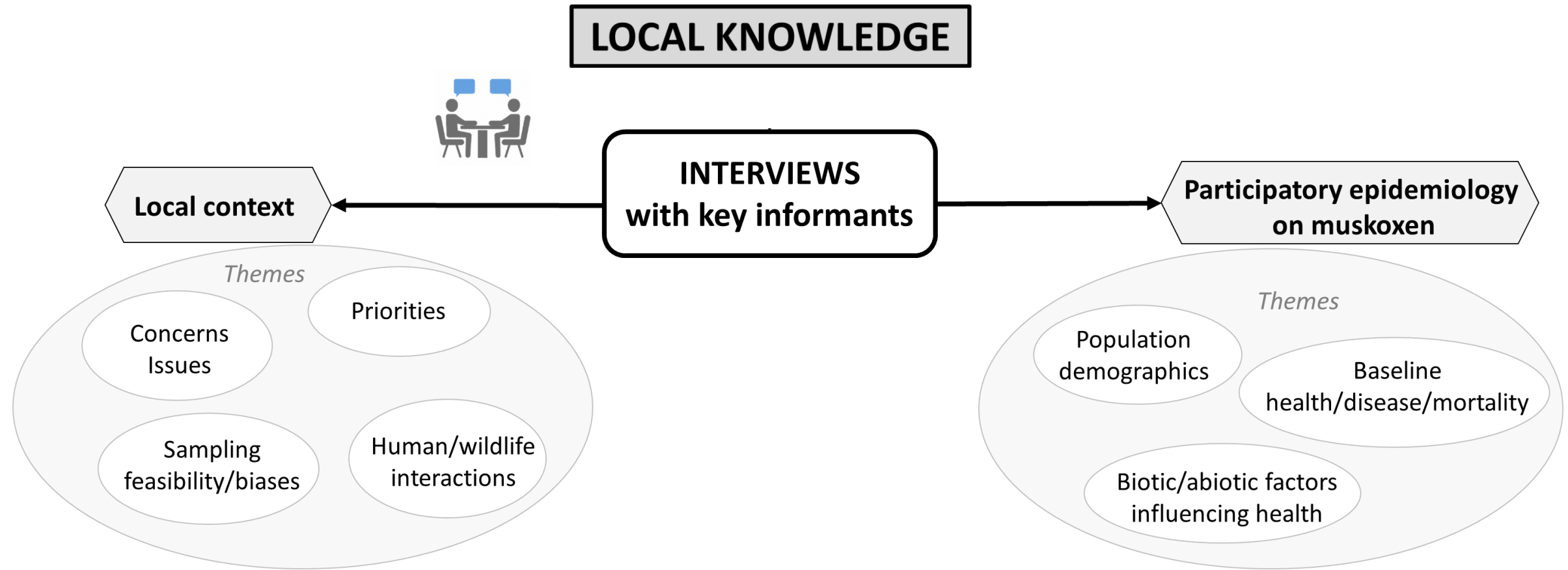
Fixed volume of counters
(0.5 kg beans)
used as unit of measure

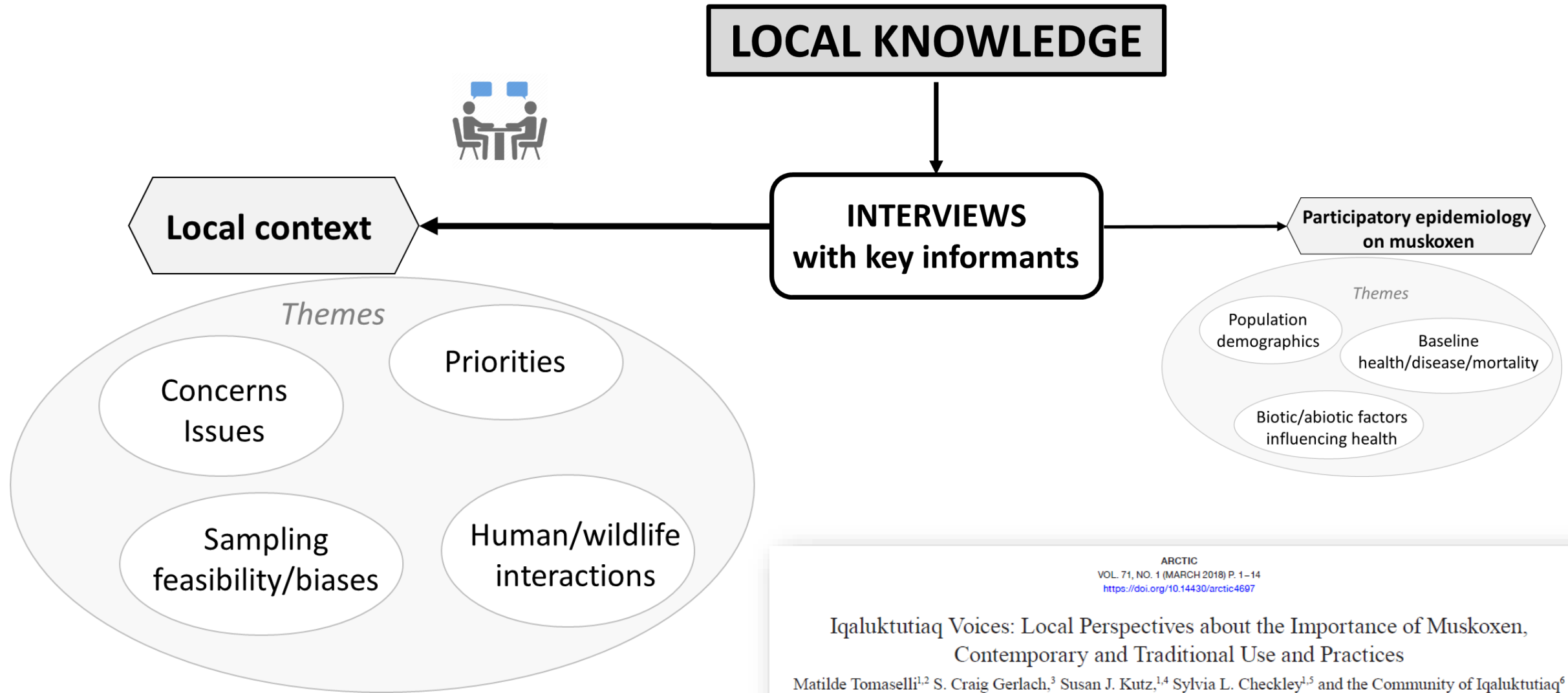


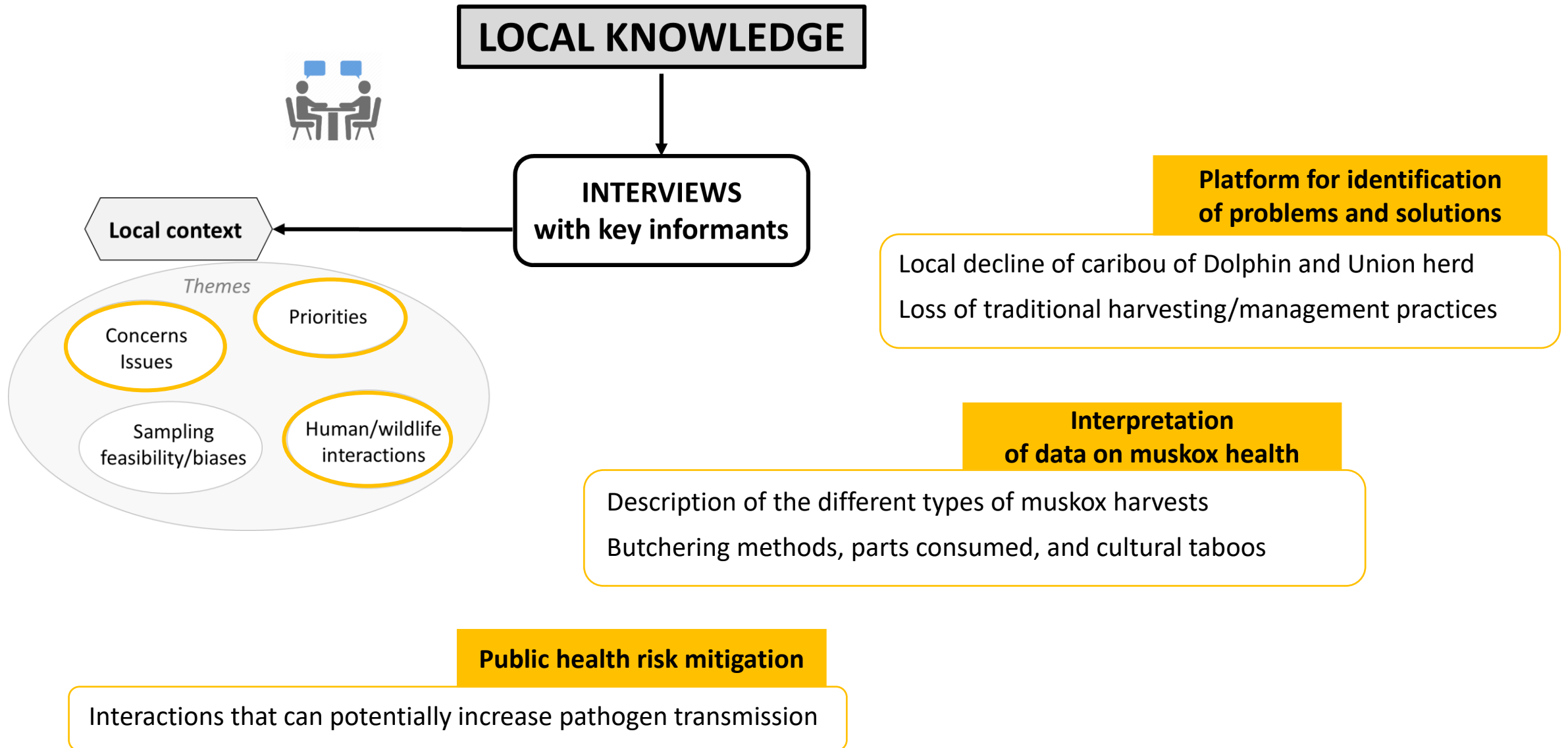
Collaborative work
to separate counters
proportionally

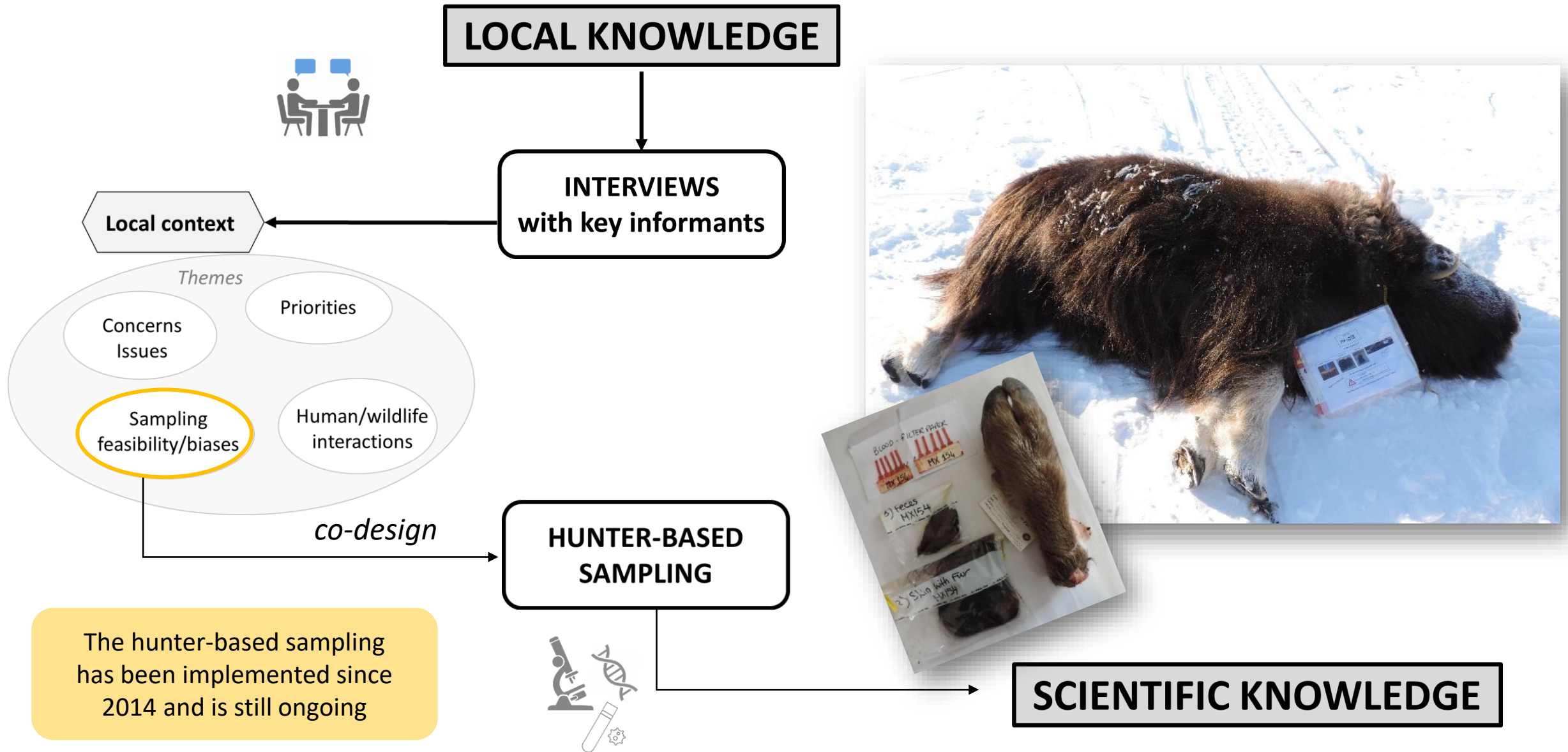


Measuring counters
to generate proportions









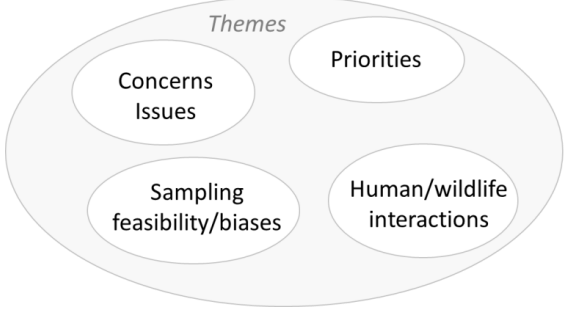
The hunter-based sampling has been implemented since 2014 and is still ongoing

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

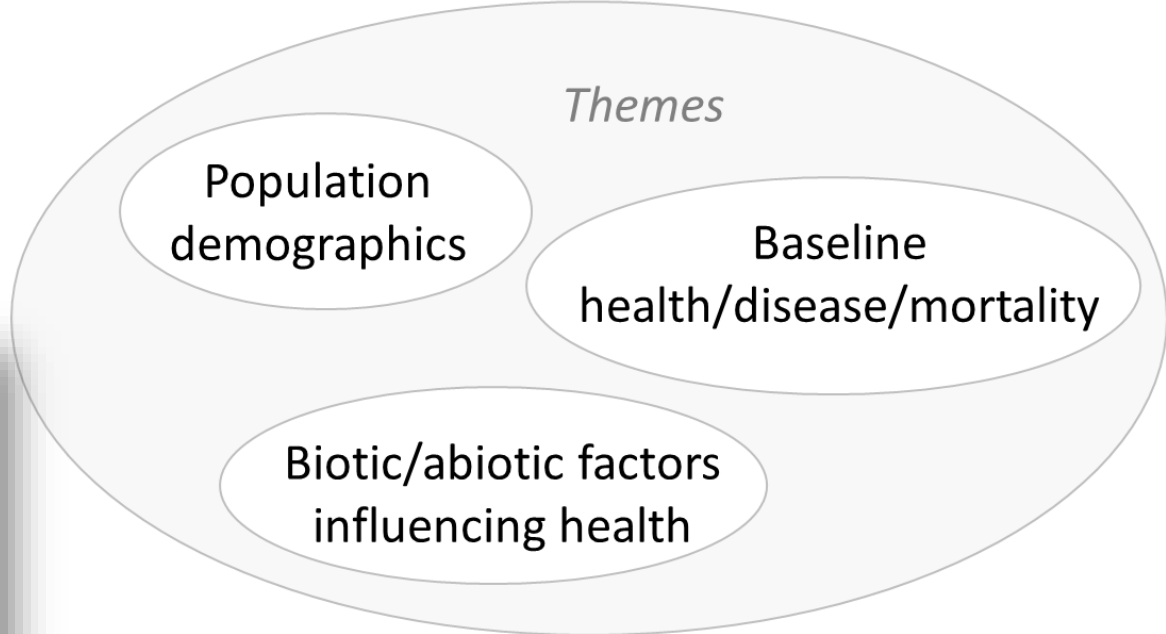


**INTERVIEWS
with key informants**

Local context



**Participatory epidemiology
on muskoxen**



Biological Conservation 217 (2018) 337–348

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect



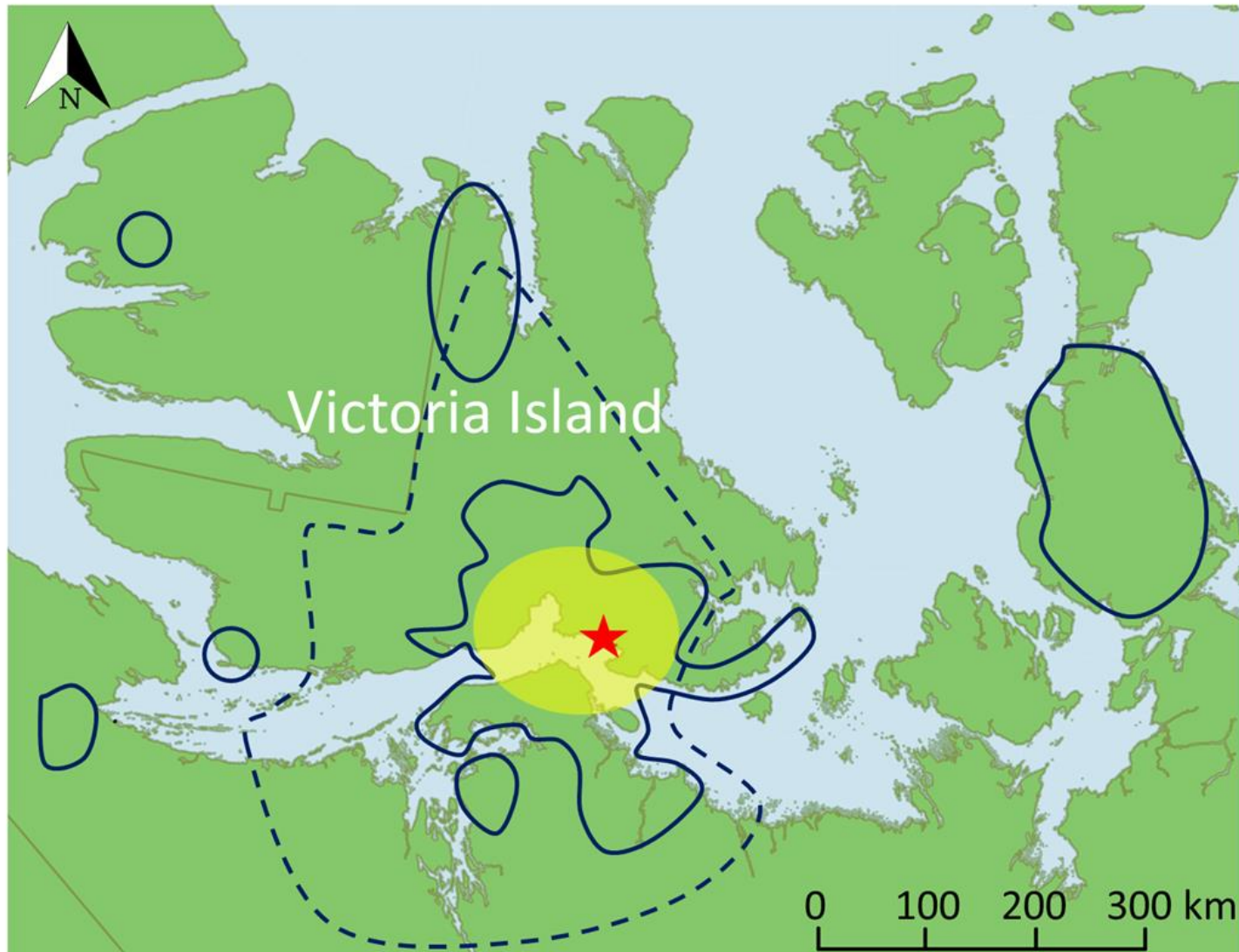
Biological Conservation

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/biocon



Local knowledge to enhance wildlife population health surveillance:
 Conserving muskoxen and caribou in the Canadian Arctic
 Matilde Tomaselli^{a,*}, Susan Kutz^{a,b}, Craig Gerlach^c, Sylvia Checkley^{a,d}





★ Cambridge Bay - Iqaluktutiaq

■ ↑ data accuracy

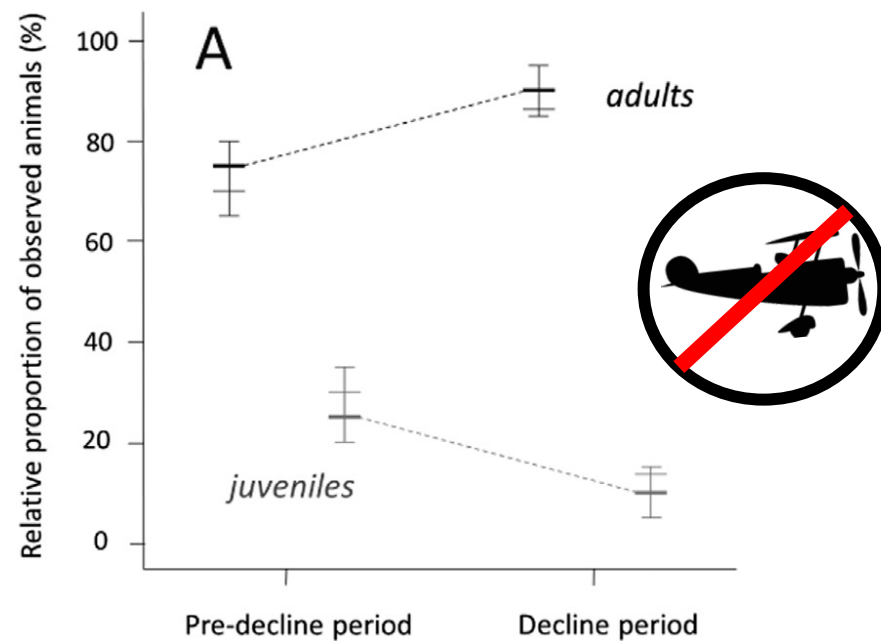
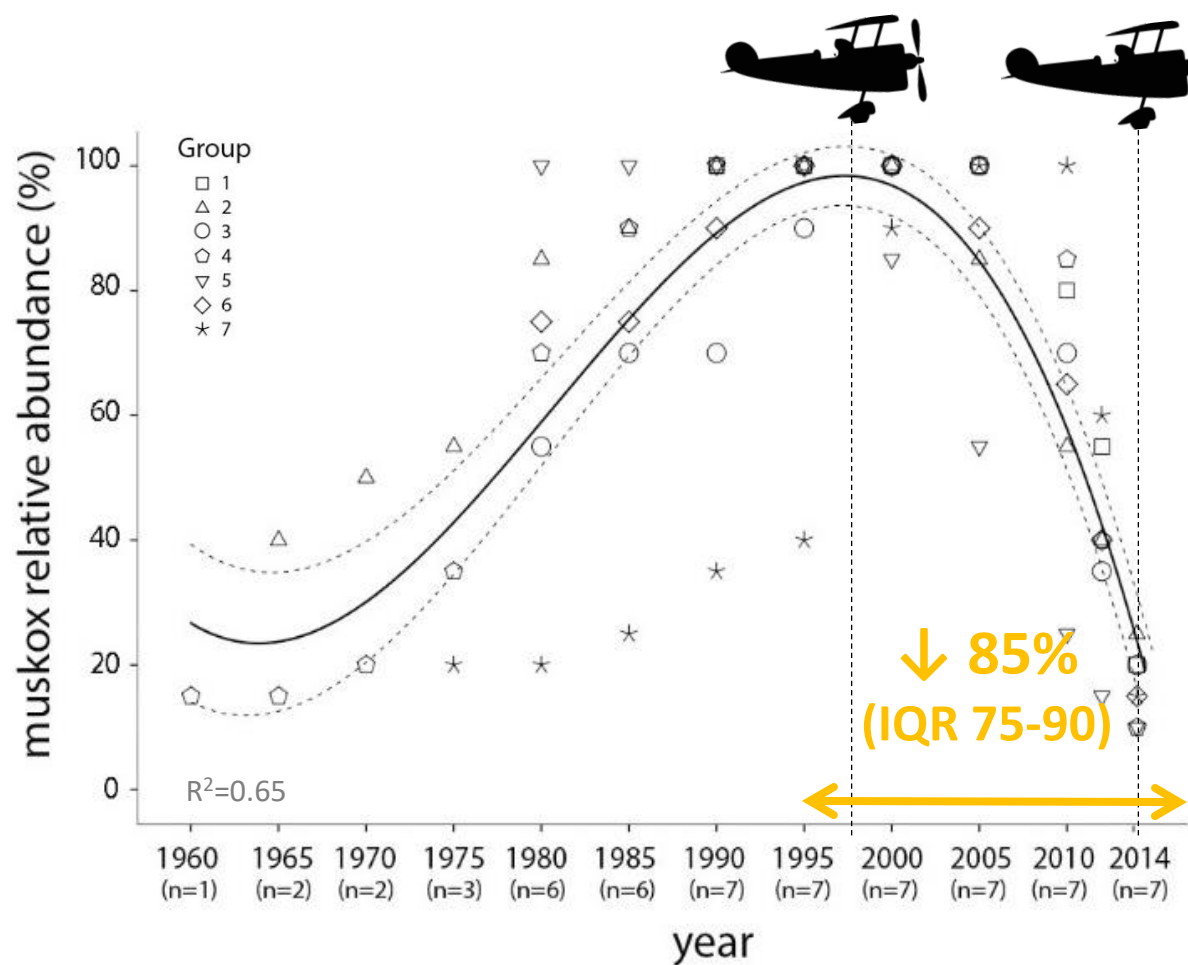
Boundaries of the area observed

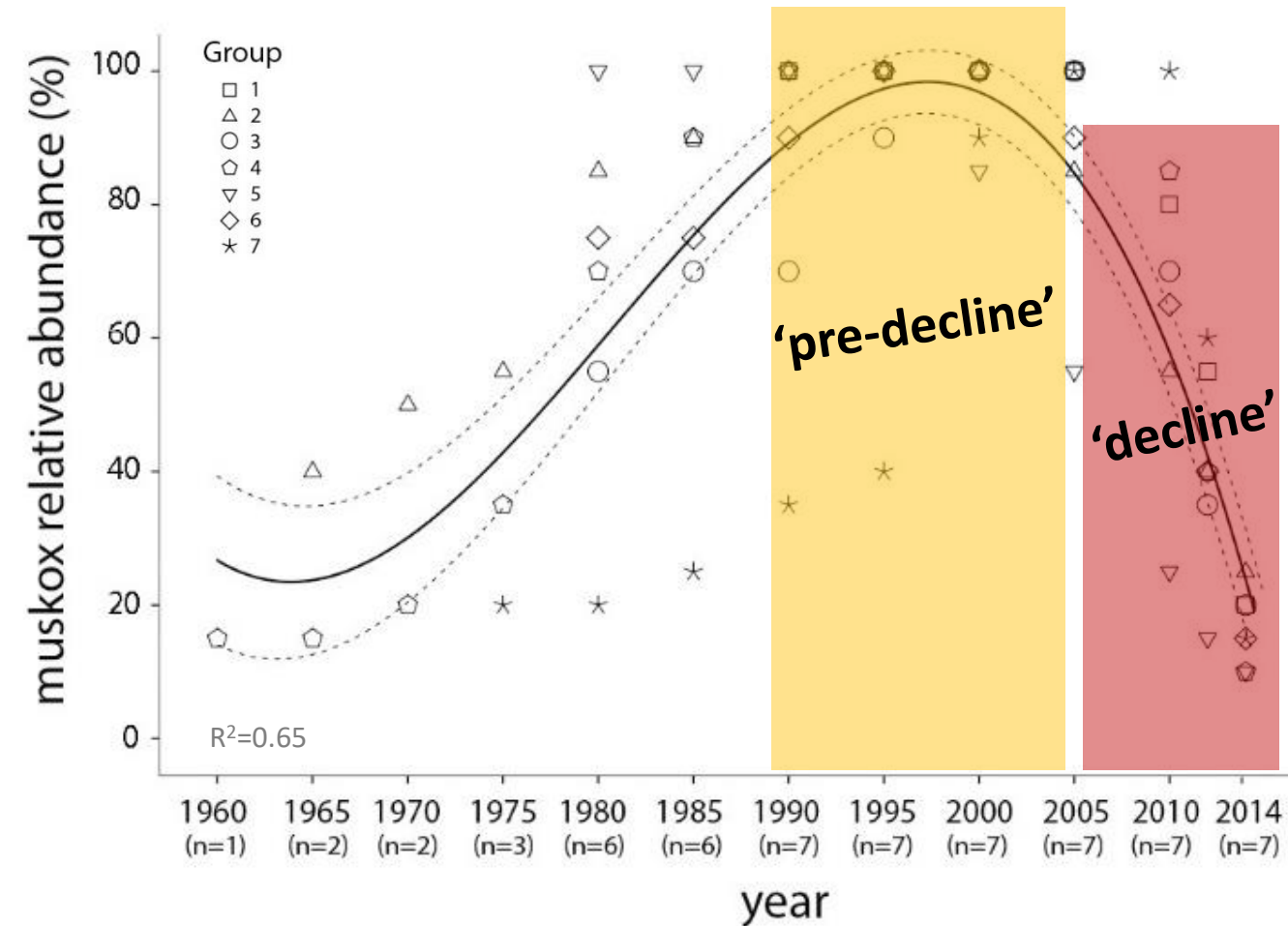
--- from air (n=2)

— from land (n=22)

**INTERVIEWS
with key informants**

*Missing population trends
Participatory epidemiology techniques*





From the 'pre-decline' to the 'decline' period

↓ proportion of young

↑ proportion of muskoxen in poor body condition

↓ size of herds and ↑ distance between herds

↑ observation of mortalities, including cases consistent with disease outbreaks

↑ trends of morbidity, including newly observed abnormalities



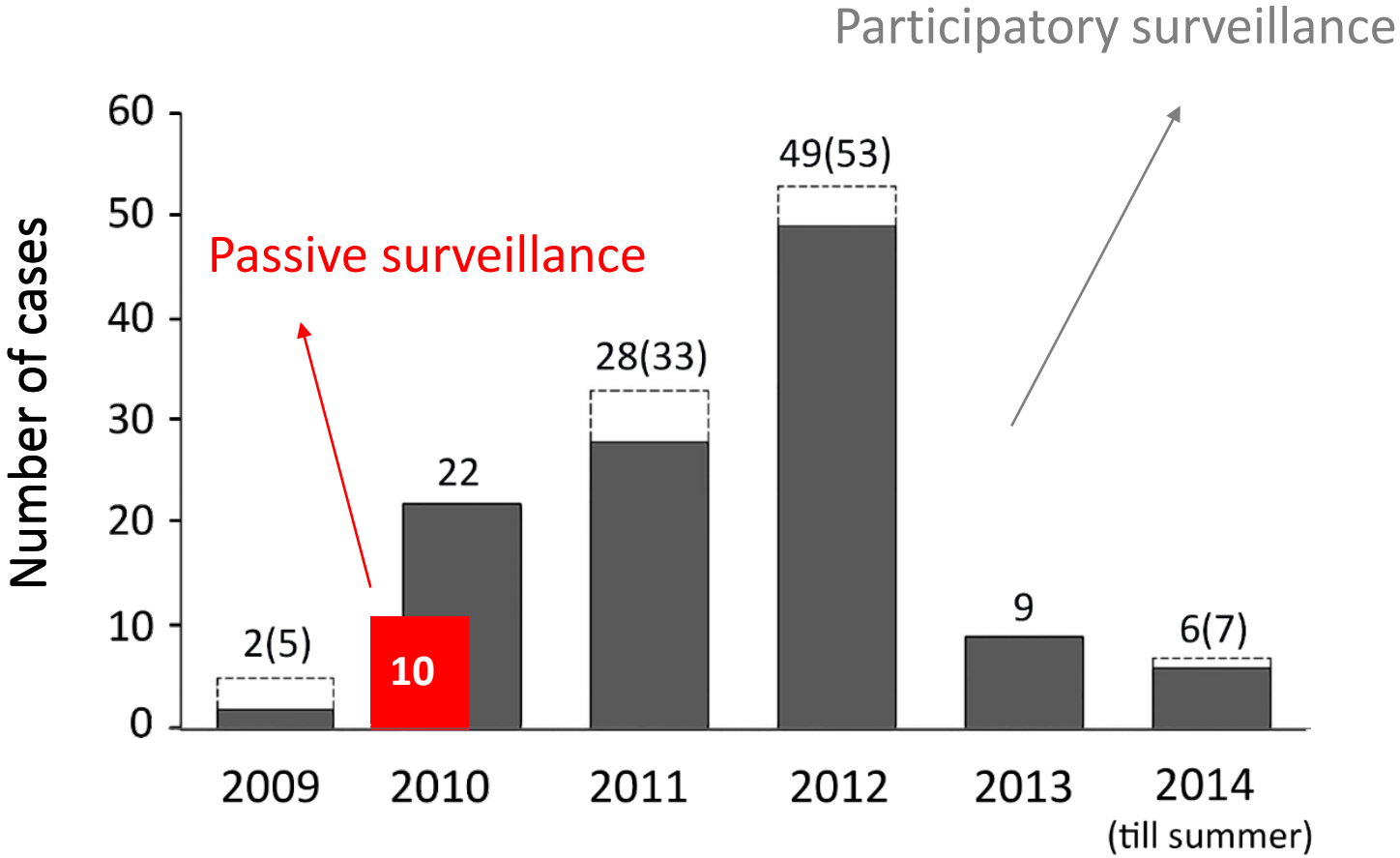
Photo credit S. Kutz



▲ Cambridge Bay ● 2010



Participatory mapping

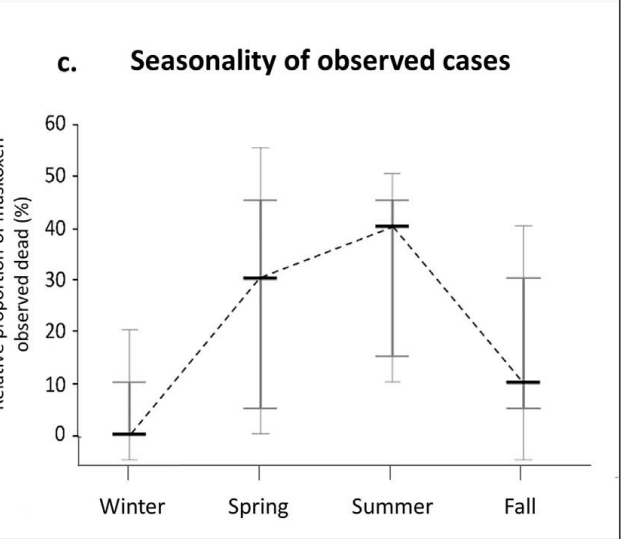
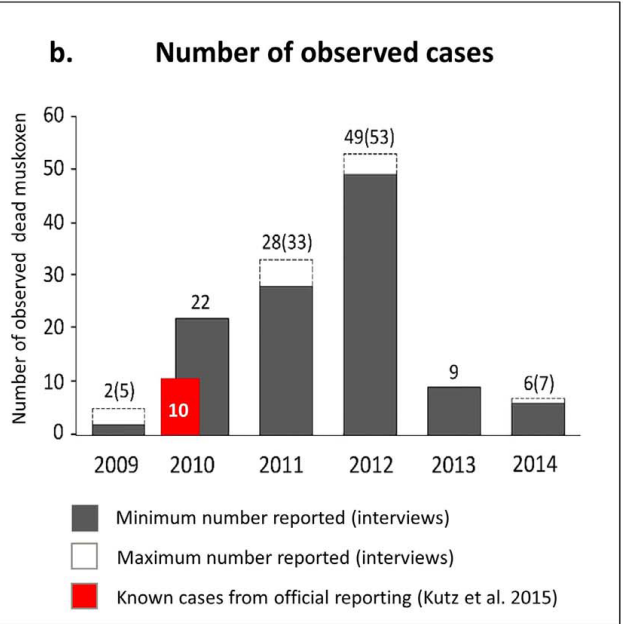
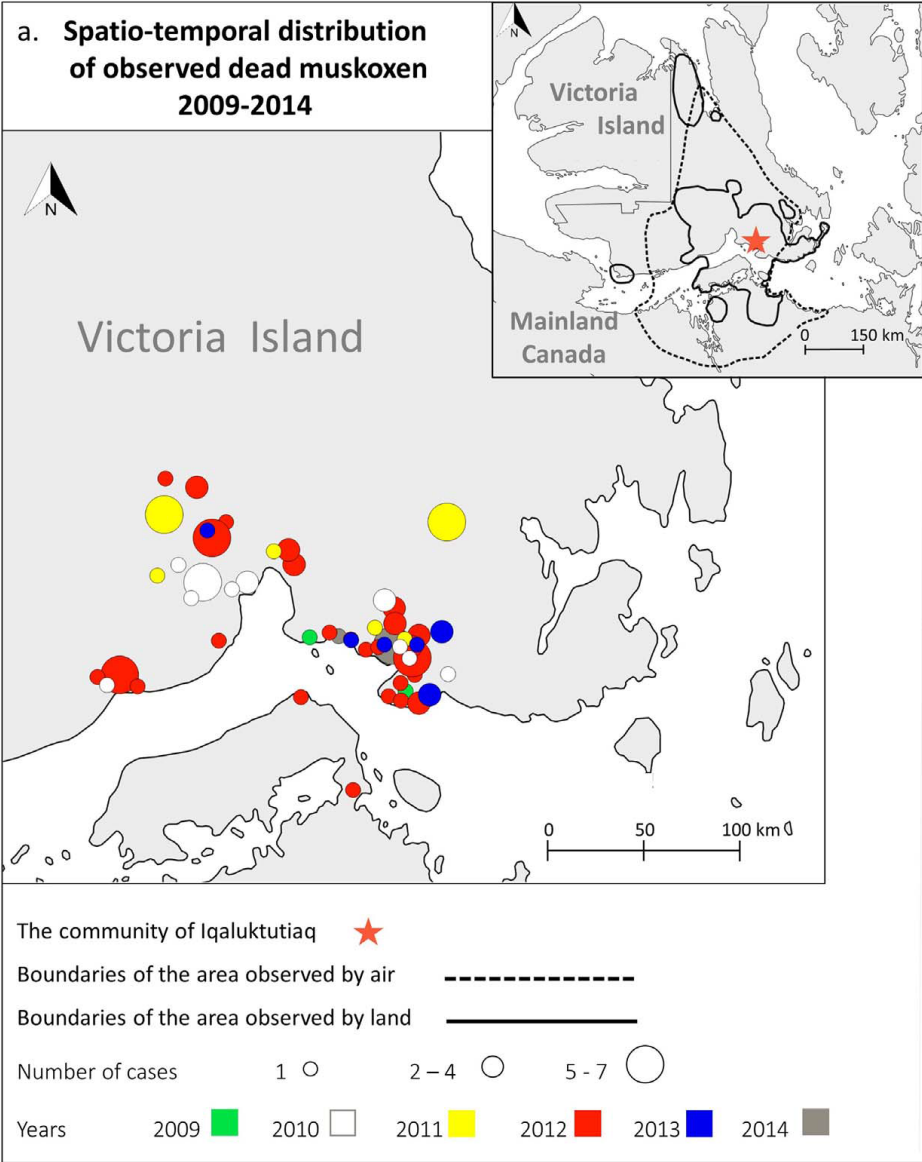




Participatory mapping

Timeline of events

Proportional piling





ALREADY NOTICED PRIOR THE DECLINE

Abscesses and traumas

White cysts in meat/heart

Swollen joints, limping animals

Sand paper disease

Warble larvae

Liver cysts

Lung cysts (liquid and solid)

Hoof overgrown/infections

NEWLY OBSERVED SINCE THE DECLINE

Scabby lesions (nose and mouth)

White eyes – corneal opacity

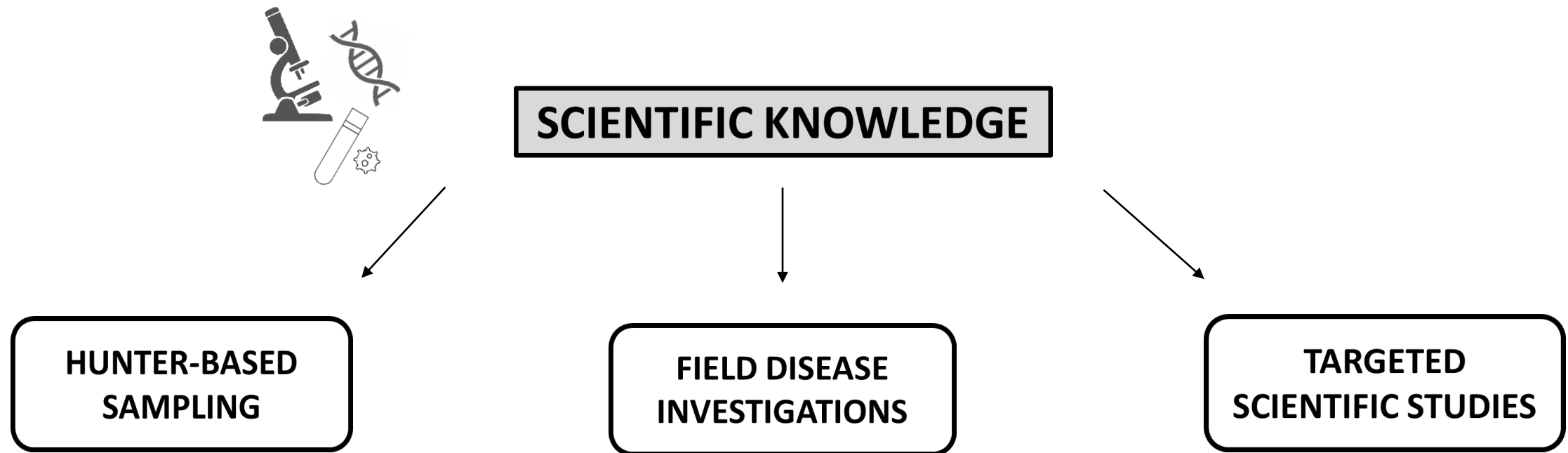
Yellow color of subcutaneous tissue



Increasingly observed since mid-2000s



*Relative proportion
First observation
Trend*



Conventional surveillance activities



**In this program these activities were informed by local knowledge
e.g., logistics, targeting priorities, and data interpretation**

Summer 2014

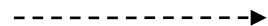


Photo credit G. Shuttleworth



Orf-like lesion observed in one outfitted-hunted muskox

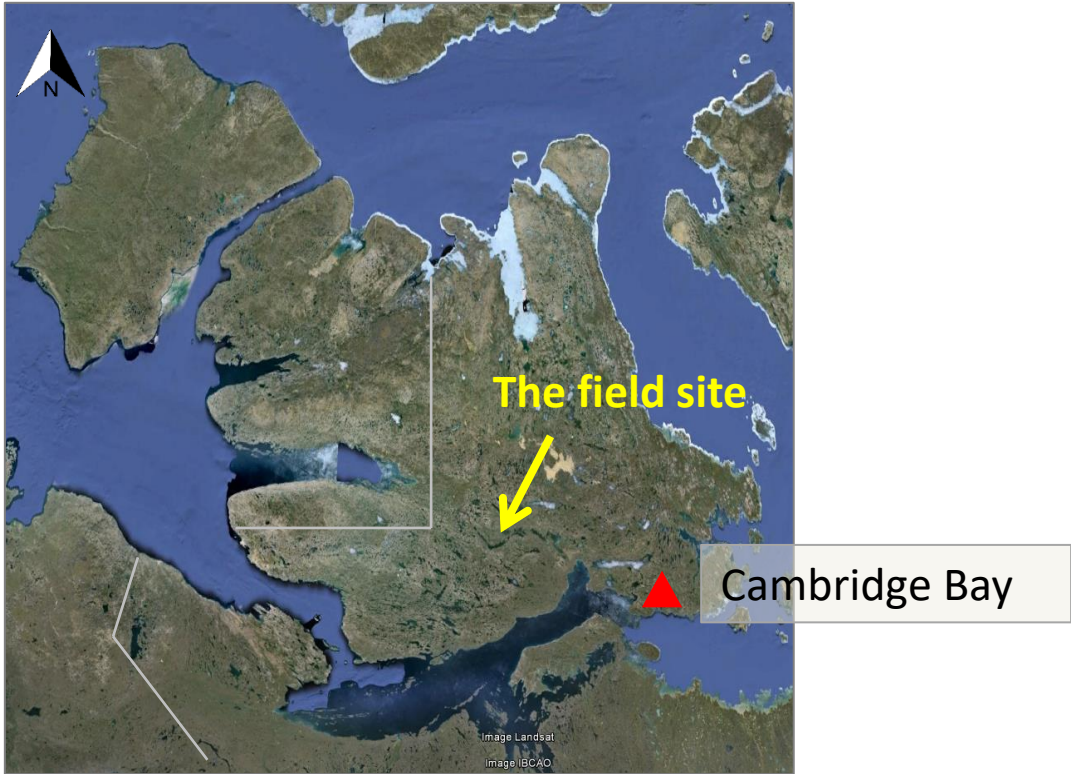
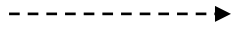
HUNTER-BASED SAMPLING



FIELD DISEASE INVESTIGATIONS

Summer 2014

FIELD DISEASE INVESTIGATIONS





Zoonoses

First time detection

2014



Contagious ecthyma
Orf virus



Rangiferine brucellosis
Brucella suis biovar 4

Tomaselli et al. *JWD* (2016)



Orf-like lesions

Observed in 2004, 2008 in bulls
and in 2012 in a dead calf

Brucella-like syndromes

Noticed since the 1980s
↑ trend since mid-2000s

Tomaselli et al. *Biol Cons* (2018)

**INTERVIEWS
with key informants**



PE data on muskox health

- ↓ number of muskoxen since mid-2000s
- ↓ proportion of young
- ↑ *Brucella*-like syndromes since mid-2000s

**FIELD DISEASE
INVESTIGATIONS**



Sport-hunted muskox - Summer 2014

Euthanized cow - Spring 2015

Isolation of *Brucella suis* biovar 4

**HUNTER-BASED
SAMPLING**

+ Existing samples archives



**TARGETED
SCIENTIFIC STUDIES**

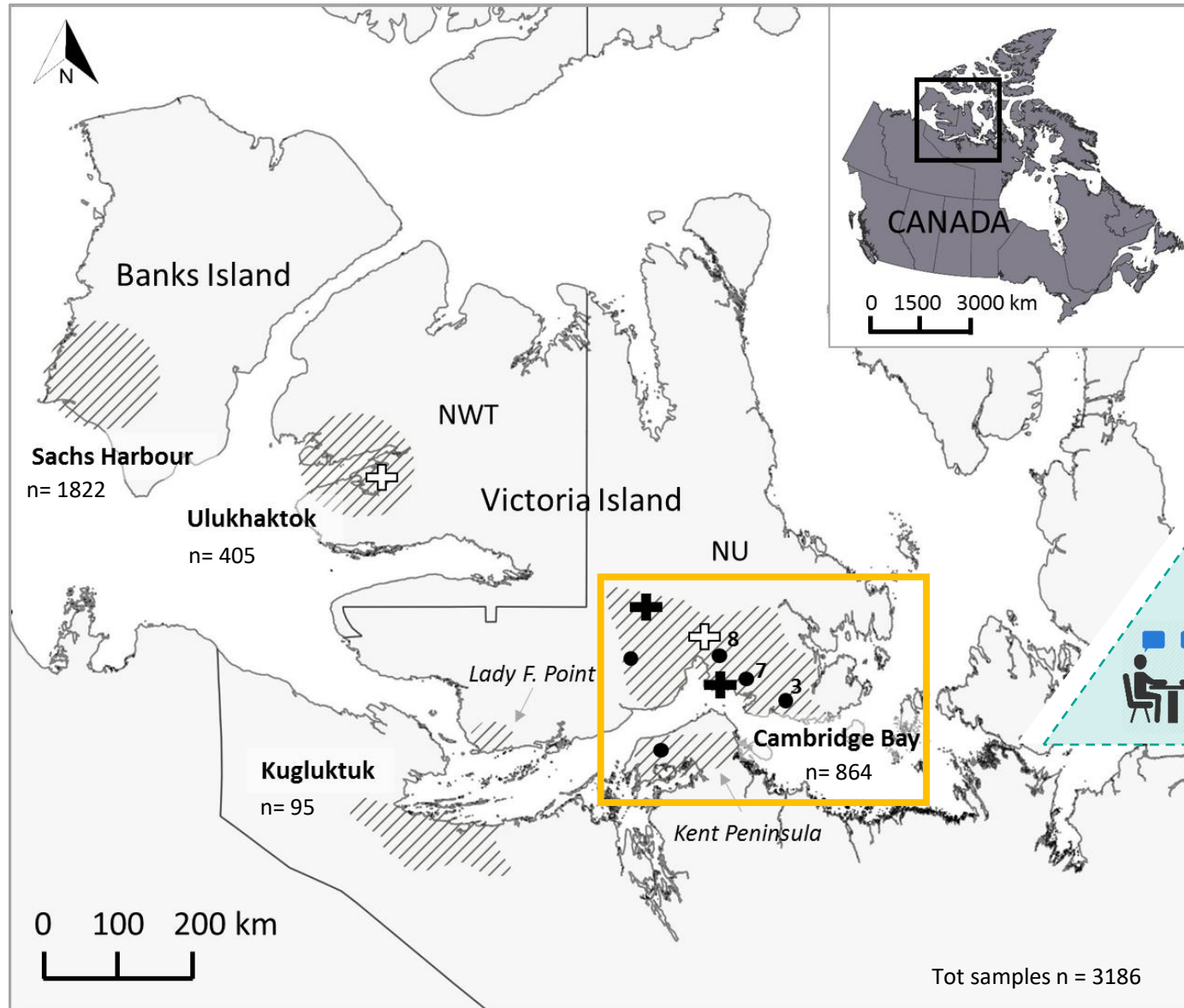
Study to assess
Brucella exposure and infection in muskoxen

TARGETED SCIENTIFIC STUDIES





A Transdisciplinary Approach to Brucella in Muskoxen of the Western Canadian Arctic 1989-2016
Matilde Tomaselli, Brett Elkin, Susan Kutz, N. Jane Harms, H. Ingebjørg Nymo, Tracy Davison, Lisa-Marie Leclerc, Marsha Branigan, Mathieu Dumond, Morten Tryland, and Sylvia Checkley



+ Samples archives



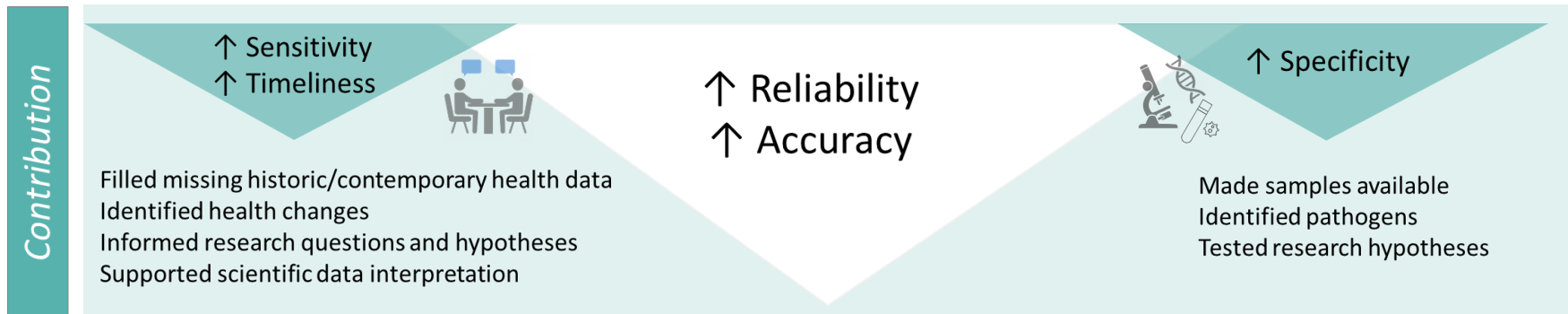
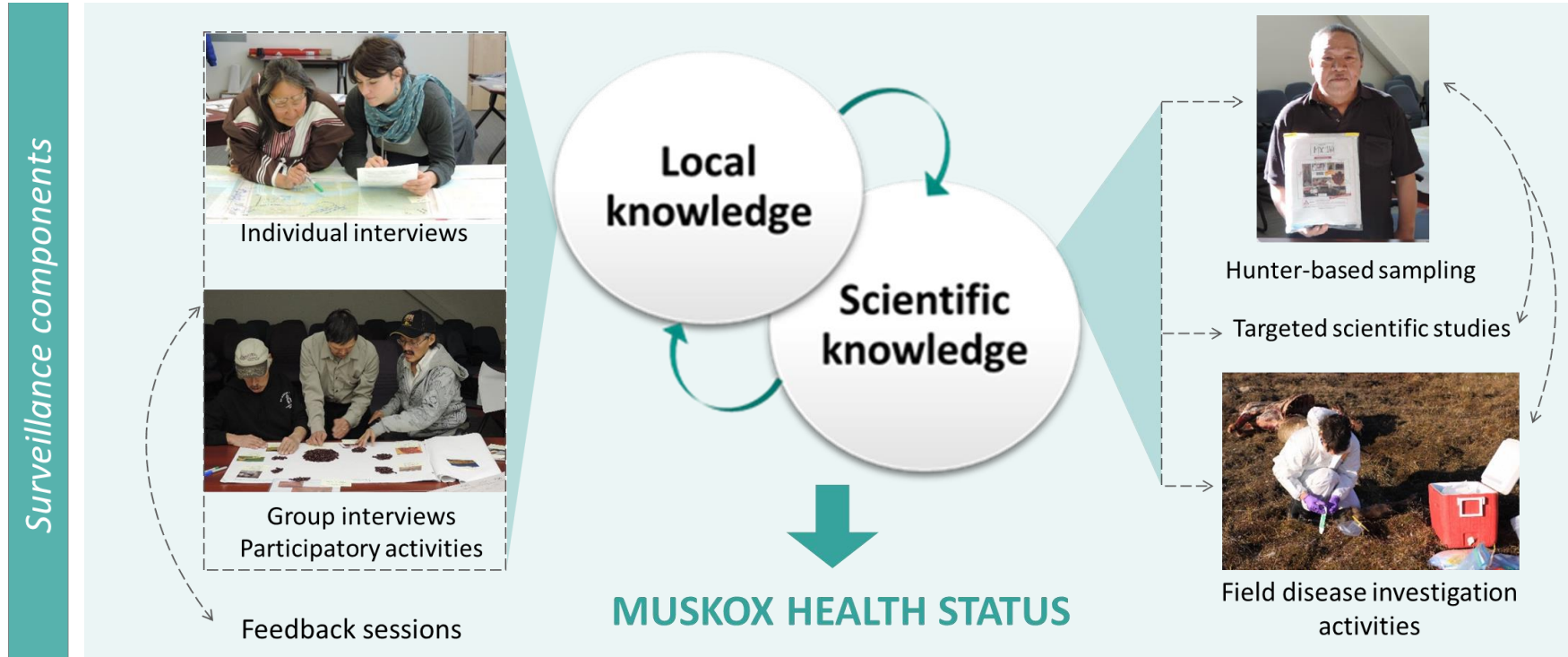
Legend

-  Sampled area
-  Serology positive sample (*Brucella spp.*)
-  Serology positive (*Brucella spp.*) and microbiology positive (*Brucella suis* biovar 4) sample
-  Microbiology positive (*Brucella suis* biovar 4) sample

Cambridge Bay area
Multiple knowledge sources, including PE
↑ confidence in the results obtained



Cambridge Bay – serology data
 ↑ trend of *Brucella* exposure
 since the population peak of the late 1990s
 [from 0.9% (pre-decline) to 5.6% (decline)]



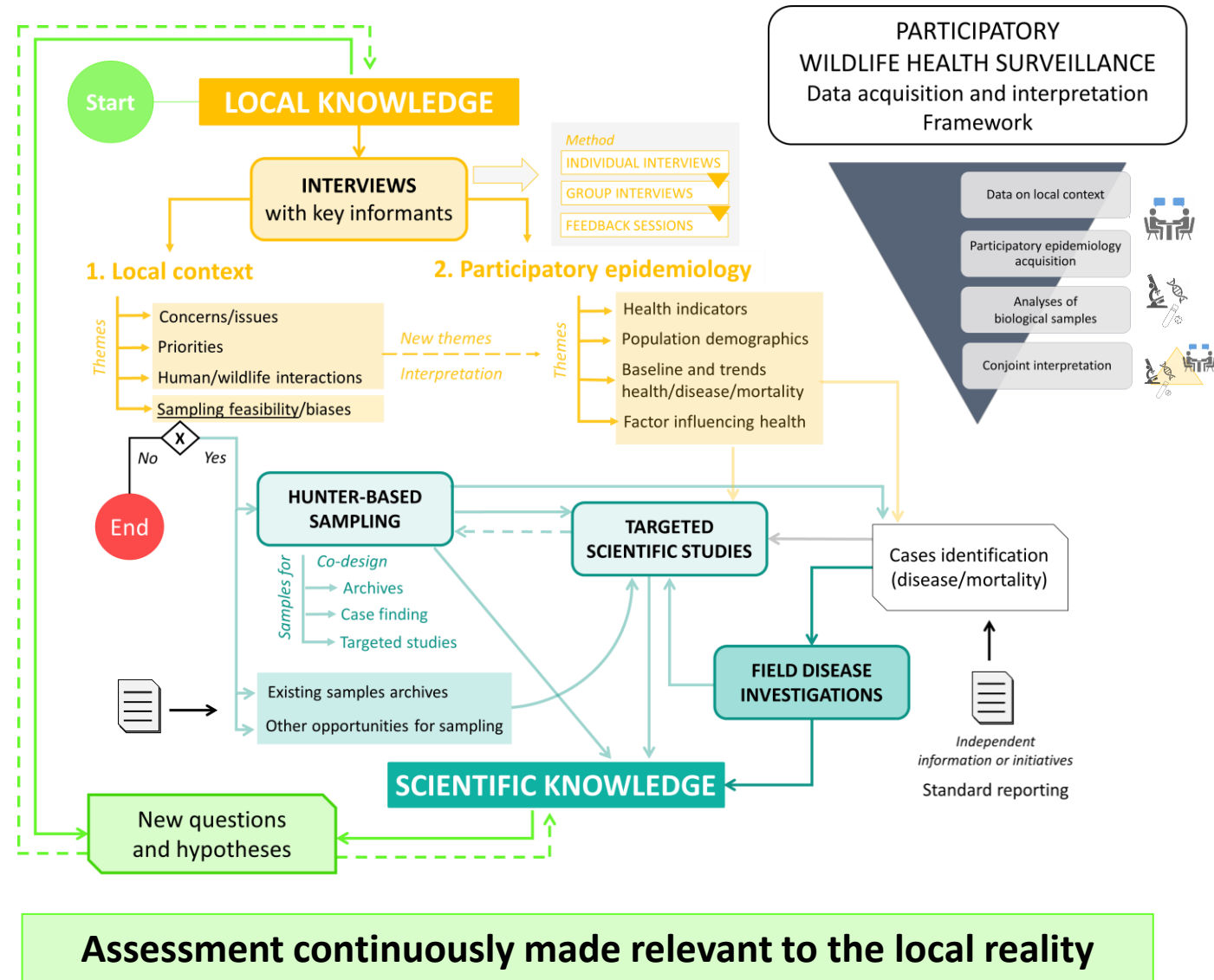
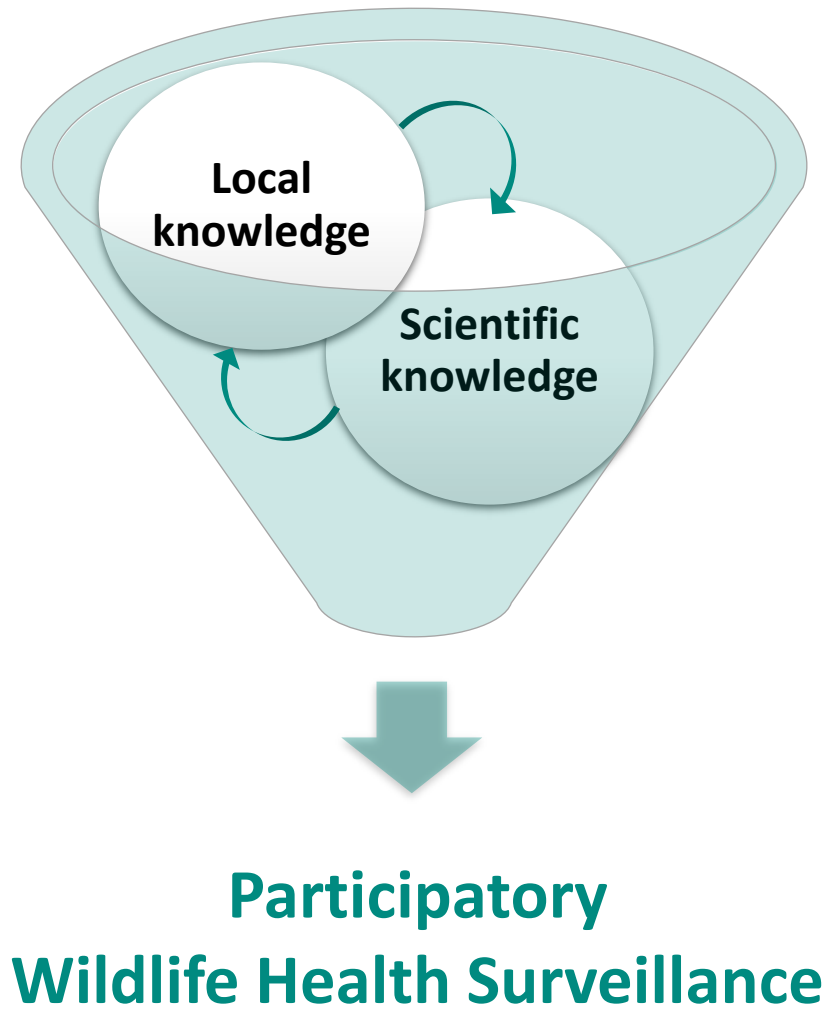
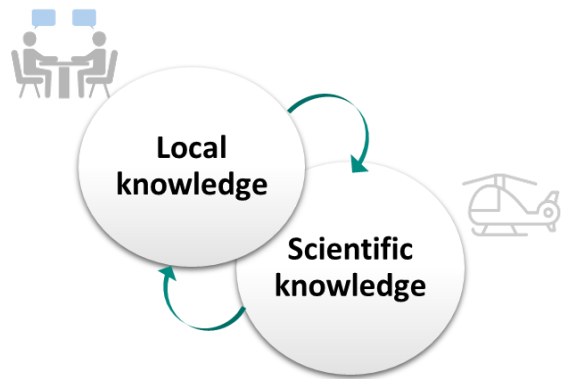


Fig. from Tomaselli M (2022) Chapter 5, In: 'Wildlife Population Health'



Inuit knowledge on polar bear health



PE on polar bear health



Markus Dyck
ᐃᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ
Government of Nunavut
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ



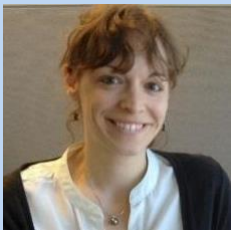
Naomi Akavak
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ
Kimmirut
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ

Matilde Tomaselli
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ
Polar Knowledge Canada
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ



Doreen Kanayuk
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ
Pangnirtung
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ

Dominique Henri
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ
Environment and
Climate Change Canada
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ



Rosemary Kanayuk
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ
Pangnirtung
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ

Evan Richardson
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ
Environment and
Climate Change Canada
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ



Pamela Wong
Trailmarks Systems
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ



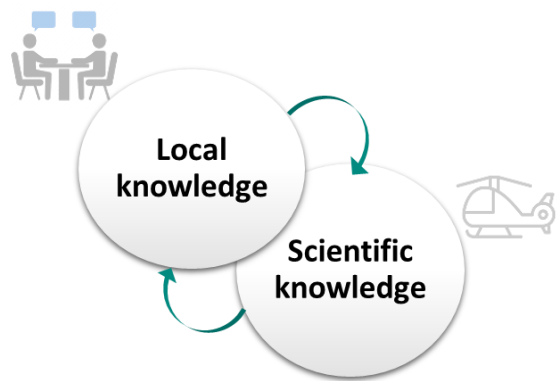
Jasmine Ware
Government of Nunavut
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ



Pudloo Pisiulak
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ
Kimmirut
ᐅᐅᐅᐅ



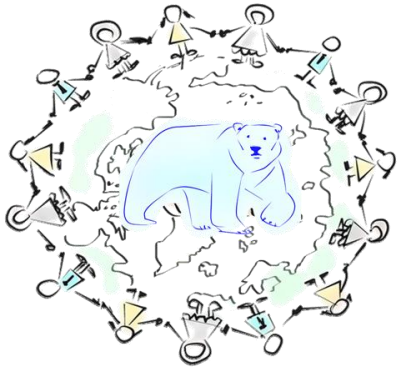
Inuit knowledge on polar bear health



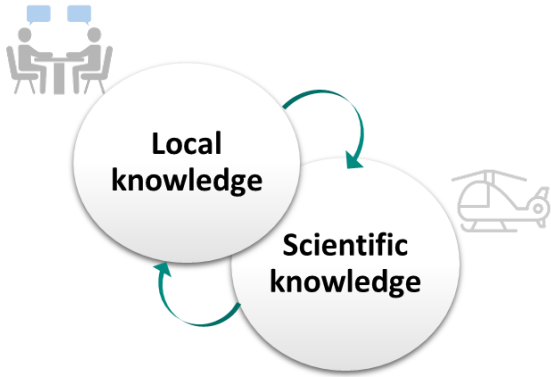
PE on polar bear health



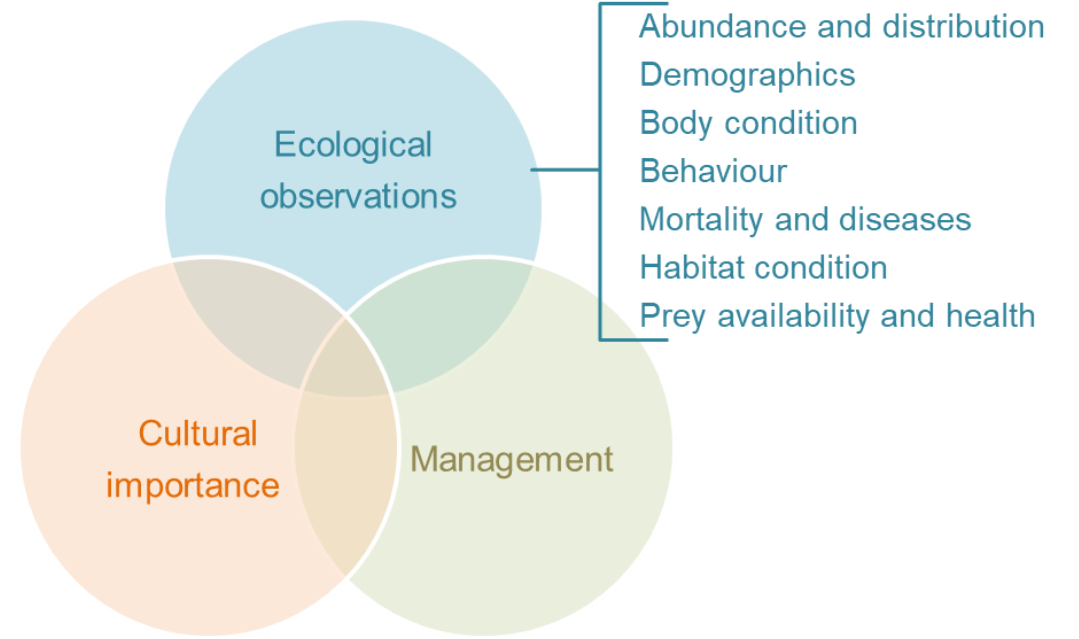
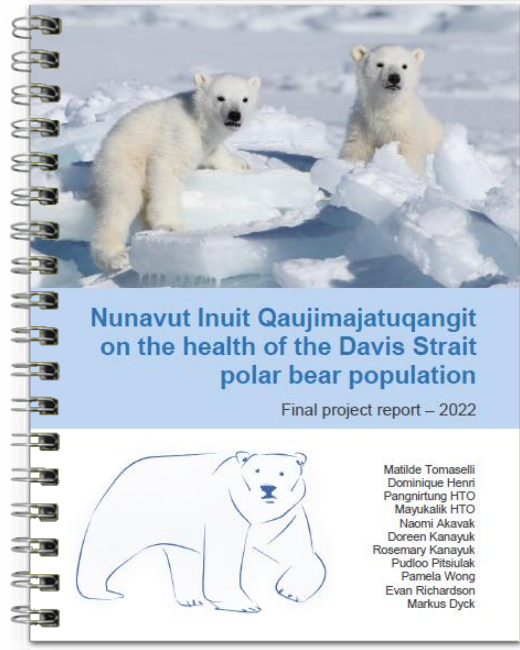
Jawlie Akavak – Sandy Akavak – Rosemary Allen – Joe Arlooktoo – Joannie Ikkidluak – Akulujuk Judea – Akeego Killiktee – Mikidjuk Kolola – Pitsiula Michael – Saimata Onalik – Elijah Padluq – Ejetsiak Padluq – Jeannie Padluq – Kooyoo Padluq – Davidee Temela – Isaac Temela – Itee Temela – Leopa Akpalialuk – Meeka Alivaktuk – Leesee-Mary Kakee – Peter Kanayuk Abraham Keenainak – Simeonee Keenainak – Michael Kisa – David Kooneeliusie – Lazarusie Ishulutaq – Johnny Mike Geetee Maniapik – Matiusie Maniapik – Davidee Nowyuk – Five anonymous contributors

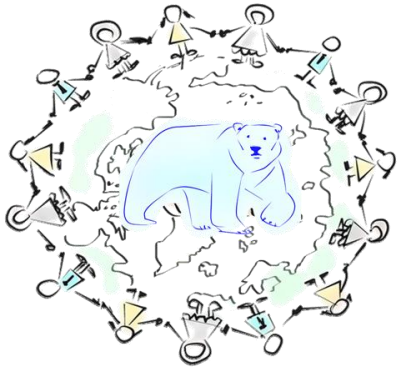


Inuit knowledge on polar bear health

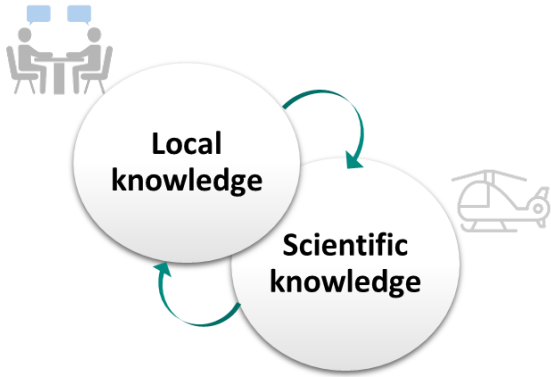


PE on polar bear health





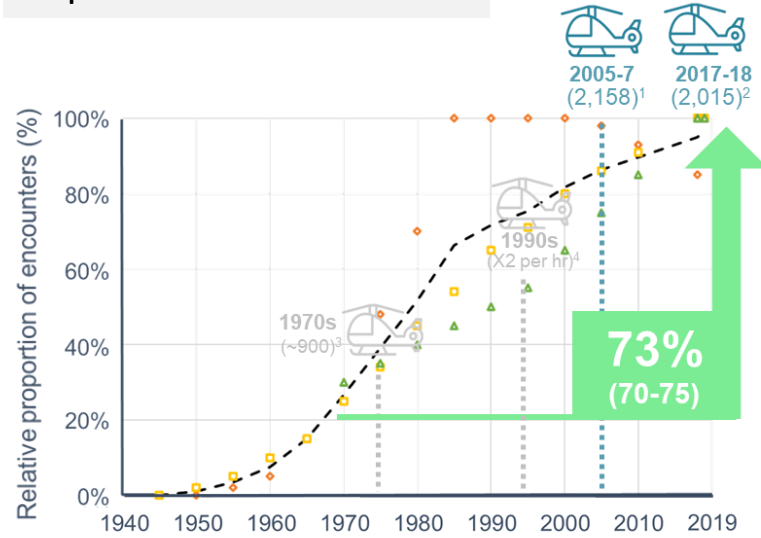
Inuit knowledge on polar bear health



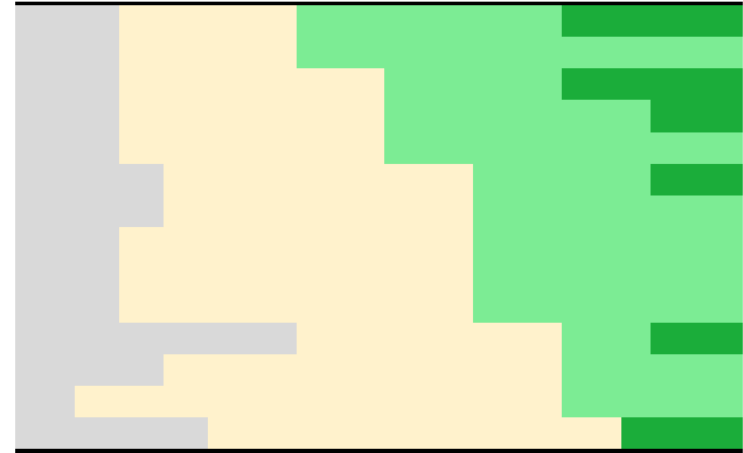
PE on polar bear health



Population abundance



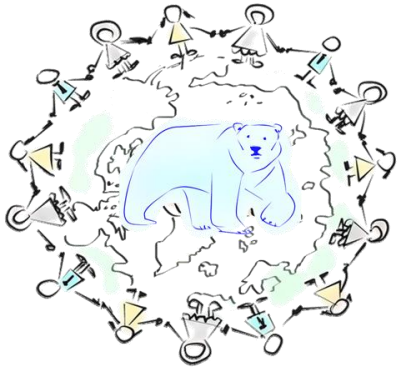
1940s 1950s 1960s 1970s 1980s 1990s 2000s 2010s



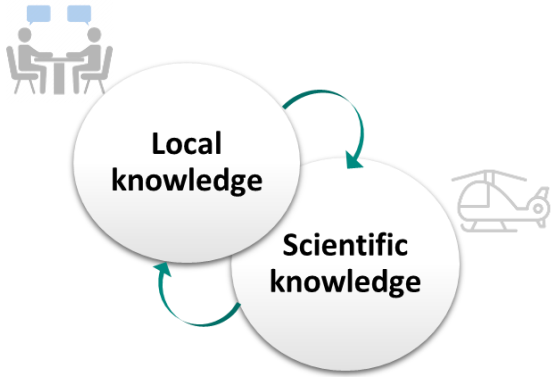
Legend

- No observation (prior to contributor's date of birth).
- Polar bear abundance was either low or abundance was not reported.
- Increasing polar bear abundance directly observed.
- Increasing polar bear abundance directly observed near communities.





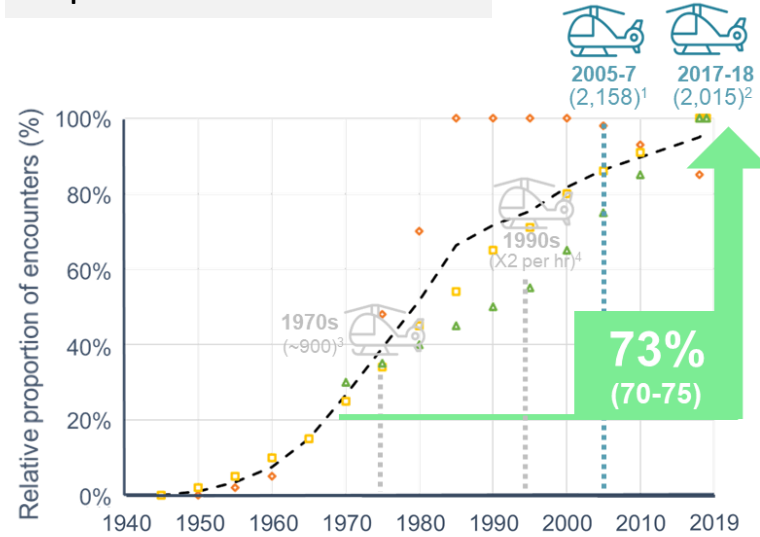
Inuit knowledge on polar bear health



PE on polar bear health

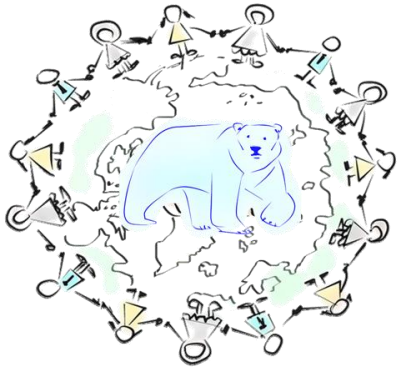


Population abundance

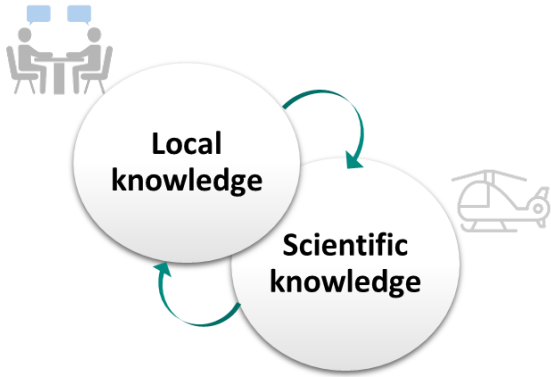


‘True’ vs. ‘Apparent’ increase ?

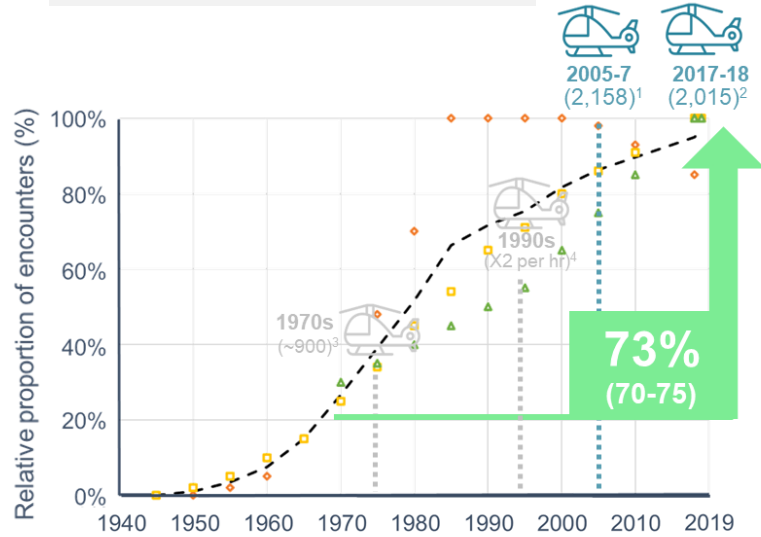




Inuit knowledge on polar bear health

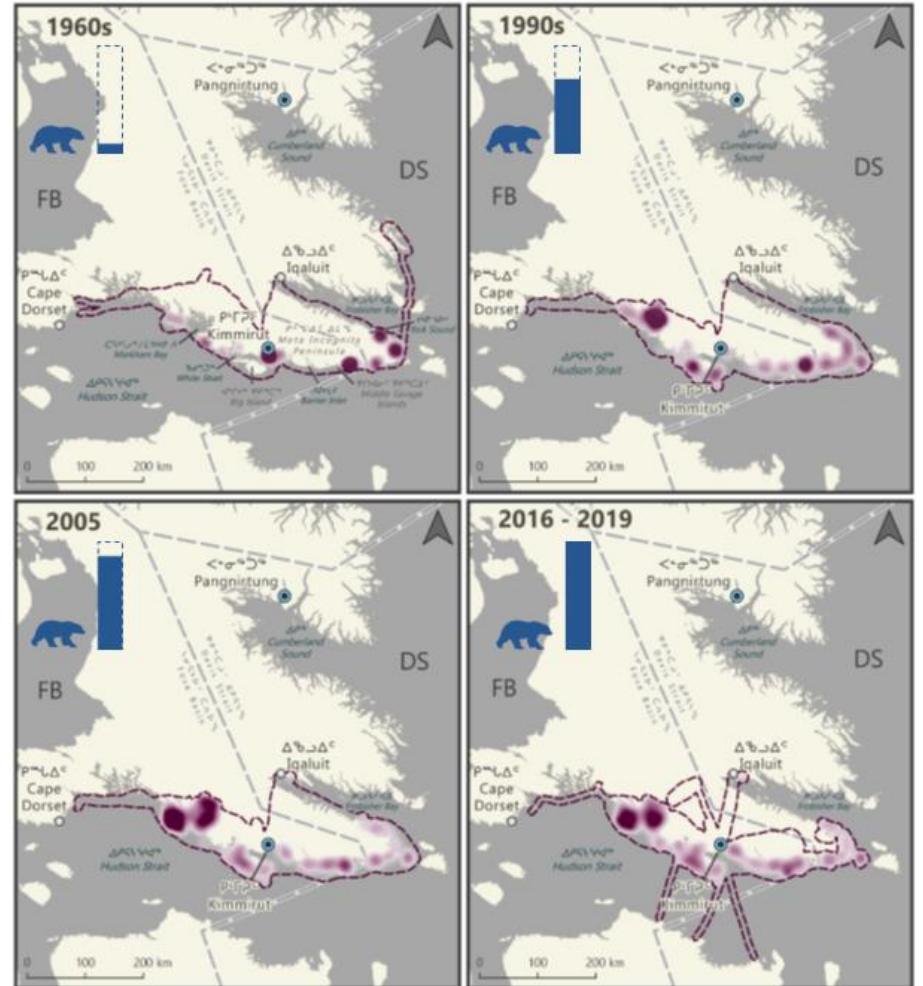
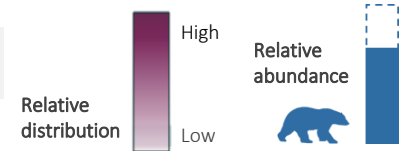


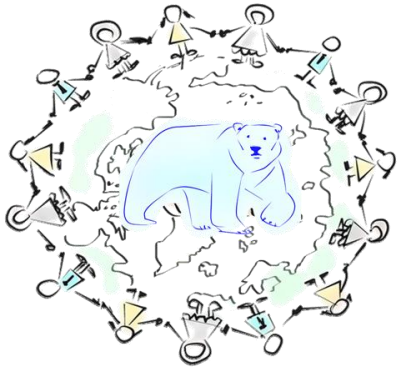
Population abundance



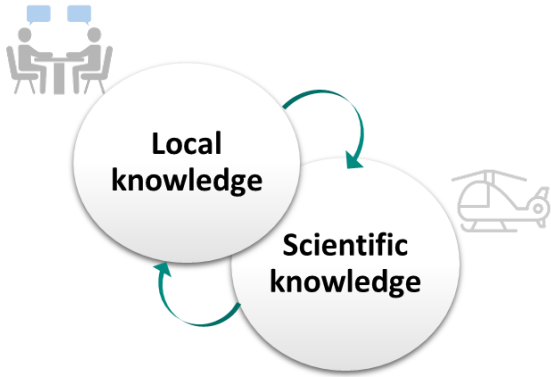
Proportional piling and mapping - timeseries

Polar Bear Distribution





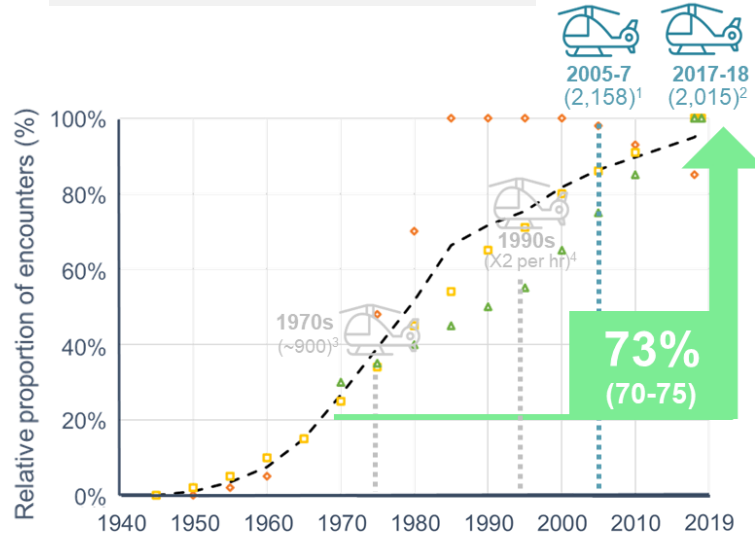
Inuit knowledge on polar bear health



PE on polar bear health



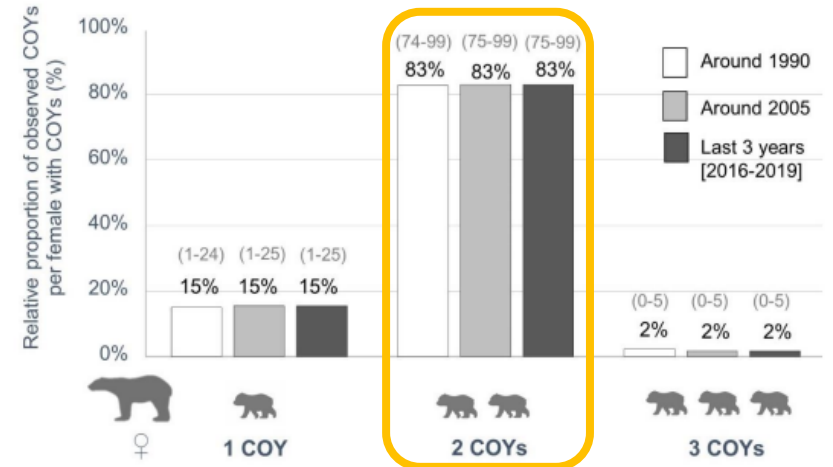
Population abundance



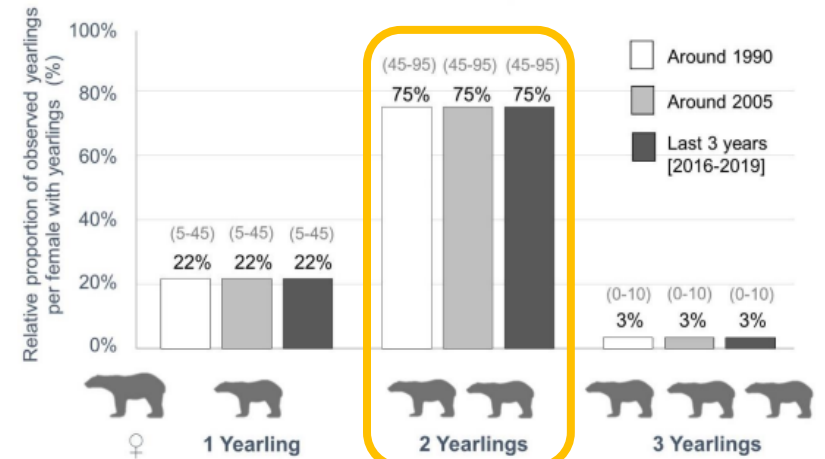
Proportional piling - timeseries

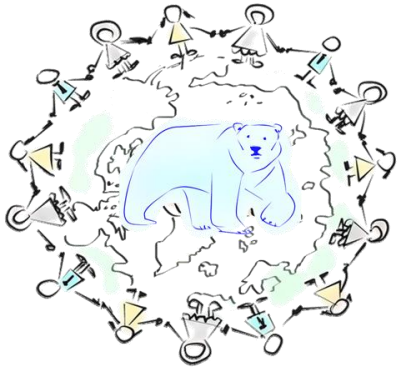
Demographics - productivity and survival

A Number of cubs of the year (COYs) / family group



B Number of yearlings / family group





Body condition status



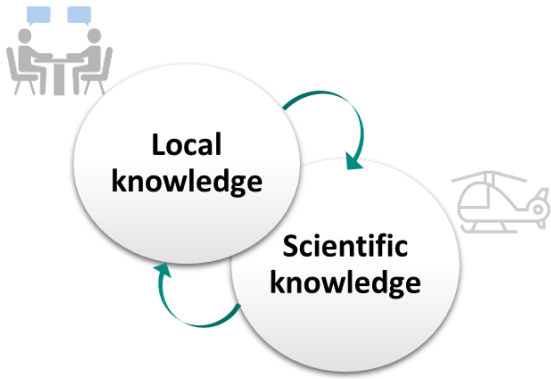
Individual interviews

≠



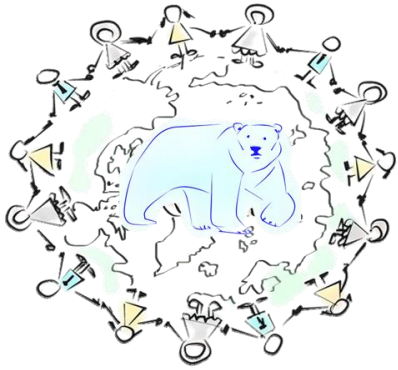
Proportional piling - timeseries

Inuit knowledge on polar bear health



PE on polar bear health

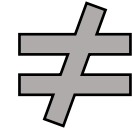




Body condition status

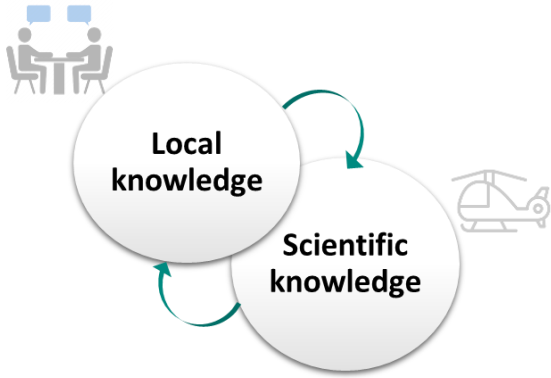


Individual interviews

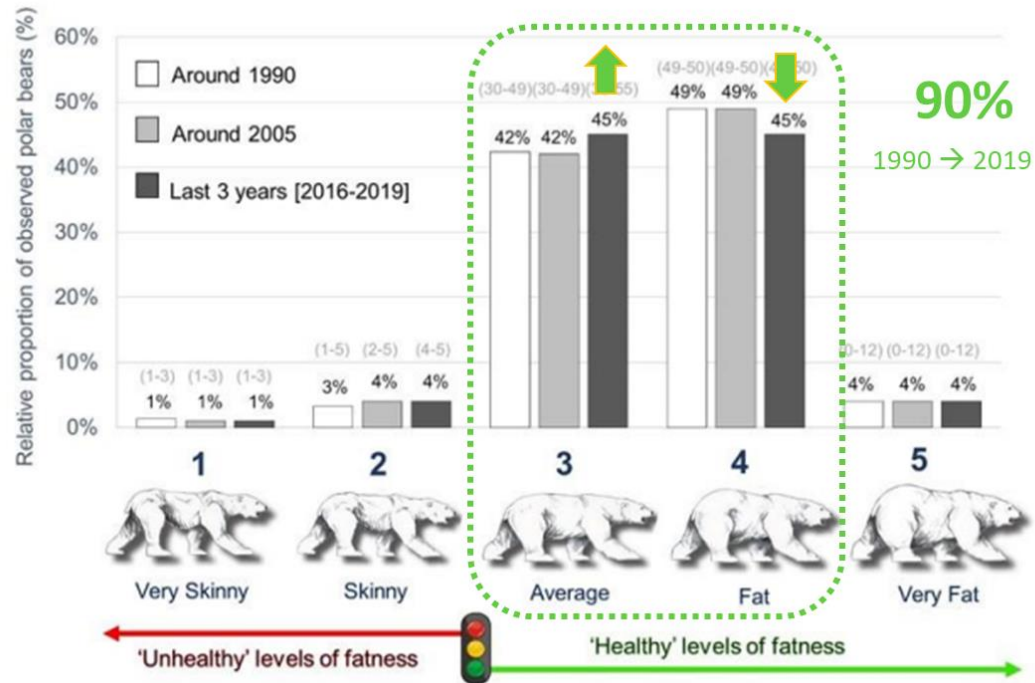


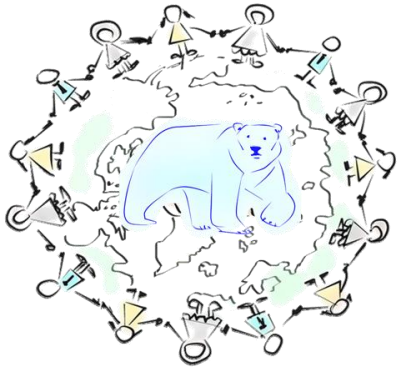
Proportional piling - timeseries

Inuit knowledge on polar bear health

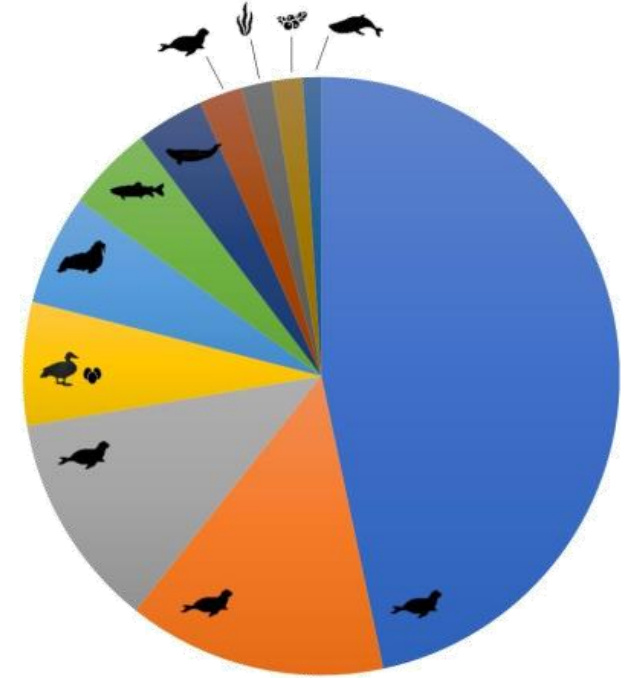
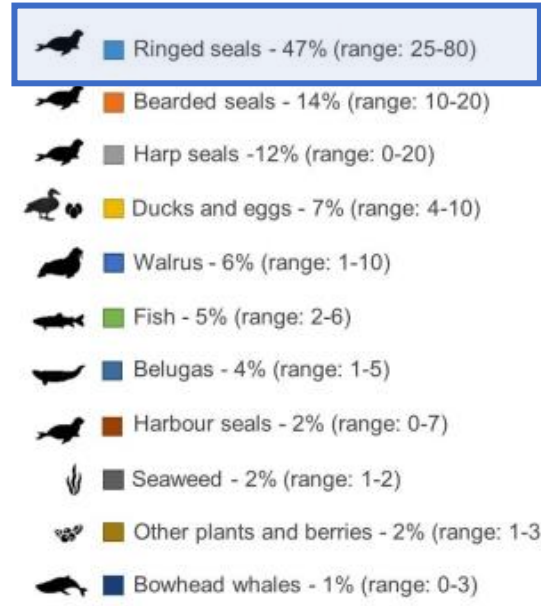


PE on polar bear health

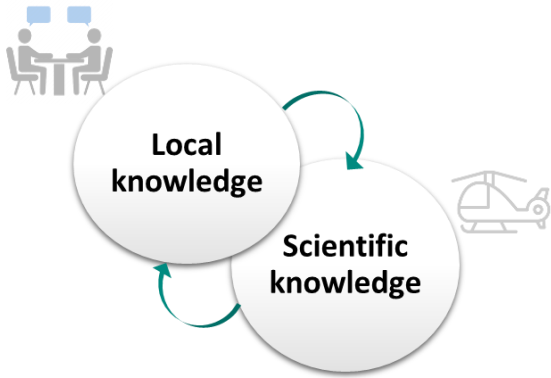




Proportion of prey species / diet items



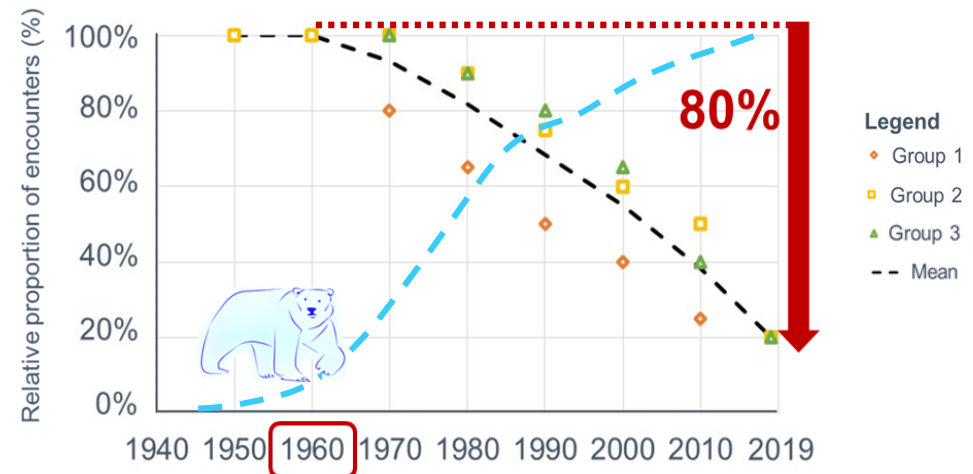
Inuit knowledge on polar bear health



PE on polar bear health



Availability / Abundance of main prey





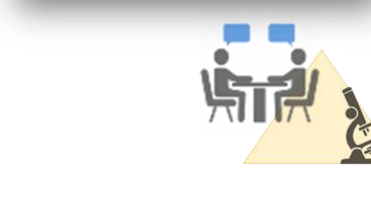
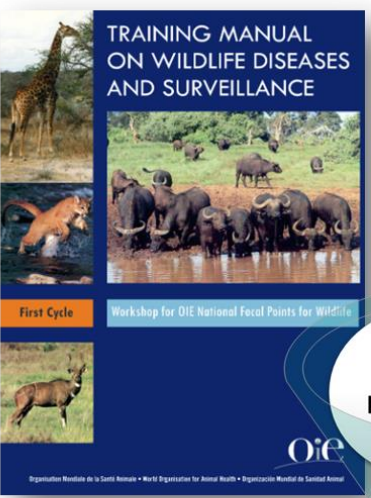
Trust
Ownership
Collaboration

Identification of problems
Empowerment
Co-management

priorities
and solutions

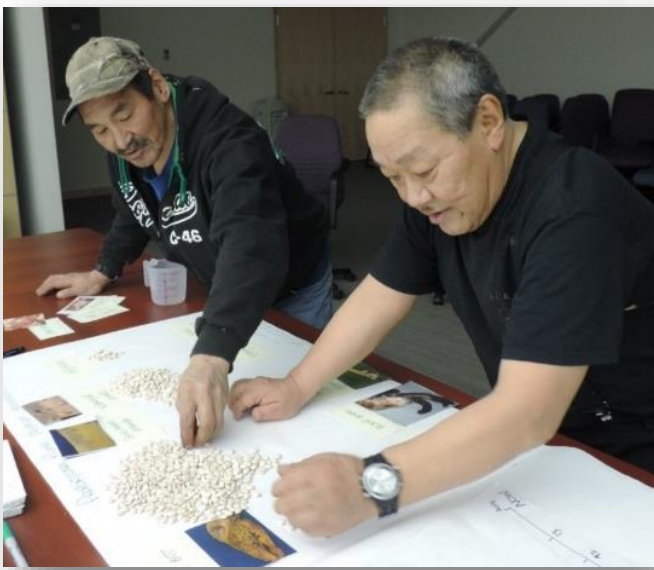


James Haniliak & Eva Kakolak
Co-presenters at ArcticNet 2016



Interventions
Wildlife management (animals, habitat)
Wildlife and biodiversity conservation
Safeguard human and animal health

Peterson and Ferro 2007; Artois et al. 2009; OIE 2010

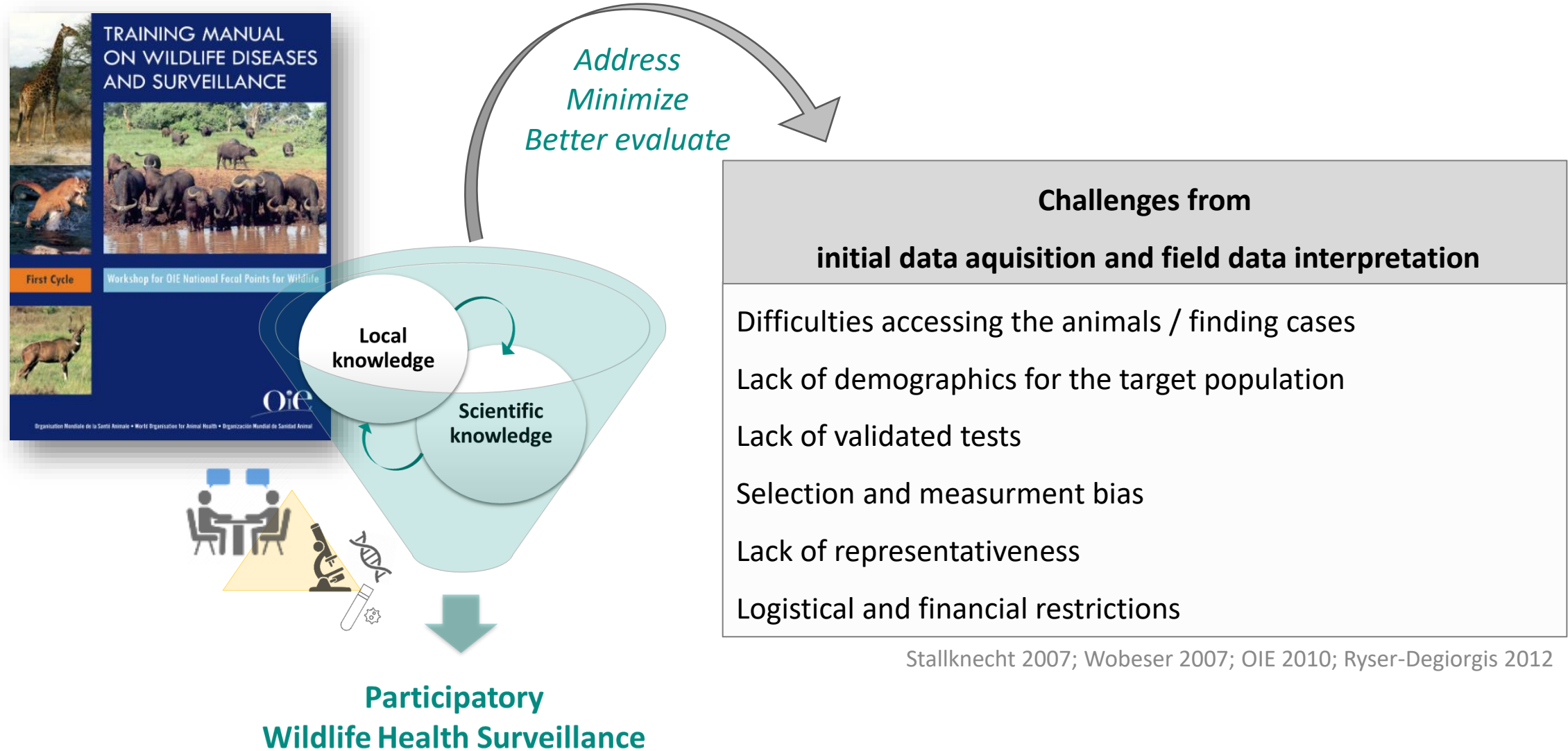


Trust
 Identification of problems
 priorities
 and solutions
 Empowerment
 Co-management

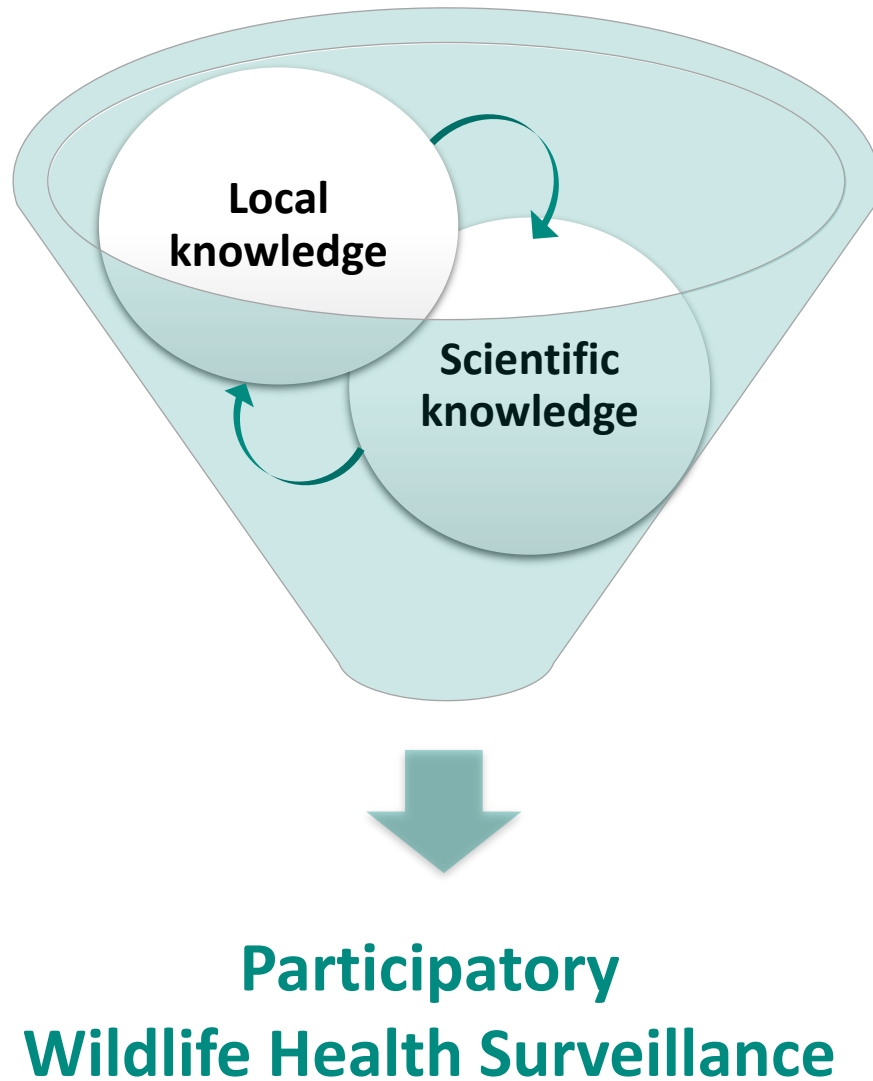


James Haniliak & Eva Kakolak
 Co-presenters at ArcticNet 2016

Ownership
 Collaboration



Stallknecht 2007; Wobeser 2007; OIE 2010; Ryser-Degiorgis 2012

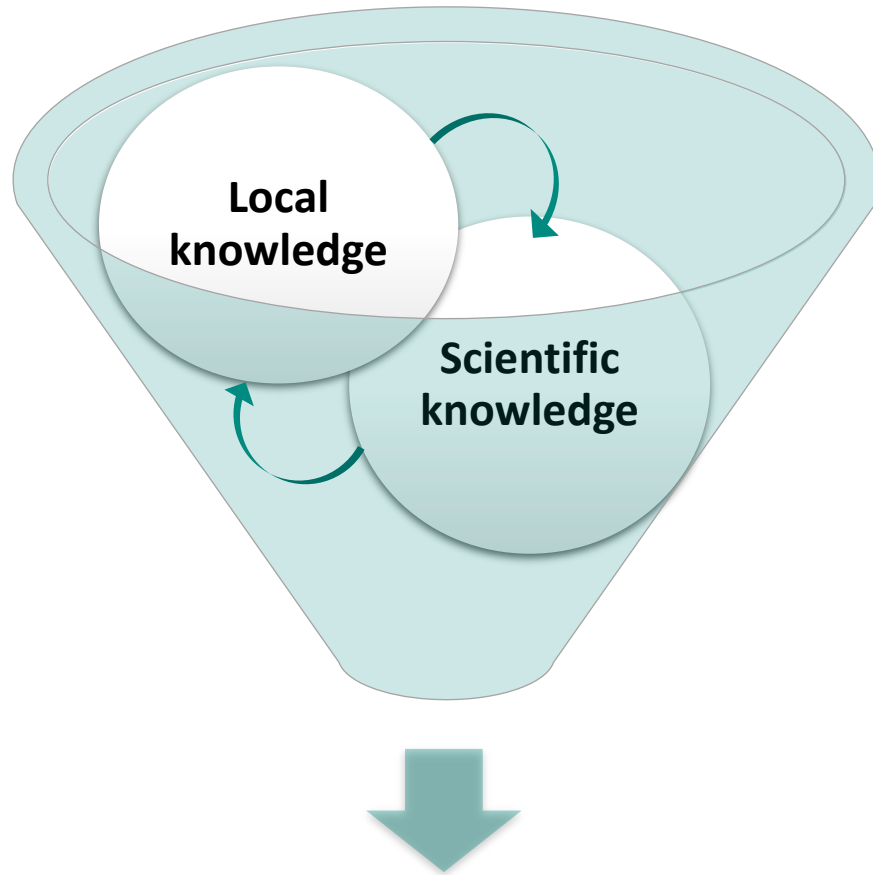


Strengths

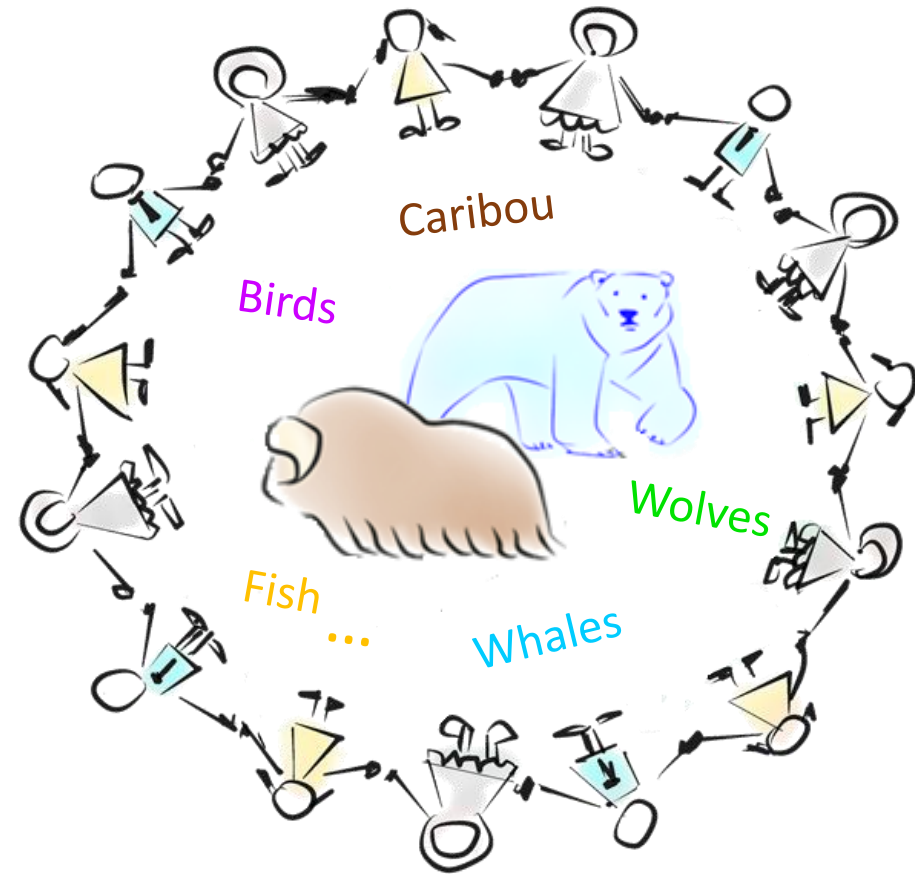
- ✓ ↑ Reliability and accuracy of outputs
- ✓ ↑ Timeliness and sensitivity for identification of changes/issues
- ✓ Tracking health indicators real time, including demographics
- ✓ Improve design of conventional methods for assessment
- ✓ Better contextualization of scientific data (cross-sectional vs longitudinal)
- ✓ Pro-active and collaborative management rather than reactive response

Challenges

- ✓ Considerable time commitments to build/maintain partnerships
- ✓ Willingness of local people to participate/share knowledge
- ✓ Project leader and team with transdisciplinary expertise (veterinary and social sciences)
- ✓ Cultural competence, teamwork and flexibility



**Participatory
Wildlife Health Surveillance**



Promising approach to improve the veterinary surveillance capacity for wildlife in the Arctic and beyond

Peer-reviewed papers:

- [Local knowledge to enhance wildlife population health surveillance: Conserving muskoxen and caribou in the Canadian Arctic. *Biological Conservation*, 2018](#)
- [Iqalututiaq voices: local perspectives about the importance of muskoxen, contemporary and traditional use and practices. *Arctic*, 2018](#)
- [“Two-eyed seeing” supports wildlife health. *Science*, 2019](#)
- [A Transdisciplinary Approach to *Brucella* in Muskoxen of the Western Canadian Arctic 1989–2016. *EcoHealth*, 2019](#)
- [Linking co-monitoring to co-management: bringing together local, traditional, and scientific knowledge in a wildlife status assessment framework. *Arctic Science*, 2020](#)

Thesis and reports:

- [Improved Wildlife Health and Disease Surveillance through the Combined Use of Local Knowledge and Scientific Knowledge. PhD thesis, 2018](#)
- [Nunavut Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit on the health of the Davis Strait polar bear population. Final project report, 2022](#)

Book Chapters:

- [Wildlife health and disease surveillance. In: *Veterinary Laboratory & Field Manual*, SC Cork, R Halliwell Eds., 2019](#)
- [Participatory epidemiology and surveillance for wildlife health. In: *Wildlife Population Health*, C. Stephen Ed., 2022](#)
- [Stakeholder Engagement for Collaborative Wildlife Health Management. In: *Wildlife Population Health*, 2022](#)
- [Wildlife Health Surveillance in the Arctic. In: *Arctic One Health*, M. Tryland Ed., 2022](#)

THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Contact information:

Matilde Tomaselli – Research Scientist, POLAR

Emails matilde.tomaselli@polar.gc.ca
matilde.tomaselli@ucalgary.ca

Website [Matilde Tomaselli \(weebly.com\)](http://MatildeTomaselli.weebly.com)

Research Gate [here](#)



Polar Knowledge
Canada

Savoir polaire
Canada



POLAR
POLAIRE