

Whaling Season:

A Year in the Life of an Arctic Whale Scientist [Scientists in the Field]

by Peter Lourie; photos by the author

Intermediate, Middle School Houghton 80 pp.

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Craig George is a whale biologist with the Department of Wildlife Management who has lived and worked in Barrow, Alaska, for over thirty years. He works in concert with the Inupiaq community documenting the bowhead whale population and Inupiaq hunts. These data propel scientific investigations but also keep the Inupiat in compliance with International Whaling Commission regulations. Lourie brings us to the busy April hunting season, where George and his team are “on call” as each whale is hauled in (none of the hunting is profiled, just the scientific data collection on the freshly killed whale, a process lucidly conveyed here). Information comes from whale samples and measurements but also from the knowledge of the community—both direct experience and the scientific knowledge embedded in traditional stories passed down through generations. Along with showing George in the lab and speaking to a middle-school science class, the book conveys his thoughts on living in such an extreme region and describes his path to becoming a biologist (son of noted author Jean Craighead George, George grew up in a nature-saturated family). **The numerous color photographs capture the piercing whites, grays, and blues of Alaska in the sunny spring as well as the bloody work of taking apart a whale.** Glossaries, lists of books and websites, and an index are appended. danielle j. ford