

# Marine Animals as Cultural & Dietary Resources

Duration: 1 – 1 ½ hours, one week to maintain diet log and research the topic.

Grade: 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>

## Goal:

Students will gain an understanding of the remoteness of coastal native communities. They will be introduced to the varied diets of these people and compare them to their own. Students will learn more about the Alaska Native culture, subsistence and how the use of marine animals is an important part of their culture.

**Objective:** Students will be able to...

- Identify the various coastal Native peoples in Alaska.
- Using charts and maps be able to locate where these Native communities are located.
- Describe hunting styles of various coastal Natives.
- Compare and contrast the diets of these Native communities with their own.
- Determine the distance between Native communities and larger population hubs.
- Discuss how rural village life varies from life in more populous locations.

## Standards:

Geography: A-1, A-2, B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, B-7, D-4, E-2, E-4

Mathematics: A-3, A-4, C-1, C-2, D-1, D-2, E-2, E-3

## Materials:

- Charts and maps of Alaskan coastline
- “What’s in Alaskan Foods” info sheets
- For a complete guide on Alaska Native foods:  
    “Nutrient Value of Alaska Native Foods” guide, available at low cost from:  
        Health Sciences Information Service  
        University of Alaska Anchorage  
        3211 providence Drive  
        Anchorage, AK 99508  
        907-786-1870

## Activities:

Have students maintain a diet log for one week. They should write down everything that they eat (all meals and snacks). Have students bring labels from different food types that they have eaten over the course of a week. Students should graph their diets based on food types etc. Using graphs and information from “What’s in Alaskan Foods” and “Nutrient Value of Alaska Native Foods”, compare and contrast your diets. Also compare and contrast life styles.

1. List differences in lifestyles between coastal Native communities in Alaska and more urbanized areas (i.e. ease of obtaining food, modern conveniences, etc.)
2. What is a major difference you noticed in the diets?

3. What percentage of fat and protein should be consumed daily, according to the USDA? What is the major contributor of fat and protein in the average students' diet? Where does the fat and protein come from in the diet of an Alaskan Native child who lives in a coastal native community?

Divide students into groups of 3 to 4 students. Using maps of Alaska, students should determine the distance between a coastal community and larger population areas. Have students answer the questions below and present this information as a group to the rest of the class.

1. Once you have identified the distance between these areas note whether or not they are accessible by road. If so, are the roads usable all year long?
2. If the coastal community is not accessible by road (or roads are closed for a part of the year), what other means of transportation may be used to get into and out of the village? What is the cost of the alternative transportation?
3. Identify marine animals that may be found near some of the coastal villages. How do these animals fit into the cultural lifestyles of these people? Describe hunting techniques used.