

## Traditions of Hunting Beluga & Bowhead Whales

It has been believed by the Native people for many years that animals, just like human beings, have spirits. The belief has always been there that you must treat the animals with respect. I think it has been traditional for every tribe that ever existed in the world to try not to make the animals that you hunt for food suffer. If you were going to kill an animal, make it clean and quick... you do not waste them. You do not play with them. There was a belief that if you played with them, you are insulting the animals, birds, and fish. And a lot of times they think the spirits of those animals, birds and fish will turn around and tell the other animals

"Don't go to that person. He hasn't any respect for us. And the person, the hunter will not be able to catch anything."

- Elder

## Origin of the Blanket Toss

The blanket toss originated with Inuit hunters because someone who was tossed into the air could spot caribou, whales or other animals in the distance. Elders also speak of a time when the blanket toss was part of the

ceremony to mark the close of a successful whaling season. Whaling captains were first to be tossed and while high in the air, they would throw gifts such as baleen and tobacco to the crowd.

The blanket toss (Nalukatuk) is arguably the most widely recognized event in the Northern Games. A large group of "pullers" gather around the edges of a blanket to stretch it out at waist height. After a participant climbs into the centre, the pullers rhythmically raise and lower the blanket.



