

On May 3, N735HB was flown to Anchorage for the annual conversion from wheel/skis to floats. OAS contracted the work out to Ernie's Aircraft Service at Lake Hood.

On June 1, and again on August 18, WB/P Finley flew N735HB into Anchorage for a 100-hour inspection. At the end of September, the aircraft was taken to Anchorage for the change-over from floats to wheel skis and the 50-hour oil change. Items noted and repaired during the 100 hour inspection included leaking brake cylinders, faulty trim tab, radio and intercom problems, vacuum system clatter, magnetic compass replacement, new battery, and improper tailwheel steering.

4. Equipment Utilization and Replacement

We received two new snowmobiles just prior to winter. Both were Arctic Cat Jags, for use at the Refuge field headquarters. After properly field testing and breaking them in, they were flown to the Refuge camp by Rust's Flying Service during building supply runs for the Environmental Education Camp. These snowmobiles will replace four unreliable machines enabling us to safely expand our biological programs into the winter months. Other items replaced/purchased include: two new chainsaws, an outboard jet unit for shallow water transportation, a 300 gallon aviation fuel tank for the field, a 125 gallon aluminum truck tank for fueling in McGrath, a foam unit and trailer for fire suppression in McGrath, and a 2' by 4' all terrain vehicle (ATV) trailer (to be used in the field to transport fuel drums and heavy freight). In addition, we recently purchased overpacks and other fuel spill materials for our fuel storage area at the Refuge camp.

5. Communications Systems

Regional Telecommunications Manager Tim Miller and a radio technician installed an entirely new repeater system for field communications and a new base station phone patch at the Refuge headquarters. The repeater worked flawlessly for the first couple of weeks but started to develop problems after that. This required a return trip for Tim and the technician, and a lot of discussion with OAS to get an okay on the helicopter and pilot being used. With some minor squelch adjustments, the repeater worked perfectly and continued to do so for the remainder of the year.

Thirteen of our 16 handheld radios were sent to the factory for correction of frequency drift, maintenance and phone patch installation. The phone patch allows the radio user to call anyone with a telephone from the field via the repeater and telephone patch at McGrath headquarters. Not only is this a convenience, it is also a great safety net during field operations.

6. Computer Systems

Great strides were made throughout the year in resolving our computer capability problem. Prior to this year, the station had