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## Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: December 29, 2012

### January Artifact of the Month: Nunivak Island Bird Arrows



SITKA – The January artifact of the month is a pair of wooden arrows from Nunivak Island. The arrows have a knobbed blunt point at the tips and the butt ends are notched and feathered. The lashing on the arrow is made from sinew. Red painted property rings decorate the shaft around the point and the knobs. Blunt arrows like these were used with a bow to hunt birds. Birds were also captured using pronged arrows, nets, bolas, and snares.

Every year large numbers of birds including gulls, pintails, auklets, murre, guillemots, ptarmigan, cranes, loons, eiders, cormorants, geese, puffins, and other species migrate to Nunivak Island to nest and breed. Birds play an important role in Nunivak Island culture. Birds and their eggs were an important food source and the skins were used to make warm and waterproof parkas and hats. Bird parts such as beaks, feathers, and feet were used as ornamentation and decoration on skin clothing. The bones were used to make needles and needle cases. Birds also play an important role in Nunivak Island folklore. Representations of birds are common on amulets, masks, bowls, utensils and other objects.

The arrows can be seen at the museum through January. Winter hours at the museum are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. with \$3 admission. Visitors 18 and younger, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and those with passes are admitted free of charge. For more information, contact the museum at 747-8981.



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Phone (907) 747-8981 Fax (907) 465-3004

[www.museums.state.ak.us](http://www.museums.state.ak.us)

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