

Customary Trade in Fish in the Seward Peninsula Area: FIS Project 04-151

This project documented subsistence barter and cash trade of subsistence foods in six Seward Peninsula Area communities: Brevig Mission, Elim, Nome, Saint Michael, Shaktoolik, and Stebbins. Federal and Alaska laws define customary trade as the limited, non-commercial exchange of fish and wildlife resources for cash. Although recognized in law, customary trade had not been allowed by regulations until recently. At the time of this study, cash trade was allowed in federally managed fisheries in the Seward Peninsula Area, but prohibited in state-managed fisheries.

In the six study communities, 88 households were identified as participating in either trade for cash or barter, about 23% of the households in the five smaller communities. Seventy three households were surveyed. Nineteen individuals were interviewed about trade and barter, in particular, about historical exchange patterns. Thirty three of the 73 surveyed households (45%) reported trading for cash during the past year, while 38 households (52%) reported bartering subsistence foods during the same time. On the surveys, 141 reciprocal exchanges were reported: 75 trades for cash in which \$7,806 was paid for 2,561 edible pounds of subsistence foods, and 66 barterers in which respondents exchanged about 2,315 lb of subsistence food and other goods for about 3,854 lb of similar goods from their barter partners.

When trading subsistence foods for cash, small transactions were most commonly reported; 66% of the transactions involved \$100 or less, and the largest single transaction reported was \$400. Summing all reported cash trades for each household during the study year, 42% of the trading households reported annual trade totals of \$100 or less. Only 9% of households reported trade totals in excess of \$500 per year.

In March, 2007, the Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted a new regulation providing for customary trade in the Norton Sound-Port Clarence Area.

Key Words: customary trade, barter, fish, Norton Sound, Port Clarence, Chinook salmon *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*, sockeye salmon, *Oncorhynchus nerka*, coho salmon, *Oncorhynchus kisutch*, pink salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, chum salmon, *Oncorhynchus keta*, king crab, *Paralithodes camtschaticus*, herring, *Clupea pallasii*, Brevig Mission, Elim, Nome, Saint Michael, Shaktoolik, Stebbins

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