

EXPLORING APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES HARVEST ASSESSMENT IN NORTHWEST ALASKA

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ABSTRACT

This report presents a plan for a continuing harvest assessment program for subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering for 11 rural communities in Northwest Alaska. The program involves a cooperative group of state and federal agencies, tribes, communities, non-governmental organizations, and industries. The program provides a framework for subsistence harvest assessment through periodic household surveys, and seeks to integrate other subsistence-related studies whenever possible. The plan rests on 3 foundations: 1) recommendations from a series of planning efforts that began in 1995, 2) recommendations from 146 participants in 11 community meetings held in Northwest Alaska in 2006 and 2007, and 3) lessons learned during prior harvest assessment efforts in Alaska. The program was intended to be an evolution of, not a break from, previous harvest assessment efforts in Northwest Alaska. Agencies and organizations in Northwest Alaska have indicated they would support a coordinated approach to subsistence harvest assessment. By institutionalizing a continuing program, by improving the harvest survey instrument, by developing a multi-year schedule for sampling communities, and by distributing survey costs among several parties, the cooperators seek efficiencies that will make an annual harvest assessment program affordable and sustainable.

Key words: harvest assessment, subsistence fishing, chum salmon, *Oncorhynchus keta*, sheefish, *Stenodus leucichthys*, whitefish, *Coregonus* spp., *Prosopium* spp., Dolly Varden, *Salvelinus malma*, caribou, *Rangifer tarandus*, moose, *Alces alces*, bearded seal, *Erignathus barbatus*, beluga whale, *Delphinapterus leucas*, Kotzebue District, Ambler, Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk, Kotzebue, Noatak, Noorvik, Selawik, Shungnak, Cape Krusenstern National Monument, Kobuk Valley National Park, Kotzebue Sound, Noatak National Preserve, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge.

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