

Northwest Arctic Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

c/o Office of Subsistence
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In Reply Refer To:
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MAY 19 2025

Crystal Leonetti,
Director
Office of Subsistence Management
1011 E. Tudor Road, M/S 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Director Leonetti,

I write to you on behalf of the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) to provide a letter of support for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's (ADF&G) project to run a sonar to count spawning Sheefish upriver on the Kobuk. The project will be submitted for funding consideration to the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (Monitoring Program) under the 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity.

The Council held a public meeting on March 27 - 28, 2025, in Kotzebue to discuss and make recommendations on subsistence issues. At the meeting, the Council received an update from Brendan Scanlon, ADF&G Northwest and North Slope Area Management Biologist. Mr. Scanlon briefly summarized the ADF&G's intent to use sonar for three years to count spawning Sheefish in the Kobuk River. Mr. Scanlon intends to submit a new investigation plan for funding in the 2026 cycle and requested a letter of support for the project.

Following the presentation, the Council voted unanimously to support the project for the following reasons:

- The project supports the Priority Information Needs identified by this Council to inventory and establish baseline data of fish and major rivers tied to subsistence use in Northwest Alaska, and to document abundance and migration timing, especially of Dolly Varden, Arctic Char, Lake Trout, and whitefish species in northwest Arctic to address changing availability of subsistence fisheries resources.
- The ADF&G does not currently have a measure of harvest for Sheefish and its last stock assessment data dates to 2018.
- The project will help produce knowledge for subsistence users in our region, and the Council has expressed interest in sonar as a means to monitor fish populations.

- Accurate and timely data is essential for the management of this important subsistence resource.

Thank you for the opportunity for this Council to assist the Federal Subsistence Management Program, and we look forward to continuing discussions about this important project in the Northwest Arctic Region. If you have any questions or want to follow up, please contact me through our Subsistence Council Coordinator, Gisela Chapa, at (907) 310-6129 or gisela_chapa@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'TBaker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas Baker
Chair

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Office of Subsistence Management
Brendan Scanlon, Fisheries Biologist for the Northwest and North Slope Regions, Alaska
Department of Fish and Game
Northwest Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Members
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record