



Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge

Winter 2026 Update

Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory Council

Rats Eradication on Four Aleutian Islands – Environmental Impact Statement

The draft of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Rat Eradication on Four Aleutian Islands is completing its final stages of internal review and is currently planned to go out for public comment in late spring 2026. This EIS analyzes the impact of rat eradication on Great Sitkin, Kiska, Amchitka and Attu Islands. The public comment period will be open for 30 days, and there will also be a virtual meeting open to the public to learn more about this project and process at a date soon to be set. Visit <https://www.fws.gov/aleutianrateis> for project details and updated information about the public comment period for the EIS.



Figure 1: Slug-out participant who collected 839 slugs in 24 hours! photo credit-USFWS

King Cove Slug-Out July 11-12, 2025

We partnered with the Belkofski Tribe, the Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove, Aleut International Association, Alaska Conservation Foundation – Aleutian Bering Sea Initiative and members of the King Cove community to host a 24-hour derby-style invasive European black slug removal competition in King Cove, where in that period 24 participants collected nearly 4,000 slugs weighing over 50lbs! We hope to continue the success of that event again in 2026 at the request of many community members and event participants.

Aleutian Pribilof Guardians Workshop August 5-7, 2025

The Refuge and FWS Regional leadership helped organize and participated in the Aleutian Pribilof Guardians Workshop held in Unalaska on August 5-7, 2025 hosted by Alaska Conservation Foundation's Aleutian Bering Sea Initiative. One of the main purposes of the workshop was to foster co-stewardship opportunities in the region with Alaska Maritime NWR. Tribal leaders, local organizations, regional stakeholders and the



Figure 2: Group photo of Aleutian Pribilof Guardians Workshop participants - photo credit: ACF

FWS were in attendance. We plan to continue the work on fostering collaboration and co-stewardship opportunities across the region.

Staffing Changes

The *R/V Tiglax*'s long-time captain John Faris retired in December 2025 after 25 years of federal service. First Mate Dan Puterbaugh will be leading the team as the captain for the upcoming summer season.

Long-time Acting refuge Manager/Deputy Refuge Manager Jeff Williams will be retiring at the end of March 2026 after 40 years of federal service. Supervisory Wildlife Biologist Heather Renner will be Acting Refuge Manager in the interim.



Figure 3: Jeff Williams (left - retiring end of March) and Captain John Faris (right - retired end of December) photo credit: FWS



Figure 4: Camp Qungaayux FWS tent set-up; photo credit:FWS

Science and Culture Camps

The Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge proudly supports youth science and culture camps in the communities of Sand Point, St Paul Island and Unalaska. This year, the Refuge is providing financial support as well as Refuge staff to provide lessons about topics related to the region and refuge.

Seabird monitoring results from 2025

Attached is Alaska Maritime NWR's 2025 Seabird Report Card. This graphic gives you a quick snapshot of reproductive performance relative to the long-term average at each monitoring site. For 2025 a few datasets are not available; we had to pull the St. Lazaria camp early in the season due to a bear problem, and due to the government shutdown we were unable to retrieve the time lapse cameras at East Amatuli Island and Cape Lisburne.

Overall, 2025 was a good year for breeding success of seabirds across Alaska, with only a few exceptions (e.g., tufted puffins at Buldir failed to fledge any chicks at all). Of note, we are aware of at least three episodes of toxic algal blooms in late summer (Kachemak Bay, St. George Island, and Nikolski Island) which affected parts of the marine food web and may be a troubling sign for marine ecosystems during warm sea temperature episodes.



2025 Seabird Report Card



Region	Annual monitoring site	Red-faced cormorants	Glaucous-winged gulls	Common murre	Thick-billed murre	Horned puffins	Tufted puffins	Red-legged kittiwakes	Black-legged kittiwakes	Fork-tailed storm-petrels	Leach's storm-petrels	Parakeet auklets	Least auklets
Bering Sea	St. George	😊		😊	😞			😄	😊				😊
	St. Paul	😊		😄	😄			😄	😊				
Aleutian Islands	Buldir		😄	😊	😄	😊	🥚	😞	😊	😞	😊	😞	😊
	Aiktak		😄	🥚	😞	😊	😄			😄	😄		
Alaska Penin.	Chowiet	😊	😄	😄	😄	😊	😄		😊			😄	
Gulf of Alaska	East Amatuli		😄	😊			😊		😊	😞			
	St. Lazaria		😄								😄		



<<< Primarily fish eaters

Primarily zooplankton eaters >>>



Way above average!



Average



Below average



Complete failure

Eggs represent overall productivity relative to the long-term average derived from monitoring data (white eggs) or anecdotal observations (clear/color).