

BRISTOL BAY SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL Meeting Materials

*November 2-3, 2022
Dillingham*



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On the cover...

Sockeye spawning in Kijik Lake near
Katmai National Park



NPS photo by D. Young

BRISTOL BAY SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Curyung Tribal Council Office
Dillingham
November 2 – 3, 2022
Convening at 8:30 am daily

TELECONFERENCE: call the toll-free number: 1-866-801-9605, then when prompted enter the passcode: 29886091

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Public comments are welcome for each agenda item and for regional concerns not included on the agenda. The Council appreciates hearing your concerns and knowledge. Please fill out a comment form to be recognized by the Council chair. Time limits may be set to provide opportunity for all to testify and keep the meeting on schedule.

PLEASE NOTE: These are estimated times and the agenda is subject to change. Contact staff for the current schedule. Evening sessions are at the call of the chair.

AGENDA

*Asterisk identifies action item.

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14. Closing Comments

15. Adjourn (*Chair*)

To call into the meeting, dial the toll-free number: 1-866-801-9605, then when prompted enter the passcode: 29886091

Reasonable Accommodations

The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodation needs to Leigh Honig, 907-891-9053, leigh_honig@fws.gov, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on October 24, 2022.

DRAFT

REGION 4
Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Yr Apptd Term Expires	Member Name & Address	Represents
1	2022	VACANT	
2	2022	VACANT	
3	2003 2022	Nanci A. Morris Lyon Chair King Salmon	Comm/Sport
4	2023	VACANT	
5	2017 2023	William W. Trefon, Jr. Nondalton	Subsistence
6	2023	VACANT	
7	2003 2023	Dan O. Dunaway Vice Chair Dillingham	Comm/Sport
8	2012 2024	Lary J. Hill Iliamna	Subsistence
9	2021 2024	Norman N. Anderson Dillingham	Subsistence
10	2009 2024	Richard J. Wilson Secretary Naknek	Subsistence

BRISTOL BAY SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Via teleconference

February 8, 2022

Invocation

Madam Chair Nanci Morris Lyon gave an invocation.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Quorum Establishment

The meeting was called to order Tuesday, February 8, 2022, at 8:34 am. Council members Billy Trefon, Dan Dunaway, Norman Anderson, Richard Wilson, and Nanci Morris Lyon were present via teleconference. Lary Hill was not present at roll call but phoned in later. The Council has four vacant seats. A quorum was established with six of six seated Council members participating by phone.

Attendees:

Via teleconference

- Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA): Renee Roque, Cody Larson, Heidi Kritz, and Gayla Hoseth.
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA): Pat Petrivelli (Anchorage).
- Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): Susan Alexander and Danny Moss (Alaska Peninsula and Becharof National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)), Jill Klein and Jon Gerken (Anchorage), Kenton Moos and Andy Aderman (Togiak NWR).
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Bruce Seppi and Walker Gussie (Anchorage)
- National Park Service (NPS): Susann Fleek Green and Liza Rupp (Lake Clark National Park and Preserve), Victoria and Dillion Patterson (Anchorage), and Troy Hamon (Katmai National Park and Preserve).
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS): Greg Risdahl (Anchorage).
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G): Mark Burch (Palmer), Bronwyn Jones and Lisa Scarborough (Anchorage), Lee Bordon (Dillingham).
- Office of Subsistence Management (OSM): Robbin La Vine, Orville Lind, Katya Wessels, Jarred Stone, George Pappas, and Pippa Kenner (Anchorage).

Review and Adopt Agenda

Motion by Mr. Dunaway, seconded by Mr. Wilson, to adopt the agenda as read with the following changes:

- Add between agenda items 10 and 11. Old Business: Board of Game (BOG) proposal 23, allow the use of snowmachine to position wolf or wolverine for harvest in Unit 17 and Federal wildlife proposal WP22-40, use of snow machines for positioning wolves and wolverines for harvest.
- Bycatch update – if there is any.
- Add:
 - 11b. Update on Chignik Fisheries – USFWS
 - 11c. Chignik Association Report – Chignik InterTribal Coalition – George Anderson
 - 11e. Call for Non-rural Determination Proposals
 - 11 k. Anti-trapping bill for Wildlife Refuges (to end the use of body gripping traps in the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for other purposes).

The motion passed unanimously.

Election of Officers

Ms. Nanci Morris Lyon was elected the Council’s Chair.
Mr. Dan Dunaway was elected the Council’s Vice Chair.
Mr. Richard Wilson was elected the Council’s Secretary.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mr. Dunaway, seconded by Mr. Trefon, to approve the fall 2021 meeting minutes as presented with the following modification to address a spelling error in an attendee’s name.

The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member and Chair Reports

Richard Wilson of Naknek (representing subsistence interests) reported that winter had been chilly. He noted that a lot of ptarmigan were arriving in his area and the community has been observing higher ptarmigan numbers. The smelt run has been good in Naknek, especially since freeze-up with lots of variety in smelt sizes. Mr. Wilson attended the Naknek/Kvichak Advisory Committee (AC) meeting where one topic of interest was lack of Chinook Salmon in the region. The AC discussed forming a subcommittee to draft language to address the bycatch issues and the Council may receive a letter seeking support.

Dan Dunaway of Dillingham (representing commercial and sport fishing interests) reported that it had been a quite winter, with cold temperatures. There was disappointment when the winter moose hunt in Unit 17C did not open due to harvest rates from the fall season and the moose population could not sustain additional harvest. There are reports that some moose were harvested in the winter hunt in New Stuyahok. In Unit 17A, a fair number of moose were harvested during the winter season. The season was extended to allow for more opportunity to hunt due to strong blizzards in the area. ADF&G announced

they hired the Area and Assistant Biologist positions located in Dillingham after three years of having difficulty filling the positions. Last fall, Curyung lands near Dillingham were closed to non-BBNC members for hunting, including berry picking; the restriction was removed after moose hunting season. At the Central and Southwest BOG meeting an Intensive Management plan was passed for bear in parts of Unit 17 due to heavy bear predation of moose and caribou calves. Mr. Dunaway was interested in discussing the bill that seeks to ban the use of body gripping traps in National Wildlife Refuges with the Council. The Nushagak is forecasted to have a large salmon returns again with more fish returning to the Nushagak rather than the Wood River, which is a switch from previous trends. Mr. Dunaway is looking forward to Covid restrictions potentially ending so the agency can perform vital field work. Ptarmigan reports are on the rise and hopefully they are restored to full abundance.

Lary Hill of Iliamna (representing subsistence interests) reported there are a lot of rabbits (hares) and foxes. Some wolves were observed but did not stay in the area long. There may have been two moose harvested during the season. Travel conditions made hunting difficult. The weather has been cold.

William Trefon of Nondalton (representing subsistence interests) reported that only one moose was harvested during the season. The meat was distributed as much as possible to the community. They have been experiencing extremely cold weather and gasoline shortages. The rabbits (hares) population is exploding, more than he's seen before. Mr. Trefon would like to hear updates on the proposed season extension for moose and a Mulchatna caribou update. He would also like to extend invitations to the Chairs of the Advisory Committees to the Council's meetings.

Norm Anderson of Dillingham (representing subsistence interests) reported that last year he only harvested one Chinook Salmon and relates that to a bycatch issue, which he would like on the agenda. Mr. Anderson is from Naknek and now lives in Dillingham. He expressed his appreciation and welcomed elders, Tribal members, and guests. He also introduced his parents. Mr. Anderson has been advocating for subsistence rights for over 40 years. He has attended summits, conferences, meetings, skill sessions, and was in the first meeting where the term subsistence was defined. Providing for subsistence uses especially on Federal lands has been a major issue for Mr. Anderson.

Nanci Morris Lyon of King Salmon (representing commercial and sport fishing interests) reported that many folks in King Salmon were able to harvest caribou in the fall for the first time in many years and the community was very grateful to have caribou meat again. She hopes they will be able to continue to use the resource into the future. Ms. Morris Lyon attended the Statewide Council and notified this Council they will be receiving a letter with more information soon. She will do her best to attend future meetings or will ensure someone from this Council will attend.

Old Business

BOG Proposals 23 and 271, to Allow the Use of Snowmachines to Position Wolf or Wolverine for Harvest in Unit 17 and Federal Wildlife Proposal WP22-40

The Council discussed concerns over language in wildlife proposal WP22-40, specifically the distance and speed restrictions. The restrictions will reduce the opportunity to harvest wolves, which will have an impact on the subsistence economy and activities. The BOG is addressing similar proposals during the 2021-2022 meeting cycle. At the Statewide BOG meeting, they will be addressing proposal 271, and the Council may want to wait and see what the BOG decides. The Council discussed if they should request the Board to defer taking action on WP22-40 until user groups can be informed and ramifications can be explored further.

Motion by Mr. Dunaway, seconded by Mr. Wilson, to request the minutes and the discussion the Council had on this topic be summarized and provided to Ms. Morris Lyon to take the Federal Subsistence Board and request that the Board defer action.

The motion passed by unanimous consent.

New Business

Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Update

Mr. Jarred Stone presented the Council with the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) update. The 2022 FRMP funding cycle is in the final stages. The Board met in early February and made recommendations about the 2022 FRMP. The Assistant Regional Director of the OSM will approve the funding plan once the budget has been finalized and applicants will be notified of the status of their submission. This summer, the Council will have the opportunity to develop Priority Information Needs (PINs) for the 2024 FRMP. The Council will have an opportunity to review and finalize the PINs at their fall 2022 meeting. Mr. Stone requested volunteers from the Council to meet with the Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory Council this summer to identify knowledge gaps and information needs for the management of the subsistence fisheries for the Southwest region. Mr. Dan Dunaway volunteered to assist with the development of PINs. Mr. Stone will notify the Council of future meeting dates so others may have an opportunity to participate if they are able.

Chignik Fisheries Update

Mr. John Gerken and Mr. Reed Johnson presented the Council with a preseason outlook for the Chignik fisheries. The 2022 forecast for the Chignik River watershed is about 1.3 million total Sockeye Salmon combined for both the early and late run; 639,000 Sockeye Salmon are expected to return for the early run and 633,000 for the late run. The early run last year did not meet the escapement goal of 244,000. In-season management will be based on the escapement of the past weir counts. The Chignik River weir is expected to be installed the last week of May, first week of June. The preseason meeting will occur the week of May 30th. In 2018, the USFWS implemented a special action to restrict harvest of early run Sockeye Salmon to Federally qualified subsistence users only. Since 2017, there have been harvest restrictions on Chinook Salmon in Federal waters, which encompasses all freshwater within the Chignik area.

Chignik Association Report

Mr. George Anderson informed the Council the InterTribal Coalition is requesting a formal stock assessment and research recovery plans to support the conservation of a healthy Sockeye and Chinook Salmon population and the continuation of subsistence harvest opportunities. The Coalition participated in the Department of the Interior's (DOI) listening session, which was a government-to-government consultation opportunity for the Tribes. Connectivity issues, such as lack of land lines and unreliable internet, in addition to Covid restrictions have made participation challenging and has also negatively impacted the community's ability to voice their opinions. Sockeye Salmon have been reported in Chignik Lake and Coho Salmon were present at Hatchery Beach, which is known as a Sockeye Salmon harvesting area. The in-river goal of 20,000 Sockeye Salmon was met in August and September. Mr. Anderson reported that due to diminishing salmon returns and limited harvest or no harvest opportunities for Sockeye and Chinook Salmon the barter system have started to erode, and it is impacting food security and the subsistence economy.

Call for Federal Fish and Shellfish Proposals

Mr. Jarred Stone informed the Council that the Board will be accepting proposals to change Federal regulations for the subsistence harvest of fish and shellfish on Federal public lands and waters for the 2023-2025 regulatory years for a period of at least 30 days upon the publication of the proposed rule in the Federal Register. The Board will consider proposals to change Federal subsistence fish and shellfish seasons, harvest limits, methods, and means related to taking of fish for subsistence uses, as well as customary and traditional use determinations. The Council did not develop any fish or shellfish proposals at the meeting.

Call for Non-rural Determination Proposals

Ms. Pippa Kenner informed the Council that the Board will be accepting proposals to formally change in Federal regulations a community's status from nonrural to rural or from rural to nonrural. Any valid nonrural determination proposal submitted this year will be acted on by the Board in 2025. Upon the publication of the proposed rule in the Federal Register, the public comment and proposal submission period will be open for least 30 days. The call for nonrural determination proposals occurs every four years concurrent with every other fisheries regulatory cycle. The next call for proposals for nonrural determinations will be in 2026. The Council did not develop any non-rural determination proposals at the meeting.

Review and Approve FY2021 Annual Report

The Council reviewed the FY-2021 Annual Report and requested that item No. 4, bear predation be edited to clearly articulate the Council's concern regarding that the dwindling salmon returns in some areas is

increasing the danger of higher predation on moose and caribou. In other areas of the region, there is an increase in salmon returns, which is fueling the growth of the brown bear population.

Motion by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Dunaway, to adopt the 2021 annual report.

The motion passed unanimously.

Federal Subsistence Board Annual Report Reply Process Review and Revision Discussion and Council Comments and Feedback

Ms. Robbin La Vine informed the Council that the Board is seeking the Council's input on how the Board responds to issues in annual reports. The Interagency Staff Committee (ISC) suggested that in addition to providing the Board with the Annual Report, letter writing could be a way to request the Board response to an important topic or concern. The Council agreed that writing letters would give better direction to the Board, a better way to direct the Council's immediate needs and allow for quicker communication between the Board and the Council.

Receiving Public Testimony Protocol – Guided Discussion

Ms. Katya Wessels guided the Council through the discussion on how the Council would like to receive public comments on proposals during the fall 2022 public meeting cycle where the Council will be discussing fisheries proposals and closure reviews. There was consensus among the Council that receiving written or oral public comments is essential and comments should be accepted throughout the duration of the meeting. The Council would like to receive public comments in their entirety from the Coordinator, not a summary. If it is a lengthy comment or a topic that might elicit a large volume of comments, then a summary from the Coordinator would be sufficient.

Briefing and Council Comments on Proposed Actions to Automate Federal Subsistence Permits

Ms. Katya Wessels informed the Council that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is exploring ways to collect information from the public and the use of automated permits within our Program. The OSM was tasked with getting feedback from the public and Councils until November 15th. The OSM provided the Council with a set of questions to address potential issues identified by the OSM such as, internet infrastructure, conservation concerns, and ability to limit permits and/or address quotas. The Council's main concern was how one would verify Federal qualifications. The Council will review the set of questions and provide feedback at their fall meeting.

Briefing on the Secretarial Regulations Proposing the Inclusion of Identified Submerged Lands in the Tongass National Forest

Ms. Katya Wessels provided an information briefing on the proposed rule that would add to the list of submerged parcels in the Federal subsistence regulations that have been identified through agency review.

The purpose of this proposed rule is to complete the regulatory proceedings to address submerged public lands within the Tongass National Forest. The document is to be published in the Federal Register in February 2022 and will have a 60-day comment period. The Council asked for clarification on why these lands need to be included and how it will affect the Bristol Bay Region. Ms. Kenner and Mr. Risdahl explained these lands and waters were old logging transfer sites and current Federal regulations do not apply on these lands and waters and acknowledging the transfer puts them under Federal Subsistence Board jurisdiction for the purposes of managing fish and wildlife. This decision would not have any implication on the Bristol Bay Region.

Anti-trapping Bill for Wildlife Refuges (to End the Use of Body-Gripping Traps in the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for Other Purposes)

Ms. Susan Alexander provided information on the House of Representatives Bill 47-16. There had been a hearing within the National Resources Committee of the House of Representatives to prohibit the use of body gripping traps on National Wildlife Refuges by the public and USFWS. Body gripping traps have been defined as: “any device that is intended to kill or capture wildlife by physically restraining any part of the animals.” This would include prohibiting the use of field, leg hold traps, kill types of traps, and snares. There is an exception within the bill for Federal agencies to use body restraining traps for management activities to control invasive species or to protect threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Don Young was opposed to this bill due to the prohibition conflicting with ANILCA and requested an exemption for Alaska if the bill moves forward.

The Council discussed that trapping has had a strong traditional and cultural tie to the Alaskan way of life. Limiting subsistence activities would have a dire impact on the subsistence economy and food security. Many villages are surrounded by NWR land and have little alternate economy. The bill is in violation of ANILCA. Body-gripping traps were designed to be more humane and are an important tool for harvesting marten, muskrat, mink, bear, and otter. Trapping is also an important tool for managing populations e.g., reducing foxes could assist in lowering the spread of rabies, reducing beaver populations to prevent land from turning into wetlands, and the management of invasive species.

A motion was made by Mr. Dunaway, seconded by Mr. Wilson, to have the Council write a letter to the Board with the request to forward to the Secretary of the Interior, Alaska Congressional Delegation, the Alaska Governor and legislature, expressing their concern and objection to Bill 47-16.

The motion carried by unanimous consent.

Agency Reports:

- Bristol Bay Native Association update presented by Gayla Hoseth.
- Alaska Peninsula and Becharof National Wildlife Refuges update presented by Susan Alexander, Alaska Peninsula and Becharof NWR
- Togiak National Wildlife Refuge update presented by Andy Aderman, Togiak NWR

- Lake Clark National Park and Preserve update presented by Susanne Fleek-Green, NPS
- Katmai National Park and Preserve update presented by Troy Hamon, NPS
- Bureau of Land Management update presented by Tom Sparks, BLM
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game update presented by Mark Burch, Rick Merizon, and Dave Crowley, ADF&G, Wildlife Conservation
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game updated presented by Bronwyn Jones and Lisa Scarbrough, ADF&G, Subsistence
- Office of Subsistence Management update presented by Katya Wessels, OSM

Future Meeting Dates:

Fall meeting will be held November 2-3, 2022, in Dillingham.

Winter meeting will be held March 14-15, 2023, in Naknek.

Leigh Honig on behalf of Robbin La Vine, Designated Federal Officer
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Nanci Morris Lyon, Chair
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its fall 2022 meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at that meeting.

A more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcript, and meeting handouts are available upon request. Call Leigh Honig at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-891-9053, email leigh_honig@fws.gov.



Federal Subsistence Board

1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503 - 6199



FISH and WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU of LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BUREAU of INDIAN AFFAIRS

FOREST SERVICE

In Reply Refer To
OSM 22094.LH

OCT 12 2022

Nanci Morris Lyon, Chair
Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council
c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 E. Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

Dear Chair Morris Lyon,

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) met on April 12-15, 2022, via teleconference to consider proposed changes to Federal subsistence management regulations for the harvest of wildlife on Federal Public Lands in Alaska and wildlife closure reviews. This letter is to provide a report on the actions taken by the Board on proposals and closure reviews affecting Federally qualified subsistence users.

Pursuant to section 805(c) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), Federal regulations (50 CFR 100.10 (e)) provides that the Board will defer to the recommendations of a Subsistence Regional Advisory Council regarding take unless, (1) the recommendation is not supported by substantial evidence, (2) the recommendation violates recognized principles of fish and wildlife management, or (3) adopting the recommendation would be detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs. When a Council's recommendation is not adopted, the Board is required by Secretarial regulations to set forth the factual basis and reasons for the decision.

The Board acted on 59 proposals and 16 closure reviews for the 2022-24 wildlife regulatory cycle. The Board agreed with the recommendations of the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, in whole or with modifications, on 50 of 59 proposals. The Board deferred four proposals: WP22-07, WP22-08, WP22-10, and WP22-40 until the winter 2023 Board meeting. The Board also acted on deferred fisheries proposal FP21-10, adopting it with the Office of Subsistence Management modification. Furthermore, the Board accepted the recommendations of the Regional Advisory Councils on 15 of 16 wildlife closure reviews, voting to maintain status quo on 14 of them.

Details of these actions and the Board's deliberations are contained in the meeting transcriptions. Copies of the transcripts may be obtained by calling the toll-free number 1-800-478-1456, and are available online at the Federal Subsistence Management Program website, <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/library/transcripts/federal-subsistence-board>.

The Board uses a consensus agenda on those proposals and closure reviews where there is agreement among the affected Regional Advisory Council(s), a majority of the Interagency Staff Committee, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game concerning a proposed regulatory action. These proposals and closure reviews were deemed non-controversial and did not require a separate discussion beyond that which was offered in the analysis. The consensus agenda contained one proposal and one closure review affecting the Bristol Bay Region. The Board adopted the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) recommendations as follows: the Board *adopted with modification* **WP22-37**, which recognizes the cultural and traditional uses of ptarmigan in Unit 9D by all residents of Unit 9D. The Board voted to *maintain status quo* on **WCR22-07**, which reviewed the closure of the Nushagak caribou herd to non-Federally qualified users unless the population exceeds 900 animals.

The remaining five proposals and one closure review affecting the Bristol Bay Region appeared on the non-consensus agenda. For four of the proposals and one of the closure reviews, the Board took action consistent with the Council's recommendations. The Board *adopted* statewide proposal **WP22-01**, which clarified who is and who is not a participant in a community harvest system and how that affects community and individual harvest limits; **WP22-41**, which delegated authority to the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager to open and close seasons, announce harvest limits, and set sex restrictions across the range of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd via delegation of authority letter. The Board *adopted with modification* **WP22-39**, which established a specific harvest regulation for the Alaska hare, including changing the season closing date to March 31st and modifying the definition of hare in Federal regulation. The Board voted to *defer* to the January 2023 Board meeting **WP22-40**, which proposed allowing the use of snow machines to position wolves and wolverines in Units 9 and 17. The Board also voted to *maintain status quo* on **WCR22-05**, which reviewed the closure to moose hunting by non-Federally qualified users in Unit 9C, Naknek River during the December season.

The Board's actions differed from the Council's recommendations for one proposal on the non-consensus agenda: **WP22-02**. The Board's actions on this proposal are explained in detail in the enclosed report.


The Board appreciates your Council's active involvement in and diligence with the regulatory process. The ten Regional Advisory Councils continue to be the foundation of the Federal Subsistence Management Program, and the stewardship shown by the Regional Advisory Council chairs and their representatives at the Board meeting is noteworthy.

If you have any questions regarding the summary of the Board's actions, please contact Leigh Honig, Council Coordinator, at 907-891-9053 or leigh_honig@fws.gov

Chairperson Morris Lyon

3

Sincerely,


Anthony Christianson, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board

Enclosure

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council members
Office of Subsistence Management
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD 805(c) REPORT

April 12-15, 2022

via teleconference

Section 805(c) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act provides that the “Secretary . . . shall consider the report and recommendations of the regional advisory councils concerning the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within their respective regions for subsistence uses.” The Secretary has delegated authority to issue regulations for the take of fish and wildlife to the Federal Subsistence Board. Pursuant to this language in Section 805(c), the Board generally defers to the Council’s recommendations. However, Section 805(c) also provides that the Board “may choose not to follow any recommendations which [it] determines is not supported by substantial evidence, violates recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation, or would be detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs.” The purpose of this report is to detail how the Board’s action differed from the Council’s recommendations based on these criteria.

BRISTOL BAY AREA WILDLIFE PROPOSALS

Statewide Proposals

Wildlife Proposal WP22-02

DESCRIPTION: WP22-02 requested to remove language from designated hunting regulations prohibiting the use of a designated hunter permit by a member of community operating under a community harvest system.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Take no action**

Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support**

Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support**

Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support** with the Eastern Interior Council’s modification

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support**

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support**

Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Defer** to regions with community harvest systems

Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support**

Eastern Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support with modification** to clarify participants in a community harvest system cannot designate another Federally qualified subsistence user to take wildlife on their behalf.

North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support**

BOARD ACTION: **Adopt**

JUSTIFICATION: This Board action will allow those living in communities with a community harvest system to designate someone to harvest on their behalf to meet their individual harvest limit or to count toward the community harvest limit depending on whether they choose to participate in the community harvest system. It will also help provide more harvest options and opportunities for Federally qualified subsistence users.



Federal Subsistence Board

1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503 - 6199



FISH and WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU of LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BUREAU of INDIAN AFFAIRS

FOREST SERVICE

JUL 27 2022

In Reply Refer To
OSM 22077.KW

Nancy Morris Lyon, Chair
Bristol Bay Subsistence
Regional Advisory Council
c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1101 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

Dear Chairwoman Lyon:

This letter responds to the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's (Council) Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report. The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture have delegated to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) the responsibility to respond to these reports. The Board appreciates your effort in developing the Annual Report. Annual Reports allow the Board to become aware of issues outside of the regulatory process that affect subsistence users in your region. We value this opportunity to review the issues concerning your region.

1. Need for Information and Representation from Federal Agencies at the Council Meetings

Title VIII of ANILCA established the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils to advise the Federal Subsistence Board and to provide a public forum for the expression of matters related to subsistence. To have a substantive and well-informed discussion on the subsistence matters and formulate solid recommendations, the Council needs to have access not just to the traditional ecological knowledge and local expertise of area residents, but also to the information on scientific research and surveys conducted by the Federal and State agencies, especially by the local offices and staff of these agencies. The Council is fully aware that some agencies might experience budget and other challenges to keep all critical positions filled and on-going research conducted. However, the Council requests that the Board ensures the full participation of Bristol Bay Region Federal agency staff in the Council's meetings. In particular, the Council would like to see important positions filled at the Federal agencies based out of King Salmon. The participation of these staff is critical in providing representation, expertise, and up to date information for the region.

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Response:

The Board understands the importance of Federal agencies filling vacant positions in the local offices, of staff actively participating in Council meetings and discussions, and of staff providing the Council information on scientific research and surveys conducted by the Federal and State agencies and answering the Council's questions. The Board enquired with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Park Service (NPS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and received the following responses.

USFWS:

The mammal/big game biologist position at the Alaska Peninsula and Becharof National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) is in the process of being filled. The Refuge is considering options to fill its vacant avian biologist position. The USFWS and NWRs appreciates the Council being aware that agencies experience budget and other challenges in keeping positions filled and research on-going.

The USFWS agrees with the Council's concerns over continuity and relationships and commends the Refuge Manager, Susan Alexander, at Alaska Peninsula and Becharof National Wildlife Refuges on her consistent participation in Council meetings over the past nine years. Both Ms. Alexander and Bill Smith, the Supervisory Biologist, who also consistently attends the meetings, look forward to introducing the new Mammal Biologist once hired at the upcoming Fall 2022 Council meeting.

NPS:

The vast majority of NPS staff who support the management of Katmai National Park and Preserve, Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve, and the Alagnak Wild River (collectively called Katmai) are stationed in King Salmon, Alaska. Katmai also employs a limited number of staff, currently two, who are stationed in Anchorage, Alaska. In addition to dedicated park staff, Katmai is supported by subject matter expert (SME) staff who work for the NPS Alaska Regional Office, also in Anchorage, Alaska. Should an NPS SME stationed in Anchorage have specific knowledge related to a topic of interest to the Council, Katmai has historically invited them attend Council meetings directly. Examples of SME participation include staff from the NPS Inventory and Monitoring program, who presented on a project monitoring mercury levels found in piscivorous freshwater fish such as lake trout, or staff from the NPS regional subsistence program who inform the Council about ongoing topics involving the Board.

2. Chinook Salmon Decline

Chinook (King) Salmon, an integral part of Alaskan ecosystems and rural Alaskan subsistence way of life, has experienced significant declines all across the State. Despite exceptionally good

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Sockeye Salmon returns recently in the Bristol Bay Region, the Council remains concerned about the poor numbers of returning King Salmon, especially in the western portion of Bristol Bay, and decreases in the size of returning fish and changing composition of age structure. A study in the Nature Communications journal indicates that the King Salmon body length decreased 8 percent on average over the last three decades¹. The King and Sockeye runs overlap, thus causing increase in an incidental King Salmon bycatch when Sockeye harvest increases. All of the above combined with effects of climate change have a profound effect on the salmon populations. The situation got worse in 2021 prompting Federal and State managers to close State King Salmon fishing completely (in parts of the state). If King Salmon runs continue to decline and crash, it will undoubtedly have devastating and perhaps deadly effects on the whole fabric of Alaska Native and rural Alaskan ways of life. The Council would like to request that the members of the Board advocate on behalf of Bristol Bay subsistence communities for more comprehensive research of the issue and to come up with some long term solutions at a higher management level before it is too late. The Council also would like to invite representatives of the At Sea Processors Association, the Groundfish Forum, and the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council to at least one 2022 Council meeting for an in-depth discussion on what is being done and what can be done to remedy the situation.

Response:

The Board acknowledges the need for more comprehensive research on the Chinook Salmon declines in western regions of Alaska. Size-at-age declines in Chinook Salmon are likely one leading contributor to the poor returns in recent history due to lower fecundity and ultimately reduced production potential of mature adult salmon. Declines in size are thought to be driven by environmental changes, as well as increased competition at sea with highly abundant hatchery salmon. Body size declines could thus be attributed to the reductions in the availability or quality of the food resources (Bigler 1996). Climate change could also have impacts to ectotherm body size by increasing the metabolic and developmental rates (Gardner 2011).

Recent attempts at a multi-national level approach to understanding these changes are underway to assess increasing extreme climate variability and its effects on salmon survival. More than 60 researchers from the USA, Canada, Japan, Russia, and South Korea plan to spend the season conducting the largest ever ecosystem survey of salmon across the North Pacific. The results of this collaborative work will hopefully shed light on possible reasons for the declines in population and size-at-age in recent history. Additionally, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has endorsed a bill (H.R. 6651) that would create a special task force to investigate the sharp decline in salmon populations in parts of Alaska. As much as 90 million dollars may become available enabling NOAA and the USFWS to work collaboratively to address these issues by identifying the nation's "core centers of salmon abundance" and do more to restore and protect their habitats. This bill would establish a task force of 13 to 19 members to study Pacific salmon trends and to develop a strategy to better manage the species.

¹ Oke, K.B., Cunningham, C.J., Westley, P.A.H. et al. Recent declines in salmon body size impact ecosystems and fisheries. Nat Commun 11, 4155 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-17726-z>

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The Board encourages additional stakeholders such as the At Sea Processors Association, Groundfish Forum, and North Pacific Fishery Management Council to come together at a 2022 Council meeting to discuss and share the research currently underway, what research is still needed to better understand these issues, and how to work collaboratively to sustain future runs of adult salmon.

References cited:

Bigler, B. S., Welch, D. W. & Helle, J. H. A review of size trends among North Pacific salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.). *Can. J. Fish. Aquat. Sci.* 53, 455–465 (1996).

Gardner, J. L., Peters, A., Kearney, M. R., Joseph, L. & Heinsohn, R. Declining body size: a third universal response to warming? *Trends Ecol. Evol.* 26, 285–291 (2011).

3. Chignik Area Fishery

The Chignik Area Fishery has been an ongoing concern of the Council and was brought to the Board's attention in the Councils FY-2019 and FY-2020 annual reports. It is the Council's understanding that "in 2021, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Fisheries and Ecological Services, and the Chignik Intertribal Coalition applied for Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program funds to conduct harvest studies in the local area. Proposals for the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program are under review now and funding decisions are expected in early 2022."² As the Council pointed out in the topic 2 of this report, with the Chinook Salmon fishery completely closed and with Sockeye Salmon fisheries restricted to Federally qualified subsistence users only in 2021, the situation has become even more difficult for Chignik Area residents. The Council remains concerned that without healthy salmon returns the communities of the Chignik area will not be able to survive. The Council advocates for Federal funding of research on declining King Salmon and requests that the Chignik Area Fishery issue remain at the forefront of the Board's attention.

Response:

Escapement goals for the Chignik River are based on counts from the Chignik River weir. The USFWS has not conducted any assessment or monitoring projects in the region prior to the cooperative Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) proposal mentioned in the Council request above that started in 2022. The 2022 Sockeye Salmon run size forecasted for the Chignik River is 1.3 million fish with a harvest estimate of approximately 562,000 Sockeye Salmon. The early run escapement estimate is 400,000 fish, and late run escapement estimate is 310,000 fish. Both runs are predicted to meet escapement goals. This forecast is more optimistic than the preseason forecast for 2021. The current biological escapement goals (BEG) and sustainable escapement goals (SEG) for the Chignik River watershed salmon are below.

Early-run Sockeye Salmon/ Black Lake BEG = 350,000 – 450,000

² The Federal Subsistence Board FY2020 Annual Report Reply, page 3.

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Late-run Sockeye Salmon/ In-river Goal	SEG = 200,000 – 400,000 10,000 in August and 10,000 in September in addition to minimum escapement objectives
Chinook Salmon	BEG = 1,300 – 2,700
Pink Salmon – Even year	SEG = 170,000 – 280,000
Chum Salmon	SEG = 45,000 – 110,000

Chignik River escapement goals for the early-run Sockeye Salmon were not met in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 fishing seasons. The late-run Sockeye Salmon has historically met escapement goals. Chinook Salmon escapement goals were not met in the 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2021 fishing seasons.

In response to the low returns, Federal subsistence closures on Federal waters in the Chignik watershed have occurred since 2013. Chinook Salmon harvest was closed to all users in 2013, 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2021. Early run Sockeye Salmon was closed to all users (except for individuals with a community harvest permit) in 2018 and was restricted to Federally qualified subsistence users only in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

The FRMP proposal submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), USFWS, and Chignik Intertribal Coalition had three objectives:

1. Collect in-season Federal subsistence harvest data from Chignik Lake resident from mid-June - November using a Chignik Lake local hire.

This objective is specific to understanding how many fish are harvested above the weir after they have been enumerated for escapement.

2. Enumerate all Chinook Salmon that pass through the Chignik River weir during the central 80% of the Chinook Salmon run using video cameras and FishTick software to count individual fish. These counts will be compared to the traditional method of enumerating salmon at the Chignik weir (10-minute expanded counts) to test accuracy.

This objective is specific to increasing the accuracy of the Chinook Salmon count.

3. Extend the operation of the Chignik River weir counting Chinook, Sockeye, and Coho salmon from August 1 to the latest date possible in order to obtain the most accurate estimate of escapement, collect additional ASL samples, and provide the maximum number of observations for statistical comparison. Exact removal date will be determined by tidal height.

This objective is specific to maintaining weir operations, which is the primary assessment project, used in management.

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The Board shares the Council's concern that low salmon returns to the Chignik River will affect subsistence fishing opportunity for Federally Qualified users fishing on Federal waters and will continue to collaborate with local tribes, ADF&G, State Advisory Committees, the Alaska Board of Fisheries, the Council, and other stakeholders to address the issue.

4. Bear Predation

The Council would like to bring to the Board's attention the recent issue of a growing bear population. Bears have become an increasing concern for subsistence users, especially around the Nushagak area. Several Council members reported seeing high numbers of bears in general, and sows with cubs in particular (in one case a sow had four cubs) in many different areas across the region. Bear numbers are higher than they have ever seen before. According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game study from summer 2021, only 5 of 65 collared moose calves survived by mid-July, which may indicate increased predation. In addition, the Council has noted uneven salmon returns across the region. The Council is concerned that dwindling salmon returns in some areas will increase bear predation on moose and caribou. Likewise, where salmon returns are high, the Council is concerned those high returns will fuel the growth of the local brown bear populations. There is a potential need for introducing regulatory change requests as it appears that current State regulations are not able to resolve the situation; however, the Council members are hoping to discuss this in more detail with the Fish and Game Advisory Committees.

Response:

The Board acknowledges that brown bear populations are a growing issue and the importance of their effects on both humans and other species. The Board also acknowledges the concerns regarding the dwindling salmon returns and the effects this has on both bears and humans.

While the Board does not enact predator control under Federal regulations, the Council could submit proposals to extend Federal seasons or increase harvest limits of bears during the next call for Wildlife Proposals in spring 2023. The Council could also submit proposals to the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) to introduce regulatory change regarding bears under State regulations. The Board encourages the Council to work with their Council Coordinator on the development and submission of any State or Federal regulatory proposals.

The Board also supports discussion between the Council and the State Advisory Committees.

5. Shore Bird Die Off

The Council is concerned about continuing sea bird die off. Sea birds are one of the important subsistence resources in the Bristol Bay Region. In 2019, 9,200 dead birds (mostly short-tailed shearwaters) were found along the shores of Bristol Bay; in most cases birds appeared starved to death. The sea bird mortalities in the region continued in 2021. The Council members

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observed that a majority of the deaths happen in the fall towards the end of the salmon season. The Council requests to receive the most recent research information and reports on these die off events and what if anything can be done to address it.

Response:

The Board recognizes the Council's concerns about continuing sea bird mortalities and requested the most recent report from the USFWS. The 2021 Alaska Seabird Update is enclosed for the Council's information.

6. Consolidation of Teleconference and MS Teams Video Conferencing

Currently the Council meetings are conducted primarily via audio teleconference with an option to join the meeting for visual information via Microsoft Teams. It works for some Council members who have computers and a cell phone or landline phones right next to it, but this parallel set up creates some confusion at times. The Council is requesting that the Board direct OSM to research the possibility of consolidating both audio and video portions of the meeting into one platform, for example such as Microsoft Teams, and still be able have an official recording of the meeting by court reporter.

Response:

Thank you for bringing this request to the Board's attention. It is important to provide easy access to participation in the meetings to all Council members and public. It is possible for OSM to organize a meeting on Microsoft Teams or similar platform that incorporates the audio and video portions of the meeting into one and still be able to officially transcribe meetings. However, combining an in-person meeting with a video conference and court reporter recording in a hybrid meeting presents several challenges. First, hybrid meetings as described by the Council are only possible when meetings can be held in an exclusively virtual environment. Second, many remote meeting locations in Alaska will provide a host of technical challenges to hold hybrid meetings, including poor internet connectivity, low bandwidth, unreliable telephone lines, etc. The Board and OSM remain hopeful that in-person meetings will resume in the fall 2022 and we can return to the organization of meetings the way they were prior to the pandemic.

7. Thank you to OSM Staff and Need to Fill the Council Coordinator Position

The Council would like to express its gratitude to its former Council Coordinator, Donald Mike, who retired in the summer 2021. We thank the Office of Subsistence Management for providing such a fantastic coordinator, we cannot say enough good things about Mr. Mike's work on behalf of the Council. The Council also thanks Robbin La Vine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator, for stepping in and doing a great job facilitating the meeting, and Katya Wessels, Council Coordination Division Supervisor, for all of the assistance with organizing and running the meeting. The Council hopes that the Office of Subsistence Management will be able to hire a

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replacement Coordinator very soon and that the new Coordinator is familiar with the Bristol Bay Region and will be able to help the Council to move forward.

Response:

The Board appreciates the Council's recognition of your former Council Coordinator Donald Mike and his outstanding service, as well as the recognition of Robbin La Vine and Katya Wessels' excellent work. The Board is pleased with OSM's highly professional and dedicated employees who help the Board to fulfill the mandates of ANILCA and promote productive collaborations among rural subsistence and commercial/sport users.

The Board is also happy to report that OSM was able to hire five new Subsistence Council Coordinators to fill vacant positions. Leigh Honig, one of the newly hired Coordinators, was assigned to your Council. Ms. Honig came to OSM from ADF&G, where she had 10 years of experience working with the Division of Wildlife Conservation as a hunt administrator, supervising the Region IV Information Center, and assisting the Alaska Board of Game process. Through her career, Ms. Honig developed great working relationships with rural communities and is passionate about natural resource policy development and working with the stakeholder groups to develop policies and regulations. The Board is looking forward to a productive and positive relationship between the Council and your new Coordinator, Ms. Honig.

8. Need to Fill All Vacant Seats on the Council

This ten-member Council currently has four vacant seats, which does not provide for adequate representation of all parts of the region on the Council. The Council requests the Federal Subsistence Program support in filling the vacant seats and maintaining the Council's membership. The Council especially needs representation from the Togiak area and also from either Southern Bristol Bay and/or Chignik area.

Response:

The Board shares the Council's concerns regarding the vacancies on the Council and agrees that it will be difficult for just six members to represent the entire Bristol Bay Subsistence Region. A wide representation of subsistence and commercial/sport users across the region ensures the Board receives solid recommendations on regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters related to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife within the region.

However, the Board cannot make recommendations to the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture regarding the Council appointments without a sufficient number of applications from the region. This year is the third year in a row when the Bristol Bay Region doesn't have enough applications to fill all seats. In the 2020 appointment year, the Council had six seats open for the Secretarial appointments, but the Board received only three applications from the Bristol Bay Region. This situation occurred again in the 2021 appointment year with six vacant seats but only three applications. Five seats will be open on the Council for the Secretarial appointments

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in December of 2022; however, only three applications were received.

Every year OSM conducts extensive outreach soliciting applications in the Bristol Bay Region and throughout the State during the application period, which is open on average for five to six months. Extensive outreach is conducted through a variety of media outlets, including, but not limited to newspaper, radio, internet, Facebook, and public conferences. Applications are mailed and emailed to individuals, agencies, and organizations. Additionally, in the 2022 appointment year, the OSM staff made special announcements regarding the open application period during the fall 2021 and winter 2022 Council meetings and notified Council members at their winter 2022 meeting on the number of applications received for their region.

OSM will continue conducting comprehensive application outreach throughout the region and the targeted outreach through your newly hired Council Coordinator, Ms. Honig. She will be able to work directly with communities in the Togiak, Southern Bristol Bay, and/or Chignik areas to solicit applications from subsistence users.

9. ANILCA vs Agency Specific Regulations

The Council wants to follow up on the issue regarding how the Federal Subsistence Board makes its decisions on regulatory proposals when agency-specific regulations are in conflict with ANILCA. This issue was raised for the first time in the Council's FY-2019 Annual Report. For example, ANILCA § 811(b) permits the use of snowmobiles for subsistence purposes. Multiple existing Federal agency regulations are in conflict with ANILCA regarding subsistence hunting of caribou, wolves, and wolverine.

In its FY-2019 Annual Report reply the Federal Subsistence Board replied that it concluded "that it would ask the Secretary of the Interior to provide a policy on resolving issues when laws are in conflict." Furthermore, the Federal Subsistence Board said, "Currently, several Board members (BLM, FWS, and NPS) are raising this issue with the Secretary's representative. Your Council will be notified as soon as we know more." The Council inquires if the Federal Subsistence Board received an aforementioned policy from the Secretary of the Interior or if any other information was received from the Secretary's representative? The Council seeks an explanation and reasoning behind how the Board currently votes and how it makes the decision when existing Federal regulations conflict with ANILCA.

Response:

Since the FY-2019 Annual Report and Board reply were presented to your Council in 2020, the Federal Subsistence Management Program experienced the turnover of both the Interagency Staff Committee Members and Board members in three of the five Federal agencies; specifically, the BLM, the USFWS, and the NPS. In addition, the Administration has changed. As new staff and Board members continue to become familiar with this issue, we will rely on Title VIII of ANILCA to direct Board authority and action.

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Board members implement Title VIII through the Federal Subsistence Management Program within their respective Federal agencies and rural leaders in the case of the public members. All Board members are tasked with ensuring a Federal subsistence priority consistent with sound management principals and the conservation of healthy populations of fish and wildlife.

Section 811 of ANILCA addresses *access* for subsistence purposes. Specifically, “the Secretary shall ensure that rural residents engaged in subsistence uses shall have reasonable *access* to subsistence resources on the public lands”. Further, section 811(b) identifies the appropriate use of motorized vehicles, including snowmachines, for subsistence purposes, subject to reasonable regulation. Section 811(b) begins “Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act or other law...,” which indicates that Congress was cognizant that existing laws and regulations might need to be considered when implementing Title VIII of ANILCA. Ensuring and safeguarding surface transportation traditionally employed for subsistence purposes is not in conflict with any agency specific regulations. Conflicts *may* exist when Board members struggle to balance the dual charge of providing opportunity for continuation of the subsistence way of life and sound resource management principles for the conservation of healthy fish and wildlife populations. In these cases, each Board member strives to fully implement their obligations under Title VIII to the full extent of the law.

In closing, I want to thank you and your Council for your continued involvement and diligence in matters regarding the Federal Subsistence Management Program. I speak for the entire Board in expressing our appreciation for your efforts and am confident that Federally qualified subsistence users of the Bristol Bay Region are well represented through your work.

Sincerely,



Anthony Christianson
Chair

Enclosure

cc: Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Federal Subsistence Board
Office of Subsistence Management
Interagency Staff Committee
Benjamin Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Mark Burch, Special Project Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Administrative Record



2021 ALASKA SEABIRD UPDATE



Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Council Meeting

2 March 2022

Robb Kaler & Liz Labunski - USFWS Migratory Bird Management
Barbara Bodenstein & Bob Dusek - USGS National Wildlife Health Center
Gay Sheffield - UAF-Alaska Sea Grant
Brandon Ahmasuk & Austin Ahmasuk - Kawerak Inc.
Stacia Backensto & Heather Coletti - National Park Service
Julia Parrish, Tim Jones & Jackie Lindsey - COASST

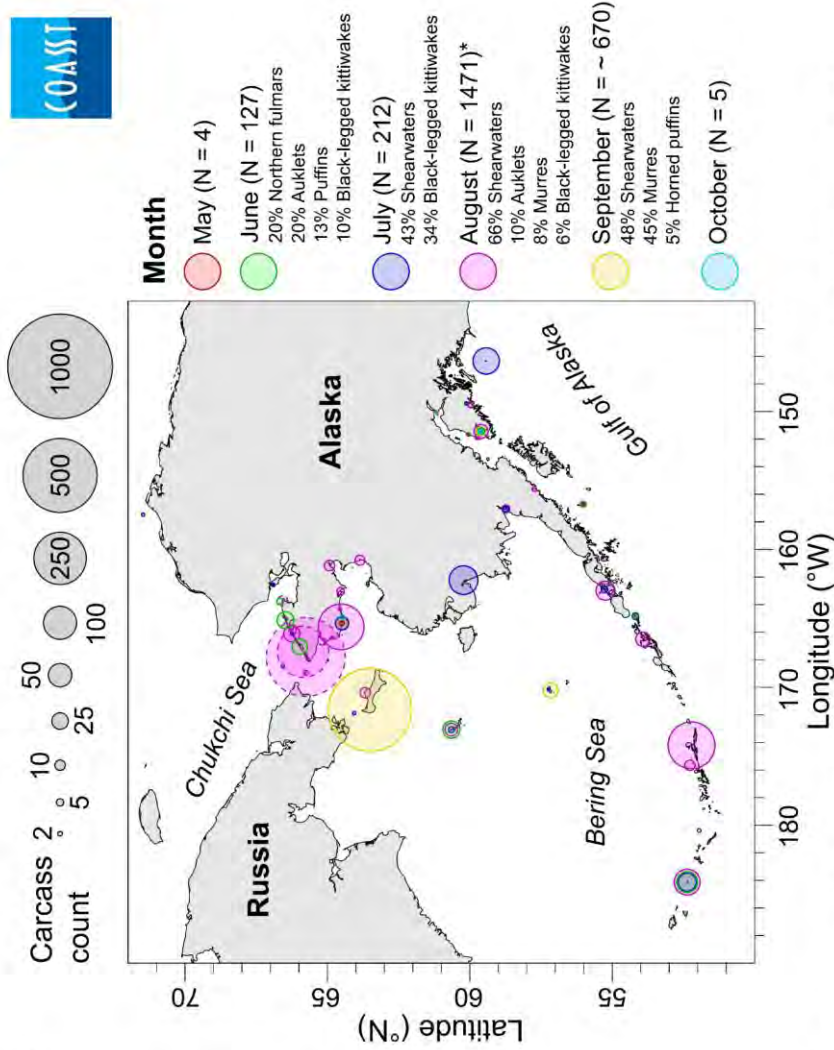




2021 Alaska Seabird Die-off

Reported:

- May-September, ~2,100 seabird carcasses reported in Alaska
 - 1,750 Bering/Chukchi
 - 270 Aleutians
 - 60 Gulf of Alaska
- Seabird species
 - Loons
 - Shearwaters
 - Cormorants
 - Gulls/Kittiwakes
 - Murres
 - Auklets
 - Puffins



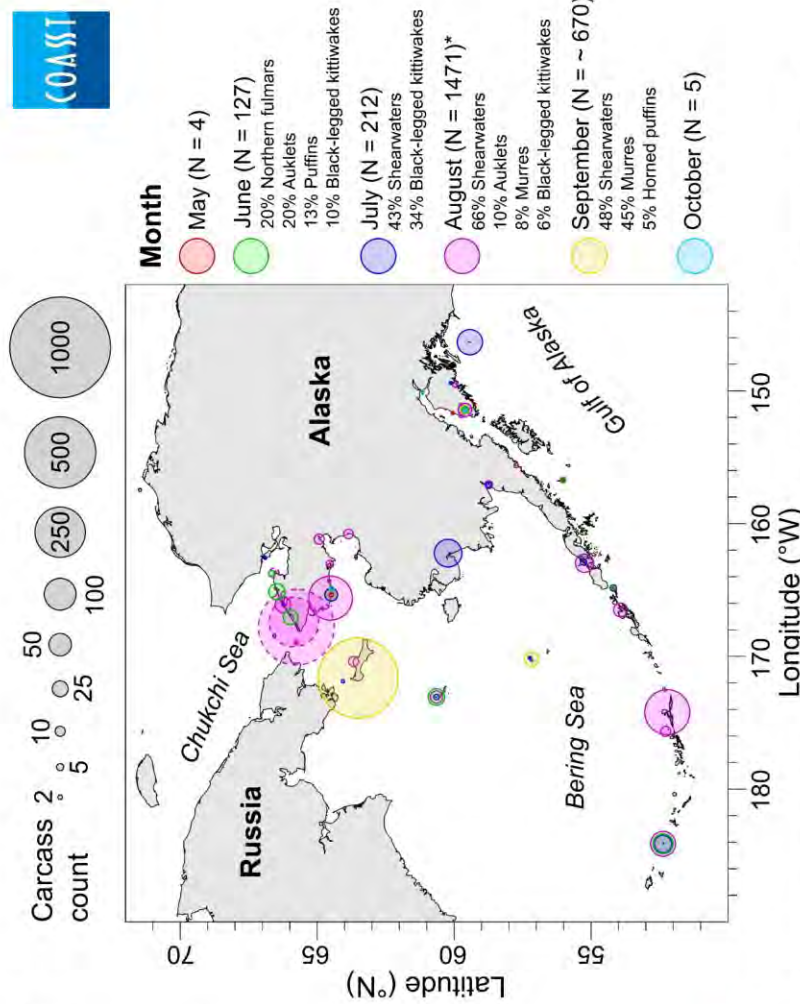
* : species composition is of birds identified to species/group. However, in August a large proportion (60%) of birds were unidentified

Note: Circles represent reports of seabird carcass abundance and are not standardized for variable observer effort among locations. The absence of reports in certain locations may indicate gaps in current knowledge OR an actual absence of bird carcasses. Reports from aerial surveys (dashed circles) are distinguished from other beach-based reports (solid circles) due to major differences in area observed.

2021 Alaska Seabird Die-off

Response:

- The USGS National Wildlife Health Center examined:
 - 12 carcasses from the Bering Strait
 - emaciated
 - negative for Avian Influenza
 - biotoxin results pending
 - 12 carcasses from Middleton Island
 - poor to fair nutritional condition
 - negative for Avian Influenza
 - no biotoxins detected
 - 2 kittiwakes tested positive for Avian Botulism Type C (**first Alaskan case**)
 - Type C Avian Botulism does not affect humans

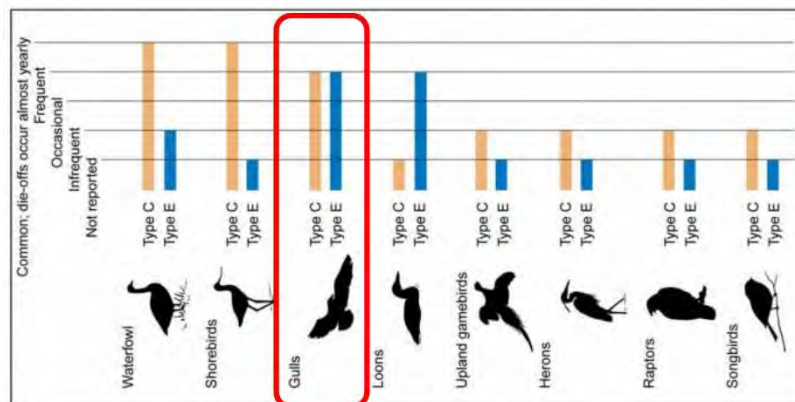
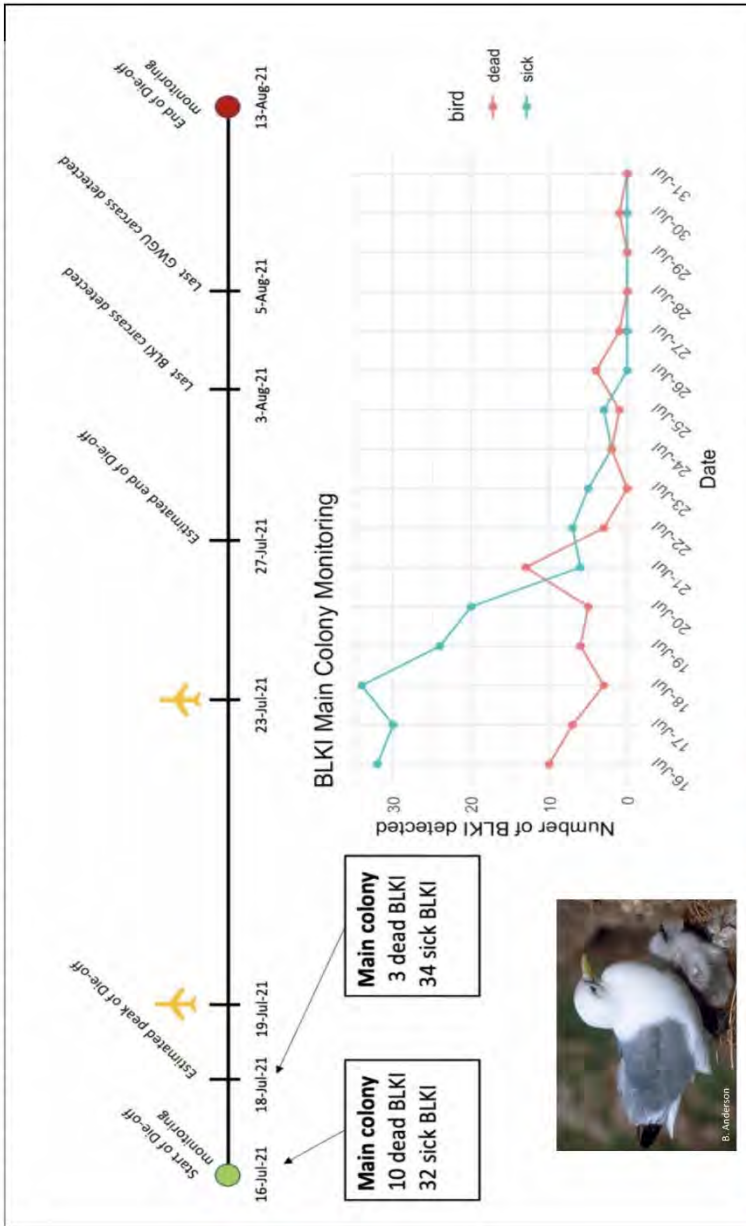


*: species composition is of birds identified to species/group. However, in August a large proportion (60%) of birds were unidentified

Note: Circles represent reports of seabird carcass abundance and are not standardized for variable observer effort among localities. The absence of reports in certain locations may indicate gaps in current knowledge OR an actual absence of bird carcasses. Reports from aerial surveys (dashed circles) are distinguished from other beach-based reports (solid circles) due to major differences in area observed.



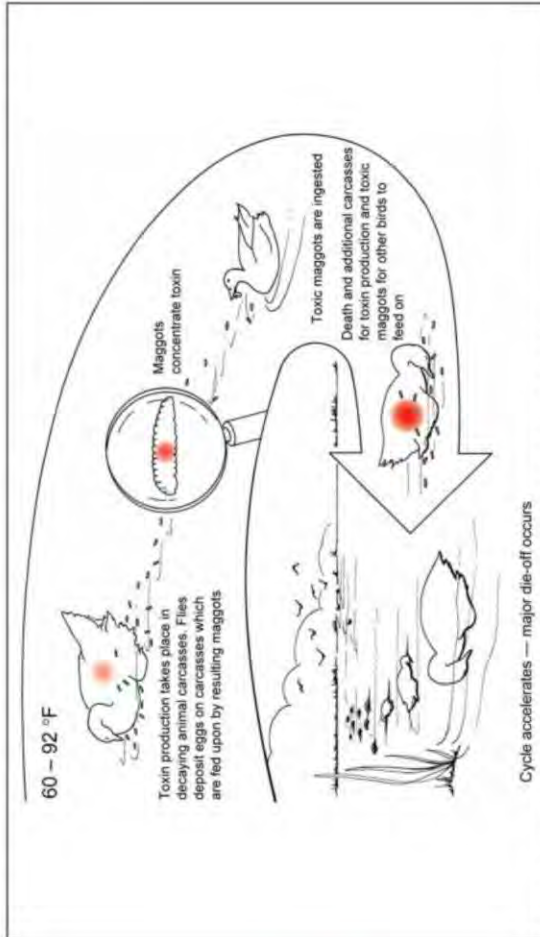
Middleton Island/Gulf of Alaska Kittiwake Die-off



Credit: F. Tremblay, McGill University



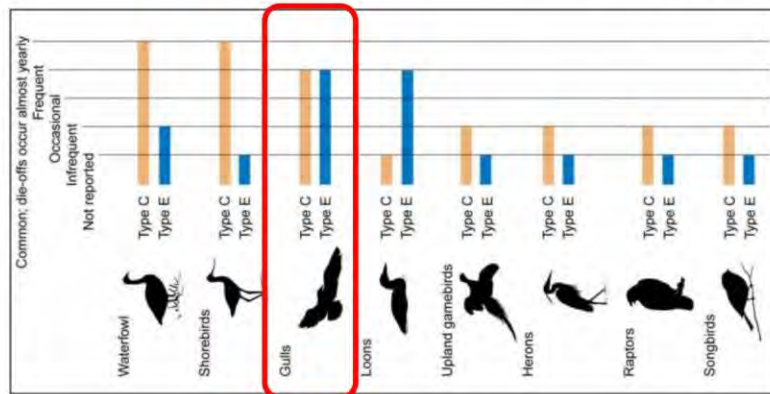
Middleton Island/Gulf of Alaska Kittiwake Die-off



Carcass-maggot cycle of Avian Botulism (USGS 1999)

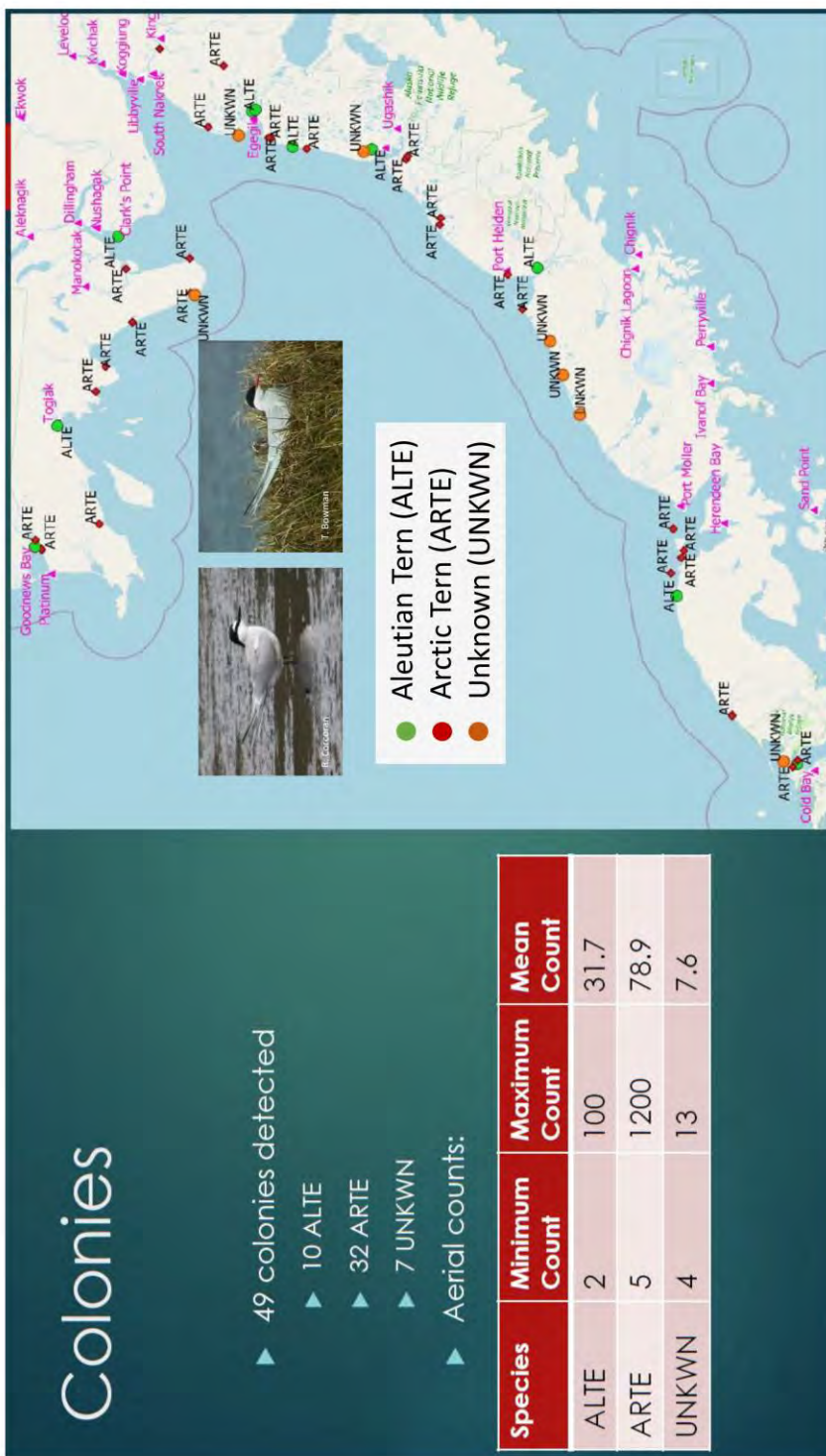
Avian Botulism Type C is concentrated in aquatic invertebrates that filter feed sediments or water and is specific to birds and **does not affect humans**. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has posted information on their web site for Hot topics and Wildlife Disease pages:

- <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=hottopics.main>
- <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=disease.main>



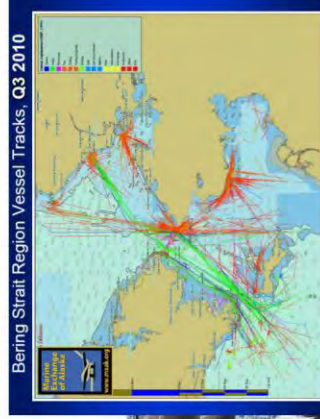
Frequency of botulism in wild birds (USGS 1999)

Aleutian Tern Pilot Aerial Survey, Bristol Bay, 8-29 June 2021



Monitoring & reducing eider & other sea duck vessel strikes

- An important consideration:
Increased vessel traffic in the Arctic**
- Shipping (LNG, oil, cargo)
 - Fishing – moving north
 - Oil/gas exploration & development
 - Military Activity
 - Tourism





2021 ALASKA SEABIRD UPDATE



Contact Info

USFWS Migratory Birds Management, Seabird Program

Robb Kaler Robert_Kaler@fws.gov

Liz Labunski Elizabeth_Labunski@fws



Presentation Procedure for Proposals and Closure Reviews

1. Introduction and Presentation of Draft Staff Analysis

2. Report on Board Consultations:

- a. Tribes
- b. ANCSA Corporations

3. Agency Comments:

- a. ADF&G
- b. Federal
- c. Tribal

4. Advisory Group Comments:

- a. Other Regional Advisory Council(s)
- b. Fish and Game Advisory Committees
- c. Subsistence Resource Commissions

5. Summary of Written Public Comments

6. Public Testimony

7. Regional Council Recommendation (motion to adopt)

8. Discussion/Justification

- Is the recommendation consistent with established fish or wildlife management principles?
- Is the recommendation supported by substantial evidence such as biological and traditional ecological knowledge?
- Will the recommendation be beneficial or detrimental to subsistence needs and uses?
- If a closure is involved, is closure necessary for conservation of healthy fish or wildlife populations, or is closure necessary to ensure continued subsistence uses?
- Discuss what other relevant factors are mentioned in OSM Draft Staff Analysis

9. Restate final motion for the record

10. Council's Vote

FCR21-13 Executive Summary	
General Description	FCR21-13 is a routine review of a Federal closure to salmon fishing at Russell Creek and Nurse Lagoon in the Alaska Peninsula Area.
Current Regulation	<p>§ __.27(e)(7) Alaska Peninsula Area</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p>(v) You may not subsistence fish for salmon in the following waters:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(A) Russell Creek and Nurse Lagoon and within 500 yards outside the mouth of Nurse Lagoon;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Rescind
Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

**FEDERAL FISHERIES DRAFT CLOSURE REVIEW
FCR21-13**

Issue

FCR21-13 is a routine review of a Federal closure to salmon fishing at Russell Creek and Nurse Lagoon in the Alaska Peninsula Area. It is the Board's policy that Federal public lands and waters should be reopened as soon as practicable once the conditions that originally justified the closure have changed to such an extent that the closure is no longer necessary. The purpose of this closure review is to determine if the closure is still warranted and to ensure the closure does not remain in place longer than necessary.

Closure Location: Russell Creek and Nurse Lagoon—Salmon

Current Federal Regulation

§ __.27(e)(7) *Alaska Peninsula Area*

(v) *You may not subsistence fish for salmon in the following waters:*

(A) *Russell Creek and Nurse Lagoon and within 500 yards outside the mouth of Nurse Lagoon;*

Relevant Federal Regulations

§ __.25 *Subsistence taking of fish, wildlife, and shellfish: general regulations.*

Subsistence fishing permit means a subsistence harvest permit issued by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game or the Federal Subsistence Board.

§ __.27 *Subsistence Taking of Fish*

(b) *Methods, means, and general restrictions.*

(16) *Unless specified otherwise in this section, you may use a rod and reel to take fish without a subsistence fishing permit. Harvest limits applicable to the use of a rod and reel to take fish for subsistence uses shall be as follows:*

(i) If you are required to obtain a subsistence fishing permit for an area, that permit is required to take fish for subsistence uses with rod and reel in that area. The harvest and possession limits for taking fish with a rod and reel in those areas are the same as indicated on the permit issued for subsistence fishing with other gear types.

(18) Provisions on ADF&G subsistence fishing permits that are more restrictive or in conflict with the provisions contained in this section do not apply to Federal subsistence users.

§ __.27(e)(7) Alaska Peninsula Area

(i) You may take salmon, trout, and char only under the authority of a subsistence fishing permit.

(iii) You must keep a record on the reverse side of the permit of subsistence-caught fish. You must complete the record immediately upon taking subsistence-caught fish and must return it no later than October 31.

(iv) You may take salmon at any time, except in those districts and sections open to commercial salmon fishing where salmon may not be taken during the 24 hours before and 12 hours following each State open weekly commercial salmon fishing period, or as may be specified on a subsistence fishing permit.

(vi) You may take salmon by seine, gillnet, rod and reel, or with gear specified on a subsistence fishing permit. You may also take salmon without a permit by snagging (by handline or rod and reel), using a spear, bow and arrow, or capturing by bare hand.

(viii) You may not use a set gillnet exceeding 100 fathoms in length.

(ix) You may take no more than 250 salmon for subsistence purposes unless otherwise specified on your subsistence fishing permit.

Note: In the Alaska Peninsula Area, you are required to have a State Subsistence Fishing Permit when subsistence fishing for salmon (**Appendix 1**, see 5 AAC 01.420. Subsistence fishing permits)

Closure Dates: Year-round

Current State Regulations

Subsistence Regulations

Alaska Peninsula Area

5 AAC 01.420. Lawful gear and gear specifications

(a) Salmon may be taken only by seine and gillnet, or with gear specified on a subsistence fishing permit.

(c) In waters open to commercial salmon fishing, salmon may be taken only with a set or drift gillnet that does not exceed 50 fathoms in total length.

(d) Except as specified in (a) and (c) of this section, a permit holder may not operate a

(1) set gillnet that is more than 100 fathoms in length; and

(2) drift gillnet that is more than 200 fathoms in length.

(e) A purse seine or hand purse seine may not exceed 250 fathoms in length or 375 meshes in depth. Seine mesh size may not exceed three and one-half inches stretched measure, except that the first 25 meshes above the leadline may not exceed seven inches stretched measure.

(f) A person may not operate subsistence fishing gear within 100 feet of a set gillnet.

5 AAC 01.430. Subsistence fishing permits

(a) Salmon, trout, and char may only be taken under the authority of a subsistence fishing permit. The department will only issue one permit per household.

(b) No more than 250 salmon may be taken for subsistence purposes, per household, unless otherwise specified by a local representative of the department on the subsistence fishing permit. A permit holder may obtain an additional permit from the department.

(c) A record of subsistence-caught fish must be kept on the permit. The record must be completed immediately upon taking subsistence-caught fish and must be returned to the local representative of the department no later than October 31.

5 AAC 01.425 Waters closed to subsistence fishing

The following waters are closed to subsistence fishing for salmon:

- (1) Russell Creek and Nurse Lagoon and within 500 yards from the stream terminus of Russell Creek and Nurse Lagoon;*

Sport Regulations

Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area

5 AAC 65.020. General provisions for seasons and bag, possession, annual, and size limits for the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area

Except as otherwise provided in 5 AAC 65.022, 5 AAC 65.051, or by an emergency order issued under AS 16.05.060, the seasons and bag, possession, annual, and size limits for finfish and shellfish in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area are as follows:

(1) king salmon:

(A) in fresh waters: may be taken only from January 1 through July 25, except that king salmon may be taken in the Chignik River only from January 1 through August 9, and as follows:

(i) 20 inches or greater in length; bag and possession limit of two fish; annual limit of five fish; a harvest record is required as specified in 5 AAC 75.006;

(ii) less than 20 inches in length; bag and possession limit of 10 fish; no annual limit;

(B) in salt waters: may be taken from January 1 through December 31; bag and possession limit of two fish; no size limit; no annual limit;

(2) salmon, other than king salmon: may be taken from January 1 through December 31, as follows:

(A) 20 inches or greater in length; bag limit of five fish and a possession limit of 10 fish;

(B) less than 20 inches in length; bag and possession limit of 10 fish;

Regulatory Year Initiated: 1992

Extent of Federal Public Lands/Waters

For purposes of this discussion, the phrase “Federal public waters” is defined as those waters described under 36 CFR 242.3 and 50 CFR 100.3. Russell Creek consists of Federal public waters within and adjacent to the external boundaries of the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge (**Figure 1**). Nurse Lagoon was at one time considered Federal public waters. The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture later determined that some marine waters, including Nurse Lagoon, were added to Federal subsistence regulation erroneously and should be removed (70 Fed. Reg. 247, 76407 [December 27, 2005]).



Figure 1. Map showing Trout Creek and Russell Creek salmon closures and areas used by residents of Cold Bay and King Cove to harvest salmon for subsistence: Mortensens Lagoon, Thin Point, and Leonard Harbor.

Customary and Traditional Use Determination

Residents of the Alaska Peninsula Area have a customary and traditional use determination for all fish in the Alaska Peninsula Area.

Regulatory History

In 1990, the Federal Subsistence Management Program adopted temporary subsistence management regulations for public lands in Alaska, which included this closure, to minimize disruption to the State's continuing fish and game management because of the uncertainty over the resumption of State management of subsistence yet still fulfilling the requirements of the Title VIII of ANILCA (55 Fed. Reg. 126; 27125, 27155 [June 29, 1990]).

Closure Last Reviewed

A review was initiated during the 2021 fish proposal cycle and was recommended to be deferred by the Kodiak Aleutian Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to allow for additional feedback from the rural public in affected communities. The Board subsequently deferred the review until the 2023 fisheries regulatory cycle.

Justification for Original Closure

In 1990, the Federal Subsistence Management Program adopted temporary subsistence management regulations for public lands in Alaska, which included this closure, to minimize disruption to the State's continuing fish and game management because of the uncertainty over the resumption of State management of subsistence yet still fulfilling the requirements of the Title VIII of ANILCA (55 Fed. Reg. 126; 27125, 27155 [June 29, 1990]).

Council Recommendation for Original Closure

None

State Recommendation for Original Closure

None

Biological Background

Russell Creek has been surveyed and found to contain Chum, Coho, Pink, and Sockeye salmon as well as steelhead trout (Johnson and Blossom 2018). Annual indexing of salmon escapement is conducted through aerial surveys and recent data shows variable returns of Chum and Pink salmon (**Table 1**). There was also a count of 600 Coho Salmon observed during the 2014 season (Keyse and Fox 2015) and 100 Sockeye Salmon observed during the 2020 season (Fox et al. 2021).

Table 1. Aerial survey estimates of Chum and Pink salmon in Russell Creek 2013-2021 (Poetter and

Nichols 2014; Keyse and Fox 2015; Keyse et al. 2016; Fox et al. 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022).

Year	Chum Salmon	Pink Salmon
2013	20,000	8,000
2014	55,500	60,400
2015	18,800	29,000
2016	113,000	0
2017	125,000	140,000
2018	12,500	2,500
2019	15,000	38,000
2020	13,800	11,800
2021	32,400	23,500

Community Background

Introduction

Two communities have consistent access to Russell Creek. One, Cold Bay with a population of 50 residents is home to the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge offices (**Table 2**). Cold Bay is located at the western end of the Alaska Peninsula, 634 miles southwest of Anchorage and 180 miles northeast of Unalaska (**Figure 1**). Cold Bay residents can access Russell Creek by road vehicle or by foot. The small watershed is located directly east of the end of the Cold Bay airport runway. Cold Bay School closed in 2015 due to a lack of student enrollment (ADCRA 2022). The other community with consistent access to Russell Creek is King Cove with a population of 807 residents (**Table 2**). King Cove is located across the bay from the Cold Bay community and travel between the communities is limited to boat or plane. An Alaska State ferry arrives in Cold Bay and King Cove monthly from May through October (City of King Cove 2022).

Table 2. The population of Cold Bay and King Cove, 1960–2020 (Source: ADCCED 2022).

Community	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Cold Bay	86	256	192	148	88	108	50
King Cove	290	283	460	677*	792	938	757
Total	376	539	652	148	880	1,046	807

*The U.S. Census left out Ram Creek Subdivision in the community total of 451 in 1990 (ADLWFD 1993:82).

Cold Bay

The town began with the airport’s construction. Aleut people used the site only seasonally because there were more sheltered areas in the region. Fort Randall Army Base was built at Cold Bay during WWII and had the largest airport west of Anchorage. The base was primarily a refueling stop and an advanced base where squadrons of fighters were stationed and infantrymen awaited transport to the fighting. After the Aleutians were retaken, the base was a garrison town. The military had total control of all land in the area, handing off to other authorities over time, and retarding the growth of permanent

residents and sense of community throughout the history of Cold Bay. In 1948 Cold Bay became Thornborough Air Force Base. The Air Force Base was activated during the Korean War and again during the Viet Nam War in the 1960s when there was a massive military presence in town. Statehood in 1959 brought Alaska Department of Transportation workers to Cold Bay. In 1960, the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge was formed and increased the presence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This removed a large amount of land from the possibility of private purchase (Pettersen et al. 1983).

King Cove

King Cove community sits along a small cove on the south side of the Alaska Peninsula between Belkofski Bay on the east and Cold Bay on the west. The cash economy is dependent on commercial fisheries and seafood processors. A cannery operates year-round, and the boat harbor contains a large number of vessels used for purse seining, trawling, crabbing, and driftnetting. Travel between the communities of Cold Bay and King Cove is limited to boat or plane. A high priority for local transportation has long been construction of an access road between King Cove and Cold Bay through the Izembek Wilderness Area to provide a more reliable link to the outside world during emergencies. The City of King Cove is again awaiting a decision on a proposed land transfer that would allow the access road to be extended directly to Cold Bay (Risdaahl 2022, pers. comm.).

Settled in 1911 by cannery operators and commercial fishermen, the older Aleut community in the area was Belkofski. Belkofski remained a viable community even after the first cannery was built in King Cove in 1911. The cannery provided only seasonal employment. However, in the 1970s the cannery began to process crab and bottom fish and remained open year-round, and one-by-one, Belkofski families began to move to King Cove to secure more steady employment. The last Belkofski family moved to King Cove in the 1980s. Belkofski's former residents retained their own Tribal government. In addition to Belkofski, King Cove drew residents from other settlements in the area, including Thin Point, False Pass, Morzhovoi, Ikatan, Unga, and Sanak (Braund et al. 1986).

King Cove Aleut are within the Aleutians East Borough, the "Eastern Aleut," whose boundaries form a distinct cultural zone both historically and today and occupy six communities (Sand Point, King Cove, Nelson Lagoon, False Pass, Akutan, and Cold Bay). The Agdaagux Tribal Council is the King Cove Tribal Council. Most former residents of Belkofski now live in King Cove and are part of the Belkofski Corporation and Tribal Council (Reedy-Maschner 2010).

In the early days of salmon fishing, canneries owned fish traps and dories and hired their own labor or Aleut labor to move the fish from traps to the plants. Over time, the village struggled to become more independent of the cannery's patronage, a process that is still alive. The cannery blocked attempts to incorporate King Cove as a second-class city for fear of the tax burden. The village successfully petitioned again in 1949. The ability to tax allowed leaders to start infrastructure projects. The cannery has threatened to withhold fuel and other amenities if fishermen strike in protest of low fish prices (Reedy-Maschner 2010). Government recognition and citizenship are recent to Aleuts. Full U.S.

citizenship did not come until the passage of the Fur Seal Act by Congress in 1966 (Mercurieff 1997 *in* Reedy-Maschner 2010).

Salmon for Home Use Removed from Commercial Catches

For the Aleut, commercial fishing is more than a “job” that finances subsistence harvesting. Dr. Katherine Reedy-Maschner collaborated with residents of King Cove to document their involvement in fisheries and wrote a book “Aleut Identities.” She describes the catch of salmon for home use:

Although both men and women fish with rod and reel at Ram’s Creek, which has a Pink Salmon run in July and August, or fish for a multitude of nonsalmon species off the docks, most fish taken for subsistence are from commercial catches, with the captain and crew using commercial gear. This is in part because Sockeye and Chinook (King) salmon are preferred over Pink and Chum salmon in taste and usage, and are usually stored in greater quantities but can be caught only at sea. Fishermen seldom turn prized King Salmon in to the cannery because the price is often too low to make it worth their while. And because they would rather eat them. The fishermen catch salmon while out in their boats and send them back to town with the tenders—the large boats that move fish and supplies from the fishing grounds to the cannery—who leave them in metal containers on the fish dock. The tendermen then call or radio those for whom the fish are intended, and someone picks them up and takes them home or delivers them The decisions people make regarding the proportion of fish to remove from the commercial catch are based on knowledge of past distribution, assessment of the current needs of the people to whom that individual distributes, his wife’s or mother’s knowledge of who should get fish and how much, and the price of fish offered by the cannery. The lower the price paid, the more fish people bring home Limited entry restricts the number of boat and permit owners and can greatly affect an individual’s ability to provide subsistence resources to this household or to other households that depend on him. Economic status, age, or other circumstances exclude some households from being able to fish, but extended family or friends often include them in their own activities or share a portion of their catches (Reedy-Maschner 2010:88).

Salmon removed from commercial salmon harvest, “home pack,” is an important source of salmon. This number may be substantial, especially in years when commercial salmon prices are low. (Fall et al. 1993; ADF&G 2022).

Non-permitted, non-crewing fishermen set their subsistence nets close to the village

Community Harvest and Use

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game issues subsistence permits to subsistence fishermen who then must record the numbers of fish taken on the permits and return them. The permits, however, do

not generally include salmon retained by commercial fishermen, and the number of permits does not indicate every subsistence harvester (Fall et al. 1993; Brown et al. 2021).

In addition to Mortensen’s Lagoon located about 9 miles southeast of Cold Bay with easy road access, Thin Point Lagoon, situated 12 miles west of King Cove, and Leonard Harbor, situated near the King Cove road system, are some of the primary areas used for obtaining subsistence Sockeye and Coho salmon for King Cove and Cold Bay residents (Johnson and Fox 2015). Most nonlocal residents of Alaska fish at Mortensen’s Lagoon primarily because of easy road access from the Cold Bay airport (Tscherich and Russ 2008; Brown et al. 2021).

The estimated harvest of salmon by residents of King Cove and Cold Bay, based on household surveys, is described in **Table 3**. King Cove residents harvested over 17,000 salmon in 1992 and 2016, which equated to over 50% of the harvest of all wild resources in pounds edible weight. Cold Bay residents harvested 1,141 salmon in 2016, which equated to 64% of the harvest of all wild resources in pounds edible weight. The majority of harvests was comprised of Sockeye Salmon (**Figure 3**).

In 1992, data from household surveys estimated that 51% of the salmon harvested for home use in King Cove and 27% in 2016 were removed from commercial harvests (Fall et al. 1993; ADF&G 2022).

Table 3. The estimated harvest of salmon for subsistence in numbers of fish, the per person harvest of salmon in pounds edible weight, and the percentage of salmon in the total wild resource harvest, based on households surveys in study years 1992 and 2016 (ADF&G 2022).

Community	Study Year	Estimated harvest (#s of fish)	Lower harvest estimate (#s of fish)	Upper harvest estimate (#s of fish)	Per person harvest (lbs edible weight)	Percentage of total wild resource harvest (lbs edible weight)
King Cove	1992	17,073	10,985	23,161	137	53%
King Cove	2016	17,445	12,245	23,095	192	64%
Cold Bay	2016	1,141	1,191	1,994	148	64%

Although freezing is widely used, residents preserve salmon harvest by salting, smoking, and drying (Pink Salmon). Dried Pink Salmon are call “yukola.” Pickling of salted salmon, canning, and jarring also occurs. Freezer space is not usually sufficient to freeze all salmon harvested. Most freeze a few Chinook (King) and Sockeye Salmon (Fall et al. 1993).

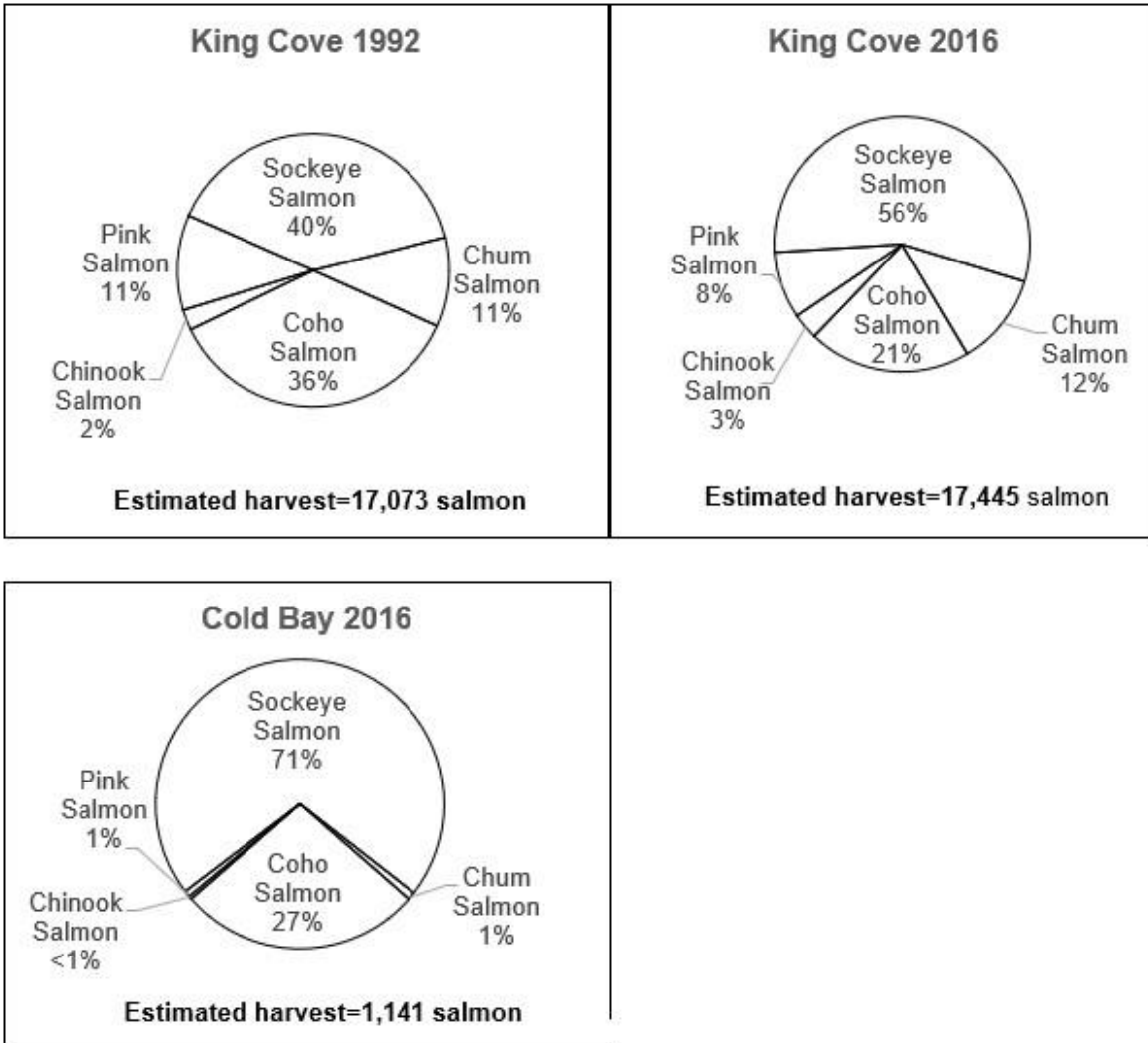


Figure 2. The estimated harvest of salmon by species in 1992 and 2016 at King Cove and Cold Bay (Source: ADF&G 2022).

Harvest History

Russell Creek is closed to subsistence fishing under both Federal and State regulations; however, it is open to sport fishing. The general Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Island Remote Zone sport fishing salmon regulations allow 5 salmon (combination of species excluding Chinook Salmon) per day and 10 in possession. There is no specific harvest reported for Russell Creek as harvest is so low, but the harvest for the combined Cold Bay Area in years where 12 or more Statewide Sport Fish Harvest Survey responses were received between 2009 and 2018 range between 1,249 and 5,048 salmon (ADF&G 2020).

Federally qualified subsistence users harvest salmon with rod and reel under State sport fishing regulations at Russell Creek (Reedy 2020, pers. comm.). The adjacent land is owned by the King Cove Corporation, and a person must get a permit from the Corporation to access Russell Creek, or a person

can access the creek using Bureau of Land Management access easements (Risdaahl 2020, pers comm.). For Cold Bay residents, the larger Sockeye Salmon subsistence efforts are at Mortensen's Lagoon (a couple miles southeast of Russell Creek), with rod and reel and beach seines. Many King Cove subsistence harvesters come over to Mortenson's Lagoon as well for the majority of their homepack since fishing options closer to King Cove are limited. They use the ferry or share on a family member's boat to travel between the communities (Reedy 2020, pers. comm.).

Effects

According to Title VIII, section 804 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), "...the taking on public lands of fish and wildlife for nonwasteful subsistence uses shall be accorded priority over taking on such lands of fish and wildlife for other purposes." There are currently nonsubsistence uses permitted in this area making the current situation out of compliance with Title VIII of ANILCA. Rescinding the closure would provide Federal opportunity to harvest salmon in the Russell Creek drainage, thereby providing priority consumptive use to Federally qualified subsistence users.

If the closure is rescinded, Federal subsistence regulations for the Alaska Peninsula Area would apply which could lead to overharvest and conservation concerns. For salmon this would require a State subsistence permit with reporting due annually by October 31. Salmon taken under the permit could be harvested by gillnet, rod and reel, or gear specified on the permit. Salmon could also be taken under Federal regulation by snagging (hand line or rod and reel), using a spear, bow and arrow, or capture by hand. The salmon harvest limit per household for the Alaska Peninsula Area is 250 fish. To conserve fish populations, the Federal in-season manager could issue a special action to set provisions for the fishery, such as stipulating gear types like rod and reel only and setting conservative harvest limits.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

- Retain the Status Quo
- Rescind the Closure**
- Modify the Closure
- Defer Decision on the Closure or Take No Action

The regulations should read:

Alaska Peninsula Area

§ __.27(e)(7)

(v) *You may not subsistence fish for salmon in the following waters:*

~~(A) Russell Creek and Nurse Lagoon and within 500 yards outside the mouth of Nurse Lagoon;~~

Justification

The Russell Creek drainage is currently closed to the harvest of salmon by Federally qualified subsistence users but remains open to other uses. Federal subsistence opportunity should also be provided to comply with the rural preference mandated by ANILCA. The Federal in-season manager has been delegated authority to open or close Federal subsistence fishing periods or areas provided under codified regulations and to specify methods and means; to specify permit requirements; and to set harvest and possession limits for Federal subsistence fisheries (**Appendix 2**). The in-season manager can use this authority to manage the fishery in the short term. A proposal outlining desired parameters for this fishery may be submitted during the next fisheries cycle so they can be put into regulation.

If this closure is retained, reference to Nurse Lagoon should be removed and the work “drainage” should be added after Russell Creek to clarify that the closure applies to the entire drainage.

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APPENDIX 1

ALASKA PENINSULA AREA SUBSISTENCE SALMON FISHING PERMIT

ALASKA PENINSULA AREA SUBSISTENCE SALMON FISHING PERMIT
 Permit expires October 31, 2020 (5AAC 01.430(c))



This permit is valid in the Southeastern, South Central, Southwestern, Unimak, Northwestern, and Northern Districts.

Name: _____
Address: _____

I hereby certify that I am an Alaska resident, and any salmon taken will be used for subsistence purposes only.

Permittee signature _____ Date _____

Additional members of same household to be included on permit (Alaska Residents Only):

Email Address: _____ Renew permit for next year:

The catch report table below must be filled out (even if the permit was not used) and returned to a local Alaska Department of Fish and Game office prior to October 31, 2020. Failure to return the permit could result in future permits being denied (5 AAC 01.015 (C)).

SUBSISTENCE SALMON HARVEST REPORT

Number of salmon by species:

DATE	SPECIFIC LOCATION	KING	SOCKEYE	COHO	PINK	CHUM

- ALL PERSONS MUST HAVE A VALID SUBSISTENCE PERMIT IN POSSESSION WHILE TAKING OR ATTEMPTING TO TAKE SUBSISTENCE SALMON.
- COMPLETE THE SUBSISTENCE HARVEST REPORTS IMMEDIATELY UPON LANDING SALMON. UNSUCCESSFUL TRIPS SHOULD ALSO BE RECORDED.
- NONRESIDENTS CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN SUBSISTENCE FISHING ACTIVITIES.

REFER TO THE CURRENT SUBSISTENCE REGULATION BOOK FOR COMPLETE REGULATIONS

Return permit to: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Peninsula Salmon Management, 351 Research Court, Kodiak AK 99615 by October 31, 2020 .

Department representative _____ Date _____

(SEE OPPOSITE SIDE FOR SUBSISTENCE REGULATIONS)

SELECTED SUBSISTENCE REGULATIONS

These listed regulations are not inclusive of all the regulations that apply to subsistence salmon fishing in the Alaska Peninsula Area.

5 AAC 01.430. LIMITS TO NUMBER OF SALMON TAKEN: 250 salmon per household, unless otherwise specified by a local representative of the department. Additional household permits are available by request from the local ADF&G representative.

5 AAC 01.420. LIMITS TO GEAR USED TO TAKE SALMON: Salmon may be taken by seine or gillnet. No set gillnet may exceed 100 fathoms in length. No drift gillnet may exceed 200 fathoms in length. In areas open to commercial salmon fishing, salmon can only be taken with gillnets of not more than 50 fathoms in aggregate length.

5 AAC 01.427. IDENTIFICATION OF GILLNET GEAR: A buoy at one end of any gillnet must be plainly and legibly marked with the operator's first initial, last name, and mailing address of the permit holder or the vessel's ADF&G number.

5 AAC 01.410. FISHING SEASONS: Salmon may be taken at any time except as follows:

1. In those districts and sections open to commercial salmon fishing, salmon may not be taken by a commercial salmon fishing permit holder within 24 hours before and within 12 hours following a commercial salmon fishing period.
2. As otherwise specified on a subsistence fishing permit; and
3. In the waters closed to subsistence fishing for salmon specified in 5 AAC 01.425.

Exceptions to this rule are listed under EXCEPTIONS 1 and 2 below or as listed on an amended permit.

5 AAC 01.423. SPECIAL PROVISIONS:

1. Mortensens Lagoon: (Mortensens Lagoon and waters within 500 yards of the Mortensens Lagoon terminus only). Salmon may be taken at any time, however the following restrictions apply:
 - A. Subsistence gear is restricted to gillnets of 15 fathoms or less in length.
 - B. No more than 50 salmon per permit per season may be taken from Mortensens Lagoon or within 500 yards of the lagoon terminus.
2. False Pass vicinity: That portion of Bechevin Bay and Isanotski Strait bounded by the latitude of Morzhovoi Village (54°54.58' N lat.) and the latitude of Whirl Point (54°49.50' N lat.). Salmon may be taken at any time using gillnets of 50 fathoms or less in length.
3. Fresh waters of Bear River: Salmon may be taken at anytime upstream from the confluence of the Milky River, also known as the Mad Sow River (a tributary of the Bear River) with gear specified on the subsistence permit.
4. Fresh waters of Sandy River: Salmon may be taken at anytime upstream from the Sandy River (oil exploration) aircraft landing strip located five (5) miles (upriver) of the stream terminus, with gear specified on the subsistence permit.

5 AAC 01.425. WATERS CLOSED TO SUBSISTENCE SALMON FISHING:

1. Russell Creek and Nurse Lagoon and within 500 yards from the stream terminus of Russell Creek and Nurse Lagoon.
2. Trout Creek and within 500 yards outside its mouth.
3. Inshore of a line from the Trident Seafood's Dock at Sand Point to Black Point (located on the northwestern side of Popof Island), including the inlet and Humboldt Creek.
4. Black Hills Section: all freshwaters and within 500 yards of any anadromous salmon stream terminus.
5. Bear River Section: waters closed to commercial salmon fishing under 5 AAC 09.350 and 5 AAC 39.290 and waters of Frank's Lagoon and King Salmon River, excluding exceptions in Bear and Sandy Rivers listed earlier on this permit.
6. No subsistence fishing is allowed in waters closed to commercial salmon fishing as described under 5 AAC 09.350 or 5 AAC 39.290 during a commercial salmon fishing period. Exceptions to this rule are listed under SPECIAL PROVISIONS 1 and 2 above or as specified on an amended permit.

ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS:

1. **No more than half the width of a stream or its mouth may be obstructed by a net.** This restriction includes blocking the stream mouth while "roundhauling."
2. The operator must be in proximity of his or her gear at all times.
3. **Salmon may not be taken by sport fishing methods while taking subsistence salmon with a net and you may not be in possession of sport caught and subsistence caught salmon at the same time.**
4. Subsistence fishing gear may at no time be used within 100 feet of another set gillnet.
5. Definition of subsistence uses: AS 16.05.940(33) subsistence uses means the noncommercial, customary and traditional uses of wild, renewable resources.

Return permit by October 31, 2020 to: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Peninsula Salmon Management, 351 Research Court, Kodiak AK 99615. Questions or concerns please contact your local Fish and Game Office: Cold Bay (907) 532-2419; Sand Point (907) 383-2066; Port Moller (907) 375-2716; Kodiak (907) 486-1882.

APPENDIX 2
DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY LETTER TO THE INSEASON MANAGER OF THE
SOUTHWEST ALASKA AREA

Branch Chief - Fisheries
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office
4700 BLM Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Dear Branch Chief:

This letter delegates specific regulatory authority from the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) to the Branch Chief - Fisheries of the Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (Branch Chief) to issue emergency special actions when necessary to ensure the conservation of a healthy fish population, to continue subsistence uses of fish, for the continued viability of a fish population, or for public safety reasons. This delegation only applies to Federal public waters subject to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Title VIII in the Bristol Bay/Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Islands/Chignik Areas.

It is the intent of the Board that Federal subsistence fisheries management by Federal officials be coordinated, prior to implementation, with Regional Advisory Council (Council) representatives, the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), to the extent possible. The OSM will be used by managers to facilitate communication of actions and to ensure proposed actions are technically and administratively aligned with legal mandates and policies. Federal managers are expected to cooperate with managers from the State and other Federal agencies, the Council Chair(s), and applicable Council members to minimize disruption to resource users and existing agency programs, consistent with the need for emergency special action.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

- 1. Delegation:** The Branch Chief is hereby delegated authority to issue emergency special actions affecting fisheries in Federal public waters as outlined under the **Scope of Delegation** below. Although a public hearing is not required for emergency special actions, if deemed necessary by you, then a public hearing on the emergency special action is recommended. Special actions are governed by regulation at 36 CFR 242.19 and 50 CFR 100.19.
- 2. Authority:** This delegation of authority is established pursuant to 36 CFR 242.10(d)(6) and 50 CFR 100.10(d)(6), which state: “The Board may delegate to agency field officials the authority to set harvest and possession limits, define harvest areas, specify methods or means of harvest, specify permit requirements, and open or close specific fish or wildlife harvest seasons within frameworks established by the Board.”
- 3. Scope of Delegation:** The regulatory authority hereby delegated is limited to the issuance of emergency special actions as defined by 36 CFR 242.19(a) and 50 CFR 100.19(a). Such an emergency action may not exceed 60 days, and may not be extended.

This delegation permits you to open or close Federal subsistence fishing periods or areas provided under codified regulations. It also permits you to specify methods and means; to specify permit

requirements; and to set harvest and possession limits for Federal subsistence fisheries.

This delegation also permits you to close and re-open Federal public waters to nonsubsistence fishing, but does not permit you to specify methods and means, permit requirements, or harvest and possession limits for State-managed fisheries. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve healthy populations of fish or to ensure the continuation of subsistence uses.

All other proposed changes to codified regulations, such as customary and traditional use determinations or requests for special actions greater than 60 days, shall be directed to the Board.

The Federal public waters subject to this delegated authority are those within the Bristol Bay/Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Islands/Chignik Areas (as described in the Subsistence Management Regulations for the Harvest of Fish and Shellfish on Federal Public Lands and Waters in Alaska). You will coordinate all local fishery decisions with all affected Federal land managers.

4. Effective Period: This delegation of authority is effective from the date of this letter and continues until superseded or rescinded.

5. Guidelines for Review of Proposed Special Actions: You will use the following guidelines to determine the appropriate course of action when reviewing proposed special actions.

- a) Does the proposed special action fall within the geographic and regulatory scope of delegation?
- b) Have you communicated with the OSM to ensure the emergency special action is aligned with Federal subsistence regulations and policy?
- c) Does the proposed action need to be implemented immediately as an emergency special action, or can the desired conservation or subsistence use goal be addressed by deferring the issue to the next regulatory cycle?
- d) Does the supporting information in the proposed special action substantiate the need for the action?
- e) Are the assertions in the proposed special action confirmed by available current biological information and/or by affected subsistence users?
- f) Is the proposed special action supported in the context of available historical information on stock status and harvests by affected users?
- g) Is the proposed special action likely to achieve the expected results?
- h) Have the perspectives of the Chair or alternate of the affected Council(s), OSM, and affected State and Federal managers been fully considered in the review of the proposed special action?
- i) Have the potential impacts of the proposed special action on all affected subsistence users and non-Federally qualified users within the drainage been considered?
- j) Can public announcement of the proposed special action be made in a timely manner to

accomplish the management objective?

k) After evaluating all information and weighing the merits of the special action against other actions, including no action, is the proposed emergency special action reasonable, rational, and responsible?

6. Guidelines for Delegation: You will become familiar with the management history of the fisheries in the region, with the current State and Federal regulations and management plans, and be up-to-date on stock and harvest status information.

You will provide subsistence users in the region a local point of contact about Federal subsistence fishery issues and regulations and facilitate a local liaison with State managers and other user groups. For in-season management decisions and special actions, consultation is not always possible, but to the extent practicable, two-way communication will take place before decisions are implemented. You will also establish meaningful and timely opportunities for government-to-government consultation related to pre-season and post-season management actions as established in the Board's Government to Government Tribal Consultation Policy (Federal Subsistence Board Government to Government Tribal Consultation Policy 2012).

You will review emergency special action requests or situations that may require an emergency special action and all supporting information to determine (1) consistency with 36 CFR 242.19 and 50 CFR 100.19, (2) if the request/situation falls within the scope of your delegated authority, (3) if significant conservation problems or subsistence harvest concerns are indicated, and (4) what the consequences of taking an action may be on potentially affected subsistence uses and nonsubsistence uses. Requests not within your delegated authority will be forwarded to the Board for consideration.

You will maintain a record of all special action requests and justification of your decisions. A copy of this record will be provided to the Administrative Records Specialist at OSM no later than sixty days after development of the document.

You will immediately notify the Board through the Assistant Regional Director for the OSM, and coordinate with Chair or alternate of the affected Council(s), local ADF&G managers, and other affected Federal conservation unit managers concerning emergency special actions being considered.

If the timing of a regularly scheduled meeting of the affected Council(s) permits without incurring undue delay, you may seek Council recommendations on the proposed emergency special action.

You will issue decisions in a timely manner. Before the effective date of any decision, reasonable efforts will be made to notify Council representatives, the public, OSM, affected State and Federal managers, and law enforcement personnel. If an action is to supersede a State action not yet in effect, the decision will be communicated to Council representatives, the public, OSM, and State and Federal managers at least 24 hours before the State action would be effective. If a decision to take no action is made, you will notify the proponents of the request immediately.

You may defer an emergency special action request, otherwise covered by the delegation of authority, to the Board in instances when the proposed management action will have a significant impact on a large number of Federal subsistence users or is particularly controversial. These options should be exercised judiciously and only when sufficient time allows. Such deferrals should not be considered when immediate management actions are necessary for conservation purposes. The Board may determine that an emergency special action request may best be handled by the Board, subsequently

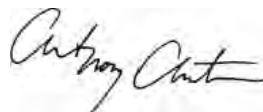
rescinding the delegated authority for the specific action only.

7. Reporting: You must provide to the Board, through the Assistant Regional Director for the OSM, a report describing the pre-season coordination efforts, local fisheries management decisions, and post-season evaluation activities for the previous fishing season by November 15. A summary of emergency special action requests and your resultant actions must be provided to the coordinator of the appropriate Council(s) at the end of the calendar year for presentation during regularly scheduled Council meetings.

8. Support Services: Administrative support for your local Federal subsistence fisheries management activities will be provided by the Office of Subsistence Management.

Should you have any questions about this delegation of authority, please feel free to contact the Assistant Regional Director for the OSM at toll-free 1-800-478-1456 or (907) 786-3888.

Sincerely,



Anthony Christianson
Chair

Enclosures: Maps of the Bristol Bay, Aleutian Islands, and Alaska Peninsula/Chignik areas

cc: Federal Subsistence Board

Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management

Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management

Subsistence Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management

Fisheries Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management

Chair, Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Chair, Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Superintendent, Lake Clark/Katmai National Parks and Preserve

Manager, Togiak National Wildlife Refuge

Manager, Alaska Peninsula/Becharof National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Manager, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge

Manager, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge

Assistant Regional Director, Law Enforcement, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Region 7)

Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Interagency Staff Committee

Administrative Record

FCR23–13 Executive Summary	
General Description	FCR23-13 is a routine review of a Federal closure to salmon fishing in Trout Creek and within 500 yards outside its mouth in the Alaska Peninsula Area.
Current Regulation	<p>§ __.27(e)(7) <i>Alaska Peninsula Area</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p><i>(v) You may not subsistence fish for salmon in the following waters:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p><i>(B) Trout Creek and within 500 yards outside its mouth.</i></p>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Rescind
Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

**FEDERAL FISHERIES DRAFT CLOSURE REVIEW
FCR23-13**

Issue

FCR23-13 is a routine review of a Federal closure to salmon fishing in Trout Creek and within 500 yards outside its mouth in the Alaska Peninsula Area. It is the Board's policy that Federal public lands and waters should be reopened as soon as practicable once the conditions that originally justified the closure have changed to such an extent that the closure is no longer necessary. The purpose of this closure review is to determine if the closure is still warranted and to ensure the closure does not remain in place longer than necessary.

Closure Location: Trout Creek—Salmon

Current Federal Regulation

§ __.27(e)(7) *Alaska Peninsula Area*

(v) *You may not subsistence fish for salmon in the following waters:*

(B) *Trout Creek and within 500 yards outside its mouth.*

Relevant Federal Regulations

§ __.25 *Subsistence taking of fish, wildlife, and shellfish: general regulations.*

(a) *Definitions. The following definitions apply to all regulations contained in this part:*

Subsistence fishing permit means a subsistence harvest permit issued by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game or the Federal Subsistence Board.

§ __.27 *Subsistence taking of fish*

(b) *Methods, means, and general restrictions.*

(16) *Unless specified otherwise in this section, you may use a rod and reel to take fish without a subsistence fishing permit. Harvest limits applicable to the use of a rod and reel to take fish for subsistence uses shall be as follows:*

(i) If you are required to obtain a subsistence fishing permit for an area, that permit is required to take fish for subsistence uses with rod and reel in that area. The harvest and possession limits for taking fish with a rod and reel in those areas are the same as indicated on the permit issued for subsistence fishing with other gear types.

(18) Provisions on ADF&G subsistence fishing permits that are more restrictive or in conflict with the provisions contained in this section do not apply to Federal subsistence users.

§ __.27(e)(7) Alaska Peninsula Area

(ii) You may take salmon, trout, and char only under the authority of a subsistence fishing permit.

(iii) You must keep a record on the reverse side of the permit of subsistence-caught fish. You must complete the record immediately upon taking subsistence-caught fish and must return it no later than October 31.

(iv) You may take salmon at any time, except in those districts and sections open to commercial salmon fishing where salmon may not be taken during the 24 hours before and 12 hours following each State open weekly commercial salmon fishing period, or as may be specified on a subsistence fishing permit.

(vi) You may take salmon by seine, gillnet, rod and reel, or with gear specified on a subsistence fishing permit. You may also take salmon without a permit by snagging (by handline or rod and reel), using a spear, bow and arrow, or capturing by bare hand.

(vii) You may take fish other than salmon by gear listed in this part unless restricted under the terms of a subsistence fishing permit.

(viii) You may not use a set gillnet exceeding 100 fathoms in length.

(ix) You may take no more than 250 salmon for subsistence purposes unless otherwise specified on your subsistence fishing permit.

Note: In the Alaska Peninsula Area, you are required to have a State Subsistence Fishing Permit when subsistence fishing for salmon (**Appendix 1**, see 5 AAC 01.420. Subsistence fishing permits)

Closure Dates: Year-round

Current State Regulation

Subsistence Regulations

Alaska Peninsula Area

5 AAC 01.425 Waters closed to subsistence fishing

The following waters are closed to subsistence fishing for salmon:

(2) Trout Creek and within 500 yards outside its mouth;

Relevant State Regulations

Subsistence Regulations

Alaska Peninsula Area

5 AAC 01.420. Lawful gear and gear specifications

(a) Salmon may be taken only by seine and gillnet, or with gear specified on a subsistence fishing permit.

5 AAC 01.430. Subsistence fishing permits

(a) Salmon, trout, and char may only be taken under the authority of a subsistence fishing permit. The department will only issue one permit per household.

(b) No more than 250 salmon may be taken for subsistence purposes, per household, unless otherwise specified by a local representative of the department on the subsistence fishing permit. A permit holder may obtain an additional permit from the department.

(c) A record of subsistence-caught fish must be kept on the permit. The record must be completed immediately upon taking subsistence-caught fish and must be returned to the local representative of the department no later than October 31.

Sport Regulations

Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area

5 AAC 65.020. General provisions for seasons and bag, possession, annual, and size limits for the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area

Except as otherwise provided in 5 AAC 65.022, 5 AAC 65.051, or by an emergency order issued under AS 16.05.060, the seasons and bag, possession, annual, and size limits for finfish and shellfish in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area are as follows:

(1) king salmon:

(A) in fresh waters: may be taken only from January 1 through July 25, except that king salmon may be taken in the Chignik River only from January 1 through August 9, and as follows:

(i) 20 inches or greater in length; bag and possession limit of two fish; annual limit of five fish; a harvest record is required as specified in 5 AAC 75.006;

(ii) less than 20 inches in length; bag and possession limit of 10 fish; no annual limit;

(2) salmon, other than king salmon: may be taken from January 1 through December 31, as follows:

(A) 20 inches or greater in length; bag limit of five fish and a possession limit of 10 fish;

(B) less than 20 inches in length; bag and possession limit of 10 fish;

Regulatory Year Initiated: 1992

Extent of Federal Public Lands/Waters

For purposes of this discussion, the phrase “Federal public waters” is defined as those waters described under 36 CFR 242.3 and 50 CFR 100.3. Federal public waters comprise the Trout Creek watershed which is within and adjacent to the exterior boundaries of Izembek and Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuges (**Figure 1**). The marine waters of Cold Bay were at one time considered Federal public waters. The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture later determined that some marine waters, including Cold Bay, were added to Federal subsistence regulation erroneously and should be removed (70 Fed. Reg. 247. 76407 [December 27, 2005]).



Figure 1. Map showing Trout Creek and Russel Creek salmon closures and areas used by residents of Cold Bay and King Cove to harvest salmon for subsistence: Mortensens Lagoon, Thin Point, and Leonard Harbor.

Customary and Traditional Use Determination

Residents of the Alaska Peninsula Area have a customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Alaska Peninsula Area.

Regulatory History

In 1992, the Federal Subsistence Management Program promulgated regulations governing the harvest of fish for subsistence uses in waters qualifying as "public lands" under ANILCA. (57 FR 22940). These regulations incorporated many provisions from State of Alaska subsistence fishing regulations that previously applied to those waters. The closure under review in this analysis was incorporated into the Federal regulations in this manner and has not been subsequently modified.

Closure last reviewed

There have been no previous reviews of this closure.

Justification for Original Closure

In 1990, the Federal Subsistence Management Program adopted temporary subsistence management regulations for public lands in Alaska, which included this closure, to minimize disruption to the State's continuing fish and game management, because of the uncertainty over the resumption of State management of subsistence, yet still fulfill the requirements of the Title VIII of ANILCA (55 Fed. Reg. 126; 27125, 27155 [June 29, 1990]).

Council Recommendation for Original Closure

None

State Recommendation for Original Closure

None

Biological Background

Anadromous species present in the Trout Creek drainage are Chum, Coho, Pink and Sockeye salmon (Johnson and Blossom 2021). None of the fish populations are regularly monitored so there is little abundance information available. Aerial surveys of Trout Creek have been conducted opportunistically since 1979. The maximum number of salmon observed during these surveys was 1,000 sockeye, 1,736 coho, 2,300 pink, and 1,200 chum (Burch 2022, pers. comm.). A fish passage assessment conducted in 2015 identified two culverts in the lower Trout Creek drainage that are assumed unsuitable for fish passage (Eisenman and O'Doherty 2018). However, anadromous species were documented at several locations upstream of those culverts in 2005 (Johnson and Blossom 2021).

Community Background

Introduction

Two communities have consistent access to Trout Creek. One, Cold Bay with a population of 50 residents is home to the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge offices (**Table 2**). Cold Bay is located at the western end of the Alaska Peninsula, 634 miles southwest of Anchorage and 180 miles northeast of Unalaska (**Figure 1**). Cold Bay residents can access Trout Creek by road vehicle or by foot. The small watershed is located directly east of the end of the Cold Bay airport runway. Cold Bay School closed in 2015 due to a lack of student enrollment (ADCRA 2022). The other community with consistent access to Trout Creek is King Cove with a population of 807 residents (**Table 2**). King Cove is located across the bay from the Cold Bay community and travel between the communities is limited to boat or plane. An Alaska State ferry arrives in Cold Bay and King Cove monthly from May through October (City of King Cove 2022).

Table 2. The population of Cold Bay and King Cove, 1960–2020 (Source: ADCCED 2022).

Community	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Cold Bay	86	256	192	148	88	108	50
King Cove	290	283	460	677*	792	938	757
Total	376	539	652	148	880	1,046	807

*The U.S. Census left out Ram Creek Subdivision in the community total of 451 in 1990 (ADLWFD 1993:82).

Cold Bay

The town began with the airport’s construction. Aleut people used the site seasonally because there were more sheltered areas in the region. Fort Randall Army Base built at Cold Bay during WWII had the largest airport west of Anchorage. The base was primarily a refueling stop and an advanced base where squadrons of fighters were stationed and infantrymen awaited transport to the fighting. After the Aleutians were retaken the base was a garrison town. The military had total control of all land in the area, handing off to other authorities over time, and retarding the growth of permanent residents and senses of community throughout the history of Cold Bay. In 1948 Cold Bay became Thornborough Air Force Base. The Air Force Base was activated during the Korean War and again during the Viet Nam War in the 1960s when there was a massive military presence in town. Statehood in 1959 brought Alaska Department of Transportation workers to Cold Bay. In 1960, the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge was formed and increased the presence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This removed a large amount of land from the possibility of private purchase (Petterson et al. 1983).

King Cove

King Cove community sits along a small cove on the south side of the Alaska Peninsula between Belkofski Bay on the east and Cold Bay on the west. The cash economy is dependent on commercial fisheries and seafood processors. A cannery operates year-round, and the boat harbor contains a large

number of vessels used for purse seining, trawling, crabbing, and driftnetting. Travel between the communities of Cold Bay and King Cove is limited to boat or plane. A high priority for local transportation has long been construction of an access road between King Cove and Cold Bay through the Izembek Wilderness Area to provide a more reliable link to the outside world during emergencies. The City of King Cove is again awaiting a decision on a proposed land transfer that would allow the access road to be extended directly to Cold Bay (Risdaal 2022, pers. comm.).

Settled in 1911 by cannery operators and commercial fishermen, the older Aleut community in the area was Belkofski. Belkofski remained a viable community even after the first cannery was built in King Cove in 1911. The cannery provided only seasonal employment. However, in the 1970s the cannery began to process crab and bottom fish and remained open year-round, and one-by-one, Belkofski families began to move to King Cove to secure more steady employment. The last Belkofski family moved to King Cove in the 1980s. Belkofski's former residents retained their own Tribal government. In addition to Belkofski, King Cove drew residents from other settlements in the area, including Thin Point, False Pass, Morzhovoi, Ikatan, Unga, and Sanak (Braun et al. 1986).

King Cove Aleut are within the Aleutians East Borough, the "Eastern Aleut," whose boundaries form a distinct cultural zone both historically and today and occupy six communities (Sand Point, King Cove, Nelson Lagoon, False Pass, Akutan, and Cold Bay). The Agdaagux Tribal Council is the King Cove Tribal Council. Most former residents of Belkofski now live in King Cove and are part of the Belkofski Corporation and Tribal Council (Reedy-Maschner 2010).

In the early days of salmon fishing, canneries owned fish traps and dories and hired their own labor or Aleut labor to move the fish from traps to the plants. Over time, the village struggled to become more independent of the cannery's patronage, a process that is still alive. The cannery blocked attempts to incorporate King Cove as a second-class city for fear of the tax burden. The village successfully petitioned again in 1949. The ability to tax allowed leaders to start infrastructure projects. The cannery has threatened to withhold fuel and other amenities if fishermen strike in protest of low fish prices (Reedy-Maschner 2010). Government recognition and citizenship are recent to Aleuts. Full U.S. citizenship did not come until the passage of the Fur Seal Act by Congress in 1966 (Mercurieff 1997 in Reedy-Maschner 2010).

Salmon for Home Use Removed from Commercial Catches

For the Aleut, commercial fishing is more than a "job" that finances subsistence harvesting. Dr. Katherine Reedy-Maschner collaborated with residents of King Cove to document their involvement in fisheries and wrote a book "Aleut Identities." She describes the catch of salmon for home use:

Although both men and women fish with rod and reel at Ram's Creek, which has a Pink Salmon run in July and August, or fish for a multitude of nonsalmon species off the docks, most fish taken for subsistence are from commercial catches, with the captain and crew using commercial gear. This is in part because Sockeye and Chinook (King) salmon are preferred over Pink and Chum salmon in taste and usage, and are usually stored in greater quantities but can be caught only at sea. Fishermen seldom

turn prized King Salmon in to the cannery because the price is often too low to make it worth their while. And because they would rather eat them. The fishermen catch salmon while out in their boats and send them back to town with the tenders—the large boats that move fish and supplies from the fishing grounds to the cannery—who leave them in metal containers on the fish dock. The tendermen then call or radio those for whom the fish are intended, and someone picks them up and takes them home or delivers them The decisions people make regarding the proportion of fish to remove from the commercial catch are based on knowledge of past distribution, assessment of the current needs of the people to whom that individual distributes, his wife’s or mother’s knowledge of who should get fish and how much, and the price of fish offered by the cannery. The lower the price paid, the more fish people bring home Limited entry restricts the number of boat and permit owners and can greatly affect an individual’s ability to provide subsistence resources to this household or to other households that depend on him. Economic status, age, or other circumstances exclude some households from being able to fish, but extended family or friends often include them in their own activities or share a portion of their catches (Reedy-Maschner 2010:88).

Salmon removed from commercial salmon harvest, “home pack,” is an important source of salmon. This number may be substantial, especially in years when commercial salmon prices are low. (Fall et al. 1993; ADF&G 2022).

Non-permitted, non-crewing fishermen set their subsistence nets close to the village

Community Harvest and Use

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game issues subsistence permits to subsistence fishermen who then must record the numbers of fish taken on the permits and return them. The permits, however, do not generally include salmon retained by commercial fishermen, and the number of permits does not indicate every subsistence harvester (Fall et al. 1993; Brown et al. 2021).

In addition to Mortensen’s Lagoon located about 9 miles southeast of Cold Bay with easy road access, Thin Point Lagoon, situated 12 miles west of King Cove, and Leonard Harbor, situated near the King Cove road system, are some of the primary areas used for obtaining subsistence Sockeye and Coho salmon for King Cove and Cold Bay residents (Johnson and Fox 2015). Most nonlocal residents of Alaska fish at Mortensen’s Lagoon primarily because of easy road access from the Cold Bay airport (Tscherich and Russ 2008; Brown et al. 2021).

The estimated harvest of salmon by residents of King Cove and Cold Bay, based on household surveys, is described in **Table 3**. King Cove residents harvested over 17,000 salmon in 1992 and 2016, which equated to over 50% of the harvest of all wild resources in pounds edible weight. Cold Bay residents harvested 1,141 salmon in 2016, which equated to 64% of the harvest of all wild resources in pounds edible weight. The majority of harvests was comprised of Sockeye Salmon (**Figure 2**).

In 1992, data from household surveys estimated that 51% of the salmon harvested for home use in King Cove and 27% in 2016 were removed from commercial harvests (Fall et al. 1993; ADF&G 2022).

Table 3. The estimated harvest of salmon for subsistence in numbers of fish, the per person harvest of salmon in pounds of edible weight, and the percentage of salmon in the total wild resource harvest, based on households surveys in study years 1992 and 2016 (ADF&G 2022).

Community	Study Year	Estimated harvest (#s of fish)	Lower harvest estimate (#s of fish)	Upper harvest estimate (#s of fish)	Per person harvest (lbs edible weight)	Percentage of total wild resource harvest (lbs edible weight)
King Cove	1992	17,073	10,985	23,161	137	53%
King Cove	2016	17,445	12,245	23,095	192	64%
Cold Bay	2016	1,141	1,191	1,994	148	64%

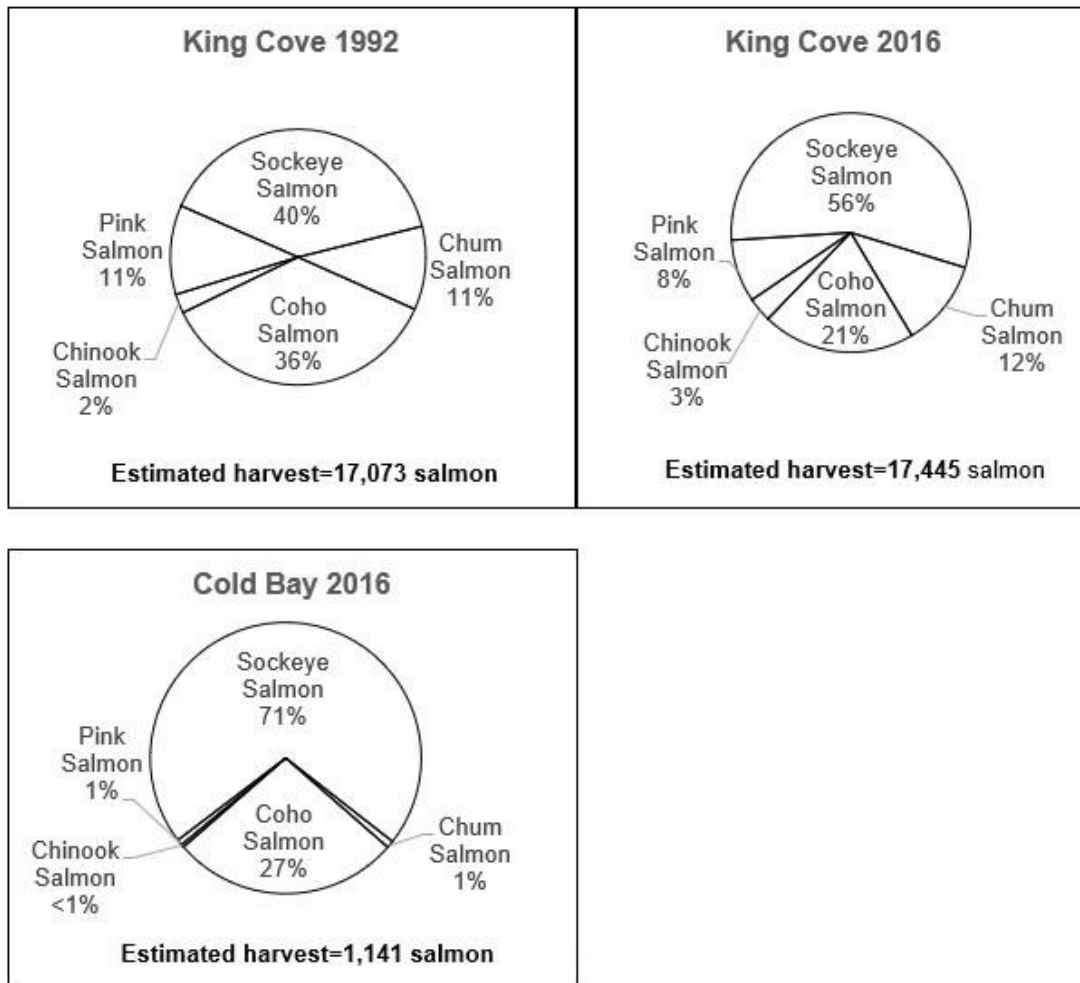


Figure 2. The estimated harvest of salmon by species in 1992 and 2016 at King Cove and Cold Bay (Source: ADF&G 2022).

Although freezing is widely used, residents preserve salmon harvest by salting, smoking, and drying (Pink Salmon). Dried Pink Salmon are call “yukola.” Pickling of salted salmon, canning, and jarring also occurs. Freezer space is not usually sufficient to freeze all salmon harvested. Most freeze a few Chinook (King) and Sockeye Salmon (Fall et al. 1993).

Harvest History

No subsistence harvest has occurred in the Trout Creek drainage including within 500 yards of its mouth as this area is closed to State and Federal subsistence harvest. Trout Creek is open to harvest under State sport regulations, but harvest is combined and reported with all Area R (Alaska Peninsula) harvest and therefore exact numbers are unavailable (Alaska Sport Fishing Survey Database 2022).

Effects

According to Title VIII, section 804 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), “...the taking on public lands of fish and wildlife for nonwasteful subsistence uses shall be accorded priority over taking on such lands of fish and wildlife for other purposes.” There are currently nonsubsistence uses permitted in this area making the current situation out of compliance with Title VIII of ANILCA. Rescinding the closure would provide Federal opportunity to harvest salmon in the Trout Creek drainage, thereby providing priority consumptive use to Federally qualified subsistence users.

If the closure is rescinded, Federal subsistence regulations for the Alaska Peninsula Area would apply which could lead to overharvest and conservation concerns. To conserve fish populations, the Federal in-season manager could issue a special action to set provisions for the fishery, such as stipulating gear types such as rod and reel only and setting conservative harvest limits.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

- Retain the Status Quo
- Rescind the Closure**
- Modify the Closure
- Defer Decision on the Closure or Take No Action

The regulations should read:

§ __.27(e)(7) *Alaska Peninsula Area*

(v) *You may not subsistence fish for salmon in the following waters:*

~~(B) *Trout Creek and within 500 yards outside its mouth.*~~

Justification

The Trout Creek drainage is currently closed to the harvest of salmon by Federally qualified subsistence users but remains open to other uses. Federal subsistence opportunity should also be provided to comply with the rural preference mandated by ANILCA. The Federal in-season manager has been delegated authority to open or close Federal subsistence fishing periods or areas provided under codified regulations and to specify methods and means; to specify permit requirements; and to set harvest and possession limits for Federal subsistence fisheries (**Appendix 2**). The in-season manager can use this authority to manage the fishery in the short term. A proposal outlining desired parameters for this fishery may be submitted during the next fisheries cycle so they can be put into regulation.

If this closure is retained, regulatory language referring to marine waters should be removed, and the word “drainage” should be included after Trout Creek to clarify that this closure applies to the entire Trout Creek drainage.

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SELECTED SUBSISTENCE REGULATIONS

These listed regulations are not inclusive of all the regulations that apply to subsistence salmon fishing in the Alaska Peninsula Area.

5 AAC 01.430. LIMITS TO NUMBER OF SALMON TAKEN: 250 salmon per household, unless otherwise specified by a local representative of the department. Additional household permits are available by request from the local ADF&G representative.

5 AAC 01.420. LIMITS TO GEAR USED TO TAKE SALMON: Salmon may be taken by seine or gillnet. No set gillnet may exceed 100 fathoms in length. No drift gillnet may exceed 200 fathoms in length. In areas open to commercial salmon fishing, salmon can only be taken with gillnets of not more than 50 fathoms in aggregate length.

5 AAC 01.427. IDENTIFICATION OF GILLNET GEAR: A buoy at one end of any gillnet must be plainly and legibly marked with the operator's first initial, last name, and mailing address of the permit holder or the vessel's ADF&G number.

5 AAC 01.410. FISHING SEASONS: Salmon may be taken at any time except as follows:

1. In those districts and sections open to commercial salmon fishing, salmon may not be taken by a commercial salmon fishing permit holder within 24 hours before and within 12 hours following a commercial salmon fishing period.
2. As otherwise specified on a subsistence fishing permit; and
3. In the waters closed to subsistence fishing for salmon specified in 5 AAC 01.425.

Exceptions to this rule are listed under EXCEPTIONS 1 and 2 below or as listed on an amended permit.

5 AAC 01.423. SPECIAL PROVISIONS:

1. Mortensens Lagoon: (Mortensens Lagoon and waters within 500 yards of the Mortensens Lagoon terminus only). Salmon may be taken at any time, however the following restrictions apply:
 - A. Subsistence gear is restricted to gillnets of 15 fathoms or less in length.
 - B. No more than 50 salmon per permit per season may be taken from Mortensens Lagoon or within 500 yards of the lagoon terminus.
2. False Pass vicinity: That portion of Bechevin Bay and Isanotski Strait bounded by the latitude of Morzhovoi Village (54°54.58' N lat.) and the latitude of Whirl Point (54°49.50' N lat.). Salmon may be taken at any time using gillnets of 50 fathoms or less in length.
3. Fresh waters of Bear River: Salmon may be taken at anytime upstream from the confluence of the Milky River, also known as the Mad Sow River (a tributary of the Bear River) with gear specified on the subsistence permit.
4. Fresh waters of Sandy River: Salmon may be taken at anytime upstream from the Sandy River (oil exploration) aircraft landing strip located five (5) miles (upriver) of the stream terminus, with gear specified on the subsistence permit.

5 AAC 01.425. WATERS CLOSED TO SUBSISTENCE SALMON FISHING:

1. Russell Creek and Nurse Lagoon and within 500 yards from the stream terminus of Russell Creek and Nurse Lagoon.
2. Trout Creek and within 500 yards outside its mouth.
3. Inshore of a line from the Trident Seafood's Dock at Sand Point to Black Point (located on the northwestern side of Popof Island), including the inlet and Humboldt Creek.
4. Black Hills Section: all freshwaters and within 500 yards of any anadromous salmon stream terminus.
5. Bear River Section: waters closed to commercial salmon fishing under 5 AAC 09.350 and 5 AAC 39.290 and waters of Frank's Lagoon and King Salmon River, excluding exceptions in Bear and Sandy Rivers listed earlier on this permit.
6. No subsistence fishing is allowed in waters closed to commercial salmon fishing as described under 5 AAC 09.350 or 5 AAC 39.290 during a commercial salmon fishing period. Exceptions to this rule are listed under SPECIAL PROVISIONS 1 and 2 above or as specified on an amended permit.

ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS:

1. **No more than half the width of a stream or its mouth may be obstructed by a net.** This restriction includes blocking the stream mouth while "roundhauling."
2. The operator must be in proximity of his or her gear at all times.
3. **Salmon may not be taken by sport fishing methods while taking subsistence salmon with a net and you may not be in possession of sport caught and subsistence caught salmon at the same time.**
4. Subsistence fishing gear may at no time be used within 100 feet of another set gillnet.
5. Definition of subsistence uses: AS 16.05.940(33) subsistence uses means the noncommercial, customary and traditional uses of wild, renewable resources.

Return permit by October 31, 2020 to: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Peninsula Salmon Management, 351 Research Court, Kodiak AK 99615. Questions or concerns please contact your local Fish and Game Office: Cold Bay (907) 532-2419; Sand Point (907) 383-2066; Port Moller (907) 375-2716; Kodiak (907) 486-1882.

APPENDIX 2

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY LETTER TO THE INSEASON MANAGER OF THE SOUTHWEST ALASKA AREA

Branch Chief - Fisheries
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office
4700 BLM Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Dear Branch Chief:

This letter delegates specific regulatory authority from the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) to the Branch Chief - Fisheries of the Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (Branch Chief) to issue emergency special actions when necessary to ensure the conservation of a healthy fish population, to continue subsistence uses of fish, for the continued viability of a fish population, or for public safety reasons. This delegation only applies to Federal public waters subject to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Title VIII in the Bristol Bay/Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Islands/Chignik Areas.

It is the intent of the Board that Federal subsistence fisheries management by Federal officials be coordinated, prior to implementation, with Regional Advisory Council (Council) representatives, the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), to the extent possible. The OSM will be used by managers to facilitate communication of actions and to ensure proposed actions are technically and administratively aligned with legal mandates and policies. Federal managers are expected to cooperate with managers from the State and other Federal agencies, the Council Chair(s), and applicable Council members to minimize disruption to resource users and existing agency programs, consistent with the need for emergency special action.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

- 1. Delegation:** The Branch Chief is hereby delegated authority to issue emergency special actions affecting fisheries in Federal public waters as outlined under the **Scope of Delegation** below. Although a public hearing is not required for emergency special actions, if deemed necessary by you, then a public hearing on the emergency special action is recommended. Special actions are governed by regulation at 36 CFR 242.19 and 50 CFR 100.19.
- 2. Authority:** This delegation of authority is established pursuant to 36 CFR 242.10(d)(6) and 50 CFR 100.10(d)(6), which state: “The Board may delegate to agency field officials the authority to set harvest and possession limits, define harvest areas, specify methods or means of harvest, specify permit requirements, and open or close specific fish or wildlife harvest seasons within frameworks established by the Board.”
- 3. Scope of Delegation:** The regulatory authority hereby delegated is limited to the issuance of emergency special actions as defined by 36 CFR 242.19(a) and 50 CFR 100.19(a). Such an emergency action may not exceed 60 days, and may not be extended.

This delegation permits you to open or close Federal subsistence fishing periods or areas provided under codified regulations. It also permits you to specify methods and means; to specify permit requirements; and to set harvest and possession limits for Federal subsistence fisheries.

This delegation also permits you to close and re-open Federal public waters to nonsubsistence fishing, but does not permit you to specify methods and means, permit requirements, or harvest and possession limits for State-managed fisheries. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve healthy populations of fish or to ensure the continuation of subsistence uses.

All other proposed changes to codified regulations, such as customary and traditional use determinations or requests for special actions greater than 60 days, shall be directed to the Board.

The Federal public waters subject to this delegated authority are those within the Bristol Bay/Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Islands/Chignik Areas (as described in the Subsistence Management Regulations for the Harvest of Fish and Shellfish on Federal Public Lands and Waters in Alaska). You will coordinate all local fishery decisions with all affected Federal land managers.

4. Effective Period: This delegation of authority is effective from the date of this letter and continues until superseded or rescinded.

5. Guidelines for Review of Proposed Special Actions: You will use the following guidelines to determine the appropriate course of action when reviewing proposed special actions.

- a) Does the proposed special action fall within the geographic and regulatory scope of delegation?
- b) Have you communicated with the OSM to ensure the emergency special action is aligned with Federal subsistence regulations and policy?
- c) Does the proposed action need to be implemented immediately as an emergency special action, or can the desired conservation or subsistence use goal be addressed by deferring the issue to the next regulatory cycle?
- d) Does the supporting information in the proposed special action substantiate the need for the action?
- e) Are the assertions in the proposed special action confirmed by available current biological information and/or by affected subsistence users?
- f) Is the proposed special action supported in the context of available historical information on stock status and harvests by affected users?
- g) Is the proposed special action likely to achieve the expected results?
- h) Have the perspectives of the Chair or alternate of the affected Council(s), OSM, and affected State and Federal managers been fully considered in the review of the proposed special action?
- i) Have the potential impacts of the proposed special action on all affected subsistence users and non-Federally qualified users within the drainage been considered?

j) Can public announcement of the proposed special action be made in a timely manner to accomplish the management objective?

k) After evaluating all information and weighing the merits of the special action against other actions, including no action, is the proposed emergency special action reasonable, rational, and responsible?

6. Guidelines for Delegation: You will become familiar with the management history of the fisheries in the region, with the current State and Federal regulations and management plans, and be up-to-date on stock and harvest status information.

You will provide subsistence users in the region a local point of contact about Federal subsistence fishery issues and regulations and facilitate a local liaison with State managers and other user groups. For in-season management decisions and special actions, consultation is not always possible, but to the extent practicable, two-way communication will take place before decisions are implemented. You will also establish meaningful and timely opportunities for government-to-government consultation related to pre-season and post-season management actions as established in the Board's Government to Government Tribal Consultation Policy (Federal Subsistence Board Government to Government Tribal Consultation Policy 2012).

You will review emergency special action requests or situations that may require an emergency special action and all supporting information to determine (1) consistency with 36 CFR 242.19 and 50 CFR 100.19, (2) if the request/situation falls within the scope of your delegated authority, (3) if significant conservation problems or subsistence harvest concerns are indicated, and (4) what the consequences of taking an action may be on potentially affected subsistence uses and nonsubsistence uses. Requests not within your delegated authority will be forwarded to the Board for consideration.

You will maintain a record of all special action requests and justification of your decisions. A copy of this record will be provided to the Administrative Records Specialist at OSM no later than sixty days after development of the document.

You will immediately notify the Board through the Assistant Regional Director for the OSM, and coordinate with Chair or alternate of the affected Council(s), local ADF&G managers, and other affected Federal conservation unit managers concerning emergency special actions being considered.

If the timing of a regularly scheduled meeting of the affected Council(s) permits without incurring undue delay, you may seek Council recommendations on the proposed emergency special action.

You will issue decisions in a timely manner. Before the effective date of any decision, reasonable efforts will be made to notify Council representatives, the public, OSM, affected State and Federal managers, and law enforcement personnel. If an action is to supersede a State action not yet in effect, the decision will be communicated to Council representatives, the public, OSM, and State and Federal managers at least 24 hours before the State action would be effective. If a decision to take no action is made, you will notify the proponents of the request immediately.

You may defer an emergency special action request, otherwise covered by the delegation of authority, to the Board in instances when the proposed management action will have a significant impact on a large number of Federal subsistence users or is particularly controversial. These options should be exercised judiciously and only when sufficient time allows. Such deferrals should not be considered

when immediate management actions are necessary for conservation purposes. The Board may determine that an emergency special action request may best be handled by the Board, subsequently rescinding the delegated authority for the specific action only.

7. Reporting: You must provide to the Board, through the Assistant Regional Director for the OSM, a report describing the pre-season coordination efforts, local fisheries management decisions, and post-season evaluation activities for the previous fishing season by November 15. A summary of emergency special action requests and your resultant actions must be provided to the coordinator of the appropriate Council(s) at the end of the calendar year for presentation during regularly scheduled Council meetings.

8. Support Services: Administrative support for your local Federal subsistence fisheries management activities will be provided by the Office of Subsistence Management.

Should you have any questions about this delegation of authority, please feel free to contact the Assistant Regional Director for the OSM at toll-free 1-800-478-1456 or (907) 786-3888.

Sincerely,



Anthony Christianson
Chair

Enclosures: Maps of the Bristol Bay, Aleutian Islands, and Alaska Peninsula/Chignik areas

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Subsistence Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management
Fisheries Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management
Chair, Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Chair, Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Superintendent, Lake Clark/Katmai National Parks and Preserve
Manager, Togiak National Wildlife Refuge
Manager, Alaska Peninsula/Becharof National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Manager, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge
Manager, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
Assistant Regional Director, Law Enforcement, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Region 7)
Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record

Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP)

2024 Overview

Quick Info

- Established in 2000
- Focuses on subsistence fisheries in Federal public waters in Alaska
- Solicits proposals every two years
- Projects may be awarded up to four years of funding
- See <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp> for more information

What is the FRMP?

The Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) funds research to provide information that can help manage subsistence fisheries in Federal public waters in Alaska. *Projects are required to focus on harvest monitoring, traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), and stock status and trends.* Proposals are evaluated based on strategic priority, scientific merit, investigator ability and resources, cost/benefit, and the extent to which they meaningfully involve Alaska Native and rural organizations (partnerships and capacity building). Projects may be led by Alaska Native and rural organizations, universities, government agencies, or private contractors.

Priority Information Needs (PINs)

PINs are research needs that could be addressed through FRMP projects. Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) members help develop potential PINs throughout the summer before an FRMP cycle. Potential PINs are then discussed and finalized during the fall Council meetings. Finalized PINs are included in the FRMP project solicitations and ultimately influence the direction of the Monitoring Program.

FRMP Timeline

March-November 2022: Council members develop potential 2024 priority information needs and finalize them at fall Council meetings

December 2022: OSM publishes Notice of Funding Opportunity

February – May 2023: OSM reviews proposals

June 2023: Technical Review Committee evaluates and scores proposals

September – November 2023: Councils and Interagency Staff Committee comment on proposals

January 2024: Federal Subsistence Board provides recommendation on the draft Monitoring Plan that includes proposals recommended for funding

February 2024: Assistant Regional Director for OSM approves Monitoring Plan and notification letters are sent to applicants

May - July 2024: Projects begin

Southwest FRMP Projects Since 2000

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
Bristol Bay Salmon Projects		
00-010	Togiak River Salmon Weir	USFWS
00-031	Alagnak River Sockeye Salmon Escapement	AFD&G, NPS, BBNA
00-033	Alagnak River Angler Effort Index	ADF&G, NPS, BBNA
00-042	Lake Clark Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USGS
01-047	Togiak River Subsistence Harvest Monitoring	BBNA, ADF&G, USFWS
01-075	Nondalton Sockeye Salmon and Freshwater Fish TEK	NPS, NTC, USGS
01-095	Lake Clark Sockeye Salmon Escapement	USGS, NTC
01-109	Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Alaska Peninsula/Becharof NWR	ADF&G, BBNA
01-173	Alagnak River Harvest Salmon Escapement Estimation	ADF&G
01-204	Ugashik Lakes Coho Salmon Escapement Estimation	USFWS
03-046	Fisheries Biotechnician Training Program	NPS
04-411	Lake Clark Sockeye Salmon Run Timing	USFWS, BBNA
04-454	Bristol Bay Sharing, Bartering, and Traded of Subsistence Resources	ADF&G, BBNA
05-402	Lake Clark Sockeye Salmon Escapement	NPS, USGS
08-402	Togiak River Chinook Salmon Radio Telemetry	USFWS, BBNA, ADF&G
08-405	Lake Clark Sockeye Salmon Assessment	NPS, USS&E, BBNA
10-402	Togiak River Chinook Salmon Adult Assessment	USFWS, BBNA, ADF&G
16-451	Bristol Bay Subsistence Salmon Networks	ADF&G, BBNA, OSU
16-453	Togiak River Chinook Salmon Subsistence Harvest Assessment	ADF&G, BBNA
22-452 ^a	False Pass and Nelson Lagoon Subsistence Harvest Monitoring and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Investigation	ADF&G
22-453 ^a	Subsistence Harvests and Uses of Salmon and Other Wild Resources in Manokotak, Alaska	ADF&G, BBNA
Chignik Salmon Projects		
02-098	Kametalook River Coho Salmon Escapement & Carrying Capacity	USFWS, BBNA
02-099	Clark River Estimation of Sockeye and Coho Salmon Escapement	USFWS, BBNA
03-043	Perryville Coho Salmon Escapement	USFWS
05-405	Perryville-Chignik Coho and Sockeye Salmon Aerial Surveys	USFWS
07-404	Perryville-Clark River Coho and Sockeye Salmon Aerial Surveys	USFWS
22-401 ^a	Chignik River Subsistence Harvest Surveys and Escapement Indexing	ADF&G, USFWS, CIC
Bristol Bay-Chignik Freshwater Species Projects		
00-011	Togiak River Dolly Varden Genetic Baseline Development	USFWS

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
00-012	Bristol Bay Traditional Knowledge of Fish	ADF&G
02-034	Kvichak River Resident Species Subsistence Fisheries	ADF&G, BBNA
04-401	Ungalikthlik and Negukthlik Rivers Rainbow Trout Assessment	USFWS
04-415	Tazimina Rainbow Trout Assessment	ADF&G
05-403	Lake Clark Whitefish Assessment	ADF&G
07-408	Togiak River Rainbow Smelt Assessment	USFWS, BBNA
07-452	Kvichak Watershed Subsistence Fishing Ethnography	ADF&G, BBNA, NPS
12-452	Whitefish Trends in Lake Clark and Iliamna Lake	ADF&G, BBNA, NPS, NTC
Kodiak-Aleutians Projects		
00-032	Buskin River Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G
01-059	McLees Lake Sockeye Salmon Escapement	USFWS
01-206	Mortenson Creek Sockeye and Coho Salmon Escapement	USFWS
02-032	Lower Alaska Peninsula/Aleutians Subsistence Fish Harvest Assessment	ADF&G, APIA, ISU
03-047	Afognak Lake Sockeye Smolt Enumerations Feasibility	ADF&G
04-402	Mortenson Creek Sockeye and Coho Escapement	USFWS
04-403	McLees Lake Sockeye Salmon Escapement	USFWS
04-412	Afognak Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G
04-414	Buskin River Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G
04-457	Kodiak Subsistence Fisheries Harvest and TEK	ADF&G, KANA
07-401	Afognak Lake Sockeye Salmon Smolt Assessment	ADF&G
07-402	Buskin River Sockeye Salmon Weir	ADF&G
07-405	McLees Lake Sockeye Salmon Weir	USFWS, ADF&G, QT
10-401	Afognak Lake Sockeye Salmon Smolt and Adult Assessment	ADF&G
10-403	Buskin River Sockeye Salmon Adult Assessment	ADF&G
10-404	Buskin River Sockeye Salmon Smolt Assessment Feasibility	ADF&G
10-406	McLees Lake Sockeye Salmon Weir	USFWS, ADF&G, QT
12-450	Aleutian Islands Salmon and Other Subsistence Harvests	ISU
12-453	Kodiak Salmon Fishery Changing Patterns	ADF&G
14-401	Buskin River Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G
14-402	Afognak Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G
16-452	Western Gulf of Alaska Salmon and Other Harvests	ISU
18-400	Buskin River Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment and Monitoring	ADF&G
18-450	Unalaska Fish Harvest Practices	ADF&G
18-451	Subsistence Harvest Trends of Salmon and Nonsalmon Fish in 4 Southern Kodiak Island Communities	ADF&G
20-400 ^a	McLees Lake Sockeye Salmon Escapement	ADF&G/QT
20-450 ^a	Kodiak Road System Subsistence Salmon and Nonsalmon	ADF&G
22-400 ^a	Buskin River Salmon Stock Assessment and Monitoring, Kodiak, Alaska	ADF&G

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
22-454 ^a	Reliable estimates of subsistence harvests and uses in Ouzinkie and Port Lions	ADF&G, USFWS

a= Ongoing project.

Abbreviations used for investigators are: **ADF&G** = Alaska Department of Fish and Game, **APIA** = Aleutian-Pribilof Islands Association, **BBNA** = Bristol Bay Native Association, **CIC** = Chignik Intertribal Coalition, **ISU** = Idaho State University, **KANA** = Kodiak Area Native Association, **NPS** = National Park Service, **NTC** = Nondalton Tribal Council, **OSU** = Oregon State University, **QT** = Qawalangin Tribe, **USFWS** = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, **USGS** = U.S. Geological Survey, **USS&E** = U.S. Science and Education, and **UW** = University of Washington.

Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program Notice of Funding Opportunity

The Office of Subsistence Management is seeking proposals for the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program to strengthen Alaska Native and rural involvement in Federal subsistence management. The Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program is a competitive grant program that provides funding for biologist/social scientist/educator positions in Alaska Native and rural nonprofit organizations with the intent of increasing the organizations' ability to participate in Federal subsistence management. In addition, the program supports a variety of opportunities for rural students to learn about subsistence resource monitoring and management through science camps and paid internships.

More information about the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program Notice of Funding Opportunity can be found in *GrantSolutions.gov*, *Grants.gov*, or on the Office of Subsistence Management Website <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/partners>, or by contacting Karen Hyer at Karen_Hyer@fws.gov, 907-786-3689.



McLees Lake Weir, Unalaska Island. Photograph by Jenny Renee.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Background

ANILCA established the Annual Reports as the way to bring regional subsistence uses and needs to the Secretaries' attention. The Secretaries delegated this responsibility to the Board. Section 805(c) deference includes matters brought forward in the Annual Report.

The Annual Report provides the Councils an opportunity to address the directors of each of the four Department of Interior agencies and the Department of Agriculture Forest Service in their capacity as members of the Federal Subsistence Board. The Board is required to discuss and reply to each issue in every Annual Report and to take action when within the Board's authority. In many cases, if the issue is outside of the Board's authority, the Board will provide information to the Council on how to contact personnel at the correct agency. As agency directors, the Board members have authority to implement most of the actions which would effect the changes recommended by the Councils, even those not covered in Section 805(c). The Councils are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.

Report Content

Both Title VIII Section 805 and 50 CFR §100.11 (Subpart B of the regulations) describe what may be contained in an Annual Report from the councils to the Board. This description includes issues that are not generally addressed by the normal regulatory process:

- an identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the region;
- an evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife populations from the public lands within the region;
- a recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs related to the public lands; and
- recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.

Please avoid filler or fluff language that does not specifically raise an issue of concern or information to the Board.

Report Clarity

In order for the Board to adequately respond to each Council's annual report, it is important for the annual report itself to state issues clearly.

- If addressing an existing Board policy, Councils should please state whether there is something unclear about the policy, if there is uncertainty about the reason for the policy, or if the Council needs information on how the policy is applied.
- Council members should discuss in detail at Council meetings the issues for the annual report and assist the Council Coordinator in understanding and stating the issues clearly.

- Council Coordinators and OSM staff should assist the Council members during the meeting in ensuring that the issue is stated clearly.

Thus, if the Councils can be clear about their issues of concern and ensure that the Council Coordinator is relaying them sufficiently, then the Board and OSM staff will endeavor to provide as concise and responsive of a reply as is possible.

Report Format

While no particular format is necessary for the Annual Reports, the report must clearly state the following for each item the Council wants the Board to address:

1. Numbering of the issues,
2. A description of each issue,
3. Whether the Council seeks Board action on the matter and, if so, what action the Council recommends, and
4. As much evidence or explanation as necessary to support the Council's request or statements relating to the item of interest.



2023 NORTH AMERICAN CARIBOU WORKSHOP & ARCTIC UNGULATE CONFERENCE

Anchorage, Alaska ■ May 8-12, 2023

Come to the conference to share your knowledge and learn from others! Join an international group of managers, biologists, Indigenous and Local Knowledge holders, and others to share knowledge of caribou, muskoxen, Dall's sheep, moose, and reindeer. The meeting will provide opportunities for exchanging viewpoints, concerns, and recommendations regarding the health, stewardship, use, and study of these important species.

The theme for the joint meeting is *Crossing Boundaries*. Arctic ungulates regularly cross landscape boundaries, connecting ecosystems and peoples, necessitating partnerships and collaboration across management and political boundaries. A critical component of such partnerships involves crossing the boundaries of Western science and Indigenous knowledges to identify creative opportunities to sustain Arctic ungulate populations in a changing world. We will explore these themes across four days of research talks, storytelling, workshops and panel discussions. Join us!

For more information visit www.nacw-auc-2023.org or e-mail info@nacw-auc-2023.org.





United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

Aniakchak National Monument, Katmai National Park & Preserve,
and Alagnak Wild River

P.O. Box 7

King Salmon, Alaska 99613-0007

Phone (907) 246-3305

Fax (907) 246-2116



ANIAKCHAK NATIONAL MONUMENT SUBSISTENCE RESOURCE COMMISSION

The Aniakchak National Monument Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) provides local subsistence users an opportunity to inform the management of subsistence resources in Aniakchak and the surrounding area (Unit 9E). Since the establishment of the Federal Subsistence Program in 1990, the nine-member commission has made recommendations on fish and wildlife proposals directly to Regional Advisory Councils and the Federal Subsistence Board.

The Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (RAC) appoints three members to the SRC. These members provide an important link between the SRC and the Federal Subsistence Management Program. In addition to the RAC appointments, three members of the SRC are appointed by the Governor of Alaska and three members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior.

At its November 2022 meeting, the RAC has the opportunity to take action on its appointment to the SRC. According to ANILCA Section 808(a), members of the RAC or local Advisory Councils (AC), such as the Chignik AC or Lower Bristol Bay AC, who also engage in subsistence in the monument, are eligible for this appointment. To be eligible to engage in subsistence within the monument, rural residents must make their primary permanent home in one of the monument's resident zone communities, live within the monument, or hold a subsistence permit issued pursuant to 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 13.440.

Subsistence users who have questions about or are interested in applying for a seat on the SRC should contact Troy Hamon at troy_hamon@nps.gov.

Aniakchak SRC Roster February 2022

Name	Community	Appointing Source	Expires*
Gerda Kosbruk	Port Heiden	Bristol Bay RAC	3/12/2022
Mark Kosbruk, Sr.	Port Heiden	Bristol Bay RAC	11/4/2020
VACANT	---	Bristol Bay RAC	---
Ronald (Ron) Lind	Chignik Lake	Governor of Alaska	12/1/2021
Scott Anderson	Port Heiden	Governor of Alaska	12/1/2021
VACANT	---	Governor of Alaska	---
Colleen Jones	Chignik Lagoon	Secretary of the Interior	1/1/2024
John Christensen, Jr.	Port Heiden	Secretary of the Interior	1/1/2024
VACANT	---	Secretary of the Interior	---

* All members serve three-year terms. According to 54 U.S. Code § 100906(c), members continue to serve until re-appointed or replaced. However, RAC appointees must be current members of a RAC or AC for their appointments to be valid.

NPFMC Salmon Reports from June 2022 Council meeting

Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT)
Western Alaska Salmon Subcommittee
July 8, 2022



Diana L. Stram, Ph.D
Senior Scientist, North Pacific Fishery Management Council



- 1) An updated bycatch impact (AEQ) analysis which includes current genetic stock identification information and an updated age/length composition for Chinook salmon along with estimates of how many Chinook salmon taken as bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery would have returned to Western Alaska Chinook salmon stock groupings. The analysis should include a PSC harvest rate analysis and an estimate of the Chinook salmon bycatch impacts to each specific stock grouping at the current cap levels and at actual bycatch levels in recent years. The Council also requests that the report include recommendations to evaluate impacts of chum salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery with currently available data.
- 2) A stock status update of Western Alaska Chinook and chum salmon stocks.
- In addition, the Council requests staff write a letter to the Secretary of State to request help to identify levels and stock composition of bycatch of salmon in waters outside of the jurisdiction of the United States. The Council requests staff write a letter in support of recent requests to the Secretary of Commerce for increased and dedicated funding for salmon research, observation, and monitoring, including on the lifecycle of salmon species in the freshwater, nearshore, and marine environments, and the effects that environmental changes are having on salmon throughout their lifecycle.

- Salmon stock status and research updates
 - Stock status update for WAK Chinook and chum
 - AFSC overview of salmon research and mandates
 - ADF&G overview of ongoing research and plans
- BSAI and GOA salmon genetics reports
 - BSAI Chum salmon bycatch genetics from 2020-2021
 - Chinook salmon genetics 2020 (BSAI and GOA)
- Update on ongoing genetics works and plans
 - AFSC progress and plans
- Bering Sea Chinook Adult Equivalency and Impact rate report; staff recommendation for assessing chum impacts
 - Update on 2015/2018 report; changes noted in age/length updates and maturity estimates
 - Staff feedback on assessing chum bycatch impacts
- Salmon Excluder final report
- Reports from the IPAs (3)
- SeaShare update

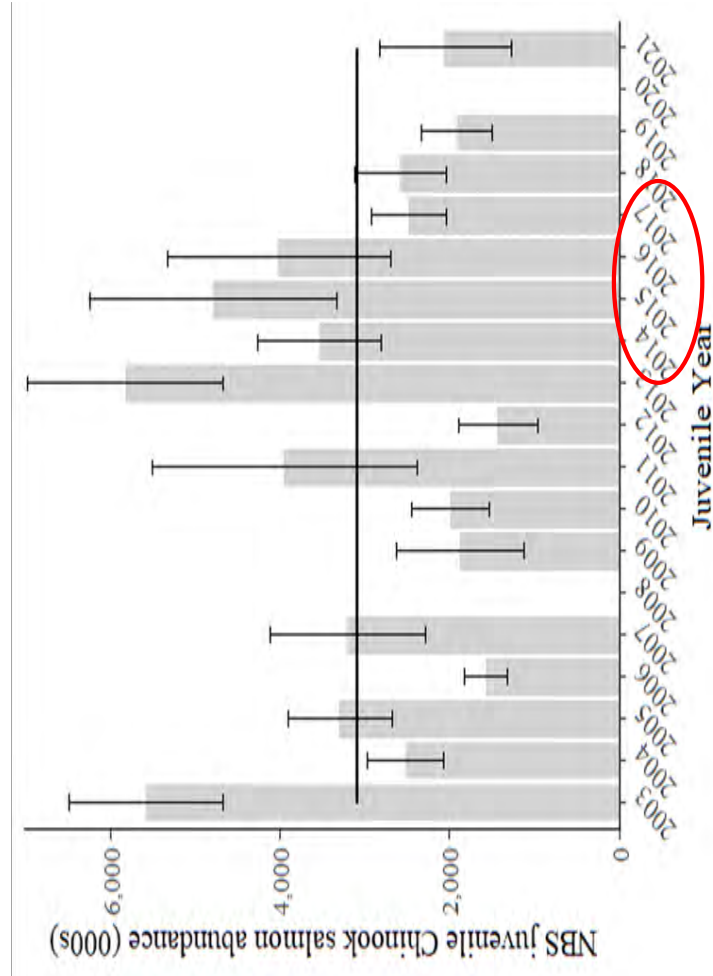


Presentations to the Council

Research updates:
NOAA and ADF&G



Juvenile Chinook salmon abundance

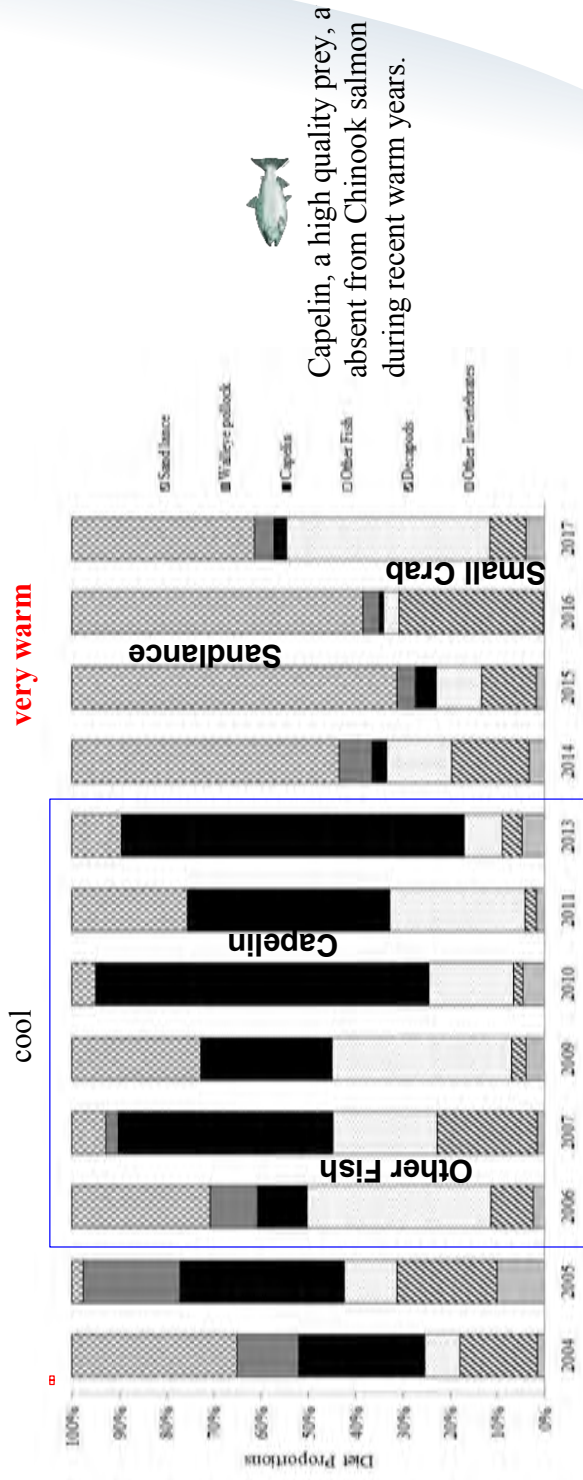


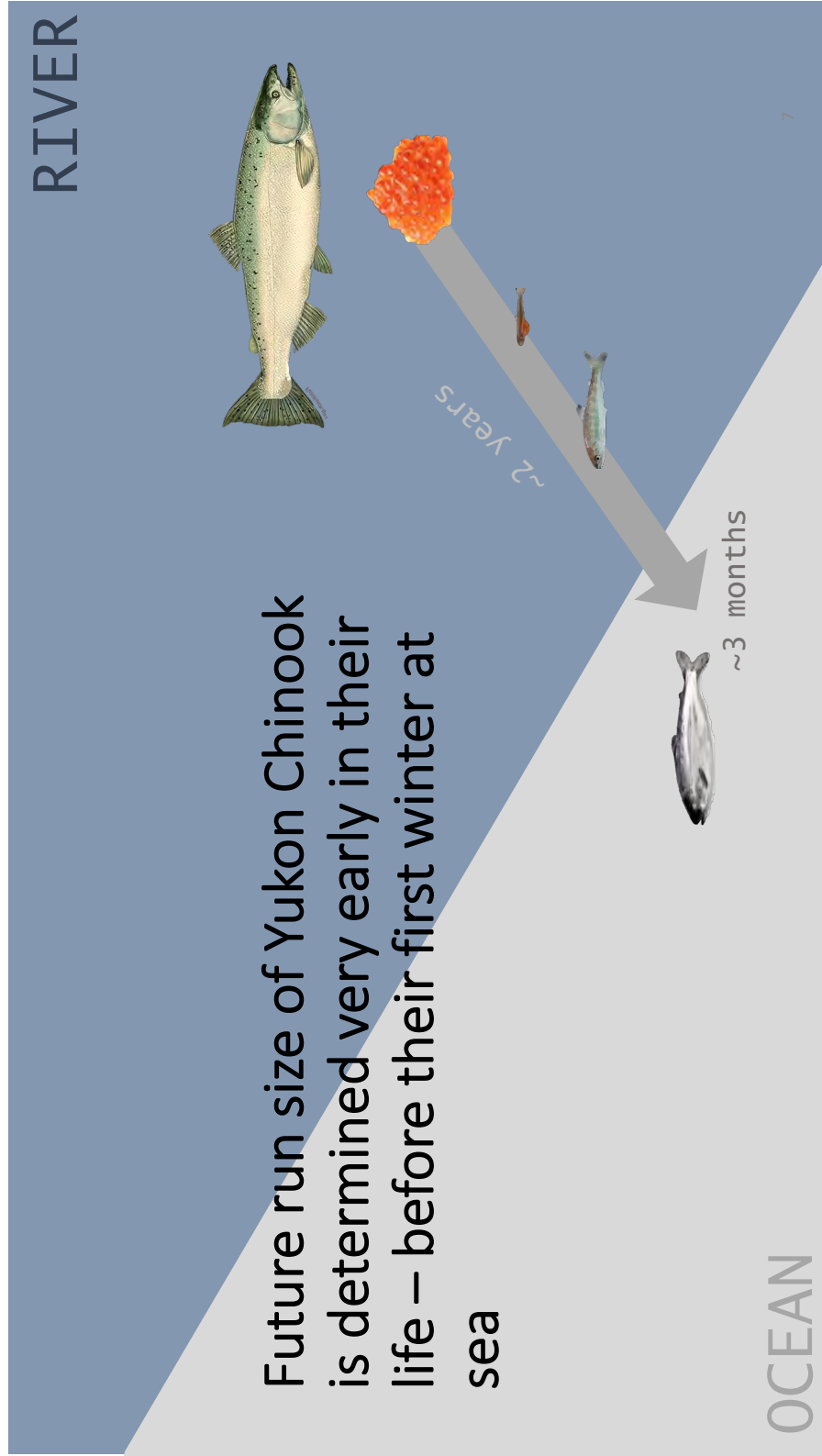
Abundance of Juvenile Chinook has been below average since 2017

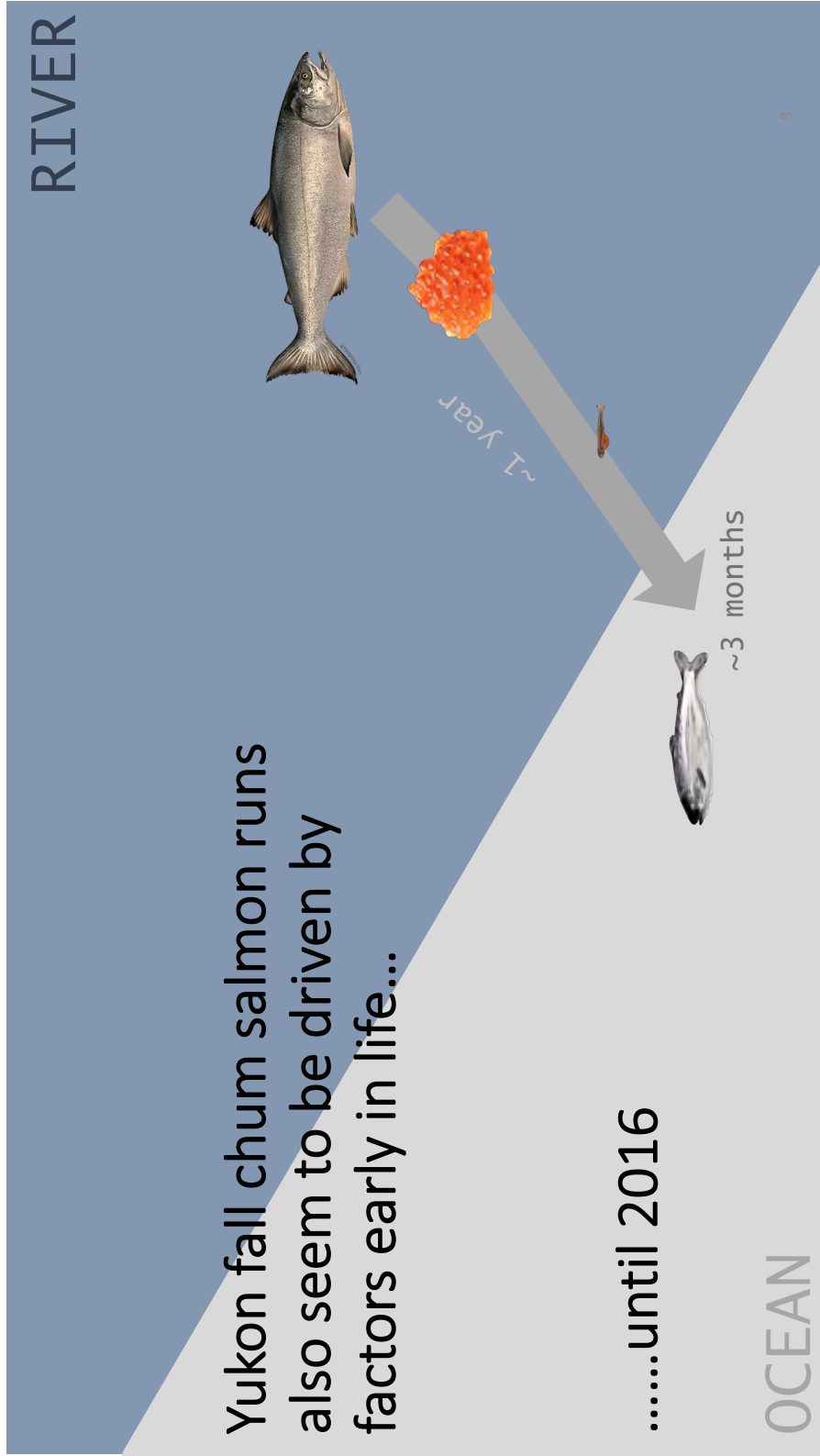
Smaller than average size during recent warm years

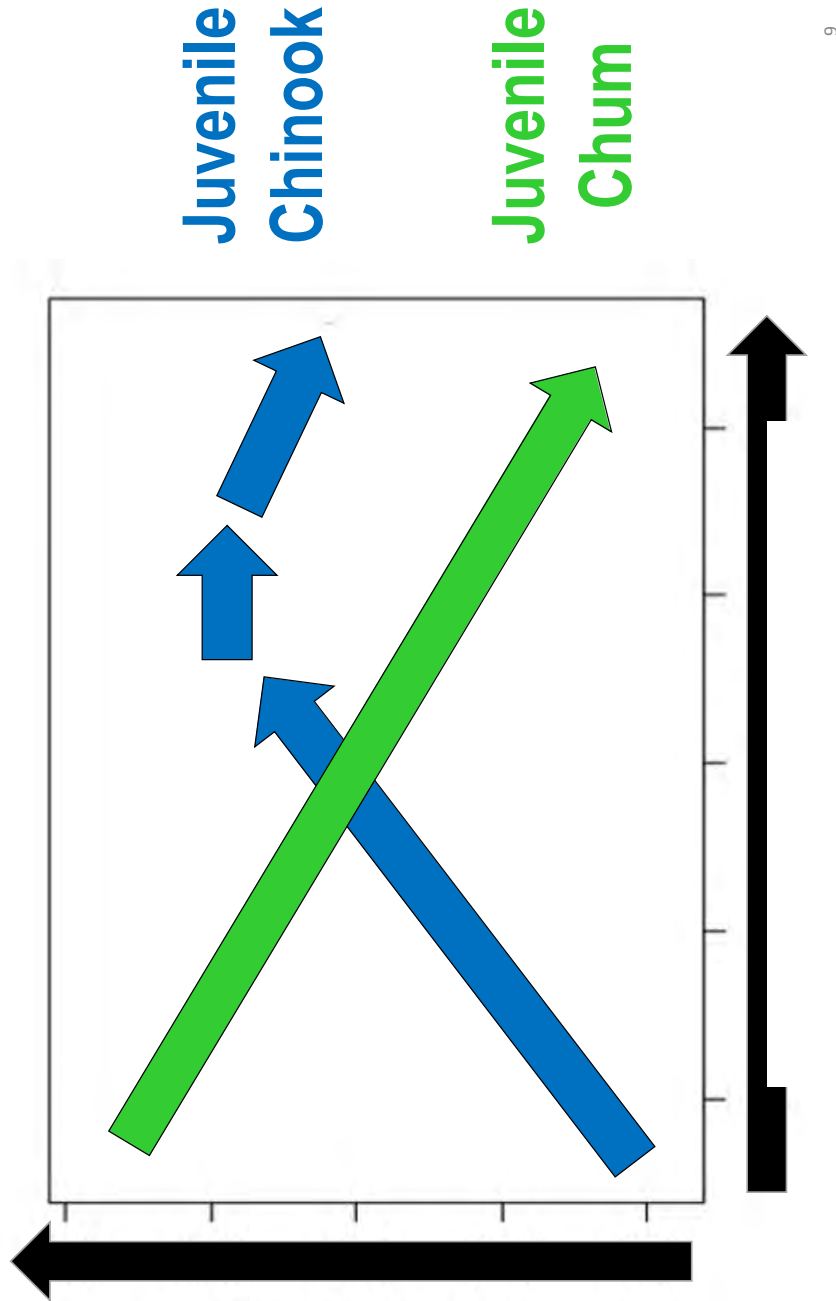


Juvenile Chinook Salmon Diet









9

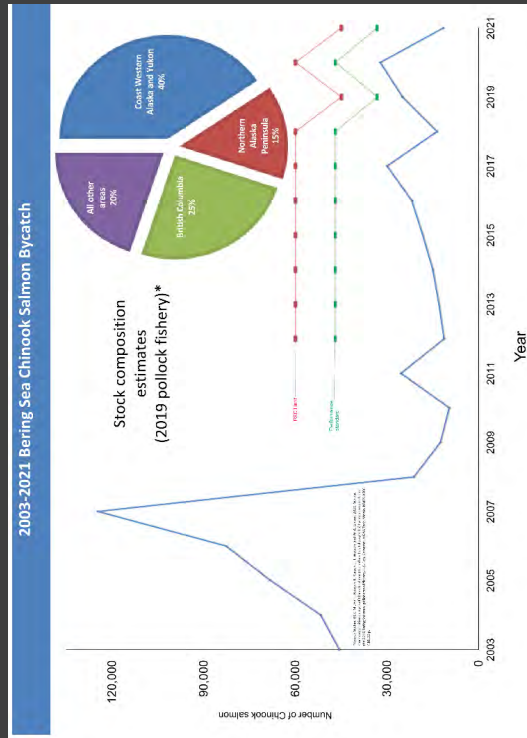




Genetics Summary

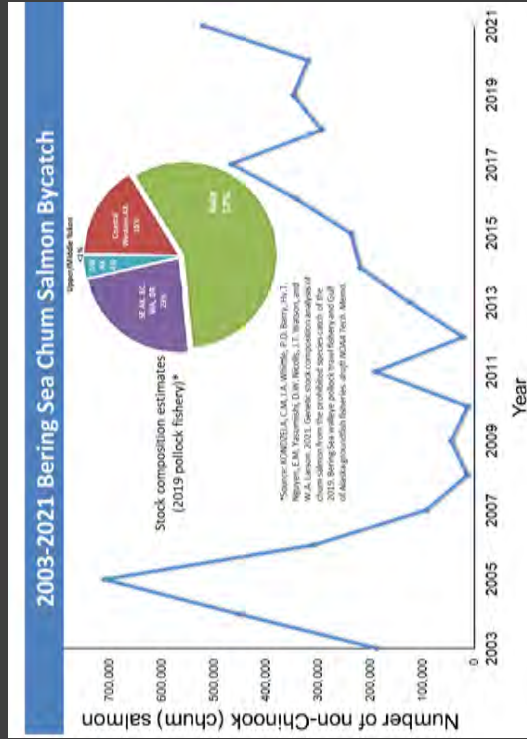


Trends and genetic breakouts



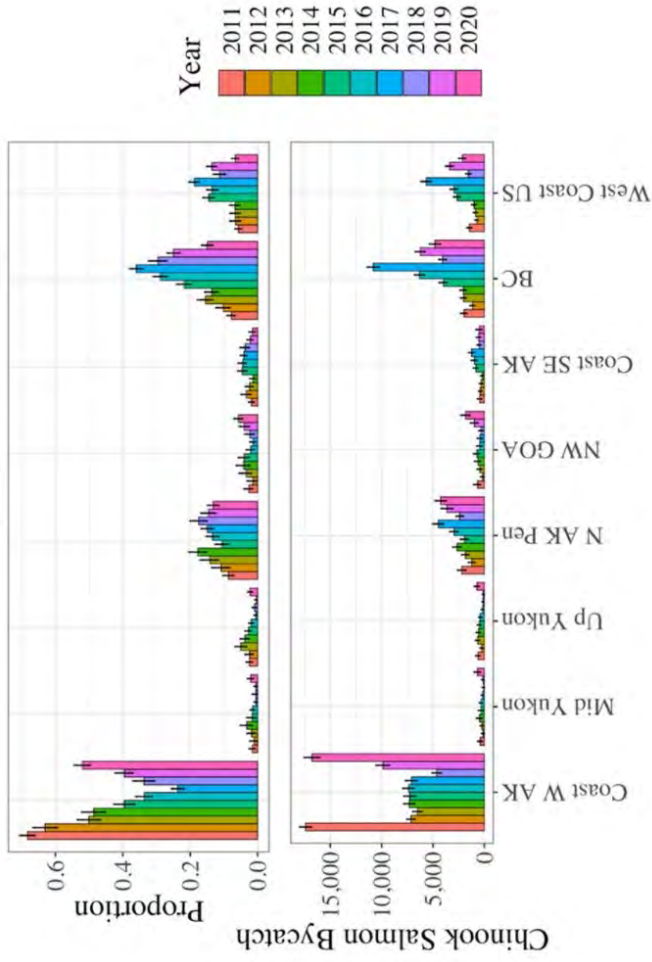
Chinook 2021: 13,783*

*from NIMFS from Catch Accounting System database 12/21/2021

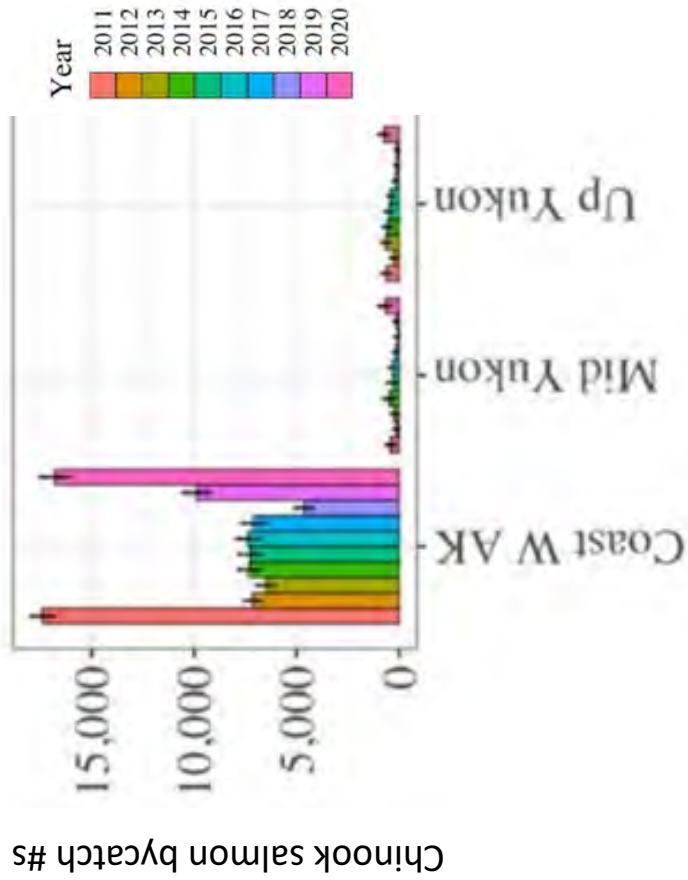


Chum 2021: 530,626*

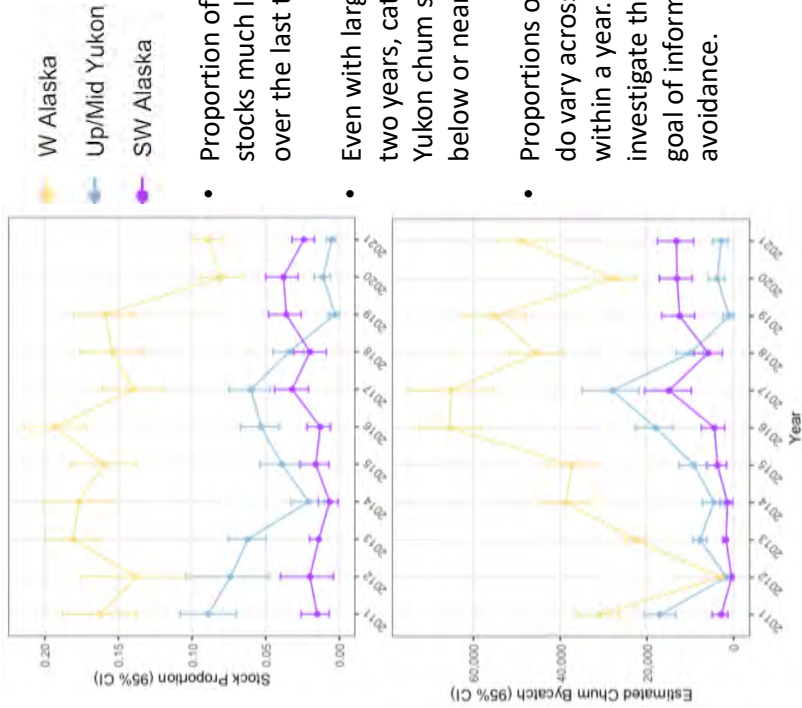
Major genetic takeaways: BSAI Chinook salmon



Spike in WAK catches, southern stocks decreasing after 2017 peak



Major takeaways: chum salmon



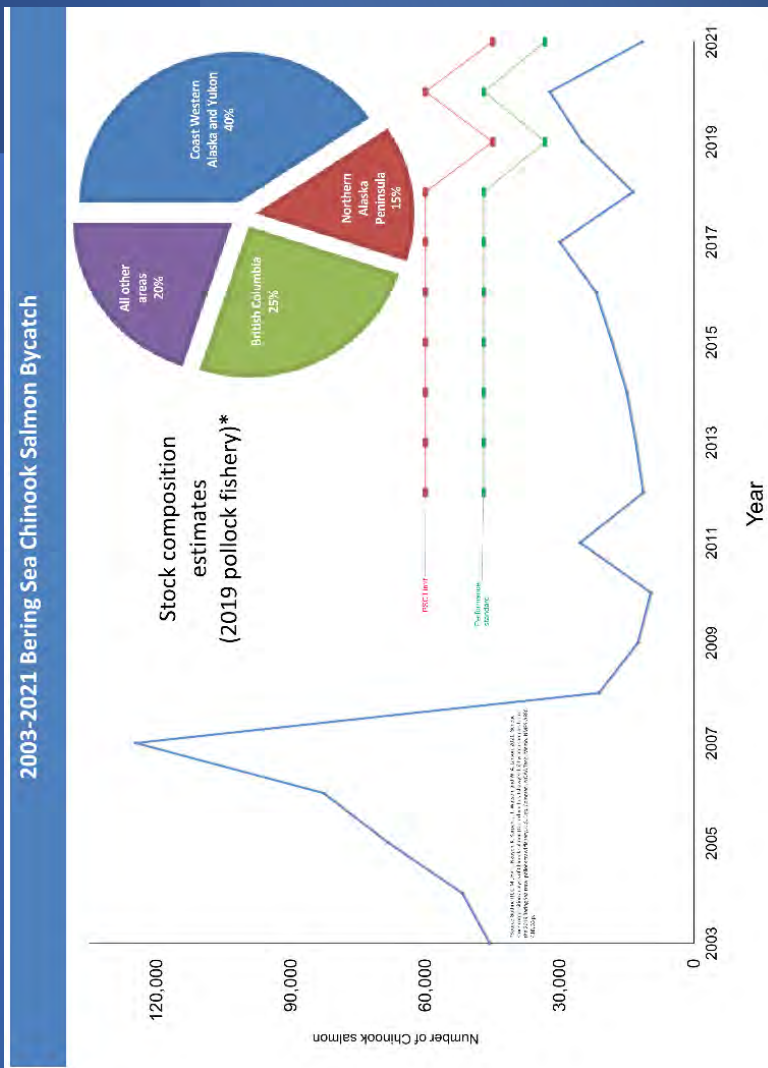
- Proportion of WAK and Yukon stocks much lower than average over the last two years
- Even with large bycatch in the last two years, catches of WAK and Yukon chum salmon have been below or near average
- Proportions of WAK and Yukon fish do vary across space and time within a year. We are planning to investigate this further with the goal of informing stock-specific avoidance.



Adult Equivalency
(AEQ) and impact rate
update BSAI Chinook

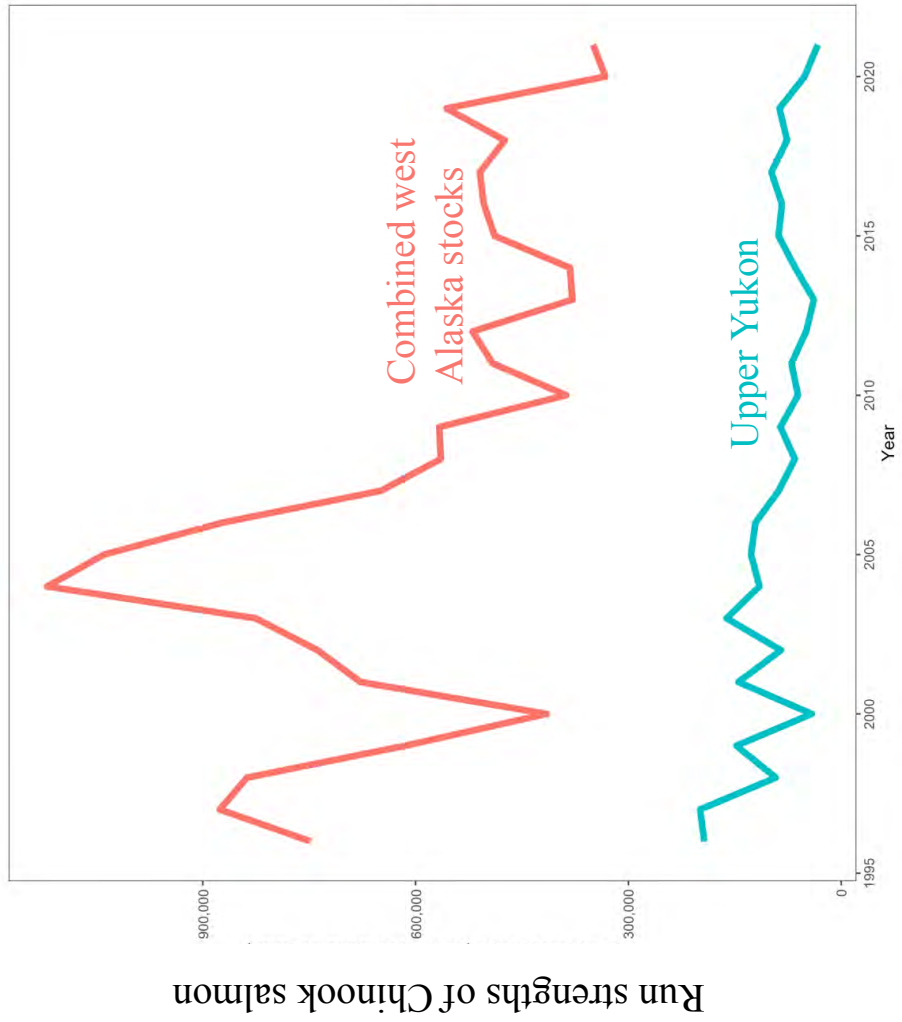
How do we estimate how many bycaught salmon would have back to a river system

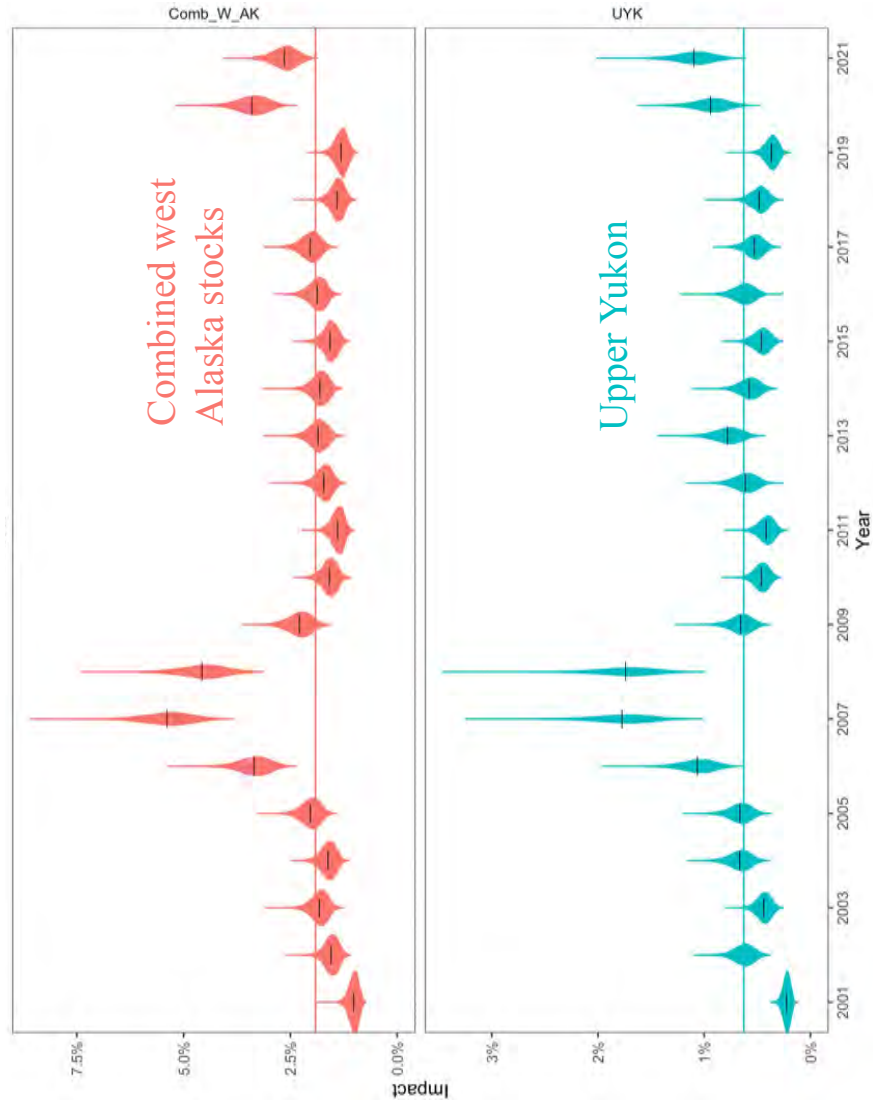
- To estimate Adult Equivalent (AEQ)
 - fish that would have returned to some river that year if they had not died from bycatch
 - Information needs:
 - Number of salmon bycaught
 - from observer program
 - Age of fish
 - from observer data on length
 - using Age-Length key (updated 2022)
 - Region of origin
 - limited to Coastal West Alaska and Upper Yukon for WAK
 - Estimated maturity by year
 - We do this in aggregate across multiple WAK rivers
-
- To estimate impact rate the % of the total run
 - the sum of the rivers in a specific genetic grouping (e.g. CWAK or Upper Yukon) that would have returned to that genetic area had the fish not been caught as bycatch
 - Information needs:
 - AEQ for that grouping
 - Run size estimate
 - for all applicable rivers in that grouping
 - E.g. only Upper Yukon has a single run size estimate, for CWAK it is sum across all western Alaska Rivers from Norton Sound to the Nushagak



2022 (A season) 5,184

Run sizes



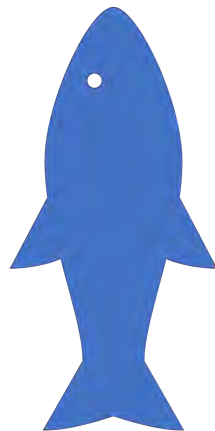


$$\text{Impact estimates} = \frac{\text{AEQ}}{(\text{run size} + \text{AEQ})}$$

Summary

- Impact rates which has averaged 1.9% since 2011 for the combined coastal western Alaska stocks
 - 0.6% for the Upper Yukon
- The rate for the western Alaska stocks increased in 2020 to an estimate of 3.4% but dropped in 2021 to 2.6%
 - 0.9% and 1.1% for the Upper Yukon
- The increase is due to lower returns overall with the biggest decrease for Combined western Alaska from the Nushagak River

Chum salmon
impact
recommendations



AEQ for chum

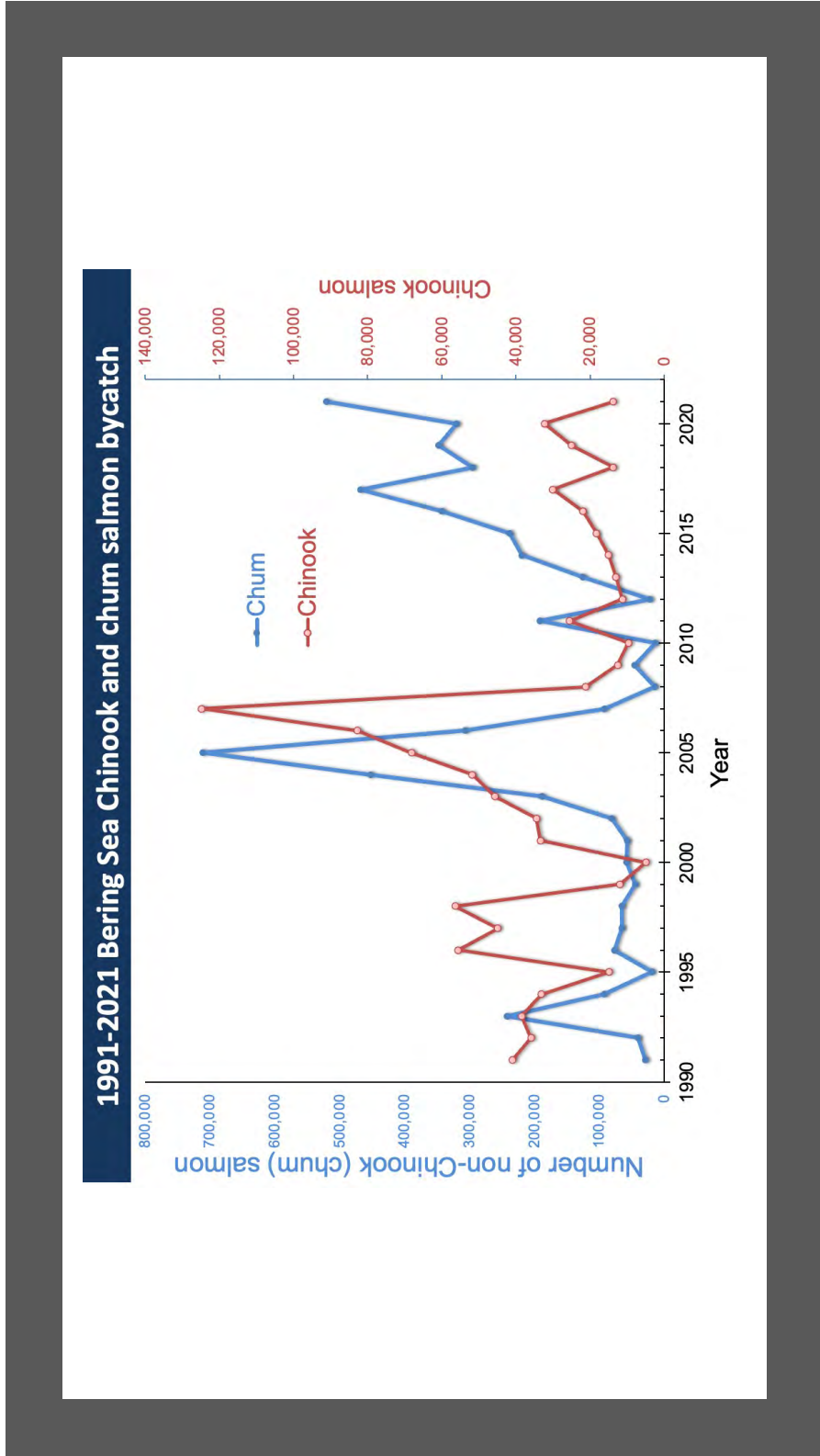
- a coarse estimate of an AEQ but several assumptions would need to be made where data are not available (i.e., maturity and natural mortality rate).

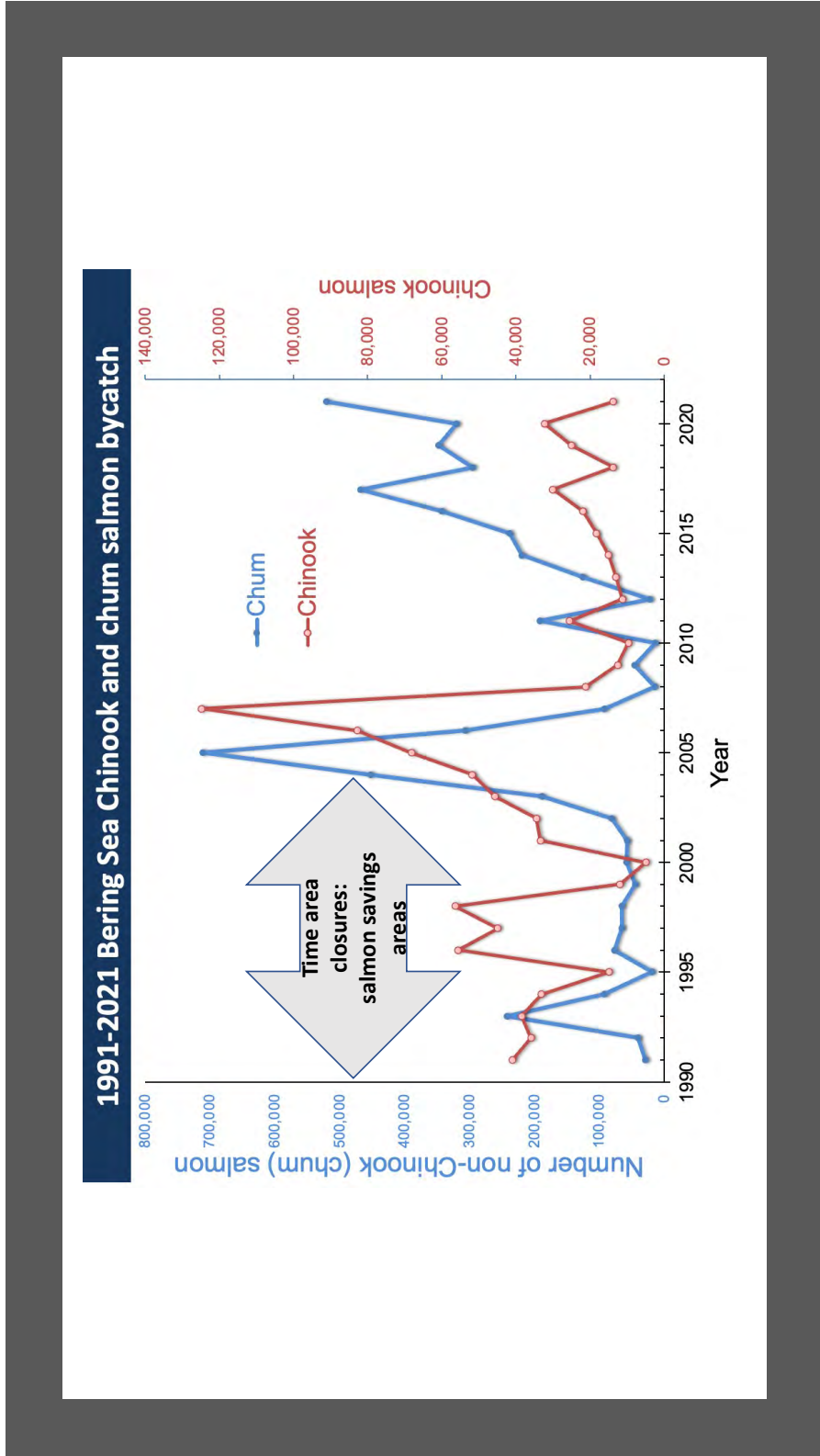
Impact rate for chum

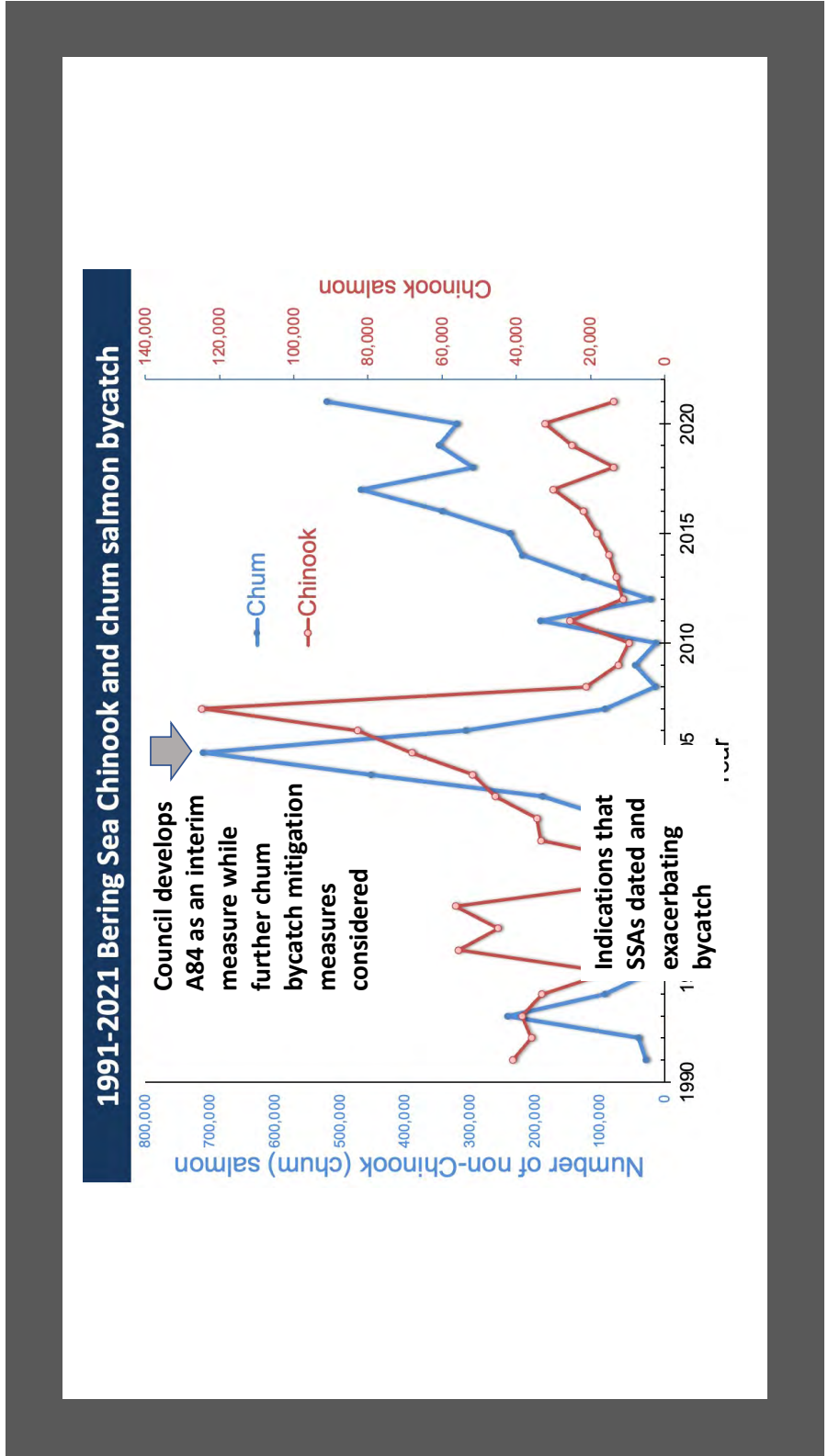
- For CWAK this is not possible.
- Run reconstructions are currently only available for Yukon River summer and fall chum salmon and Kwiniuk River chum salmon. This excludes large populations in Kuskokwim River and throughout Bristol Bay, Kotzebue Sound, and Norton Sound. Unlike Chinook salmon, the lack of run reconstructions for large populations of W. Alaska chum salmon means that a good approximation of total W. Alaska chum salmon abundance cannot be provided at this time.
- Impact rate for Yukon fall would be possible but may not reflect trends across all western AK chum stocks

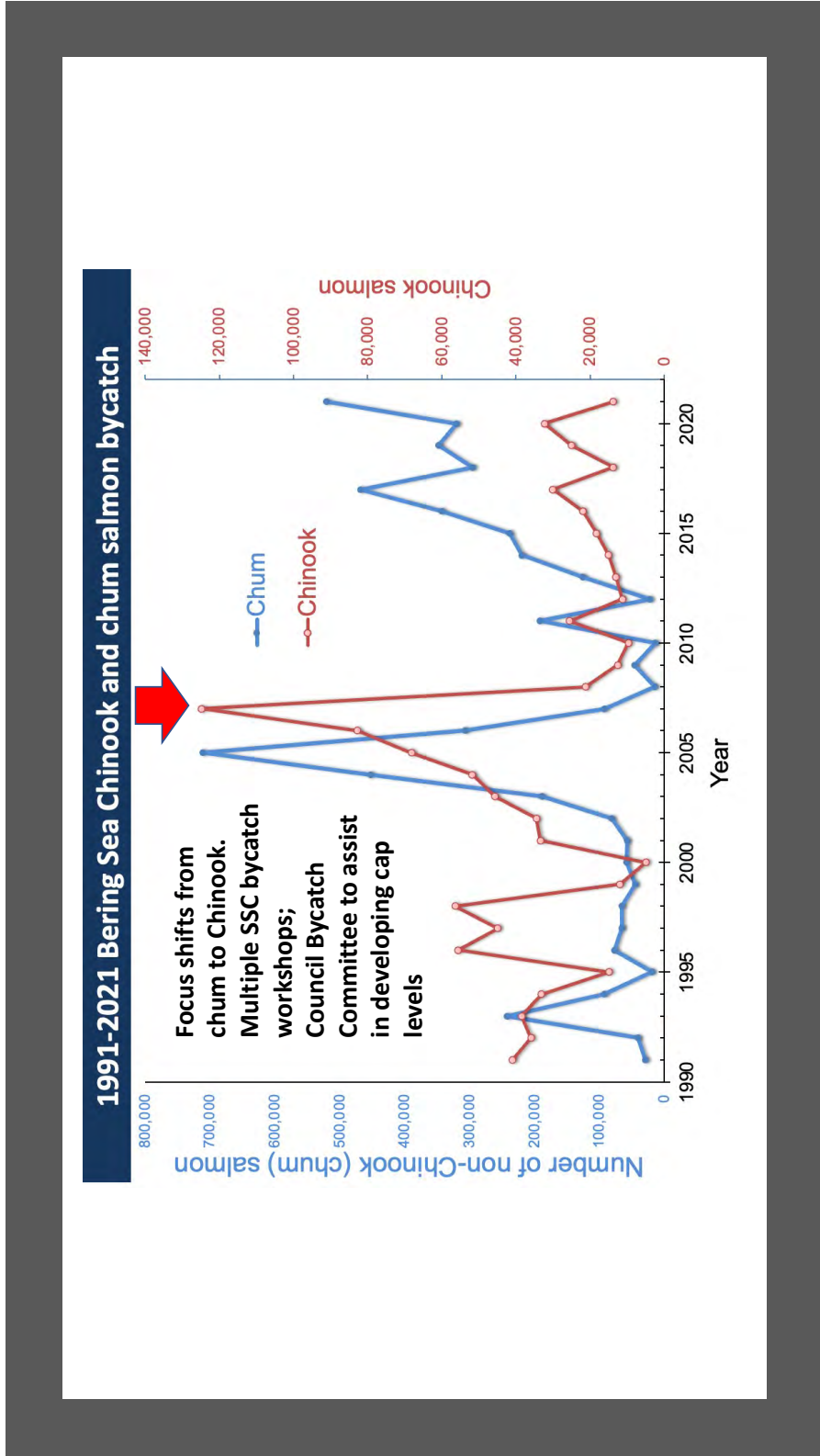
Assessing impacts

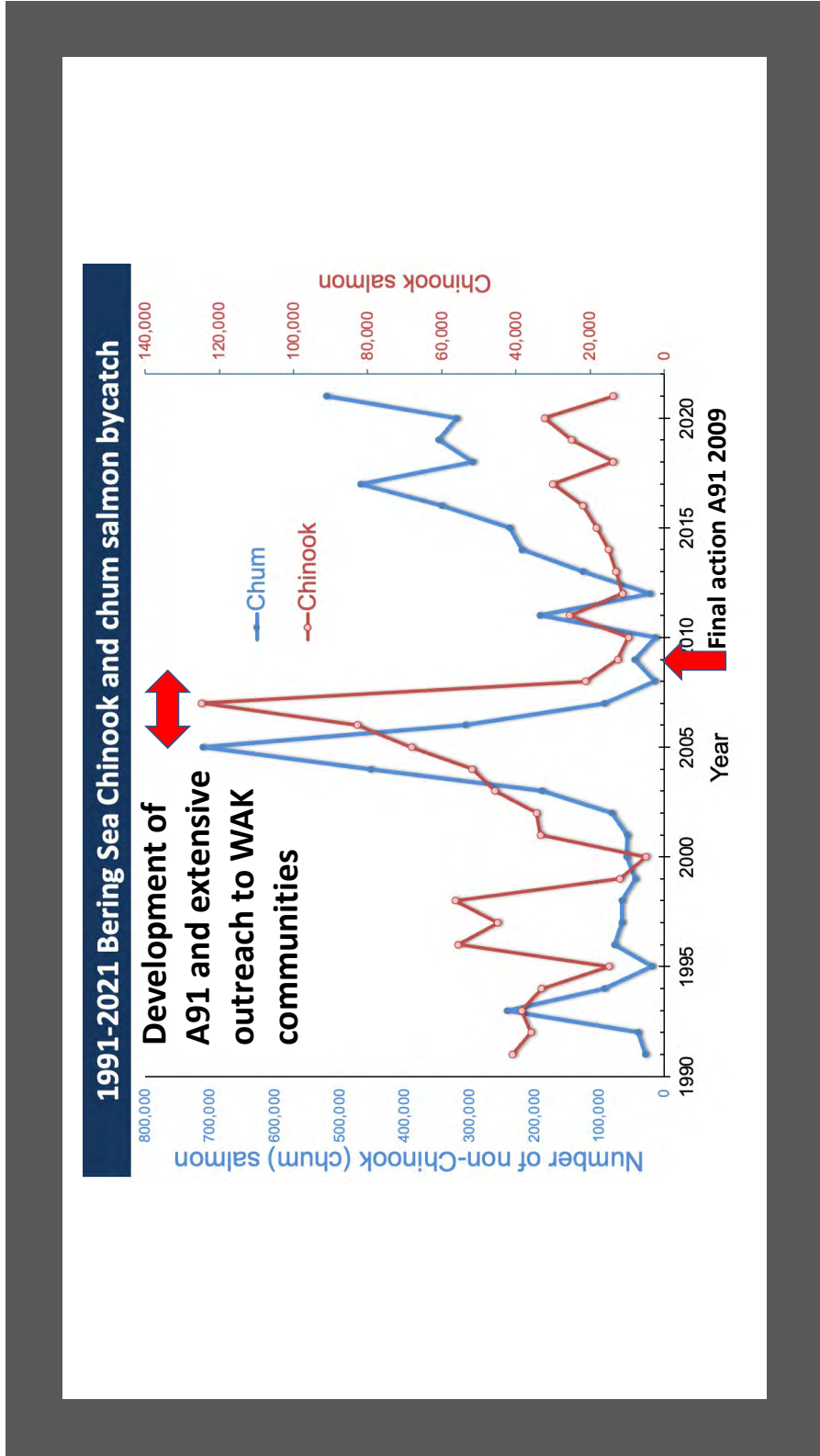
Brief history of actions related to
Chinook and chum salmon bycatch
management

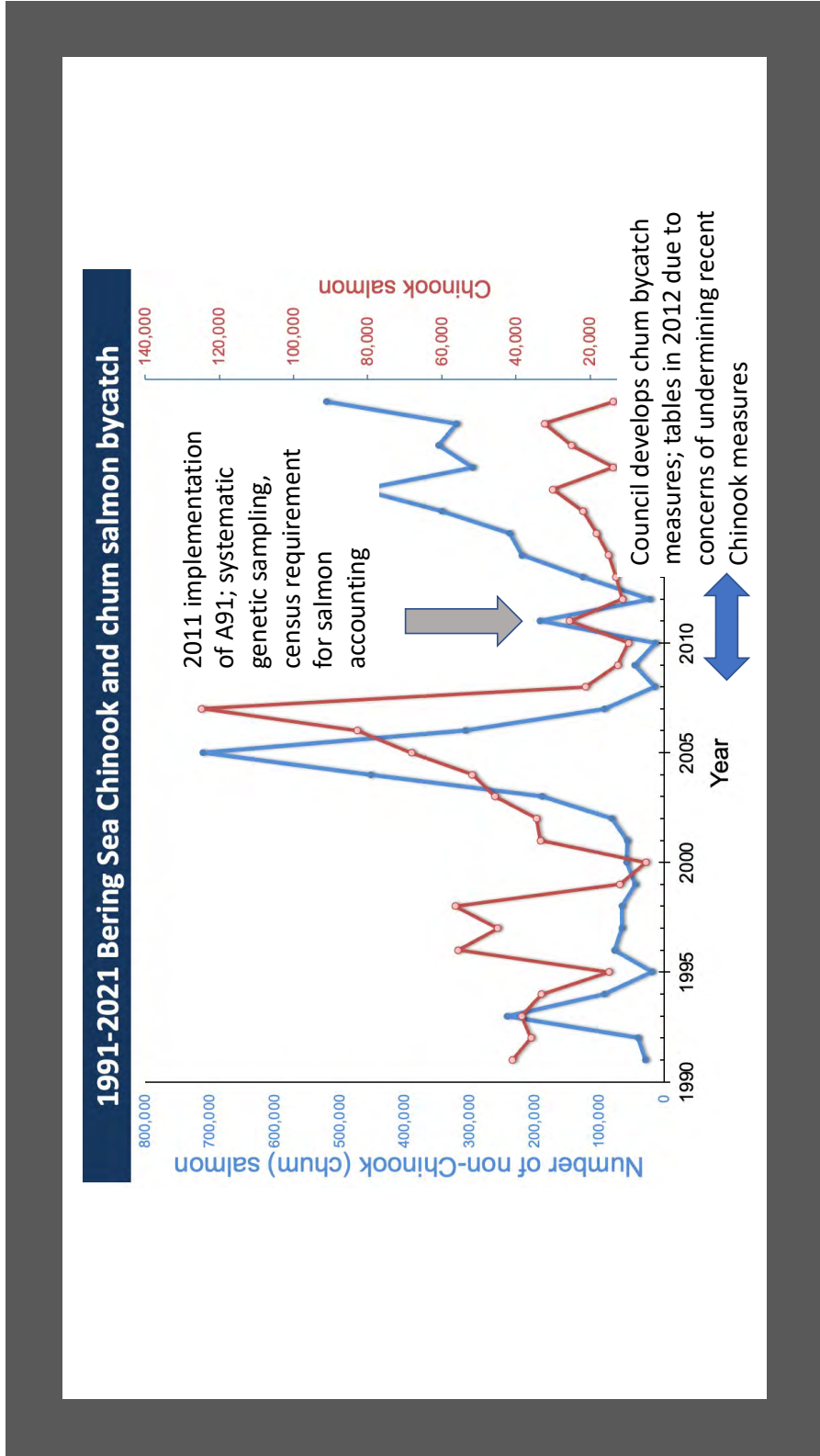


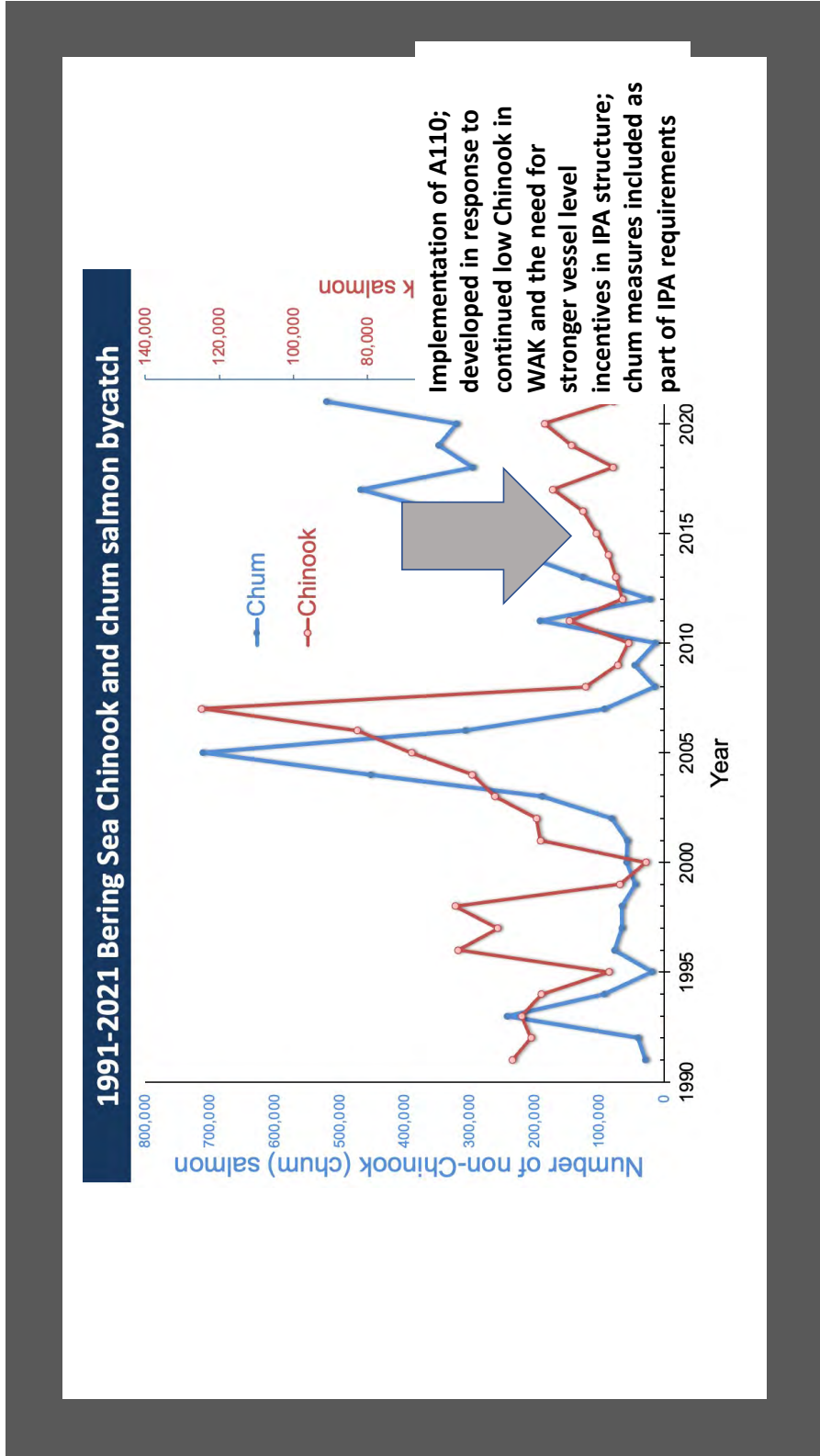








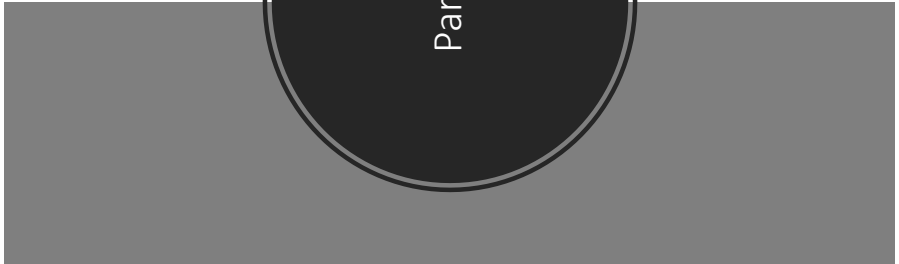






Council Action in June 2022





Part 1

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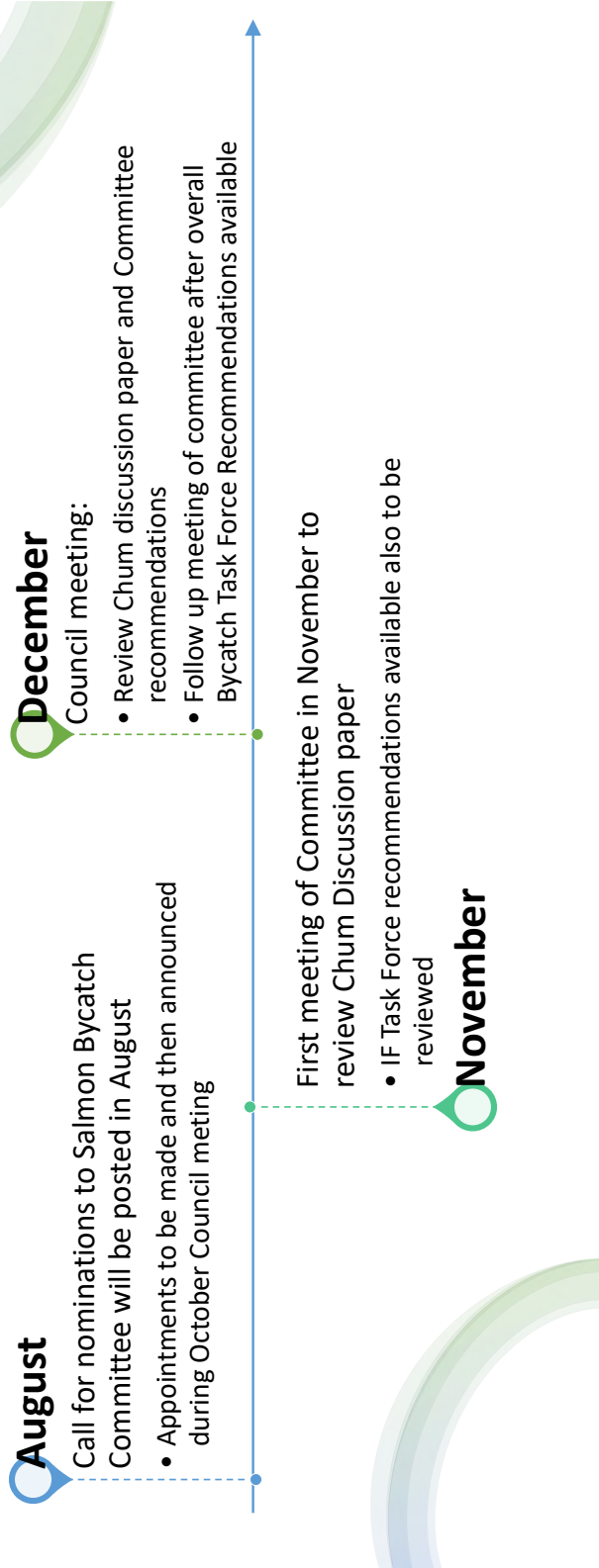


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What is next?





United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Togiak National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 270
Dillingham, Alaska 99576
Phone 907-842-1063
Fax 907-842-5402



INFORMATION BULLETIN - August 2022

Kanektok River salmon weir removal Contact: Pat Walsh

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game operated a salmon weir on Togiak Refuge on the Kanektok River from 2002-2015. The weir has been inoperative since 2016 due to lack of funding. In spring 2022, ADF&G began removing the weir materials and field camp. It is anticipated that weir removal will be complete by spring 2023.

Aerial Salmon Survey Contact: Truett Cawfield

The Fish and Wildlife service has initiated an aerial survey of the Salmon River which flows into the Kuskokwim Bay. The aim of this survey is to establish a baseline for salmon run timing and run size for this system. A weir will be constructed on the Salmon River in 2023 and will be managed by the Kenai Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, who is partnering with the Togiak Refuge staff on this project. The weir will be utilized to ensure the accuracy and precision of aerial surveys.

Arctic Char Population Inventory Contact: Truett Cawfield

Togiak Refuge has developed a multi-year study to inventory Arctic char populations throughout the Refuge. This species was previously confirmed to occur in 27 lakes. Since the beginning of the study 34 lakes have been sampled, and Arctic char occurrence has been documented in 13 new lakes. We have collected size and genetic information from 355 fish and provided the UAF museum with voucher specimens. If you have any first-hand knowledge of small or unique Arctic char populations and would be willing to share that information please contact Truett Cawfield at the Togiak Refuge office.

Mulchatna Caribou Contact: Andy Aderman

Togiak Refuge assisted ADF&G with telemetry and law enforcement flights, satellite data acquisition, data entry and database management. A June 2022 post-calving survey estimated the Mulchatna herd at 12,112 caribou, slightly down from 12,850 estimated in 2021, and well below the population objective of 30,000-80,000 caribou.

Togiak Refuge Manager Moos, under authority delegated by the Federal Subsistence Board, closed caribou hunting and closed Federal public lands in the RC503 hunt area for caribou hunting.

ADF&G staff radiocollared 12 caribou in April 2022 in the area from Cape Newenham north to the Arolik River. On June 23, 2022 we located 11 collars in 8 groups and 1 collar that was a recent mortality. We also observed 9 uncollared groups ranging from 1-7 caribou. The combined total for all groups was a minimum of 470 caribou. Thus far these caribou have remained in the general proximity of where they were captured.

Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Contact: Andy Aderman

A photocensus of the Nushagak Peninsula Herd on June 25, 2022 found a minimum of 359 caribou in 7 groups which resulted in a total population estimate of 442 +/- 118 (359-560) caribou at the 95% confidence interval. A similar effort in 2021 found a minimum of 258 caribou in 2 groups resulting in an estimate of 287 +/- 47 (258-334) caribou.

The Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Planning Committee met via teleconference July 27, 2021 and reviewed results of previous hunts, population and lichen monitoring, and the harvest strategy. Following the Harvest Strategy adopted in 2019, the Committee favored having a hunt with a total of 48 permits, with 8 permits going to each of the 6 communities: Aleknagik, Clark's Point, Dillingham, Manokotak, Togiak and Twin Hills. Refuge Manager Moos' decision was to open the Federal caribou hunt on the Nushagak Peninsula from August 1-March 15 with a harvest objective of 48 caribou, a harvest limit of 1 caribou per hunter, and 8 permits going to each of the six communities.

Nushagak Peninsula Lichen Monitoring Contact: Andy Aderman

Lichen cover on the Nushagak Peninsula declined from 48.1% in 2002 to 18.7% by 2022. Surveys estimated cover had declined 2.3% from 2002 to 2007; 6.3% from 2007 to 2012; 8.9% from 2012 to 2017, and 11.4 from 2017 to 2022. The declining trend from 2002 on, suggests lichen cover could decrease to a low enough level in the next 10 years, such that caribou may abandon the Nushagak Peninsula. It is likely Nushagak Peninsula caribou would leave the peninsula before lichens were depleted. What is not known is if caribou leave the peninsula will it be temporary, seasonal, or long term.

Moose Contact: Andy Aderman

In 2022, 14 of 19 collared adult cows produced a minimum of 25 calves (3 singles and 11 sets of twins) suggesting a production rate of 131.6 calves per adult 100 cows. Adult twinning rate was 78.6%. Three of 8 2-year old cows had a single calf. We will check calf survival in November.

During the 2021-2022 fall moose hunts in Unit 17A (RM 571, RM 573, and DM 570), hunters reported harvesting 60 moose (57 bulls, 3 cows) which was similar to the 60 moose (55 bulls, 5 cows) taken the previous year. During the 2021-2022 winter moose hunts in Unit 17A (RM 575 and RM 576), hunters reported harvesting 86 moose (28 bulls, 58 cows). In southern Unit 18, hunters reported harvesting 7 bulls in the RM 617 hunt and 12 bulls in the RM 620 hunt. Harvest was down 5 moose for the RM 617 hunt and no change for the RM 620 hunt.

The relationships of wolf and brown bear predation with moose population density and growth at Togiak National Wildlife Refuge and BLM Goodnews Block, Alaska Contact: Pat Walsh

In summer 2014, Togiak Refuge, the USFWS Genetics Lab, ADF&G, and BLM initiated a study to understand the effects of wolf and brown bear predation in regulating the populations of moose. The study relies on radio telemetry and stable isotope analysis. Our approach is to relate the predation impact by wolves and bears on moose at varying levels of moose population density. This requires having population estimates of both bears and wolves. We estimate the brown bear population totals approximately 855 bears (95% confidence limits: 664 – 1,154). Using radio telemetry, we estimate the wolf population varies widely but averages 90-100 wolves consisting of approximately 12 packs averaging 7 wolves plus approximately 10% of wolves unaffiliated with packs. Using these demographic data, we will model wolf and bear predation on moose based on the diet composition of both species determined through analysis of carbon and nitrogen isotopes occurring in wolf and bear tissues. Lab analyses are complete and modelling is currently underway.

Walrus Contact: Pat Walsh

The Togiak Refuge has annually monitored the number and timing of Pacific walrus at haul-outs since 1985, using ground counts (1985-2008), aerial surveys (2003-2011) and time lapse photography (2010-2022). Overall, walrus numbers observed at haul-outs on Togiak Refuge have declined, with the greatest declines at Cape Peirce and Cape Newenham. Peak annual haul-out counts have varied greatly, ranging from >12,000 in 1985 to <300 in 2002. Since 2002, peak counts have averaged 1,615. However, in fall 2021, a group of approximately 7,500 walrus hauled out on Hagemeister Island (Fig. 1), which was the greatest number of walrus using Togiak Refuge since 1998.



Figure 1. An estimated 7,500 walrus hauled out on Hagemeister Island, September 19, 2021.

Seabirds Contact: Jannelle Trowbridge

The abundance of black-legged kittiwakes, common murre, and pelagic cormorants has been monitored at Cape Peirce since 1990. Monitoring was not conducted in 2015 and 2020. This year's average number of birds counted on study plots was 669 kittiwakes, 241 murre, and 28 cormorants. Over the past 30 years, the average number of birds counted on study plots are 1,040 kittiwakes (range = 238-1,906), 2,437 murre (range = 53-4,490), and 84 cormorants (range = 14-149). Abundance has been below average for kittiwakes since 2021, murre since 2014, and cormorants since 2016.

Signs of avian influenza were observed at Cape Peirce this year, although lab tests were not possible in most cases. About 230 black brant were found dead along Nanvak Bay this spring. Symptoms of bird flu such as swimming in circles were also observed in living black brant. At Cape Peirce 4 glaucous-winged gulls, 1 glaucous gull, 1 raven, 1 common eider, and 1 jaeger were also found dead.

Invasive Aquatic Plant Surveys Contact: Kara Hilwig

Elodea spp. is a highly invasive and difficult to control aquatic plant implicated in the degradation and loss of fish habitat across the world. It was confirmed present in Alaska in 2009 and is now found in several waterbodies across the State. Refuge and Park staff are cooperating to complete the fourth *Elodea* survey within the Togiak Refuge, Wood-Tikchik State Park and the surrounding area. Twenty-five annual monitoring sites have been established in high use areas such as lodge docks, boat ramps, and popular float plane destinations. In 2021, crews sampled 9 locations in the Park, 28 in the Refuge, and 13 in the outlying area from August 4 to September 27. Sampling effort included overflights of 20 lakes and 29 fragment searches, and 643 rake samples. No *Elodea* or other invasive aquatic plants were detected. Funding was secured to continue this work in 2022.

Water Temperature Monitoring Contact: Truett Cawlfeld

Stream temperature monitoring has been conducted at 21 locations on 14 rivers in Togiak Refuge since August 2001. Continuous hourly water temperatures were recorded at each site. Over 2.4 million temperature records were collected, quality-graded, and digitally stored in a database. The warmest month each year was July. The warmest temperatures were observed in the Kukaktlim Lake outlet and the coolest temperatures were observed in the Weary River. Project reports are available upon request.

In addition to the stream temperature monitoring, we monitored lake temperature using moored all-season temperature arrays to record hourly temperatures throughout the water column in 2 lakes since 2011. The lakes differed significantly in surface area, water volume, and elevation with Ongivinuk Lake being smaller and at higher elevation than Snake Lake. We observed variation in lake ice timing and fewer days of ice cover on Snake Lake than on Ongivinuk Lake. We observed that both lakes turn over in spring and fall. We observed water temperatures in excess of standards for fish rearing and migration habitats during summer down to 12.5 m in Snake Lake and down to 5 m in Ongivinuk Lake. Project reports are available upon request.

Quantifying River Discharge Contact: Pat Walsh

Togiak Refuge and the USFWS Water Resources Branch have worked cooperatively since 1999 to acquire hydrologic data of the flow regime (magnitude, duration, timing, frequency, and rate of change) and water quality on rivers throughout the Refuge. A network of stream discharge gages collected stream flow data from 1999-2005 at 20 locations. A subset of five of these stations continued to collect data through fall 2009, after which three of the five stations were removed. We continue to monitor discharge in the Togiak and Kulukak Rivers, although due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, the gages were inoperative in 2020-2021. Both stations were brought back into operation in July 2022.

Education and Outreach Contact: Terry Fuller

At the time of this writing, Togiak Refuge's education and outreach efforts have slowly started to resume. Togiak Refuge normally has a very active education and outreach program. From an education standpoint, during a normal school year, Refuge staff conducts an average of 60+ classroom visits throughout 12 Bristol Bay villages annually, Classroom visits include lessons about the Migratory Bird Calendar, National Wildlife Refuge Week, careers in natural resource conservation, and numerous teacher requested classroom presentations. The Refuge works with several school districts and private schools including the Southwest Region, Lower Kuskokwim, Dillingham City school districts and the Dillingham 7th Day Adventist School. Some topics often include bird walks, wilderness survival skills, archery, salmon life cycles, aquatic resources, and bear safety. School visits started back up early in 2022 and we anticipate even more during the new school year. The refuge website, one of our educational tools, is undergoing a migration to a new platform, and we are excited about better access it will allow and the content it will provide.

Togiak Refuge, in partnership with ADF&G and the Southwest Region School District, also conducts hunter safety courses throughout western Bristol Bay Villages. Classes have impacted more than 100 students in Manokotak, Dillingham, Twin Hills, Togiak, Aleknagik and Quinhagak. The refuge plans to continue these courses, as requested, in 2022 and is in the planning stages to add a National Archery in School Program to its offerings in the future, pending a return to normal outreach efforts.

The Refuge education program also produces Bristol Bay Field Notes, an award-winning weekly radio program on KDLG 670 AM that covers an array of outdoor-related topics (past episodes can be found on KDLG's website). Togiak Refuge has an active and heavily followed Facebook page which disseminates information on a daily basis to a rapidly growing global audience.

The Refuge normally hosts an Open House event, in celebration of National Public Lands Day and National Hunting and Fishing Day. It was not held in 2021 but is expected to happen during September 2022. This event is usually attended by 100-200 people and includes a wide range of displays, hands on activities, food and beverages.

Togiak Refuge staff continues to work with the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council and the ADF&G to conduct household subsistence waterfowl surveys. Refuge staff and volunteers conducted surveys in a number of southwest Alaska communities, Aleknagik, Dillingham, Togiak, Clark's Point, Newhalen, Nondalton, Chignik Lake and Chignik Lagoon. Surveys have been on hold still due to covid-19.

Also, the Refuge partners with others to conduct three environmental education camps. As with other Service sponsored education camps, those camps were cancelled for 2021 and have not happened yet in 2021, due to covid-19 related concerns. The descriptions that follow are from the 2019 camps.

Cape Peirce Marine Science and Yup'ik Culture Camp Contact: Terry Fuller

This camp was scheduled to happen in July 2022 but was cancelled due to weather. Most recent camp: In July 2019 an enthusiastic group of seven area junior high students representing three villages (Dillingham, Togiak and Platinum) traveled to Cape Peirce for this camp. Students were able to observe seabirds, marine mammals, and learn how field work is conducted, as well as learning about the food webs and ecological relationships found at the Cape Peirce area. Students also learned about traditional Yup'ik uses of animals and plants and about Native survival skills. This camp is designed to help students gain a better understanding of the biological diversity of a marine ecosystem. It also strengthens their sense of stewardship for local natural resources. Other topics at this camp included tide pools, wilderness survival skills, archery, bear safety, Leave No Trace camping practices and careers with USFWS. Refuge Interpreter Jon Dyasuk spoke with students about traditional resource uses. A special offering for this year's camp was the chance for the students to try their hand drawing with Colorado pastel artist Penny Creasy. Traditional councils and school districts from throughout western Bristol Bay are cooperators with this camp.

Southwest Alaska Science Academy (Salmon Camp) Contact: Terry Fuller

*Note: Was not held during 2022. Most recent: In July 2019, Togiak Refuge helped with the 19th year of a summer camp aimed at teaching middle and high school students about fisheries science and the importance of salmon to our ecosystem. Students were selected from the Bristol Bay region. During the camp students worked in the field alongside fisheries professionals. Cooperators with the Refuge on this project included the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation, Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute, University of Alaska, University of Washington School of Fisheries, the Dillingham City and Southwest Region school districts, and ADF&G.

Summer Outdoor Skills and River Ecology Float Camp Contact: Terry Fuller

This camp was a modified camp held during mid-August 2022. The camp still used rafting as one of the major activities, but it was a stationary camp at Pungokepuk Lake for six junior high students. Students observed and learned about the many fish, wildlife and plant species found around Pungokepuk Lake. Rafting skills, water safety, different angling practices (Catch and Release), Leave No Trace camping practices and bear safety were topics during the trip. Students also participated in other outdoor activities such as wilderness survival skills. This camp helps students grasp the biological diversity of riparian ecosystems and the importance of salmon as a nutrient source, while developing a deeper sense of stewardship for local natural resources. Traditional councils and school districts in western Bristol Bay are cooperators with this camp.

Division of Refuge Law Enforcement Contact: Derek Thompson

Federal Wildlife Officers work to protect wildlife and habitat and make refuges safe places for visitors and staff. Regional Law Enforcement Specialists (LES) Derek Thompson is stationed in Dillingham, AK. He is the Officer responsible for patrolling Togiak NWR and providing Regional assistance and guidance for the AK Division of Refuge Law Enforcement Program.

2022 visitation and use within Togiak NWR has returned to pre-covid levels, with many local and non-local users in the Refuge. Mulchatna caribou are a local and regional priority. LES Thompson is the Federal team lead for patrolling and monitoring the Eastern Mulchatna herd. This winter AK DRLE will again team up with up with ADF&G, AWT, BLM, and FWS OLE to enforce the Mulchatna caribou closed season. Nushagak Peninsula caribou permits have been increased for the 2022-2023 season. LES Thompson reminds hunters who obtain a permit for this hunt to be familiar with the permit conditions and designated hunter permits and conditions. Please call if you have any questions.

SFWO Thompson encourages anyone with questions regarding USFWS law enforcement to contact him; and reminds all who enjoy and rely upon the resources in the Bristol Bay Region the USFWS Division of Refuge Law Enforcement is here to help protect those resources for future generations.

Staff Update

Wildlife Biologist Doug Holt accepted the Supervisory Wildlife Biologist position with Sheldon Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. Doug left us in mid-January 2022.

The Fisheries Biologist position was filled by Jonathan Cawlfeld (aka Truett) in May. Truett comes from South Texas, having completed an acoustic telemetry study on marine fishes in fulfillment of a Master of Science degree in 2021.



United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve

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Program Updates Fall 2022

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve

Southwest Area Inventory and Monitoring Network (SWAN)

SUBSISTENCE DIVISION, LIZA RUPP (907) 644-3648

Lake Clark National Park Subsistence Resource Commission

- The Lake Clark Subsistence Resource Commission met via teleconference on March 30, 2022. The fall meeting will be in Nondalton on September 28, 2022.

Subsistence Research Project: Transference of Subsistence Knowledge to the Younger Generation and between the Communities of Nikolai and Nondalton

- This project aims to promote the exchange of contemporary and traditional subsistence practices between Denali (Nikolai) and Lake Clark (Nondalton) communities, by documenting traditional knowledge about changing subsistence practices, the cultural connections between Nondalton and Nikolai, and the transmission of knowledge between youth and elders. Travel to both Nondalton and Nikolai is complete and the team is working on completing the project video and booklet.

Subsistence Harvest Surveys of Port Alsworth and Nondalton

- Through funding provided by the National Park Service (NPS), the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Division of Subsistence conducted a comprehensive survey of both Port Alsworth and Nondalton in March 2022. These surveys document the harvest and use of wild resources by resident zone communities in Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. Final results will be presented to the communities and to the NPS in 2023.

NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION, BUCK MANGIPANE (907) 717-7044

Coastal Bear Survey

- In May, park staff completed a bear capture effort on the coast of Lake Clark as part of the coastal ecology project, “Where the land meets the sea: A case study of bear use of intertidal invertebrates during a period of sea otter recovery.” Over the capture period, 17

bears were captured and 16 fitted with GPS radio-collars. The 16 bears included 10 brown bears and 6 black bears. Bears were physically examined, and a suite of samples collected that will be used to assess their diet and health. Collars record bear locations every 1.5 hours. These are the first bears radio-collared on the LACL coast and their movement and use pattern data will help understand bear use of the coast. Collars are programmed to release from the bears in late September and recovered at that time.

- A single coastal bear trend count was completed in the summer of 2022. On June 23, 2022, park staff flew a survey of the coastal salt marsh areas. The flight resulted in 133 brown bears observed, which is the second lowest among 18 surveys conducted between June 15 and June 30. The lowest count was 132 on June 21, 2012. Last year was the highest at 292 brown bears on June 27, 2021. Overall, about 78% of the bears were found in Chinitna Bay and Tuxedni Bay which is consistent with what prior surveys have documented. The lower total number observed is likely related to conditions with warmer and drier conditions present this June.

Soundscape Monitoring

- Soundscape monitoring resumed in LACL in 2022, with a goal of improving the spatial distribution of monitoring locations. Work began in July, with a deployment at Lower Tazimina Lake. Additional deployments in August were at Little Lake Clark and near the Telaquana River. Because of limited sampling this summer, we are expecting to have 1 additional year of deployments in 2023 to finish our baseline inventory.

Chinitna Bay Clam Sampling

- In May, park staff, in partnership with ADF&G, conducted sampling efforts at Silver Salmon Creek to estimate density, size, distribution and age classes of Pacific razor and other species of clams. This was a continuation of sampling efforts started in 2021 in Chinitna Bay. We found fewer species overall and less hospitable clam habitat in our Silver Salmon transects. However, we found greater razor clam densities that were 60% higher for adults and 7-times higher for juveniles than the Chinitna Bay survey area. We also documented a spawning run of Eulachon (Hooligan) in Silver Salmon Creek for the first time in park records.

Newhalen River Counting Tower

- Monitoring on the Newhalen River has been ongoing since 2000 and provides information on salmon escapement, run timing, and population characteristics. Despite a record return to Bristol Bay this year's escapement to the Newhalen River was about 193,000 sockeye salmon, which was the third lowest return since 2000 and almost 50% less than the 20-year average of 400,000 sockeye salmon. This year's Newhalen return comprised less than 5% of the total Kvichak escapement of 4.2 million sockeye salmon; the second lowest contribution since 2000. The mid-point of the run was 5 days later than average with colder than average water temperature likely affecting run timing. The 2022 Bristol Bay return set another record with over 79 million sockeye salmon, breaking the 2021 record of 65 million.

Telaquana River Weir

- This was the 13th year of this collaborative project with the state of Alaska and provides a reliable estimate of salmon escapement to one of the few lake-rearing sockeye salmon populations in the Kuskokwim River drainage. This year's return to Telaquana was approximately 153,000 sockeye salmon, which was the fourth highest escapement recorded since 2010 and about 53% higher than the 12-year average of 100,000 sockeye salmon.

Mercury in Lake Food Webs

- This summer park staff, in collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), continued their collection of water quality and biological samples from Lake Clark, Kontrashibuna Lake, and Crescent Lake to better understand how mercury bioaccumulates in the food webs of lakes with differing fish communities and morphology. In addition, LACL staff assisted USGS collecting samples from Copper Lake and Tanada Lake in Wrangell Saint Elias NP&P. Samples will be processed this winter. During the summer of 2023, USGS will sample lakes in Gates of the Arctic NP&P.

Aquatic Plant Monitoring

- Park staff continued their monitoring of aquatic vegetation in high traffic waterbodies within the park. This season we also partnered with researchers from the University of Alaska who are conducting similar aquatic vegetation surveys across the entire state. These researchers visited close to a dozen water bodies in and adjacent to the park in search of aquatic invasive species.

CULTURAL RESOURCES DIVISION, LIZA RUPP (907) 644-3648

Kijik National Historic Landmark Cultural Landscape Report

- In 2019 the park began a multi-year project to document the Kijik NHL cultural landscape and to develop a framework to manage the site that is informed by the perspectives and values of Dena'ina communities. We hope that the project will also clarify the roles and responsibilities of the NPS and Dena'ina communities in collaboratively managing the NHL in the future – for the benefit of all stakeholders, including non-Native resident zone communities and park visitors in addition to tribes. The project will also help to identify interpretive and educational opportunities for Dena'ina and other youth, and visitors. The park held an initial consultation meeting with park-associated tribes in February 2020. Researchers and park staff have begun writing the draft text in preparation for additional consultation meetings in the Spring of 2023.

Quk' Taz'un Outdoor Leadership Camp

- This was the 8th year for the Quk' Taz'un camp held at Historic Kijik, from August 1-5th. We had a total of 12 students from the communities of Nondalton and Kokhanok. Despite the wind and rain the youth had a great time and learned a lot. Five elders also

participated and part of their teaching included mountain squirrel (qunsha) snare making and setting, Dena'ina language and story-telling. Other activities included: Dena'ina history including the significance of Kijik; hiking to the ancestral house pit and learning about archeological methods; medicinal plants; traditional Dena'ina house models; carving; various forms of art; survival skills and yoga and kayaking.

Lower Twin Science Camp

- In June, in partnership with Nondalton Tribal Council and the Matanuska Susitna School District, the park held its first Science Camp at Lower Twin Lake. Students from Nondalton and the Mat Su Valley learned about the geology, history, archeology, and flora and fauna of the area both through the Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Nondalton Elders as well as from Mat Su teachers and park staff. The students also learned about careers in the NPS through presentations by staff from all park divisions. The park hopes to continue the camp in 2023.

SOUTHWEST ALASKA INVENTORY AND MONITORING NETWORK,
AMY MILLER (907) 644-3683

Water Quality Monitoring

- Lake temperature has been monitored year-round in Lake Clark since 2006, and in Kijik Lake since 2010. In 2017, temperature monitoring also began in Telaquana Lake. In 2022, monitoring continued at all three sites. The monitoring relies on the use of programmable data loggers attached at various depths to moored vertical temperature arrays. Data from the temperature arrays allow tracking of freeze-up and break-up dates, lake stratification, and large-scale wind events, all of which influence lake productivity. Additional water quality measurements, including pH, dissolved oxygen, specific conductivity, and turbidity, were measured hourly at the outlet of Lake Clark over the course of the summer (June-September), and at multiple points on Lake Clark and nine smaller lakes over the course of 1-2 days in July. Lastly, temperature loggers installed at a number of stream and beach locations around Lake Clark measured water temperatures where sockeye salmon spawn.

Surface Hydrology Monitoring

- Streamflow near the outlet Lake Clark has been estimated since 2009 by measuring water levels hourly during the ice-free portion of the year. In 2014, a second streamflow monitoring site was established near the outlet of Kijik Lake. This work continued during the 2022 field season. The data are useful for understanding patterns observed in aquatic systems because streamflow affects many processes, from nutrient loading to the timing and success of fish spawning.

Weather Stations

- All five of Lake Clark's remote automated weather stations (RAWS) have received or are scheduled for annual maintenance in 2022.

Glaciers

- Glacier Delineation: Changes in the area of Alaska's glaciers, including those in Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, have been mapped for the years 1984-2020 using all available satellite imagery and supercomputer processing. This work has been completed in collaboration with researchers at Oregon State University.
- Coastal Glacier Recession; A study on the impacts of tidewater glacier recession on coastal aquatic-associated ecosystems started in the fall of 2020. The study is compiling baseline data from locations with recent tidewater or near-coastal glaciers that have since receded. This project will allow us to better understand the impacts on coastal ecosystems and the species that depend on them. Work on this project is being done in collaboration with researchers at Oregon State University.

Bald Eagle Surveys

- Lake Clark supports large populations of bald eagles. Their breeding success is influenced by habitat integrity and food availability, among other factors. Bald eagle surveys conducted in LACL show that nest occupancy has been highly variable since surveys were initiated in 1992. In 2022, we were only able to complete bald eagle nest occupancy survey in May-June. This survey will allow us to add to our long-term data on nest occupancy by bald eagles.

Vegetation Monitoring

- Vegetation monitoring in Lake Clark provides information regarding long-term changes in species richness, cover and diversity across a range of vegetation types. Monitoring in 2022 focused on spruce woodland habitats, with revisits of 39 sampling sites near Two Lakes, Telaquana, Lachbuna, Snipe, Fishtrap, and Hanmore Lake. The crew also completed a revisit of sites at Currant Creek that burned in the 2013 fire.



United States Department of the Interior



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Updates to Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils **Fall 2022 Meetings**

The Anchorage Field Office completed a busy summer 2022 field operations. The summary below is an overview of priority projects by resource. We are continuing to increase in fieldwork operations, while adhering to any COVID-19 protocols and mitigations.

An overview map of the Anchorage Field Office can be found at:

https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/documents/files/Maps_Alaska_Anchorage-Field-Office.pdf

BLM Alaska publicly available interactive maps are available at: <https://blm-egis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MinimalGallery/index.html?appid=d2da853631fe4b60ac768f19bec4e84b>

Wildlife and Subsistence

- Conducted Breeding Bird Survey routes on the Unalakleet and Anvik Rivers in June.
- Completed a peregrine falcon nesting survey on the Kuskokwim River between McGrath and Aniak in July.
- Assisted Alaska Department of Fish and Game with the release of 28 Wood Bison on the Innoko River near Kellen Creek. The bison were barged to the site and held in a temporary corral before being released on August 6th to the wild bison herd already in the area.
- BLM issued federal muskox permits for hunts in Units 22B, 22D and 23.
- BLM issued federal moose permits in Unalakleet for the fall hunt in unit 22A.
- Contributed funds in an Inter-agency Agreement with FWS Togiak Wildlife Refuge to help monitor the Mulchatna Caribou Herd.
- Contributed funds in an Interagency Agreement with NPS to help fund the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group meeting in December. The meeting is funded by BLM, NPS and FWS and ADF&G. The working Group will discuss the management of the herd and its current population status.

Aquatics

- Conducted e-DNA sampling in the Kigluaik Mountains on the Seward Peninsula for BLM sensitive species Kigluaik Arctic Char.
- Completed initial aquatic habitat baseline data collection from the Seward Peninsula Planning Area based out of Kotzebue and Nome as part of the National Assessment Inventory and Monitoring Program (AIM). AIM data provides a framework to inventory and quantitatively assess the condition and trend of natural resources on public lands.
- Conducted ongoing stream gaging flow quantification efforts on Big River and Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River
- Conducted ongoing water quality monitoring work at Platinum. This is a partnership with USFWS Togiak National Refuge for installation of a Video Weir in 2023 on the Salmon River monitoring salmon escarpment numbers.

Ecology

- Continued collecting Assessment Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) terrestrial and riparian and wetland plot data for the Kobuk Seward Peninsula Planning Area. In July/August 2022, 23 plots were established and sampled using this monitoring framework. Data on plant cover, invasive species, sensitive species, woody structure, phenology, pollinator activity, and soil structure were collected. In addition to these national core monitoring indicators, BLM has developed methods to collect data on lichen cover and disturbance to determine rangeland health in areas that BLM permits reindeer grazing.
- In July 2022, exclosures on the Seward Peninsula were visited and monitored. These small fenced-in areas protect vegetation from grazing, providing a baseline to learn about the long-term effects of grazing on lichens and plants. The exclosures were installed in 2011 and 2012 and baseline data was collected at that time. This is the first year that vegetation has been reassessed to determine how it has changed over the past 10 years. Data will be analyzed during the upcoming winter months.
- Re-issued four firewood harvest permits to residents on the Seward Peninsula.
- Collaborated with the United State Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA) to facilitate data collection at 105 plot locations on BLM within the FIA's Southwest Inventory Unit.
- Anchorage Area: Conducted invasive species control treatments on Campbell Tract in July with another planned for August 2021. Bird vetch and orange hawkweed were targeting this year and spot treatment occurred within a 6-acre area that is assessed annually.

- Continuing to support the Anchorage Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area through an assistance agreement to partially fund meetings, public events, and chairperson coordination.

Archaeology

- OTZ Telecom Cooperative has applied to the BLM for rights-of-way to construct several towers that would provide internet service to northwest Alaska. The BLM is working with the USDA Rural Utilities Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the State of Alaska to develop a Programmatic Agreement to address potential effects to cultural resources under the National Historic Preservation Act.

Recreation

- Spring 2022- conducted SRP monitoring in the Neacola Mountains and Tordrillo Mountains.
- June 2022- inspected guide and outfitter camps in GMU 19D & 19C.
- July 2022- inspected guide and outfitter camps and airstrips in GMU 23.
- August 2022- a new BLM sign will be placed at the boundary of BLM lands and Unalakleet Native Lands on the Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River.
- Issued new Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for guided bear hunts in GUA 21-03.
- Issued new Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for guided big game hunts in GUA 19-12.
- Issued new Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for guided big game hunts in GUA 21-01.

Iditarod Trail

- The BLM worked with Denali National Park & Preserve personnel to rehabilitate and stabilize the Rohn Public Use Cabin. The work stabilized the condition of this National Register of Historic Places eligible cabin for decades to come.

Realty

- OTZ lease application
- Mukluk Telephone fiberoptic lease application
- Private individual road right of way application

- Bristol Bay Cellular 2 ROW lease renewals
- NPS Nome lease clean-up of Hill 3870 on the Teller Road
- Seldovia Certificate Inspection and Possession Environmental Site Assessment exam

Hazmat

- Kolmakoff Mine Site has been funded for FY23 remedial fieldwork.
- Three remote trespass cabin sites have been remediated and will be submitted for regulatory closure.
- RCRA HAZMAT removed and disposed of from an aircraft crash site in Squirrel River SMRA.
- Accumulated HAZMAT from AFO and GFO properly disposed of.

Minerals

- Minerals staff have had a productive field inspection and are scheduled to accomplish all planned mine inspections by the end of September.
- Salmon River Fish Passage Project is undergoing NEPA review and funding options are being sought after.
- Nixon Fork experienced a severe wildfire fire event that burned much of the surface infrastructure. There continues to be multiple enforcement actions against the operator and staff are trying to bring them into compliance before the end of FY22.
- Multiple operators in Flat have made progress in their mine site reclamation.
- One operator in Nome is beginning reclamation this fall and BLM is pursuing cleanup actions for the other operator.
- Minerals staff have worked extensively in closing out legacy mineral material casefiles associated with Native Allotments.



Project Updates

1. **FRMP 22-453 Subsistence Harvests and Uses of Salmon and Other Wild Resources in Manokotak, Alaska.**
Project goals: This project is a collaboration between BBNA and the Division of Subsistence. The research team will work with the Manokotak School to document the perceived effects of climate change on salmon populations, the local environment, and subsistence activities utilizing TEK and local ecological observations, as well as estimate the harvest of wild resources for Manokotak residents during the 2022 calendar year.
Status: The community approval meeting and fieldwork for this project will begin in early winter 2022.

2. **FRMP 22-452 False Pass and Nelson Lagoon Subsistence Harvest Monitoring and Traditional Ecological Knowledge Investigation**
Project goals: Collect survey data to estimate subsistence salmon and other wild resources harvest amounts and locations by False Pass and Nelson Lagoon residents for study year 2023, as well as evaluate the subsistence salmon permit system and make recommendations for improvement based on study findings.
Status: Community approval meetings and fieldwork for this project will begin in early winter 2022.

3. **NPS Katmai National Park and Preserve Subsistence Harvest Surveys- Kokhanok and Igiugig**
Project goals: Estimate the harvest of wild resources for Kokhanok and Igiugig for 2022.
Status: Funding for this project was awarded by The National Park Service (NPS). The research team will host community meetings and begin fieldwork in early 2023.

4. **NPS Lake Clark National Park and Preserve Subsistence Harvest Surveys- Port Alsworth & Nondalton**
Project goals: This NPS funded project will provide an estimate of the harvest of wild resources for Port Alsworth and Nondalton for study year 2021.
Status: The research team held project introduction meetings in both communities in December 2020 and received community support for the project. The surveys and interviews occurred in March 2022. Data analysis is currently underway.

5. **POLARIS Comprehensive Harvest Surveys**
Project goals: Funding for the Pursuing Opportunities for Long-Term Arctic Resilience for Infrastructure and Society (POLARIS) project was provided by the National Science Foundation. As part of this effort, the Division of Subsistence and BBNA conducted harvest surveys to estimate the harvest of wild resources in Dillingham for study year 2021.
Status: The surveys occurred in winter 2022. Data analysis is currently underway.

Proposed Research:

- **Nuyakuk River Hydroelectric Project**
 The proposed study plan developed by the Nuyakuk River Hydroelectric Project includes funds for ADF&G and BBNA to conduct comprehensive harvest surveys to obtain updated subsistence harvest data for communities near the proposed Hydroelectric site (Koliganek, New Stuyahok, Ekwok, Aleknagik). The Nushagak Cooperative decided to place the project on hold as a result of COVID-19. The Nushagak Cooperative re-initiated the formal licensing process on March 1, 2022, and the study seasons would occur in 2023 and 2024.



Division of Subsistence Contact Information:

Please reach out to us with ideas for collaborative projects, question or comments about Alaska Board of Fisheries or Game processes, and questions about state subsistence fishing permits.

Contact Bronwyn Jones, SRS III: (907) 267-2178, bronwyn.jones@alaska.gov

- Contact Chance Wilcox, SRSII: (907) 717-5665, chance.wilcox@alaska.gov
- Visit the Community Subsistence Information System: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sb/CSIS/>
- Download Subsistence Publications: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/publications/>

The mission of the Division of Subsistence is to scientifically gather, quantify, evaluate, and report information about customary and traditional uses of Alaska's fish and wildlife resources (AS 16.05.094).

Winter 2023 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

Last updated 09/29/2022

Due to travel budget limitations placed by Department of the Interior on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Subsistence Management, the dates and locations of these meetings will be subject to change

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday-	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Feb. 19</i>	Feb. 20 PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY	<i>Feb. 21</i> <i>Window Opens</i>	<i>Feb. 22</i>	<i>Feb. 23</i>	<i>Feb. 24</i>	<i>Feb. 25</i>
				NSRAC (Kaktovik)		
<i>Feb. 26</i>	<i>Feb. 27</i>	<i>Feb. 28</i>	<i>Mar. 1</i>	<i>Mar. 2</i>	<i>Mar. 3</i>	<i>Mar. 4</i>
		SEARAC (Juneau)				
			EIRAC (Arctic Village or Fairbanks)			
<i>Mar. 5</i>	<i>Mar. 6</i>	<i>Mar. 7</i>	<i>Mar. 8</i>	<i>Mar. 9</i>	<i>Mar. 10</i>	<i>Mar. 11</i>
	NWARAC (TBD)					
<i>Mar. 12</i>	<i>Mar. 13</i>	<i>Mar. 14</i>	<i>Mar. 15</i>	<i>Mar. 16</i>	<i>Mar. 17</i>	<i>Mar. 18</i>
		BBRAC (Dilligham)		SCRAC (Anchorage)		
<i>Mar. 19</i>	<i>Mar. 20</i>	<i>Mar. 21</i>	<i>Mar. 22</i>	<i>Mar. 23</i>	<i>Mar. 24</i>	<i>Mar. 25</i>
			SPRAC (Nome)			
<i>Mar. 26</i>	<i>Mar. 27</i>	<i>Mar. 28</i>	<i>Mar. 29</i>	<i>Mar. 30</i>	<i>Mar. 31</i>	<i>Apr. 1</i>
			KARAC (Larsen Bay/Old Harbor)			
<i>Apr. 2</i>	<i>Apr. 3</i>	<i>Apr. 4</i>	<i>Apr. 5</i>	<i>Apr. 6</i>	<i>Apr. 7</i>	<i>Apr. 8</i>
	YKDRAC (Alakanuk)				<i>Window Closes</i>	
		WIRAC (Aniak)				

Fall 2023 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

Last updated 08/1/2022

Due to travel budget limitations placed by Department of the Interior on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Subsistence Management, the dates and locations of these meetings will be subject to change

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 13	Aug. 14 Window Opens	Aug. 15	Aug. 16	Aug. 17	Aug. 18	Aug. 19
Aug. 20	Aug. 21	Aug. 22	Aug. 23	Aug. 24	Aug. 25	Aug. 26
Aug. 27	Aug. 28	Aug. 29	Aug. 30	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Sep. 2
Sep. 3	Sep. 4 Labor Day Holiday	Sep. 5	Sep. 6	Sep. 7	Sep. 8	Sep. 9
Sep. 10	Sep. 11	Sep. 12	Sep. 13	Sep. 14	Sep. 15	Sep. 16
Sep. 17	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Sep. 21	Sep. 22	Sep. 23
Sep. 24	Sep. 25	Sep. 26	Sep. 27	Sep. 28	Sep. 29	Sep. 30
Oct. 1	Oct. 2	Oct. 3	Oct. 4	Oct. 5	Oct. 6	Oct. 7
Oct. 8	Oct. 9 Columbus Day Holiday	Oct. 10	Oct. 11	Oct. 12	Oct. 13	Oct. 14
Oct. 15	Oct. 16	Oct. 17	Oct. 18	Oct. 19	Oct. 20	Oct. 21
Oct. 22	Oct. 23	Oct. 24	Oct. 25	Oct. 26	Oct. 27	Oct. 28
Oct. 29	Oct. 30	Oct. 31	Nov. 1	Nov. 2	Nov. 3 Window Closes	Nov. 4

Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Correspondence Policy

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) recognizes the value of the Regional Advisory Councils' role in the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The Board realizes that the Councils must interact with fish and wildlife resource agencies, organizations, and the public as part of their official duties, and that this interaction may include correspondence. Since the beginning of the Federal Subsistence Program, Regional Advisory Councils have prepared correspondence to entities other than the Board. Informally, Councils were asked to provide drafts of correspondence to the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) for review prior to mailing. Recently, the Board was asked to clarify its position regarding Council correspondence. This policy is intended to formalize guidance from the Board to the Regional Advisory Councils in preparing correspondence.

The Board is mindful of its obligation to provide the Regional Advisory Councils with clear operating guidelines and policies, and has approved the correspondence policy set out below. The intent of the Regional Advisory Council correspondence policy is to ensure that Councils are able to correspond appropriately with other entities. In addition, the correspondence policy will assist Councils in directing their concerns to others most effectively and forestall any breach of department policy.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Title VIII required the creation of Alaska's Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils to serve as advisors to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to provide meaningful local participation in the management of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands. Within the framework of Title VIII and the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Congress assigned specific powers and duties to the Regional Advisory Councils. These are also reflected in the Councils' charters. (*Reference: ANILCA Title VIII §805, §808, and §810; Implementing regulations for Title VIII, 50 CFR 100 .11 and 36 CFR 242 .11; Implementing regulations for FACA, 41 CFR Part 102-3.70 and 3.75*)

The Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture created the Federal Subsistence Board and delegated to it the responsibility for managing fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands. The Board was also given the duty of establishing rules and procedures for the operation of the Regional Advisory Councils. The Office of Subsistence Management was established within the Federal Subsistence Management Program's lead agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to administer the Program. (*Reference: 36 CFR Part 242 and 50 CFR Part 100 Subparts C and D*)

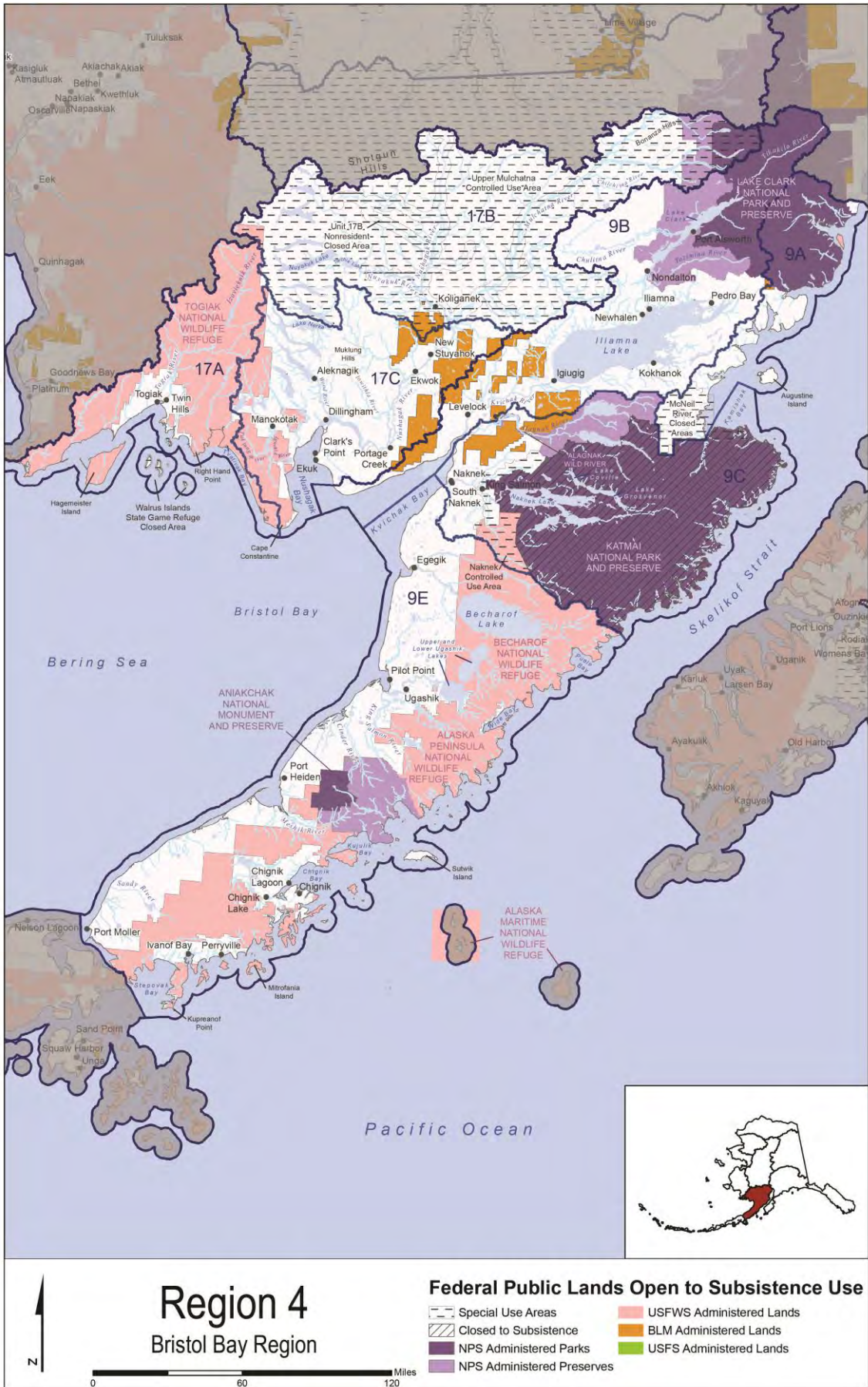
Policy

1. The subject matter of Council correspondence shall be limited to matters over which the Council has authority under §805(a)(3), §808, §810 of Title VIII, Subpart B §____.11(c) of regulation, and as described in the Council charters.
2. Councils may, and are encouraged to, correspond directly with the Board. The Councils are advisors to the Board.
3. Councils are urged to also make use of the annual report process to bring matters to the Board's attention.

4. As a general rule, Councils discuss and agree upon proposed correspondence during a public meeting. Occasionally, a Council chair may be requested to write a letter when it is not feasible to wait until a public Council meeting. In such cases, the content of the letter shall be limited to the known position of the Council as discussed in previous Council meetings.
5. Except as noted in Items 6, 7, and 8 of this policy, Councils will transmit all correspondence to the Assistant Regional Director (ARD) of OSM for review prior to mailing. This includes, but is not limited to, letters of support, resolutions, letters offering comment or recommendations, and any other correspondence to any government agency or any tribal or private organization or individual.
 - a. Recognizing that such correspondence is the result of an official Council action and may be urgent, the ARD will respond in a timely manner.
 - b. Modifications identified as necessary by the ARD will be discussed with the Council chair. Councils will make the modifications before sending out the correspondence.
6. Councils may submit written comments requested by Federal land management agencies under ANILCA §810 or requested by regional Subsistence Resource Commissions (SRC) under §808 directly to the requesting agency. Section 808 correspondence includes comments and information solicited by the SRCs and notification of appointment by the Council to an SRC.
7. Councils may submit proposed regulatory changes or written comments regarding proposed regulatory changes affecting subsistence uses within their regions to the Alaska Board of Fisheries or the Alaska Board of Game directly. A copy of any comments or proposals will be forwarded to the ARD when the original is submitted.
8. Administrative correspondence such as letters of appreciation, requests for agency reports at Council meetings, and cover letters for meeting agendas will go through the Council's regional coordinator to the appropriate OSM division chief for review.
9. Councils will submit copies of all correspondence generated by and received by them to OSM to be filed in the administrative record system.
10. Except as noted in Items 6, 7, and 8, Councils or individual Council members acting on behalf of or as representative of the Council may not, through correspondence or any other means of communication, attempt to persuade any elected or appointed political officials, any government agency, or any tribal or private organization or individual to take a particular action on an issue. This does not prohibit Council members from acting in their capacity as private citizens or through other organizations with which they are affiliated.

Approved by the Federal Subsistence Board on June 15, 2004.

Region 10 – North Slope Region Map



**Department of the Interior
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Charter

1. **Committee's Official Designation.** The Council's official designation is the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council).
2. **Authority.** The Council is renewed by virtue of the authority set out in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (16 U.S.C. 3115 (1988)) Title VIII, and under the authority of the Secretary of the Interior, in furtherance of 16 U.S.C. 410hh-2. The Council is regulated by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, (5 U.S.C., Appendix 2).
3. **Objectives and Scope of Activities.** The objective of the Council is to provide a forum for the residents of the Region with personal knowledge of local conditions and resource requirements to have a meaningful role in the subsistence management of fish and wildlife on Federal lands and waters in the Region.
4. **Description of Duties.** Council duties and responsibilities, where applicable, are as follows:
 - a. Recommend the initiation, review, and evaluate of proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the region.
 - b. Provide a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations by persons interested in any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the Region.
 - c. Encourage local and regional participation in the decision-making process affecting the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within the region for subsistence uses.
 - d. Prepare an annual report to the Secretary containing the following:
 - (1) An identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the Region;
 - (2) An evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife populations within the Region;

- (3) A recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the Region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs; and
 - (4) Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.
 - e. Appoint three members to the Lake Clark National Park and three members to the Aniakchak National Monument Subsistence Resource Commissions, in accordance with section 808 of the ANILCA.
 - f. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.
 - g. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.
 - h. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.
5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Council Reports.** The Council reports to the Federal Subsistence Board Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.
6. **Support.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide administrative support for the activities of the Council through the Office of Subsistence Management.
7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years.** The annual operating costs associated with supporting the Council's functions are estimated to be \$155,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.0 staff year.
8. **Designated Federal Officer.** The DFO is the Subsistence Council Coordinator for the Region or such other Federal employee as may be designated by the Assistant Regional Director – Subsistence, Region 11, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will:
- (a) Approve or call all Council and subcommittee meetings;
 - (b) Prepare and approve all meeting agendas;
 - (c) Attend all committee and subcommittee meetings;
 - (d) Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest; and

(e) Chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.

9. **Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings.** The Council will meet 1-2 times per year, and at such times as designated by the Federal Subsistence Board Chair or the DFO.
10. **Duration.** Continuing.
11. **Termination.** The Council will be inactive 2 years from the date the charter is filed, unless prior to that date, the charter is renewed in accordance with provisions of section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.
12. **Membership and Designation.** The Council's membership is composed of representative members as follows:

Ten members who are knowledgeable and experienced in matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife and who are residents of the region represented by the Council.

To ensure that each Council represents a diversity of interests, the Federal Subsistence Board in their nomination recommendations to the Secretary will strive to ensure that seven of the members (70 percent) represent subsistence interests within the region and three of the members (30 percent) represent commercial and sport interests within the region. The portion of membership representing commercial and sport interests must include, where possible, at least one representative from the sport community and one representative from the commercial community.

The Secretary of the Interior will appoint members based on the recommendations from the Federal Subsistence Board and with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

Members will be appointed for 3-year terms. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

If appointments for a given year have not yet been announced, a member may continue to serve on the Council following the expiration of his or her term until such appointments have been made. Unless reappointed, the member's service ends on the date of announcement even if that member's specific seat remains unfilled.

Alternate members may be appointed to the Council to fill vacancies if they occur out of cycle. An alternate member must be approved and appointed by the Secretary before attending the meeting as a representative. The term for an appointed alternate member will be the same as the term of the member whose vacancy is being filled.

Council members will elect a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary for a 1-year term.

Members of the Council will serve without compensation. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business, Council and subcommittee members engaged in Council, or subcommittee business, approved by the DFO, may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in Government service under Section 5703 of title 5 of the United States Code.

13. **Ethics Responsibilities of Members.** No Council or subcommittee member will participate in any Council or subcommittee deliberations or votes relating to a specific party matter before the Department or its bureaus and offices including a lease, license, permit, contract, grant, claim, agreement, or litigation in which the member or the entity the member represents has a direct financial interest.
14. **Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFO’s approval, subcommittees may be formed for the purpose of compiling information or conducting research. However, such subcommittees must act only under the direction of the DFO and must report their recommendations to the full Council for consideration. Subcommittees must not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency. Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish their assignments, subject to the approval of the DFO and the availability of resources.
15. **Recordkeeping.** The Records of the Council, and formally and informally established subcommittees or other subgroups of the Council, must be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2, and other approved Agency records disposition schedules. These records must be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552).

 /signature on the filed original/
Secretary of the Interior

 Dec. 10, 2021
Date Signed

 Dec. 13, 2021
Date Filed

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