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KODIAK/ALEUTIANS SUBSISTENCE  
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

Kodiak, Alaska  
March 30, 2023  
9:15 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Della Trumble, Chair  
Patrick Holmes  
Richard Koso  
Samuel Rohrer  
Chris Price  
Coral Chernoff  
Rebecca Skinner

Regional Council Coordinator, Lisa Hutchinson-  
Scarborough

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Kodiak, Alaska - 3/30/2023)

(On record)

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. We're going to go ahead and call the meeting to order this morning. We're going to start with introductions again and then we're going to do public and tribal comment and then we've moved up Jackie Keating, subsistence research presentation to first thing. And then we'll continue on down the agenda. So we'll go ahead and start with introductions, I'll do it the same as I did yesterday.

Running through, do we have any tribes in the room or online.

MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Madame Chair, Rebecca.

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, do ahead.

MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: This is Della. You might want to start with your roll call, see if you have a quorum.

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Oh, okay. We'll start with that. All right. Can we do a roll call and quorum check.

Thanks, Della.

MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Good morning, Council. And this is Lisa Hutchinson-Scarborough for the record, the Council Coordinator.

Patrick Holmes.

MR. HOLMES: Here.

MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Richard Koso.

(No comments)

MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: We'll come back to him.

0175

1 Sam Rohrer.

2

3 MR. ROHRER: Present.

4

5 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Chris  
6 Price.

7

8 MR. PRICE: Here.

9

10 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Coral  
11 Chernoff.

12

13 MS. CHERNOFF: Here.

14

15 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Della  
16 Trumble. I know you're here.

17

18 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Here.

19

20 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Rebecca  
21 Skinner.

22

23 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Here.

24

25 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Natasha  
26 Hayden, were you able to join us.

27

28 (No comments)

29

30 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: And,  
31 Richard Koso, are you there yet.

32

33 (No comments)

34

35 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay. We  
36 have seven present and we do have a quorum currently.

37

38 Thank you.

39

40 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
41 Thank you. Okay. Going on to introductions, are there  
42 any tribes online or in the room.

43

44 MS. LEKANOFF: Good morning, Madame  
45 Chair and Board. Rachel Lekanoff with Qawalangin Tribe  
46 of Unalaska.

47

48 MS. SALIMEN: Good morning, Madame  
49 Chair. My name is Mandy Salimen, I am with the

50

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1 Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska.

2

3 Thank you.

4

5 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
6 there any ANCSA corporations in the room or online.

7

8 MS. PETERSON: Good morning, Madame  
9 Chair and Council. I'm Amy Peterson, Koniag Community  
10 Affairs Liaison.

11

12 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
13 Going down to government side, do we have Alaska  
14 Department of Fish and Game in the room.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Seeing  
19 none, do we have Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
20 online.

21

22 MS. KEATING: Good morning. This is  
23 Jackie Keating with Subsistence.

24

25 MS. KRUEGER: Good morning. This is  
26 Kelly Krueger and Mark Lavine with Sport Fish in  
27 Kodiak.

28

29 MR. BURCH: Good morning. This is Mark  
30 Burch from the Department of Fish and Game from the  
31 Palmer office.

32

33 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
34 Moving on to Federal agencies. Do we have OSM in the  
35 room.

36

37 MR. ROBERTS: Good morning. This is  
38 Jason Roberts, Anthropologist with OSM.

39

40 MS. GREDIAGIN: Hi. This is Lisa  
41 Grediagin, Wildlife Division Supervisor with OSM.

42

43 MS. HOLMAN: Good morning. This is  
44 Kendra Holman, Wildlife Biologist with OSM.

45

46 MR. LIND: (In Native) Madame Chair,  
47 Board members. Good morning. Orville Lind, Native  
48 Liaison for OSM.

49

50

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1                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Do  
2 we have more OSM representatives online.

3  
4                   MS. LaVINE: Good morning, Madame  
5 Chair, members of the Council. This is Robbin LaVine,  
6 Subsistence Policy Coordinator.

7  
8                   MR. STONE: Good morning, Madame Chair.  
9 This is Jarred Stone, Fisheries Biologist with the  
10 Office of Subsistence Management.

11  
12                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Do  
13 we have BIA in the room.

14  
15                   MR. CHEN: Aloha. Glenn Chen for the  
16 BIA.

17  
18                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thanks. Do we  
19 have anyone else from BIA online.

20  
21                   (No comments)

22  
23                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Fish and  
24 Wildlife Service in the room.

25  
26                   MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning, Madame  
27 Chair. Jeff Williams, Alaska Maritime National  
28 Wildlife Refuge.

29  
30                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. We're  
31 going to go ahead and start in the room first.

32  
33                   Go ahead.

34  
35                   MR. BRADY: Good morning. This is Mike  
36 Brady, Refuge Manager, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.

37  
38                   MR. HERNANDEZ: Good morning. This is  
39 Danny Hernandez with National Wildlife Refuge.

40  
41                   MR. PYLE: Good morning. This is Bill  
42 Pyle, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.

43  
44                   MS. DANIELLE: Good morning. My name  
45 is Danielle, I'm the Deputy Refuge Manager at Kodiak.

46  
47                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Welcome. I  
48 heard you just arrived recently.

49  
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1 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning. My name  
2 is Alison Williams, I'm the Wildlife Biologist for  
3 Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

4  
5 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Fish  
6 and Wildlife Service online.

7  
8 MS. FOSADO: Good morning, members of  
9 the Council. I'm Maria Fosado, Refuge Manager at  
10 Izembek.

11  
12 MS. MELENDEZ: Good morning, Madame  
13 Chair and the Council. This is Leticia Melendez,  
14 Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

15  
16 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Do  
17 we have anyone on from National Maritime.

18  
19 (No comments)

20  
21 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Do we  
22 have any other Federal agency.....

23  
24 MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning.

25  
26 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yep, go ahead.

27  
28 MR. WILLIAMS: Again sorry for jumping  
29 the line there again. Jeff Williams, Alaska Maritime  
30 National Wildlife Refuge. Good morning.

31  
32 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thank you.  
33 Anyone else from Fish and Wildlife Service online.

34  
35 (No comments)

36  
37 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Do we  
38 have anyone from Marine Mammals.

39  
40 (No comments)

41  
42 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Any  
43 other Federal agencies online.

44  
45 MR. RISDAHL: Good morning, Madame  
46 Chair and Council Members. This is Greg Risdahl, USDA  
47 Forest Service Subsistence Program Leader.

48  
49 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Hi, Greg. I  
50

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1 apologize once again for skipping over Forest Service.

2

3 MR. RISDAHL: No. No, you asked for  
4 any other Federal agencies so I'm good.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, but I made  
9 a note to myself yesterday when that happened.

10

11 All right. Are there any other Federal  
12 agencies online.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. We're  
17 going to go ahead and go around the Council table  
18 starting with Chris Price.

19

20 MR. PRICE: Good morning. Chris Price  
21 from Unalaska.

22

23 MR. ROHRER: Good morning. Sam Rohrer  
24 from Kodiak.

25

26 MS. CHERNOFF: Good morning. Coral  
27 Chernoff from Kodiak.

28

29 MR. HOLMES: Greetings. Pat Holmes. I  
30 brought in Liam Sua to keep an eye on us today.

31

32 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: And Council  
33 members online.

34

35 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Della Trumble,  
36 King Cove.

37

38 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: And I am Rebecca  
39 Skinner from Kodiak. I'm going to stand down for just  
40 a second.

41

42 So the -- multiple phone lines are  
43 breaking up. Do we -- is there any -- do you have any  
44 idea why that's happening? No.

45

46 (Laughter)

47

48 REPORTER: I mean, you're plugged into  
49 the wall here. So.....

50

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1 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay.

2

3 REPORTER: I mean, it's.....

4

5 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: And nothing's  
6 different from yesterday.

7

8 REPORTER: No.

9

10 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Okay.  
11 We're just having -- the phone lines are breaking up a  
12 little bit for people calling in. So just make sure  
13 that you're as close to your microphone. I don't think  
14 it's microphones, it seems to be the phone lines.

15

16 Okay. And then Lisa wanted to make  
17 some announcements about the appointments.

18

19 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yes. Again  
20 good morning, Madame Chair, members of the Council.  
21 And welcome again to a second day of our Regional  
22 Advisory Council meeting for the Kodiak/Aleutians. And  
23 again it's just a pleasure to be helping with you on  
24 this meeting, it's been very productive and I'm looking  
25 forward to all the agency reports this afternoon and  
26 getting to more business.

27

28 I do want to make a correction, it was  
29 a major faux pas I made yesterday, I was a little bit  
30 tired and flustered, but I wanted to just really  
31 welcome our newly reappointed Council members, I made  
32 an error of who I said that was yesterday. So it's Sam  
33 Rohrer and Patrick Holmes and Richard Koso. So I'm  
34 really happy that you're continuing to serve, all of  
35 you are continuing to serve on this Council. You're  
36 very valuable to your communities and to the Council.  
37 So thank you.

38

39 And also anybody that's in the room  
40 please remember to resign in on the sign-in sheet. And  
41 those of you online if you need meeting materials again  
42 you can go to the Office of Subsistence Management  
43 website and click on the regions and go to  
44 Kodiak/Aleutians and then you can find the meeting  
45 materials there.

46

47 Thank you, Madame Chair.

48

49 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.

50



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1 Thank you. And then a reminder to everyone that at  
2 11:00 a.m. we have the time certain presentation from  
3 the Department of Interior, Indian Affairs briefing  
4 regarding Office of Subsistence Management. And that  
5 will be Bryan Newland, the Assistant Secretary. So at  
6 11:00 a.m. we will be taking that presentation.

7

8 Okay. So moving on to public and  
9 tribal comment on nonagenda items. Is there any public  
10 or tribes that wish to give comment on nonagenda items.  
11 We'll take in the room first.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Seeing  
16 none, is there anyone online.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Hearing  
21 none, we'll go back to our agenda and we are at update  
22 on subsistence research projects and this will be  
23 Jackie Keating, Chance Wilcox, Division of Subsistence,  
24 Alaska Fish and Game.

25

26 MS. KEATING: Good morning, Madame  
27 Chair. Thank you. (Indiscernible - distortion).....

28

29 REPORTER: Hang on a second.

30

31 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay.  
32 Jackie, could you hold on. We're having some break up.  
33 Hold on just a second.

34

35 (Pause)

36

37 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Jackie, if  
38 you're online, can you start talking so we can see if  
39 this clears up the issue.

40

41 (No comments)

42

43 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Jackie, are you  
44 still online.

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Can  
49 anyone online try speaking so we can see if it cleared  
50

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1 up the phone issue.

2

3 MR. KALER: Hi, this is Robb Kaler, I'm  
4 with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Migratory Bird.  
5 Can you hear me?

6

7 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yes. And you're  
8 coming in very clearly.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 MR. KALER: Yeah. And then sometimes  
13 if you put a cell phone in a large bowl it helps  
14 amplify it. It's.....

15

16 (Laughing)

17

18 MR. KALER: .....antiquated.

19

20 REPORTER: Della, are you there.

21

22 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Yeah, I'm here.  
23 I can hear everybody loud and clear.

24

25 REPORTER: Okay. You sound much  
26 better.

27

28 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
29 Jackie, have you dialed back in.

30

31 (No comments)

32

33 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. So I  
34 think what we're going to do unless Jackie dials in  
35 before I'm done talking, we're going to go on to the  
36 next agenda item and then we'll come back after that  
37 once Jackie has dialed back in.

38

39 So I'll just check. Jackie, did you  
40 dial in.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay.

45

46 MS. KEATING: Good morning. I just got  
47 back.

48

49 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Perfect. Go

50

0183

1 ahead.

2

3

MS. KEATING: And can you hear me okay?

4

5

6

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yes, and it seems like we cleared up the sound quality issue.

7

8

Thank you.

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MS. KEATING: Fantastic. Thank you. Well, good morning and again, Madame Chair and members of the Council. For the record my name is Jackie Keating. I am the Southcentral Subsistence Resource Specialist for the Department of Fish and Game. And I'm very sad to not be there with all of you today. We're currently out in Unalaska and working on a survey project that I'll give an update on shortly here. So thanks very much for moving me up in the agenda so that we can keep all of that moving. And I also wanted to say it was really nice to see a lot of folks in person at Board of Game last week. So glad everybody's together this week.

We've provided our normal one page update and I believe it's Page 100 of your meeting books. Oh, I first wanted to just really briefly walk through that and give a couple of updates from most of our projects that are funded by the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program for your region. Then I have a couple updates after that as well.

So I'll start with project 18-450. That was the comprehensive harvest surveys that we completed out here in Unalaska. And that project officially wrapped up just this past December in 2022. So we just wanted to let everybody know we do have the full technical paper for that now available online. The link to that is listed in the meeting book.

For project 20-450, that was the comprehensive harvest surveys that we completed on the Kodiak road system right around this time last year. Since the fall RAC meeting we did host a community data review in early November and I wanted to thank the Council members that actually came to that meeting. It was really awesome to see folks and get feedback on the preliminary data. We will be returning sometime this summer to conduct some additional key respondent interviews and then the final publication of that

0184

1 technical paper will be in June of 2024.

2

3

4 Project 20-454, reliable estimates of  
5 subsistence harvest in Ouzinkie and Port Lions. I  
6 believe Bill Pyle mentioned this yesterday, but this  
7 February we traveled to Ouzinkie and then over to Port  
8 Lions to conduct a census survey sample in both  
9 communities. I want to first thank both the Kodiak  
10 Refuge and Amy Peterson for all of their support. We  
11 had the privilege of Amy coming out in the field with  
12 us for both trips and she was an enormous help both  
13 with, you know, mentoring Staff and helping, you know,  
14 utilize her local connections and informing us of  
15 things that were important in the area and then of  
16 course keeping everybody well fed too. So working with  
17 Amy was awesome. Our plan is to return in the fall and  
18 do community data review meetings in both communities  
19 and then we'll be publishing that final report in  
20 December of 2024.

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And the project 22-452, that is the  
False Pass and Nelson Lagoon subsistence harvest  
monitoring and traditional ecological knowledge and  
investigation. So Chance Wilcox and Bronwyn Jones are  
the southwest Staff for the Division. They'll be  
traveling to both communities for the scoping meetings  
from May 24th through June 2nd. And then this project  
is for study year 2023 so we will be conducting those  
surveys in early winter of 2024. For these communities  
for the first time we'll be doing comprehensive since  
the '80s so it's going to be really great to update  
those baseline harvest data and be able to talk with  
community members.

For project outside of OSM. As I  
mentioned we're currently out in Unalaska with the  
entire southern region research team to do household  
harvest surveys just for salmon and halibut. This  
project is funded by the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund  
and it's a partnership with the Q Tribe and with the  
Division of Commercial Fisheries. So we're working  
closely with Tyler Lawson and Aleutian Aerial to  
understand total escapement of the McLee's Lake system.  
Part of that is conducting these household harvest  
surveys and doing some work to understand benefits and  
barriers of subsistence permit program out here. So we  
are currently working on a random sample of 200  
households. We have folks out and knocking on doors  
today through probably the next week and a half and

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1 then we'll be back in the fall to do a community data  
2 review meeting.

3

4

5 And then just a couple of other updates  
6 from our Division. By the time this groups meets again  
7 in the fall we'll have some staff changes to report.  
8 Our southern region Program Manager, Robin Dublin will  
9 be retiring at the end of the month so we're currently  
10 in the process of hiring her replacement. And then in  
11 addition our Deputy Director, Lisa Olson, will be  
12 retiring effective July 1 so we're currently working on  
13 plans for her replacement as well.

13

14

15 And lastly I just wanted to say it was  
16 really great to see you last week at the Board of Game,  
17 that there were several people from communities that  
18 came and provided public testimony. And there were  
19 even a few instances of folks referencing data in the  
20 community subsistence information system which is  
21 exactly what we hope that all these projects will be  
22 used for. It's for communities to have reliable  
23 information to help make informed decisions. So it was  
24 really cool to see that and I always just like to plug  
25 that we are always happy to work with communities to  
26 help folks understand where to find that data and how  
27 to use it and, you know, have us help be part of the  
28 process there if folks are putting in proposals for  
29 either the State or Federal system, we can kind of help  
30 walk through out to utilize those data.

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31 So that's all I have and I'm happy to  
32 answer any questions if there are any.

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34 Thank you very much for your time.

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36 Madame Chair.

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38 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thank you. Are  
39 there any questions or comments.

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41 Go ahead, Pat.

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43 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, this is Pat. I just  
44 want to thank you for getting this whole program  
45 rolling again because there's been such a deficit of  
46 information coming from the villages and particularly  
47 out west. And so I want to thank you and your entire  
48 team should be receiving accolades I think from the  
49 Council. I don't think I'm speaking out of line, but I

0186

1 think it's just swell that you folks are able to get  
2 back in the groove.

3

4 Thank you.

5

6 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Any further  
7 comments or questions.

8

9 (No comments)

10

11 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
12 Seeing and hearing none, thank you, Jackie, and good  
13 luck with your out -- your fieldwork out in the  
14 community later today.

15

16 We'll go ahead and.....

17

18 MS. KEATING: Great. Thank you very  
19 much.

20

21 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thank you.  
22 We'll go ahead and move back to the regular order of  
23 our agenda. So we're under 14 which is reports. 14a  
24 is tribal governments. So are there any reports from  
25 tribal governments in the room.

26

27 MS. SALIMEN: Good morning, Madame  
28 Chair and Council members. My name is Mandy Salimen  
29 and I am the Environmental Program Director for the  
30 Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska. I would like to provide  
31 you with a short update with what the Q Tribe  
32 Environmental Department has been up to. While all --  
33 not all the programs deal with subsistence directly, it  
34 all deals with the subsistence way of life.

35

36 To start our resilience program has  
37 nearly completed their adaptive management plan and now  
38 we are moving towards our vulnerability assessment.  
39 We're focused on community outreach, knowledge and  
40 knowledge sharing efforts. These efforts will assist  
41 us in developing capacity tools to combat climate  
42 change and its affects.

43

44 Our remediation team is gearing up for  
45 a busy field season. Ongoing projects include building  
46 out site inventory, reviewing and commenting on  
47 documents and collaborating with the OC on site  
48 priorities. We have -- we are looking for contractors  
49 for screw pick removal debris and asbestos removal,  
50

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1 removing trans -- transformer equipment and PCB  
2 sampling. We are also collaborating with the  
3 university to host a workshop this summer teaching  
4 local communities and tribal members about  
5 environmental sampling.

6  
7 Our recycling program is currently  
8 working on a grant to assist us in becoming a recycling  
9 hub. We have been researching equipment and uses for  
10 end products for that recycling material. We have  
11 partnered with Matson and Zender to continue our  
12 recycling program and have been reaching out to the OC,  
13 the city and neighboring communities to -- for ideas  
14 and cooperation.

15  
16 So and then I'm going to pass it over  
17 to our fisheries Program Manager.

18  
19 MS. LEKANOFF: Good morning, Chair.  
20 This is Rachel Lekanoff again for the record. I'm the  
21 Fisheries Manager for the Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska.  
22 I just started this past December. Since I've started  
23 we've been busy planning for our upcoming field season.  
24 So in summer of 2023 we'll continue to work with ADF&G  
25 so that's with Tyler Lawson and Matt Keyse especially  
26 to operate the McLee's Lake salmon weir to monitor the  
27 local sockeye run for subsistence use.

28  
29 We're also -- the Fisheries Program we  
30 -- we have also just found out we were awarded the Fish  
31 and Wildlife Partners Program funds for 2024 and 2025  
32 so we will be able to continue that co-management  
33 relationship with ADF&G. We're also planning to mentor  
34 students and any young fisheries professional by  
35 working with the Alaska Native Science and Engineering  
36 Program to utilize them as or employ them as interns at  
37 the weir.

38  
39 And then looking forward we're also  
40 starting to look at plans, I think Chris mentioned this  
41 a little bit yesterday, but we're in the process of  
42 looking -- scoping out grants and opportunities to help  
43 clean up Unalaska Lake which is smack dab in the middle  
44 of town, to address some potential World War II  
45 contamination there and also get a better idea of what  
46 that run that goes into town through Ililik Creek and  
47 Unalaska Lake are doing. So hopefully better monitor  
48 those.

49  
50

0188

1 But yeah, thank you.

2

3 Happy to be here.

4

5 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.

6 Thank you. Do we have any questions from Council

7 members or comments.

8

9 Coral, go ahead and then Pat.

10

11 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I just want to

12 thank you both for being here, really appreciate the

13 reports. It's always nice to see people in person and

14 it's nice to see young people working. And it sounds

15 like you're working on a lot of really important

16 projects. So thank you for being here.

17

18 MS. SALIMEN: Through the Chair. Thank

19 you guys for having us, we're learning a lot.

20

21 So thank you.

22

23 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair, ladies. I

24 really appreciate you coming. We chatted before and

25 with Chris' encouragement I did quite a bit of

26 contacting with the Fish and Game Habitat Division and

27 Jeanette Alas, I think she might have worked for Fish

28 and Wildlife Service out at Adak at one time, but she's

29 the Habitat Biologist for the region now. And she went

30 through literally tons of paper and emails and she

31 found a copy of that draft rehabilitation plan for

32 Unalaska late. And so it never got published. My

33 colleague that I worked with on that wrote it up, but

34 they ran out of money and I think he was probably

35 encouraged to retire like I was about that time and so

36 the whole thing disappeared. But I will do my best to

37 send that to you folks so that'll give you a place to

38 start and then you can work with Jeanette and also with

39 Tyler. And I would suspect that being -- that's part

40 of the Maritime Refuge, I suspect that Jeff Williams or

41 one of this Staff would probably need to be involved in

42 a joint planning and working group on that.

43

44 But there's some very simple things

45 that can be done to reduce the silt load in the lake

46 which in my mind is what's really holding back the

47 population because you can go up on the hill or put up

48 a step ladder or -- by the lake and to see that there's

49 so few places they can spawn and that's probably why

50



0189

1 your population hardly ever gets more than four or 500.  
2 And I know the community through your Fish and Game  
3 Advisory Committee has been working for years on trying  
4 to get community agreements on reducing harvest and  
5 anything they can to make that work. And I think that  
6 the Council's decision at our last meeting to put a  
7 hold on changing any additional harvest tools for that  
8 area, hopefully that will help as well. And so it'll  
9 be years before things will change, but I think that  
10 you ladies from my chat with you have a lot of moxie  
11 and will get the job done.

12

13 So thank you so much.

14

15 MS. SALIMEN: Through the Chair. Thank  
16 you, Mr. Holmes.

17

18 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
19 there further comments or questions.

20

21 (No comments)

22

23 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Seeing  
24 and hearing none, thank you.

25

26 All right. Are there any other tribes  
27 online or in the room who wish to give a report.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Seeing or  
32 hearing none, are there any Native organizations in the  
33 room or online who wish to give a report.

34

35 (No comments)

36

37 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Seeing  
38 and hearing none, I'm now on 14c, U.S. Fish and  
39 Wildlife Service, little i is Alaska Maritime National  
40 Wildlife Refuge activity reports, spring, 2023. And  
41 this will be Jeff Williams with Fish and Wildlife  
42 Service.

43

44 MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning, Madame  
45 Chair, members of the Council. Jeff Williams, Alaska  
46 Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, Deputy Manager. I  
47 have some materials that I provided to you in your  
48 meeting book on Page 81 it should be. A short report  
49 with an attachment right there associated with it, a  
50

0190

1 report card on seabird productivity in 2023.

2

3

4 A couple of topics of interest to the  
5 Board. One is a caribou population on Adak. The  
6 Alaska Volcano Observatory, they will be working in the  
7 Aleutians and monitoring and updating -- upgrading some  
8 of their sites in the summer. We are aware of the  
9 activities. We -- the Refuge is connected, their  
10 Volcano Observatory, with the Alaska Department of Fish  
11 and Game Biologist to make arrangements for an aerial  
12 survey of caribou that -- well, I think due to some  
13 scheduling issues that fall trip -- I mean, excuse me,  
14 the summer/spring trip wouldn't happen, but I think  
15 they're scheduled now to conduct that survey on Adak in  
16 the fall, sometime in September. The Refuge will  
17 support that work through logistical report, through  
18 our bunkhouse that we have there in Adak and hopefully  
19 we can get a new survey for the number of caribou on  
20 Adak.

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The Refuge is also continuing its involvement in planning for the feasibility of removing rats from the Aleutian Islands. Last summer a team of several people consisting of USDA researchers and a group from the nongovernmental organization I'm In Conservation, spent a couple of weeks on Great Sitkin. They looked at a variety of items that would be necessary to evaluate the possibility of removing rats from the large island, it's been done around the world in numerous places, but only once before in the Aleutian Islands. So they particularly looked at nontoxic forms of sample bait and how well it persists in a freshwater environment, the fish presence in streams, the distribution of rats kind of in upland areas, it's taking the very large volcano with a summit of over 5,000 feet, active fumaroles, active volcano, lots of World War II infrastructure for rats to be in much like Unalaska.

There's cooperators, I've -- preparing their reports. We have -- we're reviewing a draft of one of those reports now so we anticipate that we'll be able to release in the near future here, in the next couple months.

Seabird monitoring. One of the major functions of this Refuge is to keep track and numbers on seabirds throughout the region, one of the major resources. So Staff members in September would -- we

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1 -- at the September meeting we didn't quite have our  
2 report card, that's now -- that's on page -- I think it  
3 should be 83 of your meeting book. You'll also hear  
4 and see that report in a later talk by Robb Kaler who's  
5 -- that's in Tab 9 also on that report on seabirds  
6 across Alaska. So the Refuge produces this annual  
7 report card, it's backed up by a lot of rigid and  
8 statistically reliable data, but it's just the thing  
9 that most people want to see, how well are birds --  
10 seabirds doing in Alaska and it tells part of the  
11 picture. 2023 was one of the best years on record for  
12 productivity, that is the number of eggs laid and the  
13 number of chicks produced across Alaska, across many  
14 different regions of Alaska and many different species  
15 of Alaska that feed at all different portions of the  
16 marine food web. It was significantly above average.  
17 And that's the good news.

18  
19 The bad news, you'll hear a talk in a  
20 few minutes from Supervisory Wildlife Biologist Heather  
21 Renner about a few of the other things, in particular  
22 the Refuge Biologist and others associated with our  
23 monitoring program wrote a paper recently in 2020 or so  
24 that documented a die-off of birds throughout Alaska  
25 during the marine heatwave of 2015 and 2016. And in  
26 Heather's talk in a few minutes that that thought was  
27 that there was somewhere around a half million to a  
28 million seabirds died during that, murre, two species  
29 of murre, common and thick-bill murre. These same  
30 researchers and by looking at our subsequent land based  
31 monitoring, not just a count of carcasses found on  
32 beaches and done in extrapolation, that means that that  
33 number was much higher now because those birds have not  
34 returned back to colonies throughout the Aleutians and  
35 the Bering Sea. And I won't steal any of Heather's  
36 thunder, but she'll fill you in on more of that. But  
37 that work is possible because of this monitoring  
38 systems that the Refuge conducts.

39  
40 So we're planning, the Refuge Staff are  
41 planning for Refuge summer activities. We plan to  
42 support culture camps in Unalaska, Sand Point and the  
43 Pribilofs with grants and also Staff involvement in  
44 those locations. Our visitor services Staff has  
45 already visited the communities of Sitka, St. Paul and  
46 Unalaska in this winter and fall to get school programs  
47 and community outreach.

48  
49 A big project for the Refuge is the  
50

1 Kachemak Bay shorebird festival. That's the largest  
2 wildlife festival in Alaska and that'll be starting in  
3 May. Many of you have attended that. That'll be May  
4 3rd through 7th I believe.

5

6 The end -- reversing a trend and we had  
7 a hard time with Staff members over a number of years  
8 now and declining budgets, we were able to get on two  
9 new Staff members. Adrian McGill will be a supervisory  
10 visitor's service person. She'll help us out with  
11 leading outreach and educational Staff here in Alas --  
12 in Homer. And Adrian is coming to us from the Chugach  
13 National Forest just up the road.

14

15 Another person is a Biologist for the  
16 Bering Sea unit, Matt Russtan, he comes from the Bureau  
17 of Indian -- excuse me, Bureau of Land Management  
18 rather and he will be as I said the Wildlife Biologist  
19 for Bering Sea and also the Chukchi Sea regions of the  
20 Refuge.

21

22 In other news just to keep the Council  
23 aware of other things, mainly as it regards to food  
24 security and contaminates, is a fair number of  
25 activities that are happening across the Refuge. In  
26 particular the Army Corps of Engineers, Department of  
27 Energy, FAA, are making plans to remediate contaminated  
28 sites and/or investigate them again on several Refuge  
29 islands. The Army Corps of Engineers will be on Tanaga  
30 Island doing munitions, unexploded ordnance  
31 remediation, there's a planned visit also to Cape  
32 Wislow there in Unalaska, just a small site visit,  
33 Department of Energy will be visiting Amchitka Island  
34 as part of their five year sampling along with the U.S.  
35 Navy, will also be doing some PCB monitoring from a  
36 site specific location there. And finally the FAA will  
37 be doing work at Caton Island in the Sanak Island  
38 group. Basically that's an interesting one that the  
39 lead contaminated paint in some buildings did impact in  
40 a former archeological site. So tribal consultations  
41 have been going on there and archaeologists and Fish  
42 and Wildlife Service in permitting along with the FAA.  
43 So those are some -- also of interest to the Council.

44

45 Finally the -- the Refuge finally  
46 closed on the remediation of a former cabin on the  
47 Amchitka. Already DEC signed off on it. It's not  
48 often that a contaminated site gets signed off on and  
49 it's something to celebrate when it does happen. So  
50

0193

1 portions of Amchitka are now cleaner.

2

3

4 And finally our Refuge vessel, that's  
5 our pickup truck to visit around the Refuge is -- the  
6 contract is let, it will be going to Seattle for a  
7 significant midlife refit, a complete major overall in  
8 engines and top to bottom. That's like within the  
9 summer and fall, I should say this year, October of '23  
10 into spring of '24.

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That's my presentation for the Council.  
I encourage you to look at the report card, it's a  
great one page document to let you know how things are  
going. And like I said it's backed up by rigid,  
statistically valid reports of many hundreds of pages  
and it's hard to distill that into a simple graphic,  
but it does give you an idea across regions how  
seabirds who we view as monitors of the marine health  
are doing across the State.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

I'd be happy to answer any questions if  
there are any.

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thank you. Are  
there any comments or questions from Council members.

MR. KOSO: Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

MR. HOLMES: Yeah, Jeff I wanted to  
thank you for all your hard work and outreach and your  
help on us trying to develop some solutions for Lake  
Andrews and some of the other places where there's  
salmon shortcomings on returns. And I think that your  
folks work and your outreach is exemplary. And I've  
heard some positive comments from some of the places  
that you folks have been working at with the school  
kids and things. And I think that your work on the  
hazardous materials is really great. I know in '82  
when we stopped at Tanaga there were literally piles of  
munitions and -- I mean, they just left their magazines  
on the cot and all the garbage and junk when they left.  
And I did contact the Army disposal at that time and  
they went out and had, I don't know, thousands of  
pounds of stuff that they burnt on the old runway  
there. And so I'm sure there's still tons more there

0194

1 and other places. And so I particularly recall some of  
2 the dumps on some of the islands where they just backed  
3 up to the ocean and shoveled in or dumped truckloads of  
4 things. So I think that that will help a lot.

5

6 And I think your rat program hopefully  
7 will be successful. What was the other island that you  
8 folks worked on rats before, was that Amchitka or  
9 Kiska, I don't -- I forgot?

10

11 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair.  
12 Yeah, Pat, thank you very much. I appreciate the  
13 comments and all your work on the Lake Andy work. I  
14 continue to learn from you and see new ways of seeing  
15 things there.

16

17 Thank you.

18

19 The other island that rats have been  
20 successfully removed from, 7,000 acres in the west  
21 central Aleutian Islands, a island formally known as  
22 Rat Island, from rats introduced in the 1700s. In 2008  
23 the program was successful, it has restored that  
24 island. It has now been renamed to the Unangam name of  
25 Hawadax. So it is now known as Hawadax.

26

27 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. And,  
28 Rick Koso, were you trying to jump in.

29

30 MR. KOSO: Yeah, I -- yes, Madame  
31 Chair. Yeah, Jeff, thanks for all your work there on  
32 our last meeting we had with the locals and stuff at  
33 Adak here on the caribou situation. And I did talk to  
34 some of the guides since then and they really had a  
35 concern that there were no more big bulls with any  
36 racks of any size left there and they were kind of  
37 hoping that that would change the -- you know, the  
38 amount of caribou that they can kill at least on the  
39 bull side to one bull per person, I think right now  
40 it's five, but I understand that there's still too much  
41 caribou on the Island and you want to get down to 150  
42 animals, you know. I kind of disagree with that  
43 number, I think it should be quite higher than that,  
44 but, you know, you guys know a little more about the  
45 biology than I do. So anyway I just want to know if  
46 they'd con -- any of those people contacted you on  
47 that, the caribou part of it?

48

49 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you. Through

50

0195

1 the Chair, Rick. I'm aware that Lisa has had contact,  
2 but nothing directly here at the headquarters. But I  
3 think a person or two has talked to Lisa Spinner, our  
4 person on Adak. And I'm aware of some of that, but  
5 only about one -- I think only instance that I know of  
6 someone has contacted. So but I have made notes of  
7 that and I'll try to follow-up with that.

8

9 Thank you for the report.

10

11 MR. KOSO: I've got one other question.  
12 I know on Kagalaska I know you said there was more  
13 caribou that would swim across to Kagalaska. I know  
14 you spent a tremendous amount of money to kill 10  
15 caribou here a couple years back. Did you guys -- I  
16 know it's really nice to think that we're going to have  
17 a helicopter and maybe get a real count on the Island  
18 here hopefully this summer. Do you know anything more  
19 on the Kagalaska as far as the caribou moving over  
20 there?

21

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Through the Chair. Yes,  
23 Rick, we did produce a small report and I think that it  
24 was distributed to you and if you can't place it I'd be  
25 happy to resend that to you. A person on Adak needs to  
26 -- that was able to fly a aerial survey on Kagalaska,  
27 the actual date escapes me, within the last couple  
28 years here. But subsequent to that we have no new  
29 information. We just -- we anticipate that they -- it  
30 will continue to grow. So it's a novel environment,  
31 Kagalaska is, caribou have swum over there. It has not  
32 been grazed. Adak is becoming overgrazed because of  
33 the former number of caribou that were on the Island.  
34 So I would only expect to see more animals on Kagalaska  
35 during the next survey which hopefully will happen in  
36 conjunction with the fall Adak caribou survey this  
37 fall.

38

39 MR. KOSO: Okay. Thank you, Jeff, for  
40 all you do there. I appreciate that.

41

42 So that's all I have.

43

44 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
45 there any further questions or comments.

46

47 (No comments)

48

49 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.

50

0196

1 Seeing and hearing none, thank you, and we'll move on  
2 to the next agenda item. Okay. And that would be  
3 14cii, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge activity  
4 report, September, 2022 to January, 2023.

5

6 Maria Fosado or Alison Williams, Fish  
7 and Wildlife Service.

8

9 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. Good morning,  
10 Madame Chair and members of the Council. For the  
11 record my name is Alison Williams, I am the Wildlife  
12 Biologist for Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. And  
13 this morning I will be reading out our activity report  
14 on what we've been doing since our last RAC meeting.  
15 And I have a few updates to add to it as well. Online  
16 we also have our Refuge Manager, Maria Fosado and our  
17 Deputy Refuge Manager, Leticia Melendez. And so we  
18 will all be available to answer any questions that you  
19 have on our report.

20

21 So starting with some of the avian work  
22 that we've had going on, we've continued the monitoring  
23 for highly pathogenic avian influenza. So we had USGS  
24 Staff present in Cold Bay from August through the end  
25 of October to sample for avian influenza during the  
26 height of avian presence at Izembek. Samples were  
27 taken from hunter harvested birds and from the  
28 environment to test for the presence and -- presence  
29 and type of avian influenza viruses. This was  
30 particularly important work during the current outbreak  
31 of the H5N1 virus that has been documented nationwide  
32 in domestic and wild birds. This year we did not --  
33 this fall we did not notice any major mortality events  
34 that were suspected to be avian influenza, but some of  
35 the samples that were collected did test positive for  
36 avian influenza. So it was confirmed to be present at  
37 Izembek.

38

39 The next project that I will report on  
40 is our brant age ratio surveys. We conducted this  
41 survey October 3rd through the 14th. We had a total of  
42 eight observers that participated in the survey and it  
43 was conducted by foot and boat throughout Izembek  
44 Lagoon and the surrounding areas. Over the course of  
45 the survey we counted about 49,000 brant from 101  
46 different flocks and it was used to model an estimate  
47 of productivity of the year. The productivity estimate  
48 for 2022 indicated that approximately 15 percent of the  
49 fall staging population were juvenile first year birds.

50



0197

1 This was below the long term average of 24 percent, but  
2 it had little affect on the currently weekly decreasing  
3 long term trend of productivity which appears to be  
4 declining about .6 percent per year.

5

6 I will be giving a presentation on the  
7 details of this survey this afternoon and hope that I  
8 can provide more clarity on how this survey works.

9

10 The next project that I will report on  
11 is our brant captures that we conducted for the first  
12 time this year. We assisted in the first local attempt  
13 to capture brant by nighttime spotlighting on Izembek  
14 Lagoon with the objective of affixing location  
15 transmitters to brant shortly before their migration  
16 away from Izembek. The project is a collaboration with  
17 the USGS Alaska Science Center as a part of Bureau of  
18 Ocean Energy Management funded study on brant  
19 migration. The information from this study will be  
20 used by BOEM to analyze potential affects to black  
21 brant and other migrating waterfowl from offshore wind  
22 energy projects on the Pacific coast of the U.S. We  
23 conducted capture attempts from October 16 and 23rd and  
24 over the course of four capture days we learned a lot  
25 and captured seven brant of which four were fitted with  
26 transmitters. And at -- since the conclusion of the  
27 project about two of those were harvested at Izembek  
28 Lagoon.

29

30 So USGS is planning to deploy about 80  
31 more transmitters this summer on the North Slope of  
32 Alaska to continue this study.

33

34 I'll next move on to our caribou  
35 projects. For the Federal subsistence hunt of Unit 9D  
36 which is the Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd.  
37 It's split into two hunting periods. The first is  
38 August 1st through September 30th and the second half  
39 is open November 15th through March 31st. The dates  
40 run concurrently with the Alaska Department of Fish and  
41 Game's sport hunt. After consultation with ADF&G they  
42 support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service mirroring  
43 the State resident harvest regulations and currently  
44 the harvest limit of caribou in 9D is three per hunter.  
45 To date there have not been any harvest reports  
46 received by the Refuge from participating communities.

47

48 For this Federal subsistence hunt in  
49 Unit 10 which is Unimak Island. The residents of Cold  
50

0198

1 Bay and Nelson Lagoon have been added to the Federal  
2 registration hunt in Unit 10. The hunt period is  
3 August 1st through September 30 of 2022. In  
4 consultation with ADF&G there have been an increase in  
5 hunter harvest from a total of five to a total of 10  
6 bull in Unit 10 and 15 permits were allocated. To date  
7 we have not received any harvest reports from the  
8 participating communities.

9

10 And the final piece I want to report on  
11 caribou is our annual winter caribou population survey.  
12 And before I get into this I want to specify what  
13 survey we are talking about here. So there's a number  
14 of surveys that are done on Unit 9D and 10 for caribou  
15 and per historic agreements ADF&G is responsible for  
16 the spring surveys that look at pregnancy rates as well  
17 as the fall surveys that look at age and sex  
18 composition and Izembek Refuge is responsible for  
19 winter surveys that just get population counts. So the  
20 annual winter survey was originally scheduled for  
21 February 13th through the 23rd, but they were delayed  
22 due to weather, but we were finally able to complete it  
23 March 20th through 25th. So I have an update I'll read  
24 on that.

25

26 For this year's survey we were able to  
27 cover both Unimak Island and the southern Alaska  
28 Peninsula. The survey consists of flying about 600  
29 feet above ground level along survey transects that  
30 have been used throughout the history of the winter  
31 survey. This year's survey yielded extremely low  
32 counts where we only saw 32 caribou on Unimak Island  
33 and 30 on the Alaska Peninsula. The results of the  
34 survey are concerning, but we believe that they're  
35 inconclusive and need to be explored further. Several  
36 factors could have contributed to these historic low  
37 counts such as the weather, the visibility and the  
38 distribution of caribou during the survey. Weather on  
39 the southern Alaska Peninsula this winter has been  
40 windier and stormier than the previous and it may have  
41 affected the caribou's behavior or distribution.  
42 Visibility during the survey was good and the survey  
43 crew consisted of two very experienced aerial  
44 observers. In most of the survey area snow cover was  
45 patchy or bare and since caribou at this time of year  
46 are pale in color they stood out well on the landscape  
47 and as such we feel confident that observers were able  
48 to detect a large proportion of caribou present on the  
49 landscape.

50

1                   But during the fall and the winter  
2 Izembek did receive several reports from locals about  
3 their difficulties in finding and harvesting caribou.  
4 Some locals reported seeing few to no caribou from the  
5 air in places where they previously had seen caribou  
6 and some reports also came in of caribou sightings in  
7 areas that caribou have only begun to frequent in  
8 recent years including on offshore islands.

9  
10                   And in the several days following the  
11 conclusion of the survey a majority of the snow cover  
12 at higher altitudes and in the mountains began to melt  
13 and as we transitted back over the survey area on the  
14 southern Alaska Peninsula to attend the meeting we  
15 detected 52 caribou from about 2,500 feet above ground  
16 level. So this confirmed our ability to detect caribou  
17 on the landscape from altitude and the idea that they  
18 are consistently moving across the landscape and in and  
19 out of that survey area. We did not see any evidence  
20 of mass mortality events which we believe we would have  
21 if that were the case just due to the presence of any  
22 carcasses or scavengers or predators and as such we  
23 don't believe that this decrease in number is  
24 exclusively due to mortality.

25  
26                   So all of this leads us to believe that  
27 there was a shift this year in where the caribou  
28 wintered compared to the area that has been  
29 historically covered during this winter survey. It's  
30 understood that caribou population numbers and  
31 migratory pathways are highly dynamic and it appears  
32 that this was the primary factor in the low 2023 count.  
33 As such more work will need to be done and more surveys  
34 conducted before we know the true population status of  
35 the Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd and the  
36 Unimak Caribou Herd. Due to the cloud cover and the  
37 high winds we weren't able to extend our survey efforts  
38 into the higher elevations, into areas that have not  
39 been historically surveyed or to the offshore islands  
40 where there may be more caribou, but we are exploring  
41 the possibility of conducting another count of caribou  
42 in the spring when we will have another pilot back in  
43 Cold Bay and when the caribou distribution may have  
44 shifted again into those lower areas.

45  
46                   Moving on to our other mammal work that  
47 we do. I'd like to start with our brown bear stream  
48 survey. It was scheduled to occur last August through  
49 September. The survey wasn't able to be completed just  
50

0200

1 due to logistical challenges and the weather. We had a  
2 very rainy summer and last winter down in Cold Bay, but  
3 we were planning on resuming that again this summer.

4

5 For our habitat studies we are working  
6 with the Water Resources Branch of Fish and Wildlife  
7 Service to retrieve and redeploy water temperature  
8 monitoring sensors that are deployed in anadromous  
9 streams across the Refuge and in streams that are  
10 important for salmon and other fish. Some of the sites  
11 haven't been visited since 2019 and these water  
12 temperature sensors are really important for  
13 understanding water quality on the Refuge. And so we  
14 have plans this April and May to visit 16 active  
15 monitoring sites to retrieve and redeploy these sensors  
16 so we continue collecting data on water.

17

18 We also were able to do some outreach  
19 events since our last time together. We did some local  
20 events in Cold Bay including a pollinator education  
21 event where kids learned about pollinators and played  
22 games to learn what it's like in the life of the bee.  
23 We also put on a Halloween school detective event where  
24 kids learned about animals skulls and how to identify  
25 them.

26

27 And then another highlight of our  
28 winter this year was that we were able to host the King  
29 Cove school ornithology and marine biology classes in  
30 November and to provide the students with an  
31 opportunity to tour the Refuge, learn about the Fish  
32 and Wildlife Service and careers in public lands and of  
33 course go birding on the Refuge. And we are really  
34 hoping to establish this as a yearly visit to Izembek  
35 and continue our involvement with the students in King  
36 Cove.

37

38 Thank you for your time and at this  
39 point we'd be happy to answer any questions you have.

40

41 Thanks.

42

43 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Are there any  
44 questions or comments.

45

46 Go ahead, Pat.

47

48 MR. HOLMES: Yeah. Thank you very much  
49 for the excellent report, Alison. And it's really -- I

50

0201

1 think your guess on the distribution of caribou at  
2 higher altitudes beyond your normal survey areas is  
3 probably pretty good. And what you might do to help on  
4 your interoffice politics would be to have somebody  
5 with their iPhone when they're flying surveys, just  
6 hold it up, attach it on the window so that people  
7 could appreciate what flying is like on the Alaska  
8 Peninsula because when I used to do that it was -- made  
9 some of the roller coaster rides in California seem  
10 like child's play. And for a person to be able to sit  
11 in the back of the plane, count critters without  
12 barfing all over themselves is extremely -- it's really  
13 something.

14  
15 And so if on a logistics and  
16 discussions with other areas, if you need help from our  
17 Council to reaffirm the -- what was a few years ago a  
18 priority for you to be able to conduct your surveys for  
19 the Service in Alaska, for the Refuges, please let us  
20 know. I guess you can't really do that, that would be  
21 nonprofessional. But anyway we'll keep our ears open  
22 and I think give you all the support that we can  
23 because what you're doing is so important for  
24 subsistence for folks in False Pass, Nelson Lagoon,  
25 Sand Point. It's just I think a person that lives in  
26 Anchorage and never gets out in the field or has never  
27 been to those villages has no idea what it means to  
28 those folks to be able to have those herds increase and  
29 be able to get back to the level of subsistence hunts  
30 they used to have.

31  
32 So thanks a lot for all the work you're  
33 doing.

34  
35 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thanks. I had a  
36 few questions on the report. So for the brant captures  
37 and for transmitter attachment I was wondering why only  
38 four were fitted with transmitters, like what was your  
39 decision criteria there?

40  
41 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair.  
42 Thank you. That's an excellent question. So we only  
43 attached to four just because largely the groups we  
44 captured were an adult with juveniles and so they were  
45 likely the same family group and they tend to migrate  
46 to their wintering grounds together. And so we didn't  
47 want to put all of our eggs in one basket so to say,  
48 have data from really only one little group. And so we  
49 tried to distribute them across family groups as well  
50

0202

1 as there were a few we caught that were just juveniles  
2 on their own and we didn't feel confident that they  
3 were going to survive and migrate with the transmitter  
4 so we decided to leave them off.

5

6 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thank  
7 you. And then under the Federal subsistence hunt,  
8 Unimak Unit 10, I just wanted to make sure I understood  
9 the -- the middle sentence. So am I understanding this  
10 correctly that the hunter harvest data you got came  
11 from Fish and Game so there is harvest data and your  
12 last sentence that you haven't had any harvest reports  
13 submitted to the Refuge is just saying that there  
14 haven't been any reports to the Refuge. Is that --  
15 you're just kind of breaking up where the data is  
16 actually coming from and where it's reported?

17

18 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, my understanding  
19 of this is that there were 15 permits that were  
20 distributed to the community, but we have not received  
21 any reports of harvest where the -- any of those  
22 harvest tickets were successfully filled. And for this  
23 question I may actually see if Leticia Melendez is --  
24 our Deputy Refuge Manager is online since she's the one  
25 who deals with those permits and I may defer to her to  
26 see if she has anything else to add.

27

28 MS. MELENDEZ: Yes, good morning,  
29 Madame Chair and the Council members. Alison's  
30 correct, we did have those permits distributed to the  
31 participating communities and the Federal subsistence  
32 hunt officially ends March 31st. And so we should be  
33 seeing -- this is for Unit 9D, but for False Pass it is  
34 a shorter hunt that is in August through October I  
35 believe and to date we have not received any harvest  
36 report, but they do come to the Refuge.

37

38 Did that answer your question?

39

40 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, I think I  
41 actually just figured out. So that middle sentence  
42 when it says an increase in hunter harvest, that just  
43 means an increase in hunter harvest opportunity. I was  
44 reading it as actual harvest, but this is just  
45 opportunity. Okay. That answers my question there.

46

47 Thank you.

48

49 And then my last question has to

50

0203

1 do.....

2

3 MS. MELENDEZ: Right. Yes. You got  
4 it.

5

6 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thanks. With  
7 the water temperature monitoring for the sensors that  
8 have been out since 2019, are these sensors such that  
9 they will -- they have collected information between  
10 2019 and today or do they have a limited life span?

11

12 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair.  
13 Thanks again for an excellent question. They do have  
14 an estimate life span of up to five years where they  
15 could potentially be recording data. Generally we try  
16 to visit them every year or every other year just  
17 because periodically some are lost, they're anchored in  
18 the streambed, but sometimes bears think they're toys  
19 and pull them out or the waterway may change and those  
20 might wash away. And so even though they can record  
21 data, we try to visit them more frequently. But we are  
22 hoping to find them out there and if they are still out  
23 there they have likely recorded data that's between our  
24 last visit.

25

26 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thank  
27 you. Are there other questions and comments.

28

29 Coral, go ahead.

30

31 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, thank you for your  
32 report. I applaud your outreach.....

33

34 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: This is Della.

35

36 MS. CHERNOFF: .....community  
37 activities, they look like a lot of fun. With the  
38 pollinator education event was that particular to --  
39 did you talk about particular Cold Bay area pollinating  
40 or was it just a general like pollination in the life  
41 of a bee overall?

42

43 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, through the Chair.  
44 Thank you. We did keep it more general, a lot of our  
45 kids in Cold Bay are still pretty young and so we  
46 didn't go into a lot of details, but don't about why  
47 pollinators are important, what role they play in the  
48 ecosystem and why. And we do have a little atlas of  
49 bee species in Alaska. And so I think we looked at  
50

0204

1 that with the kids and pointed out what ones are  
2 present in the area.

3

4 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
5 there any further questions or comments.

6

7 Pat, go ahead.

8

9 MR. HOLMES: Briefly I'd just like to  
10 make.....

11

12 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Madame Chair,  
13 this is Della.

14

15 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, we'll go  
16 ahead and take Pat and then Della.

17

18 Go ahead, Pat.

19

20 MR. HOLMES: I think that your outreach  
21 efforts, continuing those are really good. I remember  
22 a manager or two back and when we went to King Cove for  
23 a meeting and we got there and he was there and an  
24 assistant and nobody was wearing uniforms, they were --  
25 just had the kids just squealing and laughing and just  
26 having such a grand time. And to see that effort  
27 coming from the Staff and from the Manager himself to  
28 be over there working with the kids I think is really  
29 important because you folks really fill a good niche on  
30 that.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
35 Della, go ahead.

36

37 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Thank you,  
38 Madame Chair. I guess I'm -- my -- start with the  
39 brant. Do you have any indication, it looks like this  
40 has been declining at point .6 percent per year, of  
41 basically what the cause may be on this, on the  
42 decline?

43

44 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
45 Yes, there has been a lot of discussion in the  
46 waterfowl science community to try and understand  
47 what's going on here. I believe the most prominent  
48 idea is that we are seeing a decline in the number of  
49 nests on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and that is probably  
50



0205

1 contributing to the decline in the overall population.  
2 It doesn't look like we're seeing the same decline on  
3 the North Slope and so it's believed it's that YK Delta  
4 population declining.

5  
6 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Okay. Thank  
7 you. And then on the brant captures on the transmitter  
8 you've got on here too the birds with transmitters have  
9 been harvested. I -- do you have anything on are they  
10 being returned, the transmitters, if they've been  
11 basically harvested or how do you assume that or is  
12 that -- how do you know that they've been harvested?

13  
14 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
15 We knew they were harvested just because the hunters  
16 did report back to us that they had harvested it. Each  
17 of these transmitters have contact data for the  
18 investigator at USGS that's leading the study. And so  
19 they did contact us directly. We do like to get them  
20 back because we can redeploy and reuse those  
21 transmitters and they can be costly. So we generally  
22 encourage folks to return them, it's not mandatory, but  
23 we do have some decoy ones that look the same, but they  
24 don't have all the machinery so they're much less  
25 expensive to produce. And we offer those in exchange  
26 for the transmitters so that they can have the memento,  
27 but we can also reuse the transmitters.

28  
29 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Thank you. The  
30 Federal subsistence hunt I know on 9D I did I believe  
31 for -- give out four -- three or four applications --  
32 permits I should say. And I am aware that none of them  
33 harvested a caribou. And particularly the one person  
34 had gone down to Pavlof and they basically did not see  
35 any caribou. And basically contributed it to Pavlof,  
36 Pavlof was fairly active almost all winter. And  
37 usually the theory with the hunters here has always  
38 been whenever Pavlof is active that the caribou will  
39 move. And I don't know if that's -- you basically said  
40 they're not -- they're basically not where they're  
41 usually at.

42  
43 And the other thing that's interesting  
44 too this past winter is bears have been out all winter.  
45 I don't know how they -- how it's been in Cold Bay, but  
46 I do know here that they pretty much -- people have  
47 seen the tracks, seen the bears, all the -- all winter  
48 long.

49  
50

0206

1                   The other thing I think just to make  
2 the comment is on the -- working with the schools in  
3 both Cold Bay and King Cove and I think that's a great  
4 activity to continue. And I just want to share my  
5 appreciation for that effort.

6  
7                   Thank you.

8  
9                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER:     All right.  
10 Thanks. Are there any other questions or comments.

11  
12                   (No comments)

13  
14                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER:     All right.  
15 Seeing and hearing none, thank you.

16  
17                   MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE:     One more  
18 comment, Madame Chair.

19  
20                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER:     Yeah, go ahead,  
21 Della.

22  
23                   MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE:     If we can -- if  
24 -- once you get those surveys out on the caribou if  
25 you're able to share that I know I for one would  
26 appreciate getting a copy.

27  
28                   MS. WILLIAMS:     Yeah, when we -- Madame  
29 Chair, thank you. When we report -- finish the surveys  
30 we will be writing reports and we can make sure to  
31 share the information with you.

32  
33                   MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE:     Thank you.

34  
35                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER:     All right.  
36 Thanks. Okay. We'll go ahead and move on to the next  
37 agenda item. And just to give people an idea of what  
38 I'm thinking as far as breaks, I'm going to give a  
39 break at 10:45 and then we'll need to be back here  
40 before 11:00 for our time certain call at 11:00. So  
41 break at 10:45. And then depending on how things go I  
42 got a note that Kate Martin is on -- needs to be on a  
43 plane this afternoon so I may move that up to the  
44 beginning of the Partners in Migratory Bird section if  
45 that's okay with everyone.

46  
47                   But we'll go on to 14ciii which is  
48 update on sea otters and associate nearshore ecosystem,  
49 Kodiak area. And this is Dr. Paul Schuette, Marine  
50

0207

1 Mammal Division of Fish and Wildlife Service.

2

3 DR. SCHUETTE: All right. Yeah, can  
4 you hear me okay.

5

6 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: We can. You're  
7 coming in loud and clear.

8

9 DR. SCHUETTE: All right. Thanks.  
10 Yeah, so -- yeah, thanks for having me. My name's Paul  
11 Schuette, I'm -- yeah, in the Marine Mammals office  
12 here in Anchorage. And our sea otter team, there's  
13 just a couple of us right now, myself and Ben White's  
14 (indiscernible - distortion) and our supervisor was  
15 Jensen, he -- and she just moved down to (indiscernible  
16 - distortion) Fish and so I'm currently the acting  
17 program lead probably for the next four months. So  
18 feel free to direct any questions to me or Ben.

19

20 Yeah, so my main update I wanted to  
21 provide is on the stock assessment report. We've been  
22 working on stock assessment reports, we've got three  
23 stocks with the otter and also for (indiscernible -  
24 distortion) this year. So we have our southeast stock  
25 report, the southcentral stock report and then the  
26 southwest stock report. And those are available --  
27 those are posted on the Federal Register February 8 I  
28 believe and they're -- I can provide the web address.  
29 Those are available for downloading and there's a  
30 comment period until early May and then we'll  
31 (indiscernible - distortion) from the regulations  
32 website.

33

34 So I just want to give a quick summary  
35 of the southwest stock overall and there's a breakdown  
36 of the Kodiak area. So for those not familiar with the  
37 stock assessment report these are basically meant to  
38 provide a summary of the current population size,  
39 (indiscernible - distortion) trend and then a  
40 calculation for potential biological removal from  
41 harvest. And so for the southwest stock there's five  
42 management units. So there's Kodiak, Kamishak, Alaska  
43 Peninsula management (indiscernible - distortion) up  
44 there and it's about the last of Bristol Bay, south  
45 Alaska Peninsula, eastern Aleutian and western  
46 Aleutians. So we basically kept estimates from each of  
47 the five management units (indiscernible - distortion)  
48 overall population estimate for the southwest stock  
49 (indiscernible - simultaneous speech).....

50

0208

1                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: I'm sorry to  
2 interrupt, you're -- but you're breaking up a little  
3 bit, if you could maybe move closer to your microphone  
4 or if you're on speaker phone maybe switch over to not  
5 using speaker phone.

6  
7                   DR. SCHUETTE: Okay. Yeah, I'll hold  
8 it closer to me. Yeah, so the overall population  
9 estimate across the five management units is 51,985 sea  
10 otters. And then if we look more closely at the  
11 Kodiak, Kamishak, Alaska Peninsula management unit  
12 there's an estimated 30,658 sea otters. And then if we  
13 look just more closely at Kodiak, I know the Refuge has  
14 provided some numbers from the aerial survey that was  
15 written up by McCray Cob and then some skiff based  
16 surveys. And when we put this together we worked --  
17 did work primarily with the Kodiak surveys from 2014  
18 and that estimate of 13,274 otters. I think somewhere  
19 between yeah, 13 and 15,000 otters instead of the  
20 current estimate there.

21  
22                   We've been as we've compiled the --  
23 well, I'll come back to some ideas on surveys and --  
24 but based on those estimates we've been placing  
25 calculations to calculate their -- that harvest level  
26 or potential biological removal. So the estimate for  
27 all the southwest stock is 2,417 animals that could be  
28 harvested with little impact on the entirety of the  
29 southwest stock. According to the mark and tagging  
30 recording program, bench program, the total recorded  
31 harvest on average from 2017 to 2021 is 576 otters per  
32 year. So it's way less than 1 percent of the total  
33 harvest considered sustainable. And then just in the  
34 last year or two there's been less than a hundred  
35 otters harvested reported by the (indiscernible -  
36 distortion) program. For the southwest stock overall  
37 most of those otters are harvested in and around the  
38 Kodiak area.

39  
40                   So that's kind of a summary of the  
41 stock assessment report.

42  
43                   We're -- I guess some next steps. So  
44 I've been trying to talk with Robin Corcoran a lot more  
45 lately so that we can try to coordinate some aerial and  
46 some boat based survey methods a little bit better  
47 between our office and the Refuge, but we're also  
48 working to do it across all five management units. So  
49 throughout time and basically the very different types  
50

0209

1 of surveys done from the western Aleutian -- from the  
2 western Aleutians, the eastern Aleutians, from Minta  
3 and Kodiak. We're really moving towards trying to  
4 standardize our survey efforts not just in southwest,  
5 but across southcentral and southeast so we can kind of  
6 make it easier to make comparisons across regions. And  
7 one idea we're building on is we've invested a lot in  
8 the southeast Alaska in the last couple years so we did  
9 a really massive aerial photo based survey across all  
10 of southeast Alaska for the first time ever doing it  
11 all in one year, Ben and myself and our colleagues from  
12 National Park Service and USGS helped us develop the  
13 survey design and can fly it with support from Owyhee  
14 Air Research out of Idaho to fly over 5,000 miles of  
15 transects when we're in southeast. So we've been  
16 working on developing a (indiscernible - distortion)  
17 population estimate that's going to be released here  
18 pretty soon to the public. And what's nice about the  
19 photo based method is it provides a (indiscernible -  
20 distortion) of data for use into the future and it's  
21 safer than the observer based methods that have been  
22 used in the past. And we're also using some new  
23 population modeling that allows us to incorporate all  
24 historical data for it to provide a more complete  
25 picture of the population status and trends through  
26 time.

27  
28 So that's worked out really well in  
29 southeast and I'd be happy to share some documents on  
30 that survey. They're supposed to be available to the  
31 public in the next week or so. But we want to try and  
32 use southeast as a model for what we want to do in  
33 southcentral and southwest is to try to incorporate all  
34 historical data and aerial surveys and boat based  
35 surveys into the integrated population models so we can  
36 kind of commit to more adequate, comprehensive  
37 (indiscernible - distortion) of sea otters across the  
38 range in Alaska. So that's where we're hoping to head  
39 in the coming year or so is to work at the Refuge, work  
40 at the Park Service, USDS has done a lot of work  
41 through time in the Aleutian chain, but that would  
42 bring together a lot of different datasets into a more  
43 comprehensive model.

44  
45 So that's kind of some of our next  
46 steps. Also since we've invested a lot in the -- a  
47 group called the Southeast Stakeholder Working Group,  
48 we're trying to bring together various interests from  
49 commercial fisheries, subsistence users, tribal  
50

0210

1 representatives, Fish and Wildlife Service, ADF&G,  
2 nonprofit organizations and other stakeholders. We  
3 formed this group I guess it was in 2020 or 2021, I  
4 can't remember, but it kicked off with a Stakeholder  
5 Working Group meeting in 2019, right before I came  
6 onboard. So we've -- this group has kind of been  
7 evolving through time and from that stakeholder meeting  
8 in 2019 is what led to getting support from  
9 congressional representatives to help fund this massive  
10 survey across southeast that we did last year. But I  
11 think it's been really productive, a lot of good  
12 conversations, we meet quarterly.

13

14 And so we're planning to do some  
15 travel this summer, Ben and myself, back to some of the  
16 communities across southeast to kind of build on these  
17 discussions and partnerships and talk about the results  
18 of the population survey and what that means for, you  
19 know, future practices at the local level. So we're --  
20 we want to kind of build on that model and Ben and I'd  
21 like to come out to Kodiak in say the summer or fall  
22 and that's as far as we've gotten so far is that we'd  
23 like to come out to (indiscernible - distortion) and  
24 engage with the Refuge and whoever else. And since Ben  
25 and myself have not been out there in our current  
26 positions at Wildlife Service so if anybody has any  
27 ideas or comments, we're kind of at the brainstorming  
28 stage of when and where and what that -- that visit for  
29 (indiscernible - distortion) engage more and think  
30 about population surveys and (indiscernible -  
31 distortion) matters in the region.

32

33 So that's all I have on my notes here.  
34 I'm happy to fill in any blanks if I cut out or you  
35 couldn't hear me or if you have any questions.

36

37 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, thanks.  
38 So the line unfortunately has been kind of garbled and  
39 you were a little bit hard to understand. So I'm  
40 hoping that you can shoot an email over to Lisa with  
41 three pieces of information and I think this is what  
42 you said. At the beginning you mentioned a link to  
43 something, but I couldn't tell what the link was for.  
44 But if you can send the link and explain what the link  
45 is. If that link is for the stock assessment document  
46 that you referred to that would be great, if not please  
47 include a link to the stock assessment document that  
48 you were describing when you just gave your  
49 presentation. So those are potentially two different  
50

0211

1 things. Number 3, it sounded like you referenced a  
2 comment opportunity, but again I couldn't quite  
3 understand or make out what the comment opportunity  
4 was. So if you can describe that in your email that  
5 would be helpful and then Lisa can make sure that that  
6 email gets to the Council so that we have that  
7 information.

8

9 And then generally I had one other  
10 question. For the Southeast Stakeholder Working Group,  
11 the meeting that they had in 2019, did the final report  
12 from that report ever get completed and published?

13

14 DR. SCHUETTE: Yes, good question. So  
15 I -- yeah, I do have a Word document that I can just  
16 share with Lisa to get to everybody with everything  
17 about the stock assessment report and everything I can  
18 to help them that'll make it more clear for whatever  
19 (indiscernible - distortion) them. Yeah, I'll also --  
20 I'll also put a link to the location of that final  
21 report from the Stakeholder Working Group. There's a  
22 website and there's an all report document.....

23

24 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay.

25

26 DR. SCHUETTE: .....and a website.

27

28 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thank you. Are  
29 there other comments and questions from Council  
30 members.

31

32 Pat, go ahead.

33

34 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, thanks for your  
35 report. I was wanting clarification on a few things.  
36 Are your surveys strictly line transects and do you use  
37 the same transects year after year or are they  
38 stratified where you have a higher sampling in areas  
39 where you have known populations or do you have  
40 adaptive sampling based on the density and therefore  
41 increase the counts in areas where you have high --  
42 higher density of critters?

43

44 DR. SCHUETTE: Yeah, good question. So  
45 in the past including the 2014 survey around -- area  
46 survey in Kodiak that was using the (indiscernible -  
47 distortion) intensive method which was used a lot  
48 throughout -- across the State. And those were pretty  
49 much a systematic surveys on these spaced transect

50

0212

1 lines extending out from the coastline. We -- we've  
2 been moving and southeast is a good example of the past  
3 Board which I wanted to bring up for numerous reasons,  
4 but one of the other reasons that I didn't mention was  
5 (indiscernible - distortion) time. We're moving -- and  
6 using this integrated population modeling approach the  
7 output of that we used to optimize our survey design.  
8 So it's basically -- it's not a -- it basically would  
9 have the ability to propose like up to like a thousand  
10 different survey designs that would include randomized,  
11 transect, systematic, stratified and other designs of  
12 transect placement in that it optimizes the work  
13 precision or estimates of (indiscernible - distortion)  
14 and you can kind of refine the model based on your  
15 interests. Also Joe Isinger who's at USGS, used to be  
16 with Fish and Wildlife Service, has developed this  
17 model which is (indiscernible - distortion) it's an  
18 optimized survey design so it's kind of putting  
19 transects in areas across the range, some areas that  
20 are expected to have low densities to high densities.  
21 You know, when you look at a map of it it kind of looks  
22 like it's random, but -- a randomized transect, but it  
23 is the new optimized variety of (indiscernible -  
24 distortion) but it's not evenly spaced. But the  
25 transects do extend perpendicular to the coastline, you  
26 don't fly the coastline, we fly out from the coast.

27  
28 MR. HOLMES: Do you take into account  
29 weather and wind direction because I noticed here in  
30 Kodiak when we've got really strong northwest winds in  
31 the winter the critters get a lot denser in places like  
32 in Uganik Passage and up tight next to the shore. And  
33 when we're having southeasters then it seems like the  
34 critters are spread out more? And then a second  
35 question along that line is how do you account for  
36 migrations and movements because we had a really  
37 intense population move into Women's Bay here at  
38 Kodiak, I don't know, six, eight years ago of, you  
39 know, close to a hundred otters in a very small bay and  
40 since then there's been no king crab there, there's  
41 been almost none off of the Buskin until this year I've  
42 seen a few exzubia in the spring from the crabs, but  
43 that's the first time I've got in 15, 20 years. And  
44 so, you know, the critters tend to move around the  
45 island where there's food to eat and often that's the  
46 same food that subsistence users avail themselves on.  
47 And so keeping track of where the major part of the  
48 population is I think is really important to local  
49 folks so that they can avoid that or if people are  
50



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1 hunters we don't take that many anymore, but so that  
2 they can avail themselves to trying to get a little  
3 more edge on for where they live. I'm sorry, I'm  
4 rambling, but do you account for -- I guess you're  
5 trying to find out what they're doing as far as  
6 movement with your surveys and having them adaptive; is  
7 that correct?

8  
9 DR. SCHUETTE: Yeah. No, those are  
10 great questions. So I'll go to the first question  
11 first which was about weather. Yeah, we try to have  
12 pretty strict rules on when -- when we fly due to  
13 visibility knowing that sea otters can -- for one, they  
14 can be kind of difficult to see if there's whitecaps.  
15 So if there's a lot of whitecaps we won't fly. And  
16 likewise yeah, if it's -- it -- as she stated it's just  
17 rough and it's too -- well, if it's too windy we won't  
18 fly because the pilot won't let us fly, but, you know,  
19 if there's weather that's not good for visibility -- if  
20 we think that there's going to be differences in  
21 sightability of otters based on weather then we  
22 typically won't fly on those days. But we can also  
23 account for some of those variables in our population  
24 model or we account for availability so we have methods  
25 to account for percentage of otters that are  
26 unavailable to be seen because they're water foraging.  
27 So we can account for availability and we can also  
28 account for detection due to sea (indiscernible -  
29 distortion) and canopy kelp and other aspects that  
30 might influence their ability to see sea otters. So  
31 that's a big part of the surveys is just making sure  
32 we're -- we have -- we're accounting for differences in  
33 sightability of otters.

34  
35 The second question is a really good  
36 question and that's something we're working on, air  
37 mounts. We actually have a big population survey  
38 across Cook Inlet right now that we're working on with  
39 USDS and BOEM. And that goes from like Kachemak Bay, I  
40 think eastern Cook Inlet all the way to western Cook  
41 Inlet down towards like Augustine Islands. And it's  
42 funded by BOEM primarily in areas overlapping the  
43 potential lease or the lease box for oil and gas  
44 development. That's kind of the motivation behind  
45 those aerial surveys. And those are seasonal surveys  
46 so we're trying to do three or four seasons worth of  
47 aerial surveys across that so we can encapsulate the  
48 movements related to the sea ice and forage resources  
49 and shatter movements through time. So that's really  
50

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1 one of the first efforts in the sea otter world, at  
2 least in Alaska, to start to look at seasonal change in  
3 sea otter distribution. And we'd like to expand on  
4 that in the future because I know that's of high  
5 interest to a lot of people, you know, not just -- most  
6 sea otter surveys happen when the weather is good so  
7 it's usually May or June, somewhere between May and  
8 August is when most sea otter surveys happen and  
9 they're usually just flown over, you know, one period  
10 of time and not repeated (indiscernible - distortion).  
11 So we can kind -- yeah, we're -- it's basically a view  
12 of where sea otters are in the summer unless they do  
13 the seasonal efforts in the future. There's also some  
14 ideas about using tagged animals, monitor tagged  
15 animals and look at their seasonal movements. And you  
16 can incorporate the seasonal movements against tagged  
17 animals into the aerial surveys to try to explore  
18 seasonal movements a little bit better. But we also --  
19 yeah, linking to the invertebrate (indiscernible -  
20 distortion) resources. Yeah, those are some of the  
21 kind of ecological questions that are of interest to a  
22 lot of people from subsistence users to commercial  
23 fisheries that we're trying -- looking to explore more  
24 in the future as well.

25

26 I don't know if that answers your  
27 question, but basically there's a couple ways we can  
28 get at seasonal movements that we're interested in  
29 trying to explore, but currently most surveys are just  
30 in the summer months.

31

32 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, you did a good job  
33 there. I think that shows that you're trying to be a  
34 little more precise in your surveys and survey  
35 technique. I have one other question on genetics and  
36 one of your predecessors a few years back made a  
37 comment that genetics were distinct and that basically  
38 Kodiak out to the Aleutians and then somebody else  
39 commented on Prince William Sound in southeast. But as  
40 I recall back in the late '60s, early '70s before the  
41 Marine Management Act shifted management Carl Snyder  
42 with Fish and Game and several other people moved  
43 otters from Amchitka to Prince William Sound and then  
44 to southeast because the populations there were really  
45 small. And so that's always been something that's  
46 tickled my mind and I'm wondering if that just wasn't  
47 the lack of experience on the part of the bureaucrat  
48 that was talking to us because -- because of all those  
49 transplants that were done, you know, I don't know that  
50

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1 you could really come up with some distinct genetic  
2 differences between the regions, it's more a matter of  
3 administrative abilities to survey in different  
4 geographic areas.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 DR. SCHUETTE: Yeah, that's another  
9 good question. In my email I'll put a link to a recent  
10 genetic paper on sea otters in Alaska that was  
11 published in 2021 which might be helpful. I admittedly  
12 am not top of my head great on summarizing the  
13 differences or lack thereof genetically for sea otters  
14 in the region, but that paper is a pretty good summary.

15

16 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, that would be swell.  
17 I think that would be of interest to me and I'm sure  
18 some of my Tlingit friends down in southeast and folks  
19 up in Prince William Sound. So if you could send that  
20 to our Coordinator and perhaps the Coordinators for the  
21 other RACs that have otters, I'm sure folks would be  
22 quite interested in that paper.

23

24 Thank you very much, Sir, appreciate  
25 your time.

26

27 DR. SCHUETTE: Yeah, thank you.

28

29 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
30 there further comments or questions.

31

32 Coral, go ahead.

33

34 MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you. I have a  
35 question, are there any estimates on how many males and  
36 how many female otters there might be? And then my  
37 second question is how often do otters reproduce, do  
38 they have one baby otter once a year or more?

39

40 DR. SCHUETTE: Yeah. So yeah, for  
41 reproduction yeah, they're pretty consistent, I think  
42 it's every year or every two years. I wish Ben was on  
43 the call he would be more affirmative in his answer,  
44 but yeah, around that length of time in between.

45

46 The male versus females. We kind of  
47 attempt that. One thing we try to do is keep track of  
48 pup to mother ratios. So when you're flying you can --  
49 we want to be able to distinguish pups from adults so

50

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1 we can keep track of it that way and the pups are  
2 usually with their mothers, we can distinguish them  
3 that way, but distinguishing lone males versus lone  
4 females is a little bit more challenging from the air.  
5 But yeah, the main metrics for sex is the female/pup  
6 ratios or pup/female ratios.

7

8 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
9 there any other questions or comments.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
14 Seeing and hearing none, that you Dr. Schuette, and  
15 we'll just keep an eye out for the information, if you  
16 can send that to Lisa she'll make sure that all the  
17 Council members get it.

18

19 So thank you very much.

20

21 DR. SCHUETTE: Yeah, thank you.

22

23 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. So I did  
24 say we were going to take a break around 10:45. I  
25 think we'll take that a few minutes early. And then at  
26 11:00 we have the time certain call with Mr. Newland  
27 which I understand will go approximately 30 minutes.  
28 And then after that so sometime I assume around  
29 11:45ish we will have -- we're going to move up Kate  
30 Martin. So this would be the Atlas of Sea Duck Key  
31 Habitat. And I did think about trying to squeeze it in  
32 before 11:00, but I think that's really going to short  
33 change that presentation.

34

35 So that's the -- the order of events.  
36 So we'll go ahead and take a break now. If everyone  
37 can make sure to be -- Council members back in your  
38 seats a couple minutes before 11:00 so that we can be  
39 ready for that 11:00 time certain.

40

41 Thanks.

42

43 (Off record)

44

45 (On record)

46

47 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: I'm checking to  
48 see if Bryan Newland is online.

49

50

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1 MR. NEWLAND: Yes, ma'am.

2

3 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.

4 Thank you. We weren't sure if we were going to

5 announce you or you were going to announce yourself.

6 So thank you.

7

8 So we're going to reconvene the meeting

9 and we're going to hear from the Department of

10 Interior, Indian Affairs briefing regarding Office of

11 Subsistence Management with Bryan Newland, Assistant

12 Secretary.

13

14 Go ahead.

15

16 MR. NEWLAND: Well, thank you, Chair,

17 and members of the Council. I'm really glad to be here

18 with you and I appreciate you all making time for me to

19 speak today. My name is Bryan Newland, I serve as the

20 Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs here at the

21 Department of the Interior and I wanted to share just a

22 little bit about the Department's proposal to move the

23 Office of Subsistence Management from the Fish and

24 Wildlife Service to our office, in the Assistant

25 Secretary for Indian Affairs hallway. This proposal

26 was included in President Biden's proposed budget for

27 fiscal year 2024 which was recently released and shared

28 with Congress.

29

30 So as I think everybody on the call

31 knows last year the Department of the Interior and USDA

32 and the Department of Commerce hosted a number of

33 tribal consultation sessions as well as listening

34 sessions on how we can improve the Federal Subsistence

35 Management Program to better meet subsistence needs in

36 Alaska. And those consultation sessions were aimed in

37 particular at Alaska Natives. One of the clearest and

38 most consistent comments and directives that we got

39 through these consultations was to move the Office of

40 Subsistence Management out from the Fish and Wildlife

41 Service to the Office of the Secretary. Moving OSM

42 from Fish and Wildlife Service was also one of the

43 primary asks during the Department of Interior's

44 Statewide review of the Federal Subsistence Program

45 back in 2010. And so this is a longstanding and

46 consistent request from a lot of tribes and people

47 across the State of Alaska. And we based a lot of our

48 work on that feedback.

49

50

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1 I think everybody on the call also  
2 understands that subsistence practices are important  
3 and vital to the way of life in Alaska Native  
4 communities and as well as for a lot of non-Native  
5 rural Alaskans. In particular Alaska Native people  
6 depend heavily on subsistence practices for their  
7 nutrition as well as for their cultural practices and  
8 traditional ways of life.

9  
10 Comments that we received from the  
11 consultation sessions that we held last year pointed to  
12 the adverse impacts of the changing climate on  
13 subsistence practices. And I know that these climate  
14 impacts affect all subsistence users. During our  
15 consultations many of the comments highlighted the need  
16 to expand tribal partnerships and improve the  
17 incorporation of indigenous knowledge into our  
18 subsistence management practices. We believe that  
19 elevating the Office of Subsistence Management to be  
20 located within the Office of the Assistant Secretary  
21 which is also part of the Office of the Secretary will  
22 help ensure that this program gets a high level of  
23 visibility here in the policy team at the Department of  
24 Interior and it will improve access to the resources it  
25 needs to carry out its mission.

26  
27 If this proposal is adopted OSM will  
28 continue to provide support to the Federal Subsistence  
29 Management Program for the benefit of all rural users  
30 consistent with title VIII of ANILCA. We believe that  
31 this is going to strengthen the program and that all  
32 users will benefit from the additional opportunities  
33 here in our office to leverage indigenous knowledge and  
34 enhance our partnerships in collaboration with tribes.  
35 Under this proposal in the President's budget all of  
36 OSM's functions and funding would move from the Fish  
37 and Wildlife Service to the Office of the Assistant  
38 Secretary. And all OSM Staff would retain their  
39 positions and their responsibilities unless they  
40 voluntarily choose to remain with the Fish and Wildlife  
41 Service. So I want to repeat that for emphasis. Under  
42 this proposal all OSM Staff would keep their jobs along  
43 with their responsibilities unless they chose to stay  
44 within the Fish and Wildlife Service.

45  
46 The proposal and the budget also asks  
47 for an additional \$2.5 million for OSM and it would add  
48 \$1.5 million to the FRMP Program and a million dollars  
49 to begin a Wildlife Resource Monitoring Program similar  
50

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1 to the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. The  
2 proposal as we've crafted it would not go into affect  
3 unless it's approved by Congress in this year's  
4 appropriations. We have submitted it to Congress and  
5 we're going to continue working with them over the next  
6 few months as they consider the President's budget  
7 request.

8

9 So I will stop there, Chair and members  
10 of the Council, and see if you all have any questions  
11 that I can answer today.

12

13 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
14 Thank you. Do we have questions or comments from the  
15 Council.

16

17 Pat, go ahead.

18

19 MR. HOLMES: Yes, Sir. I just -- this  
20 is the first presentation that I understand that this  
21 happened and I understand your logic and the logic from  
22 the people up in the AYK and northern Alaska, but at  
23 least my experience in -- down here in the Aleutians,  
24 Alaska Peninsula or Kodiak, Prince William Sound,  
25 southeast, there are as many or more non-tribal people  
26 involved. And so even though you say that things won't  
27 change, you're making this based on the request from  
28 those entities in other parts of the State. And I was  
29 wondering if you've taken a look and -- on actually how  
30 many people are tribal and how many people aren't as  
31 far as subsistence goes. I've worked a long time with  
32 the local tribes, NVA and Sun'aq and for many years I  
33 was the pro bono biologist for Sun'aq and helped out  
34 with things for Afognak, but, you know, what you're  
35 being presented I could see that some folks that aren't  
36 tribal could be worried.

37

38 So solve my worries.

39

40 MR. NEWLAND: Sure. Sure. Thanks.  
41 Thanks, Pat, I appreciate that comment and that  
42 question. So, you know, generally speaking an  
43 overwhelming majority of the subsistence users in  
44 Alaska are Alaska Native, but we also know that ANILCA  
45 speaks to subsistence use in the context of rural  
46 Alaskans. And here within my office in Indian Affairs  
47 we do operate a number of programs that serve both  
48 tribal members and non-Natives. So just one example in  
49 the lower 48 is the BIA operates a number of irrigation  
50

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1 projects that primarily serve non-Native farmers who  
2 have lands within reservations. And, you know, there's  
3 some things we're accustomed to doing. The fact of the  
4 matter is -- so I'm not -- I don't want to misspeak,  
5 it's not my expectation that nothing will change as a  
6 result of this move. We think over the long term this  
7 move will better align OSM's functions with the  
8 Department of the Interior's trust obligation to Alaska  
9 Natives. But I also want to assure you that the  
10 responsibility of OSM to carryout its functions under  
11 title VIII will not change so long as title VIII  
12 remains the law. And ANILCA says what it says and this  
13 move doesn't change that. And so it -- the move is not  
14 aimed at that piece of ANILCA, it's more aimed at  
15 better aligning our work with OSM with the Department's  
16 trust obligation to tribes and Alaska Natives.

17  
18 I hope that responds to your concerns,  
19 but I appreciate you raising them.

20  
21 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thanks.

22  
23 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Madame Chair,  
24 this is Della.

25  
26 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Go ahead, Della.

27  
28 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: I guess I like  
29 -- I didn't really see any documentation (indiscernible  
30 - distortion) was told. I'm curious on how you expect  
31 us to work when you're given that the RACs are made up  
32 of various user groups that represent the sports,  
33 commercial, subsistence. And so that -- they work  
34 together to recognize each other's ability to work  
35 together and coming to decisions in regard to all this.  
36 So I'm just -- I'm a little confused on how you expect  
37 us to work if what -- given the way the RACs are set  
38 up?

39  
40 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you for that  
41 comment. Again the day to day functions of what OSM  
42 does to administer the parts of title VIII, those will  
43 remain the same because title VIII is the law. And  
44 that will include OSM's work with the RACs. What this  
45 move is really aimed at is again aligning OSM's long  
46 term policy objectives, better aligning it, with our  
47 trust responsibilities, also meeting our requirements  
48 under ANILCA and then raising the profile of OSM here  
49 at the Department of the Interior, you know, in our  
50



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1 expectation and hope that or belief that this will also  
2 protect the funding and better resource OSM going into  
3 the future. But in terms of the RACs and the  
4 relationship with OSM, you know, that work will  
5 continue.

6  
7 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thanks. So can  
8 you flesh out a little bit.....

9  
10 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Madame Chair.

11  
12 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: .....more when  
13 you say what will change is aligning OSM's long term  
14 policy objectives with the trust responsibility, can  
15 you give some examples of that or describe what the  
16 vision is, what that would look like in the future  
17 because if that's what's changing I think it would  
18 really be helpful to the public and to the Councils to  
19 understand what the system is changing into.

20  
21 Thanks.

22  
23 MR. NEWLAND: Sure. Just generally  
24 speaking the United States has what we call a trust  
25 obligation to Indian people and Alaska Natives. And  
26 that trust obligation includes a number of legal and  
27 policy and moral commitments that the country has made  
28 and one of them is to protect the way of life and the  
29 tribal existence of tribal people. And so over the  
30 long term what we aim to do is to make sure that the  
31 Subsistence Management Program here at the Department  
32 of the Interior is better accounting for the existence  
33 of the tribal way of life of Alaska Native people while  
34 also maintaining its role under ANILCA. And so it --  
35 you know, it's -- my comments off the top were aimed at  
36 addressing that, but wanting to make sure that we  
37 acknowledge that a overwhelming majority of subsistence  
38 users are Alaska Native -- Alaska Natives and they  
39 depend on subsistence resources to maintain their  
40 tribal existence and way of life. And so over the long  
41 term, again I'm not trying to be circular or vague with  
42 or evasive, that's really the overall goal with this  
43 move.

44  
45 In terms of details, there's going to  
46 be a number of conversations that we have with Congress  
47 and with folks in Alaska as Congress considers the  
48 President's budget, about the details and if Congress  
49 approves this then we will have to begin the process of  
50

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1 actually moving OSM within the organization. But the  
2 people you all work with at OSM, their offices, where  
3 they're at and the day to day functions will remain  
4 largely the same as what you know now.

5

6 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
7 Sorry, I have a couple more questions.

8

9 MR. NEWLAND: Uh-huh.

10

11 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: So when the  
12 Federal Subsistence Program was originally established  
13 there was an expectation or a hope that eventually the  
14 State of Alaska would take over management so there  
15 wouldn't actually be this separate Federal subsistence  
16 management, it would -- it would be under the State. I  
17 am not sure right now if there is still that hope and  
18 expectation, but assuming that there is how do you see  
19 the shift of moving OSM from Fish and Wildlife under  
20 Indian Affairs, it -- it seems like that step is moving  
21 away from a hope that the State would eventually I  
22 guess take over management of the program. But what  
23 are -- what are your thoughts on that?

24

25 MR. NEWLAND: Well, I can't speak to  
26 that particular viewpoint, Ma'am, about, you know,  
27 whether that was the original intent. What we have  
28 here is ANILCA itself and the Department's  
29 responsibilities. And so as long as we have them here  
30 at the Department of the Interior they have to align  
31 with our trust responsibility as well.

32

33 So that's -- that -- that's what I'll  
34 say in response to your question.

35

36 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thanks.  
37 And then can you share which tribal groups -- which  
38 Alaska tribal groups you consulted with, is that  
39 something that you can share?

40

41 MR. NEWLAND: So I don't have the list  
42 up in front of me at the moment though what I can say  
43 is that I participated in these government to  
44 government consultations early on in the President's  
45 Administration, they were Statewide. And we had I  
46 believe three and then we had a number of listening  
47 sessions as well with subsistence users and they were  
48 very well attended. I don't want to give you a number  
49 and misspeak, but they were Statewide.

50

1                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. And then  
2 my last question and there may be others, I assume or I  
3 guess you can confirm this. If OSM moves under Indian  
4 Affairs would the Indian hiring preference apply?

5  
6                   MR. NEWLAND: That's a great question.  
7 So within the Office of the Assistant Secretary is not  
8 -- is not the same as the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I  
9 oversee the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but it's its own  
10 entity. Within our office as a general rule the Indian  
11 Preference Policy does not apply except when people are  
12 engaged in direct service of tribes. So most of the  
13 folks in my office are advisors to me or I guess in a  
14 manner of speaking and advisors to the Assistant  
15 Secretary. So the short answer to your question is  
16 that for all but I think one or two positions at OSM  
17 the Indian Preference Policy would not apply.

18  
19                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thank  
20 you. That was helpful. Are there other questions or comments.

21  
22                   Chris Price, go ahead.

23  
24                   MR. PRICE: Thanks, Bryan. Thanks for  
25 meeting with us today. Question about OSM. You know,  
26 did it -- did it end up in Fish and Wildlife for --  
27 just by chance or how did we -- how did it start at  
28 Fish and Wildlife and does that -- you know, it seems  
29 like you're kind of suggesting an administrative move  
30 that's mostly to, you know, enforce -- you know,  
31 protect the trust responsibilities you have with  
32 tribes. But just curious why Fish and Wildlife was the  
33 original location of OSM?

34  
35                   MR. NEWLAND: Yes, that's a good  
36 question and I -- I'm probably not the best person to  
37 answer that question because I don't -- I don't know  
38 all the nuances or ins and outs of that history. So I  
39 don't want to disrespect you or anybody else, by just,  
40 you know, giving a wrong answer. But one of the things  
41 I do want to say though, Sir, just in response to that  
42 is, you know, I've mentioned the words trust  
43 responsibility probably a hundred times already in this  
44 short call. That is -- I would describe that as a plus  
45 one or an addition to OSM priorities and obligations  
46 under ANILCA. So it's not sacrificing anything in  
47 favor of the trust responsibility, it's better meeting  
48 our trust responsibility while doing the work we're  
49 already required to do.

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ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Sam, go ahead.

MR. ROHRER: Through the Chair. Thanks, Mr. Newland, for the presentation. This is Sam Rohrer here. So I guess I have a couple questions. As you mentioned -- you have mentioned the term trust obligations several times on this call. I'm certainly well aware of the Federal government's trust relationship or obligations to lower 48 tribes. It's a little bit different in Alaska -- it's a lot different in Alaska. There's land in the trust issues which kind of falls in line with what you're talking about, but I guess -- I guess could you expand on what you view as the Federal government's trust obligations in Alaska or can you point us to, you know, the documentation of this issue?

Thanks.

MR. NEWLAND: That's a great question and a weighty question. So just the -- when I refer to the Federal government's trust responsibilities there are several layers to it. The Federal government has trust responsibilities to all tribes and the Federal government has trust responsibility to each tribe and then the Federal government has a trust responsibility to each American Indian and Alaska Native person. And so there are three layers to that and that does reach Alaska and it's based on a number of things, in some cases treaties, in some cases specific statutes and in some cases just the nature of the relationship between the United States and tribes and tribal governments. So on the ground when you're talking about what does the trust responsibility mean. Each tribe is different, each tribe is subject to maybe its own treaty or its own statutes and the same -- you know, so each tribe is different and Alaska is different from the lower 48. But the trust responsibility reaches all tribes and all Alaska Native people the same as it does in the general sense as it does all American Indians. And there are laws that affects that. ANCSA is a law that affects that, ANILCA is a law that affects that. The Alaska Indian Reorganization Act is another law that affects that. And so, you know, how specific we get depends on each tribe and each statute.

I do want to take just a moment and go back to the previous gentleman's question about the consultations and who participated. That information

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1 is available on our BIA website at BIA.gov. You can  
2 look up tribal consultations and there were  
3 consultations on the Federal Subsistence Policy and  
4 we've got a summary report of those consultations as  
5 well as when and where they occurred. So I want to  
6 make sure we're being transparent on that. And we're  
7 going to pass that website on to Sue Detwiler's team so  
8 she can share with you all, pass those links on.

9

10 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, that would  
11 be helpful. Are there other questions or comments.

12

13 Pat, go ahead.

14

15 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, I think in answering  
16 Chris' question I've been in Alaska since Statehood and  
17 the whole discussion and arguments on rural preference  
18 and that not being achieved by the State because of one  
19 or two votes in the Legislature not letting it go to a  
20 ballot Statewide when 75 percent of the people wanted  
21 to have it. So that's why we ended up having the whole  
22 program developed. But as I recall, I might be  
23 correct, somebody might want to refresh me, but I  
24 believe it was done to Fish and Wildlife Service  
25 because they are the major agency responsible for land  
26 ownership of the Federal government in Alaska. And I  
27 would like -- you gave me some statements on numbers of  
28 people involved in subsistence. I would like to see  
29 that data and how you compare it against data of  
30 subsistence users who are not tribal members. Some of  
31 our tribal members here in Kodiak are having some  
32 pretty deal issues with on let's say sea otter harvest  
33 on blood continuum and because there might be one  
34 person that's part of their ethnic background is Native  
35 and part of it isn't and they're married to a non-  
36 Native and so therefore their kids cannot participate  
37 in the specific things assigned for subsistence  
38 utilization of sea otters. And so I really would like  
39 to see both sides -- the data on both sides and you've  
40 quoted that so could you please supply that to us, Sir.

41

42 Thank you.

43

44 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you for that. And  
45 that's -- you know, what you describe there is a  
46 situation that's not unique to Alaska. It is the --  
47 that's something we see across Indian country when  
48 you're talking about the relationships and tribal  
49 status of folks. And in terms of data I will see the  
50

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1 data we have that we can share with you, you know, we  
2 want to make sure we're being candid and transparent.

3

4 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
5 Thank you. Are there further questions or comments.

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. And  
10 I just want to check. Della or Rick, I want to make  
11 sure if you have questions or comments I give you an  
12 opportunity.

13

14 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: This is.....

15

16 MR. KOSO: No, I'm fine on that.  
17 Thanks.

18

19 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay.

20

21 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: This is Della.  
22 I do have one question. I guess if you're looking at  
23 going through this process do you have a time frame?

24

25 MR. NEWLAND: That's a -- that's a  
26 great question. So the way that we've structured this  
27 proposal is to seek Congress' approval through the  
28 budget process. So the time frame would start with  
29 Congress approving this proposal and then we would  
30 begin the transfer process from there. So there's --  
31 there are a lot of details that -- there are a lot of  
32 questions we can't answer until we get to that point.  
33 And the details about how an office or an agency gets  
34 moved from one organized -- part of the organization to  
35 the next. You know, they get -- they get filled in  
36 through the process. So it would start with  
37 Congressional approval and then any conditions they put  
38 on that and we would -- we would go from there. But  
39 this would -- as we wrap up here one of the things I do  
40 want to emphasize is that this is the beginning of this  
41 conversation, it's not the end. And I anticipate that  
42 we will have many more conversations through my office,  
43 through Sue Detwiler and her team at OSM about more of  
44 the details. And I wanted to make sure I took my time  
45 as part of the administration to speak with you all and  
46 just layout the top lying parts of this proposal and  
47 the goals behind it and try to answer the questions  
48 that we can today.

49

50

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1                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

2

3

4                   MR. HOLMES: One brief question. You  
5 quoted that there were numerous public meetings on this  
6 issue. I don't recall seeing anything in our local  
7 media here in Kodiak on them. Was that information or  
8 meetings only held with tribal folks and could you  
9 please advise when those notices went out to the  
10 different groups in Alaska and when the meetings were  
11 held and where? I'd really appreciate that so I can  
12 talk to some of the folks here in town that are my  
13 Native friends and ask them, you know, what their  
14 thoughts were and if they attended.

14

15                   Thank you.

16

17

18                   MR. NEWLAND: Sure. Thanks, Pat. And  
19 I apologize, I'm going to have to run after this, but  
20 I'll answer your question. The meetings that I  
21 referenced today were tribal consultations and  
22 listening sessions for subsistence users. So we've got  
23 all of that information on our website and again we'll  
24 get those links and reports to Sue for distribution to  
25 you all so you can see them.

25

26

27                   MR. HOLMES: If you could have one of  
28 your Staff identify those things in particular because  
29 I'm pushing 80 and I'm not very computer adept and some  
30 of our other members aren't and it would be nice to  
31 know, you know, exactly what those points were because  
32 just handing me something and I don't even have an  
33 iPhone and a lot of other old-timers here in town,  
34 Natives and non-Natives are the same way. So it would  
35 be nice if you could have one of your folks put a  
36 little -- go to that site, but identify the specific  
37 things that answer the questions that we have raised,  
38 that would be greatly appreciated.

38

39                   Thank you, sir.

40

41

42                   MR. NEWLAND: Thanks, Pat. And again  
43 we'll try to get the materials that we've got on our  
44 website to you and I recognize that a lot of folks in  
45 Alaska don't have ready access to, you BI's website or  
46 any websites for that matter. So I will -- we'll do  
47 our best to get the information you're asking for to  
48 you.

48

49

50                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.

50

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1 Thank you.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Madame Chair,  
4 this is Della. I just have one more fast comment.

5

6 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Go ahead, Della.

7

8 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: And base --  
9 basically it's in regard to when we make decisions for  
10 subsistence and using caribou as an example, it's the  
11 people that benefit from it are the residents of the  
12 region or the, you know, various communities and it's  
13 not -- you're not all Native people. There -- it's --  
14 you know, there's people that live within that region  
15 as a resident. So I'm kind of curious, I definitely  
16 would like to see more information.

17

18 MR. NEWLAND: Uh-huh. Thank you.  
19 We'll be having more conversations as we go forward,  
20 including our conversations we're going to have with  
21 Congress. So I just -- I want to make sure you all  
22 that we're aiming to be candid and transparent which is  
23 why I'm here on this call with you today. And, you  
24 know, we're going to try to answer all the questions  
25 that we have answers to and because we feel strongly  
26 that this is the right path and we want to explain  
27 ourselves and we're the -- we're part of the government  
28 and we're accountable to you. So we'll do our best to  
29 answer your questions and continue this conversation.

30

31 And I'm -- I am terribly sorry, I've  
32 got -- I've run over on my time, I've got another  
33 meeting. I know Sue will probably be speaking with you  
34 much more frequently than me, but I want to express my  
35 gratitude to you all for allowing me this time today.

36

37 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah. Thank you  
38 for joining us and sharing the information.

39

40 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you. Take care,  
41 everyone.

42

43 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Bye-bye. Are  
44 there other -- any comments or Council discussion.

45

46 Coral, go ahead.

47

48 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I guess I just  
49 have -- maybe Orville could respond, like did we

50



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1 receive the notice, the Subsistence Board, of tribal  
2 consultation on this?

3

4 MR. LIND: I don't pretend to know  
5 everything, but I'm going to tell them what I know.

6

7 (Laughter)

8

9 MR. LIND: Madame Chair, Council  
10 members. So there was an email from external affairs  
11 again from our office, but it was really a  
12 (indiscernible - distortion) extended email out to  
13 information all ARDs and back me up, Lisa, that this  
14 was going to happen, that they were going to do tribal  
15 consultations from Washington folks to the Alaskan  
16 tribes. And it has happened and I have joined a couple  
17 of them. And it's -- for me it's something that's  
18 going to be a while yet I believe and it is as Chris  
19 said, it's more focused I believe on the continuation  
20 of the tribal trust responsibility stuff. And I think  
21 we don't need to get too excited about it right now,  
22 but one thing I do like hearing repeatedly is that OSM  
23 shall -- Staff shall remain intact. And that's how we  
24 work the best with our folks.

25

26 And that's all I have.

27

28 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah. So just  
29 to follow-up on that, I understand why the RACs  
30 wouldn't be invited to tribal consultation because  
31 we're not tribes, we're RACs. However there is  
32 specific reference to public listening sessions for  
33 subsistence users. And I am concerned that we weren't  
34 notified and invited to participate in those listening  
35 sessions for subsistence users. And it does seem  
36 problematic that ANILCA requires continued subsistence  
37 access for both Native and non-Native subsistence  
38 users, but the limited opportunity to participate in  
39 these listening sessions wasn't even made available to  
40 the RACs let alone other non-Native people who aren't  
41 affiliated with the RACs. So that does seem -- I mean,  
42 I am concerned with that and that does seem problematic  
43 because if this is how this process is kicking off my  
44 concern is it's just going to get kind of worse and  
45 worse and worse as things go.

46

47 MR. LIND: So I would just add.....

48

49 MS. DETWILER Madame Chair.

50

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1 MR. LIND: .....Madame Chair, is that  
2 this really is in early stages yet and I think we all  
3 really didn't comprehend I guess the largest or the  
4 logistics, everything that involves this new focus,  
5 this new venture. And all I can say is there's more to  
6 come and with your request I certainly can assist in  
7 getting that information out.

8  
9 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, and I  
10 would just say it's not that early since this change  
11 has been incorporated into the President's budget.  
12 That is quite a ways down the road, I mean, it's made  
13 it quite a ways down the road already. And this -- my  
14 concerns aren't directed at you, they're directed more  
15 at these things that are happening in D.C. that are  
16 far, far away from here and they're not -- at least I  
17 don't see, they don't seem to be incorporating feedback  
18 from the RACs which I think are a key part of this  
19 process.

20  
21 So I see Coral and Sam. I think Della  
22 might have been -- and then Pat. Okay. So I'm -- I  
23 saw Pat's hand first so I'm going to go Pat, Coral, Sam  
24 and Della if she was trying to get in.

25  
26 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, Orville, thanks for  
27 your trying to make -- help us understand. And I think  
28 that any white dude would rather be a Native. That's  
29 probably me even though we're -- might be cousins.

30  
31 But I guess the question Della asked  
32 and Becky's giving out is was there a consultation with  
33 the existing Federal Subsistence Board or are they kind  
34 of left out because this is a administrative function,  
35 an exploration from the BIA?

36  
37 MR. LIND: Thank you for that. Through  
38 the Chair. There was no information at the last  
39 Federal Subsistence Board on this as far as I can  
40 remember.

41  
42 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Go ahead, Pat.

43  
44 MS. DETWILER: Madame Chair, this is  
45 Sue Detwiler here and I'm really sorry to jump in, but  
46 I just wanted to let you know that I am on the phone.  
47 And for anybody who doesn't know me I'm the Assistant  
48 Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence  
49 Management. And again I apologize for jumping in, it's  
50

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1 probably incorrect protocol, but I just wanted to let  
2 you know I was on the phone and I do have a comment  
3 whenever it would be helpful.

4

5 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thanks,  
6 Sue. I'm going to run through the comments from  
7 Council and then I will -- you'll go after Della.

8

9 So, Pat, did you have a follow-up or  
10 were you set.

11

12 (No comments)

13

14 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Coral.

15

16 MS. CHERNOFF: Yes, thank you. So I  
17 guess I heard the comment that somebody thought that  
18 this wasn't really critical at this point and I assume  
19 that's why we didn't get notice. We have received --  
20 I've received lots of notices in the past for tribal  
21 consultations. So I guess I would just request in the  
22 future that maybe the Office of Subsistence Management  
23 maybe not decide what is important for us to get and  
24 what is not important. And then if we just maybe get  
25 notice of tribal consultation, I would appreciate that.

26

27 Thank you.

28

29 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thanks. Sam.

30

31 MR. ROHRER: Yeah, thanks. I have a  
32 couple comments. I guess the first thing I would say  
33 is using the terms candid and transparent after the  
34 proposal's made and after the budget request is in is a  
35 little ironic. It's -- this proposal's a lot of  
36 things, but it apparently isn't candid and apparently  
37 isn't transparent or the process. So that's a little  
38 frustrating. And, Rebecca, as you pointed out it is  
39 certainly well along in the process, it's in the  
40 President's budget.

41

42 I guess my -- I have a couple concerns,  
43 but for now my two biggest concerns are I -- as it sits  
44 right now OSM -- the head of OSM is in Alaska. I worry  
45 about moving management, moving control, moving  
46 supervision farther away from Alaska, into D.C., that's  
47 just scary, that hard dealing -- it's hard for Alaskans  
48 to deal with bureaucracies back in D.C. and obviously  
49 the heads of all these organizations are back there or  
50

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1 agencies are back there, I get that. But there is  
2 quite a bit of local in Anchorage management, the  
3 Regional Directors are there. And so this concerns me  
4 on how that would be set up, where would the head of  
5 OSM be stationed out of, who would they be answering  
6 to. So that's scary to me.

7  
8 And then I guess the other question  
9 would be -- I'm not -- I'm not familiar with all the  
10 programs that BIA administers, but how many wildlife  
11 management pro -- I mean, do they have wildlife  
12 management -- other wildlife management programs, is  
13 this going to be the only group of biologists working  
14 for BIA like that. The anthropology end of it I get  
15 that, I'm sure they have plenty of experience in that,  
16 but do they really have experience managing animals.  
17 That scares me.

18  
19 So that's all for now.

20  
21 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, and I  
22 would just clarify the clarification that Mr. Newland  
23 made that it's not under BIA, it's the.....

24  
25 MR. ROHRER: Indian Affairs.

26  
27 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: .....Indian  
28 Affairs, yeah. So his office is separate from BIA so  
29 it wouldn't even be within BIA.

30  
31 MR. ROHRER: And that prob -- and that  
32 probably makes my concerns even more concerning, yes.

33  
34 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
35 Della, were you trying to jump in.

36  
37 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Yeah, thank you,  
38 Madame Chair. I agree with all the comments made and  
39 the very fact that, you know, that comment not to be  
40 concerned, but this is in the President's budget. I  
41 mean, that -- that was my question and when you were  
42 doing this how soon is it going to happen.

43  
44 The other thing is when this whole OSM  
45 started with the ability to recognize subsistence in  
46 our communities and that's where it was put with the --  
47 with Fish and Wildlife. And I just -- I'm trying to  
48 figure out in my mind how in the world this is going to  
49 work if it changes. I realize we work with NOAA and  
50

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1 Migratory Birds and all these other groups which is  
2 great, we're able to do that, but I don't -- I don't  
3 understand or when you look at tribal there's --  
4 there's a lot of factors into that. I mean, are you  
5 going to be a RAC and you're just basically dealing  
6 with fish and wildlife or, I mean, that whole -- you're  
7 under a tribal offset, that's a whole different arena  
8 in itself. I -- I'm fore confused than anything else  
9 on how this is actually going to work.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.

14 Thanks, Della. And.....

15

16 MR. KOSO: Madame Chair.

17

18 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Who is this.

19

20 MR. KOSO: Madame Chair, it's Rick.

21

22 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Oh, sorry.

23 Okay. I'm going to take Rick and then I'll go to Sue.

24 I just want to get the Council comments first.

25

26 Thanks.

27

28 MR. KOSO: Yeah, Madame -- you know,  
29 I've listened -- I've been listening to this, you know,  
30 like everybody else has, you know, and it's kind of a  
31 shocker to hear what he had to say. And it was so  
32 secretive, you know, seems like we were not aware of  
33 any of it. But, you know, I think we're just sitting  
34 here beating a dead horse with all the questions. We  
35 have until we find out a lot more when we have our --  
36 or they have our next meeting, let us know what's going  
37 on. You know, it's such a mess in Washington right now  
38 they -- I don't think they could pass anything. So,  
39 you know, I don't see this happening anytime soon, you  
40 know, we're probably looking in three, four years and  
41 we may have a brand new President, a brand new Senator,  
42 a brand new Congress by then so things could change  
43 overnight. So I think we need to sit back and try and  
44 see what transpires in the next meeting and hopefully  
45 we'll get some clarification from them.

46

47 So that's all I have on that.

48

49 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.

50

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1 Thanks. Sue, if you want to go ahead.

2

3

4 MS. DETWILER: Yes, thank you very  
5 much, Madame Chair. And my name for the record is Sue  
6 Detwiler, I'm the Assistant Regional Director for the  
7 Office of Subsistence Management. And I did call in  
8 and did listen through the entirety of Bryan's  
9 presentation and then the follow-up questions, Q&A,  
10 and, you know, general discussion. And one thing I  
11 wanted to point out is that this proposal to move OSM  
12 is a proposal from the Department, it's in the  
13 President's budget. The proposal was made at the  
14 Department level, OSM was not part of the discussions  
15 in that proposal and along those same lines the  
16 Department when Bryan was referring to the  
17 consultations that were held last year and the  
18 listening sessions those -- OSM also was not engaged in  
19 those consultations either. Again they were  
20 consultations between the Department and the tribes.  
21 The Department was the one who made the -- communicated  
22 with the tribes, made the arrangements with the tribes,  
23 held the consultations along with the U.S. Department  
24 of Agriculture and NOAA Fisheries on -- at those  
25 consultations.

25

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And so we -- OSM, you know, being  
several levels down from the Department we did not have  
any kind of engagement in setting up those  
consultations or reaching out to the tribes or  
advertising or any of the public outreach for those  
consultations. And, you know, we didn't have any say  
who was outreached to or any of that. However now  
we're at the point where the proposal or the proposal  
is in the President's budget, it's been released from  
the Department, given to the President and as Bryan  
said, you know, it's going to be discussions between  
the Department and Congress about how far Congress is  
going to take this and whether they'll approve this in  
the budget for next year.

So OSM now is being -- is more engaged,  
we know what the proposal is now and we will do our  
best to make sure that the RAC has the information that  
we get from the Department. And again it's the  
Department that is working with Congress and has their  
ideas of how they want to -- how they want this move to  
be rolled out. But what I -- what I will make sure  
that we do in OSM is number 1, we're -- you know, we're  
going to continue business as usual as we always have

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1 until something changes and that change would happen,  
2 you know, if Congress approved this move. But until  
3 that time we're going to continue our business as usual  
4 and we also will make sure that the Councils get -- and  
5 the Council members get the information that is now  
6 being made available online with the President's budget  
7 and, you know, this proposal and any upcoming meetings  
8 that the Department may choose to have. So I just --  
9 oh, and the other -- so that's the President's budget  
10 as a whole and how OSM fits into it.

11

12 And I also just wanted to  
13 comment someone asked the question about how OSM became  
14 housed in Fish and Wildlife Service at the beginning of  
15 the program. And I -- I was -- I did start out my  
16 Federal career with it at -- when -- right after the  
17 McDowell Decision was made and authority was  
18 transferred to the Federal agencies to implement title  
19 VIII. And the decision was made to put OSM into Fish  
20 and Wildlife Service because of the alignment of Fish  
21 and Wildlife Service's fish and wildlife mission with  
22 the alignment of the -- of title VIII purpose to  
23 provide a subsistence priority for the taking of fish  
24 and wildlife. So OSM is in Fish and Wildlife Service  
25 because of the commonality of our response -- mutual  
26 interest in fish and wildlife management. So I wanted  
27 to add that.

28

29 And so I thank you very much and I will  
30 stay on for as long as you have this -- you're  
31 discussing this agenda item and be happy to number 1,  
32 listen to hear what your concerns are, but number 2,  
33 you know, if there's anything I can help with I -- you  
34 know, I'll do my best.

35

36 And also I would just say I don't have  
37 the answers, again it's the Department -- you know,  
38 it's a Department issue and they're the ones who are  
39 kind of working out the -- you know, the details. So I  
40 don't have -- you know, I can't be -- I'm not the  
41 decision-maker and I'm not a -- you know, the person  
42 with all the answers. But I will stay here for as long  
43 as you need me on here.

44

45 Thank you very much, Madame Chair.

46

47 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, thanks,  
48 Sue. And I just wanted to clarify from my perspective  
49 any -- I'm not sure if I'm exhibiting any frustration,  
50

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1 but any feelings I'm having about this are not directed  
2 toward OSM because that's not where I perceive the  
3 problem. I perceive the problem occurring at the  
4 higher level in that decisions were made to take this  
5 in a certain direction, decisions were made to consult  
6 with some of the people impacted, but not all of the  
7 people and while it was described that nothing -- well,  
8 not that nothing is going to change, but that perhaps,  
9 you know, the day to day of OSM is not going to change,  
10 these are significant changes and there was no effort  
11 to reach out to the existing people who are involved in  
12 the Federal Subsistence Program. So somebody decided  
13 which people were the most important and continued on  
14 with those conversations and if that's the direction  
15 this continues to go it seems like that's a little bit  
16 problematic from my perspective because you're starting  
17 from a place right now, you're going to a new place and  
18 it looks like a bumpy road.

19

20 And then are there additional -- Della  
21 did have to drop off, she had an appointment at noon.  
22 Are there additional comments or discussion from the  
23 Council.

24

25 Chris Price, go ahead.

26

27 MR. PRICE: And thanks, Staff, you guys  
28 printed this out for us yesterday, all this ANILCA  
29 stuff. And it seems pretty clear in here that, you  
30 know, all the State Fish and Game Advisory Committees,  
31 local Advisory Committees, are still included in the  
32 Regional Advisory Councils and carrying out the  
33 functions set forth, required by the Secretary. So  
34 this law doesn't change, it still, you know, provide  
35 for those subsistence users that are included under the  
36 law. But it does feel kind of jumpy the way this is  
37 going and it's just a little -- unfortunately  
38 government works like this sometimes, it could be a  
39 political thing, it could be a number of things, but  
40 it's -- because what's probably -- what I'm thinking is  
41 the role of the tribes has been under appreciated for a  
42 long time and then government realizes that and they  
43 have to somehow play catch up at the same time.  
44 Hopefully it shouldn't change what we do in any way  
45 because the protection of the actual individuals is one  
46 thing and tribes is really separate because it doesn't  
47 really mention tribes at all in this kind of language  
48 in ANILCA. So just an observation and I'd be curious  
49 how this progresses.

50



0237

1 Thank you.

2

3 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Sam, go ahead.

4

5 MR. ROHRER: Thanks. Yeah, I kind of  
6 sense that it sounds a little bit like OSM is kind of  
7 -- a little bit on the same level of frustration maybe  
8 to some degree that we have on this. But I think we  
9 probably found something else to include in our annual  
10 report.

11

12 (Laughter)

13

14 MR. ROHRER: It's a new section to  
15 write.

16

17 (Laughter)

18

19 MR. ROHRER: Thanks.

20

21 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. So I  
22 heard Sam volunteering over lunch to draft a paragraph  
23 about that.

24

25 Coral, go ahead.

26

27 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, thank you. I for  
28 one in a little bit excited about this move. I think  
29 in working with AMBCC I think it can -- we found that a  
30 lot of times it's a struggle when really the mission of  
31 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Fish and Game seem  
32 to be on the management of lands and wildlife whereas  
33 subsistence is kind of management of making sure that  
34 people's rights to be able to obtain food is something  
35 totally different. So I for one, I know -- well, just  
36 from working with the AMBCC so yeah, I do see the  
37 struggles there. So I'm a -- I'm -- I guess I'm a  
38 little astounded at finding this out after, you know,  
39 meetings started last year, January, 2022. So I'm a  
40 little upset about that, that, you know, we are finding  
41 out about this suddenly, but it has been going on for a  
42 bit, there has been meetings, but I'm a little excited  
43 about the idea of the move.

44

45 Thank you.

46

47 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
48 there any other comments.

49

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0238

1 (No comments)

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(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. it is 11:57 so we can break for lunch and come back and start the Partners in Migratory Birds or we can go ahead and come back and start the Partners in Migratory Birds or we can go ahead and take Kate Martin's presentation which is the Atlas of Sea Duck Key Habitat Sites. She does need to get on a plane at 2:40. I think even if she went first after lunch she would definitely be done by 2:40, but what -- would the Council prefer to break now and then start the sea duck or the migratory bird stuff all together after lunch.

Go ahead, Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: Is her plane at 2:40 or she has to check in at 2:40. And I guess I'm for having her before lunch. Just I don't.....

MR. HOLMES: I'll second that.

MS. CHERNOFF: .....I'd hate for her to miss her plane.

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. We will go ahead.....

MR. HOLMES: (Indiscernible - simultaneous speech).....

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: .....we'll go ahead and take 14iv(4), Atlas of Sea Duck Key Habitat Sites identified in the Kodiak-Aleutian Sea Duck Joint Venture. Kate Martin, Migratory Bird Management, Alaska Region, Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. MARTIN: Thank you, Madame Chair and members of the Council for accommodating my time constraint today. I may have changed my flight if I knew that I was following that previous topic.

(Laughter)

MS. MARTIN: But I hope to be able to provide you with a lighter topic now. So for the record my name is Kate Martin, I'm the U.S. Coordinator for the Sea Duck Joint Venture and I'm an employee of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Migratory Bird

0239

1 Management Program. And today I'm going to be talking  
2 with you about a project that we have recently  
3 published the first edition of called the Atlas of Sea  
4 Duck Key Habitat Sites in North America. It was  
5 developed by the folks here listed on the right side of  
6 the slide and I'm presenting their work.

7

8 And the next slide.

9

10 When I mention sea ducks what I am  
11 referring to are waterfowl species that spend most of  
12 their time in the marine environment. And there's 15  
13 sea duck species in North America all of which can be  
14 found in parts of Alaska and a lot of which can be  
15 found here around Kodiak and without -- and throughout  
16 this region.

17

18 Next slide.

19

20 The importance of sea ducks clearly are  
21 important for subsistence harvest in Alaska and in  
22 other parts of North America. There is some  
23 recreational harvest that we're aware of and there are  
24 some threats that we're concerned about regarding sea  
25 ducks including climate change and ecosystems shifts,  
26 disease, contaminants, collisions with vessels and  
27 disturbance during critical life periods such as when  
28 they're molting their flight feathers.

29

30 Now in general waterfowl populations  
31 including geese and swans are increasing throughout the  
32 continents and are doing fairly well, however sea ducks  
33 are not as far as we know. This is a graphic that's  
34 produced by the North American Bird Conservation  
35 Initiative through their State of the Birds Project.  
36 And it shows as you see on the top the increase in  
37 geese and swans over the continent and this is kind of  
38 a general grouping of those species whereas you can see  
39 for sea ducks they may be declining as much as 30  
40 percent from 1970 to 2020. And so not only are we  
41 concerned about their populations in general, but we're  
42 also lacking a lot of information about them because  
43 they're -- they inhabit these very remote habitats that  
44 are hard to access for surveys.

45

46 So just to give you a brief overview  
47 the Sea Duck Joint Venture was established in 1999 to  
48 address that lack of information on these populations.  
49 And it's an international partnership -- oh, I'm sorry.

50

0240

1 Madame Chair, there's a question.

2

3

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Go ahead.

4

5 MS. CHERNOFF: I just had a question  
6 for information for anyone -- everyone. What do you --  
7 what species do you consider sea ducks or what makes  
8 them sea ducks?

9

10 MS. MARTIN: These are the 15 species  
11 that we consider sea ducks, right, so scoters, the four  
12 eider species, long-tailed duck, harlequin, goldeneye,  
13 what am I missing, mergansers and buffleheads, yep.

14

15 So as I said the joint venture was  
16 formed around 1999 and it's this collaboration and  
17 partnership between the Canadian Wildlife Service, Fish  
18 and Wildlife Service and other agencies and nonprofit  
19 organizations.

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Next slide.

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Next slide.

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So our partners asked us several years ago to identify areas that are most important for sea ducks so that information could then be used for marine spatial planning, for oil spill response and preparedness and other conservation action. And so what we did -- I'm referring to we as my predecessors and my collaborators, used the survey data that we did have from population surveys and information from birds that had transmitters on them and their habitat use to identify sites that were most important. And we used those criteria that were based on monitoring data that we had. In many cases that survey data could be fairly old and so we also incorporated some expert opinion. However we see this as a incremental process in which we used what we had, but now we are looking for additional information and perhaps even different --

0241

1 using different criteria to establish other key sites  
2 that we might have been missing.

3

4

The next slide.

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6

7 So at least for now I'm going to just  
8 present a couple of the or three -- four of the sites  
9 that are within your region or near your region so you  
10 know what has been identified here. So the first thing  
11 Kodiak Archipelago. And essentially -- the next slide.  
12 Thanks. Yeah. Essentially the nearshore habitats all  
13 around Kodiak Archipelago are essential for sea ducks  
14 wintering and molting. Approximately or over 200,000  
15 sea ducks of 14 species winter here. Namely you'll see  
16 a lot of long-tailed ducks, scoters, goldeneye,  
17 occasionally a king eider, harlequin ducks as well. It  
18 provides good molting and breeding habitat as well.  
19 And in some cases especially for steller's eiders it  
20 could be a very good site to look at climate change  
21 because it's sort of the edge of their range.

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Next sites. So the key site -- next one is Izembek Lagoon. And again that's a shallow lagoon, eelgrass beds that result in high productivity and use by beds. It's a very important molting and wintering site for steller's eiders. They also have other species present there.

Next site. Nelson Lagoon was also identified and similar to Izembek it's a shallow bay that's protected by barrier islands and is used throughout or for several species for wintering, for staging during migration and for molting. It's a primary -- sorry, a primary molting area for steller's eiders and there's some key areas within Nelson Lagoon that are important because they're protected such as the area near Walrus Island.

Next. And then this site is a little bit outside of this Kodiak/Aleutians region I believe as defined by the RAC's jurisdiction, but Seal Island is also very important and very nearby the region. Same kind of situation where several species use it for wintering and for molting for steller's eiders.

So I'm here today really to share this atlas with you in its first version, but we want to -- we want to continue to have discussions about whether we're missing any important areas or whether we need to

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1 consider different types of criteria other than survey  
2 data that we have. And we want to try to identify ways  
3 to conserve these really important sites so if there  
4 are opportunities, we're looking for those. And we  
5 also want to incorporate indigenous knowledge and  
6 perspectives into this in ways that are possible. So I  
7 did bring a printed atlas, I'll leave that here if  
8 anyone wants to look at it, but you can also find the  
9 entire thing on our website and peruse that and go  
10 through the different sites that were identified.

11

12 Next slide.

13

14 So I mentioned incorporating indigenous  
15 knowledge and perspective. And I'm learning that this  
16 region and probably other regions like southeast  
17 Alaska, that also may include local non-Native folks  
18 that have lived in this region for a while as well that  
19 may have some local knowledge that they would like to  
20 share that would be important to identifying different  
21 areas that are important to sea ducks. So really I'm  
22 just opening this up to if anyone has knowledge they  
23 would like to share with us, if they know of priorities  
24 that they have that are related to sea ducks that  
25 they'd like to see addressed, that we should talk  
26 about, there are interests for multiple partners  
27 including the partners on the sea duck joint venture  
28 and possible funding for those sorts of projects.

29

30 So next slide.

31

32 You can contact me. I do have to leave  
33 this afternoon, but you can always give me a call or  
34 shoot me an email and let me know if you have any  
35 questions or comments.

36

37 Thank you.

38

39 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

40

41 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, thank you so much,  
42 Kate, for that presentation. I know when I first came  
43 to Kodiak in '63 almost all these ducks were many, many  
44 orders or magnitude more apparent particularly and then  
45 even more in early '70s when I went to work for Fish  
46 and Game because back then we were having a whole lot  
47 more northwest winds and on this side of the Island,  
48 heck down here in Pearson Cove or right in the boat  
49 harbor, the numbers of ducks in the wintertime were

50

0243

1 orders of magnitude larger. There is a data base that  
2 if you contact Richard Mackintosh, I'll send you his  
3 email, he's been the Chairman of the Audubon Society  
4 and their winter bird count and if I recall right the  
5 Audubon group got going about '9 -- late '74 or 1975.  
6 So that might give you several decades of at least spot  
7 things around the on the Kodiak road system. And I  
8 think looking at that you'll see some literally orders  
9 of magnitude of change. And I'll try and prod my  
10 buddy, Eddie Olpine, he's forever a Alutiiq guy that  
11 has moved to town, but he's one of the old-timers that  
12 was really a avid sea duck hunter when he was a kid  
13 until he got to my age and doesn't do it much anymore.  
14 But I'll poke around and see if I could see if he'd  
15 want to chat with you on the phone or something just as  
16 far as general observations. And it's just unfortunate  
17 that Roger Malutin passed away this year because he's  
18 again another person every generation from Afognak.  
19 And but that might be something to bring up to the  
20 Native Village of Afognak, JJ, I can't remember her  
21 last name, is the Chair. Well, actually both the  
22 Chairmen -- Chair ladies, Sun'aq, JJ Orloff I think is  
23 the -- correct me if I'm.....

24  
25 MS. CHERNOFF: JJ Marsh and JJ Orloff  
26 is the.....

27  
28 MR. HOLMES: Marsh. Marsh and Orloff  
29 are the two ladies that run the two tribal offices.  
30 And so they might be able to get that question out to  
31 some of the old-timers on some general observations  
32 over time. But I think this was just really, really  
33 swell. I guess everybody's gee, where are they, you  
34 know. I just saw, you know, about oh, a few goldeneyes  
35 and a harlequin, one harlequin, first one of the year,  
36 you know, but they used to be in front of my house  
37 literally four or 5,000 ducks for a good part of the  
38 winter. And now if you see 10, you know, so it's  
39 changed.

40  
41 So thank you very much.

42  
43 MS. MARTIN: Thank you. Thank you for  
44 the contact information too. I appreciate that.

45  
46 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Coral.

47  
48 MS. CHERNOFF: So part funny story,  
49 part comment. I went to a Flyway Committee last year  
50

0244

1 and I talked about the Native uses of birds in  
2 handicraft. And I found a bird skin blanket in the  
3 museum there like that day I was shown it. So I  
4 brought it to the meeting, put up a -- put it up on the  
5 screen and the room is probably full of 30 to 40 bird  
6 biologists, bird people, bird and I said oh, yeah, you  
7 probably all know what this bird is. And there was  
8 crickets in the room. It was a common eider blanket,  
9 it was common eider, common eider, common eider, common  
10 eider. And so nobody knew it. So I just went -- I was  
11 shocked and I think it just illustrates that don't  
12 underestimate that the things that we may know to  
13 share. I also shared about a bunch of pintails we saw  
14 last year because they're concerned about pintail  
15 populations all over -- down in the lower 48. And so  
16 the kind of information that we share is important to  
17 share and don't every underestimate that, what you  
18 might know.

19

20 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
21 there further comments.

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
26 Thank you.

27

28 MS. MARTIN: Thank you.

29

30 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. So if I  
31 can do the math correctly today we'll do another --  
32 well, let me ask for lunch was an hour and 15 too short  
33 because I noticed -- I know I came back pretty much  
34 right at 1:15, right behind Pat and Chris. Do we need  
35 an hour and a half or is an hour and 15 good.

36

37 (No comments)

38

39 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Let's  
40 take an hour and 15 and come back at 1:30.

41

42 Thanks.

43

44 (Off record)

45

46 (On record)

47

48 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. If  
49 everyone can make their way back we'll start the  
50



0245

1 meeting here in a minute.

2

3 (Pause)

4

5 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
6 We're going to go ahead and reconvene the meeting. And  
7 Sam Rohrer has a -- had a commitment at 1:15, but he  
8 was going to head back soon after. So he's not here  
9 right now, but he will be back shortly.

10

11 Let's go ahead -- Lisa, if you don't  
12 mind taking roll and make sure we have a quorum.

13

14 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Thank you,  
15 Madame Chair, members of the Council.

16

17 Patrick Holmes.

18

19 MR. HOLMES: Here.

20

21 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Richard  
22 Koso.

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Sam will be  
27 back here in a little bit.

28

29 Chris Price.

30

31 MR. PRICE: Here.

32

33 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Coral  
34 Chernoff.

35

36 MS. CHERNOFF: Here.

37

38 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Rebecca  
39 Skinner.

40

41 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Here.

42

43 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Della  
44 Trumble.

45

46 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Here.

47

48 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: And,  
49 Richard, did you get back on yet.

50

0246

1 (No comments)

2

3 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay. We  
4 have five present and we do have a quorum.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
9 Thank you. Okay. So moving -- continuing to move down  
10 our agenda, 14, Roman numeral iv, number 1, is brant  
11 and emperor goose population surveys and management  
12 plan revision process. Julian Fischer, Migratory Bird  
13 Management, Alaska Region, Fish and Wildlife Service.

14

15 And do we have Julian online.

16

17 MR. FISCHER: Good afternoon. Can you  
18 hear me?

19

20 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, you're  
21 coming in loud and clear.

22

23 MR. FISCHER: Oh, great. Okay.

24

25 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Julian, can  
26 you wait just a minute, we're going to turn on your  
27 Powerpoint.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 We'll let you know when we're ready.

32

33 (Pause)

34

35 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay. We  
36 got you up and running. Thank you.

37

38 MR. FISCHER: All right. Great. Good  
39 afternoon, Madame Chair and members of the Council. My  
40 name's Julian Fischer and I work for the U.S. Fish and  
41 Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Program based in  
42 Anchorage, Alaska. Thanks for the invitation to  
43 present today. Our office focuses on all waterfowl,  
44 that is the ducks, geese and swans, but today I'll just  
45 be touching on two of these species, Pacific brant and  
46 emperor geese. The presentation appears in  
47 supplemental Tab 7.

48

49 So if you're on that first slide can

50

0247

1 you please go to the next slide, please.

2

3

4 So our office conducts aerial surveys  
5 throughout the State and we do this to determine the  
6 population status of waterfowl. And the work occurs in  
7 summer, fall and winter. The map on the left shows the  
8 areas of the State where we work each year.

8

9

Next slide, please.

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So first up I'm going to touch on Pacific brant. So the term Pacific brant here refers to both black brant that breed in Alaska as well as western high Arctic brant also referred to as gray belly brant. Those breed up in the western Arctic portion of Canada. And after the breeding season all these brant migrate down into Izembek Lagoon where they're attracted to that abundant eelgrass patch at that site. In late fall many of those brants depart for other coastal sites within the Pacific flyway where eelgrass is found between Alaska and Mexico.

Next slide, please.

So the summer distribution of Pacific brant is changing. Over the last 20 years fewer brant are now nesting on the Yukon Delta while more breeding birds are now found on the North Slope of Alaska as shown in the figures on the left. The upper one shows the number of nests on the Yukon Delta over the last 20 or so years. The bottom shows the number of indicated breeding pairs increasing on the North Slope. So many factors might be affecting that change, but we believe habitat is a big one. The preferred foraging foods for goslings in the north is quite abundant, but it's declining on the YK Delta. And goslings that are hatched on the North Slope seem to grow faster and survive at higher rates than those from the sub-Arctic regions. So a greater proportion of North Slope goslings will survive each year and if they do they'll be returning to their northern hatching areas where as further will be -- further south not as many goslings will be returning. So over the long term we might be seeing a continuing shift northward.

Next slide.

So we see the distribution for brant shifting during winter as well. As I mentioned earlier

0248

1 virtually all brant pass through Izembek Lagoon in  
2 fall. And in fact a proportion of these geese that are  
3 staying at Izembek through the winter is actually  
4 increasing. So the figure on the left shows the number  
5 of brant wintering in Mexico shown in red and they've  
6 been declining whereas the numbers at Izembek shown in  
7 blue have increased through time. Roughly half of all  
8 brant now are wintering at Izembek Lagoon. Izembek  
9 Lagoon rarely freezes completely anymore or for long  
10 periods of time so many of these geese are choosing to  
11 simply stay put where those eelgrass beds are intact  
12 and plentiful.

13

14 Next slide.

15

16 Just as a slide check I want to make  
17 sure there's a family group of brant showing on the  
18 right side of that slide.

19

20 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, there are.

21

22 MR. FISCHER: Okay. Great. So the  
23 Pacific Flyway Management Plan identifies population  
24 size thresholds that guide whether fall, winter harvest  
25 guidelines should be liberal, moderate or restrictive.  
26 The population size is measured with a three year  
27 running average of mid winter counts throughout the  
28 winter range. So since the 1950s the survey indicates  
29 the population has fluctuated roughly between 100,000  
30 and 170,000 geese. The count just this last winter and  
31 the winter of 2023 was relatively low and it pulled the  
32 three year average down into the moderate harvest  
33 guideline. And so that will trigger a restriction of  
34 bag limits and season length in California this year.  
35 The other States where brant occur in fall and winter  
36 were already holding their harvest within the moderate  
37 harvest strategy so no change is expected in Alaska,  
38 Washington or Oregon at this time.

39

40 Next slide.

41

42 So while brant management has been --  
43 has used the winter survey for decades the survey is  
44 expensive, it's widespread across three countries, it's  
45 subject to potential bias if survey observers change.  
46 But one alternative that's been considered is to  
47 estimate the population at one place and at one time,  
48 that place being Izembek where virtually all the brant  
49 occur in October. Now aerial surveys have been  
50

0249

1 conducted in fall at Izembek since the 1970s, but these  
2 counts are quite difficult because the flocks are large  
3 and the brant are mixed in with other geese. And all  
4 the geese are capable of flight.

5

6 Next slide.

7

8 So nonetheless these counts between  
9 Izembek in fall and mid winter coordinated survey are  
10 quite comparable. So knowing that we wanted to measure  
11 the accuracy of our low level aerial survey counts at  
12 Izembek in the fall.

13

14 Next slide.

15

16 This should be a aerial photo of  
17 Izembek Lagoon with a circle around it identifying it.  
18 So to do that test we work closely with USGS to  
19 establish an experimental photographic survey in  
20 Izembek Lagoon.

21

22 Next slide.

23

24 To do that we established straight-line  
25 transects equally spaced covering the entire lagoon.

26

27 Next slide.

28

29 So unlike the low level aerial survey  
30 that is conducted at 150 feet the photographic survey  
31 was conducted at 1,500 feet and it was designed to get  
32 a representative sample of density that could then be  
33 extrapolated to the entire lagoon.

34

35 Next slide.

36

37 It should say Aviatix on the left.  
38 The transects are actually comprised of points along  
39 the line. We use a program called Aviatix that  
40 automatically triggers cameras within the aircraft when  
41 it passes over each of these points.

42

43 Next slide.

44

45 So to do this a pilot simply follows  
46 along the flight line and a camera operator is  
47 monitoring the progress from the back seat of the  
48 aircraft. Two cameras are used and they're triggered  
49 every few seconds and so this results in roughly 10,000  
50

0250

1 photographs for each replicate. Okay. So this is an  
2 example of one of the resulting photographs. From  
3 1,500 feet it simply appears like some small dots with  
4 a very gray background.

5

6 Next slide.

7

8 But if we zoom in on one portion of  
9 this photograph, here we're going to zoom in on that  
10 yellow box.

11

12 Next slide.

13

14 We can see nine geese clearly. There's  
15 four brant in the upper portion of the photo and five  
16 cackling geese in the lower area. So importantly we  
17 worked with computer programmers to develop an  
18 automatic identification and counting method based on  
19 the pattern of white and black packs of geese. And  
20 this enabled the computer to do the counting for us.

21

22 So the results of this work are  
23 displayed here and they demonstrate the difference in  
24 the population estimates from the low level surveys  
25 which are shown in the -- with the purple circles and  
26 the wide confidence intervals. (Indiscernible -  
27 distortion) thousand.

28

29 First is the photographic estimates  
30 which are those green dots during the most recent three  
31 years. So these photographic estimates indicate that  
32 nearly twice the number of brant are there than we were  
33 estimating from the low level flight.

34

35 The next slide should say next steps in  
36 aerial photographic survey development. So our results  
37 were recently published in the Journal Wildlife Society  
38 Bulletin and the key messages were that the new method  
39 yielded an unbiased estimate of population size, caused  
40 less disturbance to birds and it increased the safety  
41 for the aerial survey crews. So we're now working with  
42 programmers at Google to improve the identification and  
43 counting algorithm and we will use that new model to  
44 analyze the fall, 2022 estimates. So ultimately we  
45 believe that photography is a better way to monitor the  
46 total population of brant versus the winter survey.

47

48 Next slide.

49

50

0251

1                   Okay. Now I'm going to shift gears and  
2 provide a brief update on the status of emperor geese,  
3 how they're managed during the spring/summer hunt and  
4 during the fall/winter hunt.

5

6                   Next slide.

7

8                   So emperor geese remain in Alaska  
9 overwinter and they're distributed along the Aleutian  
10 chain, the Alaska Peninsula and as far north as Kodiak.  
11 In spring they stage along the northside of the Alaska  
12 Peninsula and then move into the Yukon Delta where they  
13 breed.

14

15                   Next slide.

16

17                   So there's an emperor goose -- emperor  
18 goose harvest is guided by two different management  
19 plans, Pacific Flyway Management Plan guides the  
20 fall/winter harvest and the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-  
21 Management Council, AMBCC, Management Plan guides the  
22 spring/summer harvest. Both of these plans have action  
23 thresholds that are tied to the -- to an aerial  
24 breeding pair survey we conduct annually in late May on  
25 the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta where these geese breed.

26

27                   Next slide.

28

29                   So this slide should show some green,  
30 yellow and red, these are current harvest -- this is  
31 the current harvest strategy. So the harvest  
32 strategies are shown here, these are what appear in the  
33 current plans. So the left column is the population  
34 thresholds, the middle column shows the corresponding  
35 regulations for the spring and summer hunt and the  
36 right column is the corresponding regulations for the  
37 fall/winter hunt. Green indicates a relatively high  
38 population size and a liberal harvest, yellow indicates  
39 a need for caution and a more conservative harvest and  
40 red indicates a closure of harvest Statewide.

41

42                   Next slide.

43

44                   Okay. So where are we in this. The  
45 population figure on the right is based on the aerial  
46 survey conducted on the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta breeding  
47 grounds. And from this survey we saw numbers of  
48 emperors increasing starting in the mid 1980s after  
49 hunting was closed Statewide. Recovery was slow, but  
50

0252

1 in 2016 the population surpassed the threshold required  
2 to open that hunt based on the management plan that was  
3 in place at that time. In that same year, 2016, the  
4 plan was -- the plans were developed that set the  
5 thresholds that I described in that previous slide.  
6 And the first legal harvest of emperor geese in 30  
7 years was opened. After that our population counts  
8 went down for four years and in response there was an  
9 increase of outreach efforts and there was a closure to  
10 egg harvest that was enacted. Luckily last summer in  
11 2022 the population estimate was up again and the hunt  
12 remains open today. Actually it's open Sunday, that's  
13 when the spring/summer harvest opens.

14

15 Next slide.

16

17 So while the population exceeded 28,000  
18 last summer the AMBCC partners voted to retain some  
19 conservation measures including the egg harvest closure  
20 for the 2023 spring/summer hunt and a 500 bird  
21 Statewide quota for the fall/winter hunt.

22

23 Next slide.

24

25 Okay. This is titled spring/summer  
26 emperor goose hunt regulations. The spring/summer  
27 migratory bird harvest season opens on Sunday, April  
28 2nd. The dates for the hunt in Kodiak and in the three  
29 subregions of the Aleutian/Pribilof region are shown  
30 here. Not shown on this slide are the data for the  
31 Bristol Bay region, I apologize, part of which falls  
32 within the boundaries of the Kodiak/Aleutian RAC. So  
33 the regulations are posted online at the site indicated  
34 in the left figure and if that's not visible I'll  
35 provide that website to Lisa and she can share it with  
36 you all. Emperor geese are closed to harvest year  
37 round within the Kodiak Island road area. The boundary  
38 of that area is shown on the map on the right. And  
39 I'll just say that all the regulations are summarized  
40 both in paper form and on the website and the  
41 regulation booklets have been distributed to a number  
42 of sites around the State including Kodiak.

43

44 Next slide, please.

45

46 Okay. The fall/winter hunt. So for  
47 the fall/winter hunt there's a Statewide quota of 500  
48 birds and that's allocated among different regions.  
49 Roughly 85 percent of the fall/winter harvest is  
50



0253

1 actually allocated within the Kodiak/Aleutian RAC  
2 region. Once the quota for a given area is reached  
3 during the season then the hunt is closed by emergency  
4 order.

5

6 Next slide.

7

8 Okay. So this is the reported goose  
9 harvest during the fall and winter. The upper table  
10 shows the reported harvest of emperors in fall and  
11 winter by year and region. And I apologize this table  
12 does not show the harvest within the portion of the  
13 Alaska Peninsula that falls within the Kodiak/Aleutian  
14 RAC boundary because the data does not come out in that  
15 -- with that fine a scale. In general though Statewide  
16 the reported harvest in fall and winter has averaged  
17 around 130 emperors per year.

18

19 Next slide.

20

21 Okay. The AMBCC and the Pacific Flyway  
22 are in the process of reviewing and revising the  
23 management plan. So within the AMBCC we have a  
24 committee formed specifically for that purpose that  
25 includes the Native caucus members from throughout the  
26 range of the emperor goose including Coral Chernoff  
27 from Kodiak, Peter Devine and Karen Putnakoff from the  
28 Aleutian/Pribilof region, Gayla Hoseth from Bristol  
29 Bay, Jennifer Hooper from the Yukon Delta, Lois Harris  
30 from the Northwest Arctic and Brandon Omosik from the  
31 Bering Straits region. And then the Staff from Alaska  
32 Department of Fish and Game and from the U.S. Fish and  
33 Wildlife Service also serve on that committee.

34

35 Next slide please.

36

37 So the plan revision has four major  
38 steps and first it's to first develop the objectives  
39 that we want to accomplish from the plan; next step is  
40 to define different management alternatives that can be  
41 employed that would accomplish those objectives; third  
42 step is to evaluate those and use mathematical models  
43 and traditional ecological knowledge to predict what  
44 the effects will be for each alternative; and then  
45 finally we'll select the best alternative after  
46 considering the trade-offs. So the process began in  
47 2022 and we plan to be completed by 2024.

48

49 Next slide.

50

0254

1 So that concludes my report. I covered  
2 a lot of material here in a short amount of time so,  
3 Madame Chair, if there's time for questions or comments  
4 I'm certainly available. If time is short and you need  
5 to move on then Lisa Hutchinson can provide my contact  
6 information. I'd be happy to talk to you or Council  
7 members about these or other topics.

8  
9 Thanks very much.

10  
11 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thanks. We'll  
12 go ahead and do some questions. I don't know if I'm  
13 misreading this, but on the slide that at the top it  
14 says reported fall/winter emperor goose harvest 2017 to  
15 2023. Is that just the fall -- is there a separate  
16 harvest report for spring or does this represent all of  
17 the harvest of emperor geese or is there a different  
18 harvest reporting for like what I would call the spring  
19 hunt or is that included in winter?

20  
21 MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
22 There is a separate report that covers the  
23 spring/summer hunt. This table that you're looking at  
24 here, this is simply the reported fall/winter hunt from  
25 the permit hunt for emperor geese for Kodiak and for  
26 the Aleutian/Pribilof regions. Liliana Naves is --  
27 attend this meeting and I'd have to look at what she's  
28 going to be presenting on. Not that topic, but I'm  
29 sure she could answer some questions about the emperor  
30 harvest in spring/summer as well.

31  
32 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. And I see  
33 that Coral has her hand up.

34  
35 Go ahead, Coral.

36  
37 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, on this -- thank  
38 you for that presentation, Julian. On the same slide,  
39 the reported fall/winter emperor goose harvest, there's  
40 a column here that says Statewide resident total. Was  
41 there no successful nonresident hunts or is that -- am  
42 I just -- is that included in that Statewide resident  
43 total?

44  
45 MR. FISCHER: Hi, Coral, thanks for the  
46 question. Let me see if I can pull that up. That is  
47 not on there. Let me -- hold one second. Okay. I  
48 have those numbers, I apologize they were not on there.  
49 They're not broken down by region, but I'm looking at  
50

0255

1 the nonresident harvest -- there was no nonresident  
2 harvest in the first year. The second two years --  
3 second and third year there was 25. Third -- fourth  
4 year was 18, fifth year was 19 and this year it's 20.

5

6 MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you very much.  
7 And I just had a comment about the spring hunt. In  
8 general there are no harvesting report requirements  
9 for those spring hunts?

10

11 MR. FISCHER: That is correct. Under  
12 the current management plan there is not a permit  
13 required.

14

15 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
16 there other questions.

17

18 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: This is Della.  
19 I have -- I have a number of questions.

20

21 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, go ahead,  
22 Della.

23

24 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: I guess going to  
25 the emperor -- well, since we're on the emperor and  
26 then I want to go to the brant after. On the emperor  
27 that you don't have the numbers and the Alaska  
28 Peninsula and I couldn't hear why, what the reasoning  
29 was. Can you explain that?

30

31 MR. FISCHER: Sure. Yeah. Okay. So  
32 the AMBCC is managed through a number of different  
33 regions. The region boundaries do not coincide with  
34 the RAC boundaries. So there's a -- so the RAC -- the  
35 RAC that you're -- that we're all meeting here today on  
36 includes Kodiak, the Aleutians and then the western  
37 portion of the Alaska Peninsula. The way the reporting  
38 is done for emperor harvests for the Alaska Peninsula,  
39 it's all merged into the region called Bristol Bay. So  
40 there's not -- hunters are not required to report  
41 whether they're in say Nelson Lagoon versus Togiak. So  
42 all those numbers are merged together. So that -- for  
43 that reason I can't really -- I can't provide the  
44 information on that's specific to just the RAC boundary  
45 on the western part of the Alaska Peninsula. We do  
46 have estimates.....

47

48 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Okay.

49

50

0256

1 MR. FISCHER: .....specifically though  
2 for the Izembek State Game Refuge.

3  
4 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: And if -- and  
5 what are -- would those numbers be for Izembek? I'm  
6 just kind of curious.

7  
8 MR. FISCHER: Okay. At Izembek  
9 specifically starting in the first season it would be  
10 12, then five, then nine, then four, then 15, then two.  
11 So that's an average of about eight birds per year.

12  
13 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: The reason I ask  
14 I think when -- once it's opened we -- there was an  
15 increase it seemed of hunters going in there just to --  
16 specifically harvest one emperor goose. So I'm just  
17 kind of curious. And it would be nice to kind of see  
18 that breakdown, I know it's included in Bristol Bay.

19  
20 The other thing that I question in  
21 regard to the emperors, you -- from looking at numbers  
22 of the population index of less than 28,000. At one  
23 point in time I thought the goal had been a threshold  
24 of 80,000 and that it was counted that there were more  
25 than what was actually being counted therefore the  
26 season was open. What exactly is the threshold that  
27 you're trying to meet?

28  
29 MR. FISCHER: Yeah. No, that is an  
30 absolutely fantastic question. And your -- your memory  
31 is spot on. So the difference here is that the -- when  
32 the new management plan was written in 2016 the entire  
33 -- the survey was changed to be specific to one portion  
34 of the emperor goose range on the Yukon Delta. Before  
35 there had been a fall staging -- I'm sorry, a spring  
36 staging survey that had been done starting in 1981.  
37 And we had been conducting that survey for years.  
38 During that time we were able to count all the birds  
39 that are present so that would include adult breeding  
40 age birds, it would include juveniles that had just  
41 been hatched the prior year as well as.....

42  
43 (Teleconference interference -  
44 participants not muted).

45  
46 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Hi. Can  
47 everyone who's not Julian make sure to mute your  
48 phones, please.

49  
50

0257

1                   Thanks.

2

3

4                   MR. FISCHER:     Thank you.     So, Ms.  
5 Trumble, the -- we have been counting all adults, young  
6 and juvenile birds along the Alaska Peninsula. There  
7 was concerns voiced by the Alaska Migratory Bird  
8 Council members that that survey was not the best  
9 approach to use and a desire for a more statistical  
10 designed survey that had transects and measurable  
11 variances be used. And so we switched to the Yukon  
12 Delta coastal zone survey. And so on that survey  
13 really what we're counting is breeding adults. There's  
14 probably young birds that are outside of the survey  
15 area at the time that that survey is conducted. But we  
16 did a long analysis of both the spring survey and the  
17 breeding pair survey as well as a nesting survey and  
18 found that the three were highly correlated together.  
19 So they were essentially equally mapping the trajectory  
20 of that population. And so after a thorough review we  
21 simply shifted to the breeding pair survey. The  
22 numbers are lower so it should be consistent -- it  
23 should be considered as an index and so it's not all  
24 the birds, but they represent the entire population.

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                  So that was a long winded answer to  
your question and I don't know if I answered it, but  
I'd be happy to talk about it more if you have more  
questions on it.

                  MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE:     No, it's  
perfect. Thank you. I appreciate it. Going to the  
brant, basically on your areas that you just showed  
your transects areas and maybe you're showing the  
Izembek Refuge, this -- the -- your staging area for  
the survey was and the Izembek, but it doesn't include  
Kinzarof Lagoon or what we found and have looked is  
there are quite a number of places outside of Izembek  
and Kinzarof that we are finding brants basically  
overwintering in quite a number. And those numbers  
aren't included in this survey; is that correct?

                  MR. FISCHER:     That's correct.     And  
there's two -- there's two things that would explain  
that.     First, this survey was designed as an  
experiment, it was primarily done to develop the  
technique, to determine what camera equipment was  
needed, what software was needed and what -- and how  
basically to develop the algorithm that can identify  
and automatically count brant. So it was focused

0258

1 solely on Izembek Lagoon where we had the highest  
2 concentration of birds.

3

4

5 The second part addressed the birds  
6 that are outside of that area. You mentioned that  
7 they're in Kinzarof and (indiscernible - distortion)  
8 and other locations in winter. This is the -- this  
9 survey that we're developing for photography is  
10 actually a fall survey and the intent is to continue to  
11 count brant in those other areas as well. But there's  
12 far fewer that we've seen in fall in those outlying  
13 areas compared to winter where there's certainly more  
14 birds that occur in those areas. So the intent though  
15 moving forward would be to have the photographic survey  
16 in fall, but to include all those areas that you  
17 mentioned. But I would -- I'd be really interested to  
18 hear your perspective on where brant are located in the  
19 October time period if they're in additional areas in  
20 any numbers that would be worth us looking into more.

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MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Yeah, I can get  
the word out to the guys around -- out and about  
hunting or different things and see if they can share  
that information or take pictures if they're out and  
get those to me and I'll get them to you.

The other thing I think is -- one of  
the main reasons I wanted to have this report I think  
number 1 was learning, you know, was the flu, avian  
flu, whether there was any impact on these birds in the  
population.

Number 2, I really appreciate this  
report. (Indiscernible - distortion) being in this --  
in it I'll go take it (indiscernible - distortion)  
honest about why -- one of the reasons why is, you  
know, as one of the area's in the YK that are against  
us basically with this road and thinking that it'll  
damage the birds, but the birds are in the lagoons and  
mainly at Izembek Lagoon to be specific. But to  
utilize information that's incorrect I always just --  
we have a hard time when people use information that is  
wrong. I -- to take it a step further I wouldn't mind  
this presentation being shared with the various regions  
so they have a concept of how the counting is done,  
facts that the nesting is going on more now toward the  
Arctic or the -- up -- farther north than the YK and  
that's really good information. I think it's good  
information for all of us to have a better

0259

1 understanding of what's happening. And I don't know  
2 what the -- who it's (indiscernible - distortion) to,  
3 but it definitely -- and, I mean, it wouldn't hurt to  
4 have a report given at the Statewide meeting so  
5 basically we're a little more educated on what's going  
6 on especially with the areas that are affected by  
7 the.....

8

9                                 Again I'd like to say I very much  
10 appreciate this report and I thank you.

11

12                                 MR. FISCHER: Thank you for that  
13 comment and I'm happy to present this information. So  
14 I just want to mention that within the Alaska Migratory  
15 Bird Co-Management Council we're organized into regions  
16 throughout the State. Each of those regions has a  
17 migratory bird regional group, including Kodiak,  
18 including the Aleutians. Each has their own migratory  
19 bird group that meets. And we often come and present  
20 information both at those regional meetings as well as  
21 the Statewide AMBCC meetings. So I present the status  
22 of waterfowl presentations frequently, sometimes more  
23 focused on a particular species or a new technique to  
24 try to keep folks apprised of what we're learning.  
25 There's also the State Fish and Game comes and presents  
26 any research that they're conducting and what they're  
27 learning. USGS does the same and many others. So one  
28 of the purposes of the AMBCC is to do exactly what  
29 you're described. And then occasionally we come to  
30 these RAC meetings as well which is generally not  
31 something I think that the RAC does, but is of  
32 interest. So I certainly appreciate the invite to  
33 present this today.

34

35                                 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: I think just for  
36 my history of being involved with this for 25 plus --  
37 25 years basically that this RAC has always requested  
38 information for the sea ducks and the brant and the  
39 emperor geese. We watch the emperor geese and I'm -- I  
40 know Rick Koso's online, we've watched that count every  
41 single year, you know, and wondering if it was  
42 accurate. But it -- I think my point behind it, this  
43 Council has always had an interest and a lot of it has  
44 to do with the subsistence that's involved with from  
45 Kodiak to the Aleutians. So that's why I'm saying if  
46 it -- you know, I realize this -- dealing with  
47 Migratory Bird Councils, but I think some of the RACs  
48 that are involved here, it doesn't hurt for that  
49 information I think to get out there to the RACs also.

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2

3

But again much appreciated.

4

5

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: And, Julian, I had a quick question. With the brant I think -- well, you said that the nesting is tending to move from the YK Delta up to the North Slope and you said it's probably because of habitat, but I didn't catch what is changing with the habitat that is shifting those nesting areas. So can you speak to that a little bit.

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MR. FISCHER: Yeah, I'll give that a shot. So brant are -- they specialize on sedges, coastal sedges and specifically they --their preferred food is (indiscernible - distortion) and it's a -- it's a very small sedge, it grows rapidly, but it's most nutritious when it's at a very low -- a very small height. If it's left ungrazed it changes form into a much higher, less digestible sedge. On the North Slope the -- there's a ton of these stuff. Subpath fields are just -- they're numerous, they're expansive and what's interesting about what's going on on the North Slope is when they're ungrazed by geese they still stay in the low form. On the Yukon Delta it requires geese to keep the -- keep that same type of sedge in its most nutritious form which is continuously grazed. And without geese it starts getting out competed by other forms of sedges and grasses. And so we think there's less forage now on the Yukon Delta than there used to be and there's more on the North Slope than brant can take advantage of. There's just -- there's plenty.

And so -- and I want to -- I want to emphasize too that we don't think that individual brant are move -- are making a decision to move from the Yukon Delta to the North Slope, it's more a long term change where North Slope brant are just doing really well and so their population is growing. And the Yukon Delta is either staying stable or slowly declining. The figure that I showed was of brant within the large historical colonies. We know there's been some expansion of smaller colonies on the Yukon Delta, but we think it's enough to compensate for the losses in the big colonies. So in general I think the Yukon Delta brant population's going down and the North Slope looks like it's probably increasing.

But again this year's count was really



0261

1 low. Whether that was a result of just poor breeding  
2 conditions, I think Alison Williams is going to talk  
3 about some signals of that this year when she talks  
4 about age ratios. But there could have been some  
5 impact from avian influenza although we didn't witness  
6 huge die-offs we did see some dead birds, but not  
7 massive die-offs.

8

9 But anyway so I just wanted to mention  
10 that regarding the difference between the North Slope  
11 and the Yukon Delta.

12

13 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, thanks.  
14 Are there any further questions.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. It looks  
19 like there's no more questions so thank you and we'll  
20 go ahead and move on to our next presentation.

21

22 MR. FISCHER: Thank you for your time.

23

24 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Our  
25 next presentation is overview of Izembek National  
26 Wildlife Refuge brant age ratio survey. And this will  
27 be Alison Williams, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

28

29 MS. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, Madame  
30 Chair and members of the Council. Thank you for  
31 allowing me to talk to you again today and speak  
32 briefly about some of the work with waterfowl that we  
33 do at Izembek and specifically the brant age ratio  
34 survey. I apologize, my -- I didn't get my slides into  
35 supplemental material so I will be sure to describe  
36 we're seeing in the room so that folks online can get  
37 all the information they need as well. For the record  
38 my name is Alison Williams and I am the Wildlife  
39 Biologist at Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

40

41 Next slide.

42

43 So just to kind of outline what I'm  
44 going to be talking about today I'm just going to start  
45 with just a brief touch on waterfowl use of the Refuge.  
46 And then I will go into special emphasis on brant since  
47 they are a key resource and the age ratio assessment  
48 that we do on the Refuge. And at that point I'll be  
49 able to take any questions that you have afterwards.

50

1                   Go ahead. So several of you had the  
2 opportunity to visit Izembek at our last RAC meeting  
3 and that was the highlight of the meeting for us and so  
4 we're really grateful for that. Izembek is a wet or a  
5 marine and wetland habitat that's really important for  
6 waterfowl throughout the year. Based on past surveys  
7 we do know that some birds nest locally at Izembek and  
8 specifically and most commonly we get mallards, black  
9 scoter and greater scaup nesting on the Refuge.

10

11                   We also are home to a really unique  
12 population of tundra swans, that's essentially non-  
13 migratory and spends the winter and summer around  
14 Izembek and the surrounding area. And so we do annual  
15 population surveys for these tundra swans to understand  
16 what's going on with their populations. They are a  
17 small population that sees some fluctuation year to  
18 year and over the long term appears to have -- be going  
19 under a slight decline just due to periodic birds --  
20 periodically birds leaving that population. In our  
21 2022 survey we did see 120 swans on the Refuge which  
22 was down from 2021 count which was 169 swans.

23

24                   However Izembek is most renowned for  
25 it's large numbers of waterfowl that use the Refuge as  
26 staging habitat and wintering habitat. So as Julian  
27 mentioned basically the entire Pacific flyway  
28 population does use the refuge as staging habitat.  
29 This is -- Julian talked about how they're estimating  
30 these numbers, but it may be even above the 150,000  
31 birds that we even often sight. They are coming to the  
32 Refuge for the eelgrass which is a seagrass in the  
33 lagoon that's a really important food and nutrition  
34 resource for their migration. And in the fall these  
35 birds start to arrive in about August and anywhere from  
36 Alaska, Canada and Russia and they tend to stay for  
37 about eight weeks in the lagoon. By late October,  
38 early November a majority of the population will depart  
39 to wintering grounds along the Pacific coast and down  
40 into Mexico, but as Julian mentioned before we're  
41 seeing an increasing number of brant that stay year  
42 round.

43

44                   So Julian also mentioned a number of  
45 the surveys that have been used to assess the  
46 population status of brant throughout their range. And  
47 so I won't go into detail on those, but I do just want  
48 to mention the three that are done here at Izembek.  
49 Julian covered the winter brant survey and the fall  
50

1 population survey that they do at the migratory bird  
2 management, but the one I'm really going to be focusing  
3 on is the fall productivity survey that the Refuge is  
4 heavily involved with and we also refer to this survey  
5 as the brant age ratio survey. And so I may use those  
6 terms interchangeably throughout this presentation.

7  
8 So the productivity on brant at the  
9 Refuge has been collected since 1963. It was an effort  
10 that was initiated by the first Refuge Manager after a  
11 storm tide on the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta caused a lot of  
12 nest failure. And so they wanted to initiate a study  
13 that could be done to assess the productivity of the  
14 entire population. And Izembek really offers a key  
15 opportunity to do so because it's really the only place  
16 at which the entire population gathers in a small area  
17 at the same time.

18  
19 So the survey conducts -- collects data  
20 on the number of juvenile or first year birds and adult  
21 birds that are present at Izembek. Most of the first  
22 year mortality that brant experience happens between  
23 hatching on their breeding grounds and the migration to  
24 Izembek. So this survey is effectively an index of  
25 recruitment which is just to say the number of birds  
26 that are joining the population each year. And this is  
27 the only measure of annual productivity that's taken on  
28 the entire population.

29  
30 So there's a few key things I want to  
31 mention about our field methods. The timing of the  
32 survey is really important to consider because the  
33 timing of the arrival on brant -- of brant at Izembek  
34 depends on the breeding location and the breeding  
35 status of the birds. Those birds that are nonbreeding  
36 tend to arrive at Izembek first in the fall, followed  
37 by family groups of birds that are breeding in more  
38 southern areas like the YK Delta and then finally  
39 followed by those Arctic groups. And so we have to be  
40 careful to make sure we're timing the survey to ensure  
41 that it's not done too early when the majority of the  
42 birds present are those nonbreeding birds or that we're  
43 doing it too late after those nonbreeding birds have  
44 already departed otherwise we may get estimates of  
45 juvenile birds too high or too low. And so with some  
46 of the previous work that's been done we've found that  
47 those first few weeks of October are the ideal time to  
48 do the survey because that's when we get some overlap  
49 between these different timing of migrations.

1                   So to conduct the survey we have Staff  
2 travel to various sites within the lagoon by boat and  
3 by foot to find brant flocks. We try to travel as  
4 close as we can to these flocks without disturbing them  
5 and so generally we have to get within about 400 meters  
6 of the flock. And we try to get kind of a high vantage  
7 point with good lighting behind us so that we can  
8 really see the details on these birds. Previous work  
9 also indicates that the family groups and the juveniles  
10 do not distribute evenly across the lagoon area so we  
11 make sure that we visit as many different sites  
12 throughout the lagoon as we can.

13  
14                   And if you can advance. And so in the  
15 room what we're seeing right now is a map of the  
16 Izembek Lagoon area. And each little lagoon area has a  
17 different point. And these points are basically  
18 illustrating the difference in the mean point estimate  
19 of age ratios over this long term of this study. And  
20 so these are just point estimates, there's variability  
21 in this year to year, but just to give you an idea  
22 there's parts of the lagoon where we tend to see higher  
23 proportions of juveniles such as that central part of  
24 the lagoon, Grant Point and that southwestern portion  
25 of the lagoon, Norma Bay. Some of those may be as high  
26 as 36 percent on average. We do see some years where  
27 they're higher, some years where they're lower. And  
28 then there's other parts of the lagoon such as Kinzarof  
29 Lagoon and Applegate Cove or the more north central  
30 part of the lagoon where we see a lower proportion of  
31 juveniles. And the long term average there is about 18  
32 percent, but again some years higher or lower. And so  
33 this just illustrates the importance of trying to  
34 survey as much of the lagoon as we can and access not  
35 just from shore, but also from boats so that we can  
36 really get a representative sample of what is on the  
37 landscape. We also know that sometimes brant will  
38 distribute across the lagoon based on their breeding  
39 area and so it's just another great reason to make sure  
40 we are sampling as much of the area as we can.

41  
42                   We can go ahead. So just to give you  
43 an idea of what we're looking for when we're doing this  
44 survey, we are looking for adults versus juveniles and  
45 the differences between these birds can be visually  
46 determined by their plumage characteristics. So in the  
47 room we're seeing a photo of a group of birds and we're  
48 seeing the label or an adult versus a juvenile. So a  
49 juvenile bird will have white edging on their wing  
50

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1 coverts which are those smaller feathers on the tops of  
2 their wings and it creates these white lines across  
3 their back that almost look like Vs or chevrons. The  
4 adults have -- do not have those white edges and they  
5 also have a white necklace and kind of barring,  
6 vertical barring, along their sides. So in  
7 Septemberish the juveniles start to get the white  
8 necklace so we're really trying to focus in on that  
9 white edging of the wing coverts to be able to tell  
10 them apart. And so for those in the room we can see a  
11 photo of a flock of birds and we can see a few adults  
12 on the left-hand side and then some juveniles on the  
13 right-hand side. So that can just give you an  
14 understanding of how close we need to be to these birds  
15 and how we are able to conduct the survey.

16

17 So the data then after we collect it  
18 gets shared with USGS and they run the data through a  
19 model to account for some uncertainty in the methods  
20 and the counts that we get. And this just produces a  
21 more reliable estimate of the true age ratios that are  
22 in the population. As noted earlier the age ratio can  
23 differ a lot by area of the lagoon and so into these  
24 models we put where this count was taken to kind of  
25 account for that variety. Some other variables that we  
26 might also include the flock size, the day of the  
27 season the survey was taken and the tide since the  
28 survey was at since we know those can affect the  
29 proportions that we get in our counts. And so all of  
30 that goes together to produce an estimate that we feel  
31 is statistically reliable each year.

32

33 And so looking at the long term trend  
34 of all years our productivity ratio is slowly declining  
35 at about .6 percent each year. And this is  
36 particularly apparent in the first years of the study  
37 up through about 2015. We see a lot of variety year to  
38 year, but that steady decline is more apparent. In the  
39 -- since 2015 the estimates do -- the trend and the  
40 estimates does appear to be more stable. We do see a  
41 lot of variety year to year, but it has been more  
42 stable in recent years. And a lot of this variety just  
43 is due to conditions on the breeding grounds and any  
44 events that might happen there with environmental  
45 conditions or predation or even disease. So the long  
46 term average ratio is about 24 percent juvenile in the  
47 population.

48

49 Our 2022 survey showed an estimated

50

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1 ratio of 15 percent juveniles which is lower than the  
2 long term average, but it's not significantly or it did  
3 not significantly influence that long term decline of  
4 .6 percent. This decline is likely related to the  
5 decline of nesting birds and just overall birds on the  
6 Yukon Kuskokwim Delta and this year's decrease may also  
7 be related to avian influenza. We did have some  
8 anecdotal reports of sick birds and some reproductive  
9 failure on the YK Delta and so that may have also contributed.

10

11 And so all of these data and graphics  
12 are published annually on a USGS site for managers or  
13 any other curious minds to explore. The site is just  
14 titled the annual age estimates of brant. I guess I  
15 don't remember the exact title, I don't have it in  
16 front of me, but that is accessible for anyone to look  
17 at.

18

19 So brant went or I'm sorry, Julian went  
20 into the Pacific Flyway Management Plan for Brant. And  
21 so he shared a lot of details there and I won't  
22 reiterate that too much. But it -- currently the  
23 population estimate for management purposes is used --  
24 is created using that winter brant survey. And so  
25 these age ratio estimates that we're obtaining right  
26 now aren't currently the index used for management.  
27 However with these ratio estimates in combination with  
28 the fall population survey can be a really valuable  
29 tool for assessing the population health and  
30 understanding how brant populations are going to change  
31 in the future. And so we continue -- we plan to  
32 continue these counts indefinitely just to get some  
33 continuing data on these trends and understand better  
34 what's going on with our brant.

35

36 At this point this concludes my  
37 presentation and I'd be happy to take any questions.

38

39 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Are there any  
40 questions or comments.

41

42 Pat, go ahead.

43

44 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, that's a swell  
45 presentation, I think we really appreciate it, that's  
46 really good. And I recall when we had our Cold Bay  
47 meeting one of your Staff out there made the most  
48 delicious dish of brant that I've ever had. And anyway  
49 so hopefully we'll be doing Cold Bay again, but  
50

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1 appreciate your hard work and sitting through all these  
2 hours of blah, blah, blah, blah to put two bits worth  
3 in. It's really good.

4  
5 Thank you.

6  
7 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Della, we're you  
8 trying to jump in.

9  
10 MR. KOSO: Yeah, it's Rick.

11  
12 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: This is Della.  
13 Oh, go ahead, Rick.

14  
15 MR. KOSO: Oh, no, it's okay. I didn't  
16 mean to jump on you there. Well, anyway I just had a  
17 quick question for you on a very -- very good report.  
18 So just wondering on your -- the way you issue permits  
19 for guides to hunt at Izembek, do you have a special  
20 deal that they're -- they have to pass or do you just  
21 limit so many, how do you do that and how do you keep  
22 track of their clientele?

23  
24 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah, thank you.  
25 Through the Chair. Currently waterfowl guiding on the  
26 Refuge is a noncompetitive process so anyone can apply  
27 to guide on the Refuge. And there aren't restrictions  
28 on numbers of clients they can guide or number of days  
29 they can guide. When they do get a permit from the  
30 Refuge they are required to report their client use  
31 days which are essentially the number of days they had  
32 client or the number of days they had clients on the  
33 Refuge or using the Refuge. I believe our Refuge  
34 Manager, Maria Fosado's online and she could expand or  
35 add anything to my answer if she feels it's necessary.

36  
37 MR. KOSO: Thank you.

38  
39 MS. FOSADO: Yes, Madame Chair, members  
40 of the Council. I am here, but I would like to pause  
41 and see if that answered the question or if I needed to  
42 further go into detail.

43  
44 MR. KOSO: No, that answered my  
45 question. Thank you.

46  
47 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Go  
48 ahead, Della.

49  
50

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1 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Thank you,  
2 Madame Chair. I guess I'm just kind of did I miss  
3 something, but I don't -- I didn't have a copy of this--  
4 the report. Is it possible I can get somebody to  
5 email that to me?

6  
7 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yes, Della,  
8 I will make sure everybody gets a copy.

9  
10 Thank you. It's okay we share it?

11  
12 (No comments)

13  
14 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay.  
15 Thanks.

16  
17 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Thank you.

18  
19 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
20 there any further questions or comments.

21  
22 (No comments)

23  
24 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thank you  
25 very much. We will move on to our next presentation.  
26 And that is half of Alaska's common murre killed in  
27 heatwave, Heather Renner, Alaska Maritime Wildlife  
28 Refuge.

29  
30 MS. RENNER: Hello, can you hear me  
31 okay?

32  
33 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: We can. Thank  
34 you.

35  
36 MS. RENNER: Great. And have you got  
37 my presentation up?

38  
39 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yes, we  
40 have it up. Thank you, Heather.

41  
42 MS. RENNER: Okay. Super. Thank you,  
43 Madame Chair. Thank you members of the Council. My  
44 name is Heather Renner, I'm the Supervisory Biologist  
45 at the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, I'm in  
46 Homer. Thank you for giving me a few minutes of your  
47 time today.

48  
49 My talk is about a disaster of epic  
50



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1 proportions. I know you've heard about the bird die-  
2 off associated with the 2015/2016 marine heatwave in  
3 Alaska. Jeff Williams mentioned it briefly in his  
4 earlier report from the Refuge, but the earlier  
5 estimates were based on carcass counts and today I'm  
6 going to give you a colonies based perspective. So in  
7 most die-offs we haven't detected affects on the  
8 breeding colonies.

9

10 Starting -- oh, next slide, please.

11

12 Starting in January, 2016 the public  
13 started finding dead common murrens all over the beaches  
14 in Alaska. It was a really big story at the time, it  
15 was picked up by national and international news  
16 sources. I guess one silver lining was that it might  
17 be for the first time that the general public actually  
18 knew what a murre was.

19

20 Next slide, please.

21

22 So in total about 62,000 carcasses were  
23 found from California to the Bering Sea. Those were  
24 from beach bird surveys and from reports to the public.  
25 There was a big interagency effort to get out to survey  
26 beaches and learn what was going on, but we know that  
27 when seabirds die only a tiny fraction of the dead  
28 birds actually show up on the shore. So when PLOS  
29 published a paper in 2020 that calculated a jaw  
30 dropping mortality estimate of half a million to a  
31 million common murrens and it got a lot of press at the  
32 time because that was really a truly unprecedented  
33 event.

34

35 Next slide.

36

37 But estimating mortality from carcass  
38 counts has got lots of problems. Counts of breeding  
39 colonies are really the best way to estimate population  
40 trends. During the breeding season the murrens are tied  
41 to their egg or their chick and they're concentrated in  
42 big numbers and they have consistent attendance and so  
43 that's when our traditional counting happens.

44

45 Next slide.

46

47 Common murrens breed across the entire  
48 coast of Alaska, the biggest colonies are in the Gulf  
49 of Alaska and the southern Bering Sea. They share lots  
50

0270

1 of colonies with thick-billed murrens although the  
2 thick-billed murrens are more concentrated near waters.  
3 For example the Aleutian Islands has very few common  
4 murrens, but mostly thick-billed murrens. At Alaska  
5 Maritime Refuge we have a network of monitoring  
6 colonies around the State where every year we send  
7 crews out to keep track of seabirds. And Jeff Williams  
8 earlier showed some of those results in his earlier  
9 report.

10

11

Next slide.

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Next slide.

In 2015 it was obvious that something was going on. This is a cliff on east Amatuli Island in the Barrens, one of our long term monitoring sites. Specifically it's packed densely with cooing common murrens, but in the summer of 2015 at a time when birds normally wouldn't have fled the nesting ledges were empty. Here and at many colonies in the region rafts of nonbreeding birds were sitting in the water near the colonies. We've never seen this before in 40 years of monitoring.

So we couldn't count the birds. So let's look at Chowiet Island in the Semidi group, the biggest concentration of murrens in the Gulf of Alaska. After decades of mildly fluctuating counts and a general increase in 2015 there were no birds on the colony. A few birds showed up on the cliffs early in the summer, but they didn't attempt to breed. And we found this pattern at colonies throughout the Gulf with just really widespread breeding failure. So we were reluctant to use counts on the colonies since that's how many birds had been truly lost.

Next slide.

But since 2017 the murrens have been attending the coast regularly and we've had near normal breeding success. So we took this opportunity to calculate estimates of loss. Because counts vary from year to year we average them in five year blocks so the average count from the five year period prior to 2015 we compared those to the average from the last five years. Here's an example from the biggest murre colony in the Bering Sea at St. George Island. We didn't have counts every year, we only averaged them within the

0271

1 five year block. So at St. George 77 percent of the  
2 common murres visit here after 2015. We compiled 18  
3 different datasets from different colonies like this  
4 around the State.

5

6 Next slide.

7

8 And it turns out every colony in the  
9 Bering Sea had a similar dramatic loss ranging from 70  
10 to 84 percent. We put them on top of each other and we  
11 scale the proportion of the maximum count at the colony  
12 so that we could evaluate change in the same way  
13 regardless of size. 78 percent of the 1.66 million  
14 common murres in the region are missing.

15

16 Next slide.

17

18 In the Gulf of Alaska there's a mean  
19 loss of 54 percent. The graph is a little bit noisier  
20 due to some gaps in the few colonies that weren't  
21 counted every year, but the loss calculations were  
22 completely consistent in the region.

23

24 Next slide.

25

26 So you should have a map for the -- for  
27 this slide. The map shows the total loss during the  
28 heatwave at all 18 monitored colonies. The circles are  
29 still proportionally to their colony size before the  
30 heatwave and you can see that in the Gulf of Alaska and  
31 east Bering Sea it's a remarkably consistent picture of  
32 massive loss. The Bering Sea took an especially hard  
33 hit. I do want to point out the tiny colony St.  
34 Lazaria in southeast Alaska, but definitely it has just  
35 about 2,500 common murres and it showed a small gain  
36 during the time period. This puts some geographic  
37 boundaries on the colonies affected by the die-off.

38

39 Next slide.

40

41 So how many murres did we lose. I'm  
42 going to walk you through our super simple  
43 calculations. In the Gulf of Alaska we previously had  
44 1.35 million common murres, 54 percent of those are  
45 missing. In the east Bering Sea we previously had 1.66  
46 million common murres, 78 percent of those are missing.  
47 So just in those two ecoregions that total 2 million  
48 common murres missing from colony counts.

49

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0272

1 Next slide, please.

2

3

4 But colony counts by themselves don't  
5 account for all the birds that must be at sea. Since  
6 murres don't build nests we can't count breeding pairs  
7 like we do for some species. We count some birds that  
8 are loafing or not breeding and at the same time, you  
9 know, that each nest has birds that are not on the  
10 colony at any given time. So there's been a lot of  
11 effort that's gone in to kind of quantify what that  
12 proportion is, it's called a K correction factor and we  
13 know that varies every year and on every colony, but a  
14 commonly accepted figure seems to be -- use a  
15 correction factor of about 1.7 or 1.67 to adjust colony  
16 counts to actual birds.

16

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Next slide.

So when we adjusted that with the commonly used correction factor we estimated that 3.2 million breeding common murres died. This is a substantial proportion of regional populations at every spatial scale, from the Alaska population to the U.S. Pacific Continental Shelf and it's about 38 percent of the North American continent.

Next slide.

For some context on seabird die-off this is a recent Arctic report card that Robb Taylor published. And it went back into the seabird die-offs in Alaska. This is the figure on the left. The large bubble is the 2015/'16 die-off, but the size was based on the published estimates, not our new calculation. I took the liberty of adding the Exxon Valdez oil spill in red just for some text. The estimated mortality there was about 75,000 birds. And the figure on the right we looked a little broader across the other taxonomic groups a recent paper summarized trends in mass mortality events of all wildlife. The Y axis on a log scale and I have added our event with a red star. But the take home message was that for birds or amphibians, reptiles, mammals, there's been no die-offs anywhere approaching this size ever reported for any group other than fish.

Next slide.

To our knowledge this was the biggest

0273

1 bird die-off ever recorded.

2

3 Next slide.

4

5 So the first question most people ask  
6 me is what thick-billed murre. In Alaska common  
7 murre share their breeding ledges with thick-billed  
8 murre and they look so similar that often in the  
9 counts they're not distinguished to species and they  
10 seem to have many similar habitat.

11

12 Next slide.

13

14 So after the heatwave ended we had a  
15 very different story for this species. Let's look at  
16 St. George, the biggest thick-billed murre colony in  
17 the world. While in 2016 that one bad year they failed  
18 to raise chicks we didn't detect any evidence that  
19 thick-billed adults died in (indiscernible -  
20 distortion).

21

22 Next slide.

23

24 And we had the same story at Chowiet in  
25 the Gulf of Alaska and all the colonies where we  
26 studied them together, had these massive losses of  
27 common murre and at the same time no detectable losses  
28 of thick-billed murre.

29

30 Next slide.

31

32 These birds seem so similar so why the  
33 different responses. And I'm just going to briefly  
34 discuss a couple areas where they have differences that  
35 we think might have created those different responses.  
36 And those are their wintering foraging areas, maybe  
37 they weren't available to be exposed to the same  
38 environmental conditions during the wintertime when the  
39 peak of this die-off happened and diet. We presume  
40 they have some slightly different diet habit which is  
41 don't have time to go into in great detail today.

42

43 Next slide.

44

45 The marine heatwave didn't affect all  
46 the species equally, there were winners and there's not  
47 -- I'm sorry, there were losers and if there weren't  
48 winners there were at least survivors. The responses  
49 also varied as you know among how many groundfish in  
50

0274

1 the Gulf such as walleye pollock and Pacific cod. We  
2 would have expected both of those fish to have similar  
3 responses to the warm temperature, but their  
4 differences in life history influence how their  
5 responses showed up. So Pacific cod crashed  
6 precipitously and haven't recovered whereas the  
7 relatively more pelagic and lower trophic zooplankton  
8 eating that walleye pollock was apparently enough to  
9 maintain growth during the apparent abundance of  
10 zooplankton during the heatwave. The Pacific cod crash  
11 is bad news for fishermen, but might have provided a  
12 glimmer of hope for murrens by reducing competition for  
13 forage fish. These different responses give us insight  
14 into what adaptations might be successful in a warming  
15 world.

16

17 Next slide.

18

19 I'm going to wrap up here. In  
20 conclusion we witnessed the biggest bird die-off ever  
21 comprising at least 3.2 million breeding birds, about  
22 half of Alaska's common murrens. This was the first  
23 time we've been able to observe the effects of die-off  
24 events in (indiscernible - distortion) breeding  
25 colonies presumably because mortality usually has been  
26 in young or nonbreeding birds. This single species  
27 event shows us that common murrens were not able to  
28 adapt to changing forage conditions while other species  
29 were.

30

31 Next slide, please.

32

33 And the results were disastrous.

34

35 That wraps up my presentation. I'd  
36 like to thank you for your time and if you've got time  
37 I'm happy to stay on and take any questions.

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
42 Thanks. Are there any questions.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. I'm not  
47 seeing or hearing any so thank you very much.

48

49 MS. RENNER: Thank you.

50

0275

1 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Maybe just a  
2 comment, Becky. Just thank you for the report.

3  
4 MS. RENNER: Absolutely.

5  
6 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Was that it,  
7 Della.

8  
9 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Yeah, that's it.

10  
11 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thank  
12 you.

13  
14 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
15 We're going to go ahead move on to our next  
16 presentation which is the Alaska seabird update, Robert  
17 Kaler, Migratory Bird Management, Alaska Region, Fish  
18 and Wildlife Service. And it looks like the  
19 presentation is being projected in the room. And it's  
20 also noted as being in supplemental Tab 9.

21  
22 MR. KALER: Good afternoon. How do you  
23 hear me, am I on a cell phone in a bowl in the middle  
24 of all of you.

25  
26 (Laughter)

27  
28 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Well, you're in  
29 a cell phone sitting on top of a paper coffee cup,  
30 but.....

31  
32 (Laughter)

33  
34 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: .....you're  
35 coming in good. So go ahead.

36  
37 MR. KALER: Excellent. Well, thank  
38 you, Madame Chair, and thank you, Council members.  
39 Much appreciate your time and attention. I will go  
40 through this fairly quickly. Heather Renner set the --  
41 some of what I'll be discussing, but I'll go through  
42 that very quickly, but thank you all for your time.

43  
44 Hopefully the slide that you are seeing  
45 right now, that is my opening slide. So I'm Robb  
46 Kaler, but I'm with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
47 Migratory Bird Management. I'm a seabird  
48 Researcher/Manager, but I also then try to back it out  
49 to all marine birds, not just seabirds, but marine  
50

0276

1 birds in general. Liz Labunski is my counterpart, I'm  
2 based on the Dena'ina lands here near the airport in  
3 Anchorage. But what I want to emphasize on this slide  
4 in particular is that there's a lot of partners, Gay  
5 Sheffield for example, she's UAF/Alaska Sea Grant,  
6 she's based in Nome; Brandon Ahmasuk, he's Kawerak,  
7 he's also based in Nome; Stacia Backensto, National  
8 Park Service, she's leaving Fairbanks; and then Julia  
9 Parrish, Tim Jones and Jackie Lindsey, they're based at  
10 the University of Washington, but they've been a really  
11 huge partner in tracking some of the seabird die-offs  
12 that I'll touch on briefly; and then of course Heather  
13 Renner and then the folks that she supervises based in  
14 Homer at the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge;  
15 and then we also have our USGS partners, Barb  
16 Bodenstern and Bob Dusek, they're in Madison and  
17 they've done a lot of the kind of -- helping us  
18 determine causes of death; and then I just also want to  
19 emphasize when it comes to harmful algal blooms which I  
20 think is kind of a growing concern we've relied heavily  
21 on Caroline Van Hemert and Matt Smith and they're based  
22 in Anchorage on Dena'ina lands at the USGS Alaska  
23 Science Center.

24 Next slide, please.

25  
26 And so as I've just said a lot of this  
27 information, I'm really just kind of if you will a  
28 poster boy. I rely on a lot of partners to provide  
29 information with me that I can then provide to  
30 partners. But of course quyaana to all of you and, you  
31 know, the -- our tribal partners, some of -- some of  
32 the data that we collect here within the Migratory Bird  
33 Program are based at sea and some of them are based on  
34 land. But I just wanted to say quyaana to all of you  
35 and then of course our funding partners, the banner  
36 across the bottom of this slide here. Again I just  
37 want to emphasize this is a lot of partnering and thank  
38 you to everybody.

39  
40 Next slide please.

41  
42 So I think you -- so you -- for those  
43 that are on the phone and may not see this, this is  
44 kind of a -- it's what we call a bubble chart and what  
45 it's trying to emphasize is that in the previous 40  
46 years with recording seabird die-offs or mass mortality  
47 events of seabird die-offs the previous 40 years  
48 starting in 1970 in the past decade, the last 10 years,  
49 we've had just about as many birds. And then of course  
50



0277

1 what Heather just shared, you know, does not include  
2 that and I think she had this image up too. But what  
3 we're trying to emphasize is that in the last 10 years  
4 we've had a lot more die-offs of marine birds and  
5 seabirds specifically. And with that there have been  
6 rapid changes in the marine ecosystem. And I'm happy  
7 to follow-up on that, but I'm going to move very  
8 quickly because I think Heather touched on this and  
9 then she actually added in that the Exxon Valdez oil  
10 spill in 1989 as an additional example.

11

12 Next slide, please.

13

14 So this figure is a combination of maps  
15 and this is based on information that we get from  
16 communities, tribes, our State and Federal partners and  
17 the data here go -- the upper left corner is 2017, the  
18 lower right figure, that's 2022. The size of the  
19 circle and what -- the point of this slide is really to  
20 show that -- and this is working with our Coast  
21 Observation and Seabird Survey Team partners as well as  
22 our communities, tribes and State and Federal partners  
23 kind of trying to track the magnitude, how many birds  
24 die, the duration, when do we first get reports, when  
25 do we last get reports and then which species are being  
26 affected or impacted. And so this figure right here, a  
27 lot of information and maybe the print is slightly  
28 small, but the size of the circle indicates the number  
29 of birds that were reported and as Heather mentioned  
30 the -- by the time that a bird carcass washes up on a  
31 beach and is reported and I get a report here in  
32 Anchorage, there's -- it's only a fraction, right, the  
33 minimum of what actually were probably impacted or died  
34 that year. And so at the risk of being depressing I  
35 just want to emphasize that these are minimum numbers,  
36 so the size of those circles in reality are probably  
37 much larger, but you see that some of the species are  
38 murrens that Heather was talking about, kittiwakes,  
39 those are also ledge nesters, but also other species  
40 such as the ones that feed on plankton, you know, kind  
41 of the zooplankton. So it's a broad range of species  
42 that are being impacted during these last few years.  
43 And you'll see that a lot of these die-offs have been  
44 up in the Bering Strait region, but in some years, for  
45 example, 2019, you see that a lot of birds were in the  
46 Bristol Bay. And what Heather was touching on or  
47 mentioned was the 2015/2016 marine heatwave and that  
48 was in the Gulf of Alaska. So we haven't had a lot of  
49 reports from the Gulf of Alaska, but in 2021 you will  
50

0278

1 see Middleton Island which is in the Gulf of Alaska  
2 there was -- there was a disease event and that was  
3 avian botulism. And generally avian botulism has not  
4 been recorded, I mean, that was the first year  
5 historically ever that avian botulism was reported from  
6 Alaska and that's generally because avian botulism --  
7 the botulism virus requires a little bit warmer  
8 temperatures. And that's something that -- again when  
9 these birds are compromised because they're not  
10 sighting enough food in the marine ecosystem, we want  
11 to remain vigilant about recording and as well as  
12 testing. So I know there's a lot of discussion about  
13 highly pathogenic avian influenza or bird flu and what  
14 we want to do is just help get those -- get those  
15 carcasses through the proper channels and make sure  
16 they're tested so that we can track. So when a bird is  
17 compromised physically because they're unable to find  
18 food they may now be more susceptible to disease, avian  
19 botulism, avian cholera or HPAI. And I want to  
20 emphasize that highly pathogenic avian influenza, we  
21 call it highly pathogenic because it's highly  
22 pathogenic or highly transitable to poultry. And so  
23 that's not so much to humans, but we want to remain  
24 vigilant about that as well. But it's because of  
25 susceptible to poultry and that's of course an industry  
26 in the lower 48 and then I'm sure some of you might  
27 have back yard poultry, you know, chickens that you're  
28 raising.

29

30 So next slide, please.

31

32 So this is -- this table --the table  
33 goes to 2017 to 2021. And the main thing here -- so  
34 this is working with the USGS National Wildlife Health  
35 Center, the USGS Alaska Science Center and then as well  
36 as other partners. But what I want to -- what I intend  
37 to emphasize here is that working with local partners  
38 to get carcasses, fresh carcasses, into Anchorage and  
39 then I submit those or in the past I've been able to  
40 submit those to our USGS National Wildlife Health  
41 Center at Madison, Wisconsin. And that's where they do  
42 a gross necropsy, examine the bird and really determine  
43 a cause of death. And so this table is summarizing  
44 that -- these results. If you look at the top row in  
45 this -- the past few years the total reported, that's  
46 the number that we're seeing or that we're hearing  
47 about, that's across the top. The number that we're  
48 actually able to have examined and of course that's  
49 relying heavily on partners in the remote communities,  
50

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1 you guys, to get carcasses submitted to Madison. But  
2 what I want to emphasize is that total on that far  
3 right column, emaciation is the leading cause of death.  
4 There were cases where cause of death was undetermined,  
5 that was about seven, and then other causes of death,  
6 that was 18 if you see, if you're following along here.  
7 There is an indication of low pathogenic avian  
8 influenza, we had four cases of that and by low I'll  
9 emphasize that that's low in terms of pathogenic  
10 transfer to humans -- I'm sorry, transfer to poultry.  
11 And in general avian influenza, again we want to remain  
12 vigilant, but it's not -- it's not highly transmissible  
13 to humans, but we want to remain -- remain vigilant.

14

15                   And then saxitoxin. So saxitoxin,  
16 that's one of the harmful algal blooms. We refer to  
17 those generally as HABs, H-A-Bs, and that's where there  
18 have been associations of harmful algal blooms in some  
19 of the carcasses examined, but I'll emphasize that that  
20 was not determined to be the cause of death. But our  
21 partners at the USGS Alaska Science Center are doing  
22 research on that, what dose of saxitoxin for example,  
23 what dose, what level needs to be consumed by a bird to  
24 cause it to essentially die, the cause of death. But  
25 right now there has been some saxitoxin detected, but  
26 that has not been the cause of death. So the summary  
27 of this slide here is that the leading cause of death  
28 in seabirds that we've examined is emaciation.

29

30                   Next slide, please.

31

32                   And as I maybe -- I think maybe Jeff  
33 Williams earlier today he presented this slide, but I'm  
34 relying heavily on all of our partners and in  
35 particular this slide is -- this is kind of my upbeat  
36 side where I can say work done by Alaska Maritime  
37 National Wildlife Refuge indicates that 2022 was a  
38 better year than the previous years. They are  
39 monitoring eight sites, this is long term datasets, but  
40 it's just uplifting to see all those -- the happy faces  
41 on the eggs, but you'll also see that this is laid out  
42 on the left side primarily the fish eaters like red-  
43 faced cormorants or glaucous-winged gulls and then over  
44 to the right side which is primary your -- the plankton  
45 or the zooplankton consumers, parakeet auklets and  
46 least auklets. So this is kind of where I try to be  
47 uplifting and thanks to Alaska Maritime for providing  
48 this report card annually since I think about 2016 or  
49 '17.

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0280

1 Next slide, please.

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4 And I did not -- I did not see Brian  
5 Brettschneider's presentation. This is from Rick  
6 Toman, I follow -- I follow Rick's updates, but this is  
7 a presentation that he did for the Bering Strait  
8 Science, Gay Sheffield out of Nome, UAF/Alaska Sea  
9 Grant, she hosts that. I encourage everybody to -- I  
10 learn so much every Thursday night, in fact there's on  
11 tonight on harmful algal blooms. But this is showing,  
12 this is what's right now ocean temperatures for the  
13 winter of 2022/2023, so this is December through  
14 February. And you'll see these are anomalies, these  
15 are departures from what's normal and that normal is  
16 based on 1991 to 2020, that's the baseline. And so  
17 what Rick Toman was showing here, and this again was  
18 his presentation from last week, is showing that the  
19 Bering Strait is relatively cool, which that's a  
20 positive, maybe the cold pool and the, you know, ice --  
21 you know, sea ice is better than it has been the last  
22 four or five years, but you do see that the warmer  
23 temperatures or the warmer colors, I mean, indicated  
24 that there is warmer water in the Bering and in  
25 particular you see that in the Bristol Bay. And so  
26 these are degrees fahrenheit, often you'll see these in  
27 celsius which I don't convert celsius and fahrenheit  
28 very well at all, but so this -- this makes a -- so  
29 it's not -- yeah, I don't want to be -- I don't want to  
30 -- anyway I -- this is not positive information here  
31 that I'm -- that I'm sharing.....

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(Laughter)

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MR. KALER: .....ocean temperatures  
appear to be a bit warmer compared to the long term  
baseline.

Next slide, please.

So this is, you know, Alaska Migratory  
Bird Co-Management Council, they did stand up a Seabird  
Subcommittee that started in the fall of 2021. I've  
listed names here, I know Coral's on the call, perhaps  
Gayla is too. Anyway if you're interested in hearing  
about updates of seabirds please reach out to me, you  
can find my information either online, but my closing  
slide will have my information as well. And I think  
what I want to emphasize, the 2022, and this is based  
on information that we've gotten from our various AMBCC

0281

1 partners. So 2022, this was last year, Sledge Island  
2 which is west of Nome, appeared that seabird numbers  
3 were relatively poor and that was based on observed  
4 from Brandon Ahmasuk. Bluff which is to the east of  
5 Nome, numbers of seabirds were actually good so that  
6 was positive. St. Paul and St. George, this is  
7 information from Alaska Maritime from Heather Renner,  
8 sounded like seabirds were actually fairly normal. St.  
9 Lawrence Island, the auklets, those auklets are feeding  
10 on plankton, those numbers were poor. Cape Lisburne,  
11 that's very far north, north of Nome on the Seward  
12 Peninsula. Alaska Maritime and I'm, you know, not  
13 trying to steal Alaska Maritime's thunder, but they are  
14 using time lapse cameras and I think those were knock  
15 over or stymied due to bears. So hopefully in this  
16 coming field season, 2023, a little bit better  
17 information. There was concern about hatchery salmon  
18 as they call it, you know that. That photo on the  
19 upper right, that was a report from late September.  
20 Shishmaref which is on Sarichef Island, that was  
21 following typhoon Merbok or extyphoon Merbok and so  
22 that's an unprecedented and unusual photo there. So  
23 these are the reports that we really appreciate  
24 everybody providing.

25

26 And so I will go -- next slide, please.

27

28 So I'll wrap up very quickly. Concerns  
29 for seabirds. So we know that there's increased vessel  
30 traffic, this is mostly in the Bering Strait region,  
31 but large scale commercial fishing, that lack of a cold  
32 pool following the lack of sea ice extent in the Bering  
33 Strait region, a lot more fishing further north. We're  
34 always considered about (indiscernible - distortion)  
35 ship wrecks, oil spills, plastics and contaminants, and  
36 then of course invasive species and then diseases as I  
37 mentioned when birds are compromised due to lack of  
38 food in the environment and then of course climate  
39 change and loss of sea ice.

40

41 And my final slide. Thank you for your  
42 time, I know you guys are working hard. Please don't  
43 hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions,  
44 I'm happy to answer questions if there's time now.

45

46 But quyuana to all of you for all the  
47 great work that you do.

48

49 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are

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0282

1 there any questions.

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Go ahead, Pat.

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MR. HOLMES: Yeah. Great report, lot of information. I had a couple questions. On your regional information concerns I had a brief statement about concerning hatchery salmon. And I was just wondering what that was, if, you know, your birds are feeding on fish, if those releases are positive or negative one would think? Anyway that's the first question.

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MR. KALER: Yes. That -- through the Chair, Madame Chair. Thank you, Pat. Appreciate that question. That was something that was raised at last fall's Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council question and specifically from somebody up in Gullivan. I think the point that I'd like to make clear is that in Alaska with hatchery salmon and pink salmon in particular, it's referred to salmon ranching in the sense that -- and this is from what I've understood from Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation in particular, some of the presentations I've seen, that the salmon compared to the lower 48 that when they release the salmon in Alaska they have -- they're older. And so the concern or the question that I've received and that's what I'm -- what I'm trying to address is that there's concern that they're consuming more resources because they're older and bigger. And I think we all know -- I mean, there's kind of a top down like kind of the top consumers versus a bottom up, you know, the bottom consumers. And that marine birds and marine mammals are kind of pinched in the middle competing for those resources. And so it's something to -- I'm not trying to disparage hatchery salmon or even pretend that I know what I'm talking about, but it's something that I think we need to be thinking about through resource management. Well, above my pay grade, but something that I think about in terms of how we manage the resource and what might be impacting our seabirds and our marine mammals.

MR. HOLMES: Thanks. I believe that pink salmon when they're released they're fry, probably less than half a finger length, and I believe that they primarily feed on plankton. When I've seen some releases in Kodiak you end up getting all kinds of seagulls and -- coming to eat so it's probably

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1 something to check on, but mixed message.

2

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4 The other question I have is on large  
5 scale commercial fishing. And I just would make an  
6 observation of back when we had a shrimp trawl fishery  
7 here in Kodiak the -- one of the major rookeries down  
8 near Twoheaded Island on the southeast side of Kodiak  
9 had tremendous colonies of birds. And then once the  
10 fishery stopped, they had a crash in their population  
11 for a couple of years. And I was just kind of guessing  
12 and from my own observations on doing surveys there,  
13 trawl surveys, that, you know, those birds during their  
14 spring rearing were taking advantage of all of the  
15 small things that were washing out of the nets, shrimp  
16 or whatever other small fish. But once that happened  
17 and then things restabilized years later after the, you  
18 know, fisheries changed off and the birds readapted,  
19 but that could be a two way thing as well.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
23 there any further questions.

24

25 MR. KALER: Yeah, through the.....

26

27 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. And  
28 I'm sorry did you have a follow-up clarification based  
29 on Pat's comment.

30

31 MR. KALER: No, I was just thanking Pat  
32 through the Chair, Madame Chair. Thank you for that  
33 comment, Pat, and I appreciate everybody's sharing of  
34 information.

35

36 Thank you all for your time.

37

38 Much appreciated.

39

40 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. I'm  
41 not seeing or hearing further questions. So thank you  
42 and we'll go ahead and move on to our next agenda item.  
43 And that will be update on the Kodiak Summer Marine  
44 Bird and Marine Mammal surveys, 2011 to 2022 and  
45 Aleutian and Arctic tern monitoring and research, Robin  
46 Corcoran, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. And just to  
47 clarify we don't have any presentation we need to be  
48 looking at.

49

50

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1 MS. CORCORAN: Yeah, I apologize. I  
2 wasn't able to get the presentation done in time to  
3 provide it for the meeting notes and I just handed it  
4 off. It's hot off the presses, I just finished.

5  
6 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. And you  
7 sound really quiet. If you can push the microphone  
8 closer to yourself that would be great.

9  
10 MS. CORCORAN: Can you hear me now?

11  
12 REPORTER: No. Switch to the other  
13 one.

14  
15 MS. CORCORAN: How about now? Oh,  
16 yeah, I can hear. Yeah. Thank you very much for  
17 giving me this opportunity to present on the monitoring  
18 that the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge does in  
19 relation to marine birds here in the Kodiak  
20 Archipelago. My name is Robin Corcoran, I'm the Bird  
21 Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
22 Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. And I want to  
23 acknowledge my co-contributors on this presentation.  
24 They are Jill Tangerris and Katie Stoner, but with the  
25 Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation  
26 Sciences at Oregon State University.

27  
28 Next slide.

29  
30 And I wanted to say that the work that  
31 I'm about to present was conducted in the traditional  
32 homeland of the Alutiiq Sugpiaq people and I want to  
33 thank the Natives of the Kodiak region for the  
34 opportunity to work in this area.

35  
36 Next slide.

37  
38 So today I'm going to talk about  
39 monitoring -- the major monitoring program that we  
40 conduct related to birds in the Kodiak Archipelago and  
41 that is the Kodiak Archipelago Nearshore Marine Bird  
42 and Mammal surveys. This is done during the breeding  
43 season. And then I'm also going to touch on research  
44 that we do in regards to Aleutian terns and puffins.

45  
46 Next slide.

47  
48 So just to give you some background,  
49 this Nearshore Marine Bird and Mammal survey was based  
50



0285

1 on surveys that were already conducted in our region  
2 primarily by the Park Service at Kenai Fjords and  
3 Katmai National Parks and we contribute all of this  
4 data to larger datasets that are monitoring birds at  
5 the regional and State level so all of this data is  
6 contributed to both Gulf Watch Alaska Program and the  
7 North Pacific Pelagic Seabird data base.

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Next slide.

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Next slide.

We survey both in June and August. In June populations are pretty stable of breeding birds so we're using those estimates to estimate total population size and to detect trends. And then in August numbers tend to be more variable, but we can get information on peak populations and also some information on productivity.

Next slide.

We've summarized the data for the first two rounds of the survey so the first round was 2011 to 2013, second round was 2014 to 2016, those reports are available as a download online. And I've provided the links. We're still working on the final report and these reports summarize data for 19 different bird species and two marine mammal species. I believe the Committee was provided with the sea otter data and I think there's a handout available if you're interested. And that includes the more recent survey data as well.

1                   So I'm just going to cover a few  
2 species that I think are important to subsistence users  
3 here in the Kodiak Archipelago. And I'm going to start  
4 with harlequin duck. These are our population  
5 estimates in June in green on the left and in blue for  
6 August on the right. Asterisk means a significant  
7 difference between that time period and the previous  
8 time period. And so you can see June population  
9 estimates for harlequins ranged from about 5,400 up to  
10 almost 9,000 and then in August we have quite a few  
11 more, about 10,000 up to about 18,000. We did see a  
12 significant decline between the second survey period  
13 which ended in 2016 and the third time period which  
14 ended in 2020 for both June and August for harlequins.

15

16                   Next slide.

17

18                   For black-leg kittiwakes again we have  
19 a lot of black-leg kittiwakes, this is the most  
20 abundant species we survey. Our population estimates  
21 in June varied from 87,000 up to about 106 and then in  
22 August the variation was from about 115 up to 209,000.  
23 We had significant increases in kittiwakes between the  
24 first survey period and the second, however in August  
25 we saw declines between both the first and second time  
26 period and the continued declines between the second  
27 and third.

28

29                   Next slide.

30

31                   For glaucous-winged gulls, this is our  
32 major large gull that breeds in the Kodiak Archipelago.  
33 Our June population estimates were between 29,000 and  
34 41,000 and then our August population estimates varied  
35 from 26,000 up to over 71,000, but we did see  
36 significant declines both in June and August between  
37 the first and second and the second and third time  
38 periods for this species and pretty serious declines in  
39 August unfortunately.

40

41                   Next slide.

42

43                   And now I'm going to switch gears and  
44 talk about Aleutian tern monitoring that we've been  
45 doing for some years. The reason we're interested in  
46 Aleutian terns is that in 2015 there was a Statewide  
47 species assessment done for the species and it  
48 documented a 92 percent decline since the 1960s. It's  
49 one of the rarer species in the world as far as terns  
50

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1 go and you can see a map of the current worldwide  
2 colony distribution on the right here, you can see it's  
3 just in Alaska and Russia. And the bird is challenging  
4 to study and just hasn't been well studied.

5

6 Next slide.

7

8 So our region's pretty important to the  
9 Aleutian tern, about 25 percent of the colonies  
10 analyzed in the species assessment in 2015 were from  
11 Kodiak and in the 1970s you can see we had some very  
12 large colonies particularly in Alatak and Sitkalidak.  
13 Amee and Sheep Island near Old Harbor in the Sitkalidak  
14 region, those colonies had between three and 4,000 tern  
15 -- Aleutian terns nesting and then Alatak had  
16 populations around a thousand. Colonies along the  
17 Kodiak road system, Aleutian terns numbers about 600.

18

19 Next slide.

20

21 More recently we were able to do a boat  
22 based survey. We visited all of the known Aleutian  
23 tern colonies in the archipelago in 2020, we also  
24 searched for new colonies. We were able to confirm  
25 breeding at seven of the sites and we estimated the  
26 total population in the archipelago at only 450  
27 Aleutian terns. The highlight was that a lot of those  
28 terns were in one single colony, a new colony that we  
29 had not seen before and we have not seen since on  
30 Aiaktalik Island near Geese Channel at the southwest  
31 end of the -- of Kodiak Island. The other highlight  
32 for us was that we saw relatively high nest success, we  
33 had fledglings at five colonies. And we plan to repeat  
34 this survey in summer, 2023.

35

36 Next slide.

37

38 We were also able to support a graduate  
39 student, a master of science student at Oregon State  
40 University, Jill Tangerris and she completed her master  
41 thesis collecting information on chick diet and nest  
42 survival of Aleutian terns here in Kodiak and she  
43 collected data for four years, 2017 to 2020. For chick  
44 diet she saw a lot of variability, but in most years  
45 the chicks are being fed either -- a combination of  
46 Pacific sandlets and hexagrammidae.

47

48 Next slide.

49

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1                   She unfortunately documented very, very  
2 little on survival. You can see here this is from 2017  
3 to 2019 and it's split up by colony and time in the  
4 nesting season. But the take home message is that in  
5 no year did she see nest survival rates or hatching  
6 rates about 60 percent. And just for a comparison,  
7 terns are -- usually experience pretty high nest  
8 survival and she has provided information for two  
9 closely related species, bridled and gray black terns  
10 where nest survival is well over 70 percent up to 90  
11 percent. And then black tern is a species that is  
12 ecologically similar to Aleutians and its nesting  
13 behavior and they also experience much higher nest  
14 survival. So this is a serious concern.

15

16                   And then next slide.

17

18                   She also did a lot of this work using  
19 nest cameras and was able to identify the leading cause  
20 of nest failure which was predation. And most of that  
21 was by red fox, but we also had a flooding, some  
22 livestock predation and trampling and then also some  
23 colony abandonment.

24

25                   Next slide.

26

27                   And so more recently we've started to  
28 conduct research on both species of puffin that nest in  
29 the archipelago. And this is being led by a ph.d  
30 student, Katie Stoner, at Oregon State University. And  
31 she just started this project last year. We're  
32 interested in tufted puffins because they've declined  
33 by over 90 percent in the southern portion of their  
34 range so California, Oregon and Washington and they're  
35 continuing to decline at a rate of about 8 percent a  
36 year there. We're less certain about their  
37 trajectories in the Gulf of Alaska, but there's some  
38 indication that they've declined by about 45 percent in  
39 the last 30 years in our region. Horn puffins we've  
40 included in the study simply because we don't know very  
41 much about them and they are in no way monitored  
42 regularly anywhere in their range. And in the Gulf of  
43 Alaska we have about 80 percent of the global  
44 population of horned puffins.

45

46                   So next slide.

47

48                   So what Katie's looking at is she using  
49 existing data in addition to the transect based surveys  
50

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1 here on Kodiak we have a lot of legacy data and have  
2 continued to do what we call seabird colony censuses.  
3 So this is where we just go out and count all the birds  
4 associating with a colony. So she's analyzed this data  
5 recently and found both species have declined within  
6 the Kodiak Archipelago. For tufted puffins that  
7 decline has been between 3 and 9 percent annually and  
8 then for horned puffins it's about 3 to 7 percent.

9

10 Next slide.

11

12 And one thing she's really interested  
13 in is combining the datasets so she's just starting  
14 this process, but this shows you the density from the  
15 transect based surveys that I described earlier and  
16 that's in the blue and she's mapped it against the  
17 colony census data which are the yellow -- the graded  
18 yellow dots. And she's finding a good relationship,  
19 but again she's going to use some new modeling methods.  
20 The hope is that she can use this information to  
21 develop basically a better monitoring system for both  
22 species that can be used across their range.

23

24 Next slide.

25

26 And then in addition to the analysis of  
27 survey data she's also looking at their nonbreeding  
28 ecology so she's putting tags on them called  
29 geolocators that fit on a leg band. And these will  
30 stay on them all winter and she'll recapture the bird  
31 and get the data the next -- the following year. And  
32 they will track the movements, the distribution of the  
33 birds in the winter. And she also through collecting  
34 feather and fecal samples will be able to look at  
35 winter diet and stress hormones and to see how that  
36 might be impacting the following breeding season. So  
37 last year she was able to tag 35 tufted puffins and 11  
38 horned puffins and she plans two more years of  
39 deployments.

40

41 And so -- next slide.

42

43 And so just in summary the Nearshore  
44 Marine Bird and Mammal surveys that we conduct here and  
45 we've been conducting on an almost near annual basis  
46 since 2011, they're giving us our first archipelago  
47 wide population estimates for a suite of species. We  
48 hope to continue these surveys so that we can contract  
49 trends in populations and then we're also conducting  
50

50

0290

1 research and monitoring birds of conservation concern.  
2 We're hoping to improve monitoring methods for these  
3 species and hopefully identify factors that might be  
4 contributing to declines.

5

6 Next slide.

7

8 And so I have an army of people to  
9 thank, everyone who's contributed to this survey and if  
10 there's time I will take questions.

11

12 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
13 Thank you. And can this presentation be made available  
14 to us?

15

16 MS. CORCORAN: Oh, yes. Yes.

17

18 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay.

19

20 MS. CORCORAN: Thank you.

21

22 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Are there  
23 questions, comments.

24

25 MR. HOLMES: It would.....

26

27 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

28

29 MR. HOLMES: .....it would be nice for  
30 us noncomputer jocks if you could give your figures to  
31 our coordinator so that she could pass them out to us.

32

33 MS. CORCORAN: Oh, sure.

34

35 MR. HOLMES: And that -- that would  
36 help a lot. And on your marine mammals you summarize I  
37 assume sea otters, what's the trends there. I know  
38 five years ago we had a hundred or more move into  
39 Women's Bay and there's no more king crab. And over  
40 the last 15 years I think I haven't caught any  
41 dungeness since we've had the build-up here in Chiniak  
42 although the numbers are way down now, but what's close  
43 to town, maybe some of the villages, what's happening  
44 with the otters, are they moving to some other place to  
45 eat?

46

47 MS. CORCORAN: So I think the sea otter  
48 is -- the sea otter data is available in a handout.

49

50

0291

1 MR. HOLMES: Okay.

2

3 MS. CORCORAN: You -- you can.....

4

5 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: And can you make  
6 sure we have that because we didn't get the handout.

7

8 MS. CORCORAN: Oh, okay. Okay. I  
9 will.

10

11 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Indiscernible -  
12 away from microphone) presented yesterday.

13

14 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: We -- there was  
15 a little table, but isn't there a separate handout with  
16 like a bigger -- didn't you have a picture of it on one  
17 of your slides?

18

19 MS. CORCORAN: Oh.

20

21 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Paul  
22 actually has it (indiscernible - simultaneous  
23 speech).....

24

25 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
26 Thank you.

27

28 MS. CORCORAN: Yeah, sorry.

29

30 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Go ahead, Coral.

31

32 MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you for your  
33 report. And I did appreciate that -- I don't know if  
34 you put together that table for sea otter that we got  
35 yesterday, but I really appreciated that over multiple  
36 years and dividing Kodiak up into areas which is great  
37 information.

38

39 The puffin tracking, how often do they  
40 track, are they like collars that will track throughout  
41 the day or every day or every couple of days they'll  
42 pinpoint or what are those trackers that are on there?

43

44 MS. CORCORAN: It's a -- it's a really  
45 small device, so it doesn't transmit at all. But  
46 puffins, you don't want to put something on their body  
47 so we had to stay with a very small device that would  
48 fit on a leg band. So it's just a data logger that  
49 measures -- it measures light levels. And from those

50

0292

1 light levels it can infer location. And I -- it's --  
2 to use Robb's expression it's above my pay grade, I  
3 don't know how it does it. But you have to recapture  
4 the bird and get the data logger back. And luckily the  
5 tufted puffins are -- both species of puffin are pretty  
6 site faithful so we'll be able to recapture them. It's  
7 not highly accurate, I think it's about 150 meter  
8 accuracy. So but it's good enough for general winter  
9 distribution.

10

11 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Any  
12 additional questions.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Seeing  
17 and hearing none, thank you.

18

19 MS. CORCORAN: Thank you very much.

20

21 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: And we will move  
22 on to our next presentation which is under 14d, Alaska  
23 Department of Fish and Game little i, will be the 2020  
24 Kodiak -- Aleutian/Kodiak Bird and Egg Harvest survey.  
25 Liliana Naves, Division of Subsistence, Alaska  
26 Department of Fish and Game. And there's a note that  
27 the -- there's materials in supplemental Tab 10.

28

29 MS. NAVES: Madame Chair.

30

31 (Teleconference interference -  
32 participants not muted).

33

34 MS. NAVES: So yes, the materials are  
35 in supplemental Tab 10, Number 10, and there is no  
36 presentation. So Lisa Scarbrough had arranged it to  
37 project the materials that are in the meeting materials  
38 anyway.

39

40 So I work with the Division of  
41 Subsistence of Fish and Game in Anchorage for about 15  
42 years. I also serve as the Coordinator for the Harvest  
43 Assessment Program of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-  
44 Management Council. And that include the annual bird  
45 harvest survey that was done in different regions of  
46 Alaska between 2004 and 2019 was the last year they  
47 assess -- we do that survey. So that program in the  
48 last few years shrunk a lot.

49

50



1                   So the project that I'm going to talk  
2 today is about the bird harvest survey that was done on  
3 the Aleutian and the Kodiak Archipelago to go over bird  
4 harvest and egg harvest in 2020 -- the year 2020. So  
5 since the '20 -- emperor goose harvest was reopened in  
6 2017 after a 30 year closure. And the bird numbers  
7 available for a sustainable harvest are still limited.  
8 So since then there has been lots of research that has  
9 been done to help provide information needed for  
10 harvest management. And the -- starting in 2019 the  
11 Division of Subsistence obtained a grant to work on  
12 four different projects related to emperor goose  
13 harvest management and this is one of those four  
14 projects.

15  
16                   So the objective of this survey was to  
17 complement the harvest data specifically for these two  
18 regions, the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands and the Kodiak  
19 Archipelago which are regions that traditionally have  
20 had (indiscernible - distortion) harvest surveys for  
21 birds over the years. So we work with local research  
22 assistant on each community, we also work with the  
23 local tribal council to get community consent and then  
24 we did the surveys in nine communities in the Kodiak  
25 Archipelago and the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands and the  
26 individual communities are listed there in the  
27 materials that you have. We also use the data for  
28 three additional communities that were available for  
29 other surveys conducted by the Division of Subsistence.  
30 So we generated data at the community level for all  
31 birds including emperor goose. The idea was to  
32 (indiscernible - distortion) picture of bird harvest.  
33 And we also generated harvest at the region level that  
34 are the tables that are in the materials provided at  
35 this meeting.

36  
37                   So in the last several months I have  
38 been working with individual tribal councils with the  
39 full review of the harvest estimate for the community  
40 level and that process is now largely completed. We  
41 provided the draft report with all the tables at  
42 community and the regional level for multiple partners  
43 at the region and the local levels and to the agencies.  
44 So what you are seeing here today is just the -- some  
45 main results at the region level. And I would like to  
46 thank you so very much for all the tribal councils and  
47 the local research assistants that participated in the  
48 surveys. They are listed on Page 2 in the session --  
49 in the legends, it's lots of people in the organization  
50

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1 so I won't name all them individually, but am very  
2 thankful for each and all of them.

3

4

5 So on table Number 1 on Page 2 we have  
6 the information of the communities in the -- in these  
7 two regions, their populations and number of household  
8 and whether they're included in the survey and the  
9 sampling proportion for each of those communities.  
10 Moving among the survey results are Page 3 are  
11 estimated harvest of birds and eggs for the  
12 Aleutian/Pribilof Islands region. So we started on the  
13 left, we have the reported numbers, the raw numbers.  
14 Those raw number extrapolate to account for all  
15 households, communities in the region, they're the  
16 measure of the accuracy of the estimate and the harvest  
17 is broken down by spring/summer and fall/winter. In  
18 the last column there on the right side is the estimate  
19 of the egg harvest. So for the whole Aleutian --  
20 Kodiak/Aleutian area, the total estimated harvest in  
21 2020 was about 2,900 birds. The seasonal distribution  
22 was 32 percent in the spring and summer and 67 percent  
23 in fall/winter. Looking at the very bottom of the  
24 table and so the egg harvest was about a 1,300 eggs and  
25 the total of 52 emperor goose were reported as  
26 harvested leading to estimate extrapolated number of  
27 210 geese estimated as harvested for the whole region.  
28 So this accounts for harvest in spring/summer and  
29 fall/winter.

29

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And the -- I can go the same overview  
also for the Table 3 on Page 4 of the material that has  
the harvest estimate for the Kodiak Archipelago region.  
Again starting with the raw recorded numbers on the  
left side of the table and the estimated extrapolated  
numbers, the breakdown by season and the egg harvest.  
So for the Kodiak region the total bird harvest in 2020  
was estimated at about 14,300 birds. The seasonal  
distribution of the harvest was 28 percent in the  
spring/summer and 72 percent in fall/winter. The total  
egg harvest was about 3,700 eggs and for the Kodiak  
region the total number of emperor goose reported as  
harvested was 26. That led to a harvest estimate or an  
extrapolated number of 244 geese.

So this is data for that one individual  
year. Harvest estimates can vary a lot between years  
for different reasons. If it's available we prefer to  
look at the set of years, but this is one year data  
that we did a survey. Of course there are

0295

1 (indiscernible - distortion) on the survey, it's very  
2 difficult to do this kind of survey, both to estimate  
3 the number of birds harvested, but also the population  
4 surveys have similar challenges so we look at those  
5 with a -- yeah, this is one estimating point in how I'm  
6 -- we understand that, but this may not be perfect.

7  
8 So when doing this kind of study the  
9 idea we start at the community level, but wanted to  
10 have a better understanding of the big picture  
11 perspective. So emperor goose occurs only around the  
12 Bering Sea and it's harvest across all seasons of the  
13 year in different regions. So harvest management looks  
14 at all different seasons in all different regions. So  
15 the idea was to put this data for the two regions  
16 together with other data for the other segments of the  
17 harvest. So we combine this data with the data from  
18 the -- we put it together to get a general picture for  
19 the three years -- first three years of the harvest  
20 since the harvest reopen in 2017 because this includes  
21 the three years of data that are available for some  
22 regions from the harvest so the Alaska Migratory Bird  
23 Co-Management Council and they did supply this data  
24 with all the numbers from those other parts.

25  
26 So since I provided materials for this  
27 meeting I put together a pie chart that has the  
28 breakdown of harvest byseason and by region. And the --  
29 I will just say oral and the -- so we have an idea of  
30 the big picture perspective. So it will speak slowly  
31 and then looking at the graph that I have here, but you  
32 guys don't have this graph, I apologize for this, but  
33 this just came out (indiscernible - distortion). So in  
34 the -- after -- based on the data that's available for  
35 after the hunt reopen, the estimated year long harvest  
36 of emperor goose is about 6,300 birds per year. This  
37 includes spring/summer and fall/winter season. So  
38 6,300 birds. About three-fourths of this harvest, 75  
39 percent, happens in the spring and summer and 25  
40 percent, one-fourth of the harvest happens in  
41 fall/winter. So most of the harvest that happens in  
42 the Aleutian/Kodiak regions happen in fall/winter  
43 because this is when the birds are available in your  
44 region. A little bit in spring too, but most of the  
45 harvest in your region happens in the fall/winter.

46  
47 So looking at the spring and summer  
48 harvest only, so this is about 4,700 birds in the  
49 spring and summer. So the YK Delta accounts for about  
50

0296

1 72 percent of this harvest. (Indiscernible -  
2 distortion) 23 percent. The Aleutian and Kodiak each  
3 is 0.3 percent and Bristol Bay is 4 percent. Then  
4 moving to fall/winter harvest is about 1,600 birds per  
5 year. So Bering Strait region accounts for about 41  
6 percent of this total, YK Delta 22 percent, Kodiak 15  
7 percent, Aleutian 12 percent and these are the numbers  
8 that came from the survey that I showed the results  
9 today with this group. And then Bristol Bay is 12  
10 percent of the fall/winter harvest, (indiscernible -  
11 distortion) Alaska residents 5 percent and the  
12 nonresident 2 percent. So this is for a, you know,  
13 overview of the harvest and how this study it's with  
14 the big picture perspective.

15

16 So that's what I have to share with the  
17 group today and I thank you very much for the  
18 opportunity to join the meeting and to discuss this  
19 with a different audience.

20

21 So thank you very much.

22

23 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Great. Thank  
24 you. Are there any questions.

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. I'm not  
29 seeing or hearing any questions so thank you very much.

30

31 MS. NAVES: Thank you.

32

33 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. We're  
34 going to go ahead and take a short break. If we can  
35 come back at 3:45. And when we reconvene we will be to  
36 update on the Buskin River sockeye salmon stock  
37 assessment.

38

39 (Off record)

40

41 (On record)

42

43 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Della and Rick,  
44 do I have you guys online.

45

46 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: I'm here.

47

48 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thank  
49 you. Okay. We're going to go ahead and continue with  
50

0297

1 our agenda. We have the update on Buskin River sockeye  
2 salmon stock assessment. It'll be Kelly Krueger and  
3 Mark Witteveen with the Division of Sport Fish, Alaska  
4 Department of Fish and Game. And it's Page 87 of the  
5 meeting book.

6  
7 MS. KRUEGER: Good afternoon. Can you  
8 hear me? Closer. Okay.

9  
10 Good afternoon. Thank you, Madame  
11 Chair and members of the Council. My name is Kelly  
12 Krueger and Mark Witteveen is here with me and we are  
13 Sport Fish Biologists with the Alaska Department of  
14 Fish and Game. This is a brief overview of the 2022  
15 Buskin River salmon stock assessments and the primary  
16 objectives for this study are to census the sockeye  
17 salmon escapement, estimate age composition from the  
18 escapement and harvest and summarize sex and length  
19 data. And as Rebecca said this is on Page 87 of the  
20 meeting book and a copy of this presentation is on Page  
21 93 of the meeting book.

22  
23 Next slide.

24  
25 This is a graph of the Buskin River  
26 escapement from 2013 to 2022. The escapement is in  
27 blue and we have our lower and upper objective goals  
28 with the black dash line. The recent five year average  
29 is the red line. So in 2022 our Buskin River weir was  
30 operational on May 16th and it was removed on August  
31 3rd. The lower Buskin weir was installed on August 2nd  
32 and removed on September 27th. The 2022 Buskin River  
33 weir count for sockeye salmon was 8,121 so it just  
34 exceeded our upper goal range which is five to 8,000  
35 fish and it was above the recent five year average of  
36 6,775 fish. We counted 7,546 sockeye salmon through  
37 the upper weir and the rest came through the lower  
38 weir. And you see this graph only shows Buskin River  
39 escapements. In a previous OSM funding cycle we  
40 monitored the Lake Louise tributary weir and we did not  
41 include this in our budget cycle as we previously  
42 discussed. But we did go down there, most of the fish  
43 passed Lake Louise on really high water events and so  
44 we did see some fish, but not very many. Typically  
45 we'd see less than a hundred fish there, two years ago  
46 we had over a thousand fish escape which was the  
47 highest it's ever been, but we did go down there and  
48 just several fish were observed.

49  
50

0298

1 Next slide, please.

2

3

4 This is the 2022 Buskin River sockeye  
5 salmon run timing. Again in blue is the 2022 daily  
6 counts. On the left side axis, Y axis, is the number  
7 of salmon counted per day and on the other Y axis on  
8 the right side is the percent of escapements. The run  
9 started fairly slow, you can see from the graphs we had  
10 to close subsistence, sport and commercial fishing by  
11 emergency order for a period of about three weeks in  
12 June and the peak day for escapement was June 28th with  
13 744 sockeye salmon counted.

13

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Next slide.

For our new Buskin OSM projects the main change in this grant was that we added a scale measure component and we're going to be looking at freshwater and saltwater annuli growth and compare this to climate indices and also look at freshwater productivity. This will help us refine our forecasting and see how many fish are spending two years versus three years in the ocean. So we've mentioned this at previous RAC meetings, we did just get the approval to purchase the equipment, it was kind of delayed, but we're waiting to receive our -- both the microscope and the software equipment that we will be using for this new objective. And so hopefully we'll get this settled -- set up later this year and then we'll start looking at scales this winter. And over the course of our project we're going to look at 20 years of scale data by the end of the project.

Next slide.

This is a graph showing the age composition and run size of Buskin River sockeye salmon from 2009 to 2022, The years are on the X axis, the proportion is on the left side Y axis and the total run is on the right side Y axis. The 2022 Buskin River sockeye salmon escapement was primarily composed of age 2.2 fish which is shown in red, followed by age 1.3 fish shown in green and age 2.3 fish shown in purple. The age 1.2 fish are shown in blue. Overall the average sizes of fish was smaller than the most recent five year average. This year the -- or last year female average was 485 millimeters in 2022 versus 495 which was the five year average for males. Last year they were averaging 459 millimeters versus 512 as a

0299

1 five year average. And based on our strong age 2.2  
2 component of the '22 run -- 2022 run we're cautiously  
3 optimistic about a stronger run of ocean -- three ocean  
4 fish than observed in recent years and an above average  
5 2023 run. So that's what we're hoping for this year.  
6 We don't have finalized numbers for subsistence or  
7 sport harvest yet so that's the best of a forecast that  
8 we can give for this year.

9

10 Next slide.

11

12 Our intern program. Every year we  
13 employ two top qualified students from the Kodiak area  
14 to participate in working on our Buskin project from  
15 June to August and interns gain knowledge of the  
16 principals involved in fisheries management and  
17 research and they obtain a lot of great field  
18 experience along the way. And since 2020 or since  
19 2003, 22 of 33 interns have returned to work for Fish  
20 and Game at some point which we're really proud of that  
21 number, it's a pretty high percentage including the  
22 Area Manager and several other people who still work  
23 are involved in fisheries management. And we just --  
24 our closing -- our job closed and we are currently  
25 doing interviews and will have those two interns hired  
26 within the next couple weeks.

27

28 And with that I will take questions.

29

30 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Great. Are  
31 there any comments or questions.

32

33 Go ahead, Pat.

34

35 MR. HOLMES: Well, I'd like to  
36 compliment you folks, I think your moving ahead with  
37 the scale analysis, I think that will answer a lot of  
38 questions on what's been happening when you get shifts  
39 of growth patterns, whether it's freshwater dropping  
40 off or saltwater growth. And I think that even just  
41 getting a few years comparison will give people a lot  
42 better idea of what might be happening there. And I  
43 thought your notation on the age 2.2 and -- that's  
44 right, I got it right, yeah, as being a good indication  
45 that next year we might have a little bit bigger run if  
46 we're getting the threes coming in, the 2.3. So I  
47 think that's really exciting.

48

49 And it's unfortunate that the money

50

0300

1 isn't there anymore for a smolt program, but I think  
2 the scales, that'll give us -- give you a whole lot  
3 better idea of what's happening.

4

5                   And I really always compliment you on  
6 the intern program, I think that's probably one of the  
7 best ones going on in the whole State because you're  
8 bringing young people into the profession at a really  
9 good -- good rate. And I think that ends up involving  
10 the whole community when you know your kid's out there  
11 helping out Mark and Kelly on the weir, you know,  
12 you're going to think oh, well, I'll talk to Senator  
13 Stevens and tell him got to keep funding them. So  
14 thumbs up.

15

16                   Thank you.

17

18                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Any  
19 further questions or comments.

20

21                   Go ahead, Coral.

22

23                   MS. CHERNOFF: I just have a question  
24 about this year's run since we were shut down for a bit  
25 -- a little bit last year, what do this year's runs  
26 look like?

27

28                   MS. KRUEGER: So that's from the slide,  
29 age two and age three fish are related. So since there  
30 was a strong age 2.2 component last year we're  
31 cautiously optimistic that this year there will be more  
32 age three fish, ocean fish, that come back. So we're  
33 predicting the run to be strong. I mean, cautiously  
34 optimistic because we don't have sport or subsistence  
35 data finalized from last year, just based on the  
36 escapement and based on our scales, our ASL data from  
37 last year.

38

39                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
40 there any further questions or comments.

41

42                   MR. PYLE: Madame Chair.

43

44                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Go ahead. But  
45 come up the mic so everyone can hear.

46

47                   MR. PYLE: Bill Pyle, Kodiak Refuge.

48

49                   REPORTER: Just use hers.....

50



0301

1 MR. PYLE: Okay.

2

3 REPORTER: Turn that one off though.

4

5 MR. PYLE: Bill Pyle, Kodiak Refuge.  
6 Have you detected any spawning use of Boy Scout Lake  
7 since the culvert replacement?

8

9 MS. KRUEGER: We have not surveyed Boy  
10 Scout, we always could, I mean, we could -- we could do  
11 that this summer, but we haven't any kind of habitat  
12 survey since then.

13

14 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. I'm  
15 not seeing or hearing further questions from the  
16 Council.

17

18 Thank you very much.

19

20 MS. KRUEGER: Thank you.

21

22 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Our next  
23 presentation will be Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian  
24 Islands salmon update. Tyler Lawson, Matthew Keyse,  
25 Division of Commercial Fisheries, Alaska Department of  
26 Fish and Game.

27

28 MR. LAWSON: Madame Chair and members  
29 of the Council. For the record Tyler Lawson with the  
30 Department of Fish and Game. Today I'll be giving you  
31 some updates about salmon in the Alaska Peninsula and  
32 Aleutian Islands area and providing details on the  
33 drone surveys we have been performing in the region in  
34 recent years. You can find a copy of this presentation  
35 on Page 101 in your main binder. And I do have a  
36 presentation or PDF somewhere, I'm not sure if we can  
37 pull that up.

38

39 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Is the PDF the  
40 same as what's in the book.

41

42 MR. LAWSON: Should be, yes.

43

44 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. You can  
45 go ahead and proceed while that comes up.

46

47 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: We'll see  
48 if we can find it while you talk.

49

50

0302

1 MR. LAWSON: Okay. So if you have that  
2 in front of you, that front page there, we got a  
3 picture looking at the outlet in McLee's Lake, you can  
4 see the weir's installed and the outlet about 300 feet  
5 upstream of where it'll empty into the saltwaters of  
6 Reese Bay also known as Wislow Bay shown there in the  
7 background. And that's where most subsistence fishing  
8 occurs on Unalaska Island.

9  
10 But moving on to the second slide.  
11 This is providing just kind of a timeline for the drone  
12 surveys that we've done in the region since 2018. So  
13 started in 2018 Unalaska roadside surveys were  
14 performed on Morris Cove, Summer Bay and Unalaska Lake,  
15 it's also known as Iliuliuk Lake. And Fish and Game in  
16 partnership with Aleutian Aerial LLC received funding  
17 from the Unalaska Native Fishermen's Association,  
18 Unalaska Corporation, City of Unalaska and the  
19 Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska. And under this deal  
20 Aleutian Aerial performs the drone surreys and they  
21 will then send that footage to Fish and Game here in  
22 Kodiak and we will then review that footage to index  
23 escapement of the salmon. In 2020 and 2021 those  
24 salmon funding sources gave us some money to perform  
25 some pilot drone surveys of McLee's Lake as well to  
26 help us start to make some comparisons between the  
27 escapement estimates from the weir and how they compare  
28 to the drone service. In 2022 and again this coming  
29 summer in 2023 we have funding from the Alaska  
30 Sustainable Salmon Fund to incorporate some mark  
31 recapture tagging into the McLee's drone surveys and  
32 i'll be speaking more about that in just a moment. And  
33 last year drone surveys were performed on coho salmon  
34 stocks around Cold Bay by Fish and Game Biologists  
35 which I talked about a little bit last year at the RAC  
36 meeting and I'll give you a couple updates about those  
37 system here later on as well.

38  
39 Go to the next slide.

40  
41 So starting off with Unalaska Island,  
42 kind of giving you some locations of where I'll be  
43 talking about. So you Dutch Harbor in the center there  
44 with the star, if you want to head to McLee's Lake  
45 you're going to head north and then over west, about a  
46 45 minute skiff ride to get there to McLee's Lake. And  
47 then otherwise connected on the roadside system just  
48 south of Dutch Harbor you have Unalaska Lake and then  
49 heading out the way you've got Summer Bay Lake and  
50

0303

1 Morris Cove Lake. So those are the systems where we've  
2 been doing the drone surveys since 2018.

3

4

Next slide.

5

6

7 All right. So getting into these drone  
8 surveys, kind of the good, the not bad and the ugly.  
9 So in theory Fish and Game has felt that the drone  
10 surveys that we perform are equal to or in some cases  
11 better than the fixed wing surveys that we do for  
12 monitoring smaller systems of sockeye runs. It does  
13 take some more time to review the footage, but you're  
14 given the option to slow down, pause, rewind, zoom in  
15 and enhance the video. Furthermore we can store and  
16 archive that footage and we have some quality control  
17 methods that we can implement there. And those are all  
18 things which are generally not available when you're  
19 surveying in a cessna. So it's great to have all those  
20 tools available to us.

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Generally speaking on Unalaska we've  
been doing four surveys over the course of the salmon  
run. And with those first -- four surveys we tend to  
get at least one to two great surveys with footage that  
allows to make some reliable estimates. But as I  
alluded to before in the region it's not uncommon to go  
long periods with less than ideal weather conditions.  
It can also have periods of stormy weather which are

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1 immediately followed by otherwise great weather  
2 windows, but the problem is that you have, you know, a  
3 great sunny day like we see in the right there, but it  
4 doesn't give us enough time for the turbidity and  
5 sediment and sometimes the alga blooms in the water to  
6 kind of calm down and give us some good survey  
7 conditions. These were all problems in 2022 as all the  
8 lakes that we surveyed had poor visibility during the  
9 peak of the run.

10

11 On the right we see a picture of  
12 McLee's Lake, we got the weir site circled in red just  
13 to kind of help to orient you, orient you to sort of  
14 where we're looking at with the drone. And it's  
15 showcasing a fairly large alga bloom on top of all the  
16 other problems we had going on in 2022.

17

18 The outlet and inlet streams are also  
19 surveyed when we do these drone surveys and they tend  
20 to have much better visibility as they're shallower,  
21 they have some current to move sediment out and they  
22 also have less surface area for the wind to kick up  
23 wave action. For example on the left there we have a  
24 photo of the outlet of McLee's Lake at the same time  
25 here and we can clearly see several thousand sockeye  
26 salmon in that stream there, they're just downstream of  
27 the -- where the weir is installed there.

28

29 Another important thing to point out is  
30 that while these surveys do provide us hours of footage  
31 to review it takes time to process, takes time to mail  
32 them from Aleutian Aerial to here in Kodiak and then we  
33 usually don't have time to actually sit down and review  
34 all those hours of footage until sometime in the  
35 wintertime. So they give us some really valuable  
36 information that we otherwise wouldn't obtain  
37 typically, but at this time I mention this because it's  
38 just not feasible for Fish and Game to use drone  
39 surveys as an in-season management tool as we just  
40 don't have the personnel available in-season in the  
41 summertime to review that footage in a timely manner.  
42 And to give you a specific example of this, again  
43 McLee's Lake is where most harvest occurs on Unalaska  
44 Island and we do have a sustainable escapement goal  
45 there and there's a 500 yard closure tied to that goal.  
46 And so when that goal is reached based on what we see  
47 at the weir we're able to reduce that 500 yard closure  
48 all the way to the mouth which will extend and increase  
49 fishing opportunity for the users there. If we didn't  
50

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1 have the weir in place and just relied on the drone it  
2 wouldn't be possible for us to get that information in  
3 a timely manner. It takes a much longer time for those  
4 salmon to pass that outlet and get to a point in the  
5 lake where we actually have a chance of seeing them.  
6 And on top of that we have the problems which I just  
7 mentioned here a moment ago.

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Moving on to the next slide.

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So just to give you a couple more photos from elsewhere on Unalaska to kind of showcase some of the good, the bad and the ugly. So both of these pics show the same spot of Unalaska Lake and there's three culvert pipes circled in that red circle to try to orient you there. And on the left we're able to clearly see into salmon redds and all those little black specs are sockeye salmon. If you had this in full screen in front of you and the video's playing on a computer it's beautiful and you can clearly see, identify and count those salmon. But as you can see on the right there that very same spot this past summer, that was the view we had in these areas where the salmon redds are and so it really muddied the water, no pun intended, to allow us to accurately enumerate those salmon.

While we did have funding for our surveys of McLee's Lake in 2022, our roadside lakes -- our contractor was only able to do two surveys and those were both done, spaced about six days apart. And even though that was the only weather window we had, it didn't give enough time for the conditions in the roadside lakes to calm down and allow for good surveys unfortunately.

37

Next slide.

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So in order to try to measure the reliability of our drone surveys in a more objective manner we secured AKSSF funding for a mark recapture tagging project at McLee's. This mark recapture method uses a more established ecological method to estimate the number of sockeye that migrate into the watershed and then we can compare them to the peak indices. In the photos here you can see a picture of the McLee's technicians on the left injecting disk tags into sockeye at the weir. And on the right are a couple of examples from the McLee's drone surveys where we can

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1 see that those tags have been successfully injected  
2 into the salmon. So on the top right there we can see  
3 a pink tag and on the bottom right we see a green tag  
4 inserted in those sockeye. The technicians tagged  
5 about 263 sockeye salmon last summer which actually  
6 exceeded our minimum goals for the tagging part of the  
7 project. We did use three different colored tags  
8 during the kind of early, middle and late portions of  
9 the run to see if there's any differences based on  
10 entrance timing and if those sockeye would end up  
11 spawning in the lake or one of the two major inlet  
12 streams. However the tag colors that we were able to  
13 observe were distributed fairly evenly throughout the  
14 lake and the two main inlet streams.

15  
16 To try to make a long story involving  
17 boring algebra short we are able to use the total  
18 number of all the fish tagged plus the total number of  
19 all fish seen, divide that by the total number of  
20 tagged fish in a survey and put those numbers into a  
21 formula to give us an estimate of population size. And  
22 I'll talk about that here next.

23  
24 So looking at the McLee's Lake sockeye  
25 salmon indices from the drone surveys, weir escapement  
26 and then those mark recapture estimates. So on the  
27 left axis is the number of sockeye salmon, the bottom  
28 axis is the dates of these surveys. Weir escapement is  
29 in orange, the drone indices are in blue and the  
30 estimates from the mark recapture study in 2022 are in  
31 gray. And I'll kind of walk you through this one year  
32 at a time.

33  
34 So we're going to start things off in  
35 the lower left corner for the 2020 drone surveys. In  
36 that year weir escapement was approximately 5,000  
37 sockeye salmon and those drone indices again in blue  
38 range from 650 to 2,400. In the center of the chart  
39 are data for 2021. That year weir escapement was  
40 16,000 in orange and the drone indices range from 7,400  
41 to 13,000. In the bottom right for 2022 weir  
42 escapement was 14,000 which again is above the  
43 escapement goal we have there which is 10,000 sockeye.  
44 Do note that those first two surveys on July 10th and  
45 26th, those were actually done before the weir was  
46 pulled and so the weir escapement on those dates was  
47 less than the total that we have at the end of the  
48 season. So the orange bars for those first two surveys  
49 are shorter. The drone indices in blue, those range  
50

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1 from one and, I mean, just literally one salmon to  
2 4,200. And I'll note that one salmon was seen on July  
3 26 jumping out of an otherwise terribly turbid lake and  
4 that at -- on that date fish had yet to move into the  
5 inlet streams where they are easier to see.

6  
7 Now looking at the gray bars for the  
8 mark recapture estimates. So due again to those poor  
9 lake conditions and the salmon staging in deep waters  
10 earlier in the season we didn't see any tags during the  
11 first two drone surveys so we're not able to make an  
12 estimate for the first two survey dates. On the third  
13 and fourth surveys we observed 28 and 22 tags  
14 respectively. Input into the mark recapture formula  
15 this gave us estimates of 31,000 and 47,000. Obviously  
16 those numbers are much higher than the weir escapement  
17 so why is that. Well, we know that the last couple of  
18 years the McLee's run timing has been quite late and we  
19 probably missed about one to 2,000 sockeye salmon after  
20 pulling the weir in 2022. The larger factor though is  
21 that -- again that poor lake visibility obscured our  
22 ability to see tags and the salmon might not have  
23 uniformly sorted between the stream and the lake and  
24 that's an important assumption for this study because  
25 again we weren't able to see many of those tags in the  
26 lake, we were able to see a lot of tags in the stream.  
27 So that definitely skewed things. But we're hoping  
28 here we have one more year to do this mark recapture  
29 study so hopefully 2022 will have some more kind of  
30 normal conditions and we'll see how that'll help to  
31 shed some light on how these mark recapture estimates  
32 compared to both weir escapement and those drone  
33 indices.

34  
35 So not including that one salmon  
36 outlier I mentioned before, the drone indices at  
37 McLee's over the last years have ranged from 13 to 81  
38 percent of the weir estimates. We've always known that  
39 aerial surveys tend to underestimate the actual  
40 escapement of sockeye in a system, but this really wide  
41 range for McLee's does provide some evidence that we  
42 need to be a little bit careful about drawing  
43 conclusions when, you know, we're only able to perform  
44 one or two surveys. And also that -- those limited  
45 drone surveys are not on par with the weir when it  
46 comes to managing in-season. I do want to reiterate  
47 again though that in the past years when we have been  
48 able to perform multiple surveys usually we are able to  
49 get a couple of good indices to estimate the peak of  
50

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1 the run.

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Next slide.

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6 Looking elsewhere in the region, 2022  
7 Fish and Game started to perform drone surveys on  
8 several streams in Cold Bay to estimate escapement of  
9 coho salmon. In the top right here you can see some  
10 coho salmon seen on a drone survey of Russell Creek  
11 last September. The results of this survey weren't  
12 analyzed at the time of the September RAC meeting, did  
13 have time to review it this winter and that drone  
14 survey index was actually less than the peak index  
15 obtained from a fixed wing survey just prior to that  
16 meeting. So there's no new data to see on this  
17 particular chart. But I do want to point out real  
18 quick here that the point that you do see for 2022 is  
19 pretty similar to the range we see in the 2000s when  
20 coho surveys on the season were performed more  
21 routinely.

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Next slide.

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Next slide.

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Swan Lake also in Cold Bay has been of  
special interest in recent years with a shift of  
harvest from Mortensen's Lagoon to this part of Cold  
Bay for sockeye salmon. And in the foreground here we  
have Cygnet Pond and it is connected to Swan Lake in  
the background and over that -- kind of above the



0309

1 horizon and beach, so you'll have the saltwaters of  
2 Cold Bay proper. The aerial surveys we've been trying  
3 to perform mostly on Swan Lake the past year have just  
4 not worked out. That water is just always chocolate  
5 milk and we've been able to see into it, but the last  
6 couple of years we've kind of just focused more on  
7 Cygnet Pond here.

8

9                   And if we move on to the next slide  
10 this will be an image from Cygnet Pond. And we did a  
11 drone survey I believe the day before the RAC meeting  
12 in September. And we were able to finally count 101  
13 sockeye in Cygnet Pond and this is the first time we've  
14 actually been able to confirm that there are spawning  
15 sockeye in this system. So it's great that we were  
16 actually finally able to find these sockeye and count  
17 them, definitely an improvement from zero, but we are  
18 hoping to figure out a way to positively count more of  
19 them in the system because a couple years ago we had a  
20 harvest outside of Swan Lake of 2,000 sockeye salmon.  
21 So we're going to keep on working on that and try to  
22 get some sort of a weir in place there in the next few  
23 years to give us a hopefully better count of the  
24 sockeye salmon returning there.

25

26                   Some other Fish and Game salmon updates  
27 for the region. We're going to be finishing up our  
28 official kind of memo for the drone surveys at Unalaska  
29 and that should actually be sent out next week. I can  
30 share a couple of preliminary insights into that. So  
31 as alluded to earlier we had issues in the lakes there  
32 with visibility. So the sockeye counts are going to  
33 look pretty poor, but in general we're going to really  
34 stress not making a comparison from 2022 to the  
35 previous years is because of the lake condition and  
36 especially in the sockeye reds where we normally see  
37 fish was just not possible to count fish there.

38

39                   Even though we have bad news as far as  
40 how we were able to count the sockeye salmon there we  
41 have some really great news for the pink salmon  
42 escapement in Unalaska. Unalaska Lake we counted  
43 35,000 pink salmon and that was the largest number of  
44 pink salmon seen there since 1996. Morris Cove is a  
45 smaller system, but it had 600 pink salmon, that's the  
46 most they've had since 1984. And Summer Bay had about  
47 5,000 pink salmon. Nothing historic there, but within  
48 its range of the other drone surveys that we've seen  
49 there since 2018.

50

0310

1 I discussed the Board of Fisheries  
2 updates earlier so I'll skip over that for now and I  
3 can answer anymore questions if you have any about the  
4 Board of Fish.

5  
6 I'll mention that for the annual  
7 management report we made some updates to our most  
8 report and we added some sections for escapement and  
9 harvest in appendices E and F. So those now show the  
10 historical escapement numbers for all of those roadside  
11 lakes on Unalaska as well as McLee's and we also added  
12 what information we have for Mortensen's Lagoon and  
13 Swan Lake and such in Cold Bay and likewise for the  
14 subsistence harvest for some of those systems. So we  
15 now have all those things in a kind of an easier to  
16 access place for people to find when they want access  
17 to those data.

18  
19 Together with the Qawalangin Tribe we  
20 submitted an application for another four years of FRMP  
21 funding for the weir at McLee's and if awarded the Q  
22 Tribe is going to assume the role of the principal  
23 investigator there and they'll be taking over some of  
24 the administrative and logistical responsibilities.  
25 Fish and Game is going to remain a coPI on that project  
26 and help install the weir, hire and train technicians  
27 and otherwise provide any and all of the support  
28 necessary to keep making that project a success.

29  
30 We're also going to be working with the  
31 Division of Sport Fish in doing some of the climate and  
32 scale analysis that they were talking about for the  
33 Buskin River so we'll be doing a similar thing for the  
34 McLee's Lake sockeye salmon.

35  
36 I believe Mandy mentioned earlier today  
37 that the Q Tribe also submitted a NOAA proposal for  
38 habitat remediation and a salmon weir for Unalaska  
39 Lake. We submitted a letter of support for that. And  
40 if they get that funding we're going to help them to  
41 get that weir installed and make sure they have all the  
42 pieces and parts for it and we've also offered to help  
43 them to train technicians to staff that and do all the  
44 things necessary to get that project up and running.

45  
46 We are also planning to expand our  
47 limnology sampling at McLee's Lake and hopefully  
48 Unalaska Lake as well. We'll be deploying some hobo  
49 temperature loggers for 24/7 and hopefully 365  
50

0311

1 temperature monitoring in streams, lakes and possibly  
2 the salmon runs there and also doing some more  
3 chlorophyll A and phytoplankton sampling there  
4 especially in McLee's where I pointed out that large  
5 alga bloom last summer.

6

7

8 And lastly I'll just briefly mention  
9 that we have some personnel changes in the region.  
10 Lisa Fox who was our long time Area Management  
11 Biologist has moved over to our Research section and  
12 she's going to be heading the area N chum salmon  
13 genetics study which will be going on for the next few  
14 years. And in her place we now have Matt Keyse and  
15 Matt has been in the position that I have in Cold Bay  
16 and in Sand Point as well so he has a lot of experience  
17 in the region.

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And finally just to say thank you to  
all of our partners and helpers on these projects.  
Mark Witteveen from the Sport Fish Division came out to  
McLee's last summer and he helped to train the  
technicians on the mark recapture protocol so we thank  
for making the long trek out from Kodiak to do that  
last June. And as always we're really thankful for the  
Q Tribe, Unalaska Corporation, for all of their help  
that they always provide us. We had help from ANSEP to  
provide interns last summer and we're hoping to have  
another one again this coming summer. OSM Staff have  
been great, especially Justin Koller and sitting down  
with us and answering all of the questions about the  
next round of FRMP funding. And I want to especially  
thank Jenny Renee and Kanisha McGlasson Price, our  
technicians out at McLee's the last couple of summers  
for all the hard work that they have done to help make  
that project out there a success.

And with that I'll be happy to take any  
questions that you have.

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Great. Thank  
you. Any questions or comments from Council members.

Chris, go ahead.

MR. KOSO: Madame Chair, it's Rick.

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. We're  
going to go Chris and then we'll go to Rick.

0312

1                   Go ahead, Chris.

2

3                   MR. PRICE: Great presentation. Thank  
4 you, Tyler, for all you've done for our community and  
5 also having the Trooper here was fantastic yesterday.  
6 And we'll hope to continue to work with the Troopers  
7 too.

8

9                   The ADF&G logo didn't make it on the  
10 slide.....

11

12                   (Laughter)

13

14                   MR. PRICE: .....but otherwise the  
15 partnership was great. Thank you very much.

16

17                   (Laughter)

18

19                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Rick, go ahead.

20

21                   MR. KOSO: Yeah. Hi, Tyler, I got a  
22 question on Mortensen's Lagoon there. I couldn't find  
23 the info on it there, I know you mentioned info on it.  
24 Could you give me a little bit of an update on  
25 Mortensen's Lagoon of how the escapement is looking  
26 there maybe for this next year?

27

28                   MR. LAWSON: Through the Chair. Sure,  
29 Rick. Yeah, so in 2022 we actually were able to get  
30 some -- a good survey in on Mortensen's. It's one of  
31 those systems where sometimes the visibility is good  
32 for surveys and oftentimes it's not especially previous  
33 years, but in 2022 I think off the top of my head the  
34 escapement was 3,900. And it has a lower escapement  
35 goal of 3,200. So it did hit its escapement goal this  
36 year. The previous three or four years off the top of  
37 my head it did not hit its escapement goal, but again  
38 that's confounded with really poor survey conditions  
39 and us sometimes not being there late enough into the  
40 season to get a survey in once the salmon have moved  
41 into shallower waters and had their spawning colors  
42 come into effect so we can see them really well. But  
43 at least this past summer we did have a really great  
44 survey and they did seem to be there in good numbers.  
45 We don't have information to do any forecast on  
46 Mortensen's at this time. There is a chance hopefully  
47 next year that we might try to apply for some funding  
48 to get a weir back in place there. And I'll share more  
49 about that when the time comes and if we're able to  
50

0313

1 pull it off.

2

3 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
4 there other.....

5

6 MR. KOSO: Yeah, thank you, Tyler.

7

8 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Are  
9 there further questions or comments.

10

11 Pat, go ahead.

12

13 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, Tyler, again I'd  
14 like to compliment you on your hard work and getting  
15 things done in a difficult place. One thought that I  
16 don't know if I mentioned to you was from the old  
17 geezers that used to go out there, Glenn Davenport at  
18 Statehood and Arnie Shawl in the '70s and '80s and I  
19 did surveys there too, but I think what you're doing is  
20 a lot easier than flying a Grumman Goose down that  
21 creek.

22

23 But one of their comments that they  
24 always made was when they had a green, mucky summer  
25 there that two, three years down the line then they had  
26 a big jump in returning fish because of all that  
27 plankton in there seemed to really nuke -- give the  
28 fish that were in the lake, the smolt, a really big  
29 boost. And I bet you if you had a smolt program going  
30 you'd see those things going out, you know, eight  
31 inches long. So that's really cool.

32

33 And I think the local support that you  
34 get from the Qawalangin Tribe and the city, I mean,  
35 that's just doing some really good things, working with  
36 folks so that everybody's involved trying to solve the  
37 problems.

38

39 And I think that grant coming up for  
40 the weir on Unalaska could be -- Unalaska Iliuliuk  
41 could be really, really helpful. And I would like to  
42 mention -- I had mentioned this to him personally, but  
43 I was able to locate a rehabilitation proposal for the  
44 streams there near Unalaska and particularly Iliuliuk  
45 that had been lost for 25 years. I worked with a  
46 couple people from Habitat and they came up with a walk  
47 around, quick and best way to resolve things. And so  
48 I'll make sure I get you that study. And actually  
49 Jeanette Alas in the Fish and Game Habitat found it and  
50

0314

1 she went through piles of paper and finally found a  
2 email from a successor that had -- pretty much had the  
3 whole package. So I think that you've got some really  
4 potential working with the city and the Q Tribe to  
5 hopefully get some more escapement in there than a few  
6 hundred fish. And so I envy you.

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Any further  
11 questions or comments.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Seeing  
16 and hearing none.....

17

18 MR. LAWSON: Through the Chair. I just  
19 want to mention a couple things that Pat brought up.  
20 Yeah, Pat, happy to see those documents and look  
21 through them to kind of add to our ties of the  
22 historical fun stuff that we have for the region.  
23 There's a lot of interesting things that have gone on  
24 there over the years. I have some of the notes from  
25 Arnie Shawl about those alga blooms in our notes from  
26 the late '90s and 2000 that are pretty interesting.

27

28 And I also want to reiterate that yeah,  
29 our partnership with the Q Tribe is great. And I  
30 forgot to mention that we've been working with Mandy  
31 and Rachel back here and they've been awesome to work  
32 with and they're cranking grants out at a incredible  
33 pace and it's been real fun to work with them and kind  
34 of get them involved with the fisheries aspect of  
35 things out there. So I can't say enough good things  
36 about them.

37

38 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, I think that would  
39 be swell. And I guess one footnote possible that might  
40 be explored is that chap that works for Fish and  
41 Wildlife Service, Mike Denault, he's a Stream  
42 Rehabilitation person for the Refuges and who knows,  
43 perhaps you might be able to get his on the grounds  
44 advice because as we all know now that's part of the  
45 Maritime. And so I think there's some just wonderful  
46 potential to solve problems that have been lagging for  
47 30, 40 years.

48

49 So anyway, good luck.

50

0315

1                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER:     All right.  
2 Thank you.   Okay. We're going to go on to the next  
3 presentation and just to give people a heads up I  
4 expect we are going to go until at least 5:30, 5:30 or  
5 6:00 tonight to get through the items we have.

6  
7                   So the next item is University of  
8 Alaska, Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program,  
9 Alaska Mariculture Program, Melissa Good.  
10                  Is Melissa online?

11  
12                 MS. GOOD:   I'm.....

13  
14                 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER:   Here.   Okay.

15  
16                 MS. GOOD:   Yeah.

17  
18                 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER:   And it looks  
19 like she's handing over the presentation. And it looks  
20 like we do not have these materials in either of the  
21 books. So sorry for people who are on the phone.

22  
23                 MS. GOOD:   All right. Well, thank you  
24 for -- thank you for inviting me here and thanks,  
25 Chris, for reaching out. I was asked to give an  
26 overview of the mariculture industry in Alaska.  
27 There's a lot to talk about with mariculture so this is  
28 going to be a really high level overview. And I'm  
29 happy to provide these slides, that way they can be  
30 passed out to the folks that are online. And I  
31 apologize that you can't see those.

32  
33                 My name is Melissa Good, I also go by  
34 Missy and I'm the Mariculture Specialist for Alaska Sea  
35 Grant. Thank you. So Alaska Sea Grant for those of  
36 you who don't know is a partnership between NOAA and  
37 the State of Alaska and we're housed within the  
38 University of Alaska Fairbanks. This type of  
39 partnership isn't unique for the nation, there are 34  
40 programs all across the nation and we focus on resource  
41 development, sustainable economic development  
42 throughout the great lakes, coastal regions and marine  
43 environments.

44  
45                 So what is mariculture for those of you  
46 who don't know. It includes the enhancement,  
47 restoration and farming of marine organisms in a marine  
48 environment. In Alaska we're a little bit unique in  
49 that it is illegal to farm finfish in the State of  
50

0316

1 Alaska so here that only includes shellfish and  
2 seaweeds.

3

4 Next. So what is currently being  
5 farmed in Alaska. So right now what we -- what we have  
6 being farmed for seaweeds are some of the larger kelps,  
7 sugar kelp, ribbon kelp and bull kelp and there's some  
8 pictures of those in these slides.

9

10 Next. And for shellfish that includes  
11 Pacific oysters, blue mussels and geoduck clams.  
12 Pacific oysters and kumamoto oysters are the only non-  
13 Native species that are allowed to be cultivated in  
14 State of Alaska waters. Currently only Pacific oysters  
15 are being cultivated here.

16

17 We don't have final numbers for 2022  
18 from the State yet, but to get a sense of what the  
19 industry looks like, it's about a \$2 million industry.  
20 In 2021 there's 4 and a half million that were sold and  
21 these numbers include oysters that were sold out to  
22 consumers and distributors and also from one farm to  
23 the other. There's no brood stock for oysters in the  
24 State of Alaska so all brood stock is shipped in. And  
25 then there are a couple of farms that are able to take  
26 very small oyster seed and grow them up to a larger  
27 size which then gets sold to another farm site for  
28 actual growth to marketable size.

29

30 Go back, please. There was 536,000  
31 pounds of seaweed that was sold. That was mostly  
32 ribbon and sugar kelp from aquatic farms that were  
33 growing those specifically. There's a very small  
34 amount of other seaweeds that was sold as well that was  
35 naturally set seaweeds on oyster gear. There's almost  
36 a small amount of shellfish as well, blue mussels.

37

38 In March of 2022 there was 81 aquatic  
39 farm permits that were considered active, active  
40 doesn't mean that they actually have product onboard or  
41 are growing anything, but are considered active by the  
42 State of Alaska. There was four hatcheries, 49 of the  
43 aquatic farms had inventory of their farm site.

44

45 To get a little bit of history of what  
46 mariculture has looked like in the State of Alaska, the  
47 cultivation industry started in the early 1990s. The  
48 graph on the left-hand side has thousands of pounds, X  
49 axis is years going up to 2021 and what we see is  
50



0317

1 there's been a huge fluctuation in clams, mostly  
2 geoduck clams. We're -- at the peak we saw 70,000  
3 pounds of clams sold and that was in the early 2000s,  
4 dropping off to nothing within these last five years.  
5 There are geoduck clams that are on farm sites, it  
6 takes seven years for a clam to reach maturity and a  
7 sellable size and so we have a long history within that  
8 industry for those organisms.

9

10 As far as blue mussels go, blue mussels  
11 are sold by the pound as well and over the last five  
12 years or so there's only been a couple thousand pounds  
13 of blue mussels sold. Those are being sold out of  
14 Kachemak Bay.

15

16 We have a graph on the right-hand side  
17 and these are millions of numbers of oysters sold. We  
18 do have a peak of over 12 million oysters that were  
19 sold in the mid 2010s and then we see a precipitous  
20 drop in the 2020/2021, this is due to covid. Sales in  
21 the oyster market probably go to restaurants and with  
22 the closures of restaurants farms no longer really had  
23 a way to see their oysters. Because we do have farm to  
24 farm sales of very small oysters to farms that can grow  
25 them up to a marketable size, we do still have some  
26 sales. We do expect 2022 numbers to be quite a bit  
27 higher than the 2021 numbers.

28

29 Next. Right now we have up a graph of  
30 the aquatic plant sales. Again this is primarily  
31 ribbon and sugar kelp that's being sold. The first  
32 sales of seaweeds were in 2017 here in Kodiak and we've  
33 seen exponential growth in the seaweed cultivation  
34 industry. Right now or at 2021 there was over 500,000  
35 pounds sold. We do expect the 2022 numbers to be even  
36 higher than that with expectations that this industry  
37 will continue to grow.

38

39 And when we think about where are these  
40 farms located, about half of the farm sites and about  
41 half the acreage leased is in southeast Alaska, a  
42 little over a third is in southcentral which includes  
43 both Prince William Sound and Kachemak Bay and about 12  
44 percent here in Kodiak and the Alaska Peninsula area.

45

46 Next. The Alaska Department of Fish  
47 and Game does have a publicly available map that can  
48 show you where farm sites that are active and  
49 hatcheries are located. For those of you in the room  
50

0318

1 you can see the black dots with green around them,  
2 those are all considered active permit sites. You get  
3 a permit to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and  
4 a least through the Alaska Department of Natural  
5 Resources so these are really the lease sites. There's  
6 1,200 acres of leased area in Alaska. Most farms don't  
7 use their whole footprint of their lease sites, that's  
8 not necessarily the acreage of farms, it's the acreage  
9 of the lease footprints. And farm sizes range from one  
10 to 182 acres, 182 acres being these large kelp farms.  
11 Again not necessarily taking up that whole acreage and  
12 the one acreage farms are oyster farms.

13

14 Next. What does this look like. So  
15 for those of you here in the room that is a spreader  
16 bar system that's growing ribbon kelp, that's actually  
17 out in Talsen Bay. This one's from last year, but you  
18 can see it again this year if you drive out the road.

19

20 Go ahead next. And so we see these  
21 small spreader bar systems that -- not really taking up  
22 much ocean space to these larger systems. So the  
23 picture in the upper left-hand corner we're looking at  
24 a on water view of -- it kind of looks like buoy soup,  
25 but this is a catenary system of sea growth that's  
26 outside of Craig, Alaska. And then the bottom system  
27 is an aerial view of a tension system, it's another  
28 catenary type system. This one's the farm that's out  
29 at Woody Island here in Kodiak.

30

31 Next. There are three main types of  
32 oyster growing systems that are being utilized in  
33 Alaska. One is a lantern net system. For those of you  
34 in the room that's on the left-hand side, those -- both  
35 of those pictures on the left-hand side. There's also  
36 a metal stacking tray system, those are the pictures in  
37 the middle. Metal stacking trays require more of a  
38 surface, a floating platform. And then on the right-  
39 hand side you can see pictures of some float bags that  
40 are being utilized. As far as our region goes or this  
41 region for the RAC, the only oyster farm in the region  
42 is in Larsen Bay here in Kodiak and they're using a  
43 float bag system.

44

45 Next. There is a fairly arduous  
46 process to acquire an aquatic farm site. The potential  
47 farmer will submit an application to the Alaska  
48 Department of Fish and Game who's issuing your permit  
49 so for your species and your farm gear and design and  
50

0319

1 then that's jointed with Alaska Department of Natural  
2 Resources that issuing the lease. There are other  
3 layers that are involved as well and this depends on  
4 where you're at and what you're growing, there could be  
5 local government permitting that you're going through.  
6 If you are growing shellfish you're also going to work  
7 with the Alaska Department of Environmental  
8 Conservation and there are some Federal requirements as  
9 well. So every farm site is going to have to either  
10 have a letter or a permit through the U.S. Army Corps  
11 of Engineers and there's also a review process looking  
12 at marine mammals, protected species, essential  
13 habitat, anything else that could be impaired by having  
14 an aquatic farm site in an area.

15

16 Aquatic farming in the State of Alaska  
17 is kind of considered a lowest priority so if there's  
18 anything else going on within an area it's probably not  
19 going to get approved.

20

21 So what are these seaweeds and oysters  
22 being grown for. It's almost all food products, we  
23 have some examples here of Barnacle Foods who has some  
24 salsas and some seasonings, there's also hot sauces,  
25 some purees that are being developed, beer, the Kodiak  
26 Brewery has a seaweed beer that they've done, there's  
27 oyster beers and then oysters are primarily going to a  
28 ready to eat market, mostly restaurants.

29

30 There is some other experimental work  
31 that's going on with seaweed, there's a lot of  
32 different applications for seaweed, it's all about  
33 developing those processing industries.

34

35 I don't have time to go through  
36 training and education opportunities that are available  
37 or coming up. One that is coming up really soon here  
38 in Kodiak is a seaweed handling and processing workshop  
39 which will take place at the Kodiak Seafood and Marine  
40 Science Center. That will take place April 19th  
41 through 21st and our application period closed, but if  
42 anyone's interested in that workshop let me know  
43 because we do still have some space available and we  
44 have scholarships available for that as well.

45

46 There are also some really large  
47 initiatives that were recently funded. The Alaska  
48 Mariculture Cluster was funded through the EDA Build  
49 Back Better Program at \$49 million. The first I guess  
50

0320

1 support that's coming out to the cluster, it's just  
2 getting up and running is right now there's a RFP out  
3 for green energy development for the mariculture  
4 industry. And there's going to be a lot of other  
5 resources as well coming through this program. I would  
6 recommend checking out their website to see everything  
7 that's involved. Alaska Sea Grant's playing a role in  
8 workforce development to this program. And you can see  
9 the logo soup of all of the initial members of the  
10 proposal.

11

12 Next. There's also a lot of research  
13 that's being funded right now. One of the biggest  
14 research programs that has been funded is through the  
15 -- it was through the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee  
16 Council. This is the Mariculture Research and  
17 Restoration Consortium. The goal of this program is to  
18 really understand the impacts of aquatic farms within  
19 the Exxon Valdez oil spill region. We do expect that  
20 research coming through this project in these regions  
21 can give us some insights about areas as well,  
22 southwest Alaska, further southwest in Alaska and  
23 southeast. So this project is not only looking at the  
24 impact of aquatic farms, but also efficiencies in farm  
25 sites and product development.

26

27 Next. And so I kept it short and sweet  
28 and hopefully you have some questions. I'd be happy to  
29 answer them now or offline.

30

31 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Are there any  
32 questions from the Council.

33

34 Go ahead, Coral.

35

36 MS. CHERNOFF: Thank you for that.  
37 Thank you for coming and presenting. And do you have --  
38 do you know how many current permits there are like in  
39 waiting, like waiting in line to become permitted?

40

41 MS. GOOD: So that's a really good  
42 question and it varies -- it varies by day. So this --  
43 both the dual State agencies are continuing reviewing  
44 applications and there's an application window. So you  
45 can put in a application between January 1st and April  
46 31st so we're right in the middle of that. I believe  
47 right now that the State has about 20, I think just  
48 over 20 applications that are in the review process.  
49 Some of those they're waiting or most of those are  
50

0321

1 waiting for feedback or further information from the  
2 applicant and others are just in queue waiting for the  
3 full review from the agencies. Once the agencies find  
4 an application complete it then goes out to public  
5 review and then there's a 30 day window for public review.

6  
7 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Further  
8 questions.

9  
10 Go ahead, Coral.

11  
12 MS. CHERNOFF: And where would we go to  
13 find out where that public review or when those are  
14 coming up?

15  
16 MS. GOOD: Yeah, the State of Alaska  
17 put them out in their public notice platform on the  
18 website, the State website. I can send a link to that,  
19 it's kind of hard to find. I would be happy to send a  
20 link. Yeah, and you can sign up there to receive  
21 emails on whenever aquatic farm leases come up for  
22 review.

23  
24 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Chris Price, go  
25 ahead.

26  
27 MR. PRICE: Do any sea mammals or  
28 anything interact with the kelp and any subsistence  
29 related activities happen around the kelp?

30  
31 MS. GOOD: Yeah, so right now we don't  
32 have very many instances of marine mammals interacting  
33 with aquatic farms besides sea otters. In Kachemak Bay  
34 sea otters are really well known to break into oyster  
35 gear, especially those hanging lantern nets that you  
36 saw. Lantern nets are zipped -- kind of just zipped  
37 together with plastic string and the sea otters know  
38 how to just pull that out and get into them and they  
39 like eating the oysters. But because we don't know a  
40 lot about it the Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
41 does have guidance for avoiding marine mammals  
42 interactions and configuring your gear, so does the  
43 National Marine Fisheries Service and part of that  
44 Mariculture Recon research project, ADF&G is doing  
45 really intensive surveys throughout Prince William  
46 Sound, Kachemak Bay and the Kodiak region on what  
47 marine mammal and seabird interactions are with aquatic  
48 farms.

49  
50

0322

1                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Any further --  
2 Coral, go ahead.

3  
4                   MS. CHERNOFF: So are -- since this is,  
5 I mean, fairly new, are there regulations about how  
6 your nets or how your gear is laid out and how big it  
7 is and how much space it takes out, how close to shore?  
8 Because I know of several people running over lines out  
9 here so it's become sort of a hazard or, you know,  
10 people are learning about it now, they're like oh, now  
11 we know that's there. But so that I guess regulations  
12 on how or where. And then I was surprised like when it  
13 first came in that those are set up all year round. I  
14 guess that's -- do they need to be set up all year  
15 round or again, what is -- are there regulations about  
16 how these gears are set up?

17  
18                   MS. GOOD: Sure. I would definitely  
19 talk to the State for specifics on that, I don't want  
20 to speak for them. There are regulations on how close  
21 an aquatic farm site and that's that least footprint  
22 can be to anadromous streams and then marine mammal  
23 haulouts, migratory pathways and rookeries. As far as  
24 gear design goes that is something that is reviewed by  
25 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and approved by  
26 them. And when it comes to gear staying in the water  
27 or being removed from the water that is permit specific  
28 so every permit is different. Where some organisms  
29 like oysters or your other shellfish you're going to  
30 keep your gear in year round, where kelp farming right  
31 now what is happening with sugar and ribbon kelp and as  
32 we see other kelps species becoming cultivated, this  
33 could potentially change as ribbon and sugar kelp are  
34 outplanted in the fall, they grow throughout the winter  
35 and then they're harvested in the spring. Whether a  
36 farm has to take their gear out and what gear has to be  
37 taken out is again farm site specific. Some gear is  
38 allowed to stay in year round. What we often see is  
39 the outside sets of the gear, the support system of the  
40 farm is allowed to stay in. Some permits have  
41 requirements where they have to sink it, some don't  
42 have to do that, some have to completely remove it.  
43 It's permit specific. And there's one permit per farm  
44 site unless a farm site's really close then they can  
45 have one permit covering two. But we haven't seen that  
46 yet.

47  
48                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
49 Well, thank you very much.

50

0323

1 MS. GOOD: Yeah.

2

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ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: We're going to move on to our next presentation. This is the Office of Subsistence Management, Lisa Grediagin.

MS. GREDIAGIN: All right. Thank you, Madame Chair, members of the Council. Lisa Grediagin for the record. And on behalf of the Office of Subsistence Management I want to thank all Council members for your exceptional work on behalf of your communities and user groups. We value your expertise and the contribution of your knowledge and experience to the regulatory process.

Last fall we held our first in-person Regional Advisory Council meetings since the beginning of the covid 19 pandemic three years ago. All 10 Councils were able to meet as scheduled in rural and hub communities across the State. It's been a tremendous honor to work with all of you, our Council volunteers, OSM Staff, and our multi agency colleagues in subsistence to accomplish our goals of informed subsistence management and the implementation of title VIII. We plan to repeat this success for the winter, 2023 Council meetings. We are so happy to work with all of you face to face again.

Over the past few years we have reminded Council members about the change in requirements for U.S. travelers who must be Real ID compliant to board domestic flights and access certain Federal facilities. Beginning May 7th, 2025 every air traveler will need to present a Real ID compliant driver's license or other acceptable form of identification such as a passport to fly within the United States. This applicable even when you fly on small commercial bush carriers. Please note that all Council members will need to make sure that they have the required Real ID for travel to the fall, 2025 Council meeting. You can find more information on Real ID requirements on the State of Alaska's Division of Motor Vehicles website.

The Federal Subsistence Board recently held a fisheries regulatory public meeting in Anchorage the week of July 31st, 2023. This was the Board's second in-person meeting and first regulatory meeting since the covid 19 pandemic. The Board had a packed

0324

1 agenda addressing fisheries proposals and closure  
2 reviews, deferred wildlife proposals and agenda items  
3 touching on important subsistence and regulatory issues  
4 across the State. We also listened to you, the  
5 Councils, through your participating representatives at  
6 the meeting. The Board is always better informed by  
7 your expertise.

8  
9 As for changing and staffing at OSM  
10 there's not much new information to report since the  
11 last time we met. OSM is advertising for a  
12 cartographer position to help with our mapping needs  
13 and the closing date for that application was March  
14 3rd. We hope that during the fall meetings we'll be  
15 able to announce the hire of this new and important  
16 team member.

17  
18 While there have been no new additions  
19 there has been one very large subtraction. The great  
20 Tom Kron retired in early February after more than 22  
21 years with the program. Tom has been an OSM  
22 institution and his generosity and wealth of knowledge  
23 will be greatly missed.

24  
25 That concludes the OSM report and I'd  
26 be happy to answer any questions.

27  
28 Thank you, Madame Chair.

29  
30 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thank you. Are  
31 there any questions.

32  
33 Pat, go ahead.

34  
35 MR. HOLMES: I'm surprised that Tom  
36 retired, I thought he'd stay there for -- until he was  
37 90 years old.

38  
39 (Laughter)

40  
41 MR. HOLMES: And he put in 25 years  
42 with Fish and Game before he went there.

43  
44 I heard there's some possibility of  
45 having a joint Council meeting perhaps in Anchorage  
46 like we did about 10 years ago or whatever because that  
47 was really productive to allow for networking with  
48 particularly like our sister city, Sitka, but also  
49 folks up in Bristol Bay and is there any potential that  
50



0325

1 that might happen again?

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MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, that is happening. It's planned for next winter so a year from now in Anchorage. And actually when you get to that part of the agenda of selecting the, you know, meeting date and location for winter, 2024 you're basically just selecting the week because the plan is to have another all Council meeting next year in Anchorage.

MR. HOLMES: Super.

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Any further questions.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thank you. All right.

MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Lisa, go ahead.

MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Madame Chair, members of the Council, I just thought this would probably be a good time to interject this since it is OSM update. I did receive a letter from our Assistant Regional Director Sue Detwiler, who spoke with us a little bit earlier and it's just regarding it was a feed -- some feedback from the Department of Interior regarding the move from -- some of the questions that the Council had for Mr. Newland.

Anyway an email has been sent to all of you so just wanted to give you heads up, they gave you some answers and some directions on where the meetings were and who attended. So anyway if you want more information on that later I can talk to you about it or show it to you.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Thank you. So now we are going back to a previous agenda item which is approving our annual report and that's in the original meeting book on Page 53. And I did just want to say a few books about the process of

0326

1 this because I -- there was a couple Council members  
2 had questions about why we were even talking about  
3 changing this report.

4  
5 So in our fall meeting the Council  
6 generated topics that they -- that we wanted to include  
7 in our annual report. We conveyed those to Lisa, Lisa  
8 crafted them into this letter or this report or letter  
9 and you can see it's got draft all over it. The winter  
10 meeting is the normal time when we approve this report  
11 so every winter we approve our annual report. After we  
12 approve it at this meeting then it goes to the Federal  
13 Subsistence Board. And normally every year we do make  
14 at least some small changes to the draft because things  
15 happen between the fall meeting and the winter meeting  
16 and we always think of other things we want to add in.  
17 So this is just the normal process that we go through  
18 every year to put together the annual report and then  
19 approve it. We have the report as written in the book  
20 and what I'm going to do is go through and note the  
21 changes that were suggested yesterday. And some of  
22 these I would consider noncontroversial, nobody had any  
23 -- nobody voiced any concerns with them. Some of them  
24 were controversial in that there may be disagreement or  
25 we just need to clarify that the things do need to be  
26 included in the report. And so we'll discuss that,  
27 make sure that what is in the report is what we want to  
28 go to the Federal Subsistence Board and then we do need  
29 to vote to approve it today.

30  
31 So the first change I noted was in the  
32 section 1, fisheries enforcement concerns. Pat had  
33 asked that the word stressed be added in relation to  
34 the streams so that the -- some of the salmon streams  
35 are stressed and that's particularly why we have these  
36 enforcement concerns with potential overuse. Although  
37 I'm editorializing I think what Pat meant.

38  
39 And then also there was a suggestion to  
40 include a sentence expressing our appreciation for  
41 Tyler Lawson and Sergeant Walsh's and whoever else, I  
42 don't mean to leave anyone out, but the efforts that  
43 the group made following our fall RAC meeting to  
44 address these enforcement concerns. So a sentence of  
45 appreciation.

46  
47 So those were the suggested changes for  
48 paragraph 1.

49  
50

0327

1 Paragraph 2 was the Proposed King Cove  
2 Road. There was a suggestion to add a sentence that  
3 references subsistence. So the -- conveying that this  
4 road could be helpful or important for subsistence  
5 access for the residents of King Cove. This one I  
6 would consider controversial. There was I guess  
7 opinions expressed both in support of including that  
8 sentence and not including it.

9  
10 I didn't note any changes to 3, 4 or 5  
11 or 6.

12  
13 Paragraph 7 which is the Lake Andrew  
14 section, there was a suggestion to add a sentence or  
15 recommendation about developing a study -- a study team  
16 to help come up with a plan. And Pat may need to  
17 correct that if I have that -- if I got that wrong.  
18 But basically adding a recommendation that a study team  
19 be developed to come up with a plan there.

20  
21 And then Della suggested a -- what I  
22 had -- in my head I'm thinking of it as a new topic.  
23 So it would be a paragraph 8 that has to do with  
24 resources, resource management, I think making sure  
25 that we have good data, particularly in times where we  
26 have constraints on resources and where there's  
27 competitive uses. And earlier in the day I had asked  
28 Della if she could come up with a couple of draft  
29 sentences there because I'm pretty sure I am not  
30 summarizing what she wanted very well.

31  
32 And then earlier today there was a  
33 suggestion on adding another paragraph which would be  
34 paragraph 9, comments regarding the moving of --  
35 movement of OSM. And it might just be the -- maybe the  
36 lack of public notice and -- or notice to the RAC  
37 members at any rate. So that was a potential new  
38 paragraph.

39  
40 So does the Council -- should I go back  
41 through the paragraphs, make sure that the changes I  
42 noted are okay paragraph by paragraph, would that be  
43 the fastest way to move through this and then did  
44 anyone have additional changes that they noted down  
45 that we're going to need to talk about.

46  
47 MR. PRICE: Can you pass it as you just  
48 mentioned, I mean, can we just.....

49  
50

0328

1 REPORTER: Chris.

2

3 MR. PRICE: Oh, I'm sorry.

4

5 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Was that Della.

6

7 REPORTER: No, Chris needs to turn his  
8 mic on if he's.....

9

10 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah. So if  
11 what I said makes sense to at least one of you can make  
12 a motion to approve this letter with the changes that I  
13 have described.

14

15 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair, I'd like to  
16 do this point by point. There's just a few things and  
17 I don't think it would take very long.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 The basic concepts are there.

22

23 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. We will  
24 do that. So paragraph 1, the suggested change again  
25 was to add in the word stressed to describe the streams  
26 and then to add a sentence appreciating the efforts of  
27 particularly Tyler Lawson, Sergeant Walsh, anyone else  
28 I've left out, but their efforts to respond to and  
29 address these enforcement concerns between our last RAC  
30 meeting and this RAC meeting.

31

32 So are there -- is there any  
33 corrections that need to be made to that or does that  
34 capture the thoughts of the group.

35

36 Pat.

37

38 MR. HOLMES: On the sentence that  
39 starts with 4,000 people, there are only a few stressed  
40 salmon streams with weak returns. Now that very  
41 precisely defines it in biological terms as to the  
42 importance of the fisheries enforcement concerns. And  
43 perhaps at the end -- I don't quite have the verbiage  
44 on it, but we could just have a sentence on there that  
45 says that we received a report from Tyler and the  
46 Department of Fish and Wildlife Protection that they  
47 have -- are developing solutions to this problem. I  
48 guess that's as close as I could come.

49

50

0329

1                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Coral, go ahead.

2

3                   MS. CHERNOFF: I think I'm good with  
4 that if we could possibly just get an okay from maybe  
5 Fish and Game Biologist or something that that might be  
6 an appropriate summation of that, are the streams  
7 stressed with poor returns.

8

9                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Well, I guess I  
10 want to jump in that the.....

11

12                   (Laughter)

13

14                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: .....Council  
15 members or the Council can have its own opinion of  
16 streams, but if you'd like to hear from Fish and Game  
17 that's fine, but we do not have to agree with Fish and  
18 Game's assessment. No offense meant to Fish and Game,  
19 but you're welcome to come up.....

20

21                   (Laughter)

22

23                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: .....and share  
24 your thoughts.

25

26                   MR. LAWSON: Yeah, through the Chair.  
27 That as Pat Holmes likes to say is a sticky wicket.

28

29                   (Laughter)

30

31                   MR. LAWSON: I don't know how much  
32 longer you all want to be here, I mean, it really kind  
33 of depends on which system we're talking about. If you  
34 have specific ones in mind I'm -- we're happy to answer  
35 your question and kindof give you an idea if there's --  
36 we have any input on if they are stressed or not. I'm  
37 not sure that answers your question, but we're happy to  
38 answer any specific questions you have about specific  
39 systems.

40

41                   MR. HOLMES: I don't have any  
42 questions. I was thinking of starting at Morris Lake  
43 and working all the way down to Iliuliuk and Unalaska  
44 Lake because it's just not getting the escapement. And  
45 that to me is stressed and weak.

46

47                   ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, it -- to  
48 me it -- I don't know that it's -- I'm not viewing it  
49 as terribly productive to spend a long time on this  
50

0330

1 very specific point. I took Pat's suggestion to mean  
2 he wanted to emphasize that and the -- one of the  
3 reasons we're so concerned about the enforcement issue  
4 is because there are streams that are stressed or maybe  
5 not as productive or they're more heavily used than --  
6 and they need of a bit of an extra eye as far as  
7 enforcement and that was my read of Pat's suggestion.  
8 And I don't know that it's necessary to specifically  
9 define exactly which streams are stressed and we're --  
10 really we just want more enforcement presence in the  
11 community. That is my -- that's my read of the  
12 situation.

13

14 So, Coral, did that -- did you have --  
15 did you want more specific feedback from Fish and Game.

16

17 MS. CHERNOFF: Well, I guess my point  
18 was just if we're going to put things in letters I want  
19 sort of some accuracy or truth to some things that  
20 we're saying. I don't -- I think it's not productive  
21 when we're like sort of producing our own sort of  
22 facts, loose facts on things. So I guess my idea is  
23 that I think the original wordage is fine. I think  
24 overstressing things that perhaps -- but that's just my  
25 opinion. So I don't know, I guess we have difference  
26 of opinions here.

27

28 So whatever the Council wishes to do,  
29 but I just wanted to express how I felt about it.

30

31 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Chris Price, go  
32 ahead.

33

34 MR. PRICE: Maybe there's a better way  
35 to say this, to reflect -- I see the local concern  
36 about some of our rivers being, you know, damaged, I  
37 mean, the environment is damaged and restoring, you  
38 know, the systems and stuff like that. But I don't  
39 know how -- if this really needs to be super specific  
40 or not. I really -- you know, this is kind of my first  
41 time working on one of these with you guys and don't  
42 know how specific we need to be. I mean, they have the  
43 reports from the past so, I mean.....

44

45 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: So, Chris, as  
46 the representative and resident of Unalaska does Pat's  
47 wording -- I mean, adding -- it's basically adding the  
48 word stressed into the sentence. Does that -- does  
49 that seem to somewhat correctly characterize -- does it

50

0331

1 seem accurate or does it seem more accurate -- are you  
2 comfortable with the wording or do you think we need to  
3 leave it out. And I'm going to defer to you because  
4 you -- you're from that community.

5

6 MR. PRICE: We're concerned about the  
7 runs.

8

9 REPORTER: Chris, you.....

10

11 MR. PRICE: We're concerned about the  
12 runs and how much is it environmental and how much is,  
13 you know, all these other factors. I would defer to  
14 the experts. We are going to have the Army Corps come  
15 out and look at our -- some of our lake habitats and  
16 other areas in Unalaska because we do have some erosion  
17 events that are happening and things like that. So  
18 it's pretty dynamic. So it's hard for me, I'm not an  
19 expert, I would defer to the opinion of Fish and Game  
20 on what they thought, if the runs are stressed or if  
21 they're, you know, damaged or whatever you want to call  
22 it.

23

24 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, and just to clarify I  
25 think it was the streams that are being described as  
26 stressed, not the runs although the concern is with the  
27 run.

28

29 Okay. So to move us past this, I -- can I get a  
30 nod of heads around the table, are we okay with Pat's  
31 suggested addition of the word stressed or do -- should  
32 we -- do we need to actually take a vote on this  
33 particular -- on this specific sentence.

34

35 Coral and then Pat and then Sam.

36

37 MS. CHERNOFF: And I just want to reiterate that  
38 the wording was stressed with poor returns. And I'm  
39 not in favor of that. I'm in favor of the original  
40 language that we have in front of us on paper.

41

42 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Pat and then Sam.

43

44 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair, I was basically using  
45 the words that Vincent Tutiakoff, the Mayor of Unalaska  
46 and also one of the executive officers of the Unga  
47 Corporation or the Aleut Corp -- anyway the corporation  
48 out there. And I just was making a follow-up on that  
49 because the main point that we -- I --s discussed at  
50

0332

1 three prior meetings was the Unalaska system and that  
2 that's the reason why we voted not to change things  
3 there because if we were adding a new gear type, sport  
4 gear, that could easily overfish the very small returns  
5 and so that really applies to the whole area, but  
6 specifically Unalaska Lake. That is the points that  
7 Vincent made. And that's the only reason I'm doing  
8 that. And also because I was a biologist there and I  
9 came back 25 years later and nothing had happened and  
10 it was worse. And if that isn't stress and weak  
11 returns, I'm sorry. So let's just either do it or  
12 have a vote.

13

14 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Sam, go ahead.

15

16 MR. ROHRER: Yeah, thanks. Yeah, I'm  
17 comfortable with Pat's language. I don't think they're  
18 going to probably spend as much time looking at this as  
19 we've spent talking about it.

20

21 (Laughter)

22

23 MR. ROHRER: I think it's fine. But  
24 yeah, the point is we have concerns. We have concerns.  
25 And so it helps convey that.

26

27 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. If we  
28 could do this. Pat, can you make a quick motion to  
29 approve your language. I think the language is clear  
30 if someone -- if you could make that motion, we'll  
31 second it and we'll just take a quick vote so that we  
32 can move on through this.

33

34 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair, I'd like to  
35 make a motion that that sentence read the population of  
36 Unalaska is over 4,000 people and that there are only a  
37 few stressed salmon streams with weak returns that are  
38 easily accessible from the limited road system.

39

40 MR ROHRER: I'll second it.

41

42 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Is there  
43 further discussion.

44

45 (No comments)

46

47 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Is there  
48 objection to the suggested language.

49

50



0333

1 (No comments)

2

3 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Hearing  
4 no objection that passes.

5

6 All right. And then there wasn't any  
7 discussion -- oh, sorry. Thank you, Fish and Game.

8

9 (Laughter)

10

11 MR. LAWSON: Thanks, Pat.

12

13 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah. There  
14 wasn't any discussion on the sentence about  
15 appreciating the.....

16

17 MR. HOLMES: No.

18

19 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: .....or I guess  
20 there wasn't disagreement about the sentence expressing  
21 appreciation so I'm assuming that that sentence is  
22 okay.

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Moving on  
27 to the King Cove road paragraph, the suggestion was to  
28 add a sentence that referenced subsistence harvest and  
29 how the -- linking the King Cove road to subsistence  
30 access. And, Della, do we still have you on.

31

32 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Yeah, I'm still  
33 here.

34

35 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. So the  
36 concern here that was raised is that if additional uses  
37 for that road beyond the emergency medical uses were  
38 added in that that could be actually detrimental to  
39 getting the road because then it'll look like the road  
40 is going to be used for more things than just the  
41 emergency medical use. When we talked about this  
42 yesterday it didn't sound like you thought that that  
43 was a concern or that would be a problem and in fact I  
44 think you said that from a community standpoint you  
45 guys were going to start referencing subsistence access  
46 anyway in regards to the road. So I just wanted to  
47 give you a chance to say does that -- does the language  
48 adding a sentence and referencing subsistence, does  
49 that concern you, do you think it's going to hurt

50

0334

1 getting the road actually approved or what are your  
2 thoughts on this paragraph.

3

4 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Basically I  
5 don't necessarily think it needs to be, I'm not sure  
6 exactly how to do -- I know that a prior EIS lacked the  
7 issue of surrounding subsistence as one of the issues  
8 that came up. I think that the point that it will  
9 allow access to subsistence areas on King Cove  
10 Corporation lands within the Cold Bay area are -- I  
11 mean, that's fine. It's not going to be of the road  
12 system, it will be -- yeah, that's -- I just kind of --  
13 I think -- to be honest with you I think it's fine just  
14 the way it is.

15

16 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thank  
17 you, Della. Okay. So Della has indicated that the  
18 paragraph seems fine without that addition. Is that  
19 okay, can I get nods of heads.

20

21 Pat, go ahead.

22

23 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, that would be fine  
24 with me if that's what Della was thinking. I -- my  
25 thoughts on doing that was the fact that that -- this  
26 comment has nothing to do with subsistence and that's  
27 what our Council talks about. And even though I'm  
28 emotionally strongly in favor of the road and it's been  
29 so abused in the environmental impact statements, so  
30 many of my friends are dead because they couldn't get  
31 out, but I was just thinking that having a reference to  
32 subsistence would tie it into our Council rather than  
33 having just a straight emotional or political statement  
34 which is what it is because that's why it hasn't  
35 happened. That's the reason why I suggested that  
36 sentence. So whatever Della wants, that's fine.

37

38 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
39 Thanks. Any additional comments.

40

41 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Yeah.

42

43 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Go ahead.

44

45 (No comments)

46

47 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Oh, okay.

48

49 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: I think -- or

50

0335

1 that's it.

2

3

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yes, go ahead.

4

5

6 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: I think if you  
7 basically before the last sentence basically say it  
8 would also residents of King Cove access to subsistence  
9 on the Cold Bay side. I mean, there's -- you've got  
10 subsistence that you can get from Mortensen's to  
11 different areas that you have to -- you can drive on  
12 the road to get there. And (indiscernible -  
13 distortion) even including birds.

13

14

15 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. So I'm  
16 now seeing nods around the table that people are okay  
17 with that. Della is saying she's not concerned that  
18 that language will harm the chances of the road getting  
19 approved or not. So is there any objection to  
20 including a sentence referencing subsistence to  
21 paragraph two. Although I guess technically we didn't  
22 have a motion, but nod of heads. Okay. So that  
23 sentence will be added to paragraph two.

23

24

25 Going to paragraph seven adding a  
26 sentence about a recommendation to develop a study team  
27 and plan. I didn't hear any objection to that. Is  
28 that -- is there any further discussion on adding such  
29 a sentence.

29

30

Chris Price.

31

32

33 MR. PRICE: I was just going to say  
34 they should put the Aleut Corp on there, I don't see it  
35 on there, but they need to be consulted with. And then  
36 I would say the City of Adak too, right.

36

37

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay.

38

39

40 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair, would you  
41 like me to give you a rough thing that I had laid out  
42 for that sentence?

42

43

44 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yep. And let's  
45 make sure Lisa's ready to take notes on that.

45

46

MR. HOLMES: Okay.

47

48

MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Go ahead.

49

50

0336

1 MR. HOLMES: Basically it would add in  
2 the sentence up -- at the end of the first paragraph  
3 that would say our Council wishes to have developed  
4 with the Fish and Wildlife Service, ADF&G, Navy RAB,  
5 Aleut Corporation, to develop a plan along with the  
6 community of Adak to solve the -- solve and maintain  
7 the problems with the Lake Andrew outlet.

8  
9 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right. Is  
10 there any comments or questions on that.

11  
12 (No comments)

13  
14 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Is there  
15 any concern with adding generally that sentence.

16  
17 (No comments)

18  
19 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. I'm not  
20 seeing any issues with that. That was the only change  
21 I had written down for paragraph 7.

22  
23 The next thing was adding a new  
24 paragraph 8 and, Della, did you get a chance to develop  
25 some proposed language for a paragraph 8.

26  
27 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Thank you,  
28 Madame Chair. I think I'm going to throw this out  
29 there and I can tweak it every which way, but I -- I'm  
30 going to go on the lines of our RAC is thankful that  
31 OSM continues to allow us to work with other agencies,  
32 whether they're migratory birds, sea otters, State of  
33 Alaska, to be able to make decisions regarding  
34 resources, especially those resources that have over, I  
35 need a word here, that have crossover with regions and  
36 ability to try to work together in those times that it  
37 does. I think that basically says this for a number of  
38 reasons. Number 1, the idea is that we, and I'm going  
39 to say we from King Cove, are responsible for the bird  
40 population in the AYK. I don't -- there's I think some  
41 education teaches and that's why I think sharing some  
42 of this information with different regions is good so  
43 they understand basically what's happening, that it's --  
44 that we need to work together, that's one things, but  
45 it just -- it's a problem that, you know, there's -- I  
46 think there's more than one reason sometimes that  
47 things are happening and we need to work together to  
48 resolve them. But it's just kind of along those lines  
49 that whenever, you know, we have issues that cross  
50

0337

1 those -- crossover with regions that have an impact on  
2 resources that we need to better work together to  
3 resolve them.

4

5 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Yeah.

6

7 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: I don't know if  
8 I made sense, I'm getting tired.

9

10 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yep. Yeah, so  
11 the concept there of resources that span across  
12 different regions and I -- I mean, we could specify RAC  
13 regions or we could just live it regions, a little bit  
14 more general, but I probably, you know, better  
15 understanding what -- it is getting late, I'm -- I  
16 don't have the words either, but what is happening with  
17 those resources because different things are happening  
18 in different areas. So in some areas the resource  
19 might be going down, in some other areas it might be  
20 going up. But this concept that we are able share  
21 information and have a better understanding across  
22 areas.

23

24 Is there any additional comment or  
25 concern with adding a paragraph 8 that captures what  
26 Della just described.

27

28 Pat or -- oh, okay.

29

30 (No comments)

31

32 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yep. Okay. I'm  
33 not seeing any concern with that.

34

35 Lisa, was that -- is that clear enough  
36 and, Della, you're going to send this to Della as Chair  
37 to read the letter once you draft it anyway. So she'll  
38 be able to take a look at it.

39

40 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yeah, it  
41 would be really helpful, Della, if you could write that  
42 down and email it to me so and not -- because I'm not  
43 -- my computer went dead and I don't write very fast.  
44 So just so I can know what your concept is.

45

46 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Okay.

47

48 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: So thank  
49 you.

50

0338

1 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Okay. Will do.

2

3 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. And then  
4 the last thing earlier today there was a suggestion to  
5 address in our annual report the -- potentially moving  
6 OSM from where it is now to where it was proposed to  
7 go. And so I'm going to look at Sam. Sam, you  
8 suggested that. Do you -- do you still want this  
9 included and if so generally what would you like  
10 included.

11

12 MR. ROHRER: Thanks. I would like to  
13 see if included and I guess for me I have some  
14 questions and the number 1 question is what are the  
15 deficiencies the move is seeking to address, what's  
16 broke that we need to fix, that the Department of  
17 Interior thinks needs fixed. I'd like to know the  
18 answer to that.

19

20 And then I have concerns and I guess my  
21 two biggest concerns are seeing OSM run from D.C.,  
22 that's scary and I think bad. And then I also have  
23 concern about the Department of Indian Affairs  
24 management background. We all know the Fish and  
25 Wildlife Service manages wildlife and lands, but  
26 what.....

27

28 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And fish.

29

30 MR. ROHRER: And fish, yeah, thank you.  
31 What management expertise does Department -- does  
32 Bureau of Indian Affairs have. I don't know the answer  
33 to that, I'd like somebody to be able to explain that  
34 to us. So I guess the biggest issues is RACs -- the  
35 RACs should be involved in this process and they should  
36 be going out for wider public involvement than just the  
37 little bit they have.

38

39 So that's kind of my concerns in a  
40 nutshell.

41

42 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thanks.  
43 And then my thought, I would -- I would like the letter  
44 to express disappointment that the RACs were not  
45 notified of at least the listening sessions which my  
46 understanding is those were -- those were not tribal  
47 consultations. I understand why we would not be part  
48 of tribal consultations, but I am disappointed that we  
49 weren't at least notified so that we could participate  
50

0339

1 in the -- in the listening sessions.

2

3 Is there additional comment and/or does  
4 anyone have concerns with including this new paragraph  
5 9.

6

7 Pat, go ahead.

8

9 MR. HOLMES: I like your verbiage  
10 there, disappointed that we were not involved and maybe  
11 say involved prior to this being submitted to  
12 Washington, D.C. And there might be questions, I  
13 looked at section VIII again and there's a definition  
14 in there that this process is defined for all rural  
15 residents. And so there's a potential that will this  
16 meet that requirement. And in my mind Fish and  
17 Wildlife Service as Sam pointed out is the best agency  
18 for subsistence management because of their background  
19 with the resources and the -- and the lands. So if we  
20 can muckle something out of that, I think that kind of  
21 gets obey and just.

22

23 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Are -- is  
24 there any concern or objection with having Lisa draft  
25 up what was just said into a paragraph and including it  
26 in our annual report.

27

28 MR. HOLMES: That would be fine.

29

30 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. I am not  
31 hearing any concern with that. Okay. So unless  
32 there's additional items that people want included at  
33 this point we could -- I would take a motion to approve  
34 the annual report at -- with the changes that we've  
35 discussed.

36

37 MR. ROHRER: I'll make a motion to  
38 approve the annual report with the changes we have  
39 discussed.

40

41 MR. HOLMES: Second.

42

43 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
44 Thank you. Is there further discussion.

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Is there  
49 any objection.

50

0340

1 (No comments)

2

3

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Hearing none, the annual report with the changes as discussed is approved. And then I just want to confirm, Lisa, that once you have something drafted up you usually send it to Della to look over anyway, right?

8

9

MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yeah. Correct. And if it's okay with you, Council, I'd probably want to maybe send it to all of you just to review particularly every -- like Pat, I'd like to have you review your last item and -- just to so I know I'm on the right page. But if that works.

15

16

Thanks.

17

18

19

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ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Yeah, I think that would be appreciated.

Okay. So our annual report is approved. Going on to our next agenda item, again going backward. We need -- we don't need to, but if we want to take some action on the correspondence policy. So if we would like to make comments or suggest changes this would be the time to do that, but we are -- we are not being asked to approve this, but if we want to make comments this is the time to do it.

So I will open the floor to does anyone to suggest changes to or not suggest changes, make comments on the draft Council correspondence policy.

34

MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair.

35

36

37

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ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Go ahead, Pat.

MR. HOLMES: Well, I'd like to compliment the OSM Staff because I think this clarifies things very simply and it's well stated in my mind.

42

Thank you.

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. I guess the only thing would be if somebody wanted to make a motion that a line under number 5, a line be added in for the Council Chair to review draft correspondence before it gets transmitted to the Assistant Regional Director. That was something we talked about



0341

1 yesterday, but just to capture on the record if  
2 somebody wanted to make that motion.

3

4 MR. ROHRER: I'll make that motion.

5

6 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thanks,  
7 Sam. Is there a second.

8

9 MR. PRICE: I can second that.

10

11 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Thanks.  
12 Is there any discussion on that.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Seeing  
17 none, is there any objection.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Seeing  
22 and hearing none. So if that comment or suggested  
23 change could be transmitted to the appropriate people.  
24 And other than that we don't need any other action on  
25 this correspondence policy.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. So that  
30 will conclude the correspondence policy.

31

32 Okay. We are down -- now down to item  
33 15, future meeting dates. First we need to confirm our  
34 fall, 2023 meeting date and location. There's a note  
35 that this is in supplemental Tab 11. And just a  
36 reminder that at our last meeting we picked the dates  
37 of September 19th and 20th in King Cove. So if that  
38 still makes sense to people, we just need to confirm  
39 that that makes sense or if we want to change it this  
40 would be the time to discuss and come up with new dates  
41 and location. So is there any -- I guess is there any  
42 concern with leaving it on September 19th and 20th in  
43 King Cove. And this is for fall, 2023.

44

45 MR. PRICE: What does Della think.

46

47 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Della, is that  
48 still okay with -- I mean, does that still make sense  
49 from your end?

50

0342

1 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Yeah, I don't  
2 have a problem with it. We may want to suggest a  
3 backup though in Cold Bay in the event the weather gets  
4 bad. I think we've done that before.

5  
6 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah, I have  
7 vague recollection. Lisa.

8  
9 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Well, I  
10 just recall from our last meeting we had to move the  
11 date to Wednesday, Thursday because of the airline  
12 schedule so that we might need to keep that a little  
13 bit flexible, but I don't know what Ravn's going to be  
14 doing in September. Just a thought.

15  
16 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Yeah.  
17 But I think for now if it's around the 19th and 20th or  
18 the 20th and 21st in September in King Cove it sounds  
19 like that is still the will of the Council.

20  
21 Do you need another motion on that or  
22 is nod of heads okay.

23  
24 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Okay.

25  
26 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. All  
27 right. Moving on to selecting preferred winter, 2024  
28 meeting dates. I am assuming that Lisa or somebody  
29 will have more comments because of the -- apparently  
30 we're having an all Council meeting in the winter; is  
31 that correct.

32  
33 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: That is  
34 correct or at least that is the plan. And so what  
35 we're -- we're trying to -- this isn't a definite date,  
36 but we're trying to ask every Council what is their  
37 kind of number 1 availability and then when we kind of  
38 narrow it down and get -- we'll let you know later. So  
39 it may not be the date that we choose, but we'd like to  
40 get your first. And the all Council meeting will be  
41 about five days, right, approximately five days. It  
42 could even be on the weekends too if that's something  
43 that kind of works with you. So anyway just if we  
44 could come up with maybe a first choice and second.

45  
46 Thank you.

47  
48 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. So just  
49 to clarify the calendar that's under Tab 11 that shows  
50

0343

1 the preferred weeks for the different Councils, those  
2 are the weeks that those Councils have said this is  
3 when we would like to have this all Council meeting in  
4 Anchorage. Am I interpreting that correct?

5

6 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: Yes.  
7 Correct. The Councils that have met so far and also  
8 Nome is not on there, the Seward Peninsula and they  
9 chose the last week of March was the week that they  
10 selected. But again we're going to come down with one  
11 week for everybody, but that's the only one that's not  
12 on your calendar.

13

14 Thank you.

15

16 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. So  
17 normally when we're looking at these calendars we're  
18 trying to find a week that nobody else has picked, this  
19 is the opposite. We -- you know, if we see a week  
20 where more people have kind of coalesced around that it  
21 would probably be helpful.

22

23 So I'll open it up for suggestions from  
24 the Council.

25

26 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair.

27

28 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Go ahead, Pat.

29

30 MR. HOLMES: How about if we just think  
31 the middle of the month, you know, March 20th, 21st or  
32 either way, just in the middle of the month and that  
33 would give us some flexibility all the way around.

34

35 And I'd like to make a thought toward a  
36 future fall meeting possibly if something is going on  
37 with one of the conventions or meetings for the  
38 Aleutians and Pribilofs out at Dutch Harbor, I think  
39 that would be a very educational thing and it would be  
40 really neat to have a fall meeting. And then to have  
41 Vince give us a tour or Chris and go out and look at  
42 those streams, maybe get somebody to run us out to  
43 McLee's Lake and so folks can see that if the weather  
44 allows and just get a feeling for -- go to Town Beach  
45 and just so that we -- folks in the Committee could  
46 understand how folks in Unalaska feel about their  
47 resources and how they obtain them. So I'd like to  
48 toss that out for the future. But.....

49

50



0345

1 explain why everybody wanted that week. Okay. Well,  
2 would -- does -- if somebody would like to make a  
3 motion for a set of dates and we'll take it from there.

4

5 MR. KOSO: Make a motion to go to March  
6 5th through March 8th.

7

8 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thank you, Rick.  
9 Is there a second.

10

11 MS. CHERNOFF: Second.

12

13 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. We have a  
14 motion and a second. Is there further discussion on  
15 going with the dates of March 5th to March 8th, again  
16 this is for the all -- winter meeting, all Council, in  
17 Anchorage for 2024.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. I'm not  
22 hearing or seeing any -- anyone with their hand up. Is  
23 there any objection.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Hearing  
28 none, we can note down that the KRAC would also like  
29 that March 5th through March 8th week.

30

31 Okay. Now we're moving on to fall,  
32 2024. And Pat just shared some thoughts. Oh, I think  
33 what I heard him say is meeting in UnAlaska and I  
34 forget if he mentioned a specific time period in there.

35

36 MR. HOLMES: No, I didn't, but often we  
37 -- when were we out there last time, it was like second  
38 week of September when we came out the last time,  
39 Chris. Would that give the Council a good idea to see  
40 the different things that are going on out there or --  
41 I don't know, tentatively why don't we.....

42

43 MR. PRICE: What about the first open  
44 week of.....

45

46 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Wait. If we can  
47 use the mic. Thank you.

48

49 Go ahead, Chris.

50

0346

1 MR. PRICE: The best timeline when the  
2 window opens, August 20th through the 23rd is your best  
3 opportunity for all the excitement of our summer, it's  
4 still summertime. So.....

5  
6 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
7 So.....

8  
9 MR. PRICE: Plenty to do.

10  
11 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: .....right now  
12 we're tossing around the idea of Unalaska the week of  
13 August 20th. I think in the past I recall there have  
14 been concerns with meeting in August so does anyone  
15 have comments on August -- the week of August 20th in  
16 Unalaska.

17  
18 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: This is Della.

19  
20 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yep. Go ahead.

21  
22 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: We normally do  
23 our -- a couple big fundraisers here in August. I  
24 don't know, but September actually works better for me.  
25 I'm not sure what other people's schedule looks like.

26  
27 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: We have.....

28  
29 MR. KOSO: Yeah, Madame Chair, this is  
30 Rick.

31  
32 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Go ahead, Rick.

33  
34 MR. KOSO: I'm with Della on that's  
35 better because August we still have people probably  
36 salmon fishing or something. So I would suggest  
37 September.

38  
39 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Lisa, go  
40 ahead.

41  
42 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, Lisa Grediagin  
43 for the record. And just a note of caution of the  
44 Councils is we've had that window open in August, but  
45 we may have to shorten that window so if you do do  
46 August there's a chance next fall we'll have to ask you  
47 to move it just based on our whole regulatory timeline.  
48 So OSM's working on that like next week. And maybe  
49 not, but I just wanted to put that note of caution out  
50

0347

1 there that if you do schedule it for August we might  
2 need to ask you to change it anyway.

3

4 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Pat, go ahead.

5

6 MR. HOLMES: Perhaps the first week of  
7 September then because that's still -- you know,  
8 there's still some -- that's when the silvers are  
9 starting to show up and, you know, still take a look at  
10 the streams in the community and what happens there,  
11 get more of a feel of summer still at that point. But  
12 and then you'll miss -- I don't know, when I was out  
13 there usually the third and fourth weeks of September  
14 end up getting some darn monsoon come ripping snorting  
15 in, but god knows. So let's just maybe consider that  
16 first week.

17

18 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. So we  
19 have a suggestion for the week of September 3rd and I  
20 think a suggestion for a three day meeting.....

21

22 MR. PRICE: Yeah.

23

24 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: .....because we  
25 need three days to fully absorb subsistence and.....

26

27 MR. PRICE: Yeah, that sounds good.

28

29 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: .....we'll come  
30 up with some reasons why we need a three day meeting.

31

32 MS. HUTCHINSON-SCARBROUGH: That's also  
33 your fisheries closures review so it's going to be.....

34

35 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Oh, and fishery  
36 closure reviews which will be very helpful. Okay. So  
37 proposal for the first week in September in Unalaska.  
38 Is there -- does that make sense to people, the week of  
39 September 3rd.

40

41 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: What I'd  
42 recommend is if you're using the 3rd for a travel date,  
43 most all these communities out here have a silver  
44 salmon derby for Labor Day weekend that goes Friday,  
45 Saturday, Sunday and Monday. I know if you're using a  
46 travel day maybe September 3rd that might be -- that  
47 might work, but let's just keep -- you might want to  
48 keep that in mind. And I don't know what Dutch Harbor  
49 does for silver salmon, but I know in King Cove, Cold  
50

0348

1 Bay and Sand Point are pretty big on their silver  
2 salmon derbies.

3

4 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. So I  
5 think what I'm hearing is if we had a three day meeting  
6 September 4th, 5th and 6th. Okay. I'm seeing nods or  
7 at least no one shaking their head around the table.

8

9 Okay. Can I get a motion for those  
10 dates for fall of 2024 and location.

11

12 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair, I'd like to  
13 move that we consider having our fall meeting at Dutch  
14 Harbor, depending on airline flights, the 4th, 5th and  
15 6th of September.

16

17 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
18 Thank you. Is there a second.

19

20 MS. CHERNOFF: Second.

21

22 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Is there  
23 any.....

24

25 MR. KOSO: Second.

26

27 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: .....discussion  
28 and part of discussion we might want to also identify a  
29 backup so if for some reason Unalaska doesn't work  
30 we'll -- we've already identified the backup community.

31

32 MR. HOLMES: Cold Bay or King Cove I  
33 guess.

34

35 MR PRICE: Anchorage because we'd be  
36 stuck in Anchorage.

37

38 (Laughter)

39

40 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Yeah,  
41 unfortunately the jokes aren't being caught, but  
42 somebody suggested Anchorage because we'll probably be  
43 stuck in Anchorage on our way to Unalaska.

44

45 MS. CHERNOFF: Sand Point.

46

47 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: So backup, I've  
48 heard King Cove was thrown out, Cold Bay was thrown  
49 out, Sand Point was thrown out, Anchorage was thrown

50



0349

1 out.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Cold Bay works  
4 for me.

5

6 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. All  
7 right. Backup then will be Cold Bay.

8

9 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: We could do  
10 Anchorage, but maybe -- yeah, I don't know.

11

12 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. So backup  
13 location is Cold Bay trying for the -- those -- that  
14 same week in September of 2024. And is there any  
15 objection to September 4th, 5th and 6th and Unalaska is  
16 the first choice, Cold Bay is the second choice.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Okay. Seeing no  
21 objection, those are our preferred fall, 2024 meeting  
22 dates.

23

24 Okay. We are on closing comments. So  
25 I'm going to go around the table and give everyone an  
26 opportunity. I'm going to start down with Chris Price.

27

28 MR. PRICE: Through the Chair.  
29 Appreciate the meeting this week and being in Kodiak is  
30 really exciting and really friendly, friendly town and  
31 people here are -- and the weather's been great so I  
32 really enjoy Kodiak. And thank you for hosting this  
33 very good meeting and the OSM Staff are excellent and  
34 they're professionals and they're doing a great job.  
35 And the Chair did a great job running the meeting.

36

37 So thank you, guys, I really appreciate  
38 it and looking forward to having you guys -- well,  
39 seeing you next winter in looks like Anchorage and then  
40 hopefully in Unalaska in the fall of 2024.

41

42 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
43 Thank you, Chris.

44

45 Sam.

46

47 MR. ROHRER: Yeah, thank you. I just I  
48 guess first would say missed getting to see you, Della  
49 and Rick, I'll always miss when we're not all in  
50

0350

1 person, but glad you're able to join us by phone.  
2 Thanks to all of our presenters for great  
3 presentations, lots of information, maybe a little bit  
4 too much information to retain it all in two days, but  
5 certainly a lot of good presentation. And, Rebecca,  
6 great job running the meeting for us so thank you for  
7 filling in for Della there. And thank you to the other  
8 Council members.

9

10 So thanks.

11

12 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thanks.

13

14 Coral.

15

16 MS. CHERNOFF: Just thank you,  
17 everyone, for being here, for coming to Kodiak and  
18 having an in-person meeting and thank you for all the  
19 people who presented, we got lots of good information.  
20 And thank you, Rebecca, for running such a smooth  
21 meeting and keeping us on track and giving us short breaks.

22

23 (Laughter)

24

25 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Pat.

26

27 MR. HOLMES: I guess I'll start with  
28 one of my dumb jokes. I think our comments of worrying  
29 about shifting OSM, I would probably be less worried if  
30 it was Glenn Chen and cousin Oliver that were going to  
31 be running the show, but when it gets to Washington,  
32 D.C. I'm iffy. And I think our meetings are just so  
33 cool because it emphasizes how folks from small towns  
34 in rural Alaska can get together and sit down and  
35 discuss things and come up with some good solutions to  
36 some really sticky problems. And I would like to close  
37 by saying, Becky, you have the most wonderful ability  
38 of doing four things at once and it seems like through  
39 time you just get better.

40

41 Thank you.

42

43 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.

44 Thank you.

45

46 We'll go to Rick.

47

48 MR. KOSO: Thank you, Madame Chair, and  
49 all the Board members and whatnot. Sorry I didn't make  
50

0351

1 it to Kodiak, I miss that, but able to attend here.  
2 But I don't know about you guys, but I start shortening  
3 out after the first day so I'm not sure what happened  
4 the second day. But anyway it turned out to be a  
5 pretty good meeting and we'll be seeing you guys in the  
6 winter I guess it is.

7

8 So thank you again, Rebecca, for  
9 running the show and we'll talk to you all later.

10

11 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: All right.  
12 Thanks, Rick.

13

14 Della.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR TRUMBLE: Yeah, thank you,  
17 Rebecca. Thank you for Chairing the meeting for me and  
18 actually I enjoyed being able to sit back and look  
19 through the information in full. That was -- that was  
20 nice. I want to thank Lisa for putting this together.  
21 There was a tremendous amount of material in this  
22 meeting, but it was very valuable. I -- this is  
23 probably one of the better meetings that I've attended.  
24 And just working with this Council and the ability with  
25 the many different areas that we go and we take the  
26 time to look at and how important it is to our  
27 communities and our region, I mean, you know, I'm  
28 really -- I feel really good about continuing to work  
29 with everybody here. I will say I'm sorry I missed  
30 going to Kodiak, I would have loved to go to Melissa's  
31 restaurant and hopefully next time I do make it.

32

33 I want to thank all the migratory, all  
34 the bird reports, Tyler, the State, all the Federal  
35 agencies, our Refuges and I think the reports are  
36 exceptional and I think we've got more to look forward  
37 to working on as we move forward.

38

39 And again thank you, Rebecca,  
40 appreciate it.

41

42 ACTING CHAIR SKINNER: Thanks, Della.  
43 I just want to thank all of the members of the public  
44 who attended our meeting and of course all of the Staff  
45 who presented and then thank you to the Council members  
46 for the time that you put into preparing for and  
47 attending this meeting.

48

49 And those are my comments. And so I

50

0352

1 think we're not at the point of adjourning the meeting.  
2 So we'll go ahead and adjourn at 5:45.

3

4

Thank you.

5

6

7 MR. HOLMES: One point. Somebody asked  
8 about the museums and things to see in town. If you're  
9 not leaving tonight and are going to be here tomorrow,  
10 leaving in the afternoon or staying until Monday, the  
11 Alutiiq Center is right up the street here, that cream  
12 colored building down below and, April Actone said they  
13 are open from 10:00 to 4:00 on Friday and 10:00 to 4:00  
14 on or 12:00 to 4:00 on Saturday. And the Baranov or  
15 the historical museum right across the street, the  
16 Russian one, Friday they're open 10:00 to 7:00 and  
17 Saturday 10:00 to 4:00, but both places have really a  
18 good collection of Kodiak's history.

18

19

So you might enjoy that.

20

21

Thanks a lot.

22

23

(Off record)

24

25

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)

26

27

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C E R T I F I C A T E

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA )  
 ) ss.  
STATE OF ALASKA )

I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the state of Alaska and reporter for Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 02 through \_\_\_\_\_ contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the KODIAK/ALEUTIANS FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II electronically on the 30th day of March 2023;

THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by under my direction and reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and ability;

THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party interested in any way in this action.

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 1st day of May 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Salena A. Hile  
Notary Public, State of Alaska  
My Commission Expires: 09/16/26