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YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE  
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center  
Bethel, Alaska  
October 27, 2022  
9:25 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Myron Naneng, Acting Chair  
John Andrew  
Jackie Cleveland  
Norma Evan  
Robert Hoffman  
James Landlord  
Henry Parks  
Phillip Peter  
Alissa Rogers

Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Bethel, Alaska - 10/27/2022)

(On record)

MS. MCDAVID: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. It looks like folks have taken their seats in the room, so we're going to go ahead and get started here.

For folks joining us on the phone, you can find the updated agenda and all the meeting materials in the Federal Subsistence Program website. That internet address is doi.gov/subsistence and then if you click on the regions tab and choose Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta you'll see a link for meeting materials.

For all our folks on the phone if you could please remember to mute your phones when you're not speaking. That would be great. If you don't have a mute button on your phone you can press star, six to mute and star, six again to unmute.

Everyone in the room if you can please remember to sign in on the sheet at the table in the back each day of the meeting so we can have a record of all the attendees. That would be great. Thank you.

Just a housekeeping announcement about public comments. This is a regulatory meeting and the Council will be discussing and deliberating on Federal fisheries proposals. There will be opportunity for public comment on these proposals. If you're here in the room and you would like to give a comment when we get to these proposals, please just raise your hand and we'll have our Chair call on you to comment. If you're on the phone and would like to comment, please just indicate that you'd like to comment by saying Mr. Chair and we'll call on you to provide a comment then.

If you'd like to submit written comments on fisheries proposals, you can do so by either providing me, the Council Coordinator, with a copy if you're here at the meeting or you can email those written comments to subsistence@fws.gov and we do just ask that you have your name and your affiliation

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1 and your contact information on those written comments.

2

3 There will also be an opportunity to  
4 comment at the beginning of each day on non-agenda  
5 items, so members of the public or tribal  
6 representatives if you'd like to provide a comment on  
7 anything that's not on the agenda there will be a  
8 chance to do so each morning of the meeting.

9

10 I believe that's all I have. We are  
11 missing our Chair Raymond Oney today, so our Vice Chair  
12 Myron Naneng is going to be stepping in to be the Chair  
13 of the meeting today. I'll turn it over to Myron now.  
14 Thank you.

15

16 CHAIRMAN NANENG: We'll call the  
17 meeting to order and then we'll have the invocation.  
18 If everybody can please stand up. Phillip will be  
19 giving the invocation.

20

21 (Invocation)

22

23 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Let the record show  
24 that the meeting was called to order at 9:25 a.m.  
25 Let's go ahead with the roll call.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: Henry Parks.

28

29 MR. PARKS: Here.

30

31 MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.

32

33 (No response)

34

35 MS. MCDAVID: Norma should be joining  
36 us. I believe she got weathered out yesterday. John  
37 Andrew.

38

39 MR. ANDREW: Here.

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: Thomas Alstrom.

42

43 (No response)

44

45 MS. MCDAVID: Thomas, were you able to  
46 call in?

47

48 (No response)

49

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1 MS. MCDAVID: Thomas wasn't feeling  
2 well. He wasn't able to make his flight, but he may  
3 try to call in to the meeting later today.

4  
5 Jacqueline Cleveland.

6  
7 MS. CLEVELAND: Here.

8  
9 MS. MCDAVID: James Landlord.

10  
11 (No response)

12  
13 MS. MCDAVID: James also got weathered  
14 out on his flight yesterday and will hopefully be  
15 joining us later this morning or after lunch.

16  
17 Phillip Peter, Sr.

18  
19 MR. PETER, SR.: Here.

20  
21 MS. MCDAVID: Alissa Rogers.

22  
23 MS. ROGERS: Present.

24  
25 MS. MCDAVID: Wasilly Alexie.

26  
27 (No response)

28  
29 MS. MCDAVID: Unfortunately Was had a  
30 death in his family and he is not going to be able to  
31 join us at the meeting.

32  
33 Ray Oney.

34  
35 (No response)

36  
37 MS. MCDAVID: Were you able to join us  
38 online, Ray?

39  
40 (No response)

41  
42 MS. MCDAVID: Myron Naneng.

43  
44 MR. NANENG: Here.

45  
46 MS. MCDAVID: Robert Hoffman.

47  
48 MR. HOFFMAN: Here.

49  
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1 MS. MCDAVID: Robert is joining us on  
2 the teleconference today. Thank you so much for  
3 calling in, Robert.

4  
5 MR. HOFFMAN: You're welcome.  
6

7 MS. MCDAVID: And Richard Slats.  
8 Richard is stuck in Anchorage. He will be coming in  
9 around noon today. Currently we have seven Council  
10 members present. We do have a quorum.

11  
12 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thank you. Can we  
13 quickly go around the room to have the audience quickly  
14 introduce themselves. We'll start with the  
15 translators.

16  
17 SOPHIE: Good morning. I'm Sophia and  
18 I'll be your interpreter all day and tomorrow.

19  
20 MS. MCDAVID: I'm sorry. If folks  
21 could please speak into the microphone when you  
22 introduce yourselves.

23  
24 SOPHIE: I do not have a microphone.  
25 Hello. I'm Sophie (in Yup'ik). Quyana.

26  
27 MS. ANDREW: Good morning. Joanne  
28 Andrew. (In Yup'ik) I'm the interpreter.

29  
30 CHAIRMAN NANENG: I think the service  
31 staff would be -- it would be good to know who is from  
32 the Fish and Wildlife Service.

33  
34 MS. LAVINE: Good morning, Mr. Chair.  
35 Members of the Council. My name is Robbin Lavine and  
36 I'm the Subsistence Policy Coordinator with OSM and  
37 it's really good to see you all. Thanks.

38  
39 MS. WESSELS: Good morning, Mr. Chair.  
40 Members of the Council. My name Katya Wessels and I'm  
41 Counsel Coordination Division Supervisor with Office of  
42 Subsistence Management. It is so wonderful that we can  
43 meet in person again. Thank you.

44  
45 MR. FOLEY: Mr. Chair. Members of the  
46 Council. My name is Kevin Foley. I'm a fish biologist  
47 with the Office of Subsistence Management. Good  
48 morning.

49  
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0006

1 MS. KENNER: Hi. I'm Pippa Kenner and I  
2 work with OSM in Anchorage and I'm an anthropologist.  
3 Thank you.  
4

5 MR. PLANK: Good morning, Mr. Chair.  
6 Members of the Council. Tom Plank, wildlife biologist  
7 with OSM.  
8

9 MS. KLEIN: Good morning, Mr. Chair.  
10 Members of the Council. My name is Jill Klein and I  
11 work as the Regional Subsistence Coordinator. I'm  
12 based in Anchorage at the Regional Office and I also  
13 serve as an Interagency Staff Committee Member. Good  
14 morning.  
15

16 CHAIRMAN NANENG: How about the Bethel  
17 staff.  
18

19 MR. MOSES: Good morning. I'm Aaron  
20 Moses. I'm the Subsistence Resource Specialist at  
21 Yukon Delta.  
22

23 MR. DAVIS: Good morning. I'm Ed  
24 Davis, the Assistant Refuge Manager at Yukon Delta  
25 National Wildlife Refuge. Very new. Just got here  
26 this week.  
27

28 MR. TULIK: (In Yup'ik) Christopher  
29 Tulik with the Yukon Delta Refuge.  
30

31 MR. DANIELS: Good morning. My name is  
32 Bryan Daniels. I'm the waterfowl biologist at Yukon  
33 Delta Refuge and I'm also acting deputy manager. Good  
34 morning.  
35

36 MR. LARSON: Good morning. My name is  
37 Paul Larson. I'm the Pathways student working under  
38 Bryan Daniels.  
39

40 MS. FITKA: Good morning, Councilmen.  
41 My name is Serena Fitka. I'm the executive director  
42 for the Yukon River Drainage Fishery Association.  
43 Thank you for having us.  
44

45 MS. MONCRIEFF: Good morning. My name  
46 is Catherine Moncrieff and I'm the Staff Anthropologist  
47 at the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. I'm  
48 very happy to be here today.  
49  
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1 MS. CANFIELD: Good morning. My name  
2 is Gabe Canfield. I am the project coordinator at  
3 Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. Thanks for  
4 having me.

5  
6 MS. SCHOMOGYI: My name is Terese  
7 Schomogyi. I'm the programs manager at the Kuskokwim  
8 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Thank you.

9  
10 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Anybody else?

11  
12 MR. ADERMAN: This is Andy Aderman,  
13 wildlife biologist with the Togiak Refuge in  
14 Dillingham. Good morning.

15  
16 KWETHLUK, INC: Good morning. This is  
17 Kwethluk, Inc. We have Nick Ayapan, Senka Guy, Anthony  
18 Olick and George Guy with Kwethluk, Inc. Good morning.

19  
20 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Good morning.  
21 Anybody else online?

22  
23 MS. DEBENHAM: Good morning. Rosalie  
24 Debenham with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Good  
25 morning.

26  
27 MR. HARRIS: Good morning. This is  
28 Frank Harris, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kenai  
29 Fisheries Office.

30  
31 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Anybody else online?

32  
33 MR. GILLIKIN: Good morning. This is  
34 Dan Gillikin with the Native Village of Napaimute. I'm  
35 the environmental director.

36  
37 MR. GUSSE: Good morning. This is  
38 Walker Gusse with the Bureau of Land Management out of  
39 Anchorage.

40  
41 Mr. CHYTHLOOK: Good morning. This is  
42 John Chythlook with the Alaska Department of Fish and  
43 Game, Sport Fish Division.

44  
45 MS. STUBY: Good morning. This is Lisa  
46 Stuby of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Sport  
47 Fish Division.

48  
49 MS. GLEASON: Good morning. This is  
50

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1 Christy Gleason, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.  
2 I'm the Yukon River Fall Season Manager.  
3

4 MS. JALLEN: Good morning. This is  
5 Deena Jallen. Also with the Alaska Department of Fish  
6 and Game. The Yukon River Summer Season Manager.  
7

8 MR. RANSBURY: Good morning. This is  
9 Shane Ransbury with Alaska Department of Fish and Game.  
10 I'm the Fall Season Assistant Manager for the Yukon.  
11

12 MR. MCKEE: Good morning. This is  
13 Chris McKee, Statewide Subsistence Coordinator for the  
14 Bureau of Land Management and Interagency Staff  
15 Committee member out of Anchorage.  
16

17 MR. GRAHAM: Good morning. This is  
18 Cory Graham with OSM.  
19

20 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Anybody else online.  
21

22 MS. STRAM: Good morning. This is  
23 Diana Stram with the North Pacific Fishery Management  
24 Council.  
25

26 MS. POLLOCK: Good morning. This is  
27 Nikki Pollock with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal  
28 Fish Commission. I'm the new operations manager.  
29

30 MS. PATTON: Good morning, everyone.  
31 This is Eva Patton now with the National Park Service  
32 Subsistence Program in Anchorage and ISC member.  
33 Really wonderful to hear all of your voices and  
34 wonderful to know you're meeting in person. I wish I  
35 could be there with you. Take care. Good morning.  
36

37 MR. SMITH: Good morning. This is Nick  
38 Smith with Alaska Department of Fish and Game.  
39

40 MR. SUNDOV: Good morning. This is Tim  
41 Sundov, fish biologist in Glennallen with BLM.  
42

43 MR. THERCHIK: Good morning. It's  
44 David Therchik, Refuge Information Technician, Y-K  
45 Delta.  
46

47 MS. DECKER: Good morning. This is Sam  
48 Decker with Alaska Department of Fish and Game.  
49  
50



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1 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Anybody else online.

2

3 MS. JOHNSON: Good morning. This is

4 Ashley Johnson with AVCP in Bethel Natural Resources

5 Department.

6

7 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Don't be shy. We

8 can't see you. So introduce yourself if you're online.

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Okay. If that's

13 everyone online, let's introduce the public that's here

14 in Bethel.

15

16 MR. MAGEL: Good morning. My name is

17 Andrew Magel. I'm the fisheries technician at the

18 Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Thank

19 you.

20

21 MR. ANDREW: Good morning, Mr.

22 Chairman. (In Yup'ik) I was, like everybody else,

23 looking on FB when you guys called. My Yup'ik name is

24 (in Yup'ik). I'm originally from the Yukon River, but

25 I live here in Bethel. Timothy Andrew is my taxpayer

26 name. I'm glad to be here participating. It's been a

27 long time.

28

29 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quiana. Anybody from

30 the public online.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 CHAIRMAN NANENG: I know there's one in

35 the corner that's -- oh, Jeff, do you want to introduce

36 yourself?

37

38 MR. SANDERS: Do you want me to?

39

40 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Yes. You're public.

41

42 MR. SANDERS: Jeff Sanders, long time

43 Bethel resident and also have an extensive relationship

44 with Lower Yukon through family and fishing.

45

46 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thanks, Jeff.

47 Ambrose, do you want to introduce yourself.

48

49 MR. AGUCHAK: Ambrose Aguchak from

50

0010

1 Bethel.

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CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Ambrose.

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Thanks everyone for introducing themselves. I'd like to welcome everyone for face-to-face meeting after the last couple of years. It seems like every organization that's meeting nowadays are saying thank you for meeting in person so that we can discuss some of the issues that are affecting us every day in lives and hopefully plan a future for our families and our kids in the future.

So I really appreciate everyone having introduced themselves and the different departments, State departments as well as Federal departments that are working on this issue, the livelihood of our people in the Y-K Delta. I know it affects other concerns statewide.

So with that we'll go on to agenda item number 5, the review of the agenda and the adoption.

MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. Council members. There is an updated copy of the agenda. It should have been at your seat. Does everyone have a copy? It has a little yellow at the top with the date on it. If you all want to look that over there. There was only one minor change from the agenda that was in your meeting books and that was the addition of agenda item number 11(j) to elect a Council member to represent the Y-K Delta RAC on the State of Alaska Wood Bison Planning Team.

So that was just one thing that we realized we needed to add as an action item after the original agenda had been sent out. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thank you. (In Yup'ik) Are there any additions to the agenda that might be of importance to our meeting today? I know that addition plus there's also a possibility that there may be something that we might need to add to discuss on the agenda in the next couple of days.

I'll give everyone an opportunity to take a look at it and if there's no additions, then we'll move to adopt the agenda.

(Pause)

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1 MR. PETER, SR.: Mr. Chairman. I'd  
2 like to make a motion to accept this agenda.

3  
4 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Motion made by  
5 Phillip Peter, Sr. to adopt the agenda. Is there a  
6 second.

7  
8 MR. ANDREW: Second.

9  
10 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Seconded by John  
11 Andrew. Any further discussion on the motion.

12  
13 MR. PETER, SR.: Question.

14  
15 CHAIRMAN NANENG: The question has been  
16 called. All in favor say aye.

17  
18 IN UNISON: Aye.

19  
20 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Those opposed say no.

21  
22 (No opposing votes)

23  
24 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Motion carried. We  
25 do have an agenda. Item number 6.

26  
27 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madame Chair.  
28 Council members, you can find the copy of the meeting  
29 minutes from your winter meetings starting on Page 5 of  
30 your meeting books.

31  
32 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair, I'd like to  
33 make a correction.

34  
35 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Go ahead, Alissa.

36  
37 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
38 Through the Chair. On Page 9 John Hanson is spelled  
39 H-A-N-S-O-N, not H-A-N-S-E-N. John Hanson,  
40 H-A-N-S-O-N. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

41  
42 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyan. Any other  
43 additions or corrections on the minutes.

44  
45 (No comments)

46  
47 CHAIRMAN NANENG: If not, entertain the  
48 motion to accept the minutes with the correction.

49  
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1 MR. PETER, SR.: Mr. Chair, I so move  
2 to accept the minutes.

3  
4 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Motion made by  
5 Phillip Peter. Is there a second?

6  
7 MR. ANDREW: Second.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Seconded by John  
10 Andrew. All in favor say aye.

11  
12 IN UNISON: Aye.

13  
14 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Those opposed say no.

15  
16 (No opposing votes)

17  
18 CHAIRMAN NANENG: With that, thank you.  
19 The minutes are adopted from the previous meeting.  
20 We're going to the reports of Council members. We'll  
21 start with those online. Robert Hoffman, can you go  
22 ahead and give your Council Member report.

23  
24 MR. HOFFMAN: Mr. Chairman, thank you.  
25 A report on the past meeting? I didn't understand the  
26 question.

27  
28 MS. MCDAVID: Council Member Hoffman,  
29 right now is your opportunity if you want to share  
30 anything with the Council and those in attendance about  
31 subsistence activities in your region since the past  
32 meeting or any comments and concerns that you might  
33 have that you want to bring to the Council's attention.

34  
35 Thank you.

36  
37 MR. HOFFMAN: I'm just pleased that  
38 we're continuing our discussions on assisting the  
39 problems of our region. I really appreciate having  
40 these meetings for the future and I hope they continue  
41 because the problems are so serious in our region that  
42 we're having with, you might say, subsistence  
43 activities that carry us on through the winter months.  
44 So I really appreciate that we continue to try to  
45 assist the problem. I'm very, very proud of that.

46  
47 Thank you very much.

48  
49 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Robert. Any  
50

0013

1 Council Member online.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Since we don't have  
6 anyone online we'll go ahead to Henry to give a report.

7

8 MR. PARKS: Mr. Chair, before I start  
9 my report I'd like to quickly introduce myself. My  
10 name is Henry. I'm from the Native Village of  
11 Nunapitchuk. Currently I'm one of the board of  
12 directors for our village corporation back home and  
13 I've been on the board for over 20 years. I'm one of  
14 the AC advisory committee members for the Lower  
15 Kuskokwim and here representing the Native Village of  
16 Nunapitchuk. I'm one of the church leaders back home  
17 at our Russian Orthodox Church. Currently right now  
18 I'm unemployed and I'm a single parent and I've got  
19 three kids and they're all adults now. I've got  
20 grandkids too.

21

22 The second thing I want to say good  
23 morning to all the Council Members, Federal agencies,  
24 the State agencies and all those on teleconference. I  
25 want to say a big thank you to our new coordinator  
26 Brooke for preparing this very important meeting.

27

28 We all know that we've been impacted by  
29 this pandemic for over two years, three years now maybe  
30 and this is my first in-person meeting, so I'm kind of  
31 very excited to be at this meeting with my Council  
32 Members here.

33

34 So that's why I'm -- so anyways from  
35 the last meeting that was in March we had long daylight  
36 hours in the month of March, so I usually go out and  
37 hunt ptarmigan because we had enough snow back home and  
38 we had good ptarmigan this year. Those previous past  
39 years we didn't see any ptarmigans anymore, but now  
40 they're coming back, which is good.

41

42 Now I did some other subsistence  
43 hunting. Rabbit, but not beavers. I went out to Yukon  
44 treeline to get (in Yup'ik) steam bath wood and when  
45 the days got longer I went out to the mouth of Dawson  
46 to manaq, ice fishing, pikes. I'm not the only person  
47 down there. Sometimes there's a lot of people down  
48 there manaq, ice fishing pikes.

49

50

0014

1                   So when the waterfowl started to arrive  
2 there were plenty again this year, but hardly any snow  
3 geese again. I don't know why, but there were a lot of  
4 waterfowl, cacklers, geese, swans, cranes. I went out  
5 maybe a couple times and had fresh birds. So when the  
6 ice got melted I went out to Baird Inlet. That's in  
7 Nelson Island area. It's pretty far from my place.

8  
9                   We had to go out and spend a few nights  
10 over there camping, spring camping. Take my family  
11 members along. Gathered eggs, seagull eggs, because we  
12 like seagull eggs. They're not like chicken eggs, but  
13 they're really good eggs. Seagull eggs. So we had  
14 enough, came back, shared our eggs with our immediate  
15 family members, cousins.

16  
17                   So when the salmon arrived I want to  
18 quickly say thank you to the Federal agencies, State  
19 agencies for giving us an opportunity to fish again  
20 this past summer. So we had a good fishing season. To  
21 me it was a fish -- a really good fishing season, but  
22 that first opener was not really good, but the second  
23 opener was really good. It was really good. The kings  
24 were at their peak on that second opener.

25  
26                   I want to quickly say and make a  
27 recommendation to the Federal agencies next time,  
28 hopefully, if it's God's will, next year, if we're  
29 going to be fishing again, please don't open it on  
30 Sundays. The reason why I bring it up is because we  
31 respect Sundays. It's called a Sabbath. A Sabbath  
32 day. We have to rest on that day. Our ancestors  
33 respected that day. One day. That's Sunday. We have  
34 to go to church and rest on that day.

35  
36                   Also I want to add please don't open it  
37 at 6:00 a.m. It's a little too early for us.  
38 Especially for us who are living up in the tundra  
39 villages area because it's a long trip going downriver  
40 by boat. It's over 50 miles to reach our fishing  
41 grounds down below mouth of Johnson. So 6:00 a.m. is a  
42 little too early for me. Not only for me, to other  
43 folks too. So 9:00 a.m. would be the best time. So  
44 please don't forget that.

45  
46                   I highly recommend to the State --  
47 Federal and State agencies if you guys are going to  
48 give us an opening by next year, please open it at 9:00  
49 a.m., eastern 6:00 a.m., because it's a long trip from  
50

0015

1 my village. Those three villages from my area.

2

3                   Anyway, we did catch a lot of -- to me,  
4 I had a lot of kings this year. Reds. But chums were  
5 not very much again this past summer. So we had really  
6 good fishing season again this year, but I feel really  
7 sorry for the Yukon people because they were suffering  
8 again from catching salmons again this year.

9

10                   So anyway we had a good season like I  
11 said and the weather was really good and our fish died  
12 out really good, smoke them, and we had enough salted  
13 salmon. Sulunaqs. We called them sulunaqs. Even  
14 half-dried salmons. They're all stored in our freezer  
15 ready to cook them later on down the road.

16

17                   Anyways we had a good summer. The  
18 plants of the earth were there again. Fresh fruit,  
19 salmon berries. A few blackberries this year due to  
20 the weather. Blueberries. But we had a lot of red  
21 berries. In our area we had a lot of whitefish this  
22 year back in my hometown because we have a lot of  
23 lakes, rivers back home in my area. So again this year  
24 we had good fishing whitefish. Got some whitefish.  
25 Another fish pikes and the lush.

26

27                   I think that's about it, but I know I  
28 have forgotten some of my reports. I would like to  
29 make a comment, Mr. Chair, besides my report here. I'm  
30 going to make an example of the farmers. You know,  
31 there's people who make farms, for example, fresh  
32 produce or even cattle. These people they have to keep  
33 an eye on their plants or cattle in order for them to  
34 grow or succeed. That's who they are. They're  
35 farmers. We call them farmers.

36

37                   Now for us the land, the sea, the  
38 river. It's like our farm. Meaning if they're not  
39 being taken care of, they will extinct. So we have to  
40 somewhat keep an eye on salmon returns, waterfowl  
41 returns and other mammals. Sea mammals or land  
42 animals. Because if they're not properly taken care of  
43 they will extinct.

44

45                   My point here is about salmon returns.  
46 Just making an example of like farming. Then for us  
47 Natives, there's over 55 under AVCP and every village,  
48 every household doesn't have a job back home. So since  
49 we're like left, we're not living in the big cities, we

50

0016

1 live off from the land, subsistence way of life.  
2 That's our cultural way of life because we don't --  
3 like I said, every household under AVCP, there's over  
4 50 villages. They don't have jobs. So we rely on  
5 subsistence way of life.

6  
7 So other races they live off livelihood  
8 ways of life, meaning they work and get groceries from  
9 the store, pay their expenses and whatnot, but for us  
10 Natives we're not like them. We don't have access,  
11 like road access in our villages, only boardwalks, and  
12 we have to have especially salmon on our table to feed  
13 our family members and our guests.

14  
15 Right now we all know the Yukon people  
16 suffered again from salmon fishing, so I know that they  
17 don't have much, probably few fish in their freezer  
18 right now. Like I said, we always catch our shares --  
19 or our catches, our catches to our relatives, cousins  
20 during potlucks or church gatherings. So that's who we  
21 are is Natives, as Yup'ik people, Native people. We  
22 always have to catch our catches.

23  
24 So right now I know some they don't  
25 have salmon in their freezers. They will invite some  
26 guests, but maybe they will ask you got no dry fish.  
27 That's our number one social food, salmon. Whether  
28 they're dry fish, whether they're sulunaqs, half dried.

29  
30 I think that's about it, Mr. Chair.  
31 Quyana.

32  
33 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Henry. Then  
34 we'll go next to John.

35  
36 MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
37 Quyana. This is real nice to see people instead of  
38 talking on the phone and figure out who they are, where  
39 they're from. It's been a long two years since we met  
40 in person like this. Nice to see all the folks in  
41 here. I'm pretty happy even though some of our members  
42 didn't make it.

43  
44 Again, my name is John Andrew. In  
45 Yup'ik they call me (Yup'ik names). Those are my  
46 grandfather's and his brother's name. I'm a longtime  
47 fisherman, hunter, trapper and subsistence gatherer out  
48 here in my area. But this past -- starting from the  
49 spring our village up there and the four villages that  
50



0017

1 we all speak of on and off on fisheries issues.

2

3 This year we have such a late opening  
4 that some of us had to go back into the lakes to go  
5 after whitefish and pike. It's the first time I had to  
6 fish for whitefish and pike all the way into June. I  
7 had to share with the village. At least some  
8 households that don't have their own boats and motors  
9 to go out with or their setnets don't work.

10

11 In June we did not -- I did not go for  
12 setnet openings because I was hoping for -- waiting for  
13 driftnet openings because it's better to go for me --  
14 it's better to go after fresh fish. Live fresh fish.  
15 I don't like to see dead fish in my setnets. On June  
16 19 there was an opening. They said that was a good  
17 day, but I was handicapped. I had injured myself. I  
18 wasn't able to go. I told my family that I'll wait for  
19 silvers.

20

21 On July 3 opening I had a real good day  
22 on that setnet day. I had maybe 82 in the morning about  
23 three hours and I wanted to pull out my net there. One  
24 of my grand-nephews said I'll fish the rest of the day  
25 for our other relatives. I was pretty happy with that.

26

27 After that we had to wait for silver  
28 season because we were hoping that the Department would  
29 give us an opening for silvers. Because when we don't  
30 get enough kings and reds, we usually make it up with  
31 silvers or cohos off the river, but we didn't have any.

32

33 Come silver time the Department closed  
34 the whole river all the way from the mouth to upriver  
35 and -- all the way to upriver. It was a disaster right  
36 there. The fish were jumping for a whole three or four  
37 weeks. We weren't allowed to fish for them. That  
38 really hurt a lot of our families at the villages.

39

40 When we'd meet with the other four  
41 villages, we talked about the Area M fisheries. Try to  
42 limit -- put a limitation or ask them to put limits on  
43 salmon fisheries down in Area M trawling driftnet  
44 openers down there. They catch most of our fish before  
45 they get to our area in the Yukon and Norton Sound.

46

47 The Department has records starting  
48 back from way back prior to 1980s, the harvest records  
49 down there. We asked for limits or restrictions on the

50

0018

1 fisheries. They always say no, no. We need more study  
2 or more research on it. They're not telling us the  
3 truth. You know they have records already.  
4

5 The other one was the Bering Sea trawl  
6 fisheries that are intercepting our immature salmon.  
7 They catch them by the hundreds of thousands. Even  
8 some years by half a million. Chums and the kings.  
9 Now they're bycatch.

10

11 A few years back I read a report from  
12 Sports & Field by a guy named Shane Mahoney. This is  
13 all fisheries. There's a waste of at least 35 percent  
14 of all salmon catches or another species because some  
15 of them are not their targeted species or the wrong  
16 size or they just rotted before they work on them.  
17 It's a total waste.

18

19 Our people around here when they fish,  
20 they take all the fish back home. Take them and save  
21 some for the families and neighbors and elders and  
22 people that want them. We've been asking for  
23 restrictions and limitations on False Pass and Bering  
24 Sea since the 1980s. To this day they never -- it  
25 never has become a reality.

26

27 Some guy -- some fisherman down from  
28 Anchorage area he sat at three different Councils. We  
29 could have another council for the Bering Sea Fishery.  
30 Northwest Pacific Fisheries Management Council. I  
31 think -- I believe that probably ends up down on the  
32 Aleutian Chain, not at the Bering Sea side. It's  
33 something we really need to look into because the  
34 majority of the Northwest Pacific Management Council  
35 are not from our local area. They're talking about  
36 putting only two people on that seine and they're just  
37 a minority and they'll be powerless.

38

39 I could go on, but I have to thank Mr.  
40 Henry Parks for taking away what I had to say earlier.  
41 Saved me a lot of air time. Thank you.

42

43 (Laughter)

44

45 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, John.  
46 Alissa.

47

48 MS. ROGERS: Quyana, Mr. Chair.  
49 Through the Chair. Good morning and welcome to the Y-K  
50

0019

1 RAC meeting. It is so good to see all your faces. My  
2 heart is filled with so much joy right now. It's so  
3 good to see you all again. I'm Anguksuar Qiuran,  
4 Alissa Nadine Rogers. The daughter of Allen Joseph and  
5 Marita Hanson, granddaughter of John and Alice Hanson  
6 of Alakanuk, Fred Qiuran Cyril Lincoln Joseph and  
7 Bridget Ala Joseph of Hooper Bay.

8

9 I currently am sitting on 23 other  
10 tribal entities, councils, committees, State agencies  
11 and 13 of them I seat as an official representative of  
12 them. I do have to declare that I do work for the  
13 State of Alaska, yet I will not be representing them  
14 here at this meeting.

15

16 For my report I'm kind of a little bit  
17 all over the place because I was trying to like compile  
18 it together, but thank you, Mr. Parks. You said a lot  
19 of what I needed to say.

20

21 For the smelts this year they were  
22 pretty plenty. They were nice and big compared to  
23 previous years, but not as much as in worms as there  
24 was previously. In the past three years there was a  
25 bunch of worms in the meat, so you had to really really  
26 cook your smelts really good or make sure they would  
27 dry them and then heat them in the oven. So smelts  
28 were really good for us this year. Which saved us a  
29 lot because we didn't get very much this year.

30

31 Smelts and bird hunting is pretty much  
32 all I got in my freezer right now. We didn't go salmon  
33 fishing because it didn't work with our schedule. We  
34 had motor trouble. We couldn't go out. We had net  
35 trouble. And we couldn't go moose hunting either. We  
36 attempted to go a couple times, but it just didn't line  
37 up with us this year.

38

39 Bird hunting. We were worried about  
40 the bird flu, but it wasn't as bad as we were  
41 anticipating it to be, but we definitely took a lot  
42 into concern.

43

44 This year there were a lot of baby  
45 ducks out there this year. Not so much other ones, but  
46 there was a lot of baby ducks out there. I felt like  
47 the incoming bird migration was a lot smaller, but the  
48 outgoing bird migration was way bigger this year.

49

50

0020

1                   Trapping for us was a good year this  
2 year. We did pretty good. It held us afloat. During  
3 egg hunting season was pretty good this year and lots  
4 and lots of greens. There was lots of kapuukaq. There  
5 was lots of butterheads, fiddleheads. There was -- we  
6 were a little late on the fiddleheads this year, but  
7 there was quite a bit of greens this year, which we  
8 were really thankful for. They were very welcoming  
9 compared to previous years.

10

11                   For the summertime fishing was hard.  
12 Fishing was hard on our young people. They see how we  
13 react. They see how we take upon these regulations and  
14 how we have to live with them and yet we're still  
15 trying to teach them our traditional values and trying  
16 to teach them who we are and that it's a part of us and  
17 who we are trying to be with these regulations and new  
18 things that we have to abide by.

19

20                   After meeting with a group of young  
21 people during the ONC Science Camp, we took into heart  
22 a lot of discussion items in regards to what they see  
23 because they're the ones that see what's happening out  
24 there. They observe, they learn and a lot of them are  
25 heartbroken. They were disappointed. A lot of them  
26 you could see it on their face.

27

28                   They saw the pain in their parents and  
29 their family members who go hunting and fishing and  
30 aren't able to because if they're not able to go  
31 hunting and fishing, those family members of theirs  
32 revert to alcohol and drugs and it affects their homes,  
33 it affects their families and it hurts them as kids  
34 because they're seeing something completely different  
35 than what they're normally seeing and what they're  
36 observing.

37

38                   So if they don't have their core  
39 ability to go subsistence hunting and fishing, they're  
40 having to sit at home and watch their families fall  
41 apart. They can tell how we respond and act. But one  
42 of the things that they wanted to bring forth -- we had  
43 this huge, giant whiteboards and we were scribbling all  
44 over them, but I told them we needed three main -- what  
45 are their three main concerns that they want to bring  
46 to the table.

47

48                   One of them, they're scared of Donlin  
49 Gold. They're scared of what is going to happen to  
50

0021

1    them and their already troubled families. They feel  
2    like no one is out there to represent them and their  
3    future and what they want. They want a life that we  
4    have, that we lived even prior to regulations. They  
5    want the ability to walk out their door, go hunting and  
6    fishing without having to be sheltered, put in place,  
7    restricted.

8

9                   The second thing that they wanted was  
10   to change the regulation in the fisheries. They wanted  
11   to extend the second half of the fisheries and reduce  
12   the front end of the fisheries so that it gives  
13   families more time because when that first fish gets  
14   here and the ability to go fishing they want fresh  
15   fish. They don't have fresh fish because we've been  
16   heavily restricted these past years and now they want  
17   fresh fish and the ability just to have fresh fish on  
18   the table is something they crave for. Something they  
19   miss. Something that builds their ability to get  
20   excited for the summer.

21

22                   The third thing that they wanted to  
23   bring to the table was reducing the amount of  
24   regulations that are put forth on them and on their  
25   families and opening it up, giving it a little relaxing  
26   room for them to go out hunting and fishing because  
27   they feel so regulated right now. They can't go  
28   caribou hunting. They can't go ptarmigan hunting.  
29   They can't go fishing for salmon like they used to.  
30   They want these restrictions to lift so that they can  
31   experience them while they're young, while they're  
32   still learning and not have to wait until they're 30,  
33   40 years old to actually be able to go out.

34

35                   If we're talking about fishing, kings  
36   and chums and coho were so bad this year. The first  
37   reported king that was reported to me was on May 26th.  
38   I got a picture someone sent me and said the kings are  
39   here, the kings are here. And they ran -- kings ran  
40   this year all the way through until September 6th. The  
41   last picture that I got from someone who caught a king  
42   salmon was September 6th.

43

44                   Usually my family doesn't go king  
45   fishing because ever since 2005 I've given up my rights  
46   to go fishing for kings because I believe my elders  
47   need it more than I do. It's a part of my diet, but  
48   it's more a part of their diet than it is mine. They  
49   need to eat what they're used to eating so that they

50

0022

1 can reduce their health issues. If it means me giving  
2 up my portion to save theirs, then I will do that.

3

4

5 For moose hunting this year around the  
6 Kuskokwim area there was lots of moose this year. More  
7 than last year or previous years, but a lot of them are  
8 females and a lot of them are starting to have twinning  
9 rates. So we see two or three baby moose with a  
10 mother, which is great for our season because that  
11 means that they can start lifting restrictions here on  
12 moose hunting.

12

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Our garden did pretty good this year.  
They were pretty big and decent. The only issue is  
that we had three hard days of hard freeze, which we  
had to start our garden over twice. We went from 84  
degrees at its hottest during the day to -36 degrees  
overnight, which killed our plants. We lost it twice  
and it happened three times this summer where we woke  
up and it was nothing but pure ice. Everything in the  
greenhouse had survived those three days, but we  
definitely had to restart all our plants over twice,  
which pushed our season back by at least a month.

There was lots of ants this year. A  
lot of dragonflies and a lot of caterpillars than  
previous years. I don't know why, but this year I kept  
having dragonflies land on me, so that's how come I  
feel like there's more dragonflies.

Berries were pretty good this year.  
There wasn't as much blueberries, but if you knew where  
to look and if you knew how blueberries survive during  
our weathers and you know where to find them, they were  
really big. We had lots of salmonberries this year.  
They actually did pretty good. They were a little bit  
big and some of them already had pre-ripened before the  
ripening season ever started. So that first week of  
July we went out and there was -- there was pretty big  
ones out there.

I had a lot of people call me and  
report about bear activity. There was a lot of  
troublesome bears that were out there. Bears breaking  
into fish camps. Even bears going into people's  
houses. That's how bad it was. A family had to jump  
out a window because a bear came through their front  
door.

0023

1                   That tells me that there isn't as much  
2 fish up in the spawning grounds being able to sustain  
3 those bears, so they're migrating down to our area  
4 where they know there's human activity, there's fish  
5 available and people are putting up fish. So knowing  
6 that there's an increase of bear activity in our area  
7 is a pre-warning to me that we're not getting enough  
8 fish up to the spawning ground.

9  
10                   I did want to mention also that my  
11 grandpa told me -- and the reason why I don't forget  
12 this is because our graveyard had sunk and became a  
13 swampland and disappeared. It turned into a lake and  
14 my grandpa didn't want to be buried in the ground  
15 because he didn't want to sink and be underwater when  
16 his body is laying at rest.

17  
18                   This year we've had -- it's happening  
19 again. He said be -- he pre-warned me that it's going  
20 to happen. The land is going to change, it's going to  
21 shift. It may not be now, but it will be coming and  
22 don't forget. A lot of the land around our area  
23 including the Lower Yukon especially where a majority  
24 of those lakes are out there the lands are sinking and  
25 becoming swamp lands again and the highlands were lands  
26 that were currently sunk and swamped are now becoming  
27 hills and mountainous areas.

28  
29                   So be careful when you're going out  
30 hunting, that the lands are sinking. We don't know how  
31 deep it is under the tundra, but you can easily get  
32 mucked in those swamp lands.

33  
34                   Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm done.

35  
36                   CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Alissa.  
37 We'll move on to Jackie.

38  
39                   MS. CLEVELAND: (In Yup'ik).

40  
41                   MS. EVAN: Good morning, Chair. This  
42 is Norma Evans. My flight was cancelled, but I am on  
43 now.

44  
45                   CHAIRMAN NANENG: Good morning, Norma.  
46 We heard you. Okay, Jackie, proceed.

47  
48                   MS. CLEVELAND: Hi, Norma. I wish you  
49 were here. (In Yup'ik) Hi, my name is Jackie Cleveland  
50

0024

1 in English and in Yup'ik I'm Nalikutaar. I live in  
2 Quinhagak currently where I live with my fiancé and my  
3 dog. I work for Alaska Venture Fund as a project  
4 manager for a project called Iowa Story House which  
5 will launch in February. I also work for Togiak  
6 National Wildlife Refuge as an RIT. I think it's my  
7 second year there.

8  
9 Some other positions. I'm the vice  
10 president for the Native Village of Quinhagak Tribal  
11 Council. Vice chair for the Central Bering Sea  
12 Advisory Council.

13  
14 I'll go into the fishing part. When I  
15 was reading last year's minutes on my part it's not too  
16 different from last year's report. One thing that's  
17 still the same is that Quinhagak has no existing  
18 monitoring or data collecting systems in place for  
19 salmon fishery besides the aerial survey, which doesn't  
20 include counting chum salmon.

21  
22 This year the aerial survey was I think  
23 inconsistent because it was earlier than usually done  
24 before. The one salmon survey, aerial survey that was  
25 done on the Kanektok River this year was done earlier  
26 than -- like a month earlier than previous years I  
27 believe. So the numbers showed -- I don't know the  
28 exact numbers, but the kings met the lower escapement  
29 goals. The reds, of course, exceeded the escapement  
30 goal. There's no count on chum. Then there's no count  
31 on silvers either.

32  
33 Based off local traditional knowledge  
34 though, the silvers were there, but they weren't as  
35 plenty as before, but we still had enough to meet our  
36 needs. But I just wanted to mention that our silver  
37 numbers are not as low numbers shown on this river.

38  
39 Our subsistence fishery did okay this  
40 year where most met their needs overall. We did  
41 however have a scare about the chum not showing up,  
42 which they did finally show up at the end of July. But  
43 there's still no count on them either. They did show  
44 up and they did show up in bigger numbers than the year  
45 before.  
46 The kings are mostly jacks. In a given fish rack, I  
47 would say the ratio is now 60 percent reds and 40 kings  
48 for this past year because the chums didn't show up  
49 until later.

50



0025

1                   Kanektok was open to sport fishing all  
2 season, but District W4 did not have a commercial  
3 fishery season due to having no buyers. We continued  
4 to observe more pike numbers taking over our trout  
5 species. We're still able to get trout when we can,  
6 but we're noticing a lot more chum -- or, sorry, pike.  
7 But we're told when we do bring up as an issue that it  
8 has to be more numbers than that in order to do  
9 something. Then if they were to do something, they'd  
10 have to get rid of 70 percent of the population to make  
11 a difference and that would be a challenge.

12  
13                   I'll move on to the moose hunting  
14 season. It was better than last year. We did ask for  
15 an extension, but we didn't get it, but people still --  
16 I think we had more tags still than -- way more tags  
17 still than last year. I myself filled my tag on (in  
18 Yup'ik) which I had no idea was going on because on the  
19 other side of the mountains it was sunny. It was still  
20 windy but sunny.

21  
22                   And then about the third day hunting I  
23 realized we hadn't heard a boat in three days and  
24 that's when I realized something was probably happening  
25 at home. So it was really scary going home with mixed  
26 feelings with my moose. Being happy with my moose and  
27 not knowing if my village was going to be there. But  
28 luckily we were at the (in Yup'ik) and our winds got up  
29 to about 45 miles an hour. Some erosion happened, but  
30 that's ongoing, the erosion part.

31  
32                   Some of the other animals and critters  
33 that we eat are rabbits, ptarmigan, seal, walrus,  
34 beluga, waterfowl, waterfowl eggs. We're known for  
35 having a big variety of medicinal and edible plants,  
36 which we had a good year of those, but we had no  
37 berries this year. People are saying it's because we  
38 didn't have much snow. And then it got really hot in  
39 May, which kind of fried some of the growth there. I  
40 guess when I get back there's still trout to be  
41 harvested and also mouse food.

42  
43                   I wanted to touch base a little bit  
44 about -- going back to the climate change. So we  
45 continued to face the erosion on our rivers and the  
46 coast. Actually it washed a lot of our archeological  
47 sites, but not the whole village. We were able to  
48 retrieve some artifacts.

49  
50

0026

1                   Permafrost melt is putting a lot of  
2 infrastructure at risk at home, making many buildings  
3 unlevel and unsafe to even be in. Hunting and fishing  
4 patterns are changing of course. For instance the  
5 seals seem to be further out. Hunters have to risk  
6 their lives to go further out into the Bering Sea to  
7 get the seals. Then there's so much freshwater mix  
8 that I notice they sink faster with the freshwater mix.

9  
10                   I could go on but I think that's good.  
11 Okay. That's it for now.

12  
13                   CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Jackie.  
14 Phillip.

15  
16                   MR. PETER, SR.: Good morning. My name  
17 is Phillip Peter from Akiachak. I'm on the Federal  
18 Board for -- this is my second term on the Federal  
19 Advisory Board. I'd like to make a short report.

20  
21                   I'm a subsistence fisherman. I used to  
22 be a commercial fisherman. Now I'm concentrating on  
23 subsistence from the beginning of crash on chinook and  
24 chums.

25  
26                   I want to talk a little bit about what  
27 my elders used to talk to me. We had a big catch in  
28 the '90s or '80s or '90s on chum. When making a report  
29 me and my cousin we make a record on the chum on  
30 commercial fishing. I never forget what my uncle tell  
31 me. He talked to us really seriously and truth. Now  
32 you guys are happy and laughing. Laughing guys will  
33 over on chums. Watch. You will see no more chums in  
34 Kuskokwim. Laughing guys will over. It's true. You  
35 know it's true. I'm beginning to realize that  
36 everything is going to be changing from then on.

37  
38                   But he mentioned to us that reds will  
39 be more than chums. They're going to fill the  
40 Kuskokwim with reds. Few, few chums. You never talk  
41 about the chinook.

42  
43                   This summer first opening in June I  
44 catch nine. Six jacks, king, two reds and one chum.  
45 When the fish are low, fish will go in the Kuskokwim  
46 swimming. I just got a couple of drifts and I quit for  
47 all day. No fishing all day. I don't want to waste  
48 gas for fishing. Gas prices are really high in our  
49 area. But the second opening first drift we catch 20  
50

0027

1 jacks, six inches, 25 mesh, 35 fathoms.

2

3 The second drift we catch 24 jacks.

4 All jacks. Small jacks. I realized that when those  
5 small jacks are swimming in the Kuskokwim, there are  
6 lots. I know there are lots. We're killing -- we're  
7 taking them. How can we protect the conservation for  
8 our generations? How come we're taking them. We're  
9 taking them. I know that, you know, protecting the  
10 chinooks.

11

12 Our elders, I see them with my own eyes  
13 and my father, my uncle, my grandpa, my grandmother,  
14 they prepared for fish to come on the river. My dad  
15 used to hang a net, 8.5 inch, 15 fathoms long and 28  
16 mesh. All of them are old people. They wait for kings  
17 and set their nets. Gee, they catch really big ones.  
18 Let those small jacks pass through and the medium size  
19 kings pass through. That's the conservation, real  
20 conservation.

21

22 They don't let us use small 5.5 nets  
23 for kings. Only for chums and reds and sock -- chums  
24 and reds and coho. When are we going to learn. When  
25 are we going to learn. Those old people knew. Those  
26 old people knew. I never see 5.5. Almost eight feet  
27 king salmon. I don't see them no more.

28

29 We used to have a competition sponsored  
30 by Chevron, I guess. If we catch a big king, they'll  
31 give us an award. The biggest kind on the record on  
32 the competition is about 4.5 feet king salmon. I never  
33 catch any king salmon that length and I never used my  
34 8.5 45-mesh 50 fathoms since the elders closed the net.

35

36 The elders closed the net, king salmon  
37 net. When they have a big meeting AVCP. I never use  
38 that net for a long, long time. Now it's been sitting  
39 in my sack. I never used them since they closed it.  
40 So I know this year we have plentiful jacks. Plentiful  
41 jacks in Kuskokwim this year. A couple of drifts I  
42 make in the morning, 6:00 a.m.. When I got back to my  
43 fish camp it was 8:00 a.m. Forty-four jacks. All  
44 jacks. No reds, no chums. All 44 jacks.

45

46 My wife told me to quit fishing for  
47 small jacks, so I quit fishing. I didn't fish on the  
48 third opening, but I told my son-in-law to fish and he  
49 catch 20 bigger on the third opening, bigger. Bigger

50

0028

1 kings.

2

3 Also I'm really upset when the Federal  
4 government closed the river and transferred it to the  
5 State of Alaska. It really makes me upset.

6

7 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Whoever is online can  
8 you mute your phone, please. We'd appreciate it.  
9 You're talking in the background.

10

11 MR. PETER, SR.: Quyana. The Federal  
12 to the State of Alaska. John mentioned a while ago.  
13 Once the Federal government take over the Kuskokwim  
14 from the mouth to the boundary of Aniak, the Federal  
15 government should control, take over complete. Not  
16 transferring it to State of Alaska.

17

18 This year it's really worse. In August  
19 it end up -- the weather is raining, windy. In August  
20 too, rain and windy. We never drift or set our nets.  
21 Two and a half -- almost month and a half for cohos.  
22 Our elders didn't care about those cohos because of the  
23 weather. In August we have a lot of rain in August  
24 when the cohos arrive to the Kuskokwim. We make (in  
25 Yup'ik) out of them. Some few (in Yup'ik). But I'm  
26 really upset and mad because I never fish. I fished  
27 for (in Yup'ik) and (in Yup'ik) for cohos.

28

29 The subsistence fishing looks like  
30 going wrong direction. Trying to control us. Us  
31 people who -- us people subsistence fishermen. We need  
32 those cohos. Commercial fishing is closed. Almost end  
33 of September the State of Alaska opened for setnetting.  
34 My nephews, two of them, they got 80 dogs. What about  
35 the rest of the community who owns dogs for recreation.  
36 Maybe those dog foods are high priced this year.  
37 Everything is going up.

38

39 I need to eat. I never taste -- only  
40 one time I taste only coho. After that it's not fair.  
41 Federal government and State government should work  
42 together. Seriously. This is not a game no more.  
43 It's not a game. Restrictions, restrictions and  
44 restrictions. Those laws.

45

46 Last year they finally accept my  
47 recommendation. Action as a group. Area M and NOAA.  
48 Finally. Finally, all those years them outsiders  
49 recognize us. Finally, all those years outsiders  
50

0029

1 recognize us. Finally recognize us. I hope it goes to  
2 reality. Those people are from other side. If we  
3 control it as Alaska Natives and follow what our elders  
4 used to tell us.

5  
6 I know all the fish in the ocean will  
7 come back to our rivers. That's why our elders when  
8 they have AVCP meeting they close the king salmon net  
9 and us young people followed. Maybe the elders are  
10 expecting increasing the chinooks, but nobody paying  
11 attention. Nobody doing their work for us.  
12 Conservation.

13  
14 Finally I hope -- and I would be really  
15 happy if we take over. I'm glad Inter-Tribal Fish  
16 Commission is working for us. If we have a port from  
17 Norton Sound, Bering Sea, us we know. We could control  
18 the Bering Sea, Norton Sound and Southeast if we work  
19 together with other entities.

20  
21 We know moose are plentiful now because  
22 Yukon and Kuskokwim unite and work together to increase  
23 the moose. I know the Federal government know our  
24 actions and we could do the same for salmon.

25  
26 I hope -- oh, one more thing. I want  
27 to make a small comment and let you guys know. This  
28 summer when the typhoon -- in the news on TV they talk  
29 about the typhoon is coming this way to our area, in  
30 the morning when I go out daylight I see plentiful  
31 ptarmigans going backwards, a lot of them, all white.  
32 And the birds were flying back. I know that will mean  
33 something. Will mean something.

34  
35 INTERPRETER: They sought shelter.

36  
37 MR. PETER: All animals and moose,  
38 everything, they got mind and think. They know the  
39 weather. The big storm is coming. My elders used to  
40 tell me don't be amazed what you see. (In Yup'ik) I  
41 already used that. Those elders they tell us what they  
42 did and they don't talk about what they did not do, but  
43 what they did. (In Yup'ik)

44  
45 Quyana, Mr. Chairman.

46  
47 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Phillip.  
48 Norma. Make sure that on the record that Norma has  
49 joined us. So, Norma, we're asking for reports from  
50

0030

1 Council members.

2

3 MS. EVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In  
4 Marshall areas and in some areas -- can you guys hear  
5 me?

6

7 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes, we can hear  
8 you.

9

10 MS. EVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
11 This year in Marshall area we had no blueberries, there  
12 were less salmonberries, I think and when we picked  
13 them they're very hard here it seemed like. We had (In  
14 Yup'ik) early on in May and June and it was too hot and  
15 dry for, I think the blueberries to grow.

16

17 Due to subsistence closures on the  
18 Yukon there were very little to no fishing at all, a  
19 handful of setnetters I asked in the community, and  
20 they said they were seeing bigger pikes ranging in the  
21 -- over feet sometimes. I wish we could have a  
22 fisheries during when the wintertime, when the pikes --  
23 summer last year my dog ate my pike dryfish, quick-paks  
24 and dry-paks were dog treats.

25

26 In the summer in the river I still  
27 noticed there were no small fry fish salmon like swim  
28 around, I did not see any around. Also Marshall and  
29 the surrounding villages that use subsistence and wait  
30 for the eels it's been four years since we gotten those  
31 and if we do not see them this year it'll be five  
32 years.

33

34 This year we had two grizzly bears  
35 hanging around near our berry picking areas in the  
36 village, they're hanging around the old airport and  
37 they have been coming into town for a few weeks now.  
38 They killed a moose not even a mile from one of our --  
39 the houses on the upper -- up river -- we had a funeral  
40 recently. I work on the tribal council, I cried  
41 because of the importance of our salmon during  
42 funerals, I did process salmon for her parents, you  
43 know, and just had a funeral for Charolette Alstrom, I  
44 couldn't help it I just cried because during her  
45 parents' funeral, me and my family we provided like  
46 salmon to them.

47

48 And that's my report from Marshall.

49

50

0031

1                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG:  Quyana, Norma.  
2   Before I give my Chairman's report let's take a 10  
3   minute break.

4  
5                   MS. MCDAVID:  Back at 11:10 please.

6  
7                   (Off record)

8  
9                   (On record)

10

11                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG:  Good morning.  
12   Going to call the meeting back to order again.

13

14                   Do we still have all those that are  
15   online listening.

16

17                   (No comments)

18

19                   MS. MCDAVID:  Norma, are you still on  
20   the phone with us?

21

22                   (No comments)

23

24                   (Teleconference interference -  
25   participants not muted)

26

27                   MS. MCDAVID:  For those online, sorry,  
28   we are having some technical difficulties.  I'll call  
29   again, Norma, are you on the teleconference line?

30

31                   (No comments)

32

33                   MS. MCDAVID:  Okay, Norma if you're  
34   with us we can't hear you.

35

36                   (Teleconference feedback - unmuted  
37   microphones)

38

39                   MS. MCDAVID:  If everyone besides our  
40   two Council members on the line could please mute your  
41   phones, press star, six, or your mute button, we're  
42   getting a lot of feedback.

43

44                   (Teleconference feedback - unmuted  
45   microphones)

46

47                   REPORTER:  Maybe we should disconnect  
48   and call back in.

49

50

0032

1 MS. WESSELS: Call back in.

2

3 REPORTER: Yes.

4

5 MS. WESSELS: So you're going to hang  
6 up.

7

8 REPORTER: Yes, hang up and then redial  
9 the.....

10

11 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, I have the number I  
12 just need the code.

13

14 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: We're waiting for  
15 technical people to say that we can go ahead and that  
16 everything is hunky-dory with the technical stuff.

17

18 (Laughter)

19

20 (Off record)

21

22 (On record)

23

24 MS. MCDAVID: Norma, can you try again  
25 to let us know you're on the line.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 MS. MCDAVID: What about Council Member  
30 Robert Hoffman, are you on the line Robert?

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 MS. MCDAVID: Can anyone else that  
35 might be on the teleconference try to speak up and let  
36 us know if you can hear us.

37

38 (Teleconference feedback - unmuted  
39 microphones)

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: Just so folks on the  
42 phone know, we can't hear anyone on the phone currently  
43 so we're trying to resolve that issue.

44

45 (Pause)

46

47 (Off record)

48

49 (On record)

50



0033

1                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: In the interest  
2 of time I think we'll go ahead and continue. I'll  
3 introduce myself, my name is Myron P. Naneng, Sr., and  
4 it's my baptismal name. My Yup'ik name is (In Yup'ik)  
5 and I'm named after my grandmother who passed away  
6 right before I was born. I am from the village of  
7 Hooper Bay (In Yup'ik). I was born and raised there and  
8 lived there until I was eligible to go to high school  
9 and from there went to high school at St. Mary's, after  
10 St. Mary's, graduated from St. Mary's went up to UAF  
11 and also attended college here in Bethel at the  
12 Kuskokwim Community College. I've lived in and out of  
13 Bethel from 1974 through 1976 but I moved here to  
14 Bethel in 1979 and I've been here ever since.

15  
16                   One of the things that I used to not  
17 like about Bethel when I was going to college was  
18 having to pass through and one of the thoughts that I  
19 said back then, before I got married, was I will never  
20 live in Bethel.

21  
22                   (Laughter)

23  
24                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Every once in  
25 awhile my wife says to me, do you want to move and I  
26 say -- I look at her and say, no, I don't want to move  
27 because within an hour I can go fishing, I can go  
28 hunting, go berrypicking and almost everything that I  
29 want to do, subsistence food gathering.

30  
31                   So I've been a subsistence fishermen at  
32 Hooper Bay when I was growing up when my dad used to  
33 out down to Bristol Bay to work at cannery and also to  
34 be a commercial fishermen, I had to be the one to  
35 subsistence for the family. A lot of people think that  
36 it's easy to fish for salmon at Hooper Bay. It depends  
37 on the prevailing winds during the wintertime to have  
38 salmon come into the Bay. If the winds are prevailing  
39 from Northwest all winter long then the Yukon River  
40 water is being pushed into the Bay so the salmon follow  
41 that Yukon River water along the Coast and up to the  
42 Yukon River itself. In 1985 I started commercial  
43 fishing on the Yukon, bought a permit, and also  
44 subsistence fished there at Black River, one of those  
45 old grandfathered in commercial fishing sites before  
46 the crashes of salmon that started happening -- the  
47 decrease started back in 1990s, it accelerated in 2000s  
48 and I have not fished commercially since about 2017  
49 because I felt that a lot of people on the Yukon that  
50

0034

1   fished there needed it more than I did. However, every  
2   once in awhile I go subsistence fishing at Black River  
3   for my family and we did that when they closed the  
4   Kuskokwim River completely back about 2018.

5  
6                   So we gather enough for our family but  
7   more recently we've also had to gather more for those  
8   of our families from Hooper Bay as well as Scammon Bay  
9   because of the restrictions and closures of those  
10   fishing areas because of low returns of salmon to the  
11   Yukon River.

12  
13                   To fish here on the Kuskokwim nowadays  
14   you have to go to the non-spawning grounds to go  
15   fishing and they're not necessarily close by. You have  
16   to drive a long ways and it's not necessarily a one  
17   hour trip one way, it might take as much as two or  
18   three hours to get to where we want to go fishing for  
19   food. So with all those years of fishing on the Coast,  
20   on the Yukon and now the Kuskokwim I've observed a lot  
21   of changes to many of the subsistence fishing  
22   opportunities for many of our people in each of those  
23   areas.

24  
25                   One of the thing that has been observed  
26   by many of our people at Hooper Bay, tomcods, which  
27   used to be abundant during the spring and fall, the  
28   last two years there's very little returning but  
29   they're slowly returning this year. Halibut that's  
30   being fished by people on the Coast, like Nelson Island  
31   and along the Coast down to Quinhagak and even up the  
32   Coast around Hooper and Scammon that I know of, and  
33   even some of the Yukon River people are starting to go  
34   halibut fishing because they can't harvest any salmon,  
35   but the size of those halibuts are getting smaller,  
36   they're not as big as they used to be.

37  
38                   So all the fisheries have been impacted  
39   by both State and Federal management. You know in the  
40   past I used to be on the Alaska Yukon Canada Treaty  
41   negotiating team. You know how the best way to be  
42   kicked out of the negotiating team is, make a  
43   suggestion that the State of Alaska should address the  
44   issues of salmon management in-state before they go  
45   negotiating with another country. We have in-state  
46   issues that need to be addressed. After I made that  
47   comment at one of the negotiating team meetings I got a  
48   letter a week later saying, thank you for your services  
49   but your services are no longer needed. I must have  
50

0035

1 hit a point that really needed to be addressed back  
2 then. That was in the early 2000s. So I've attended  
3 many North Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings,  
4 many Board of Fish meetings raising the concerns of  
5 salmon that have been decreasing over the years. And  
6 every time we go to the Board of Fish or the North  
7 Pacific Fishery Management Council they don't take into  
8 account our observations but they consider them to be  
9 anecdotal. Why do they consider them to be anecdotal?  
10 It's because we didn't have someone with a degree from  
11 an accredited university with only a couple of years of  
12 observations to tell them that what we're saying is not  
13 true -- like Phillip stated, elders from their  
14 observations will tell you what they're observing.  
15 They don't have to put it in writing or in a book to  
16 let you know that this what they're observing.

17  
18 I used to go commercial herring fishing  
19 out at Scammon Bay and Cape Romanzof. My father in  
20 law, Teddy Sundown, when they -- when we -- before we  
21 went out to the fishing site told us, you young men  
22 better get ready because the herring are hitting out at  
23 Cape Romanzof, he wasn't even there to tell us that it  
24 was happening. A few hours later we heard an  
25 announcement from Fish and Game people that were on  
26 site saying that the herring had arrived, but he was  
27 observing it both from looking at the seagulls that  
28 were flying overhead, the cloud conditions and what he  
29 had observed over the years. If my father in law had  
30 said that at a Board of Fish meeting or someone who's  
31 trying to put together rules and regulations to  
32 restrict your livelihood, they would have considered  
33 that to be anecdotal. But it was true, and it was what  
34 he observed. I wish I could observe more so I can tell  
35 him I catch that -- this is what I learned from him.

36  
37 You know, the last few years there has  
38 been lack of subsistence fishing on the Coast, the  
39 Kuskokwim, the Yukon, and various restrictions where  
40 fish racks are empty, where smokehouses are empty yet  
41 commercial fishing is allowed to happen on some of the  
42 known intercept fisheries of salmon that are bound for  
43 the Yukon and the Kuskokwim, and even to other spawning  
44 grounds in Western Alaska. Why do they say that. It's  
45 a mixed stock fishery that they've studied for many  
46 years, conducted genetic studies and also tried to find  
47 out where the salmon are returning to the spawning  
48 grounds, via genetic studies and every time that is  
49 brought up, including the tagging study that was done  
50

0036

1 back in 1980s they say it's inconclusive that any of  
2 that salmon is returning to the spawning grounds to the  
3 Kuskokwim, to the Yukon, or to other Western Alaska  
4 spawning grounds. And it affects our people, the  
5 Yup'iks, the Chup'iks, the Athabascans. And they allow  
6 commercial fishery first. And then my thought, and  
7 I've said this directly to the Commissioner of Fish and  
8 Game, are you trying to cancel culture and they say,  
9 what do you mean by that, you're canceling culture by  
10 the fact that you're not allowing our people to  
11 practice what they have done for many centuries, your  
12 rules and regulations continue to restrict, limit  
13 opportunities for our people. And I hate to say this  
14 but are we going towards what will close everybody out  
15 from fishing, both commercially, subsistence,  
16 sportsfishing, are we moving to that direction of  
17 endangered species status, endangered species listed.  
18 Because that's the only way that it's going to close  
19 all fishers.

20  
21 A few years ago my wife and I were  
22 fishing for whitefish up on the mouth of Kisaralik, we  
23 caught a jack, Fish and Wildlife came by said we had to  
24 release it, which was fine with us, but one of the  
25 things we're also observing is the number of whitefish  
26 that we used to catch at the mouth of Kisaralik with  
27 small hooks and we're fishing primarily for whitefish,  
28 we're not catching as many whitefish as we did before.  
29 And that whitefish, we pressure cook it and make (In  
30 Yup'ik), mix it with berries, salmon berries,  
31 blackberries and blueberries and we eat it, it's good  
32 nutritional food. That's also slowly but surely being  
33 reduced substantially by the fact there's not as many  
34 chum salmon spawning so these other species of fish can  
35 be abundant for food and eating.

36  
37 I've been a member of other  
38 conservation efforts. AVCP Waterfowl Conservation,  
39 Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council. In 1997  
40 we were successful in getting the U.S. Senate to ratify  
41 the protocol amendment to allow for spring migratory  
42 bird hunting that they had closed back in 1916. That  
43 was the first recognition that our Native people would  
44 be able to harvest spring migratory birds as they  
45 returned. Because we know during the falltime all  
46 those birds return in higher numbers to their wintering  
47 grounds. We've even negotiated with some of the  
48 farmers down in California, Washington and Oregon.  
49 They want to kill off 50,000 cacklers and we said no.  
50

0037

1 Those are our food source. Those are what our people  
2 survive on when there's other food not available.

3  
4 The moose moratorium that was  
5 instituted back in 2000s, latter part of 1990s. Five  
6 year moratorium to try to build the population of  
7 moose. You know I can brag to other parts of the state  
8 to tell them on the lower Yukon you can hunt for two  
9 moose today. You can hunt for a bull, a cow and/or a  
10 calf because there's so many moose in that area. But  
11 if you talk to somebody else that never seen a moose  
12 and you mention a cow they might think that it's  
13 livestock running around in their farmlands, but, in  
14 essence, what our people have done on the YKDelta is  
15 build up their farmlands. But the thing is is that  
16 five year moratorium was not the one that our villages  
17 accepted, our villages put in two more additional years  
18 to build up that moose population. Now the moose are  
19 going out to the Coast, they're even swimming in the  
20 Bering Sea, they're even down here on the Kuskokwim  
21 River and because of the efforts of our people to build  
22 up that number. I wouldn't be surprised if I see an  
23 antlered seal one of these days but that's something  
24 else.

25  
26 (Laughter)

27  
28 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: So I think one of  
29 the things that needs to be done is that the bycatch by  
30 trawl fleet needs to be reduced substantially because  
31 at their meetings they always say we're instituting  
32 excluders but do those excluders work, meaning that  
33 they're trying to avoid salmon in their trawls, yet  
34 they catch so many of them. They're trying to exclude  
35 halibut, but they're catching so many of them. At the  
36 AFN Convention just this last week there was a  
37 resolution that we supported where we're trying to get  
38 the State to move forward with the reduction of  
39 intercept fisheries down in Area M. It needs to be  
40 reduced. Because the numbers that they provide are  
41 only the reported numbers, they're not the total  
42 numbers of what they catch. Of chum salmon. And we're  
43 paying for the brunt of it.

44  
45 So I believe we don't want to get to  
46 that endangered species status but are we being  
47 realistic that chums will return in higher numbers very  
48 soon. I hope that prediction doesn't happen but we'll  
49 be very much restricted for all of us and when that  
50

0038

1 happens will both Fish and Wildlife and/or State of  
2 Alaska have any management concerns over that, will  
3 they be able to manage the fisheries, you know, I think  
4 -- my belief is that we all have to work together to  
5 build those numbers up. If we can build numbers of  
6 other resources within the YKDelta and other parts of  
7 the state I think we can work together to make it  
8 happen but it's an ongoing concern.

9

10 So I hope that, like all of us here on  
11 the Regional Advisory Council, we hope that both State  
12 of Alaska and Fish and Wildlife are listening to us, we  
13 don't want continued regulations that further restrict.  
14 In essence these restrictions are killing our culture.  
15 And a lot of the people that live in the villages are  
16 feeling the brunt of it, they're feeling the brunt of  
17 not being able to harvest what they have relied on  
18 annually for food, you know, I fished as much as I can  
19 so I wouldn't have to pay as much to go to the grocery  
20 store to buy food that's not necessarily nutritious  
21 and, you know, it doesn't do well for my health to eat  
22 store bought food, I get what they call acute heartburn  
23 because of some of the chemicals they put in those  
24 foods. But salmon and other food that we harvest  
25 reduces that heartburn and also other sicknesses that  
26 we may have.

27

28 And as a family I think we need to get  
29 that fishery back for our people so that it can keep  
30 the families together, and that's what I mean by  
31 cancelling culture. It's disrupting the family unity.  
32 It's disrupting the opportunity to gather food as a  
33 family and also for our young people to learn that you  
34 have to work hard to gather all this instead of waiting  
35 for somebody else to bring it to you.

36

37 So that's my comments and I'd like to  
38 thank the Council members for their reports too.

39

40 So with that thank you very much.

41

42 Okay, now that we're done with the  
43 Chairman's report we'll go down and follow the agenda  
44 and go to Item No. 8, the service awards.

45

46 Brooke.

47

48 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
49 And I realized in the sort of shuffle this morning that  
50

0039

1 I forgot to introduce myself to everyone. My name is  
2 Brooke McDavid and I'm your new Council Coordinator. I  
3 am very excited to be working with all of you. I know  
4 we've been talking a lot on the phone these last couple  
5 weeks getting ready for the meeting. So you all have  
6 gotten to know me a little bit but I wanted to make  
7 sure to introduce myself, especially for the other  
8 folks in the room that I may not have met yet and for  
9 the folks online.

10

11 Today we have just a couple of service  
12 awards to give out to folks but before we do that I  
13 just wanted to say thank you all, all Council members,  
14 for your service on this committee. The time you give,  
15 you volunteer to prepare for and attend these meetings,  
16 it's time, you know, away from your family and away  
17 from your jobs and we really want to thank you for that  
18 time. And, you know, we thank you for sharing your  
19 local and traditional knowledge with us, your  
20 experiences and your observations. It's invaluable to  
21 the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

22

23 So, Qu yana, to all of you for that.

24

25 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Qu yana.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: Today we have two service  
28 awards to give out. And we try to give service awards  
29 out every five -- for every five years of service on  
30 the Council. We got a little bit behind because of  
31 Covid so we're trying to pick back up where we left off  
32 with that. And today we have Jill Klein with us, she  
33 is the Alaska Regional Subsistence Coordinator for U.S.  
34 Fish and Wildlife Service and she's also an InterAgency  
35 Staff Committee member and she's going to help give out  
36 the awards today. Jill will say a few words about the  
37 recipients of the awards and then if any of the Council  
38 members want to offer any words to the recipients or  
39 anyone else in the room you'd be welcome to as well.

40

41 I'll turn it over to Jill now, thank  
42 you very much.

43

44 MS. KLEIN: Okay. Thanks, Brooke. And  
45 I'm honored to be able to be able to give out these  
46 awards. And so first we have Alissa Rogers and she  
47 gets the first award in recognition of five years of  
48 service on the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Council.

49

50

0040

1 Ms. Rogers is a lifelong subsistence  
2 user in the region and currently lives in Bethel. When  
3 she was young per parents sent her to help with and to  
4 learn about subsistence and commercial activities from  
5 both sides of her extended family. Presently Ms.  
6 Rogers continues to participate as she shared earlier  
7 today, in as many subsistence activities as she can  
8 with her family. She harvests, processes and preserves  
9 a variety of wildlife, fish, birds, plants and berries,  
10 and she also shares her knowledge, her traditional  
11 subsistence practices with others. And she also served  
12 as the Chair of this Council.

13  
14 Ms. Rogers, the Federal Subsistence  
15 Management Program thanks you again for your five years  
16 of service on the Council and for all the work that you  
17 do for subsistence users in the region.

18  
19 (Applause)

20  
21 MS. KLEIN: All right, the second one  
22 is to John Andrews -- or Andrew. He's been on the  
23 Council for 15 years. So he was previously recognized  
24 during the Council meeting held by teleconference but  
25 since this is our first time meeting in person, as you  
26 all know, in a couple of years, we wanted to be able to  
27 present him an award face to face.

28  
29 The Federal Subsistence Management  
30 Program would like to recognize Mr. John Andrew for 15  
31 years of service on the Council.

32  
33 Mr. Andrew is from the community of  
34 Kwethluk and is also a lifelong subsistence user from  
35 the region. Mr. Andrew and his family have always  
36 lived a traditional subsistence lifestyle and he has  
37 extensive knowledge of regional resources from a  
38 lifetime of hunting and fishing. Mr. Andrew has  
39 hunted, fished and gathered just about every type of  
40 resource available in the region and we're so grateful  
41 for his expertise on the Council.

42  
43 So, Mr. Andrew, the Federal Subsistence  
44 Management Program thanks you for your 15 years of  
45 service on the Council and for all the work that you do  
46 for subsistence users in your region.

47  
48 (Applause)

49  
50



0041

1 MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2

3 (In Yup'ik)

4

5 INTERPRETER: Thank you to everyone who

6 is sitting here in the audience and to the Staff for

7 recognizing me. And thinking of all the elders who

8 have gone on and they are here in our heart and in our

9 mind for those of us who started attending these

10 meetings so we have to try to help our people in our

11 mind, heart and actions so in getting this recognition

12 it is very happy to be recognized and acknowledged for

13 my work.

14

15 Thank you.

16

17 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana, John and

18 Alissa for your years of service.

19

20 (Applause)

21

22 (Photo opportunity)

23

24 (Applause)

25

26 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Since it's almost

27 noontime, we're going to take one hour and 10 minutes

28 break because it's almost five minutes to lunch so I'll

29 give the credit to the time. So one hour and 10

30 minutes so we can get back after lunch, so that'll be

31 like about 1:10 that we'll get back.

32

33 Brooke.

34

35 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

36 Brooke McDavid for the record. I did have a request,

37 Mr. Chair, from our presenter from the North Pacific

38 Fishery Management Council. She has some scheduling

39 conflicts, she won't be able to be here later this

40 afternoon or tomorrow and she has requested, if

41 possible, if you would entertain her presenting as soon

42 as we get back from lunch.

43

44 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes, we'll have

45 her first on the agenda if there's no objections from

46 the rest of the Council members.

47

48 (No objections)

49

50

0042

1 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
2 will let Dr. Stram know about that. And just so folks  
3 on the phone know, when we return from lunch we'll have  
4 Dr. Stram's presentation and then the next item on the  
5 agenda will be the opportunity for public comments on  
6 the non-agenda items.

7  
8 Thank you.

9  
10 We'll return at 1:10.

11  
12 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes. Quyana  
13 everyone see you after lunch.

14  
15 (Off record)

16  
17 (On record)

18  
19 MS. STRAM: Good afternoon, members of  
20 the Council. My name's Diana Stram. I'm the Senior  
21 Scientist for the North Pacific Fishery Management  
22 Council. I'm going to provide you an overview of the  
23 chinook and chum bycatch in the Bering Sea as well as  
24 actions that were taken up by our Council in June and  
25 actions that will come related to this for our Council  
26 in December. And, again, as Brooke said there's a  
27 longer presentation that was given to the Gubernatorial  
28 Bycatch taskforce, the Western Salmon Subcommittee back  
29 in July that's available for reference in your  
30 materials and I also have additional slides here that  
31 if you have additional questions I'm happy to answer  
32 them but in the interest of your time I tried to  
33 shorten this a little bit.

34  
35 Next slide.

36  
37 So just to provide you an overview and,  
38 again, the more detailed presentation contains all of  
39 these reports from July. This is what was presented to  
40 our Council in June of this past year in Sitka. This  
41 is per Council request last October. So we heard an  
42 overview of salmon stock status and research updates  
43 from both ADF&G and NOAA and that included stock status  
44 updates for Western Alaska chinook and chum and then  
45 the overview from both the Alaska Fisheries Science  
46 Center and ADF&G of their ongoing research plans as  
47 well as National mandates. We heard our annual reports  
48 on the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska salmon genetics  
49 reports, and I have some of that to show you here.  
50

0043

1 Right now that included chum salmon bycatch genetics  
2 from -- through the 2020 and 2021 fishery year because  
3 we did not receive 2020 reports due to Covid. And then  
4 the salmon chinook genetics were from 2020. They're  
5 still working on catching up so that they can provide  
6 those reports in a more timely manner so they're only  
7 one year out as opposed to right now where they're two.  
8 We heard about additional ongoing genetics work and  
9 plans from the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. We  
10 provided a Bering Sea chinook adult equivalency and  
11 impact rate report as well as (indiscernible -  
12 distorted) on how to assess impacts of chum bycatch on  
13 Western Alaska stocks. Those are all contained in  
14 additional slides so, again, I'm happy to answer  
15 questions or walk through them but they're not included  
16 in this shortened version here. And then reports that  
17 we hear annually from the industry. We heard a report  
18 about salmon excluders. I will talk a little bit about  
19 salmon excluders in this presentation. And then  
20 reports from the three different sectors of the pollock  
21 fisheries on their incentive plan agreements as well as  
22 an update from SeaShare which is the hunger relief  
23 organization that distributes both donated as well as  
24 bycaught salmon and rockfish and other, and halibut  
25 back to communities within Alaska as well as the  
26 Pacific Northwest.

27  
28 Next slide.

29  
30 So the next few slides are just to  
31 provide you a brief history of the Councils actions in  
32 managements related to chinook and chum salmon bycatch  
33 in the Bering Sea.

34  
35 Next slide.

36  
37 So just as an overview, this is chum  
38 salmon bycatch in blue and chinook salmon bycatch in  
39 red and, again, the right-hand Y axis provides you the  
40 chinook salmon numbers, the left-hand axis in blue  
41 provides you the chum numbers and these are from 1990  
42 through 2021. And then at the bottom I just showed  
43 what the numbers are and as of two weeks ago in October  
44 of 2022. So I'm going to walk through some of these  
45 trends because the trends in both species bycatch have  
46 driven a lot of our management responses. But just to  
47 note on here because it's not on the graph that the  
48 chinook bycatch as of October 13th was 6,336, the chum  
49 salmon bycatch as of October 13th was 242,350. And,  
50

0044

1 again, you'll note that high spike in 2021 of over  
2 500,000 bycatch which we'll talk about in just a  
3 minute.

4  
5 Next slide please.

6  
7 So this slide just shows you that over  
8 the period of the '90s to the early 2000s when the  
9 Council's been managing salmon bycatch overall.....

10  
11 (Teleconference interference -  
12 participants not muted)

13  
14 MS. STRAM: I'm sorry, did you want to  
15 pause for something?

16  
17  
18 (No comments)

19  
20 MS. STRAM: Okay, I'll keep going.  
21 Please let me know if there's questions and I can  
22 pause.

23  
24 So in the '90s and the early 2000s we  
25 managed salmon by time area closures so these were  
26 large scale closures in the Bering Sea that had a  
27 trigger limit so a numbered limit for both chum and  
28 chinook and time that those areas were closed so when  
29 they were triggered those areas closed and the Bering  
30 Sea pollock fleet had to move out of those areas.

31  
32 Next slide.

33  
34 And just to be clear I'm on Slide 6  
35 now.

36  
37 So what happened is then there was  
38 information indicating that those large scale closures  
39 called salmon savings areas were exacerbating, they  
40 were making the bycatch worse and that there was  
41 indications that the salmon inside of those closure  
42 areas, there was less salmon inside the closure areas  
43 than outside the closure areas so when the fleet was  
44 being pushed out of those broad scaled closures it was  
45 making the bycatch worse. So the Council developed an  
46 interim measure in about 2004 that was to exempt the  
47 fleet from the closures while they began to develop  
48 additional measures. And at the time the industry was  
49 developing what's called a hot spot closure system to  
50

0045

1 which all of the sectors belonged to and it's a closure  
2 system in which the fleet themselves can impose three  
3 to five day closures -- three to seven day closures,  
4 I'm sorry, based on areas of hot spots of bycatch that  
5 they experienced and communicated internally.

6

7 Next slide.

8

9 At that same time, I would say in 2005  
10 while we were developing that we were looking at a chum  
11 cap in 2005, because of that high level over 700,000  
12 chum caught as bycatch. While the Council started to  
13 develop that the focus in 2007 then shifted to chum  
14 because we had a high bycatch year of over 120,000  
15 chinook bycatch in the pollock fleet. So the Council  
16 switched the overall focus from chum to chinook and we  
17 had multiple workshops with our science and statistical  
18 committee and experts in the field. The Council  
19 developed a bycatch committee that was a standing  
20 committee at that time to assist in developing  
21 different cap levels for chinook salmon at that time.

22

23 Next slide.

24

25 So that was what caused the development  
26 of what's called Amendment 91 and I'll talk about that  
27 in just a minute, that where final action for that was  
28 taken in 2009. The result of that action was to put a  
29 limit on the pollock fleet. It was divided out by  
30 sector and by season but it's the first time that  
31 there's been an overall limit for chinook bycatch on  
32 the pollock fleet whereby if that limit is reached the  
33 pollock fleet has to shut down. And, so that limit,  
34 again, is divided by sector and by season but if any of  
35 the sectors reach their seasonal limit they are shut  
36 down for the remainder of that season, if they reach it  
37 in the B season they're shut down for the remainder of  
38 the year. At that time we also started providing  
39 extensive outreach to Western Alaska communities. We  
40 have used the Regional Advisory Councils as a forum for  
41 which we could bring Council members to the communities  
42 in order to discuss salmon bycatch issues with the  
43 decisionmakers there so over the course of 2009 and  
44 2010 we brought Council members out to each of the  
45 Western Alaska RACs as well as held some meetings of  
46 our own in other communities in order to provide  
47 outreach and hear discussions from the communities.

48

49 Next slide.

50

0046

1                   That Amendment 91 was implemented in  
2 2011. There are some provisions that go along with  
3 putting a cap on the pollock fleet and part of that was  
4 that we instituted systematic genetic sampling. So  
5 previously any of the genetic samples from the salmon  
6 that were bycaught to determine which stocks of origin,  
7 so which rivers they were going back to, it was done  
8 opportunistically by observers when they had a chance  
9 to collect samples. And implementing Amendment 91 we  
10 instituted systematic genetic sampling so in the Bering  
11 Sea where it's 100 percent observed and now there's a  
12 census for salmon so every single salmon that is caught  
13 by the pollock fleet is counted either by an onshore --  
14 by an observer on the actual vessel or by an observer  
15 in a shore side processing plant where the catch is  
16 delivered. There's also cameras that are onboard all  
17 vessels and all points of entry to ensure the  
18 compliance with that. In addition to that, the  
19 systematic genetic sampling meant that one in every 10  
20 chinook was sampled for genetics and one in every 30  
21 chum are sampled for genetics. That is still the case  
22 now. And so that gives us a representative sample  
23 that's consistent from one year to the next. So that  
24 was implemented in 2011 and at that time the Council  
25 then moved back to looking at chum bycatch because that  
26 measure was only for chinook and so the Council spent  
27 about two years developing measures for chum bycatch  
28 that were considered in multiple analysis. And then in  
29 2012 when they were taking review of that analysis that  
30 included time area closures as well as overall hardcaps  
31 for chum -- we call them hardcaps when it closes the  
32 fisheries as opposed to a seasonal closure or a time  
33 area closure -- in 2012 the Council tabled it at that  
34 point because any of the measures that they were trying  
35 to consider seemed to be undermining the recent  
36 measures for chinook and chinook was always considered  
37 the priority.

38  
39                   Next slide please.

40  
41                   So in development of that then we began  
42 to develop what's called Amendment 110 and that was  
43 developed primarily in response to continued low  
44 returns of chinook salmon runs in Western Alaska as  
45 well as some analysis that we did that showed that  
46 there might be a need for some stronger vessel level  
47 incentives. We found that while overall bycatch was  
48 decreasing when we looked at a vessel level some  
49 vessels were continuing to have high bycatch despite  
50

0047

1 the idea that there were incentives to reduce their  
2 bycatch. So we made a number of changes under  
3 Amendment 110 in terms of increasing the vessel level  
4 incentives within the incentive structure on individual  
5 vessels, we put revisions -- we put provisions on  
6 fishing into September and October where they tend to  
7 catch higher bycatch of chinook and we also put into  
8 place a lower cap in times of low chinook abundance,  
9 which I'll talk about in the next slide. We also then  
10 included the chum measures as part of the incentive  
11 plan agreement. So before chum measures were taken as  
12 a lower priority to chinook, and so the closures were  
13 always for chinook so we folded the chum measures in  
14 with the incentive plan agreements with the idea that  
15 they would still prioritize chinook salmon bycatch  
16 avoidance but that they would also take measures to  
17 move away from areas of Western Alaska chum and we  
18 worked with the geneticists to provide as much spacial  
19 and temporal detail on the genetics of where the fleet  
20 was encountering Western Alaska chum understanding that  
21 that was the priority for avoidance.

22

23 Next slide please.

24

25 So overall this is the current system  
26 that's in place right now. Our measures to minimize  
27 salmon, PSC, prohibitive species catch, and that's what  
28 it is in regulation in the pollock fishery. So we have  
29 two different amendments then that set up chinook  
30 salmon PSC limits under Amendment 91 and then Amendment  
31 110, we have a higher and a lower cap structure so  
32 right now what we have is a three river index that  
33 includes the post-season in-river run size abundance  
34 for the Kuskokwim, Unalakleet and the Upper Yukon so,  
35 in aggregate, those three rivers are added together and  
36 if the number of that -- the sum of those three is less  
37 than 250,000 fish then the cap drops in the following  
38 year for the pollock fishery to a lower cap. It drops  
39 from an overall cap of 60,000 to an overall cap of  
40 45,000 with a performance standard that the fleet is  
41 intended to stay below, and, again, those are divided  
42 out by sector and season in order to continue to be  
43 able to fish under those cap levels. So for the past  
44 two years and also for 2023 we will be, again, under  
45 the low cap level because the aggregate three river  
46 index is below 250,000 fish. Under their incentive  
47 plan agreements the fleet then continues to provide  
48 additional incentives to avoid chinook and chum salmon  
49 under any condition of abundance, they have their own  
50

0048

1 rewards and penalties that are fixed in their plan  
2 agreements. Something that we can't do at the  
3 regulatory level. They also impose, again, hotspot  
4 closures. That little figure to the bottom right,  
5 those red boxes are areas in the Bering Sea that are  
6 closed when they have received information that say a  
7 vessel or two vessels have run into a chinook in a  
8 haul, or chum, then they will draw a closure around it  
9 and the fleet will have to avoid that closure for three  
10 to seven years -- sorry, three to seven days, while  
11 they continue to fish in the Bering Sea. We also have  
12 salmon escapement panels which I'll go over in the next  
13 slide and, again, donations to food banks, that's what  
14 SeaShare, the hunger relief organization handles all  
15 the donations of bycaught fish to -- for hunger relief  
16 and redistribution, both to Western Alaska as well as  
17 communities across Alaska and in the Lower 48.

18

19 Next slide.

20

21 So salmon excluders are now used in all  
22 pollock nets by regulation after Amendment 110 and what  
23 these are escape -- they're an escape mechanism within  
24 the caught end of the trawl net because salmon are  
25 better swimmers than pollock, they can sense the  
26 (indiscernible - distorted) in the current which is  
27 present where they've got this escapement panel and so  
28 when the net's moving through the water the pollock  
29 fall back into the caught end and the salmon are able  
30 to escape. They've run a number of experiments, the  
31 salmon excluders tend to do much better for chinook  
32 than they do for chum. I think that the most recent  
33 report that we heard in June there is about a 30  
34 percent success rate in general for chinook. They've  
35 had trouble having similar success rates for chum,  
36 they've tried various designs and so -- but everyone is  
37 using those, they still do work for chum but not with  
38 as high of percentage of escapement.

39

40 Next slide please.

41

42 So just to give you a general idea in  
43 terms of the seasonal and area catch patterns for the  
44 pollock fishery, the graph that you see here just shows  
45 you from '91 to 2021 the overall catch of pollock in  
46 metric tons and then the colors just show you in terms  
47 of area where they're fishing, where they're catching  
48 it in both A season, the winter season and the B  
49 season, southeast and northwest of 170, which is a  
50



0049

1 dividing line in the Bering Sea. To the right of those  
2 panels that you see to show you the bars, are the catch  
3 concentrations and this is to show you what the winter  
4 fishery, which is called the A fishery, looks like in  
5 terms of where they're fishing so you see that they're  
6 concentrated pretty -- most of the shoreside fleet is  
7 always just north of Unimak Island and they stretch up  
8 towards the Pribilofs but they're constrained by ice  
9 cover so in most years -- 2019 you see it more  
10 concentrated, 2020 a warmer year they were able to move  
11 a little bit more up the shelf edge and around there  
12 and then 2021 you see kind of a patchier distribution,  
13 just concentrated around the Pribilofs and then  
14 concentrated in Unimak.

15

16 Next slide please.

17

18 And in contrast then, for the B season,  
19 again the ice cover, this is, again, pollock catch and  
20 here the fleet fishes -- the shore side fleet tends to  
21 be closer to shore, again, very far off shore in the  
22 Bering Sea and then in general up along the entire  
23 shelf edge stretching towards the Russian border to let  
24 you see to the far -- the far left, the upper left-hand  
25 corner shows you the extent of the fishing and, in  
26 general, that goes pretty close in some years the 200  
27 nautical mile boundary of the EEC (ph) with the Russian  
28 fleets.

29

30 Next slide please.

31

32 The next couple slides I have just  
33 gives you some of the genetic summary that we heard in  
34 June. We do get this every year. I would note we  
35 normally get this report in April and this year we  
36 waited until June to take the report and I understand  
37 that we're hearing that that was not as convenient for  
38 many people to participate in. The reason that that  
39 was done was so that we could get the genetics back on  
40 the 2021 chum bycatch in order to see if it looked  
41 substantially different from the bycatch in previous  
42 years but we will make every effort to move that report  
43 back to April to accommodate people.

44

45 Next slide please.

46

47 This just gives you the trends in the  
48 genetic breakouts in general. Again on the left you  
49 see the trend in Bering Sea chinook bycatch in blue,  
50

0050

1 the numbers themselves, on the right, similarly, for  
2 Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch this just gives you  
3 through 2021 but, again, the numbers at the bottom,  
4 similar to earlier are the ones that show you what they  
5 are in 2022. On the left, speaking to chinook, what  
6 you -- the green and the red line then, refer to the  
7 upper and lower catch levels -- the limit numbers for  
8 the Pollock fleet and so the green is what we call the  
9 performance standard, or the performance limit and that  
10 is an annual limit that they are intended to stay below  
11 in order to retain some of the flexabilities that they  
12 have in their current system for fishing. The red  
13 number is the overall limit that closes down the  
14 fishery and, again, where you see the drop in those  
15 limits that's because we went into a lower level year  
16 for salmon bycatch, the lower limit based on the three  
17 river index. This just shows you that in 2021, again,  
18 we were in that lower level in 2019, we went back to  
19 the higher level in 2020 and then in 2021 and 2022,  
20 which isn't shown here, we've been at that lower level  
21 and, again, we'll be at that lower level in 2023 as  
22 well. And then the pie charts just show you as a  
23 snapshot, and this tends to be fairly consistent but  
24 I'll show you some other graphs after -- in terms of  
25 the genetic composition of the bycatch and so in  
26 general we see, if you're looking at chinook to the  
27 left, it's the large blue part of the pie, that's the  
28 grouping that includes Coastal West Alaska and the  
29 Yukon and that tends to comprise about 40 percent of  
30 the overall bycatch of chinook that the fleet  
31 encounters. To the right, if you look for chum salmon  
32 bycatch then, the situation's quite different and what  
33 you're looking at is the red pie that says Coastal West  
34 Alaska and that tends to be about 16 percent, what you  
35 see in green is the Asian component and that really  
36 dominates the chum that the fleet encounters so a lot  
37 of the hatchery releases from the Asian Pacific Rim  
38 hatchery releases tend to dominate the bycatch.

39

40 Next slide please.

41

42 So, again, going back to like major  
43 takeaways from Bering Sea chinook, this shows you in  
44 every year that we've done systematic sampling from  
45 2011 through 2020 the colors represent individual years  
46 and looking -- starting with the far left, these are  
47 the breakouts that we are -- can report back on  
48 currently, genetically, so they're very large aggregate  
49 groups but we have one large group that's Coastal West

50

0051

1 Alaska, they can break the middle Yukon out separately  
2 from that and the upper Yukon, North Alaska Peninsula  
3 is a separate stock, Northwest Gulf of Alaska is a very  
4 large aggregate of stock and then Coastal Southeast  
5 Alaska, again, a large aggregate, British Columbia and  
6 then the entire West Coast of the U.S. And what you  
7 can see is that there is a spike -- the lower level  
8 then gives you the numbers, the upper graph gives you  
9 the relative proportion so if you're looking at the  
10 numbers what you're looking at is that in 2020 then, of  
11 all the bycatch that was taken about 16,000 of it would  
12 have returned to overall Coastal West Alaska.

13

14 Next slide please.

15

16 So just to show you that a little bit  
17 more, so you can see that separately, this gives you  
18 again, the exact same thing as the previous slide, just  
19 showing you the proportion -- or the actual numbers if  
20 you break them out from the proportion of the samples  
21 that were to Coastal West Alaska, middle Yukon and  
22 upper Yukon.

23

24 Next slide please.

25

26 And similarly for chum, it's just  
27 plotted a little differently, the top is from 2011 to  
28 2021, again, in relative proportion, in yellow the  
29 Western Alaska stock, in blue the upper and middle  
30 Yukon combined and then for comparison in purple the  
31 Southwest Alaska, same color scheme in the bottom but  
32 that just gives you in terms of overall numbers. So in  
33 general the proportion of Western Alaska and Yukon  
34 stocks have been much lower than the average proportion  
35 over the last two years and then with that large  
36 bycatch in 2021 of over 500,000 you basically had about  
37 50,000 of those fish that would have come back to  
38 Western Alaska based on that. And the genetics -- the  
39 proportions of Western Alaska and Yukon fish vary in  
40 space and time within a year so they've been working  
41 really hard to try to break those out in time and space  
42 so we can get a better understanding on an annual basis  
43 of where those stocks are located in the Bering Sea in  
44 terms of where fishing pressure is to try to help  
45 inform additional management measures for stock  
46 specific avoidance -- obviously the goal is to avoid  
47 Western Alaska chinook and chum salmon so we're working  
48 on that.

49

50

0052

1                   Next slide please.

2

3

4                   The next couple slides then just talk  
5 about what the Council action was coming out of the  
6 June meeting and then I'll get into what's being  
7 requested for December.

7

8

9

8                   Next slide.

10                   So the Council took a motion -- they're  
11 acknowledging that the Western Alaska salmon crises and  
12 obviously the impact it's having on culture and food  
13 security throughout Western Alaska while the best  
14 information we have about the climate is that it's a  
15 primary driver of the poor salmon returns. The Council  
16 is still committed to looking at improvements in the  
17 salmon bycatch management to try to minimize bycatch at  
18 all levels of salmon and pollock abundance. So the  
19 Council made a number of requests. The first is of the  
20 pollock industry, that they implement additional salmon  
21 -- chum salmon bycatch avoidance measures. So this was  
22 taken in June and in the beginning of the B season. I  
23 should have noted that the pollock fleet do not  
24 encounter chum salmon in the A season, only in the  
25 summer season, the B season. They encounter chinook in  
26 both A and B. So the Council asked that they implement  
27 additional measures. They did hear in public comments  
28 from some sectors of the pollock fleet, some measures  
29 that they were intending to put in to place for the B  
30 season to try to do a better job of avoiding chum  
31 salmon and they'll be reporting back to the Council in  
32 December on the efficacy of those measures and how well  
33 they worked. The Council also requested a discussion  
34 paper of Staff and we're working on currently, and the  
35 main goal of that is to look at what the Council was  
36 considering in 2012 in terms of management actions, cap  
37 levels and time area closures and then looking at  
38 updated bycatch and genetic stock composition  
39 information, how that varies in space and time, what  
40 the rationale was for how chum is currently managed in  
41 the pollock fishery, different trade offs that the  
42 pollock fishery encounters in avoiding PSC species. So  
43 in -- and specifically the main PSC species that the  
44 pollock fishery is avoiding, chum salmon, chinook  
45 salmon, herring. The fleet's also trying to avoid  
46 squid, while not a prohibitive species is in our  
47 ecosystem component and they can run into a great  
48 number of squid as well. And then the Council  
49 requested that we summarize some of the varying  
50

0053

1 conditions that have changed since 2012 since chum was  
2 last looked at in 2012, some of this, asked us to  
3 incorporate an overview of Asian hatchery releases as  
4 well as changes in Alaska chum salmon stock status.

5

6 Next slide.

7

8 The next part of the Council's motion  
9 then, as you're probably aware, the State of Alaska has  
10 a bycatch task force that has been meeting over the  
11 course of the last six months. It also has a -- part  
12 of that is the Western Alaska salmon subcommittee  
13 that's been meeting. So the Council wants to consider  
14 the findings and the recommendations of the overall  
15 State of Alaska bycatch task force while continue to  
16 look at how to improve salmon bycatch. And the Council  
17 also formed a committee of what is intended to  
18 represent tribal members, scientists, industry  
19 representatives or other aspects, it's called a working  
20 group here, but it is a Council committee. And the  
21 nominations for that committee were available on the  
22 Council's website and we try to distribute them as  
23 broadly as possible. The Council took nominations for  
24 that salmon bycatch committee and those members will be  
25 nominated within the next week or so and we are hoping  
26 to have a preliminary meeting on that committee before  
27 the December Council meeting. The idea is that that  
28 committee would discuss and make recommendations on the  
29 Staff discussion paper on chum salmon bycatch measures  
30 as well as evaluate and make recommendations based on  
31 the State of Alaska's bycatch task force and the  
32 Western Alaska salmon subcommittee and look at current  
33 information including local traditional subsistence  
34 knowledge and consider additional research to determine  
35 what's driving Western Alaska salmon decline.

36

37 Next slide.

38

39 And, finally, the Council indicated its  
40 continued prioritization on Bering Sea salmon research  
41 supporting that NOAA and ADF&G prioritize developments  
42 of models that would help in predicting where and when  
43 salmon stocks will be located in the Bering Sea. The  
44 ability to predict where they may be located would  
45 really help the Council in developing appropriate  
46 management measures to focus on avoiding Western Alaska  
47 salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery. And the Council  
48 also continues to support reducing the time it takes  
49 for the genetic analysis to come back. The Council

50

0054

1 would really like to see the previous years genetics,  
2 we have that now for chum and the geneticists are  
3 working really hard to try to speed up how quickly they  
4 could provide the previous years information for chum  
5 -- I'm sorry, for chinook as well.

6  
7 Next slide.

8  
9 This is just my final slide in terms of  
10 what's next. So in August, again, we had the call for  
11 nominations for salmon bycatch committee. The  
12 appointments have not yet been made but will be made  
13 shortly and the nominees will be the -- the appointees  
14 will be notified and then we will try to organize an  
15 introductory committee meeting prior to the December  
16 meeting. At the December Council meeting then, the  
17 Council will review the chum discussion paper and any  
18 resulting committee recommendations as well and if the  
19 bycatch task force recommendations aren't available  
20 prior to that, they will meet afterwards to consider  
21 those. Again, we're hoping to have the first meeting  
22 of this committee in November and if the task force  
23 recommendations are also available we'll review them,  
24 if not that'll be in a follow up meeting. The chum  
25 discussion paper will be posted to the Council's  
26 eAgenda for the December meeting by November 11th.

27  
28 And, Mr. Chair, that's all I have here.  
29 I do have additional slides if you wish to walk through  
30 them. I do also want to note in a separate measure, but  
31 you might be interested, the Council did take a -- the  
32 Council designated a new seat on our advisory panel for  
33 an Alaska Native tribal representative for a recurring  
34 three year term. So this is a new seat, it's the only  
35 designated seat on our advisory panel and the deadline  
36 to apply for that is February 3rd. The information is  
37 on our website. It's important to note that an  
38 individual does not need to be an Alaska Native but  
39 they must be nominated by a tribe and/or a consortia so  
40 they can speak for the tribes or the consortia in order  
41 to be qualified for nomination for that seat.

42  
43 With that I'll pause for questions and  
44 if you want me to go over additional information I'm  
45 happy to do so.

46  
47 (Teleconference interference -  
48 participants not muted)

49  
50

0055

1                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any questions  
2 from the Council members for Diana Stram. But before  
3 we do, welcome James Landlord. So let the record show  
4 that James is here. Is there someone online that has a  
5 question.

6  
7                   MR. GUY: Mr. Chairman.

8  
9                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, go ahead.

10  
11                  MR. GUY: Yeah, Mr. Chairman, this is  
12 George Guy, I am the general manager for Kwethluk,  
13 Inc., would this be an appropriate time to give my  
14 input on this discussion on the bycatch?

15  
16                  ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, go ahead if  
17 it's related to the presentation. Go ahead, George.

18  
19                  MR. GUY: Yeah, Mr. Chairman, thank  
20 you. My name is George Guy, I'm the general manager  
21 for Kwethluk, Inc., and I just want to make a  
22 disclosure that I am the co-Chair for the Alaska  
23 bycatch review task force for Western Alaska salmon  
24 subcommittee that was -- I was appointed in March of  
25 this year for the Alaska bycatch task force meeting.  
26 And I do concur with the report on the bycatch issues  
27 that were just presented to the Federal Advisory  
28 Committee.

29  
30                  Recently on October 5th we had a --  
31 NOAA had a meeting in Bethel regarding the salmon, you  
32 know, based on the meetings I came to that meeting  
33 representing our firm, Kwethluk, Inc., and the first  
34 question I have for the Federal RAC under the bycatch  
35 is where is our customary and traditional culture  
36 rights under our Title VIII of ANILCA.

37  
38                  No. 2., would be the chinooks and chums  
39 have been dwindling down and now it's cohos that are in  
40 the same scenario, now they're declining. And we based  
41 on the bycatches out in the Bering Sea and the Gulf of  
42 Alaska 532 [sic] chum salmon have been taken along with  
43 chinook salmon that are bound for the Yukon and  
44 Kuskokwim Delta Rivers along with the Norton Sound.  
45 And we're being zeroed in Okay. under the subsistence  
46 use program we're being closed off while the commercial  
47 industry has been being ongoing, where is the justice  
48 for all. One salmon on -- one salmon, under one table,  
49 without -- money on one side and subsistence food on  
50

0056

1 the other side under one salmon. And under Title VIII  
2 of ANILCA we have the right to subsist to feed our  
3 families through blood, sweat and tears we try and feed  
4 our families. And by all these closures that are  
5 impacting the Yukon and Kuskokwim Delta, why aren't  
6 they closing the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska for  
7 these commercial industries under the State of Alaska  
8 and the Federal regime, we've got two regimes under  
9 mandate for all renewable resources. And those salmon  
10 are supposed to return to their spawning areas whether  
11 it be Kuskokwim, Yukon or Norton Sound, they have a  
12 rock on their heads that they utilize to navigate to go  
13 spawn.

14  
15 Where is Katie John case in this  
16 scenario where without the right to subsist -- to  
17 subsist -- to try to feed our family with salmon, king  
18 salmon, chum salmon, red salmon, cohos. They recently  
19 closed the cohos and our people are hurting, especially  
20 on the Yukon. So don't forget about the Katie John  
21 case. And the pollock industry with their bycatch of  
22 500,032 chums where the Kuskokwim people hardly have  
23 any chums, maybe only 10 per family or less or none.

24  
25 And you guys need to look at focusing  
26 on that radio active nuclear power plant that exploded  
27 four to five years ago, don't forget about that too.

28  
29 So to the Title VIII of ANILCA, under  
30 ANCSA, where is our subsistence right. Again, we're  
31 under two regimes, State of Alaska and the Federal.  
32 And we're confused with the two controlling governments  
33 that tell us when to fish, how to fish, we don't have  
34 no rights while the pollock industry, or these Area M  
35 fishers are catching our renewable resources and making  
36 money off of our potential resources where we have to  
37 feed our families.

38  
39 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: George.

40  
41 MR. GUY: So I just wanted to.....

42  
43 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: George.

44  
45 MR. GUY: .....throw my thoughts in so  
46 thank you, Mr. Chairman.

47  
48 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thank you  
49 George. Is there any questions from the Council  
50



0057

1 members regarding the presentation by Dr. Stram.

2

3 MR. PARKS: Mr. Chairman, I have a  
4 question.

5

6 (Teleconference interference -  
7 participants not muted)

8

9 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If you're online  
10 can you please put your phones on mute.

11

12 MR. PARKS: I have a question to Diane.  
13 According to the reports here, I have a question, what  
14 about reds, have they ever been bycaught or cohos  
15 besides kings and chums? That's my question.

16

17 (Teleconference interference -  
18 participants not muted)

19

20 MS. STRAM: Hi, this is Diana. I think  
21 I understood the question, it was a little hard to hear  
22 but you're asking if other salmon species besides chum  
23 and chinook are bycaught by the pollock fisheries?

24

25 MR. PARKS: Yeah, I asked what about  
26 reds, or cohos, silvers, have they ever been bycaught  
27 because I don't see any numbers on our chart here  
28 according to your report.

29

30 MS. STRAM: Thanks for that. So  
31 technically when we report bycatch in the pollock  
32 fishery it's by chinook and by non-chinook, so we tend  
33 to just report it as chum because the fleet -- when the  
34 overall bycatch in any year, and we've done different  
35 analysis of it, it's over -- right now it's over 96.6  
36 percent chum. It's been anywhere from 96 to 99.9  
37 percent chum so we -- so really on an annual basis it's  
38 incredibly rare that you see anything other than chum  
39 in that category, it is technically called non-chinook  
40 and it includes all the other salmon species but the  
41 fleet does not run into any other salmon species other  
42 than chum and chinook.

43

44 MR. PARKS: Thank you.

45

46 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any other  
47 questions from.....

48

49 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: From Tuntutuliak.

50

0058

1                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Just a moment,  
2 let me get the Council members if they have any  
3 questions to ask questions first and then I'll go out  
4 to those that are listening.

5  
6                   Okay, Alissa.

7  
8                   MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
9 Through the Chair. Thank you for your presentation, it  
10 was really informative and hearing numbers and what's  
11 going on currently, it kind of got me a little  
12 flustered.

13  
14                   First off on your presentation where  
15 you're showing trends from the history of 1991 through,  
16 was it, 2021, I'm showing that every eight and a half  
17 years there was different increases and combinations of  
18 actions that were taken in regards to the Council's  
19 developments and indications where -- It kind of made  
20 me see that was there no -- what is the word that I'm  
21 looking for -- was there no monitoring or no  
22 repercussions during the times when chum and chinook  
23 were being taken.

24  
25                   And then the second question is, are  
26 you showing any -- with the current information that  
27 you have from 1991 through 2021, are you showing any  
28 types of trend and relationships between trawlers, the  
29 timing of fishing, of fish trawling in both A and B  
30 seasons in regards to relationship between the decrease  
31 of salmon between the three separate rivers. I know  
32 you combine the three rivers together but what I'm  
33 trying to find out is when those peaks or those times  
34 where there's high numbers of bycatch being taken, in  
35 relation to the decrease of salmon, chum, coho in the  
36 Yukon, Kuskokwim and Unalakleet, have any timing  
37 between resulting in the report of lower index of  
38 escapement.

39  
40                   And then the third question is, where  
41 do you get your information to determine escapement for  
42 trawl fishing in the seasons, is that at the end of the  
43 season when we get our escapement numbers each river,  
44 or do you guys -- do you have a process or a way of  
45 finding out what escapement was done after the fishery,  
46 prior to the fish coming in to the three river index.

47  
48                   Thank you, Mr. Chair.

49  
50

0059

1 MS. STRAM: Thank you for the question.  
2 I'll try to -- I tried to take notes so I can cover all  
3 three of them, I may have to ask for clarification.

4  
5 So the first ones, in terms of  
6 repercussions over history, what I was trying to show  
7 is kind of the way we modify management measures. So  
8 the repercussions are that during the area -- and which  
9 time area closures were in place, those were triggered  
10 and the fleet was moved out of those areas so that the  
11 fleet did have to move around, the fleet had to forego  
12 catch to get out of those areas. So that was  
13 occurring. For a little while it seemed like it was  
14 working and then obviously it wasn't working. I mean  
15 in general, historically based average, location isn't  
16 a great way to manage particularly in the Bering Sea.  
17 So that's why the Council kept modifying as the  
18 situation kept evolving, the Council then modifying  
19 their management measures accordingly. You know we  
20 tend to be a little bit crises management, whatever's  
21 the biggest crises at the moment is what we're trying  
22 to focus on and that's why we moved off of chum back  
23 after 2005 because chinook was more of a priority and  
24 so the Council moved to chinook and now is trying to  
25 readdress management measures for chum.

26  
27 In terms of looking at trends, trawling  
28 and timing of the bycatch in relation to the three  
29 river index, that's not why the three river index was  
30 selected. So we look -- particularly in conjunction  
31 with Amendment 91 and Amendment 110, the analysis that  
32 we did for those and some NPRB (ph) studies that we  
33 did, did look at kind of what are the -- what are the  
34 causes, are there trends in bycatch, is there any  
35 correlation between fishing time, between fishing  
36 depth, day and night differences, temperature, and so  
37 we studied all of those things and the short answer is  
38 that some -- that there is some relation in all of them  
39 but none of them was a real smoking gun and so that was  
40 why we went with more blunt tools such as a hardcap  
41 versus something that might be a little bit more  
42 sophisticated.

43  
44 In terms of the three river index, the  
45 three river index was not selected in relation -- oh,  
46 I'm sorry, to talk about the declines.

47  
48 So what I didn't go into but in terms  
49 of the adult equivalent that we calculate, and, again,  
50

0060

1 we're forced to calculate that in aggregate for the  
2 Coastal West Alaska so it's all the rivers of Western  
3 Alaska with the exception of the upper Yukon so we do  
4 a separate adult equivalent for the upper Yukon that we  
5 do from Coastal West Alaska and because of the age of  
6 the bycatch in the pollock fishery -- so when they  
7 catch chinook in the pollock fishery those chinook  
8 range from three to seven years old and the majority of  
9 them are around four to five years old and so we use  
10 the -- we know that some proportion of all those fish  
11 are coming back to river systems in Western Alaska  
12 annually but not all of them would have returned in  
13 that year so what that means is that in a high year  
14 like 2007 you have 120,000 fish that were caught but  
15 not all of them would have returned to a river system  
16 in that year so the overall impact in aggregate is less  
17 but it promulgates forward so in years, even if you had  
18 no bycatch in the year after 2007 you would still feel  
19 the impacts of that bycatch from 2007 because a lot of  
20 those fish would have matured over the next several  
21 years. So the impact of those high years really  
22 promulgates forward and then you still feel it  
23 regardless of what the impact is -- what the bycatch is  
24 in a subsequent year.

25  
26                   Leading then to the three river index,  
27 we were just trying to look for something that we could  
28 use as an overall threshold of Western Alaska chinook  
29 abundance. So we looked at a variety of different  
30 aggregations of river systems. For awhile we included  
31 the Nushagak in there and we were trying to make it  
32 river systems that tended to trend up and down together  
33 so that they would be an accurate representation. When  
34 we included the Nushagak in there it kind of swamped  
35 the signal that the Nushagak was trending separately  
36 from the other three and so we chose those three  
37 because they trended together and we thought that those  
38 as an overall index would represent the best indication  
39 of whether or not conditions were good or bad, so not  
40 related to bycatch at all, but related to how the  
41 trends in those river systems were.

42  
43                   In order to get the information for  
44 that index, ADF&G compiles that. It's the post-season  
45 in-river chinook salmon run size. So they compile that  
46 over the summer based on information they had in that  
47 -- and that index -- the sum of those are presented in  
48 a letter to the Council every October. And, again, in  
49 doing analysis with ADF&G for Amendment 110 we looked  
50

0061

1 at different aspects of when run size is available and  
2 whether or not there would be major changes that would  
3 indicate a different aspect and so this seemed to be  
4 the most reliable and recommended by ADF&G as  
5 representing the best information possible.

6  
7 And I'm sorry I didn't get a handle on  
8 what your third question was about escapement numbers  
9 if you could just repeat that.

10  
11 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
12 Through the Chair, thank you. Is there any indication  
13 in the post season report that you get from ADF&G where  
14 it indicates that there was heavy restrictions to  
15 practically no fishing at all and the fact that our  
16 subsistence harvest numbers over the past 20 to 40  
17 years now have decreased significantly anywhere between  
18 58 to 95 percent of our normal harvest that we usually  
19 take, does that play any effect into your cap? Your  
20 bycatch cap?

21  
22 Thank you.

23  
24 MS. STRAM: Okay, thanks for that. I'm  
25 sorry I didn't get all that the first time.

26  
27 So yes and no.

28  
29 So in the development of Amendment 110  
30 that was considered and when we looked at those -- what  
31 we looked at was the cluster of the -- adult equivalent  
32 for the river system in conjunction with year sets and  
33 so they tended to cluster above and below 250,000 fish  
34 and when you're below 250,000 fish those river systems  
35 -- that was also associated with a number of  
36 subsistence and commercial restrictions so that was  
37 part of the justification for choosing that threshold  
38 as a high and a low year in terms of abundance.

39  
40 On an annual basis when we get the  
41 letter, no, we just get the letter indicating whether  
42 or not we're above or below 250,000.

43  
44 When we do a management analysis and --  
45 which we seem to be moving towards possibly, we do  
46 include all that information in the analysis that goes  
47 to the Council in terms of evaluating the likely  
48 impacts of their actions and the past historical  
49 impacts but in terms of the actual letter from ADF&G,  
50

0062

1 no, but it did go into the consideration of the  
2 analysis of Amendment 110.

3  
4 I believe that answers your question.

5  
6 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any more  
7 questions from the Council members.

8  
9 (No comments)

10  
11 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If not we'll go  
12 to the village first, Tim, and then we'll get back to  
13 -- if you're calling from Tuntutuliak, if you have a  
14 question we'll go ahead and recognize you.

15  
16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Hello, this is  
17 (Indiscernible) Tuntutuliak.

18  
19 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, go ahead.

20  
21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yes, my name is  
22 (Indiscernible) from Tuntutuliak and I've been  
23 representing Tuntutuliak in the Kuskokwim River  
24 InterTribal Fish Commission for several years. Our  
25 concern was -- we didn't join the Commission but we  
26 finally joined the Commission because as chinooks are  
27 low, that's when we (indiscernible - breaking up) we  
28 teach our fellow tribal members the size of the fish,  
29 large, medium, small and chinook -- I mean jacks -- we  
30 told them that the bigger the fish the more eggs you  
31 have so they will have them swimming up river to  
32 headwaters and couple years later they will come back  
33 in abundance. We followed the restrictions throughout  
34 the season and worked with the Fish and Wildlife and  
35 Fish and Game. And then along the way we came into  
36 (indiscernible - distortion) the month of June we  
37 conserve chinook, month of July conserve chum, but go  
38 for target the red salmon and this year somehow we  
39 didn't get the Covid notice but the silver salmon was  
40 in the -- we didn't fish, it was closed to September  
41 30th and we were (indiscernible - distortion) it was  
42 open September 15th (indiscernible - distortion) but in  
43 those years the conversation, we didn't know the amount  
44 of trawlers and then down there catching chinooks and  
45 chums and what she reported there.

46  
47 But before further going on, I'm very  
48 happy the tribal committee to discuss the bycatch. The  
49 tribal committees when they sit down they will have  
50

0063

1 traditional knowledge and value and not -- scientists  
2 methods to (indiscernible - distortion) methods can be  
3 used.

4

5 My method in springtime when chinooks  
6 are going to be abandoned, my science must  
7 (indiscernible) they always come and bite while I'm  
8 going -- I'm going hunting and I say, yeah, chinooks  
9 are coming and -- and at the chum -- they take longer,  
10 they are low, much reduced and we say, yes, some  
11 of.....

12

13 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: I hate to  
14 interrupt, do you have a question.....

15

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: .....but those  
17 bycatch.....

18

19 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: .....in regard to  
20 -- Sir -- Sir.....

21

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: .....task force,  
23 they finally.....

24

25 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Hello.

26

27 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: .....realized that  
28 those bycatchers need my traditional knowledge --  
29 they're catching too much. And -- but we like to see  
30 them cut down, decrease their bycatch to absolute zero.  
31 You know fishing.....

32

33 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: (In Yup'ik)

34

35 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Indiscernible -  
36 distortion) things will be coming down but we're going  
37 to be starving and we'll be gone here along the  
38 Kuskokwim River if we don't hang anymore fish.

39

40 Quayana.

41

42 (In Yup'ik)

43

44 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: How many tribal --  
45 how many tribal committee members will there be, ma'am?

46

47 MS. STRAM: Thank you for that. I  
48 don't know yet because the committee itself hasn't been  
49 named. The committee's intended to be comprised of

50

0064

1 representatives from up and down the river systems but  
2 also contain some members of the pollock industry as  
3 well as additional members that have been nominated.  
4 So because we haven't seen the appointment list yet I  
5 can't answer that, I'm hoping that we'll be able to  
6 announce that within the next week. The scientists and  
7 Staff will not be on the committee itself, they'll be  
8 there to assist the committee in their discussions and  
9 deliberations. And as I understand it there will be  
10 co-chairs that will both be members of the North  
11 Pacific Council that will co-chair the committee. So  
12 we should know soon but I apologize that I can't answer  
13 that yet.

14  
15 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thank you.  
16 Tim, do you have a question.

17  
18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Okay, thank you.

19  
20 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Mr. Chair.

21  
22 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chairman, thank you  
23 for allowing me to ask questions. It's not very often  
24 we get the opportunity that subsistence users and  
25 public to ask questions on issues like on bycatch  
26 issues from Council's Staff. Thank you, Dr. Stram for  
27 your presentation, we really appreciate the time you  
28 took to provide us the information out here at the RAC  
29 meeting.

30  
31 The question I had was one of your  
32 slides indicated that AEQ, you're able to establish AEQ  
33 for chinook salmon on it's potential impacts on the  
34 runs on various chinook salmon stock, and I was just  
35 wondering about the chum salmon or other salmon species  
36 and why there is no established protocol for  
37 determining AEQ on those stocks, do they -- is that  
38 something in the works that the Staff are doing, or is  
39 there a need for direction for that to go forward.

40  
41 MS. STRAM: Thank you for the question.  
42 It's a great question and one that we also discussed at  
43 the June meeting.

44  
45 So there's a couple of answers to it.  
46 One, we can do an AEQ for chum, we have the necessary  
47 information, it's not -- it would be -- it would be  
48 more of a course estimate. Some of the information  
49 that we need to do the AEQ includes information on  
50



0065

1 maturity rates by river system and again you're talking  
2 about across all of Western Alaska so when we did it  
3 for chinook we had pretty good information for a number  
4 of rivers and off of the top of my head I think the  
5 average majority rate that we used was driven largely  
6 by the Kuskokwim and the information we had there. We  
7 revised that more recently for more updated  
8 information. We have less -- less reliable -- less  
9 information for chum on that but we do have some  
10 estimates that we could make and some assumptions we  
11 could make as similarly for natural mortality rates.  
12 So we can do an AEQ for chum and, in fact, we did do  
13 one back in 2012. What we have trouble doing is taking  
14 that adult equivalency for chums -- so we can tell you  
15 how many chums would have returned in aggregate over  
16 that timeframe, what we can't do is the impact rates,  
17 so what we did for the Western Alaska stocks, for  
18 chinook, and then for the upper Yukon separately, is we  
19 got an aggregate run size from ADF&G for all the  
20 chinook stocks in Western Alaska that compromised that  
21 group as well as the run size for the upper Yukon and  
22 using that we can divide that out so we can come up  
23 with an impact rate that would give you basically what  
24 percent per year would have more, would have returned  
25 had you not had that bycatch. And so that's what we  
26 report out. For chum that becomes more complicated  
27 because the run reconstructions are only available for  
28 a subset of those rivers and not very many -- I believe  
29 that the Yukon summer and fall, Quiniak -- and so  
30 there's a lot of large populations like the Kuskokwim,  
31 throughout Bristol Bay, Kotzebue and Norton Sound that  
32 wouldn't be representative in that so it would be a  
33 very large underestimate of it.

34  
35 So we had discussions per the Council's  
36 request. We met with State and agency Staff to discuss  
37 what could we do. We could do an impact rate for Yukon  
38 fall chum, but the concern there would be that that --  
39 while that's possible it might not reflect the trends  
40 across all Western Alaska stock so what we're trying to  
41 figure out is what's the best way to provide  
42 information on the impacts to chum stocks besides doing  
43 an AEQ and impact (indiscernible - distortion) so we're  
44 still really looking at that because we don't want to  
45 provide something that's not useful or could be  
46 misconstrued. And so it really has to do with  
47 information availability. We're comfortable with the  
48 information we have available for chinook,  
49 understanding that those things are still -- that's  
50

0066

1 still really an aggregate it's not telling you anything  
2 specific to an individual -- not to the Kuskokwim  
3 individually, or to the Yukon individually.  
4

5 So that's basically the reason why --  
6 we can do the AEQ part for chum, we can't take it  
7 further than that so then the question basically is  
8 would that be -- would a coarse estimate be useful, it  
9 might be useful and we can do it now with the  
10 information we have available, we have really good age  
11 information for the age of the chum in the bycatch we  
12 just have to make assumptions about some of the other  
13 calculations.  
14

15 Hopefully that gets to your question.  
16 It's a great question and one that we're still  
17 exploring as we move forward this year.  
18

19 MR. ANDREW: Okay, thank you, Dr.  
20 Stram. I forgot to mention my name for the record,  
21 Timothy Andrew, subsistence user.  
22

23 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana, Tim. I  
24 think for everyone's information that's sitting in this  
25 room, the Yukon and the Kuskokwim River both have  
26 chinook salmon, they both have summer chums, however on  
27 the Yukon we have what they call fall chums that they  
28 say is fall chums beginning on July 15th of each year,  
29 or each summer. From what I know there's very little  
30 sockeye on the Yukon but they do have coho. In the  
31 summer, you know, the Kuskokwim River had quite a  
32 number of sockeye coming back into the river and a lot  
33 of people were able to harvest some of them but on the  
34 Yukon, the whole salmon species were all closed to  
35 September, they were restricted and not able to fish,  
36 so I do believe that the North Pacific Fishery  
37 Management Council really has a job to do to make sure  
38 that they identify each of the salmon stocks that go  
39 into these rivers to spawn. Because when we say chum  
40 salmon, for the Yukon we know we're talking about both  
41 summer and fall chums. So we got to keep in mind that  
42 North Pacific Fishery Management Council should include  
43 what Henry Parks asked, are they having an impact on  
44 coho, are they having an impact on sockeye because for  
45 many people on the river system like here in the  
46 Kuskokwim, if they can't get any chinook salmon they  
47 look forward to the coho during the falltime to replace  
48 that. Similarly, up on the Yukon too.  
49  
50

0067

1 I've observed that over the years  
2 fishing on both rivers.

3  
4 So I hope that the North Pacific  
5 Fishery Management Council identifies those stock  
6 species and do a genetic study on each and every one of  
7 those species and where they return.

8  
9 They have to. Because when all fishing  
10 is closed and you can't even fish any of the stocks or  
11 species that come into the river system, we're losing  
12 our subsistence food. We're losing our opportunity to  
13 put food on the table.

14  
15 So, Dr. Stram, I appreciate your report  
16 but I think that the North Pacific Fishery Management  
17 Council has to work to identify all the salmon stocks  
18 that go into the river system as well as to the other  
19 spawning grounds in Western Alaska that are impacted by  
20 the bycatch, by the trawl fleet.

21  
22 So that's just my comment regarding  
23 your report so I thank you for your report and I do  
24 believe we need to go on to the next agenda item.

25  
26 My final question is, are you going to  
27 ask North Pacific Fishery Management Council to start  
28 putting on stock identification of all the salmon  
29 species that go into the river systems?

30  
31 MS. STRAM: Thank you for that. We do  
32 -- we can identify genetically the fall chum on the  
33 Yukon. So that is a separate genetic breakout. It's  
34 my understanding that we have no ability to identify  
35 sockeye or coho because we don't catch them in the  
36 bycatch so they aren't sampled genetically because  
37 they're not present. So -- but just to be clear in  
38 case I wasn't, and I apologize if so, the fall chum is  
39 a separate genetic group so that one is identified  
40 separately. So those are the breakouts that we have  
41 from the geneticists. And in an ideal world, and we're  
42 hoping to improve on those so we can break out more  
43 river systems so that you could break out different  
44 river systems separately so you're not stuck with that  
45 giant aggregate.

46  
47 But I appreciate your comments and I  
48 thank you all for the opportunity and we will continue  
49 to participate in the RAC meetings any time we're  
50

0068

1 requested to to the best of our ability. So thank you  
2 and I'll make sure that your Coordinator has the  
3 information to participate or comment in December as  
4 well.

5

6 Thank you, very much.

7

8 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thank you,  
9 Dr. Stram. We'll go on to the next item on the agenda  
10 and it's public and tribal comments on non-agenda  
11 items.

12

13 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke McDavid,  
14 Council Coordinator for the record. I just wanted to  
15 make a quick housekeeping announcement before we go  
16 into public comments. If there's anyone that wasn't in  
17 the room earlier please make sure that you sign in on  
18 the sign-in sheet by the door. And perhaps if there's  
19 anyone on the phone that did not identify themselves  
20 earlier if you could just please tell us your name and  
21 where you're from.

22

23 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: And also if there  
24 is public comments and tribal representatives making  
25 comments we'll put a time limit on there so watching  
26 the debate last night, it started from two minute  
27 comments down to 30 seconds and we might end up with 15  
28 seconds but I don't want to go that far.

29

30 (Laughter)

31

32 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: We'll give  
33 everyone an opportunity to at least make comment, at  
34 least three minutes and I'll ask Brooke to be the  
35 timekeeper.

36

37 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
38 And just so everyone is reminded we do have an  
39 opportunity tomorrow morning also for public comments  
40 on non-agenda items so if you want to wait and give  
41 your comment tomorrow you'd be welcome to do that as  
42 well.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. Tim.  
47 Identify yourself when you begin okay.

48

49 MR. ANDREW: Yeah, for the record my

50

0069

1 name is Kamguk, K-A-M-G-U-K. Like I indicated earlier  
2 Timothy Andrew is my taxpayer name. As I listened to  
3 all the Council reports earlier, all of you indicated  
4 that there is some restriction, somewhere around  
5 various species that we depend on in the area, from  
6 caribou to salmon to all the different species that we  
7 go out and harvest and utilize for our subsistence  
8 uses. Before I carry on and hopefully I stay within  
9 this three minutes, something very -- something very  
10 hopeful has arrived over the horizon as far as us.

11

12 Our subsistence use on the various  
13 resources.

14

15 Just a few days ago, or a day ago there  
16 was indication that a small group of people had filed  
17 suit on the State of Alaska and the case is Forrer  
18 versus the State of Alaska, et al., and the like. And  
19 what this group is alleging is that the State of Alaska  
20 is derelict in their duty to provide for sustained  
21 yield on the various resources in the state of Alaska.  
22 It's fairly new so -- you know I'm not an attorney but  
23 just looking at the name of the lawsuit and the purpose  
24 of the lawsuit, it has far reaching potential effects  
25 upon the resources that we depend on, like for salmon.  
26 Our Yukon River salmon, they're absolutely non-existent  
27 at the moment. Kuskokwim River is basically moving in  
28 that direction. Nome and even the Unalakleet River are  
29 already there. The Department of Fish and Game has not  
30 provided for sustained yield for the resources for  
31 continued viability. And same way with the Mulchatna  
32 Caribou Herd. We've seen that caribou herd drop from  
33 over 200,000 in 1996 down to less than 12,000 that we  
34 have today. You know, clearly the animals that we  
35 depend on are not being managed for sustained yield,  
36 but for some other purpose other than for the continued  
37 viability of the species and for our subsistence uses.

38

39 And we also have on the Yukon River as  
40 Norma had indicated earlier, the return of the Arctic  
41 lamprey. And I see that my nephew James is here and  
42 I'm glad to see that he's here to listen. But for a  
43 number of years we've seen that species come in very  
44 high, back in the early 1970s and 1980s, as far as I'm  
45 aware, but it was until mid-1980s it started going up  
46 and down, maybe we'd hit or miss them and then in the  
47 1990s those runs started going way up high, way up low,  
48 way up high, way up low, and then in more recent years  
49 they're basically non-existent. These are an

50

0070

1 anadromous species that spawn and are in fresh water  
2 for awhile, they go out into the ocean to mature and  
3 then they return when they're supposed to return. The  
4 Federal of Alaska has absolutely no information on/or  
5 very little, or no information on these species, a very  
6 subsistence species for the people of the Lower Yukon.

7

8 And several years ago, not several  
9 years ago it must have been about seven, eight years  
10 ago, if it's that, Alissa and I submitted a proposal to  
11 the Board of Game about the ptarmigan that we had i the  
12 area, we were starting to see this again with the  
13 ptarmigan and we had some weather anomalies that were  
14 occurring and questions were raised about where do  
15 these ptarmigans nest, where's their principle nesting  
16 areas, where they summer, the State of Alaska did not  
17 have any information on them.

18

19 There's a lot of things that the State  
20 does not have any information on. Blackfish, something  
21 that's really really important to us and the people in  
22 our villages, whitefish is another species. I see work  
23 being done on humpback in various places. Lush fish,  
24 or burbot. There's a lot of resident species that we  
25 really need attention -- really need to establish  
26 baseline information and research before we get into a  
27 situation that we're facing today with our salmon on  
28 both Yukon and Kuskokwim River. At least establish the  
29 baseline information, get the research ball going  
30 whoever we can get possibly to do that, it would  
31 greatly affect how we make our decisions now and also  
32 in the future. Because going at this with a shot in  
33 the dark type of process it's not doing the resources  
34 any good, it's not doing us any good, it's not doing  
35 you any good as people that make recommendations to the  
36 Federal Subsistence Board.

37

38 There's a lot of data gaps and what not  
39 in different research projects but they're -- and those  
40 data gaps need to be closed.

41

42 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

43

44 And, thank you, Brooke.

45

46 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Questions of Tim.

47

48 (No comments)

49

50

0071

1                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any others from  
2 public or online. All right, Serena.

3

4                   MS. FITKA: Hi, thank you. For the  
5 record my name is Serena Fitka, I'm the Executive  
6 Director for the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries  
7 Association. And I would just like to talk about the  
8 Board of Fish Proposal 140 that's going to be coming  
9 through and it is the South Umiak and Shumigan Islands  
10 June salmon fishery management plan.

11

12                   Gale Vick, she sits with the Fairbanks  
13 Advisory salmon subcommittee and she wasn't able to  
14 present the proposal so she asked me to provide some  
15 highlights and also ask the YK Regional Advisory  
16 Council for a letter of support.

17

18                   So this Proposal 140, the South Umiak  
19 and Shumigan Island June fishery harvest both chinook  
20 salmon, sockeye and chum salmon in a mixed stock  
21 fishery. These stocks are salmon -- of salmon are  
22 bound for Bristol Bay and the Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim  
23 region as well as other areas across the North Pacific  
24 Ocean. These salmon stocks have historically been  
25 intercepted in significant numbers along the Alaska  
26 Peninsula. To ensure that none of these salmon stocks  
27 are overharvested, it is necessary to restrain the  
28 interception of these stocks as provided in the  
29 management plan in this section and consists with the  
30 policies for the management of sustainable salmon  
31 fisheries.

32

33                   So the proposal does outline a  
34 management plan to reduce the harvest, the commercial  
35 harvest of salmon. I provided copies in the back. It  
36 is, I believe the Western and Eastern Interior RACs  
37 provided a support letter for this proposal to the  
38 Board of Fisheries so we're asking for a support letter  
39 from the YK Regional Advisory Council to support  
40 Proposal 140.

41

42                   MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Serena. I just  
43 wanted to let Council members know that we do have an  
44 item on the agenda under new business to take up any  
45 Board of Fish proposals that the Council might be  
46 interested in so when we get to that agenda item we  
47 could revisit the Proposal 140 and you all could decide  
48 if you would like to take that up and support it or  
49 not.

50

0072

1 Thank you.

2

3 MS. FITKA: Okay, thank you.

4

5 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana. Anybody  
6 else.

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Anyone online  
11 want to make comment.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. If there's  
16 no other comments I think there's opportunity again  
17 tomorrow for more public comments. Let's take a 10  
18 minute break.

19

20 (Off record)

21

22 (On record)

23

24 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: We'll go ahead  
25 and call the meeting back to order again. I asked  
26 James to give a report on his village but he said he'd  
27 rather do it in the morning, okay, so following the  
28 agenda we'll go on down to Item 10, old business. And  
29 under new business -- or old business we have .805(c)  
30 report summary by the Council Coordinator.

31

32 Brooke.

33

34 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So  
35 I'm going to present the Council with a brief overview  
36 of your .805(c) report. This is not an action item.  
37 On Page 20 of your meeting books you will find the  
38 cover letter for the .805(c) report, that's Page 20.  
39 And just as a reminder, the .805(c) report is meant to  
40 give you a summary of the actions that the Board took  
41 at their last regulatory meeting and that meeting was a  
42 wildlife regulatory meeting that was held in April.

43

44 So I'll just summarize what's in the  
45 report. There were two proposals that appeared on the  
46 consensus agenda at that April wildlife Board meeting  
47 and the Board adopted your Council's recommendations  
48 for both of those proposals. That was WP22-42, which  
49 increased the moose harvest limit in Unit 18Remainder

50



0073

1 to three moose. And the Board rejected WP22-43 which  
2 requested delegating authority to the Federal in-season  
3 manager to increase the moose harvest quota in Zone 1  
4 of the Kuskokwim hunt area of Unit 18 if the water  
5 levels are too low to access Zone 2.

6

7 So the Board agreed with your Council's  
8 recommendations on both of those.

9

10 There were six remaining wildlife  
11 proposals for your region that appeared on the non-  
12 consensus agenda. And for five of those proposals the  
13 Board adopted -- or took action consistent with your  
14 recommendations.

15

16 They adopted two statewide proposals,  
17 WP22-01 and 02. Those proposals clarified community  
18 harvest system regulations.

19

20 The Board also adopted WP22-41 which  
21 delegated authority to the Togiak National Wildlife  
22 Refuge Manager for in-season management of Mulchatna  
23 caribou.

24

25 The Board adopted, with modification,  
26 WP22-44 which extended the fall moose season in the  
27 Kuskokwim hunt area of Unit 18 to October 15th and also  
28 established a may be announced winter season with a  
29 harvest limit of one antlered bull by Federal  
30 registration permit.

31

32 The Board also adopted with  
33 modification WP22-45 which created specific harvest  
34 regulations for Alaska hare including shortening the  
35 season to August 1st through May 31st and modifying the  
36 definition of hare.

37

38 For one proposal the Board's actions  
39 differed from your Council's recommendations and that  
40 was WP22-47, which sought to allow the calf harvest of  
41 caribou in Unit 22. The Board's action on this  
42 proposal is explained in more detail in the .805(c)  
43 report and that's on Page 23. So your Council  
44 supported the proposal but the Board ended up rejecting  
45 it and their justification was because the WACH  
46 management program, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd  
47 management plan -- sorry -- recommends the prohibition  
48 of calf harvest when the herd is under preservative  
49 management, which they currently are. So the Board

50

0074

1 thought that it was a good idea to stick to the  
2 management plan.

3

4 Thank you, Mr. Chair. That concludes  
5 my report. I will take any questions that the Council  
6 members have. Thank you.

7

8 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any questions  
9 from the Council members.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If not we'll go  
14 on to the next agenda item and that's the Board FY2020  
15 annual report replies.

16

17 Brooke.

18

19 MS. MCDAVID: All right, that's me  
20 again. So you all have a copy of the annual report  
21 reply for FY2021 from the Board in your meeting book  
22 and that starts on Page 24. I'll just quickly go  
23 through each item and give a real brief update. When  
24 you have a chance, hopefully you can take the time to  
25 read through the whole replies.

26

27 But to start, the Board wants to let  
28 you know that they appreciate your effort to  
29 communicate through your annual report on issues  
30 outside of the regulatory process that affects  
31 subsistence users in your region. In FY21 there were  
32 three topics of concern in your Councils annual report.

33

34 Board members and OSM Staff read your  
35 topics of concerns and discussed them during the summer  
36 2020 work session of the Board.

37

38 So just to go through each of the  
39 topics real quick.

40

41 The first one was concerns about Donlin  
42 Mine impacts to subsistence. And we did arrange to  
43 have representatives from Donlin give a presentation  
44 later in the meeting. They're going to talk to us  
45 about barging impacts, the rainbow smolt studies  
46 they're doing and also how to get involved on the  
47 subsistence community advisory committee.

48

49 The second topic was a request for more

50

0075

1 whitefish monitoring. And Frank Harris from Fish and  
2 Wildlife Service will be giving us a report about a  
3 whitefish study that he is currently conducting and  
4 that was funded through the FRMP Program. In the  
5 Board's reply they highlighted all of the research that  
6 has been funded through the FRMP program about  
7 whitefish and that list is on Page 40. It's at the end  
8 of the reply.

9  
10 Okay. Topic No. 3 was about sockeye  
11 salmon and your Council asked the question does sockeye  
12 salmon abundance affect other salmon species. And our  
13 Fisheries Staff provided some great detailed  
14 information in the reply and that begins on Page 27.  
15 But to summarize, increased abundance of sockeye may  
16 impact other species to some extent but each species of  
17 salmon has unique life history strategies and so they  
18 aren't necessarily competing for the same habitat and  
19 same prey at the same time. However, they also note  
20 this is definitely a topic worth further research and  
21 also attached at the end of the reply is a list of all  
22 the sockeye salmon research projects funded through the  
23 FRMP program.

24  
25 No. 4 the topic of concern was record  
26 low salmon runs on the Yukon and Kuskokwim. The Board  
27 just wanted you to know that they recognize the  
28 severity of this issue and how it impacts both food and  
29 culture in your communities. And we will have several  
30 salmon reports later in the meeting where you'll have  
31 the opportunity to ask questions and receive updates  
32 from management Staff.

33  
34 Topic No. 5 was about Bering Sea  
35 bycatch and Area M intercept fisheries. We already  
36 heard the presentation from Dr. Stram from North  
37 Pacific Fishery Management Council earlier. And as you  
38 recall, the Council, at the last meeting made a motion  
39 to write letters to both the North Pacific Fishery  
40 Management Council and to the Board about Bering Sea  
41 bycatch. The Board received and acted upon the Joint  
42 Council letter and I'll present some more details about  
43 that in the next agenda item which is the Council  
44 correspondence update. But for now just note that the  
45 Board did elevate and forward your concerns.

46  
47 Still on reply topic No. 5 regarding  
48 Area M, or the Alaska Peninsula intercept fishery.  
49 ADF&G Staff from that region were not able to give an  
50

0076

1 update on Area M at this meeting but Fish and Game did  
2 provide a really nice detailed handout that has  
3 information on the Alaska Peninsula fishery and I will  
4 pass that out to you guys when I'm done with the  
5 update. There's also some copies on the back table  
6 there.

7

8 A couple small things to note, Fish and  
9 Game did begin a multi-year chum salmon stock  
10 composition assessment project this summer and took  
11 genetic samples of commercially harvested chum salmon  
12 and this will build on the previous WASSIP study that  
13 took place between 2007 and 2009.

14

15 Something else to note about Alaska  
16 Peninsula intercept fishery, like we heard from Serena,  
17 the Board of Fish will be meeting for this area, that  
18 meeting is going to be in February and your Council as  
19 well as several other organizations, including  
20 Kuskokwim InterTribal Fish Commission, ONC, TCC,  
21 Fairbanks Advisory Committee all put in proposals  
22 suggesting changes to the management plan for that  
23 region. So we will have the chance to talk about some  
24 of those proposals if the Council wishes later on in  
25 the agenda.

26

27 Reply Topic No. 6 was Mulchatna caribou  
28 declines and just as a reminder the Federal season has  
29 been closed for the past two regulatory years and we  
30 will have Staff from Togiak Refuge giving an update to  
31 the Council later in the meeting and they'll be able to  
32 answer any questions you have about the herd status.

33

34 Topic 7 was a request to increase moose  
35 harvest opportunity in the lower Yukon and as I just  
36 mentioned in the .805(c) report, the Board did approve  
37 wildlife proposal at their April meeting to increase  
38 moose harvest in Unit 18Remainder from two to three  
39 moose. Under this report topic the Council also  
40 brought up the need for designated hunter permit  
41 distribution and the issuance of these permits,  
42 unfortunately, it can't be delegated to community or  
43 tribal representatives but at the request of  
44 communities, Yukon Delta Staff or OSM Staff may be able  
45 to arrange to travel to communities to issue those  
46 permits. But they just have to receive a request.

47

48 And then finally the last topic of your  
49 annual report for last year was a request for  
50

0077

1 information about Snowy Owls and we will have a  
2 biologist from Fish and Wildlife Service online  
3 tomorrow, Steve Lewis, he's going to give a  
4 presentation about Snowy Owls and he's happy to answer  
5 your questions and he'd love to hear your observations  
6 about Snow Owls.

7

8 So that's all I have for updates  
9 regarding your annual report topics from last year.  
10 Again, the Federal Subsistence Board really wants to  
11 thank your Council for your continued involvement  
12 regarding subsistence matters and representing users of  
13 the Yukon Delta region.

14

15 That concludes my summary, Mr. Chair,  
16 thank you.

17

18 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you,  
19 Brooke. Any questions from the Advisory Council  
20 members.

21

22 (No comments)

23

24 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: No questions  
25 sound like.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay.

30

31 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
32 One more update from me. I wanted to give you guys an  
33 update about two letters that you sent to the Board  
34 after your last meeting.

35

36 The first letter was about Council  
37 member reimbursement that you might have incurred  
38 during the teleconference meetings held during the  
39 pandemic. And if you turn to Page 41 of your meeting  
40 books you'll find the Board's reply to your letter.  
41 And just to summarize, OSM reviewed policies on  
42 reimbursement and found that Council members can only  
43 be reimbursed for internet and phone charges for those  
44 meetings, that would be in excess or greater than your  
45 normal charges. So like if you had to buy extra  
46 minutes or extra data to call in to those meetings and  
47 participate we could reimburse you for that. We would  
48 just need a copy of your bill that showed those  
49 increased charges for the meeting. And you could just  
50

0078

1 send that to your Coordinator, if you still have access  
2 to any bills from the last meeting that was held via  
3 teleconference you could send those in or if we ever  
4 have to hold a meeting in the future via teleconference  
5 just keep that in mind that you could turn in those  
6 extra charges.

7

8 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any questions  
9 from the Board -- Council.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: I only have one  
14 comment, every month with us living here in Bethel, it  
15 doesn't happen in urban areas but in Bethel, we're only  
16 given a certain amount of data by GCI. For some of us  
17 the data starts on the 5th of each month and if you  
18 have kids that are on the internet with their iPads and  
19 even phones to play games, your data is all gone by the  
20 20th of the month, so you end up having to buy buckets.  
21 Maybe I sent my \$10 buck bucket charge to Fish and Wild  
22 -- no, just kidding.

23

24 (Laughter)

25

26 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: But you end up  
27 buying buckets to add to your data and that doesn't  
28 last long if you have kids that love to play games on  
29 their iPads or the phone, that bucket can last only a  
30 couple of days. So I just wanted to explain that  
31 because we don't have the luxury of having unlimited  
32 internet out here in Bethel and in the villages.

33

34 Yeah, go ahead.

35

36 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
37 Through the Chair. It's quiet, is it.....

38

39 REPORTER: We've lost the speakers  
40 so.....

41

42 MS. ROGERS: So just speak loud pretty  
43 much.

44

45 (Laughter)

46

47 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
48 Through the Chair. I was wondering if we could ask  
49 Brooke to get us a list of all the meeting dates, time,  
50

0079

1 and all that information passed out to all of our  
2 Council members so they can bring that information to  
3 GCI. GCI will reissue all those bills in regards to  
4 those dates and then we could just forward them on, and  
5 possibly contact information so that we could get that  
6 to you.

7  
8 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Alissa.  
9 That's something I can definitely do and I'd be happy  
10 to send that to you guys.

11  
12 REPORTER: We need a break, just for a  
13 couple of minutes hopefully.

14  
15 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay.

16  
17 REPORTER: We have no speakers, that's  
18 why it's so quiet.

19  
20 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay.

21  
22 (Off record)

23  
24 (On record)

25  
26 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: We'll go back to  
27 the agenda item D, special action review for -- go  
28 ahead.

29  
30 MS. MCDAVID: I wasn't quite finished.

31  
32 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Oh, you're not  
33 finished yet.

34  
35 MS. MCDAVID: No, sorry.

36  
37 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Sorry, I thought  
38 you were. Okay, go ahead.

39  
40 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So  
41 I had an update for you guys about two letters, that  
42 was the first letter that you wrote to the Board about  
43 the meeting expenses.

44  
45 The second letter I wanted to update  
46 you on was the Joint Council Letter to the Board from  
47 the four Yukon region RACs regarding salmon bycatch in  
48 the Bering Sea. So the Board actually had me come to  
49 their work session in July and present about this issue  
50

0080

1 and present the letter and the request that your  
2 Councils made. And at that meeting the Board voted to  
3 elevate the Joint Council's concerns to the Secretaries  
4 of Interior and Agriculture. The letter sent by the  
5 Board to the Secretaries wasn't available in time to  
6 make it into your meeting book but it was included in  
7 your supplemental materials. Those were mailed to you  
8 with your itinerary and such in the priority mail  
9 envelope. We have more copies if you didn't bring that  
10 with you. But that was Tab 1 of your supplemental  
11 materials if you have them.

12  
13 So in the letter to the Secretaries,  
14 the Board relayed the concerns and the requests made by  
15 the Joint Councils to lower the bycatch for chinook  
16 salmon, to implement chum salmon hardcaps and to add a  
17 subsistence or tribal representative seat to the North  
18 Pacific Fishery Management Council. And in addition to  
19 passing on your requests, the Board included the  
20 following from the letter -- in the letter on Page 2  
21 and I'm just going to read you a short paragraph  
22 because I think it's worth reading. So the Board  
23 states:

24  
25 Many Alaskans, including the Councils  
26 have opined that it is inequitable for commercial  
27 fishers in marine waters to harvest salmon bound for  
28 AYK drainages when subsistence fishing in those river  
29 systems by those who need it most is completely or  
30 severely restricted. Accordingly, the Board  
31 respectfully requests for you to liaise with the  
32 Department of Commerce to explore engagement and  
33 relationship building between our agencies with the  
34 goal of addressing salmon migratory life cycles and  
35 bycatch holistically.

36  
37 In addition, the Federal Subsistence  
38 Board plans to invite North Pacific Fishery Management  
39 Council members and Staff to its next meeting in  
40 January 2023 to discuss this issue.

41  
42 So, Mr. Chair, that concludes my  
43 Council correspondence updates. If anyone has  
44 questions on that second letter I could also answer  
45 those.

46  
47 Thank you.

48  
49 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you. Any  
50



0081

1 questions from the Council members.

2

3 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

4

5 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Go ahead, Alissa.

6

7 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Through the  
8 Chair. In regards to the Department of Commerce, are  
9 we going to be integrating or coming together to meet  
10 with them or do you mean to set up -- have us set aside  
11 date and time or even just a little mention that if  
12 they want to meet that we can have a meeting?

13

14 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair.  
15 Member Rogers. I am not sure that the -- the next step  
16 for planning to meet with North Pacific Fishery  
17 Management Council, or inviting them to the upcoming  
18 Board meeting has commenced yet, just because we're  
19 still a little way away from the Board meeting. And  
20 in regard to the Board requesting the Secretaries to  
21 liaise with the Department of Commerce, it's kind of up  
22 at the higher level and will be up to the Secretaries  
23 if they're going to follow through with that.

24

25 MS. KENNER: So you read a letter that  
26 was to DOI.

27

28 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, so that letter was  
29 addressed the Secretary of Interior and Secretary of  
30 Agriculture.

31

32 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. Quayana.

33

34 Yes, go ahead.

35

36 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair.

37

38 (Pause)

39

40 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, may I speak.

41

42 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes, you may.

43

44 MS. WESSELS: Thank you. Katya Wessels  
45 for the record. I just wanted to also add to what  
46 Brooke was saying in regards to the North Pacific  
47 Fisheries Management Council being invited to the Board  
48 meeting. You know the Chairs of the Councils are also  
49 invited to the same meetings, the Chairs or their

50

0082

1 representatives so if they end up coming to the Board  
2 meeting, the Chair of your Council, or if there is a  
3 substitute for the Chair they would be able to be  
4 present during that discussion and, you know, express  
5 their position at that time.

6

7 Thank you.

8

9 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you. Any  
10 other comments related to this topic before we go on to  
11 the next one.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If not we'll go  
16 on to Item No. D, special action review for FSA -- the  
17 numbers -- and we'll turn it over to our Cultural  
18 Anthropologist.

19

20 MS. KENNER: Hello, Mr. Chair and  
21 members of the Council. My name is Pippa Kenner and I  
22 am an Anthropologist at the Office of Subsistence  
23 Management in Anchorage. And the materials relevant to  
24 my presentation are on Page 43 of your Council book.  
25 It's basically the news release that went out when the  
26 Yukon was closed by the Board. So I'm here today to  
27 present a brief update of four fisheries temporary  
28 special action requests. They're called FSA22-01, 02,  
29 03 and 04 and they were submitted to the Board last  
30 spring.

31

32 All four special action requests were  
33 identical. And each requested the Federal Subsistence  
34 Board to close Federal public waters of the Yukon River  
35 drainage to the harvest of chinook, summer and fall  
36 chum salmon except by Federally-qualified subsistence  
37 users, and to further reduce the pool of eligible  
38 harvesters based on an ANILCA Section .804 subsistence  
39 user prioritization.

40

41 The Federal Board met on May 4th, 2022  
42 and adopted Temporary Special Action FSA22-01 for  
43 conservation purposes. The Board took no action on the  
44 other special action requests based on the adoption of  
45 FSA22-01.

46

47 Specifically, the Board closed Federal  
48 public waters to the Yukon River drainage to the  
49 harvest of chinook, summer and fall chum and coho  
50

0083

1 salmon except by Federally-qualified subsistence users  
2 from June 1st through September 30th, 2022 with harvest  
3 opportunities to be determined by the Federal fisheries  
4 manager should fishery run strength be sufficient to  
5 allow a Federal subsistence fishery. In short the  
6 returns this summer were so poor that no directed  
7 opportunities to harvest chinook, summer or fall chum  
8 salmon were provided. Holly Carroll, the Federal  
9 Fisheries Manager for the Yukon River implemented the  
10 Board's action. Holly will be updating the Council on  
11 the Yukon River salmon management and can answer  
12 questions related to the implementation of the action  
13 at that time. Actually I believe it's going to be  
14 Gerald Maschmann back here. So, again, we're going to  
15 be going through over what happened on the Yukon this  
16 summer in just a couple minutes. Right now I'm just  
17 giving you an update.

18  
19 That concludes my update on these  
20 special action requests and I'll try to answer your  
21 questions if you have any. This is not an action item,  
22 just an update. And, again, we're going to be going  
23 over this some more later in the meeting.

24  
25 Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the  
26 Council.

27  
28 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thank you.  
29 Any questions from the Council members.

30  
31 (No comments)

32  
33 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If there's no  
34 questions that concludes the old business and we'll  
35 move on to the new business, the fishery reports. No.  
36 I will be the Yukon 2022 season summary.

37  
38 MR. MASCHMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair  
39 and Council members. My name is Gerald Maschmann and I  
40 work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the  
41 Fairbanks office. I am the Assistant Federal  
42 Subsistence Fisheries Manager for the Yukon River and I  
43 assist our Federal Manager, Holly Carroll, with Federal  
44 management of salmon on the Yukon River. I'll focus  
45 this brief update on the 2022 season.

46  
47 I believe on Page 44 of your book is  
48 the handout, I'm not going to go through that entirely  
49 but I'll just summarize it. There's some figures in  
50

0084

1 there on Pages, I think 48, 49 and 50 that I'll refer  
2 to.

3  
4 I guess I probably don't have to tell  
5 anyone it was another lousy season on the Yukon. You  
6 know going into the season we had some very poor  
7 forecasted run sizes particular for chinook and chum  
8 salmon, and coho salmon were also forecasted to  
9 probably come in below average. And so based on these  
10 poor forecasts we anticipated entering the season with  
11 subsistence salmon fishing closed starting in the lower  
12 Yukon on June 2nd, while also providing subsistence  
13 fishing opportunity for non-salmon species using four  
14 inch or less gillnets, manned fishwheels and other  
15 selective gear types such as dipnets. You know we  
16 entered the season -- you know going into the season it  
17 was likely that this strategy would need to last  
18 throughout the season unless the salmon runs came in  
19 better than expected. And this management strategy was  
20 discussed with fishermen, stakeholders and the public  
21 at several pre-season meetings as well as six district-  
22 wide tribal consultation meetings.

23  
24 As Pippa reviewed in consultation with  
25 the Regional Advisory Council Chairs and the Office of  
26 Subsistence Management Staff the Federal manager began  
27 issuing emergency special actions to close salmon  
28 fishing in each district starting on June 2nd and  
29 moving those closures up river based on salmon  
30 migration timing. And these actions were taken in  
31 consultation and concurrently with ADF&G announcements  
32 which restricted State managed waters.

33  
34 Due to the poor outlook in returns,  
35 subsistence salmon fishing for chinook and chum salmon  
36 was essentially closed for the entire season on the  
37 Yukon River. Managers provided opportunity for  
38 subsistence fishers to harvest non-salmon species using  
39 four inch or smaller mesh gillnets and other selective  
40 gear types while we did allow for the retention of pink  
41 sockeye and coho salmon. You know, unfortunately the  
42 salmon runs came in poor for a third season in a row.  
43 Looking at Figures 1 and 2 in your handout, only 45,000  
44 chinook salmon passed the Pilot Station sonar and only  
45 12,000 passed the Eagle sonar. This was well below  
46 expectations and well below the interim management  
47 escapement goal of getting our fish across the Border  
48 into Canada. Overall, this was probably the worst  
49 chinook salmon run on record.  
50

0085

1 Both summer and fall chum salmon runs  
2 came in poor but they were better than the 2021 chum  
3 runs which were the worst on record. Figure 3 shows  
4 that 437,000 chum passed the sonar during the summer  
5 season and Figure 4 shows that 325,000 chum salmon  
6 passed during the fall season.

7  
8 And as your Chair mentioned, there's an  
9 overlap there on July 15th in the lower Yukon where the  
10 summer chum run is kind of ending and then the fall  
11 chum run are kind of entering around mid-July and  
12 fishermen tell us they can tell the difference between  
13 a summer chum and a fall chum and we've also seen that  
14 with using mixed stock genetic analysis. So using that  
15 genetic analysis and accounting for that summer and  
16 fall chum overlap it's estimated that about 521,000  
17 summer chum salmon and 241,000 fall chum salmon passed  
18 the Pilot Station sonar during the 2022 season.

19  
20 Although poor, the summer chum salmon  
21 run did come in near the top of the forecast and  
22 slightly above the bottom end of the drainage-wide  
23 escapement goal of 500,000 fish. The fall chum salmon  
24 also came in above forecast but was below the lower end  
25 of the drainage-wide escapement goal of 300,000 fish.  
26 If you look at Figure 5 that shows about 92,000 coho  
27 salmon passed the Pilot Station sonar and that's below  
28 the average of 145,000 but above the record low return  
29 that we saw last year.

30  
31 Just under 22,000 fall chum salmon have  
32 passed the Eagle sonar this season and overall it's  
33 anticipated that no escapement goals were met or will  
34 be met for salmon throughout the drainage in the 2022  
35 season. However, we did see that chum and coho salmon  
36 runs increased over last year and maybe that might  
37 indicate that these runs could be improving and there's  
38 been maybe some evidence from the Bering Sea, sampling  
39 that they do on juvenile chum, that maybe there's good  
40 numbers of juvenile chum that look healthy out there so  
41 maybe that's also an indicator that maybe the chum are  
42 coming back.

43  
44 Main stem Yukon salmon fishing  
45 restrictions were basically removed starting on October  
46 1st and moving up river chronologically. Some of the  
47 tributaries are going to remain closed through  
48 December. Some of these tributaries there's still fall  
49 chum and coho spawning and so they're going to remain  
50

0086

1 closed just to protect these spawning chum and coho.

2

3                   And as you know -- as some of you know  
4 on the Yukon fishermen have identified a higher than  
5 normal of prevalence of a disease called ichthyphonus  
6 in chinook salmon and they've been seeing that the last  
7 few seasons and it seems to rear its ugly head like  
8 every 10 or 12 years it seems to come back and the last  
9 couple of seasons we've seen a high prevalence of  
10 ichthyphonus. We did have a handout on a ichthyphonus,  
11 I put a stack up here if you're interested in  
12 ichthyphonus on the Yukon River you can grab one of  
13 those. But we started sampling for ichthyphonus at  
14 three sites this season, at Pilot Station, at the  
15 Rapids and at Eagle. The sampling goal of 200 chinook  
16 at each site was met at the Pilot Station and Rapid  
17 sites, however, due to the poor chinook numbers seen at  
18 Eagle, the Eagle samples were reduced to 50. And right  
19 now preliminary results from this study will be shared  
20 later this winter or spring but it does look like, just  
21 based on observations in the field, it's about a third  
22 of the chinook that we sampled at Rapids seemed to have  
23 ichthyphonus infection, that's considered very high.  
24 So this is a very important study, we plan on doing  
25 more sampling next year. And it's somewhat sensitive  
26 because we have to sacrifice some fish so, you know,  
27 some folks in these communities are a little  
28 apprehensive about sacrificing fish when they're being  
29 closed down. But a lot of fishermen have requested  
30 this study. A lot of fishermen have supported this  
31 study. And so we're trying to, as we sample those fish  
32 hand those fish out to the local communities. In  
33 addition, you know, we like to take advantage, if we're  
34 going to sacrifice fish, we need to take advantage of  
35 the opportunity so the fish are also sampled for a  
36 variety of other additional research projects  
37 addressing Yukon chinook salmon health and life history  
38 and it's been a collaborative effort between ADF&G, the  
39 Fish and Wildlife Service, multiple researchers at UAF  
40 and elsewhere, fish disease experts, effected  
41 communities and the local fishermen have been  
42 participating in this study. So we'll be continuing to  
43 assess the escapement and ichthyphonus analysis will  
44 continue through the winter months.

45

46                   And to be honest, fall management isn't  
47 really over yet, like I said there's still fall chum  
48 and coho salmon are still migrating and still spawning  
49 on their spawning grounds and will be through November.

50

0087

1                   Fishermen can expect ADF&G's summer  
2 season summary probably most likely any day now, I know  
3 they're working on it. And usually the fall season  
4 summary will be available usually by the end of  
5 December and that really gives a good detailed summary  
6 of the season so I'd watch out for that.

7  
8                   And I just wanted to comment on Holly's  
9 commitment to government to government consultation.  
10 She takes that very seriously and so we value that  
11 knowledge that's shared during tribal consultations.  
12 It's an open door, Holly is an open door policy. If  
13 your tribal government wishes to have one to one  
14 government to government tribal consultation with the  
15 Federal Fisheries Manager please contact her or me,  
16 it's on the last page of that handout, is our contact  
17 information. We'll be happy to do all the work if your  
18 tribal government wants to have that consultation, just  
19 let her know, we'll figure out what day and time works  
20 best for your tribal government and we'll make  
21 arrangements to have it.

22  
23                   So that's all I have for you today, I'd  
24 be happy to answer any questions you might have. But  
25 before I leave I want to ask if the Yukon managers with  
26 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is on and if  
27 they have any additional information they'd like to  
28 share they can share that now.

29  
30                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you. Is  
31 the.....

32  
33                   MS. JALLEN: Hi, yeah, thanks Gerald.  
34 This is.....

35  
36                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Go ahead.

37  
38                   MS. JALLEN: Hi, thank you. So thanks  
39 Gerald for giving a great summary. We work very  
40 closely with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service all season  
41 looking at all the assessment data as it comes in and  
42 having our management meetings, sometimes every day to  
43 look over the runs and look over the numbers and we  
44 work really closely together to decide how to manage  
45 the runs and then we also work really closely in-season  
46 with each other to make sure that we're talking to  
47 fishermen, that we're present at meetings, that we're  
48 available to help answer questions. And we just -- you  
49 know, my heart goes out to everybody about, you know,  
50

0088

1 for how hard this year was and especially coming kind  
2 of back to back with poor chum runs. We're really  
3 hoping that we're going to start hopefully picking up  
4 next year. I guess kind of one bright spot was that the  
5 summer chum run came in within the forecast and so  
6 hopefully, you know, once we start to see our forecast  
7 later this winter hopefully that will give us a good  
8 indication of what to expect for next year. And  
9 hopefully we'll have forecasts around, you know,  
10 January or in the spring, we'll try to get those out,  
11 mailed out to every household in the form of the  
12 outlook flier. Last year we sent a four page outlook  
13 flier to every household talking about the outlooks and  
14 about non-salmon harvest because we've had a lot of  
15 questions about that as well. So look forward to that  
16 coming to your mailbox sometime around April or May  
17 next spring, for the forecast and management strategy.  
18 There'll be a lot more discussions to discuss 2022 and  
19 looking forward to 2023 this winter and as we go into  
20 the spring meeting there'll be the Yukon River Panel  
21 meeting coming up later this winter. Also the Board of  
22 Fish meeting will be a great chance to discuss a lot of  
23 these Yukon River areas at the AYK Board of Fish  
24 meeting for both Yukon and Kuskokwim River areas.

25

26 I think Shane's got some more  
27 information about dates for those meetings.

28

29 I just want to thank Gerald and thank  
30 Holly for all the -- you know, all the work that, you  
31 know, just being such good teammates and just -- you  
32 know just helping us to all get through this really  
33 poor year and we're really all hope that the salmon  
34 start to come back next -- start to come back better  
35 next year. It'll be -- you know everyone will be  
36 really happy to see them start to come back.

37

38 With that I'll turn it over to Shane to  
39 give a little bit of update from fall season and also  
40 I'll be online but it sounds like Gerald's there and he  
41 can probably answer most of the questions you've got,  
42 so, thanks.

43

44 Shane.

45

46 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank.....

47

48 MR. RANSBURY: Hi everybody, my.....

49

50



0089

1                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG:   .....you.

2

3                   MR. RANSBURY:   .....name is Shane  
4   Ransbury, I'm the Fall Season Assistant Manager.  And  
5   we just wanted to add that, you know, we hear your  
6   RAC's opening comments and concerns for the continuing  
7   low salmon runs.  For fall chum and coho, this was the  
8   third year in a row with poor runs, even when all  
9   fishing was closed in the river.

10

11                   This season we did three additional  
12   research projects in-season.  We collected samples from  
13   fall chum salmon to run some stress hormone analysis  
14   on.  We restarted the Sheenjek River sonar project,  
15   which was a historical project counting fall chum, an  
16   important spawning river and we worked with U.S. Fish  
17   and Wildlife Service and Yukon Delta Fishery  
18   Development in a joint project to develop -- to deploy  
19   radiotags in about 350 coho salmon and we're still in  
20   the process of tracking those tagged salmon throughout  
21   the Yukon River drainage right now, as they return to  
22   spawn.

23

24                   We also -- we have Alaska Fish and Game  
25   marine salmon research team studying Yukon salmon with  
26   NOAA over the last 20 years in the Bering Sea and now  
27   in the Gulf of Alaska.  We share research information  
28   on our Alaska Fish and Game, Yukon River FaceBook page.

29

30                   This year, as for dates kind of what  
31   Deena was mentioning, the Board of Fisheries is meeting  
32   January 14th through 18th in Anchorage to address 12  
33   proposals for Yukon and Tanana subsistence, personal  
34   use and commercial fishery.  We will be -- as well as  
35   many more for the Kuskokwim.  We'll be speaking at  
36   local Advisory Committee meetings to discuss these  
37   proposals.  Those AC meetings are open to the public  
38   and you can read the proposals online and submit public  
39   comments by December 30th.  The Board of Fisheries is  
40   also taking up proposals for Area M in February 20th to  
41   the 25th in Anchorage.  And you can read the proposals  
42   online and submit comments by February 3rd.  We heard  
43   in the opening comments that your RAC is interested in  
44   this fishery to protect Yukon salmon.

45

46                   And then finally in regard to Norma's  
47   question during her open comment regarding a potential  
48   commercial pike fishery.  That would be treated similar  
49   to the lamprey or whitefish commercial fisheries where

50

0090

1 a commercial processor, catcher/seller or other type of  
2 buyer submits an experimental freshwater fishery  
3 application to us. That would need to include their  
4 intended fishing dates, harvest number, location and  
5 some other information and then we would evaluate if  
6 the fishery is viable to be open. However, during  
7 these low salmon runs the Department has no plans to  
8 open up new commercial fisheries since subsistence  
9 needs are the priority.

10

11 That concludes my fall season update.

12

13 Thank you, and I'll turn it over to the  
14 Chair.

15

16 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Anybody else.

17

18 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

19

20 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes, go ahead.

21

22 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23

24 Through the Chair. Do we have any updates on the  
25 International Treaty and, I know we didn't meet those  
26 needs, but do you have any updates, have they met,  
27 have.....

27

28 MR. MASCHMANN: Through the Chair.

29

30 Member.....

31

32 MS. JALLEN: Hi, through the -- okay,  
33 go ahead.

33

34 MR. MASCHMANN: Go ahead, Deena.

35

36 MS. JALLEN: Thanks Gerald. Yeah,  
37 through the Chair. Yeah, the Yukon River Panel winter  
38 meeting, the post-season meeting for 2022 is going to  
39 be taking place in December so it would be the U.S. and  
40 Canadian section meeting, so they meet separately on  
41 December 3rd and December 4th and then we'll meet  
42 together, both the countries will meet together on the  
43 15th and the 6th, and then the public meeting for this  
44 session will be December 7th and December 8th, and  
45 those meetings are going to be in person in Anchorage  
46 and I don't have a location yet. But that'll be the  
47 winter kind of 2022 wrap-up and then at that meeting  
48 they'll probably discuss when they're going to have the  
49 pre-season meeting to discuss 2023, if there's any kind  
50

0091

1 of advice from the Yukon River Panel or changes to the  
2 inter -- the escapement goals or management strategies,  
3 those will be discussed at the spring meeting and  
4 they'll talk about when that meeting's going to happen  
5 at the December meeting.

6  
7 So hopefully that answers your  
8 question.

9  
10 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Did she answer  
11 your question?

12  
13 (No comments)

14  
15 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, any more  
16 questions from the Council members.

17  
18 MR. PETER: Mr. Chairman.

19  
20 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Go ahead.

21  
22 MR. PETER: On your report what causes  
23 -- when the fish moving -- mortality -- I got question  
24 for it. You know some of the fish got big wounds on  
25 their skin but the -- they're alive, strong and  
26 swimming, what causes them to die while they going up  
27 stream from the mouth of the Yukon to the end -- end of  
28 the river where they spawn. What causes them, weaken  
29 and die-off?

30  
31 MR. MASCHMANN: Through the Chair.  
32 Thank you, that's a great question and it's a question  
33 we've been trying to figure out. We've noticed the  
34 last few seasons that we have a certain number of fish  
35 pass the Pilot Station sonar and so we expect a certain  
36 number to get to Eagle and to cross the Border into  
37 Canada and the number of fish showing up at Eagle has  
38 been a lot lower than we expected and so we're like  
39 well where are these fish going. Is the sonar off, is  
40 our genetic estimates, our proportions off but we've  
41 been through them and we think Pilot Station is  
42 operating well. We think it's doing as well as it can  
43 do. And so some fishermen in District 5, which is the  
44 middle Yukon, they've noticed that the last few seasons  
45 that there's a disease called ichthyophonus that is  
46 infecting the chinook salmon and it gets in their heart  
47 and, you know, as the fish swim up river, they're  
48 strong, they got a lot of energy but if they're also  
49 fighting a disease some of the fishermen think that  
50

0092

1 fish with this disease, they're not making it to the  
2 spawning grounds so maybe that's a reason why we're  
3 missing fish up at Eagle, is that they're dying from  
4 this ichthyophonus disease.

5  
6 In 2019 we had, it was really warm in  
7 the middle Yukon, high temperatures, and some folks  
8 thought, well, maybe they're burning through all their  
9 energy in this warm water and they weren't able to make  
10 it and so at this point we're not sure why we're not  
11 seeing the fish up river that we think we should see  
12 based on what we see down river. It could be a  
13 combination of ichthyophonus, warm water, we're just  
14 unsure. So, you know, that's what we're trying to  
15 figure out with this ichthyophonus sampling and the  
16 other researchers are looking into other things like  
17 stress hormones, vitamin deficiency, percent body fat,  
18 those kinds of questions. So we're not quite sure, you  
19 know, some fishermen think it's ichthyophonus, and other  
20 people think it's maybe a combination of other things  
21 but we're trying to figure it out, yeah.

22  
23 Thank you.

24  
25 MR. PETER: Mr. Chairman. Through the  
26 Chair. You know on this report the escapements are  
27 pretty good, 237,000 chums, fall chums, on -- on your  
28 report it's a pretty good number 233,000 -- 237,000  
29 even though it's short of 300,000. As long as the  
30 river has fish it's good, good number. But next year  
31 hopefully it'll increase a little bit if they're not  
32 dying off from the predators, you know. And like  
33 Kuskokwim, they're having a problem in Yukon, same as  
34 Kuskokwim, but there's fish -- but there's fish in the  
35 river but they're on restrictions if we're not fishing  
36 except -- except setnetting, setnetting a whitefish, I  
37 call that whitefish net a killer because it's not  
38 strong enough to hold the fish. You know once the king  
39 salmon or any salmon is caught in a whitefish net it  
40 jerks and then they fall off, they're dead. The only  
41 -- my concern is this -- if we're going to go for  
42 conservation, I know the Department is really fearful  
43 of our custom [sic] and traditional knowledge. Like  
44 our elders, what I said this morning, when I'm  
45 testifying, in May -- or my dad, my uncle, my grandpa,  
46 they start mending the big net, the big size net, the  
47 king salmon net just used for king salmon, not  
48 targeting the small salmon. They believe it's 15 -- 15  
49 fathoms, long time ago it may be under 28 mesh. My dad  
50

0093

1 used to hang a 26 mesh size, 15 fathoms long same as my  
2 uncle and my grandpa. But they set their net on the  
3 eddy. We used to check them right after -- we set them  
4 in the morning, and in the afternoon we check it, it  
5 catch five, five kings, first run, five kings. In the  
6 evening same. They set there for -- only for  
7 consumption. Not for subsistence, just to eat. Those  
8 whitefish nets are really killers for all species.

9  
10 So why not the ADF&G and Fish and  
11 Wildlife try to work on a solution for us to be tested  
12 out for consumption only. For consumption. Right now  
13 the nets are really good. I could hang a net, eight  
14 inch or 8 and a quarter, 8.5, 45 mesh, 15 fathoms maybe  
15 I could catch more just for consumption, we share our  
16 fish, fresh caught fish to our community, all of them.  
17 But I think we need to change the mesh size for the  
18 Yukon, just like Kuskokwim.

19  
20 When I tested it out a couple years  
21 ago, I hate to set out net because I -- maybe just  
22 because I'm lazy, you know, but I hung one a couple  
23 years ago for setnetting, 5.5, 60 feet -- no, 50 feet,  
24 45 mesh when the setnet opened in the morning a couple  
25 of years ago I set the net eight miles down river where  
26 I find the -- finally find an eddy, high water. I used  
27 to watch my uncle, my grandpa, my dad, they throw out  
28 the stick -- I keep throwing the stick out -- when you  
29 find eddy they come toward me and then goes out to that  
30 line where I hit the eddy. Cannot go out -- cannot  
31 pass that, it's still going back and forth, back and  
32 forth and it's really deep, really deep -- deep water  
33 -- deep eddy. When you set them out, I set them, I set  
34 my net, first net I set it out less than three minutes  
35 let it stay my -- what you call them (In Yup'ik).

36  
37 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Floats.

38  
39 MR. PETER: Yeah, they start pulling.  
40 Maybe one, two, three and then I check it, I catch  
41 seven really good sized kings for consumption and I --  
42 and I mark that one. Put anchor and a buoy so that I  
43 could -- and when I returned home I told my (In Yup'ik)  
44 I got -- if you want to set your net go down river and  
45 you'll see buoy, set your net right there for  
46 consumption. First opening. How come we never try it.  
47 We keep on doing like this we're killing them, we're  
48 taking them, those small fish for our future  
49 generations.  
50

0094

1                   Maybe they're afraid for, you know,  
2 lose -- lose the king salmon or saving up to commercial  
3 fishermen in the Area M down -- down there for money.  
4 We need to change -- change, only for testing and only  
5 for consumption and first run of king salmon. When the  
6 second one comes in we use whatever net we want to use,  
7 but if we're successful, if we're really successful --  
8 the ADF&G and us, the Board of -- the Board of Fish --  
9 Board of Directors -- us could change it. Boy if we  
10 use that 8.5, eight and a quarter the month of June,  
11 first opening, in Kuskokwim and Yukon, one drift if  
12 we're lucky, if we're lucky we could catch 80 -- 80 big  
13 ones, not small ones, 80 big ones not small ones. I  
14 used to drift, I used to commercial fish with that  
15 eight inch, my eight inch is still in my shack, wrap it  
16 up in the gunny sack, never using it but one time I  
17 used it in Quinhagak. I fill up my buckets.....

18  
19                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Philip.

20  
21                   MR. PETER: .....four times.

22  
23                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Philip,  
24 let's.....

25  
26                   MR. PETER: Thank you, very much, Mr.  
27 Chairman.

28  
29                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah.

30  
31                   MR. PETER: But I want to see setnet in  
32 Yukon like us, 5.5 inch, 6 inch next year for  
33 consumption just like Kuskokwim, not the whitefish net.

34  
35                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: yeah, Qu yana.  
36 Any more questions or comments regarding the report.

37  
38                   MR. PARKS: Mr. Chairman, I have a  
39 question. As you stated about this sickness, this  
40 disease, ichthyophonosis, is that it, parasite, some kind  
41 of a parasite, so you stated that the chinooks are the  
42 ones that are being infected. What about these other  
43 salmons like reds, chums, silvers now -- and you stated  
44 that there's a sonar down in Pilot Station area and  
45 probably you guys do some catches over there and test  
46 to see if they're infected, what about down at mouth of  
47 Johnson, do you guys do some -- I mean mouth of the  
48 Yukon, I'm sorry, do you guys do some testing on these  
49 fish for parasites.  
50

0095

1                   Quyana, Mr. Chair.

2

3                   MR. MASCHMANN: Through the Chair.

4 Thank you. There is an Emmonak test fishery and  
5 sometimes in the past they can take samples from fish  
6 they catch here but for this particular  
7 ichthyphonus.....

8

9                   MR. PARKS: Uh-huh.

10

11                   MR. MASCHMANN: .....Pilot Station is  
12 just a real convenient place to sample because they  
13 have the sonar, there's a test fishery that's operating  
14 every day and so there's the opportunity to get the  
15 number of samples that they need from Pilot Station.  
16 You know in Emmonak they've been -- there is a test  
17 fishery but they've been trying to minimize the number  
18 of fish that they kill out of that fishery just because  
19 of conservation concerns and so there's a possibility  
20 we wouldn't get the number of samples we need. So  
21 Pilot Station is just really a good place to get those  
22 samples from and that's why we do it there. And it's  
23 pretty close -- I mean it's not -- you know it's all  
24 relative. I mean Pilot Station isn't really close to  
25 the mouth but when you think about how big the Yukon  
26 is, Pilot Station is really way down river compared to  
27 the size of the Yukon, so, yeah.

28

29                   MR. PARKS: Quyana, thank you. Mr.  
30 Chair, one more question.

31

32                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay.

33

34                   MR. PARKS: Now, the reason why I  
35 brought that up is because who knows those salmons,  
36 especially chinooks, are they being infected on their  
37 route down there at the sea or do they get this  
38 parasite while going up stream to the Yukon?

39

40                   MR. MASCHMANN: Through the Chair,  
41 thank you. Yeah, that's a great question. I think  
42 there's some theories that they get it in the ocean.  
43 This disease is in herring.....

44

45                   MR. PARKS: Uh-huh.

46

47                   MR. MASCHMANN: .....and that's a major  
48 food source for chinook and so they think maybe they're  
49 getting it from herring. But why does ichthyphonus --

50

0096

1 why is it not present very much in some years but then  
2 in other years we just see a lot of it and then it  
3 seems to go away for a few years and then it comes  
4 back, we're not sure, but we think they get it from  
5 herring while they're feeding in the ocean and as they  
6 come in the mouth, you know, they're bright and healthy  
7 at the mouth but as they move up river they're burning  
8 through their energy stores and they're putting all  
9 their energy they can into getting to the spawning  
10 grounds, they just can't fight the infection. And so  
11 by the time they get to the middle Yukon, the ones who  
12 are infected start getting really sick and it doesn't  
13 seem like they can make it. It appears we're still  
14 answering that question, but sick fish, if they're sick  
15 enough just don't seem to be making it to the spawning  
16 grounds. And we haven't seen it -- or we haven't heard  
17 fishermen complain about it in chum or coho. So we're  
18 not sure why chum or coho don't seem to have it, or at  
19 least they're not being affected by it if they do have  
20 it. So -- and maybe they're eating different fish out  
21 in the Bering Sea that don't have the disease.

22

23 MR. PARKS: Thank you.

24

25 MR. MASCHMANN: Thank you.

26

27 MR. PARKS: Quyana, Mr. Chair.

28

29 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: James.

30

31 MR. LANDLORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
32 Ichthyophonus. I sit on Yukon River InterTribal  
33 Watershed Council. We first met in 1997 at Galena to  
34 discuss why our fish were getting sick. And we first  
35 heard of salmon getting disease and sick back then. I  
36 don't know if it was ichthyophonus but there were a lot  
37 of people talking that some of the fish had sores in  
38 their body. And just recently I went and was reading  
39 the news and internet, ocean gets warm and it's when  
40 disease affect the fish. They get disease because the  
41 ocean's warm, more bugs or whatever in the ocean, but  
42 it also gets cold and it's also due to climate and in  
43 the U.S. and in Alaska. They say when the ocean gets  
44 cold and warm more bugs affect the fish. However, I  
45 think NOAA needs to do a longterm study on how the warm  
46 waters affect the fish when they come into our rivers.  
47 And I don't know who studies those but it's part of  
48 NOAA -- so that's the first time we talked about sick  
49 fish, we started back in 1997 in Galena when the First  
50



0097

1 Nations, Yukon Territory, all the way down the mouth  
2 and we signed an agreement, I think we called it Accord  
3 to work with each other to keep the Yukon River clean.  
4 That's the first time that I heard that there were fish  
5 that were sick.

6  
7 Thank you.

8  
9 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you, James.  
10 I think some of that will be answered, the comments  
11 that you're making, we have been told that the Bering  
12 Sea research group from ADF&G has to leave. So I'll  
13 request whoever from ADF&G is there, that's Item No. 5  
14 on the new business would like to make the report  
15 regarding the Bering Sea research projects. And I'm  
16 sure the questions that have.....

17  
18 MS. GARCIA: Hello, Mr. Chair, can you  
19 hear me?

20  
21 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: .....been asked  
22 of you will be answered. Yes, go ahead.

23  
24 MS. GARCIA: I apologize, I thought you  
25 were ready for me to present, I will wait.

26  
27 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Who's that?

28  
29 MR. MASCHMANN: That's Sabrina.

30  
31 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yep, if you're  
32 going to give the Bering Sea report salmon research  
33 update you're on the agenda right now because I've been  
34 told that you're going to be leaving very shortly so  
35 you have the floor. Go ahead.

36  
37 MS. GARCIA: Wonderful. Thank you, Mr.  
38 Chair. And is my presentation loaded on the screen for  
39 you all.

40  
41 MS. MCDAVID: Hi, Sabrina, this is  
42 Brooke, the Council Coordinator. Yes, it is, we're  
43 ready for you to go and I'll advance your slides when  
44 you let me know, too, thanks.

45  
46 MS. GARCIA: Wonderful, thank you,  
47 Brooke. Hello everyone, Mr. Chair and members of the  
48 Council. My name is Sabrina Garcia and I am the Marine  
49 Research Biologist for the Arctic, Yukon, Kuskokwim  
50

0098

1 region and part of the Salmon Ocean Ecology Program for  
2 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

3

4 Today I'm going to talk to you about  
5 this relatively new research program within the  
6 Department, provide updates on research focused on  
7 Yukon River chinook and chum salmon and introduce new  
8 and ongoing projects aimed at understanding the marine  
9 life phase of our Western Alaska salmon.

10

11 Next slide.

12

13 MS. MCDAVID: Sabrina, sorry for.....

14

15 MS. GARCIA: The Salmon Ocean Ecology  
16 Program.....

17

18 MS. MCDAVID: Sabrina, sorry, I just  
19 wanted to interrupt you real quick. We forgot to let  
20 folks in the room and online know where they can find a  
21 copy of your presentation. It's on Page 101 of the  
22 meeting book, and folks online that will be meeting  
23 book, Part 1. Okay, that's all Sabrina, you can  
24 proceed.

25

26 MS. GARCIA: Okay, thanks, Brooke. So  
27 we're on Slide 2.

28

29 So the Salmon Ocean Ecology Program or  
30 SOEP was initiated about two years ago and it is  
31 currently made up of three biologists, two from the  
32 statewide region and myself from the Arctic Yukon  
33 Kuskokwim region. And the goals of this program are to  
34 understand the marine life of Alaska salmon, use this  
35 information to assist in decisionmaking and answer  
36 pressing questions about what is driving salmon  
37 populations. I know these are lofty goals for just  
38 three of us. So you'll see in the upcoming slides that  
39 we rely very heavily on collaboration with the State,  
40 Federal, non-governmental organizations, universities  
41 and International agencies to fulfill our mission.

42

43 Next slide.

44

45 So one of our longterm projects is the  
46 Northern Bering Sea juvenile salmon and ecosystem  
47 survey. This project was initiated by NOAA in 2002 and  
48 ADF&G joined as project partners in 2010. For the last  
49 20 years, this has occurred in the shallow shelf

50

0099

1 habitat indicated by the white box in the Northern  
2 Bering Sea. This area is the primary habitat for  
3 juvenile salmon in from the Yukon River.

4  
5 (Teleconference interference -  
6 participants not muted - news station)

7  
8 MS. GARCIA: Can you hear that?

9  
10 (Pause)

11  
12 (Teleconference interference -  
13 participants not muted - news station)

14  
15 MS. GARCIA: Mr. Chair.

16  
17 (Teleconference interference -  
18 participants not muted - news station)

19  
20 MS. MCDAVID: Excuse me, whoever's  
21 speaking on the line it sounds like there's a repeat of  
22 a radio episode and.....

23  
24 (Teleconference interference -  
25 participants not muted - news station)

26  
27 MS. MCDAVID: Sabrina are you still on  
28 the line?

29  
30 MS. GARCIA: Yes, I'm still on the line  
31 but I can hear it sounds like a radio report.

32  
33 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Please standby, we  
34 might have to ask the operator to mute. For some  
35 reason there's a radio program coming through the  
36 speakers.

37  
38 Everyone on the line please mute your  
39 phones, star, six. If you're listening to the radio  
40 please mute your phones.

41  
42 (Teleconference interference -  
43 participants not muted - news station)

44  
45 REPORTER: Okay, we should be okay now.

46  
47 MS. GARCIA: Brooke, I don't seem to  
48 hear it anymore.

49  
50

0100

1 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, one second, we're  
2 getting the mics set back up.

3  
4 MS. GARCIA: Okay.

5  
6 (Pause)

7  
8 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks for your patience  
9 everybody, there's always some minor technical  
10 difficulties.

11  
12 (Pause)

13  
14 REPORTER: Sabrina, would you try it  
15 now please?

16  
17 MS. GARCIA: Yes.

18  
19 REPORTER: Speak a little louder?

20  
21 MS. GARCIA: Can you hear me okay?

22  
23 REPORTER: A little louder please.

24  
25 MS. GARCIA: Can you hear me, is this  
26 better?

27  
28 REPORTER: No, a little louder. Get a  
29 little closer to the mic maybe.

30  
31 MS. GARCIA: How about now?

32  
33 REPORTER: That's worse.

34  
35 MS. GARCIA: Is that better?

36  
37 REPORTER: No.

38  
39 MS. GARCIA: Okay, let me plug my  
40 headphones back in. Is this better?

41  
42 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, that's a little bit  
43 better, thank you.

44  
45 MS. GARCIA: Okay. I'm just going to  
46 pick up on Slide 3 since I don't know how much folks  
47 caught on that slide.

48  
49 So one of our projects is the Northern  
50

0101

1 Bering Sea juvenile salmon and ecosystem survey. This  
2 project was initiated by NOAA in 2002 and ADF&G joined  
3 as project partners in 2010. For the last 20 years,  
4 this has occurred in the shallow shelf habitat  
5 indicated by the white box in the Northern Bering Sea.  
6 This area is the primary habitat for juvenile salmon in  
7 from the Yukon River. Surface trawl gear is used to  
8 fish the upper 70 feet of the water column across a  
9 standardized grid of stations. This platform is used  
10 to study the distribution, abundance, stock  
11 composition, diet and health of juvenile salmon,  
12 specifically chinook and chum salmon. This survey  
13 occurs in September after juvenile salmon have spent a  
14 few months in the ocean and just before their first  
15 winter at sea.

16

17 Next slide.

18

19 One of the most important pieces of  
20 information we get from these surveys is an estimate of  
21 juvenile salmon abundance. As I mentioned on the  
22 previous slide most of the juvenile chinook salmon we  
23 catch during the survey are from the Yukon River,  
24 therefore we can estimate the abundance of juvenile  
25 Yukon River chinook salmon. This figure shows the  
26 abundance of juvenile Yukon River chinook salmon over  
27 time. The black bar running across the figure is the  
28 average abundance across the entire 20 years of the  
29 survey. Juvenile Yukon River chinook salmon abundance  
30 has changed over the history of this survey but you can  
31 see that their abundance has steadily declined since  
32 2013 and it has been below average since 2017. We did  
33 see a slight increase in juvenile chinook salmon  
34 abundance in 2021 relative of the.....

35

36 (Teleconference interference -  
37 participants not muted)

38

39 MS. MCDAVID: Are you still with us  
40 Sabrina, I'm sorry we have some open lines it sounds  
41 like.

42

43 MS. GARCIA: Yes, should I just speak  
44 over them.

45

46 REPORTER: No, please don't.

47

48 MS. MCDAVID: One moment please. Folks  
49 on the phone who have called into the Yukon Kuskokwim

50

0102

1 Delta RAC meeting please mute your phones, it's very  
2 disruptive, we can't hear our presenter.

3

4 Thank you.

5

6 (Teleconference interference -  
7 participants not muted)

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Excuse me we have someone  
10 on the line talking about our meeting for the YKDelta  
11 RAC, can you please mute your phone line, you're coming  
12 through into the meeting room and everyone can hear  
13 you.

14

15 (Pause)

16

17 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, Sabrina, are you  
18 still there?

19

20 MS. GARCIA: Yes, do you want me to  
21 start that slide over?

22

23 MS. MCDAVID: I think we heard most of  
24 what you said until the voices came on the line.

25

26 MS. GARCIA: Okay.

27

28 MS. MCDAVID: Just pick up where you're  
29 comfortable.

30

31 MS. GARCIA: Okay. If you can advance  
32 to the next slide then.

33

34 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, I will.

35

36 MS. GARCIA: Thank you. Juvenile  
37 abundance is a key part of the survey objectives  
38 because it provides us with two very important pieces  
39 of information. An estimate of marine survival and it  
40 also tells us what life stages are most important to  
41 determining whether run sizes will be good or poor in  
42 the future.

43

44 (Teleconference interference -  
45 participants not muted)

46

47 MS. GARCIA: this figure shows the  
48 relationship between juvenile and adult abundance for  
49 Yukon River chinook salmon with juvenile abundance on  
50

0103

1 the bottom axis and adult returns on the left. This  
2 relation indicates that as we see more juvenile chinook  
3 salmon in the survey we tend to see a higher number of  
4 adults returning to the Yukon River a few years later.  
5 This strong relationship between the number of  
6 juveniles and the number of adults shows that survival  
7 after the survey is relatively stable year to year.  
8 This tells us that while chinook salmon may be  
9 experiencing.....

10

11 (Teleconference interference -  
12 participants not muted)

13

14 MS. GARCIA: This tells us that while  
15 chinook salmon may be experiencing mortality after we  
16 catch them in the Northern Bering Sea survey that  
17 mortality is stable year to year and does not  
18 substantially change future run sizes. The stability  
19 in this relationship between juvenile chinook salmon  
20 and adult returns from those juveniles allows us to  
21 provide pre-season estimates of run size for Yukon  
22 River chinook salmon.

23

24 Next slide.

25

26 Using the juvenile chinook salmon  
27 abundance that I just showed on the previous slide, we  
28 can predict the number of adult chinook salmon that  
29 will return to the Yukon River up to three years in the  
30 future. On this figure, grey bars show the actual run  
31 abundance in each year and the black dotted line and  
32 whiskers indicate our juvenile based forecasted run  
33 sizes for these years. Our expectation for the 2022  
34 run size was for another poor abundance year, similar  
35 to what we saw in 2021. However, the chinook salmon  
36 run size for the Yukon River in 2022 was the lowest on  
37 record and came in well below our pre-season forecast.

38

39 Next slide.

40

41 I mentioned this before but this is  
42 very important so I want to repeat it. The data from  
43 these Northern Bering Sea surveys suggest that whatever  
44 is causing good or bad run sizes of Yukon River chinook  
45 salmon is occurring very early in the life of these  
46 fish, either during the year that they spend in the  
47 fresh water, their first few months in the ocean or a  
48 combination of both. This means that later marine  
49 mortality, whether that's competition, predation,  
50

50

0104

1 bycatch, they're not substantially affecting future run  
2 sizes of chinook salmon in the Yukon River. Now while  
3 these factors do not appear to be driving the declines  
4 that we've seen in Yukon River chinook salmon there are  
5 still concerns from stakeholders about whether there is  
6 a right management balance among all these different  
7 fisheries to provide equitable access to salmon,  
8 particularly for subsistence use. So it is important  
9 that we continue to gather information on the harvest  
10 characteristics of these fisheries so that this  
11 information can be used for informed decisionmaking.

12

13 Next slide.

14

15 We can also use juvenile abundance  
16 information from the Northern Bering Sea surveys to  
17 better understand population dynamics and critical  
18 periods in Yukon River fall chum salmon. We are  
19 currently focusing on fall chum salmon because they are  
20 genetically distinct from other Western Alaska stocks  
21 of chum salmon. On this figure the grey bars indicate  
22 juvenile fall chum salmon abundance, and the black  
23 dotted line represents the average across the time  
24 series. Juvenile fall chum salmon abundance has been  
25 variable throughout time but we saw above average  
26 abundance in both 2019 and 2021. There was no survey  
27 in 2020 due to the pandemic and we did complete the  
28 survey this year in 2022 so we should have some updated  
29 estimates of juvenile abundance for both chum and  
30 chinook in the next few months.

31

32 Next slide.

33

34 The lowest of the data set for juvenile  
35 chum salmon when we.....

36

37 (Teleconference interference -  
38 participants not muted - radio station)

39

40 MS. GARCIA: When we plot the juvenile  
41 fall chum abundance with the number of adult fall chum  
42 salmon we see something similar to what we saw for  
43 chinook salmon. The more juvenile chum salmon.....

44

45 (Teleconference interference -  
46 participants not muted - radio station)

47

48 MS. MCDAVID: Hold on Sabrina. I'm  
49 very sorry about this. Folks on the line we're hearing

50



0105

1 a radio come through again, please mute your phones,  
2 star, six or use the mute button on your phone.

3

4 Thank you.

5

6 (Teleconference interference -  
7 participants not muted - radio station)

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: We keep hearing, it was  
10 another season of low salmon runs -- okay, Sabrina we  
11 might have to have the operator mute the line. Standby  
12 please.

13

14 (Pause)

15

16 MS. GARCIA: Sorry Brooke, I didn't  
17 catch that, what did you say?

18

19 REPORTER: Hold on.

20

21

22 MS. MCDAVID: Just please standby  
23 Sabrina, we're trying to get the line cleared, we're  
24 calling the operator.

25

26 (Pause)

27

28 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If we're going  
29 through the agenda, we're trying to cover as much as we  
30 can today because I know some of the people will want  
31 to head back to where they came from by sometime  
32 tomorrow afternoon or evening. So we'll probably run  
33 to about 6:00 p.m. tonight so we can cover as much of  
34 the agenda as possible.

35

36 (Pause)

37

38 REPORTER: Sabrina are you still there?

39

40 MS. GARCIA: Yes, I am.

41

42 REPORTER: Okay.

43

44 (Pause)

45

46 MS. MCDAVID: Just as a reminder to  
47 folks on the phone, please don't put the teleconference  
48 on hold, sometimes if you do that and you have hold  
49 music or maybe the radio, that could be what is coming  
50

0106

1 through.

2

3

(Pause)

4

5

6

REPORTER: I don't hear anything, could she go ahead.

7

8

9

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, Sabrina, are you ready to try again.

10

11

12

13

MS. GARCIA: Yep, if you're on Slide 9 I'll get started on that one that says fall chum salmon on the top.

14

15

16

MS. MCDAVID: Yes, that's what we have up, thank you.

17

18

19

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24

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29

MS. GARCIA: Okay. So the dataset, when we plot the juvenile fall chum salmon abundance with the number of adult fall chum salmon we see something similar to what we saw for chinook salmon. The more juvenile chum salmon we see in the Northern Bering Sea survey, that's on the bottom axis, the more adults we see returning from those juveniles on the left axis. But then we have these two years shown by the red triangle beginning in 2016 and continuing in 2017 that are farther away from the lines than the other points in the datasets. Something changed just starting in 2016.

30

31

32

Next slide.

33

34

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43

What we think these data are illustrating is that for most of the dataset whatever factor determined adult abundance of Yukon River fall chum salmon were occurring sometime before we catch the juveniles in September of their first year in the ocean. This is suggesting a critical period for survival in the same period to what we saw for chinook salmon. But in 2016 something shifted such that later marine mortality became more important to determining future adult return abundance.

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

Next slide.

We know something dramatically different happened in 2016 in the Bering Sea. That year marks the beginning of a major multi-year marine heatwave in the Bering Sea that lasted through 2019.

0107

1 On this map the red colors are showing very warm sea  
2 surface temperatures that built over time into 2019.  
3 Like the blob in the Gulf of Alaska this Bering Sea  
4 marine heatwave was unprecedented in scale, magnitude  
5 and duration. Unlike Yukon River chinook salmon which  
6 spend their entire marine life in the Bering Sea, fall  
7 chum salmon use the Bering Sea in their first summer at  
8 sea and then they migrate to the Gulf of Alaska and the  
9 North Pacific Ocean for the winter and come back to the  
10 Bering Sea seasonally for the rest of their marine  
11 life. So chum salmon that first entered the Bering Sea  
12 in 2016 were faced with marine heatwave conditions in  
13 both of their marine habitats.

14

15 Next slide.

16

17 Now, when sea surface temperatures  
18 increase we do see changes in several aspects of  
19 juvenile salmon ecology. For example, in warmer years  
20 we see higher proportions of juvenile chinook salmon  
21 from Southern Bering Sea stocks migrating into the  
22 Northern Bering Sea. We also see juvenile sockeye  
23 salmon likely from Bristol Bay entering the Northern  
24 Bering Sea in those warmer years. We also see changes  
25 in the prey items eaten by salmon. For chinook we tend  
26 to see more sandlans in warmer years and caplin in  
27 cooler years. For chum salmon we tend to see lower  
28 proportions of high quality zooplankton. For both  
29 juvenile chinook and chum salmon we see a higher  
30 proportion of empty stomachs as temperatures increase  
31 and finally temperature also affects the health of  
32 juvenile salmon with both chinook and chum salmon  
33 showing lower condition in very warm years.

34

35 So next slide.

36

37 So now that I -- that was the chinook  
38 and chum salmon section and now I'm going to switch  
39 gears a little bit and talk about some of the ongoing  
40 research projects that we have as part of our new  
41 salmon ecology group. And the first of these projects  
42 also utilizes the Northern Bering Sea platform and this  
43 one is trying to understand the role of predation  
44 during the marine life stage of salmon. And this  
45 research has three components. The first is a salmon  
46 shark satellite tagging program where we  
47 opportunistically tag sharks that are caught during the  
48 salmon surveys in the Northern Bering Sea and also on  
49 other surveys throughout the North Pacific. So these  
50

0108

1 tags, you can see it in that bottom left picture, that  
2 chart has two tags. Those tags provide location and  
3 depth information which we can use to find out where  
4 and when salmon sharks might overlap with salmon in the  
5 ocean. The second is to document predator wounds and  
6 scars during salmon surveys. Wounds and scars give us  
7 information on who likely predators are and where  
8 predation is most likely to occur. Most of the time  
9 when we think of predators we think of big animals like  
10 sharks and marine mammals but I just wanted to show  
11 this photo of the lamprey wounds in the top left on  
12 juvenile pink salmon and we tend to see these quite a  
13 bit during our Northern Bering Sea surveys. Finally,  
14 we're using environmental DNA, or eDNA to look for  
15 predators. The surface trawl gear used during our  
16 juvenile salmon surveys is not designed to capture  
17 predators so this new technology allows us to test  
18 ocean water for DNA left behind by predators like  
19 lamprey sharks and marine mammals. We've been doing  
20 eDNA sampling for two years on the Northern Bering Sea  
21 survey and we're going to continue to do that on future  
22 surveys. And this predator research aims to  
23 understand, not only salmon, but other aspects of the  
24 ecosystem that they're a part of.

25

26 Next slide.

27

28 As part of the International Year of  
29 the Salmon Initiative, three high seas expeditions  
30 occurred to study the winter ecology of Pacific salmon.  
31 The last survey from this International initiative  
32 occurred earlier this year and as part of this  
33 expedition four research vessels sampled the area of  
34 the North Pacific Ocean highlighted by the three  
35 polygons in this figure. The goal of these surveys is  
36 to understand the winter distribution, abundance, stock  
37 composition and ecology of Pacific salmon. In  
38 collaboration with NOAA our SOEP program submitted a  
39 proposal to fund analysis using chum salmon samples  
40 collected during this winter survey. For example, we  
41 want to use genetic stock composition to see where  
42 Arctic, Yukon, Kuskokwim chum salmon were caught, where  
43 they may overlap with hatchery fish, what their diet and  
44 condition is like, and to look for competition between  
45 and among salmon species. This proposal was selected  
46 for funding and so we're going to begin analyzing  
47 samples from the survey this winter.

48

49 Next slide.

50

0109

1                   As part of my PHD dissertation I am  
2 planning to build a habitat model for chinook salmon in  
3 the Bering Sea. This model will incorporate many  
4 different data types, including environmental variables  
5 with the goal of being able to predict where and when  
6 chinook occur in the Bering Sea. If we can  
7 successfully predict where and when chinook occur, we  
8 can provide that information to marine fisheries so  
9 that they can avoid fishing areas where chinook salmon  
10 are likely to be present and therefore reduce bycatch.  
11 The left photo on the screen shows an immature chinook  
12 salmon being tagged with a satellite tag, that tag will  
13 record the chinooks depth and temperature every 10  
14 minutes and these satellite data are just one type of  
15 data that's going to be included in the model. And the  
16 figure on the right shows what one of the outputs from  
17 this model is going to look like. So as an example we  
18 use temperature and chlorophyll to predict chinook  
19 salmon abundance on May 5th 2019. The areas of bright  
20 red indicate areas where you're going to have a higher  
21 probability of catching chinook salmon.

22

23                   Next slide.

24

25                   We are also using salmon bony structure  
26 like vertebrae and operculum and operculum is that flap  
27 of tissue that covers the salmon gills, and what we  
28 want to do is use those structures to recreate the life  
29 history of fall chum salmon using stable isotopes and  
30 hormones. So essentially these bony structures act as  
31 time capsules that record the hormone and chemical  
32 concentration experienced by the fish over its entire  
33 life and we can use those hormone and chemical  
34 concentrations to look at growth, stress and  
35 reproduction and see how those might be affected by the  
36 environmental conditions experienced by the fish. This  
37 new technology allows us to learn about the marine life  
38 of salmon without having to catch them in the open  
39 ocean. And that figure that you're looking at that's a  
40 chinook salmon operculum, and what this graph is  
41 showing is that as the fish gets older you can see that  
42 there are peaks in its -- in both the stress and  
43 reproductive hormones so this is just an example of  
44 what we're going to be doing with fall chum salmon.

45

46                   Next slide.

47

48                   And while the majority of our research  
49 focuses on the marine environment we have a new project  
50

0110

1 that is trying to tie together the conditions  
2 experienced in the marine environment with those  
3 experienced during their fresh water migration. We  
4 want to figure out if female chinook salmon are less  
5 equipped to make it to their spawning grounds or are  
6 producing eggs that are less equipped to survive  
7 because of changes in their diet, heat stress  
8 experienced during their long migration or disease.  
9 Particularly for chinook salmon that migrate to the  
10 upper part of the Yukon, it's like they're running an  
11 ultra marathon every day for a month to get to their  
12 spawning grounds and they're doing this without eating.  
13 And then the females have to lay eggs, and if those  
14 eggs are going to survive they need to be packed full  
15 of vitamins. And so the spawning runs that these  
16 chinook salmon are doing, it's an incredible journey.  
17 And if they contract a disease in the ocean then that  
18 makes that journey even harder and if they don't have  
19 enough nutrition then that journey becomes that much  
20 harder. And we believe that changes in chinook salmon  
21 marine diets may be causing female chinook to have  
22 reduced nutrient levels at the start of their  
23 migration, which means that they may not have enough  
24 nutrients to reach their spawning grounds or to pass on  
25 to their eggs. And increased river temperatures and  
26 diseases like ichthyophonus may cause further stress to  
27 an already long migration. We're working with, within  
28 Alaska and in the Canadian Yukon to obtain samples from  
29 female chinook and their eggs to assess them for  
30 nutrient and stress levels. And I want to point out  
31 that this project is getting these samples from fish  
32 that are already on the spawning grounds that have laid  
33 eggs so it's specifically designed to avoid additional  
34 mortality to collect samples. This proposal was  
35 selected for funding and we're going to begin this work  
36 next summer. And we hope that this research will help  
37 pinpoint the factors that are affecting chinook salmon  
38 productivity on the Yukon River.

39

40 Next slide.

41

42 That's all I had for today. My email  
43 is on the screen as are Jim Murphy and Katie Howard who  
44 also are collaborators on this marine research. We do  
45 have a FaceBook page. The QR code for that FaceBook  
46 page is on the screen. Also the work that I presented  
47 on here today, we post updates regularly on our  
48 FaceBook page so if you're ever wondering -- if you  
49 ever want updates that's one of the best places to

50

0111

1 look.

2

3 Thank you for inviting me to speak  
4 today and I'm happy to take any questions.

5

6 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thank you.  
7 Thank you, Sabrina. Any questions from the Council  
8 members.

9

10 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

11

12 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, go ahead.

13

14 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
15 Through the Chair. This is Alissa Rogers. I wanted to  
16 ask you -- I couldn't overhear when you were just  
17 having a discussion and the radio was kind of talking  
18 over, the juvenile salmon from the eggs to when they're  
19 three months in the ocean, you -- I just want to make  
20 sure that I heard you correctly, that you were saying  
21 that the mortality of those juvenile salmon was  
22 happening in fresh water and not in the ocean?

23

24 MS. GARCIA: Thanks for that question.  
25 What I was trying to say is that when -- if you look at  
26 that relationship between the juvenile chinook salmon  
27 and the adults that returned from those juveniles, it's  
28 a pretty straight line so it means that more juveniles  
29 that we see in the survey, the more adults that come  
30 back from those juveniles. So that means that what's  
31 happening after we catch those juveniles in September,  
32 so what's happening to them in their later marine life,  
33 it's pretty consistent year to year. So that means  
34 that whatever is deciding -- whether the future runs  
35 are going to be good or bad is happening before we  
36 catch those juvenile chinook salmon in September. Now  
37 what we don't know is if those factors are happening  
38 during the year that they spend in the fresh water or  
39 the first few months in the ocean of a combination of  
40 both of those life stages. All we know is that by the  
41 time that we catch them in September, the number of  
42 juveniles that we see in the ocean is a really good  
43 indicator of how many adults will come back to the  
44 river three -- you know, two, three, four years down  
45 the line.

46

47 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. And one more  
48 question I had for you, in the research in regards to  
49 the upcoming project that you're going to be doing, are

50

0112

1 you guys also taking into consideration the mining  
2 effects on the spawning grounds in Canada in regards to  
3 the eggs and salmon survival rate?

4  
5 MS. GARCIA: This project, I believe  
6 you're referring to the last one I presented on on the  
7 nutrients and heat stress work, we're not explicitly  
8 incorporating anything in regards to the mining. I do  
9 believe that that's something that gets brought up  
10 quite a bit at the Yukon River Panel meeting but it's  
11 not something that we're considering in this project.  
12 This project is mostly trying to link the food that the  
13 salmon are eating in the ocean and the amounts of  
14 nutrients that they have at the start of their  
15 migration and how heat stress and disease during the  
16 migration might make female chinook salmon less able to  
17 reach their spawning grounds, or if they do reach their  
18 spawning grounds and lay their eggs, if they're not  
19 leaving their eggs with enough nutrients. So what  
20 we're doing is when those females get to the spawning  
21 grounds we take a few of their eggs and a piece of  
22 muscle from the female and we try to find out how much  
23 nutrients did she have stored and how much did those  
24 eggs get. But not anything with mining.

25  
26 MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

27  
28 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you. I  
29 just have one question. I've heard reports from our  
30 good friends from up north saying that chinook salmon  
31 are beginning to show up in their river systems and I  
32 know that -- and they told me that they never had  
33 chinook salmon in their river systems before, this must  
34 because of the cold weather or the cold water, but is  
35 there someone taking a look at that aspect to find out  
36 why they're moving up north?

37  
38 MS. GARCIA: When you say up north, do  
39 you mean in tributaries -- northern tributaries of the  
40 Yukon or do you mean north into the Arctic?

41  
42 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Into the Arctic,  
43 like Colville, what's that called Colville River and  
44 the North Slope area?

45  
46 MS. GARCIA: Oh, yes. There is a  
47 group, I think it's actually through the University of  
48 Alaska-Fairbanks and then there's a Canadian group that  
49 is monitoring salmon into the Arctic and I can't  
50



0113

1 remember the name off the top of my head but I can find  
2 out and send it to Brooke so she can pass it on to you  
3 but they are monitoring salmon expansion into the  
4 Arctic and trying to figure out, you know, which  
5 species of salmon are showing up in places where they  
6 haven't been before. I haven't heard that chinook  
7 salmon are entering those farther north areas but if  
8 you're getting reports of it, I'm sure that these  
9 groups that are focusing on salmon in the Arctic would  
10 be really interested to hear about it. So I'll pass it  
11 along to Brooke and she can pass it along to you.

12

13 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thank you.  
14 Any more questions from the Council members.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Tim, did you have  
19 a question.

20

21 MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
22 Sabrina, thank you for your presentation. I was just  
23 wondering about one of the food fish out other, caplin,  
24 and I was just wondering how susceptible are caplin to  
25 potentially be caught in bycatch fishery and if it is a  
26 -- if it is harvested in the bycatch fishery, any idea  
27 what the metric tons would be like, or the amount or if  
28 it's quantifiable?

29

30 Thank you.

31

32 MS. GARCIA: Yeah, thanks for the  
33 question. In terms of bycatch in the pollock fishery,  
34 I'm not too sure if caplin are getting caught as  
35 bycatch. What I could do is I can look on the NOAA  
36 website and pass it along to Brooke if I find anything.  
37 The only forage fish that I know of that is monitored  
38 as a prohibited species in the bycatch is herring but  
39 I'm not too sure about caplin. Caplin kind of have  
40 these dynamics where they're really, really abundant  
41 when the water is very cold so we typically only see  
42 caplin in colder regimes of the Bering Sea and not  
43 really during warmer years. Interestingly when we went  
44 into the Northern Bering Sea survey this year we did  
45 end up catching lots of caplin so it was a good sign to  
46 see caplin, that waters are maybe getting a little bit  
47 less warm than we've seen them in the last few years.  
48 But I'll follow up with Brooke and let you know what I  
49 find out about caplin caught as bycatch in the pollock

50

0114

1 fishery.

2

3 MR. ANDREW: Thank you.

4

5 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. Qu yana.  
6 Jackie.

7

8 MS. CLEVELAND: Hi, thanks for the  
9 presentation. I found it very interesting and it  
10 reminded me of one of the fish I caught after a flood  
11 at home and I'm from Quinhagak, and I'm Jackie  
12 Cleveland by the way. And then we noticed there was  
13 activity in this freshwater pool that was an old gravel  
14 site pit so from the flooding we know that there are  
15 pike in there so we were trying for pike but we  
16 actually caught a landlocked jack that looked like a  
17 trout, maybe even a lake trout. So people were  
18 confused whether it was a lake trout or a landlocked  
19 jack. But are you guys finding, or is there research  
20 that finds more crossover breeding or if that's even  
21 something that exists from these floods and fish  
22 getting landlocked, I guess?

23

24 Thanks.

25

26 MS. GARCIA: Yes, no problem. Thanks,  
27 Jackie. You know I'm probably not the best person to  
28 ask about freshwater side of things. My focus is  
29 really on the marine realm. I would expect that the  
30 managers, maybe Gerald or Deena might have a bit more  
31 information on what's happening on the freshwater side  
32 of things. Sorry I don't have an answer to your  
33 question.

34

35 MS. CLEVELAND: It's okay, thanks, I'll  
36 ask later.

37

38 MS. JALLEN: Yes, this is Deena Jallen  
39 with Fish and Game. I might just add one little thing  
40 unless Gerald wants to add some more. But, yeah,  
41 thanks for that question, Jackie. It's not something  
42 that we have heard about a lot.....

43

44 (Teleconference interference -  
45 participants not muted - on hold)

46

47 MS. JALLEN: .....you know we did have  
48 a lot of high water this spring so that could have  
49 stranded fish in different places. There is a project

50

0115

1 that's going to go on that's going to start next  
2 season, it's going to be a chinook salmon  
3 radiotelemetry project where they're going to tag  
4 chinook salmon in the lower Yukon and then they'll have  
5 towers along the Yukon to see where those fish go and  
6 so that will be super interesting. And I think they're  
7 also going to try to pair that with genetics and with  
8 other information that they can collect from those fish  
9 before they get tagged. So, yeah, stay tuned next year  
10 for some really good chinook salmon travel and  
11 distribution information.

12

13 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any more  
14 questions for Sabrina.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If not I thank  
19 you for your report and the questions asked. So with  
20 that we'll take a five minute break.

21

22 MS. GARCIA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23

24 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Make sure it's  
25 five so we can keep moving on the agenda.

26

27 (Off record)

28

29 (On record)

30

31 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: It's the  
32 Kuskokwim River 2022 season summary, Fish and Wildlife  
33 Service. How many fish did you catch?

34

35 (Laughter)

36

37 MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll  
38 have Spencer introduce himself first.

39

40 MR. REARDEN: My name is Spencer  
41 Rearden, I'm the Supervisory Biologist here in Bethel  
42 and I was part of the group that was with Fish and  
43 Wildlife Service and the InterTribal Fish Commission  
44 tried to help make decisions this last summer.

45

46 MR. MOSES: Thank you. And my name is  
47 Aaron Moses again. I'm the Subsistence Resource  
48 Specialist for Yukon Delta, and I'm also part of the  
49 Kuskokwim River Fisheries Team. Our team, on the Fish

50

0116

1 and Wildlife side is comprised of Spencer, Boyd  
2 Blihovde, our in-season manager. He had prior family  
3 commitments and he said sorry for that, he'll see you  
4 guys in the spring. We have Chris Tulik, our RIT from  
5 Nightmute and Emmitt -- our new one is Emmitt Nicori  
6 originally from Kwethluk and now living in Napakiak.

7  
8 So for the 2022 season we work closely  
9 with the InterTribal Fish Commission and the Alaska  
10 Department of Fish and Game to manage chinook and chum  
11 salmon on the Kuskokwim River. In the spring Yukon  
12 Delta and the Fish Commission continued its joint river  
13 salmon management strategy and harvest strategy. These  
14 strategies were developed according to the following  
15 guidelines and guiding principles; avoiding collective  
16 overharvest of chinook and chum salmon populations  
17 within the Kuskokwim River watershed due to application  
18 of a precautionary approach to harvest management --  
19 oh, sorry, all this is in your book on Page 52 -- sorry  
20 about that.

21  
22 Also to integrate meaningful local and  
23 traditional knowledge into the fisheries management  
24 decisionmaking process. Strive to provide continued  
25 customary and traditional subsistence harvest.  
26 Substantially [sic] manage other currently healthy  
27 salmon populations within the Kuskokwim River  
28 watershed. And uphold Federal fisheries conservation  
29 and stock diversity mandates.

30  
31 For the 2022 season, we issued five  
32 emergency special actions during the June 1st and June  
33 11th front end closure, three 16 hour setnet gillnet  
34 opportunities were provided. After the front end  
35 closure there were four 12 hour set and driftnet  
36 opportunities and four setnet only opportunities  
37 resulting in 200 hours of fishing during the June and  
38 July fishing season. All fishing opportunities were  
39 limited to six inch or less gillnets to conserve larger  
40 chinook salmon which are predominately female. And  
41 then going all the way to August, on August 15th the  
42 Alaska Department of Fish and Game managers closed the  
43 Kuskokwim River main stem and all salmon bearing  
44 tributaries to all methods and means for coho salmon  
45 based on the available information on the date of the  
46 closure. The Bethel test fish CPEU was the slowest in  
47 22 years and the Kogrukuk and Kwethluk River had  
48 record low coho salmon passages. On August 16th Yukon  
49 Delta and the Fish Commission met and there was a  
50

0117

1 consensus to continue monitoring the coho salmon run  
2 but to not issue any Federal restrictions. The  
3 decisions were based on Alaska Department of Fish and  
4 Game closure was more flexible to the local subsistence  
5 user, users were allowed to fish in areas traditionally  
6 used for whitefish which was different than originally  
7 proposed. The number for coho salmon were so low both  
8 parties were not able to justify announcing a  
9 subsistence opening during the closure dates.

10

11 Also subsistence management in  
12 September had lead to the realization that managing the  
13 fishery from June 1st to September 30 may become the  
14 new normal on the Kuskokwim River. Yukon Delta  
15 National Wildlife Refuge needed more Staff and  
16 resources to effectively manage these salmon species  
17 for this new duration of time.

18

19 For in-season subsistence harvest.  
20 Federal subsistence fishing opportunities resulted in  
21 the harvest of 57,790 salmon from 996 interviews from  
22 the portion of the Refuge from the Fish Commission and  
23 Orutsararmiut Native Council conduct in-season harvest  
24 monitoring surveys. Most of the estimated harvest for  
25 2022 was chinook salmon at 51 percent, at 29,300  
26 followed by sockeye salmon 43 percent, 24,840 and chum  
27 salmon which was six percent at 3,650. All this  
28 harvest information is at the end on Page 59 where it's  
29 detailed from each opening.

30

31 Some new information from the three  
32 river index from the Alaska Department of Fish and  
33 Game, a preliminary run total came out to be 143,622  
34 chinook salmon with a total escapement of 105,774 with  
35 a harvest drainage-wide for the whole Kuskokwim to be  
36 37,848.

37

38 Just a little bit in to how each  
39 species managed on the Kuskokwim, or how it went.

40

41 For chinook salmon, it met all of its  
42 -- they met all their weir based escapement goals which  
43 were the George River, Kogrukluuk and Kwethluk. Chum  
44 salmon did not -- no, wait, where is it -- oh, the chum  
45 salmon have one escapement goal on the Kogrukluuk which  
46 is 15 to 49,000, at the end of the year the weir count  
47 was 15,471, that's different from what is on here, just  
48 updated. For sockeye salmon, the Bethel sonar counted  
49 606,400 sockeye salmon passed the Bethel sonar. And

50

0118

1 there's one weir-based escapement goal on the Kogrukluk  
2 with an escapement of 4,400 to 17,000 and it ended up  
3 being 10,278. For coho there are two weir-based  
4 escapement goals, one on the Kogrukluk and Kwethluk.  
5 The Kogrukluk towards the end of the season was  
6 inoperable due to high water so they weren't able to go  
7 through the whole season. And on the Kwethluk River at  
8 the end of the season there was a count of 6,291 and  
9 the escapement goal for the Kwethluk is greater than  
10 19,000 so both weirs did not meet their escapement  
11 goals for coho.

12

13 With that I'll be glad to answer any  
14 questions.

15

16 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any questions  
17 from the Council members.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. If not  
22 anything to add there Spencer.

23

24 MR. REARDEN: Just a little description  
25 of how we go about trying to make some decisions with  
26 our in-season management. So obviously Fish and  
27 Wildlife Service has assumed jurisdiction and we work  
28 closely with the InterTribal Fish Commission. And what  
29 they bring to the table is the local voice from up and  
30 down the river, which is very important, right, we need  
31 the buy-in of the local people to help us make good  
32 decisions.

33

34 I feel fairly fortunate that the 2022  
35 season that we've had relative to what I'm hearing on  
36 the Yukon, we had openers, you know, we had some  
37 satisfaction. We know it's not enough. We know fish  
38 are getting smaller. We know opportunities, in  
39 general, they're getting fewer. And our biggest worry  
40 now are chum and coho, I mean those are new things.  
41 Chum two years in a row, coho the first time. So we  
42 got a lot more challenges ahead of us but I think we've  
43 got a good recipe for the right people. With the Fish  
44 Commission, they bring in expertise, they bring in  
45 other university fish biologists that are pretty high  
46 caliber people that give us a new way to look at  
47 things. We got local knowledge introduced into these  
48 meetings through the Fish Commission. We have that on  
49 our agenda each time we meet to make sure that we don't  
50

0119

1 skip over it. We try to reach out to the general  
2 public with our meetings. We had meetings set up most  
3 likely towards the end of winter is when we start  
4 hitting the road, kind of getting to the villages. We  
5 know the pandemic kind of stymied some of our efforts  
6 but we look forward to getting out there and doing the  
7 same thing again. And one of the questions we often  
8 ask and we want people to keep thinking, is what did  
9 you like or what you didn't like about how we've been  
10 doing things, good or bad, you know, we're always  
11 looking for ways to improve.

12  
13 And so we kind of have an open door  
14 policy and we hope that people will still engage with  
15 us whenever we can. This is a very high priority for  
16 the Refuge. We come together and we look at what are  
17 our highest priorities but we got a very short Staff,  
18 we don't even have a fish biologist yet, we're having  
19 trouble trying to hire a fish biologist. It's over six  
20 months and we still don't have it advertised. We had  
21 -- we borrowed a fish biologist to help us with some of  
22 the interpretations of the data but we're looking to  
23 build. We're trying to hire a Deputy Manager right  
24 now. We just recently hired an assistant manager. So  
25 we feel we need to gear up a little bit because the  
26 challenges are just going to keep on building, but at  
27 the same time we look forward to what the Fish  
28 Commission has brought to the table. They get us to  
29 look at things a little differently with their  
30 expertise and different views and that's what we're  
31 here for and that's what we're supposed to be doing.  
32 And the local component is what makes it work as best  
33 we can.

34  
35 But there will be more challenges, I'm  
36 afraid. I haven't seen any real good news coming our  
37 way yet and that makes me worry, but we're in it  
38 together, we got the right people, so thanks.

39  
40 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, Qu yana.  
41 Any comments from the Council members.

42  
43 MR. PETER: Mr. Chairman. A little bit  
44 comment. Concerning fishing in the Kuskokwim, you know  
45 from the mouth to the end how many setnets are set in  
46 the river. I always get curious, you know, maybe a few  
47 -- a few setnets are in the river and the other concern  
48 I have is the opening. When the ADFG opens the Federal  
49 wild -- wildlife opens we need to fix that. You know,  
50

0120

1 when I was a commercial fishermen the State of Alaska  
2 set the nets -- sent us the hours, set hours. When  
3 there's no runs they gave us six hours commercial  
4 fishing. But when the run is heavy they gave us 12  
5 hours in the days, Monday, Wednesday, Friday we used to  
6 fish in the river, commercial fishing.

7  
8 Like in the morning 6:00 a.m., opening,  
9 12 hours, before 12 hours all the Kuskokwim River is  
10 empty. Empty. Drifters in my hometown, nobody  
11 fishing. Even though we have another six hours, but  
12 nobody going down to fish. Maybe from the Y all the  
13 way to Tuluksak, maybe the river is empty. Six hours  
14 wasted. Because of -- you know this year the weather's  
15 different. Really different. Really calm, really  
16 sunny. But in the morning it was all right, we got  
17 cold weather, sometimes -- sometimes we hit into fog  
18 and we need to start talking about controlling the  
19 Kuskokwim just like commercial fishing, a lot of boats  
20 in the morning were fishing, crowded. Sometimes I  
21 think about my elders when they're -- sometimes I think  
22 about my elders. If they see so many -- long time ago  
23 when our elders were here, when they tell us to fish,  
24 we fish. When our limit is done, we're done. We don't  
25 use dog teams no more. But only few recreations for  
26 racing in wintertime. But so many fishermens first  
27 opening, so many fishermen. Even though so many  
28 fishermen are out there it depends on their nets. If  
29 you make them good you catch, if you mend them, hung  
30 them, wrong way you will not catch fish.

31  
32 So the escapement. I wonder how many  
33 escapements this year for chinooks and chums and  
34 sockeye totally going into tributaries. You know we  
35 have high water all summer long, I know. Raining.  
36 Raining all the time in July. Start raining and the  
37 high water comes in in the Kuskokwim and some of the  
38 weirs didn't work so well. I wonder when the high  
39 waters, you check out the weirs how many fish are going  
40 through or just idle for not checking.

41  
42 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

43  
44 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana, Phillip.

45  
46 MR. MOSES: Yeah, through the Chair.  
47 Quyana, I could address a couple of those questions and  
48 I could address one of the questions that Mr. Parks had  
49 about the 6:00 a.m. I'll start off with the setnet  
50



0121

1 numbers. If you look on Page 59 on the effort, the  
2 most setnet numbers that we've seen on the Kuskokwim  
3 were 146 and that's the most that we've seen on the  
4 Kuskokwim since we've been doing this. And if you look  
5 at the top -- the top of it, when you see those 457,  
6 these are the driftnet boats, these are the amount of  
7 boats that are out during these opportunities that we  
8 are estimating with the Fish Commission and ONC, and so  
9 you could see that in the beginning there were about  
10 457 boats, 473, 572, and then when it gets into July it  
11 gets -- it went way down to 147. But for a lot of the  
12 setnets we're consistently seeing about 70 or 80  
13 setnets on the Kuskokwim during those openings.  
14

15 As for hours, that's one of the things  
16 that Spencer talked about when we went to the villages  
17 and asked what's going good and what's going bad, a lot  
18 of the villages stated that they wanted the elders to  
19 fish early so they wanted to have it at 6:00 a.m., so  
20 that the elders could go out before all the young  
21 people wake up they said.  
22

23 (Laughter)  
24

25 MR. MOSES: And so that's one of the  
26 ones that we go to the villages and ask what's right,  
27 what's going right and what's going on, what would we'd  
28 like to change. And so I don't remember when that was,  
29 I think it was around 2018, that's when we started  
30 going from 6:00 a.m., to 6:00 p.m.  
31

32 And as for this year, escapement again,  
33 the total escapement for chinook was 105,774.  
34

35 So.  
36

37 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, Quyana.  
38 John.  
39

40 MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
41 My name is John Andrew from Kwethluk. We are changing  
42 the way we fish nowadays. Most of my friends and the  
43 people about my age, or pretty close to my age or  
44 younger they rather fish early in the morning before  
45 the heat of the day. They all said they do better the  
46 first few hours. I always like it that way so I can  
47 get done with my fishing and get my relatives they  
48 could come down and cut the fish before noon. And some  
49 of us, for this year, didn't fish setnet or driftnet in  
50

0122

1 June, our elder waited until July 3. On July 3, like I  
2 mentioned before, I did good that morning. It was a  
3 short setnet. I think I got lucky but I got up early  
4 before my other relatives could borrow my boat or run  
5 away with my setnet.

6  
7 (Laughter)

8  
9 MR. ANDREW: I got 82 in that morning  
10 in about three hours and I was done for the day. And I  
11 called my relatives and said the fish is waiting to  
12 work at the camp and they came down to help and gave  
13 some of them away too and then they borrowed my setnet  
14 and boat same day and then the rest of July I didn't  
15 bother to -- I didn't go out to fish no more, until I  
16 was hoping to fish for silvers because a lot of us like  
17 to salt them, freeze them, jar them and they keep  
18 longer that way because -- and if you work on fish on a  
19 rainy day they get moldy easy. And we were  
20 disappointed because one of those working group or --  
21 or, yeah, the working group meeting we asked the State  
22 -- or the managers there to have the Feds take over the  
23 -- because there was a conservation concern on the coho  
24 run too. We were just a little -- because we wanted at  
25 least a chance to fish for a taste of fish. And under  
26 Title VIII our people that subsist are guaranteed  
27 subsistence priority and you know we didn't see that  
28 this summer. And usually the four villages, when we  
29 met, they were talking about this one and they even  
30 asked -- I think they even asked the InterTribal Fish  
31 Commissioners the same question and they didn't follow  
32 up on it. I know they didn't -- the Department then  
33 gave it to you folks and you folks did not -- I heard  
34 -- I heard it around that the Refuge refused to take  
35 the management over (indiscernible) conservation. That  
36 was one big disappointment for us at the villages. But  
37 the people that work in there along with the State  
38 Staff, we want to (indiscernible) right now, thank you.

39  
40 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana, John.  
41 Quyana, gentlemen for your report. The Kuskokwim River  
42 salmon summary. On the agenda we have the Kuskokwim  
43 River InterTribal Fish Commission. Kuskokwim River  
44 InterTribal Fish Commission.

45  
46 MS. SCHOMOGYI: Good afternoon.....

47  
48 REPORTER: Push the little.....

49  
50

0123

1 MS. SCHOMOGYI: .....my name is.....

2

3 REPORTER: There you go.

4

5 MS. SCHOMOGYI: Good afternoon. Now  
6 you can hear me?

7

8 (Council nods affirmatively)

9

10 MS. SCHOMOGYI: Maybe it's good evening  
11 at this point. Through the Chair. My name is Terese  
12 Schomogyi. I'm the Programs Manager with the Kuskokwim  
13 River InterTribal Fish Commission. I've been here  
14 about two years now. I'm really happy to be at my  
15 first RAC meeting in person and meet you all. So I  
16 will be providing the Fish Commission's fall update on  
17 behalf of our Commission.

18

19 So the InterTribal Fish Commission  
20 represents the 33 Federally-recognized tribes of the  
21 Kuskokwim River in fisheries management, research and  
22 monitoring. And we do this to protect the health of  
23 the salmon fishery on the Kuskokwim as well as to  
24 protect all of your traditional way of life. You can  
25 find our report on Page 60 of your meeting packet.

26

27 I'll be brief.

28

29 The first bit of the report shows our  
30 leadership and Staff, our Executive Council that was  
31 voted in in April. There are some updates to our  
32 Staff. Kevin Whitworth is our new Executive Director.  
33 He took this position in an interim role in April after  
34 Mary Peltola left to run for Congress, and since  
35 September 1st he has been our formal, official  
36 Executive Director. Andrew Magel is in the back of  
37 room, Andrew if you want to give a wave, he's been with  
38 us since August. He's our new Fisheries Technician and  
39 he's a Jesuit volunteer. And as of a week or two ago  
40 we hired an operations manager, Nikki Pollock, she was  
41 born and raised in Bethel and she's an enrolled tribal  
42 citizen at ONC. We're really happy to have her  
43 onboard.

44

45 I think Aaron Moses and Spencer Rearden  
46 from Yukon Delta gave a really good overview of our  
47 salmon management this summer. The 2022 season was the  
48 seventh season of collaborative management between the  
49 Fish Commission and Yukon Delta. We are really

50

0124

1 grateful for that partnership. And at this point, with  
2 the model that we've established for a collaborative  
3 management we're really hoping that that can be taken  
4 up between tribes and Federal agencies throughout the  
5 state of Alaska. As Spencer said it's really good that  
6 we have local voices managing the fishery. We're  
7 really grateful for those who are involved, many of you  
8 RAC members are involved in different ways with the  
9 Fish Commission.

10

11 In April, our Commissioners elected  
12 five in-season managers, up from four in previous  
13 years, to manage the fishery with Yukon Delta. Those  
14 in-season managers are Betty Magnuson from McGrath,  
15 Megan Leary from Napaimute, Mike Williams, Sr., from  
16 Akiak, Avery Hoffman from Bethel, and Paul Cleveland  
17 from Quinhagak. So that's riverwide representation  
18 that was sitting at the table with the Federal  
19 government to manage Federal waters of the Kuskokwim  
20 River.

21

22 Aaron and Spencer gave an overview of  
23 the Joint Salmon Management Strategy that our teams  
24 worked on before and during the salmon season. And  
25 I'll give a couple updated numbers for salmon harvest  
26 that have come out just this past week. I've been  
27 working with some other members of our team on  
28 finalizing that report and we'll send it out to the  
29 public as soon as it's available.

30

31 But in Federal waters of the Kuskokwim  
32 River, specifically between Tuntutuliak and Akiak, we  
33 estimate that about 58,940 total salmon were harvested,  
34 29,920 of these were kings, 25,400 of these were reds  
35 and 3,630 of these were chum. We don't have in-season  
36 harvest estimates for coho salmon at this time and  
37 these numbers will be expanded and refined with the  
38 Alaska Department of Fish and Game's post season  
39 household survey.

40

41 During the 2022 salmon season we  
42 operated several salmon research and monitoring  
43 programs. These included a smolt out-migration or  
44 screw trap on the Kwethluk River that counted and  
45 identified salmon smolt as they were leaving the  
46 Kwethluk system. We partner this program with the  
47 Kwethluk River weir which counts the adult salmon that  
48 go into spawn so we can get a sense of how many fish  
49 leave the river and how many come back. We also

50

0125

1 operated the Takotna River weir. We operated our  
2 community based harvest monitoring program in eight  
3 villages in the lower river. And with some other  
4 information provided by ONC and by Yukon Delta National  
5 Wildlife Refuge we're able to produce in-season harvest  
6 estimates after different openers with that information  
7 that we got directly from local fishermen in those  
8 villages. We also piloted an environmental DNA project  
9 at the Kwethluk River weir. This is also known as eDNA  
10 and essentially what it does is takes water samples  
11 from the river and filters out different fish DNA found  
12 in fish slime, fish excrements, things like that and  
13 then we can analyze that DNA in the lab after the  
14 season and get a sense of how many fish were in the  
15 river at that time. We're hoping to expand that  
16 project in coming seasons and hoping to analyze those  
17 samples at UAF this winter.

18  
19 As for advocacy work, we've been  
20 involved at the North Pacific Fishery Management  
21 Council pushing for reductions in bycatch in the Bering  
22 Sea Aleutian Island pollock fisheries as well as for  
23 increasing tribal involvement and the involvement of  
24 indigenous knowledge in their processes. We have also  
25 submitted some proposals to the Board of Fish. Serena  
26 Fitka mentioned Proposal 140 about reducing commercial  
27 fishing time in Area M. That will be discussed further  
28 at this meeting, I think. That's something that we  
29 have supported. And we're also now a part of the  
30 Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim Tribal Consortium with the Yukon  
31 River InterTribal Fish Commission, AVCP, TCC and  
32 Kawerak. And this tribal consortium represents 118  
33 tribes in Western and Interior Alaska with the goal of  
34 restoring, maintaining and conserving the health and  
35 diversity of the Bering Sea ecosystem from rivers to  
36 the ocean. This tribal consortium has been doing a lot  
37 of work, for example, helping organize the tribal  
38 consultations that the Department of Interior and NOAA  
39 put on earlier this month here in Bethel and also in  
40 Fairbanks. That's something we're actively working  
41 within and with those tribal partners to push for  
42 restoration of our salmon populations.

43  
44 And I also wanted to give a brief  
45 overview of our Kuskokwim River salmon situation  
46 report, which looks like this. It's not in your  
47 meeting booklet but I believe Brooke gave it to you all  
48 ahead of time, and if not -- oh, she'll give it to you  
49 now and for members of the public it's on the back  
50

0126

1 table, you can grab a copy if you'd like. We didn't  
2 finalize this before our meeting materials were due but  
3 we're happy to have this first version of our situation  
4 report right now. And I'll let you look it over in  
5 your time, but to be brief, it discusses the multi-  
6 species, multi-year salmon collapses that we're  
7 experiencing on the Kuskokwim with the declines of  
8 chinook, chum and now coho salmon. And it walks  
9 through the data, the Western scientific data but also  
10 indigenous knowledge and local observations and uses  
11 all of this information to build a story of what's  
12 going on on the Kuskokwim. Some things that we note in  
13 this report are that because of the continued  
14 sacrifices and conservation efforts by Kuskokwim  
15 subsistence communities, we've been able to meet  
16 chinook salmon escapement goals, but those sacrifices  
17 mean that subsistence harvesters are only meeting about  
18 one third of their long-term subsistence -- chinook  
19 salmon subsistence harvest needs. Chum salmon remain  
20 continually low on the Kuskokwim River. The 2022 chum  
21 salmon returns at the weirs that they have monitoring  
22 chum were down 70 to 84 percent of long-term averages.  
23 And 2022 is the third year of an alarmingly steep  
24 decline of coho salmon. 2022 abundance of coho was  
25 down 57 percent at the Bethel test fishery and data  
26 shows that these declines began around 2019.

27  
28 There are lots of sockeye in the  
29 Kuskokwim it seems, which is something we're grateful  
30 for but it is difficult for our subsistence communities  
31 to harvest those with all the different gillnet  
32 restrictions that go on while the sockeye are running.

33  
34 In this situation report we also talk  
35 about some of the factors causing these salmon  
36 declines. We know there are lots of different things  
37 at play. But it's very clear to us that the intercept  
38 of chum salmon in the South Alaska Peninsula, also  
39 known as Area M, as well as bycatch of chinook and chum  
40 salmon in the Bering Sea pollock fishery definitely  
41 have a hand in these salmon declines. And, moreover,  
42 they're something that we can control directly through  
43 management actions. So we focus on these. There's  
44 some new data in this report that shows that about 57  
45 percent, on average, of the chum salmon caught in the  
46 Area M June Fishery were bound for Coastal Western  
47 Alaska rivers which includes the Kuskokwim River.  
48 That's almost 10 times the impact that the Bering Sea  
49 pollock fishery chum bycatch has on intercepting chum  
50

0127

1 salmon bound towards our area.

2

3 I think I'll wrap up there. I have  
4 some more I could share but I want to be respectful of  
5 everyone's time and give you all time to look over the  
6 situation report. So with that, Quyana, and I'm happy  
7 to take any questions you might have.

8

9 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana. Any  
10 questions from the Council members.

11

12 Go ahead, Jackie.

13

14 MS. CLEVELAND: Quyana, Chair. I might  
15 be asking too soon but I remember we spoke of  
16 documenting the local knowledge and is that for the  
17 near future to start or has it started yet?

18

19 MS. SCHOMOGYI: Thanks for the  
20 question, Jackie. Through the Chair. What Jackie is  
21 referring to at a strategic planning retreat that the  
22 Fish Commission had earlier this year, our Staff was  
23 directed to begin documenting indigenous knowledge  
24 which is something that we're really excited to do. We  
25 have applied for a grant with Indian Collective to  
26 begin planning for some of that, have yet to hear back.  
27 We're actively pursuing more funding to try to figure  
28 out what we want to do. So if you all have suggestions  
29 about indigenous knowledge you think would be useful  
30 for the Fish Commission to document and how that might  
31 look, come find me, I'm very interested to hear what  
32 you have to say.

33

34 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

35

36 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes.

37

38 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Through the  
39 Chair. Some of that traditional knowledge is already  
40 being started. If you want to get a hold of Janessa  
41 Esquible, she's currently working on a project called  
42 Kusko (In Yup'ik) where she gets historical knowledge,  
43 past history knowledge of how fishing was conducted,  
44 how it's being done now and what our future is going to  
45 be looking like and how we're going to be -- changes of  
46 our traditional practices. There's going to be a  
47 meeting this November that you might be participating  
48 in so just to let you know there's -- if you want to  
49 partner with them they would appreciate all the help  
50

0128

1 they can get.

2

3 Thanks.

4

5 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Response -- no --  
6 okay, Qu yana, Alissa. Any other questions.

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If not, thank you  
11 very much for your update and report.

12

13 MS. SCHOMOGYI: Thank you.

14

15 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. Going down  
16 the agenda we have a missing person, meaning that one  
17 who was going to give the report on the -- okay, I was  
18 looking at a note that she had disappeared but she's  
19 back, the humpback fish project update -- whitefish  
20 project update.

21

22 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. I believe  
23 Frank Harris is on the line and he's prepared to give  
24 that update.

25

26 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay.

27

28 MS. MCDAVID: Frank, are you with us.

29

30 MR. HARRIS: Yeah, I'm here, can you  
31 hear me.

32

33 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Go ahead.

34

35 MR. HARRIS: Okay. Yeah, good  
36 afternoon, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. For the  
37 record my name's Frank Harris, I'm a Fisheries  
38 Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
39 Kenai Fisheries Resource Office.

40

41 And I just wanted to present a little  
42 bit about the -- it's actually a broad whitefish  
43 project that we're conducting. It's an effort to  
44 collect the baseline information and address  
45 subsistence fishery concerns about seeing fewer broad  
46 whitefish than in the past. The Orutsararmiut Native  
47 Council, the Native Village of Napaimute and the U.S.  
48 Fish and Wildlife Service have begun a four year study  
49 of broad whitefish spawning in the Kuskokwim River near  
50



0129

1 McGrath, Alaska. So broad whitefish have multiple  
2 spawning areas but this is just the one area that we're  
3 studying and it's near McGrath. This project was  
4 funded by OSM during the 2022 FRMP funding cycle.

5

6 The purpose of this study is to  
7 estimate the number of broad whitefish on the spawning  
8 grounds between McGrath and Medfra, estimate harvest  
9 rates of the spawning aggregate in the Kuskokwim River  
10 and describe population demographics, such as age and  
11 weight.

12

13 To accomplish this U.S. Fish and  
14 Wildlife Service, with the help of ONC will be using  
15 electrofishing techniques to capture, mark and  
16 recapture these tagged broad whitefish. Since most  
17 broad whitefish spawn every other year, so they'll  
18 spawn multiple times throughout their life but usually  
19 it's every other year, it will take several years of  
20 sampling to estimate the total number on spawning in  
21 the area. Tagging will occur in the fall and last  
22 about six to eight weeks.

23

24 During 2022, this fall, we began on  
25 August 22nd and tagging ended October 11th, just as the  
26 ice started to run. In 2022 we had one tagging crew  
27 and we tagged 628 broad whitefish. In 2023 we will  
28 have two crews sampling to maximize the number of fish  
29 we can tag. We anticipate similar timing for the  
30 remaining three years.

31

32 Excuse me one second here.

33

34 These tags, they're long and grey and  
35 they are located near the dorsal fin. They have a tag  
36 number, each one is individually -- has an individual  
37 tag number and then each one has a 1 800 phone number  
38 listed on it to call the Fish and Wildlife Service to  
39 report the tag. Additionally, tags can be reported to  
40 ONC, NVN, and the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

41

42 After these broad whitefish are done  
43 spawning in mid- to late October, broad whitefish will  
44 drop back down stream of McGrath and overwinter. Some  
45 of these fish will travel as far down stream as  
46 Tuntutuliak and we know from previous tagging studies  
47 that some of these fish will be harvested down stream  
48 of McGrath. As part of our study we will need to  
49 estimate mortality from the harvest and this is where  
50

0130

1 the help of the subsistence fishers come in. When you  
2 catch a tagged broad whitefish, we would ask that you  
3 call that 1900 number and we'd like to know the date  
4 caught, location, tag number, your name, the village  
5 you live in, and a phone number so we can call you back  
6 if we need to and we're going to enter this into a  
7 monthly drawing for a gas card. Additionally, there  
8 will be a yearly grand prize gas card. It's going to  
9 be a substantial amount.

10

11 The data from these tagged recoveries  
12 will be used to estimate from this population and  
13 inform researchers how many tags are no longer in the  
14 population and are available for recapture in the  
15 future. So getting all the tagged fish reported is  
16 very important for accurate estimates and we appreciate  
17 everyone's help on this.

18

19 I thank you for your time and I'm  
20 available to answer any questions you may have.

21

22 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any questions  
23 from the Council members.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If not thank you  
28 for your report. It would be nice to have a  
29 frozen.....

30

31 (Laughter)

32

33 MR. HARRIS: All right, thank you.

34

35 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: .....whitefish --  
36 it would be nice to have a frozen whitefish right now.

37

38 (Laughter)

39

40 TUNTUTULIAK: (Indiscernible) from  
41 Tuntutuliak.

42

43 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, go ahead  
44 Tuntutuliak, make it short please. Thank you.

45

46 TUNTUTULIAK: (Indiscernible) people  
47 that are studying on the whitefish and they're -- the  
48 beavers are making dams where they're going to spawn  
49 and there are lots of pike -- the pike predators, there

50

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1 are -- they're good for -- the pikes are good for  
2 fishing springtime, we eat them around -- and them  
3 black fish, they got good eggs, when we eat them, we  
4 can eat them raw, cooked or frozen. And I like the  
5 study right now. I haven't heard about that -- but the  
6 pikes are really (indiscernible).

7

8                   Quyana.

9

10                   MR. HARRIS: Thank you for that  
11 information.

12

13                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, Quyana. If  
14 there's no other comments regarding the humpback  
15 whitefish project we'll go on to the next agenda item  
16 and that's the proposal presentation procedure and I'll  
17 ask Brooke to provide that.

18

19                   MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So  
20 we're at the point of the meeting where the Council is  
21 about to take up the Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
22 fisheries proposals. Just as a reminder there is a  
23 procedure for each proposal that we follow. That could  
24 be found on Page 119 of your meeting books. There's  
25 also a handout of the procedures, standalone, on the  
26 back table back there. Just as a reminder to the  
27 Council, for your regional proposal, there's only one  
28 so you have to take that one up. But for the crossover  
29 proposals, if we -- I guess the Council needs to sort  
30 of decide before Staff presents the analysis if those  
31 are something you do want to take up or if you want to  
32 defer to the RACs in those regions. If the Fisheries  
33 Staff does begin to present the analysis, at that point  
34 we will have to go through the whole procedure for  
35 those proposals. So just a little housekeeping  
36 announcement about the proposals.

37

38                   Thank you.

39

40                   MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

41

42                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Go ahead, Alissa.

43

44                   MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
45 Through the Chair. I propose an agenda change that we  
46 start taking up proposals first thing in the morning.  
47 I'm a little bit brain fried right now and we're going  
48 to get bogged down and we're going to be sitting here  
49 all night trying to figure out what we're -- what

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0132

1 process that we're just now hearing. So I think if  
2 it's okay we take up the proposals in the morning and  
3 move on to the next agenda item.

4  
5 (Pause)

6  
7 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, we'll go  
8 into the proposals tomorrow morning when everybody has  
9 had a chance to dream about them all night.

10  
11 (Laughter)

12  
13 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: So let's go on to  
14 the temporary -- Agenda Item No. D, on Temporary  
15 Fisheries Special Actions.

16  
17 (Pause)

18  
19 MS. ROGERS: What page is it on?

20  
21 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Page -- it  
22 doesn't say.....

23  
24 MS. ROGERS: It doesn't say.

25  
26 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: .....but it will  
27 be before -- 213.

28  
29 (Pause)

30  
31 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Whenever you're  
32 ready.

33  
34 MR. FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
35 Members of the Council. Good evening. My name is  
36 Kevin Foley for the record and I am a Fish Biologist  
37 with the Office of Subsistence Management. This is my  
38 first time appearing before you and I want to say thank  
39 you. I would be lying if I didn't say I was a little  
40 nervous right now but I am very humbled by the amount  
41 of collective knowledge that this Council represents.  
42 So thank you.

43  
44 I'm here to provide you with  
45 information and bring to the Council's attention a  
46 temporary Federal special action that OSM is in the  
47 very early stages of our analysis. This is just a  
48 briefing and is not an action item for this meeting.

49  
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0133

1                   The temporary Federal special action  
2 request, FSA23-01 was submitted by the Native Village  
3 of Quinhagak and requests to limit the harvest of  
4 chinook and chum salmon on the Kanektok River in June  
5 to only Federally-qualified rural residents until the  
6 next regulatory cycle. The request notes that chum  
7 salmon throughout Western Coastal Alaska are in serious  
8 decline with the poorest returns on record and  
9 escapement goals through the AYK region are largely  
10 being unmet. They also state that chinook salmon have  
11 been in a long period of decline statewide.

12  
13                   This request was originally received by  
14 OSM as a proposal to modify Federal subsistence fishing  
15 regulations during the 2023 and 2025 fisheries  
16 regulatory cycle. However, the application was  
17 received after the application period closed and could  
18 not proceed during this cycle. In June of this year,  
19 OSM Staff worked with the Native Village of Quinhagak  
20 to have the proposal resubmitted as a temporary special  
21 action request for the 2023 and 2024 seasons.

22  
23                   (Pause)

24  
25                   MR. FOLEY: We are just starting the  
26 process of analyzing this request and don't have  
27 additional information to provide you at this time. As  
28 it is a temporary special action request there will be  
29 public hearings to seek input. There will also be  
30 tribal and ANCSA Corporation consultations. As we  
31 received this request so early the Council will take up  
32 this at your winter 2023 meeting and provide a  
33 recommendation to the Federal Subsistence Board.

34  
35                   Once, again, for the record, I'm Kevin,  
36 a Fish Biologist with the Office of Subsistence  
37 Management. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Members of the  
38 Council for your time. This concludes my presentation  
39 on FSA23-01. And I'm standing by for any questions you  
40 may have regarding this agenda item.

41  
42                   MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

43  
44                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Go ahead.

45  
46                   MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
47 Through the Chair. Do you have any paper documentation  
48 on this or justifications and all the analysis of this  
49 yet or is this just an introduction that this has come  
50

0134

1 about?

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10 questions.

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MR. FOLEY: Through the Chair. Ms. Rogers. This is just an introductory information for the Council to be looking out for in the future.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any other questions.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. Going down the agenda items we're going to take the fish 2024 fisheries tomorrow morning too as well, so we'll go down to Item F, Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program updates. Is someone online or someone in person going to provide the update.

(Pause)

MR. FOLEY: One moment, Mr. Chair.

(Pause)

MR. FOLEY: We're taking the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Update, is that correct?

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes.

MR. FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. Again, this is.....

MS. MCDAVID: Sorry, Kevin. Just to jump in. We're going to skip the FRMP update and the PIN update because there'll be more discussion for that and we'll do that in the morning if that's okay, and move on to the Partners update if that's okay.

MR. FOLEY: Okay. Yeah, that's fine.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you.

MR. FOLEY: Thank you. Let me just find that please.

(Pause)

0135

1 MR. FOLEY: All right. Mr. Chair.  
2 Members of the Council. Once again my name is Kevin  
3 Foley and I'm your Fish Biologist with the Office of  
4 Subsistence Management. On October 20th the Office of  
5 Subsistence Management posted a notice of funding  
6 opportunity for the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring  
7 Program. This is a competitive grant for Alaska Native  
8 and rural non-profit organizations. The intent of this  
9 program is to strengthen Alaska Native and rural  
10 involvement in Federal subsistence management by  
11 providing salary funds to organizations so they can  
12 hire a professional biologist, social scientist or  
13 educator. The grant also provides funds for science  
14 and culture camps and paid student internships.

15

16 More information on this funding  
17 opportunity is available on grants.gov and grant  
18 solutions. You may also contact Karen Hyer by way of  
19 email or phone and Karen's contact information is at  
20 the bottom of Page 222 of your Council booklet.

21

22 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the  
23 Council. This concludes the Partners for Fisheries  
24 Monitoring Program update.

25

26 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you. Any  
27 questions from the Council members.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: I just have one  
32 question. So the grant can be for anything to monitor  
33 projects, other than fish, or just fisheries related?

34

35 MR. FOLEY: Perhaps my colleagues in  
36 the room may be better informed to address that  
37 question.

38

39 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Kevin. Yeah,  
40 this is Pippa Kenner with OSM. I'm not the most  
41 familiar person with the Partners Program but I do know  
42 that basically what it does is funds positions, like  
43 for instance in our non-profits, so ONC and Napaimute,  
44 those organizations both have Partners, their positions  
45 are funded through our Partners Program, it's like an  
46 internship. Then the other part of it is the Fisheries  
47 Resource Monitoring Program and that's where they apply  
48 for funding to do research.

49

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0136

1                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Follow up  
2 question. Most of the fishery monitoring programs are  
3 in the in-river systems, yet there's very few out along  
4 the Coast where people also harvest fish and salmon and  
5 they don't seem to have an opportunity to work on  
6 monitoring fisheries other than the test fisheries that  
7 some of the villages have been involved with, Fish and  
8 Wildlife, or Fish and Game in trying to monitor the  
9 fish that are heading to the Yukon River and I think  
10 that there should be some opportunities created for  
11 those on the Coast, not just for salmon but for other  
12 fisheries like halibut, whitefish, tomcods and other  
13 fish that they harvest for subsistence purposes.

14  
15                   So that's just my comment regarding  
16 this here.

17  
18                   Okay, thank you. And we'll go on to  
19 the next item, Item G, Joint Meeting North American  
20 Workshop.

21  
22                   MS. ROGERS: It's 6:00 o'clock.

23  
24                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: I know, just one  
25 more item, if we go through one more item I can say  
26 that we almost went through the full page of the  
27 agenda.

28  
29                   (Laughter)

30  
31                   MS. MCDAVID: This will be quick.

32  
33                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay.

34  
35                   MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
36 Members of the Council. My name is Tom Plank and I am  
37 a Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence  
38 Management. And I am resenting an announcement about a  
39 caribou and ungulate conference next year that  
40 hopefully will be of interest to Council members. I'll  
41 also be seeking your input on a couple matters related  
42 to the conference. An informational flyer about the  
43 conference can be found in your meeting books on Page  
44 223.

45  
46                   A joint meeting of the North American  
47 Caribou Workshop and Arctic Ungulate Conference will be  
48 held in Anchorage from May 8th through the 12th of  
49 2023. The meeting will bring together an international  
50



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1 group of managers, researchers and indigenous and local  
2 knowledge holders who will want to share their  
3 knowledge of caribou, muskoxen, Dall sheep, moose and  
4 reindeer. The theme for the meeting is crossing  
5 boundaries. Arctic ungulates regularly cross landscape  
6 boundaries connecting ecological processes between  
7 different systems. This necessitates collaboration  
8 across geographical boundaries and also calls for  
9 crossing boundaries between Western Science and local  
10 and indigenous knowledge. The conference will include  
11 preliminary sessions on co-management, the status of  
12 caribou globally, integrating Western science with  
13 indigenous knowledge and the effects of climate change  
14 on caribou. Field trips, workshops, research talks,  
15 symposiums and a poster session will also be part of  
16 the conference. The conference web address is included  
17 on the flier in your meeting books and I encourage you  
18 to visit that website, and also for more detailed  
19 information about abstract submissions that are due by  
20 December 15th, 2022.

21

22 So before I move on to my two topics to  
23 discuss are there any questions.

24

25 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any questions  
26 from the Council members.

27

28 (No comments)

29

30 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: I just want to  
31 share you a story that I heard last week. I got a  
32 relative of mine that owns reindeer up at Stebbins area  
33 and he says that people come around hunting for caribou  
34 and occasionally they shoot one of his reindeer that he  
35 owns so he's trying to get people to recognize that  
36 there's a difference between a reindeer and a caribou  
37 but for most of us that have never seen them they all  
38 look alike. So I just wanted to share that story and I  
39 thank you for your presentation. And with that we'll  
40 break for tonight and come back tomorrow morning.

41

42 Yes?

43

44 MS. MCDAVID: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I'm  
45 ready for dinner too, but we have to.....

46

47 (Laughter)

48

49 MS. MCDAVID: I believe Tom needs the

50

0138

1 Council to do one small action, at least, and that is  
2 to potentially choose a member of this Council and an  
3 alternate or two to potentially attend this conference  
4 next year. Thank you.

5

6 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Oh, okay.

7

8 MR. PLANK: Also I had a second topic  
9 to go over as well.

10

11 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, go ahead.

12

13 MR. PLANK: Go ahead, thank you, Mr.  
14 Chair.

15

16 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: And then address  
17 that appointment of Council members to participate in  
18 the May conference.

19

20 MR. PLANK: All right. So the first  
21 topic is we're asking for input, as a Council, one of  
22 the events that will take place during the conference  
23 is a facilitated discussion on Alaska State and Federal  
24 ungulate management. This session is intended to be a  
25 neutral forum for Council members, such as yourselves,  
26 State Fish and Game Advisory Committee members, Federal  
27 and State agency Staff and other interested parties to  
28 discuss ungulate management in Alaska specifically  
29 regarding harvest regulations.

30

31 So my question for the Council is, what  
32 topics and issues would you like to be discussed during  
33 the session and it could be anything of concern related  
34 to harvest regulations and ungulate management.

35

36 So, Mr. Chair, now I'll turn the  
37 discussion over to you on this topic before I move on  
38 to the second topic and your suggestions would be very  
39 important in setting the discussion agenda.

40

41 (Pause)

42

43 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: (Inaudible - no  
44 mic)

45

46 REPORTER: Turn your mic on.

47

48 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Oh, sorry about  
49 that. I was just having an executive session with our  
50

0139

1 elder -- with Phillip here.

2

3 (Laughter)

4

5 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Talking about  
6 moose, caribou with anglers, that's what they call  
7 ungulate animals but I know moose is not necessarily  
8 that but (In Yup'ik)

9

10 INTERPRETER: When they talk about the  
11 caribou during the meeting, he's asking him if he wants  
12 to attend.

13

14 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: What about you  
15 Jackie.

16

17 MS. CLEVELAND: About what, our  
18 suggestions?

19

20 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, I'm  
21 recommending or asking if you would want to represent  
22 the Council.

23

24 MS. CLEVELAND: Maybe.

25

26 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah.

27

28 MS. CLEVELAND: I'll say yes but it's  
29 so far away. Qu yana, through the Chair. And, Qu yana  
30 Chair for (In Yup'ik), I would accept it.

31

32 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: What about you  
33 Phillip.

34

35 MR. PETER: Yeah. Yes.

36

37 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Good. So you got  
38 two names already.

39

40 (Laughter)

41

42 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, let's go on  
43 to your next topic.

44

45 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That  
46 was actually my second topic. A critical component of  
47 the conference is making sure that local knowledge  
48 holders are able to attend and participate. The Office  
49 of Subsistence Management is able to provide financial

50

0140

1 support to send one member of each Subsistence Regional  
2 Advisory Council to attend the conference. So we're  
3 asking the Council to nominate a member to attend and  
4 participate. Again, the conference will be held May  
5 8th through the 12th in Anchorage and OSM will cover  
6 all expenses such as travel and conference  
7 registration. One expectation of the nominated Council  
8 member is that they will be an active participant in  
9 the State and Federal Ungulate Management Symposium for  
10 which you just provided -- you know, for the input.

11

12 So you're going to go with those

13 two.....

14

15 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes.

16

17 MR. PLANK: .....with Jackie and

18 Phillip.

19

20 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes.

21

22 MR. PLANK: Okay.

23

24 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

25

26 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes.

27

28 MS. ROGERS: You could write my name

29 down because I'm sending myself over anyway.

30

31 (Pause)

32

33 MS. ROGERS: You could put my name down

34 too, I'm going to send myself over, I'm going to be at

35 your conference.

36

37 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. Three

38 names. One volunteering and two that's been appointed.

39 So if one of them doesn't make it then the volunteer

40 will.....

41

42 MS. ROGERS: I'll be there.

43

44 ACTING CHAIR NANENG: .....will be

45 there.

46

47 MS. ROGERS: I'm not missing it.

48

49 (Laughter)

50

0141

1                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any other.

2

3                   MR. PLANK: Unless there's any more  
4 questions that concludes the agenda item. Thank you,  
5 Mr. Chair and Council and I'm certainly looking forward  
6 to it.

7

8                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thanks for  
9 the report, and the Council members will be there. The  
10 appointed ones and the one volunteer.

11

12                   With that I think that we're going to  
13 start moving along with the agenda faster tomorrow, so  
14 we'll take a break for tonight and be back here at 9:00  
15 to start over. So we'll probably take care of the  
16 faster ones first before we go to the proposals, that  
17 might take some time. So if there's no objections from  
18 the Council members.

19

20                   (No objections)

21

22                   ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, with that,  
23 thank you very much we'll see you tomorrow morning.

24

25                   (Off record)

26

27                   (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2

3 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA )

4 ) ss.

5 STATE OF ALASKA )

6

7 I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the  
8 state of Alaska and reporter for Computer Matrix Court  
9 Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

10

11 THAT the foregoing pages numbered \_\_\_\_ through  
12 \_\_\_\_ contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the  
13 YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL  
14 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I taken electronically  
15 on the 27th day of October;

16

17 THAT the transcript is a true and  
18 correct transcript requested to be transcribed and  
19 thereafter transcribed by under my direction and  
20 reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and  
21 ability;

22

23 THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or  
24 party interested in any way in this action.

25

26 DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 10th  
27 day of December 2022.

28

29

30

31 \_\_\_\_\_  
32 Salena A. Hile  
33 Notary Public, State of Alaska  
34 My Commission Expires: 09/16/26

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