



NORTHWEST ARCTIC SUBSISTENCE  
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
Meeting Materials

*April 9-10, 2019*

*Kotzebue*





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Sea ice on Chukchi Sea.



USFWS photo

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**NORTHWEST ARCTIC SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Room  
Kotzebue

April 9-10, 2019  
9:00 a.m. daily

**TELECONFERENCE:** call the toll free number: 1-877-638-8165, then when prompted enter the passcode: 9060609.

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

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

**AGENDA**

\*Asterisk identifies action item.

- 1. Invocation**
- 2. Call to Order** (*Chair*)
- 3. Roll Call and Establish Quorum** (*Secretary*)..... 4
- 4. Welcome and Introductions** (*Chair*)
- 5. Review and Adopt Agenda\*** (*Chair*) ..... 1
- 6. Election of Officers**
  - Chair (*Designated Federal Officer*)
  - Vice-Chair (*New Chair*)
  - Secretary (*New Chair*)
- 7. Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes\*** (*Chair*) ..... 5
- 8. Reports**
  - Council Member Reports
  - Chair’s Report
  - Coordinator’s Report (*Zach Stevenson, OSM*)
- 9. Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items** (available each morning)
- 10. Old Business** (*Chair*)

- a. Update on Emergency Wildlife Special Action WSA18-04

**11. New Business (Chair)**

- a. Wildlife Closure Review – WCR18-19 (Unit 23 SW muskox) ..... 17
- b. Wildlife Reports/Resource Reports
  - i. Law Enforcement Update (*A. Joseph Dallemolle, District Ranger, Western Arctic National Parklands, NPS; Damon Schaeffer, Senior Director Lands and Facilities, NANA Regional Corporation, Inc.; Trooper Scott Bjork, Alaska Wildlife Troopers – Northern Detachment; and Captain Rex Leath, Northern Detachment Commander, Alaska Wildlife Troopers*) ..... 28
  - ii. Western Arctic Caribou Herd Report (*Alex Hansen, Wildlife Biologist III, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Alaska Department of Fish and Game*) ..... 32
  - iii. Wildlife Report, GMU 23 (*Brandon Saito, Wildlife Biologist III, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Alaska Department of Fish and Game*)
  - iv. Wildlife Report, Western Arctic National Parklands (*Raime Fronstin, Wildlife Biologist*) ..... 38
  - v. Subsistence Resource Commission Report, Western Arctic National Parklands
  - vi. Wildlife Report, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve (*Marcy Okada, Subsistence Coordinator*) ..... 42
  - vii. Subsistence Resource Commission Report, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve
  - viii. Board Support report (*Hazel Smith, Fish and Game Regulatory Program Assistant*)
- c. Call for Federal Wildlife Proposals\* ..... 43
- d. Council Charter Review\* ..... 68
- e. Approve FY2018 Annual Report\* ..... 52
- f. Review of Statewide Finfish Fisheries Proposals of interest to the Council\*

**12. Agency Reports**

*(Time limit of 15 minutes unless approved in advance)*

- a. Alaska Department of Fish and Game
  - i. Division of Subsistence Report (*Beth Mikow and Dan Gonzalez, by telephone*)
- b. Tribal Governments
- c. Native Organizations & Alaska Native Corporations
  - i. Update on the NANA Trespass Program
- d. Bureau of Land Management
  - i. Update on the Bering Sea-Western Interior (BSWI) Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) ..... 55

- ii. BWSI RMP/EIS 90-day public comment period (Deadline: June 12, 2019)
- iii. BWSI RMP EIS ANILCA Section 810 Analysis and comment period
- iv. Update on the Ambler Road Environmental Impact Statement (Ambler Road EIS)
- v. Ambler Road EIS Section 810 Analysis
- e. National Park Service
  - i. Superintendent’s Report, Western Arctic National Parklands
  - ii. Cultural Resources Report, Western Arctic National Parklands .....59
  - iii. Seabird die-offs along the coasts of Bering Land Bridge National Preserve and Cape Krusenstern National Monument (*Stacia Backensto, Wildlife Biologist/Outreach Specialist, Arctic Inventory and Monitoring Network*) .....60
  - iv. Updates on long-term monitoring efforts on climate, coastal erosion, lake drainage and loons on the Seward Peninsula (*Stacia Backensto, Wildlife Biologist/Outreach Specialist, Arctic Inventory and Monitoring Network*)
- f. United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge
  - i. Selawik National Wildlife Refuge Update
  - ii. Update on the December Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group Meeting
- g. Office of Subsistence Management
  - i. General Update
  - ii. Fisheries Program Updates

**13. Future Meeting Dates\***

- Confirm fall 2019 meeting dates and location .....65
- Select winter 2020 meeting dates and location .....66

**14. Closing Comments**

**15. Adjourn (*Chair*)**

**To teleconference** into the meeting, call the toll free number: 1-877-638-8165, then when prompted enter the passcode: 9060609.

*Reasonable Accommodations*

The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodation needs to Zach Stevenson, 907-786-3674, zachary\_stevenson@fws.gov, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on April 1, 2019.

**REGION 8**  
**Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

<b>Seat</b>	<b>Year Appointed <i>Term Expires</i></b>	<b>Member Name and Community</b>
<b>1</b>	2018 <b>2019</b>	<b>Tristen S. Pattee</b> Ambler
<b>2</b>	2016 <b>2019</b>	<b>Beverly M. Moto</b> Deering
<b>3</b>	2011 <b>2019</b>	<b>Hannah P. Loon</b> Kotzebue <span style="float: right;"><b>Secretary</b></span>
<b>4</b>	2010 <b>2019</b>	<b>Michael C. Kramer</b> Kotzebue <span style="float: right;"><b>Vice-Chair</b></span>
<b>5</b>	1917 <b>2020</b>	<b>Raymond E. Lee, Jr.</b> Buckland
<b>6</b>	2018 <b>2020</b>	<b>Repogle Swan, Sr.</b> Kivalina
<b>7</b>	1993, 2015 <b>2020</b>	<b>Louie A. Commack, Jr.</b> Ambler
<b>8</b>	2018 <b>2018</b>	<b>Silvano A. Viveiros, Sr.</b> Kotzebue
<b>9</b>	2014 <b>2019</b>	<b>Enoch L. Mitchell</b> Noatak
<b>10</b>	2018 <b>2021</b>	<b>Barbara M. Atoruk</b> Kiana

**NORTHWEST ARCTIC SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
Meeting Minutes**

October 24-25, 2018  
Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Rook  
Kotzebue, Alaska

The meeting called to order at 9:06 a.m.

**Invocations**

Calvin D. Moto, Sr. provided the opening invocation on October 24, 2018. Hannah Paniyavluk Loon provided the opening invocation on October 25, 2018.

**Call to Order** (*Chair*)

Enoch Attamuk Shiedt, Sr. called the meeting to order.

**Roll call and Establish Quorum** (*Zach Stevenson as requested by the Chair*)

Five of the eight-seated Council members attended on October 24, 2018, including Enoch Attamuk Shiedt, Sr., Michael Kramer, Raymond E. Lee, Jr., Enoch L. Mitchell, and Calvin D. Moto, Sr. Council Members Louie A. Commack, Jr. and Beverly Moto were on excused absence from the meeting on October 24-25, 2018. Six of the eight-seated Council members attended on October 25, 2018 including Enoch Attamuk Shiedt, Sr., Michael Kramer, Raymond E. Lee, Jr., Hannah Paniyavluk Loon, Enoch L. Mitchell, and Calvin D. Moto, Sr. A quorum was established on both days of the meeting.

**In Attendance:**

Meeting attendees included Susan Georgette, Refuge Manager, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Selawik National Wildlife Refuge (NWR); Elizabeth Ferguson, Staff Representative, Lincoln for House District 40; Bill Carter, Fish Biologist, Selawik NWR; Carol Damberg, Regional Subsistence Coordinator, USFWS, Alaska Region; Maija Lukin, Superintendent, National Park Service (NPS), Western Arctic National Parklands; Hannah Atkinson, Cultural Anthropologist, Western Arctic National Parklands; Joe Dallemole, District Ranger, Western Arctic National Parklands; Tyler Tischer, Education and Interpretation Program Manager, NPS; Kyle Joly, Wildlife Biologist, NPS; Brittany Sweeney, Outreach Specialist, Selawik NWR; Marcy Okada, Subsistence Coordinator for the NPS Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve; Beth Mikow, Subsistence Division, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G); Mark Burch, ADF&G; Brandon Saito, ADF&G, Kotzebue; Tom Sparks, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Anchorage Field Office, from Nome; Walker Gusse, Staff Ranger/Pilot, BLM Anchorage Field Office; Joshua Ream, Anthropologist, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM); John Chase, Northwest Arctic Borough Planning Department, Kotzebue; Alex Hansen, Caribou Biologist, ADF&G, Kotzebue; Ryan Owens, Environmental Specialist, Maniilaq Association, Kotzebue; Andy Baker, Kotzebue; Cyrus Harris, Maniilaq Association and the Native Village of Kotzebue; Damon Schaefer, Senior Manager, Facilities and Safety, NANA Regional Corporation, Kotzebue; Rosalie Debenham, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Alaska Region; Pippa Kenner, Anthropologist, OSM; Zach Stevenson, Council Coordinator, OSM; and Trooper Scott Bjork, Alaska Wildlife Troopers.

**Teleconference Line:**

The meeting was aired on a toll-free teleconference with participants including Tanya Ballot, Administrator, Selawik NWR; Orville Lind, Tribal Liaison, OSM; Clarence Summers, Alaska Regional Office, NPS, and Interagency Staff Committee Member; Dan Sharp, BLM; Brian Ubelaker, Wildlife Biologist, Anchorage Field Office, from Nome; Marcy Okada, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve; and Neil DeWitt of Anchorage.



### Live Broadcast

The meeting was broadcast live on KOTZ Radio (720 AM/89.9 FM) and the KOTZ Radio website (<https://kotz.org/index.html>), reaching listeners in each of the region's eleven (11) communities including Kotzebue, Noatak, Kivalina, Noorvik, Selawik, Deering, Buckland, Kiana, Kobuk, Shungnak, and Ambler.

### **Review and Adopt Agenda\*** (Chair)

The Council reviewed and unanimously adopted the agenda with modification. The modifications included the following additions or presentation sequence changes not reflected in the meeting book:

7. Reports
  - a. Designated Federal Officer's (DFO) Report (*Zach Stevenson, Council Coordinator*)
9. Old Business (Chair)
  - a. Update from the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) Meeting (*Dr. Joshua Ream, Anthropologist, OSM*)
10. New Business (Chair)
  - a. Migratory Bird Apology from the USFWS and the ADF&G (*Susan Georgette, Refuge Manager, Selawik NWR*)
  - b. Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Notice of Funding Opportunity (*Dr. Joshua Ream, Anthropologist, OSM*)
  - c. Update on the Federal Fisheries Proposal Cycle (*Dr. Joshua Ream, Anthropologist, OSM*)
  - d. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) Notice of Funding Opportunity (*Dr. Joshua Ream, Anthropologist, OSM*)
  - e. FRMP Priority Information Needs (PINs)\* (*Dr. Joshua Ream, Anthropologist, OSM*)
  - f. Report on Superintendent's Compendium Changes (*Maija Lukin, Superintendent, Western Arctic National Parklands*)
  - g. Identify Issues for Annual Report\* (*Zach Stevenson, Council Coordinator*)
11. Agency Reports
  - Native Organizations & Alaska Native Corporations
    - a. Update on the NANA Trespass Program (*Damon Schaeffer, NANA Regional Corporation*)
  - National Park Service
    - a. Caribou Hunter Success Working Group (*Hannah Atkinson, Cultural Anthropologist, Western Arctic National Parklands*)
    - b. Superintendent's Report (*Maija Lukin, Superintendent, Western Arctic National Parklands*)
    - c. Resources Report (*Hillary Robinson, Chief of Resources, Western Arctic National Parklands*)
    - d. Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve Report (*Marcy Okada, Subsistence Coordinator, Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve and Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve*)
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
    - a. Selawik NWR Update (*Susan Georgette, Refuge Manager, Selawik NWR, and Bill Carter Fisheries Biologist with the Selawik NWR*)

Bureau of Land Management

- a. Report on the Squirrel River Planning Process (*Tom Sparks, Associate Field Manager, BLM Anchorage Field Office*)
- b. Report on the Ambler Road Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (*Tina McMaster-Goering, Project Manager BLM Alaska State Office*)

Alaska Wildlife Troopers

- b. GMU 23 Law Enforcement Update (*Scott Bjork, State Trooper, Public Safety, AWT-Northern Detachment*) - \*Requests presentation time slot of 9:00 a.m. on Oct. 25, 2018.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

- a. Caribou Report (*Alex Hansen, Wildlife Biologist III, DWC-R5, Kotzebue*)
- b. Area Biologist Report (*Brandon Saito, Wildlife Biologist III, DWC-R5, Kotzebue*)
- c. Advisory Committee Report (*Hazel Smith, Fish & Game Regulatory Program Assistant, BDS Statewide*)
- d. Update on 2016-2017 Caribou Survey Data for Buckland, Noatak, and Koyuk (*Beth Mikow, Subsistence Resource Specialist III, Subsistence Northern Region*).

**Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes\*** (*Chair*)

The Council reviewed and unanimously approved the previous meeting minutes.

**Reports**

Council Member Reports

*Enoch L. Mitchell*

Noatak residents had a favorable fall blueberry and fish harvest. Different insects were observed. The arrival of ice, marking the freeze up of fresh water occurred on October 24<sup>th</sup>, a month later than usual.

Caribou arrived in small groups throughout the season. The herd was scattered, and there was no pattern in the migration of the herd. The caribou that arrived seemed alarmed, arriving silently, and staying high in the hills throughout the fall season. Caribou were lean, likely because of running too much. Local observations indicate the caribou have been harassed and the migration of the herd diverted. These stresses affect communities who rely on caribou for food, face high costs for commodities and underemployment. The need for developing a subsistence education program was noted, specifically focused on sharing traditional knowledge of hunting caribou among youth and elders.

*Calvin D. Moto, Sr.*

Several items of concern to Federally qualified subsistence hunters were noted. The hunters enquired why they had to obtain permits and tags for hunting and were informed this applies on State lands. Five (5) caribou can be harvested on State lands and (15) caribou can be harvested on Federal lands. Hunters harvested some caribou, though delayed the hunt because of the rutting season. Changes in weather, specifically the decrease in snow, presented more caribou, though they were farther away from the communities. This is a concern for Federally qualified subsistence hunters. Presently residents of Deering have a program offered through the school district for young hunters that teaches youth how to hunt and butcher caribou.

*Enoch Attamak Shiedt, Sr., Council Chair*

More caribou were harvested in Noatak than before. Non-Federally qualified subsistence hunters are traveling farther up the Noatak River to intercept caribou. Transporters are not supposed to be in the

Noatak National Preserve, but they are. Caribou are being disturbed during migration. The same problem is happening in Kiana. Caribou are crossing the Kobuk River at night. Residents of Huslia and Kotzebue reported harvesting more caribou.

Changes in hunting and fishing practices down the coast from Kotzebue were mentioned and attributed to changes in weather and climate. Concern was noted regarding the increase in global warming and potential for disease to spread, affecting caribou and other subsistence resources that are critical to Federally qualified subsistence users.

Joshua Ream clarified that the harvest limit is five (5) caribou per day and the Federal Subsistence Board adopted a proposal during the last cycle requiring a Federal registration permit for hunts in Unit 22 (Seward Peninsula), Unit 23 (Northwest Arctic), and Unit 26A (North Slope). Pippa Kenner added that some confusion likely resulted from regulations not being published in the Federal Register until recently. The OSM will circulate the new regulation books as quickly as possible. The Chair stated that these kinds of delays have been problematic, resulting in enforcement violations and uncertainty among communities regarding the status of regulatory changes.

*Mike Kramer*

The spring hunting season for *ugruk*<sup>1</sup> arrived quickly. Sea ice conditions were very thin. Several high-harvesters provided meat for many families who were unable to go hunting. There was not an opportunity for bird hunting, though some crabbing was done. Some salmon were harvested. Some caribou hunting was done on the Agashashok (Aggie) River. Many Federally qualified subsistence caribou hunters traveled to Kiana and Nookvik and returned without caribou. This was attributed to the herd being deflected. Younger inexperienced hunters scared some caribou away. Many Federally qualified subsistence users were successful in harvesting moose. Concern regarding the potential for wanton waste by non-Federally qualified subsistence users and the lack of sufficient wildlife law enforcement for the region were mentioned. Residents of Noatak were successful in harvesting caribou. A few aircraft disturbances of caribou were reported. Caribou hunting conditions on the Kobuk River are unknown due to not hunting in that area this year.

*Raymond E. Lee, Jr.*

A question was raised regarding the process for promulgating Federal wildlife regulatory proposals. The Coordinator explained the process for developing Federal wildlife regulatory proposals. Caribou traveling from up north were not harvested. These caribou did not travel down river. They showed alarmed behavior and were likely to cross the river at nighttime. Reports from local hunters indicated the caribou were piling up, waiting for others to arrive. Federally qualified subsistence users harvested no caribou migrating westward from Shishmaref.

The sea ice was thick, though melted quickly. Springtime *ugruks* were plentiful, especially around the islands and at Church Rock. Birds were plentiful. No moose were harvested over the past two years because the moose population is low in Unit 23. The female moose-hunting season should be changed to September 15<sup>th</sup>. Presently the moose-hunting season lasts until December 1<sup>st</sup>.

A question was raised about how to make a Federal wildlife regulatory change for moose. The Coordinator clarified the process for submitting Federal wildlife regulatory proposals. Pippa Kenner and Joshua Ream explained how the Federal Subsistence Board defers to the Regional Advisory Councils when considering wildlife proposals, special actions, and emergency actions.

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<sup>1</sup> The word “ugruk” means young bearded seal in the Iñupiaq coastal dialect of Kotzebue.

Coordinator's Report (*Zach Stevenson*)

The Coordinator delivered a report, inviting the public to apply to serve on the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, noting the deadline of February 8, 2019. The Chair encouraged people to apply and be patient, emphasizing the nomination and application process to serve on the Regional Advisory Councils is slow.

**Public and Tribal Comments on Non-Agenda Items** (available each morning)

Andy Baker voiced concern regarding disturbance of the caribou leaders in the migration, the availability of caribou, the enforcement of the Federal closure, and the observation of aircraft during the nonsubsistence hunting season in areas closed to nonsubsistence caribou hunting.

Calvin D. Moto, Sr., emphasized the importance of accurate and timely local reporting to enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts. Mike Kramer noted the region took multiple efforts to enhance subsistence opportunity and conserve caribou for Federally qualified subsistence users by limiting transporters and guides and promoting a regulatory change to facilitate predator control by allowing people to harvest two bears per year.

Enoch L. Mitchell expressed interest in developing a proposal to increase local law enforcement to reduce disturbances to caribou. The Coordinator explained law enforcement is the purview of the land managers. The Coordinator added that a working group could be established to share information on law enforcement issues when the Council is between meetings, though a working group does not have decision-making authority. Hannah Atkinson said the Kobuk Valley Resource Commission that raised this issue requested to form a working group to address law enforcement.

Enoch L. Mitchell motioned for agencies to work together to raise funds necessary to work with Alaska State troopers and park rangers to set up law enforcement camps and monitor caribou as they migrate between communities. Susan Georgette talked about the presence of law enforcement and a concern that law enforcement arriving to communities by plane may worsen disturbances to caribou. The Chair recommended that aircraft should be color coded to help communities distinguish between law enforcement and those who may be disturbing caribou. The Coordinator explained that OSM does not provide law enforcement. No vote was taken on this issue and the motion died. The Coordinator also recommended participation in the law enforcement-working group through the Kobuk Valley Resource Commission.

Cyrus Harris noted that the Native Village of Kotzebue is exploring drafting of proposals to the Alaska Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board to open the bull caribou season to allow for harvest of young bull caribou that are not in rut.

Tanya Ballot explained that this is the second year her family has not put away enough caribou for the winter, emphasizing something must be done to protect the region's caribou that migrate each year in fall and spring. Tanya Ballot stated that all flights of transporters and guides in the region must be stopped.

Mike Kramer supported this idea, advocating for the elimination of commercial services in the region, like dropping off non-Federally qualified subsistence hunters, adding that instead these resources could be used to benefit subsistence users.

The Coordinator acknowledged and repeated for the record the request for funding from Enoch L. Mitchell to hire locals to assist with law enforcement to minimize the disturbance to the caribou herd

leaders. The Coordinator clarified OSM specifically does not have a law enforcement authority. The Coordinator added that OSM's role focuses on regulations. Law enforcement on Federal public lands is done by the land management agencies. However, OSM does not have authority to address Enoch L. Mitchell's motion regarding local law enforcement. The NPS Western Arctic National Parklands and Selawik NWR developed a working group to bring people together and address some concerns pertaining to caribou in the region.

Pippa Kenner asked if there was a second to the motion from Enoch L. Mitchell. Pippa Kenner noted this issue could be added to the annual report submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board. Pippa Kenner added that a motion could be considered asking the Federal agencies in the region to consider more law enforcement and report to the Council. The Council expressed support for sending correspondence to the Federal agencies in the region requesting consideration of hiring more law enforcement to reduce disturbances to the caribou leaders migration and requesting a report back the Council.

### **Old Business** (Chair)

a. Update from the Board Meeting (*Joshua Ream, Anthropologist, OSM*)

The Council received an update on actions taken on regulatory proposals at the Board Meeting including:

- Wildlife Proposal 18-42. Align season dates for caribou in Units 21D, 22, 23, 24, 25A-West, 26A, and 26B. **Adopted**
- Wildlife Proposal 18-45. Reduce harvest limits for caribou in Unit 23. **Rejected**
- Wildlife Proposal 18-46/47. Close a portion of Federal public lands in Unit 23 to caribou hunting except by Federally qualified subsistence users. **Adopted with Council modification**
- Wildlife Proposals 18-48 (**Adopted**) and 18-49 (**Took no-action**) to establish a registration hunt for caribou in Units 22, 23, and 26A.

Dr. Ream explained the Board differed from the Council's recommendation on two (2) proposals including:

- Wildlife Proposal 18-43. Increase brown bear harvest limit and extend the season in Unit 23. The Board increased the harvest limit to two (2) bears, which aligns with state regulations (**Adopted with OSM modification**); and
- Allow the sale of up to two raw untanned brown bear hides with claws attached and/or skulls per regulatory year from brown bears in Unit 23 (**Rejected**).

Questions from Council Members were answered.

### **New Business** (Chair)

a. Migratory Bird apology from the USFWS and ADF&G (*Susan Georgette, Refuge Manager, Selawik NWR*)

The Council received an apology delivered by Susan Georgette regarding prior migratory bird management on behalf of the USFWS. Tony Gorn of the ADF&G was unavailable to participate. Susan Georgette extended her thanks and emphasized the apology was the result of work from many people throughout the region over many years including the late Raymond Stoney, Siikauraq Whiting, Cyrus Harris, Fred Armstrong, and others.

b. Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (*Dr. Joshua Ream, Anthropologist, OSM*)

The Council also received an update addressing the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program Notice of Funding Opportunity. Dr. Ream explained that this competitive grant program supports



collaborative projects that increase an organization's ability to participate in Federal subsistence management. The program provides funding for the hiring of a local biologist, social scientist, or educator. The program also funds science camps and paid youth internships. The Notice of Funding Opportunity has been circulated. Karen Hyer and Jarred Stone are the contacts at OSM. A list of previously funded partners was provided. Questions from the Council were answered.

- c. Update on the Federal Fisheries Proposal Cycle (*Dr. Joshua Ream, Anthropologist, OSM*)  
The Council received an update on the Federal Fisheries Proposal cycle from OSM. Nineteen (19) fisheries proposals were received during this cycle. There were no Federal Fisheries Proposals submitted pertaining to the Northwest Arctic Region. Dr. Ream explained that one reason OSM might not have received any proposals pertaining to the Northwest Arctic is because bag limits remain liberal in the region. Dr. Ream added that in the springtime, OSM will be announcing a Call for Federal Wildlife Regulatory Proposals.
- d. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (*Dr. Joshua Ream, Anthropologist, Office of Subsistence Management*)  
An introductory overview of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) was provided. The introduction include mention of a research project pertinent to the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council funded for the 2018 cycle. The project will address Dolly Varden in Kobuk River and will be conducted by the ADF&G Sport Fish Division and the USFWS Conservation Genetics Laboratory. The program promotes collaboration between Federal, State, Tribal, and local organizations. The next steps in this process is for Regional Advisory Councils to identify Priority Information Needs (PINs) for their regions. A list of topics that will not be considered for funding was provided. A working group appointed by the Council recently met to identify PIN for the Northwest Arctic Region. The Council will be asked to finalize and adopt the PINs.
- e. FRMP Priority Information Needs (PINs)\*  
Dr. Ream and Susan Georgette briefly described a research project funded through the FRMP and focused on studying the impacts of expanding beaver ranges into the region. The company selected for the funding left the State of Alaska before the project could be conducted and the funds were not awarded. Susan Georgette explained that a larger project addressing beaver was submitted by Ken Tape, a faculty member at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and involves the NPS and National Science Foundation. Dr. Ream noted he would work with the Coordinator to request that Mr. Tape provide an overview of this project for the Council.

Dr. Ream explained the PINs are used to help make sure that fisheries research proposals received by OSM meet the research needs that are important to the Regional Advisory Councils. Pippa Kenner added that proposals are ranked by a Technical Review Committee to make sure an applicant has the skills required to do the research. Pippa Kenner also noted that proposals are ranked for their ability to build partnerships with tribes and cost effectiveness. The PINs selected by the Council will be combined with those developed by the North Slope and Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils to create list of 2020 PINs for the Northern FRMP. Feedback from resource managers in the region provided the following priorities for consideration:

- Identify major spawning locations of Broad Whitefish and Least Cisco in Northwestern Alaska
- Define critical habitat areas of forage fish eaten by Sheefish, such as Herring and Smelt
- Assess the age structure of spawning populations of whitefish species beyond the Selawik and Kobuk Rivers

- Abundance and size composition of the populations of whitefish species beyond the Selawik and Kobuk Rivers
- Abundance and size composition of the Dolly Varden populations in the Noatak River
- Stock identification of subsistence-caught Dolly Varden in the village of Noatak
- Marine movements and behaviors of Dolly Varden in Northwest Alaska.

Dr. Ream added that the changing species abundance and composition near Deering and the effects of expanding range of beaver population on subsistence fisheries were already discussed. Questions from Council Members were addressed. The Council was asked to develop a list of priorities for the region. PINs established by the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council were reviewed. The Council unanimously adopted a motion supporting its 2020 FRMP PINs, including:

- Changes in species composition, abundance and migration timing, especially of Dolly Varden trout
- Effects of expanding beaver populations and range on subsistence fisheries in the Northwest Arctic.

f. Report on Superintendent's Compendium Changes (Maija Lukin, Superintendent, NPS Western Arctic National Parklands )

Several compendium changes for the Western Arctic National Park Lands pertinent to the Council were adopted including:

- Designation of food storage in bear-resistant containers
- Removal of language referring to the Bering Land Bridge National Preserve
- Restraint and physical control of pets by voice command or leash
- Hunting with dogs must be in accordance with State and Federal laws
- Towing of persons on sleds by snow machine is authorized in all areas
- A permit is required for vehicles larger than a snow machine
- A permit is required from the Superintendent to stay longer than fourteen (14) days in one location.

Changes to the compendium attempt to align Park regulations with local practices. The compendium is updated annually. Maija Lukin added that while not a compendium change, the collection of wood requires a permit. Maija Lunkin introduced two new Park Rangers including Joe Dallemolle and Jim Hans. Questions from Council Members were answered.

g. Identify Issues for Annual Report\* (*Zach Stevenson, Council Coordinator*)

The Council identified the following issues for inclusion in its Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report to the Federal Subsistence Board:

- Request for research to better understand changes in wildlife distribution and abundance affecting Federally qualified subsistence users in the Northwest Arctic region and recommendations to address these changes
- Request for updated and timely population data for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH)
- Request for local enforcement to observe and report disturbances to the lead migration of the WACH
- Request for updated sheep population census data to inform the management and recovery of Dall sheep throughout the Northwest Arctic region
- Request for consideration of Northwest Arctic FRMP PINs including trout, whitefish, and the topic of beaver

- Request for change in season dates for the hunting moose in Unit 23, given the changes in moose abundance and changes in weather and climate throughout the Northwest Arctic.

### Agency Reports

#### Native Organizations and Alaska Native Corporations

- a. Update on the NANA Trespass Program (*Damon Schaeffer, NANA Regional Corporation*)  
An update was provided addressing the NANA Trespass Program, involving local residents who monitor lands held by the NANA Regional Corporation, assisting with surveillance including, though not limited to, helping minimize disturbances to caribou. Data collected from the most recent season is under review. A summary report will be made available to the public soon.

#### National Park Service

- a. Caribou Hunter Success Working Group (*Hannah Atkinson, Cultural Anthropologist, Western Arctic National Parklands*)  
The Council received a summary update on the Caribou Hunter Success Working Group from the NPS Western Arctic National Parklands. The working group provides a local public with a forum for sharing information on hunter safety, hunter ethics, and Federal regulations pertaining to caribou.

Additionally, an update on the Cape Krusenstern and Kobuk Valley Subsistence Resource Commissions (SRCs) was provided. The SRC update addressed new member appointments, appointment deadlines, and a summary of items of interest to the SRCs.

- b. Superintendent's Report (*Maija Lukin, Superintendent, Western Arctic National Parklands*)  
The Council also received a Superintendent's update pertaining to Compendium Changes pertinent to caribou hunting in the Western Arctic National Parklands. Questions from Council Members were answered.
- c. Resources Report (*Hillary Robinson, Chief of Resources, Western Arctic National Parklands*)  
A wildlife update was provided addressing the population status and harvest trends for several species of interest to the Council including moose, brown bear, and Dall sheep.

Additionally, the Council asked to write a letter to Hillary Robison, Chief of Resources, Western Arctic National Parklands, thanking her for her great work. Ms. Robison is moving out of state.

- d. Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve Report (*Marcy Okada, Subsistence Coordinator, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve and Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve*)  
Marcy Okada addressed wildlife surveys of interest to the Council. The surveys included population trends and harvest numbers, where available, for several species including muskox at Sisauluk and Cape Lisburn, brown bears in the Lower Noatak River area, and Dall sheep at Anaktuvuk Pass.

#### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- a. Selawik NWR Update (*Susan Georgette, Refuge Manager, and Bill Carter Fisheries Biologist, Selawik NWR*)  
The Selawik NWR commented there was less airplane traffic because of a nonresident moose closure. In 2017, one group of four hunters was transported into the Refuge, harvesting one moose.

An update on Selawik Science and Culture Camp; monitoring of invasive aquatic plants; an oral history project involving Selawik residents, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and the Selawik NWR ; facilities maintenance upgrades; an update on hunting activity in the Refuge; and a brief law enforcement update was provided.

Bill Carter provided an update on a research project funded by OSM focused on counting the downward migration of Sheefish from the Selawik River. Bill Carter also provided an update on a multi-year project studying the impacts of mudslides on the Selawik River on Sheefish.

#### Bureau of Land Management

- a. Report on the Squirrel River Planning Process (*Tom Sparks, Associate Field Manager, BLM Anchorage Field Office*)  
Report addressed the status of the Squirrel River Planning Process and Ambler Road EIS, specifically addressing Council Member concerns regarding potential user conflicts resulting from increased public access to the region and potential cumulative impacts to subsistence resources.

Report on the Ambler Road EIS (*Tina McMaster-Goering, Project Manager BLM Alaska State Office*)

The Council received an update on the Ambler Road EIS. The update included a copy of the summary scoping report that includes an appendix with public comments received.

#### Alaska Wildlife Troopers

- a. GMU 23 Law Enforcement Update (*Scott Bjork, State Trooper, Public Safety, AWT- Northern Detachment*)  
The Council adopted a motion requesting increased enforcement of caribou regulations, specifically monitoring nonsubsistence users hunting caribou in areas closed to them.

#### ADF&G

- a. Caribou Report (*Alex Hansen, Wildlife Biologist III, DWC-R5, Kotzebue*)  
The ADF&G commented on the later-than-usual return of caribou to the region and noted that weather conditions prevented the completion of the summer WACH population survey.
- b. Area Biologist Report (*Brandon Saito, Wildlife Biologist III, DWC-R5, Kotzebue*)  
There were no non-resident moose hunting permits issued in the past several years. Approximately one hundred and twenty (120) moose are killed every year and most are harvested by local hunters. The highest count for moose was about 9,000; now, the numbers are between 6,000 and 6,500 unit-wide.

The bear season has been opened to allow harvest of two (2) bears per year. Additionally, bear baiting has been opened for both brown and black bears.

- c. Advisory Committee Report (*Hazel Smith, Fish & Game Regulatory Program Assistant, BDS Statewide*)  
Hazel Smith was excused absent but provided a written report addressing Advisory Committee actions pertinent to the Council.
- d. Update on 2016-2017 Caribou Survey Data for Buckland, Noatak, and Koyuk (*Beth Mikow, Subsistence Resource Specialist III, Subsistence Northern Region*)

An overview of caribou surveys was provided for the 2016/2017 study year for Buckland, Koyuk, and Noatak. The overview described the survey methodology, the percentage of survey response by community, and the pounds of meat harvested per person by community. Questions from Council Members were answered.

### **Future Meeting Dates\***

The Council unanimously adopted a motion to have a 2-1/2 day winter 2019 meeting on February 26-28 in Kotzebue, Alaska. The Council requested this additional time to provide oral testimony to the BLM regarding the Ambler Road EIS. This will be the first and only opportunity for the Council to provide public comments on the record regarding the Ambler Road EIS. Additionally the Council unanimously adopted a motion to have a 2-1/2 day fall 2019 meeting on October 28-30 in Noatak, Alaska. A screening of alternatives to be carried forward in the EIS is underway. The public will have the opportunity to provide comments when the Draft EIS is released. A list of the cooperating agencies was provided. An update on the National Historic Preservation Act consultations was provided, involving more than one hundred and ten (110) parties. Twenty-six (26) parties participated in consultations, and the consultations will continue. Those interested in participating in consultations should contact Tina McMaster-Goering or Tim LaMarr. Section .810 hearings addressing potential impacts to subsistence resources will be conducted after public meetings for the Draft EIS.

### **Closing Statements**

Council Members provided the following closing comments.

*Mike Kramer*

Thanked the State and Federal agencies for their participation and support.

*Hannah Paniyavluk Loon*

Thanked residents of Selawik for their participation in the meeting. Hannah Paniyavluk Loon added that the Northwest Arctic Borough Economic Development Commission is exploring the feasibility of producing reindeer to promote regional food security. Walter Sampson will be reporting to the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly on the reindeer feasibility study.

*Raymond E. Lee, Jr.*

Thanked all the organizations for their participation and expressed the desire to see those who participated in the meeting again soon.

*Enoch L. Mitchell*

Thanked the agencies for their participation, Zach Stevenson for his work, and Hilary Robison for her service and wished her good luck in her new job. He also thanked all of those who participated in the meeting from communities throughout the region.

*Calvin D. Moto, Sr.*

Reflected on his retirement from the Council and emphasized subsistence is a top priority in his life. Calvin D. Moto, Sr., noted that he only missed two meetings while serving on the Council for many years. Mr. Moto talked about his work on subsistence issues including serving as first Chair of the Northern Seward Peninsula Advisory Group and serving as first Chair of the Northern Arctic Regional Fish and Game Advisory Committee in 1981 until 1985 or 1986. Mr. Moto emphasized the importance of his family, great-grandchildren, and community and the need for working together to achieve a common goal. Mr. Moto noted how he learned from his grandparents, thanked everyone, and wished everybody a safe journey

The room erupted with thunderous applause for Mr. Moto. The Council unanimously adopted a motion to



write a letter to Calvin D. Moto, Sr. thanking him for serving on the Council for all these years. Mr. Moto retired from the Council.

**Adjourn (Chair)**

The Council voted unanimously to adjourn.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

February 24, 2019

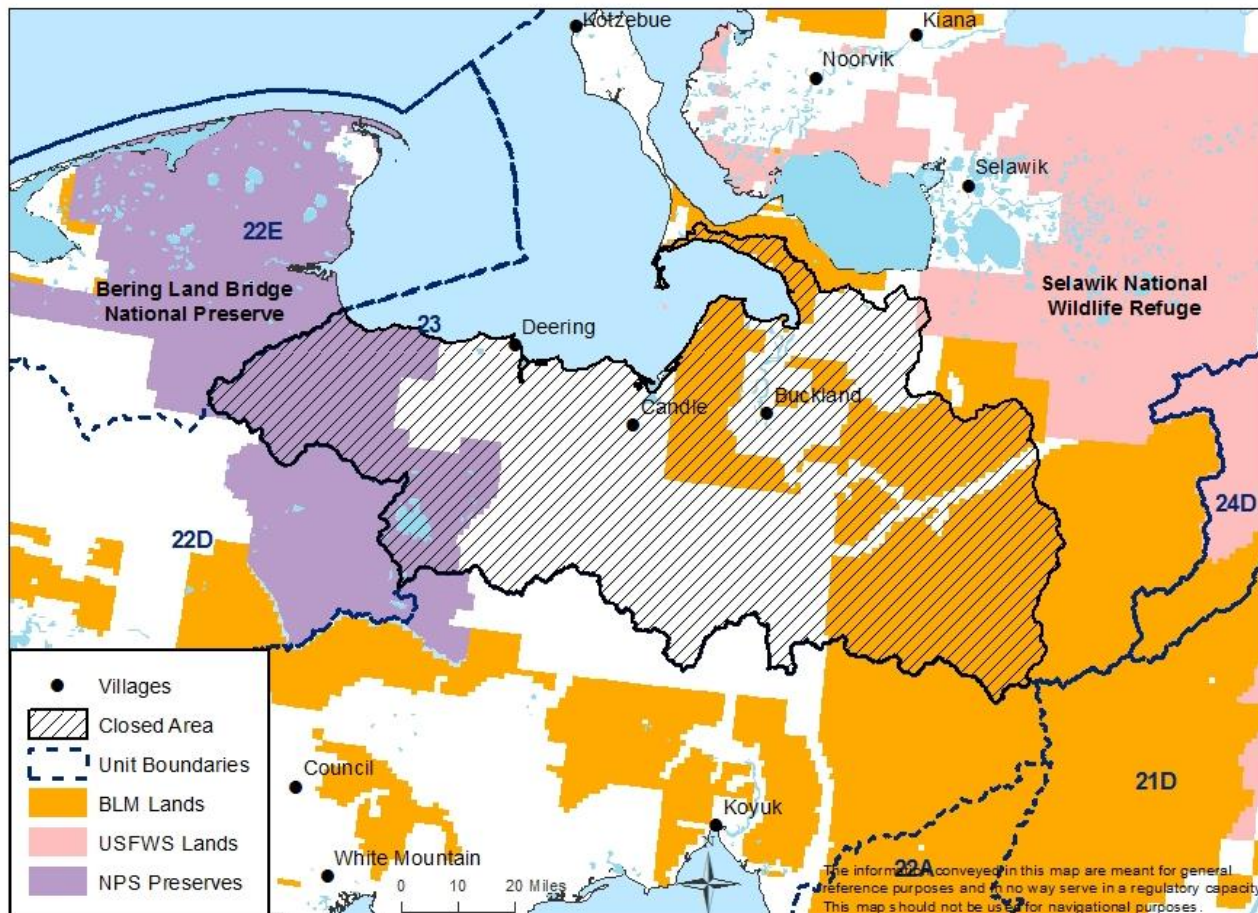
/s/  
*Zachary C. Stevenson, Subsistence Council Coordinator*  
*OSM*

/s/  
*Enoch Attamuk Shiedt, Sr., Chair*  
Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its winter 2019 meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.

## FEDERAL WILDLIFE CLOSURE REVIEW WCR18-19

**Closure Location:** Southwest portion of Unit 23 (Map 1) — Muskox



**Map 1.** Federal hunt area closure for muskox in Unit 23, south of Kotzebue Sound and west of and including the Buckland River drainage.

### Current Federal Regulation

#### Unit 23—Muskox

*Unit 23—south of Kotzebue Sound and west of and including the Buckland River drainage—1 bull by Federal permit or State permit Aug. 1-Mar. 15.*

*Federal public lands are closed to the taking of musk oxen except by Federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations*

**Closure Dates:** Year round

## Current State Regulation

### Unit 23–Muskox

*Seward Peninsula west of and including the  
Buckland River drainage*      *One bull by permit (TX106)    Aug. 1-Mar. 15*

**Regulatory Year Initiated:** 1995

### Regulatory History

In 1991, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) submitted and then withdrew Proposal P91-94 to add “no open season” and “no customary and traditional use determination” to muskox regulations in Unit 23. BLM submitted the proposal because the population estimate of 123 muskox did not support a viable hunt (OSM 1991).

In 1995, the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council submitted Proposal P95-44 to establish muskox hunts in Units 22D and 22E because the muskox population could withstand a harvest of 15 bulls as recommended by the Seward Peninsula Cooperative Muskox Management Plan (OSM 1995a). The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) adopted Proposal P95-44 with modification to also establish a Federal hunt for muskox in Unit 23 south of Kotzebue Sound and west of and including the Buckland River Drainage (Unit 23 SW) to provide additional subsistence opportunity. The Board added Unit 23 SW because muskox from the Seward Peninsula population occurred in the area. The harvest limit was one bull by Federal registration permit. The season was Sept. 1-Jan. 31, but closed whenever 7 muskox were harvested.

The Board also adopted Proposal P95-43, establishing a customary and traditional use determination (C&T) for muskox in Unit 23 SW as residents of Unit 23 SW, which included residents of Deering and Buckland (OSM 1995b).

Note: Prior to 1995, no muskox season existed in Unit 23 SW, so the unit was essentially closed to muskox hunting by both Federally qualified subsistence users and non-Federally qualified users. Proposal P95-44 opened Unit 23 SW to Federally qualified subsistence users only. As Unit 23 SW remained closed to non-Federally qualified users, 1995 is the year WCR18-19 is considered to be initiated.

In 1998, the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) established a Tier II muskox hunt in Unit 23 SW (Persons 1999). The harvest limit was one bull by Tier II permit and the season was Aug. 1-Mar. 15.

In 1999, the Board adopted Proposal P99-46, aligning Federal and State muskox seasons and permit requirements in Unit 23 SW. The season modification and establishment of a State Tier II hunt were the culmination of several years of work by the Seward Peninsula Muskox Cooperators Group (The Cooperators) to create a biologically sound harvest system that met the needs of local users.

In 2001, the Board adopted Proposal WP01-35, changing the harvest limit from one bull to one muskox. However, cows could only be taken from Jan. 1-Mar. 15 and not more than 8 cows could be harvested. Total harvest could not exceed 13 muskox. The Cooperators unanimously supported submitting the

proposal to provide more subsistence opportunity, to better coordinate between State and Federal hunts, and because there were no conservation concerns (OSM 2001). The BOG adopted similar regulations.

In 2002, the Board adopted Proposal WP02-37, delegating authority to the superintendent of the Western Arctic National Parklands to set annual harvest quotas and close the season for muskox in Unit 23 SW.

In 2006, the Board adopted Proposal WP06-55, establishing a designated hunter permit for muskox in Unit 23 SW.

In 2010, the Board adopted Proposal WP10-84 with modification, clarifying the regulatory language and requiring a Federal or State Tier I permit (instead of Tier II) to harvest muskox in Unit 23 SW. The Board revised permit requirements to maintain consistency with recent changes under State regulations.

In 2011, the BOG adopted regulations to allow flexibility in managing muskox hunts outside of the normal regulatory cycle. These changes enabled ADF&G to manage Tier II, Tier I, and drawing permit hunts and to set harvest thresholds based on the relationship between the harvestable surplus and amount necessary for subsistence (Gorn and Dunker 2015).

In 2014, the Board adopted Proposal WP14-41 with modification, eliminating the cow muskox hunt in Unit 23 SW because of conservation concerns.

Federal public lands comprise approximately 50% of Unit 23 SW and consist of 68% Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed lands and 32% National Park Service (NPS) managed lands (**Map 1**).

**Closure last reviewed:** 2014 – WP14-41

**Justification for Original Closure:**

Section §815(3) of ANILCA states:

*Nothing in this title shall be construed as – (3) authorizing a restriction on the taking of fish and wildlife for nonsubsistence uses on public lands (other than national parks and monuments) unless necessary for the conservation of healthy populations of fish and wildlife, for the reasons set forth in section 816, to continue subsistence uses of such populations, or pursuant to other applicable law...*

The Board’s intent was to provide subsistence opportunity for hunting muskox in Unit 23 SW, maintaining a subsistence priority as mandated by ANILCA. The closure began when the initial C&T and hunt were established by Proposals P95-43 and P95-44, respectively.

**Council Recommendation for Original Closure:**

The Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council opposed Proposal P95-44, stating “let the State season and the system work for a year to see if it meets the needs of the local people. If it does not, the Regional Council could always initiate a proposal to deal with the situation.” However, at the Federal Subsistence Board meeting, the Chair of the Northwest Arctic Council supported modified Proposal P95-44, which established a muskox hunt for Federally qualified subsistence users in Unit 23 SW (and closed the area to non-Federally qualified subsistence users) (FSB 1995).

### **State Recommendation for Original Closure:**

The State was neutral on the original closure (P95-44). While the State agreed with the intent of the cooperative muskox management effort, it recommended postponing a decision on P95-44 until the BOG decided on State regulations for muskox in Units 22 and 23 (OSM 1995a). The State submitted a request for reconsideration, R95-05, requesting that the Board rescind their decision on P95-44. The Board rejected R95-05.

### **Biological Background**

Muskox disappeared from Alaska by the late 1800s. In 1970, 36 muskox were reintroduced to the southern portion of the Seward Peninsula. The population grew to 104 muskox by 1980. In 1981, an additional 35 muskoxen were translocated from Nunivak Island to Unit 22D to augment the existing Seward Peninsula muskox population (Nelson 1994).

The Cooperators developed the Seward Peninsula Cooperative Muskox Management Plan (Nelson 1994) to guide muskox management on the Seward Peninsula. The Cooperators include representatives from ADF&G, the National Park Service (NPS), BLM, USFWS, Bering Straits Native Corporation, Kawerak Inc., Reindeer Herders Association, Northwest Alaska Native Association, residents of Seward Peninsula communities, and other interested groups or organizations. The goals developed by the Cooperators are the same as ADF&G management goals (Nelson 1997, Gorn and Dunker 2015):

- Allow for continued growth and range expansion of the Seward Peninsula muskox population
- Provide for sustained yield harvest in a manner consistent with existing State and Federal laws by following the goals/objectives endorsed by the Cooperators and the Seward Peninsula Cooperative Muskox Management Plan
- Manage muskoxen along the Nome road systems of Unit 22B and 22C for viewing, education, and other nonconsumptive uses
- Work with local reindeer herding interests to minimize conflicts between reindeer and muskoxen
- Protect and maintain the habitats and other components of the ecosystem upon which muskoxen depend
- Encourage cooperation and sharing of information among agencies and users of the resource in developing and executing management and research programs

Since the 1970s, the range of the Seward Peninsula muskox population has greatly expanded. Between 1970 and 2007, surveys were conducted in Units 22B, 22C, 22D, 22E, and 23SW, termed the “core count area” (Gorn and Dunker 2015). Since 2010, surveys have been conducted in the core count area as well as northern Unit 22A, southeastern Unit 23, and Unit 21D, termed the “expanded count area” (Gorn and Dunker 2015).

Between 1970 and 2007, the Seward Peninsula muskox population steadily increased at 13% per year, peaking at 2,688 muskox in 2007 (**Figure 1**) (Gorn and Dunker 2015). In 2010, ADF&G changed survey methodologies (from minimum counts to distance sampling) and began surveying the expanded count



area in addition to the core count area. Between 2007 and 2010, the population was stable, but then decreased 13% per year between 2010 and 2012 in both the core and expanded count areas. Since 2012, the muskox population in the core and expanded count areas has appeared stable and stable-increasing, respectively (**Figure 1**) (Gorn and Dunker 2015, Dunker 2017a). The 2017 population counts for the core and expanded count areas were 1,864 muskox and 2,353 muskox, respectively (Dunker 2017a).

As muskox commonly move between subunits, hunt areas do not represent unique muskox populations (ADF&G 2016, Dunker 2017a). However, individual hunt area population estimates are useful for establishing harvest quotas and managing hunts. Between 1992 and 2017, the number of muskox in Unit 23 SW ranged from 134-255 muskox, averaging 205 muskox (**Figure 2**) (Gorn and Dunker 2015, Dunker 2017a). Over the same time period, the percentage of the Seward Peninsula muskox population occupying Unit 23 SW ranged from 6%-27%, averaging 13% of the population. In 2017, 10% of the Seward Peninsula muskox population occupied Unit 23 SW.

Given the gregarious nature of muskox, mature bulls are important for predator defense, foraging, and group cohesion in addition to breeding (Schmidt and Gorn 2013). For example, mature bulls may protect groups of females with calves against predators, effectively increasing calf survival and recruitment. Therefore, muskox may be more sensitive to selective harvest of mature males than other species (Schmidt and Gorn 2013). Schmidt and Gorn (2013) observed annual rates of population growth for Seward Peninsula muskox decreased disproportionately as harvest rates increased. Mature bulls (MB) are male muskox  $\geq 4$  years old. Cows are female muskox  $\geq 3$  years old (Gorn and Dunker 2015). Schmidt and Gorn (2013) suggest that harvest should be eliminated if ratios fall below 20 MB:100 cows and that ratios of 50-70 MB:100 cows may support both harvest and population growth.

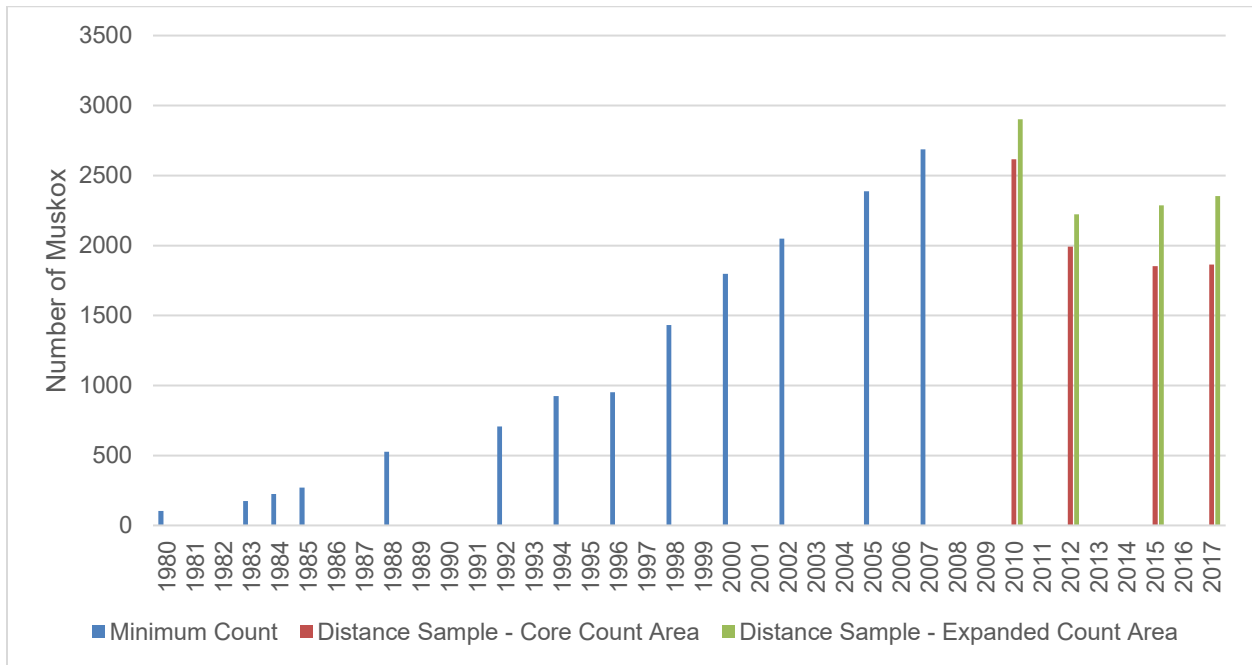
Between 2002 and 2017, MB:cow ratios for the entire Seward Peninsula muskox population ranged from 29-44 MB:100 cows (**Figure 3**). Ratios appeared stable between 2015 and 2017. Over the same time period, MB:cow ratios for muskox in Unit 23 SW ranged from 19-33 MB:100 cows (**Figure 3**). In Unit 23 SW, the MB:100 cow ratio decreased between 2015 and 2017 (Gorn and Dunker 2015, Dunker 2017b).

Short yearlings (SY) are muskox between 10 and 15 months old and provide a measure of recruitment. Between 2002 and 2017, SY:cow ratios for the entire Seward Peninsula muskox population ranged from 17-44 SY:100 cows (**Figure 4**). Ratios increased between 2015 and 2017. Over the same time period, SY:cow ratios for muskox in Unit 23 SW ranged from 10-31 SY:100 cows (**Figure 4**). In Unit 23 SW, the SY:100 cow ratio appeared stable between 2015 and 2017 (Gorn and Dunker 2015, Dunker 2017b).

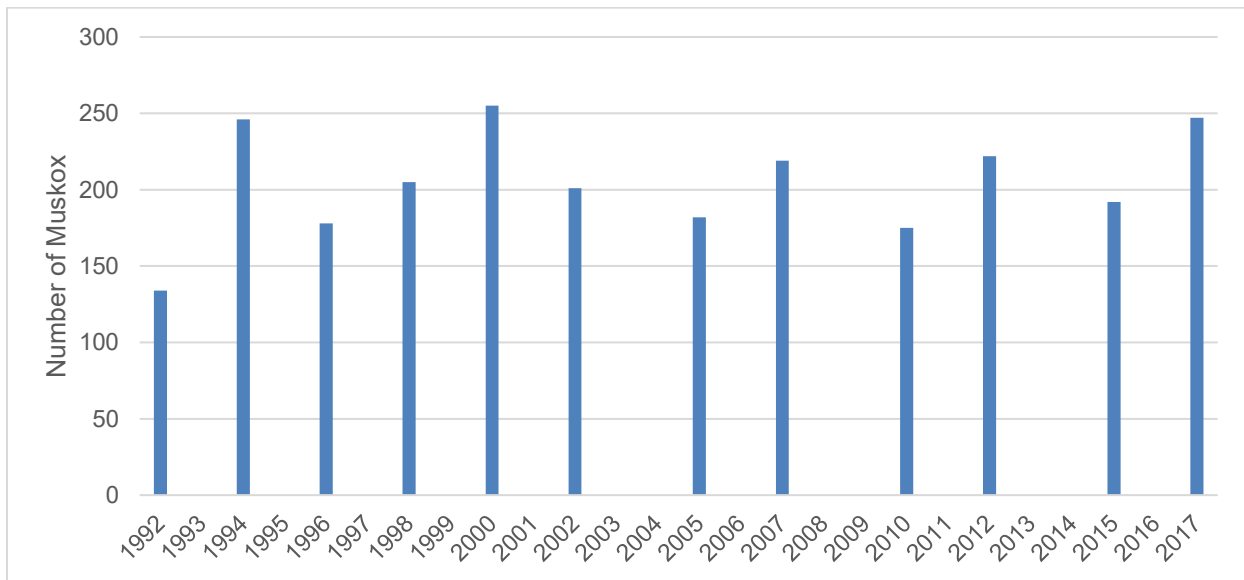
Between 2008 and 2014, mortality rates for radio-collared cows ranged from 4%-26% (Gorn and Dunker 2015). These mortality rates are not representative of the entire population due to the low sample size (1% of the population) and non-random distribution of collars. Eighty-eight percent of mortalities occurred between April and October, suggesting brown bears as a causative agent. Predation on muskox seems to be increasing as bears learn to prey on muskoxen and wolf numbers increase on the Seward Peninsula in response to more Western Arctic caribou wintering there. Brown bear predation on calves may be decreasing recruitments rates (Gorn and Dunker 2015).

Muskox reduce movements during the winter to conserve energy (Nelson 1994). Muskox depend on areas with low snow cover as they cannot forage in deep, hard-packed snow. Therefore, disturbance to

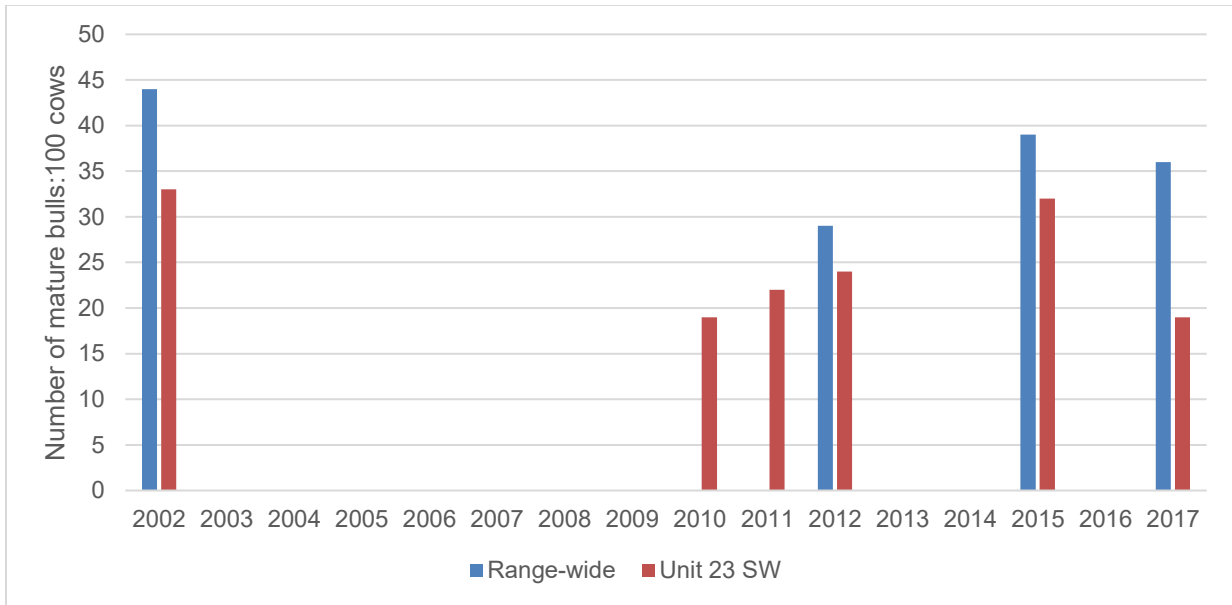
muskox groups during the winter by hunters or predators could decrease survival through increased energetic requirements and movement to unsuitable habitat (Nelson 1994).



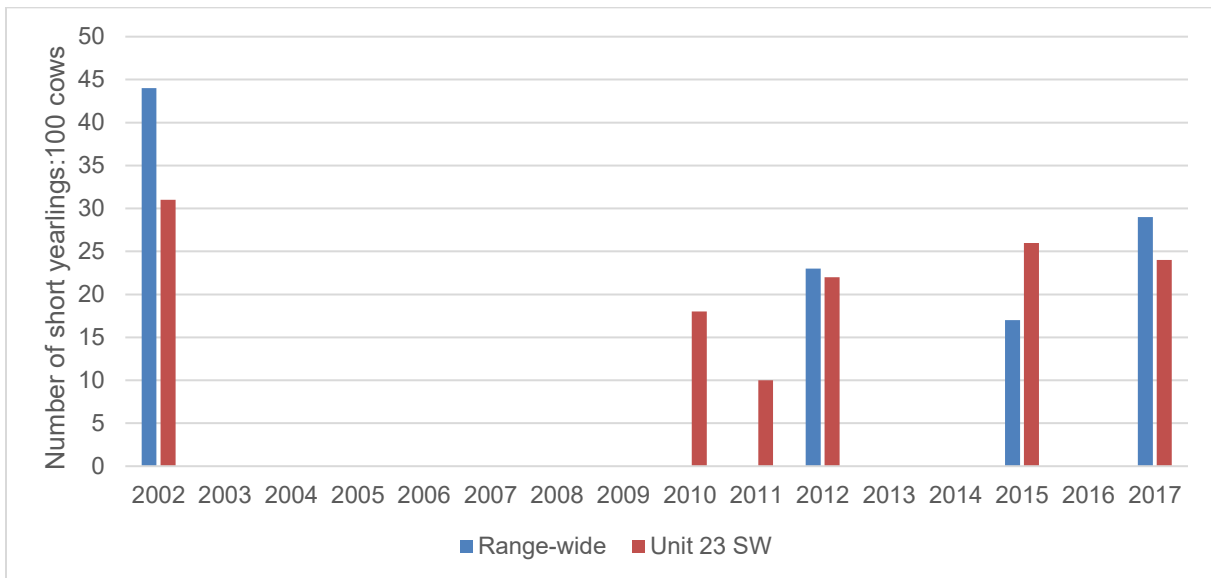
**Figure 1.** Population estimates for Seward Peninsula muskox. The core count area includes Units 22B, 22C, 22D, 22E, and 23SW. The expanded count area includes the core count area, northern Unit 22A, southeastern Unit 23, and Unit 21D (Gorn and Dunker 2015, Dunker 2017a).



**Figure 2.** Population estimates for muskox in Unit 23SW (Gorn and Dunker 2015, Dunker 2017a).



**Figure 3.** Bull:cow ratios for Seward Peninsula muskox. Ratios are the number of mature bulls:100 cows. Mature bulls are  $\geq 4$  years old. Cows are  $\geq 3$  years old. (Gorn and Dunker 2015, Dunker 2017b).



**Figure 4.** Ratios of short yearlings:100 cows for Seward Peninsula muskox. Short yearlings are muskox between 10 and 15 months old. Cows are  $\geq 3$  years old. (Gorn and Dunker 2015, Dunker 2017b).

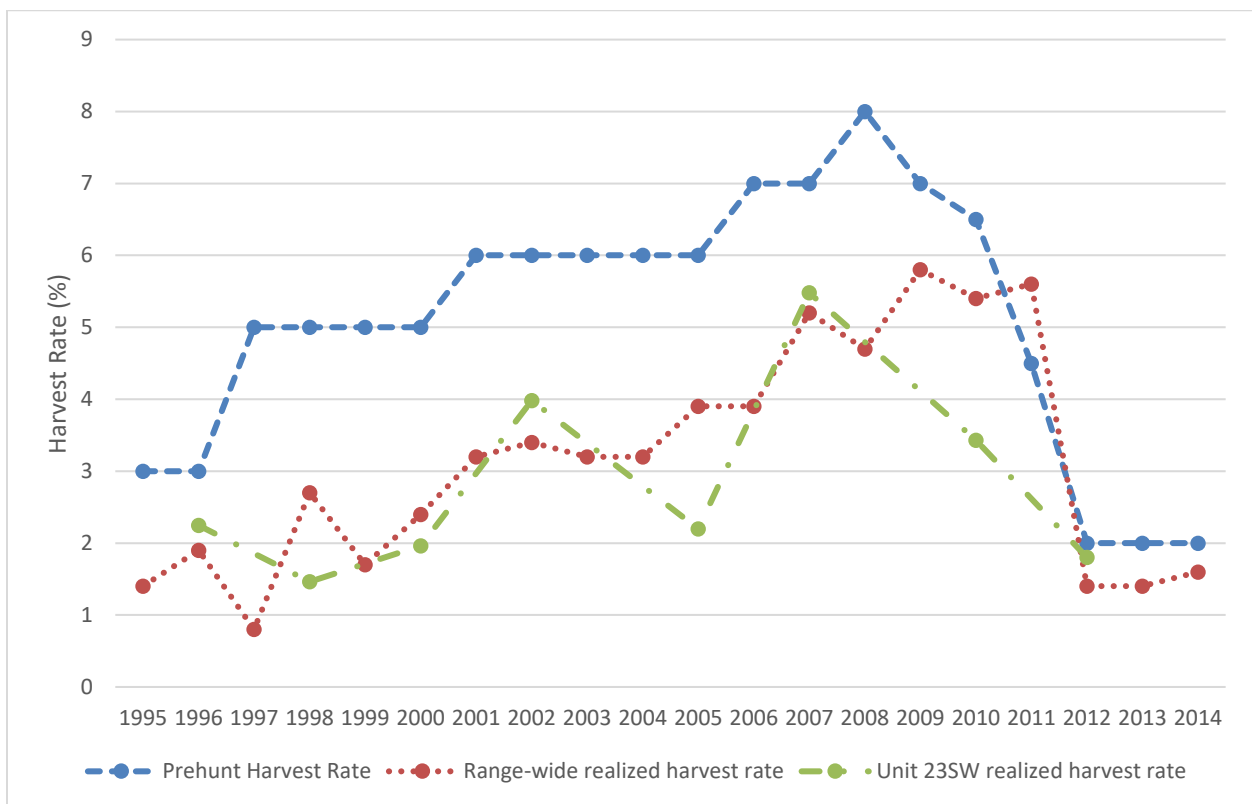
### Harvest History

Muskox harvest in Unit 23 SW occurs by State Tier II permit, TX106 on non-Federal lands and by Federal permit, FX2302 on Federal public lands. Since 2012, the range-wide allowable harvest has been 2% of the total population estimate (**Figure 5**). Quotas for individual hunt areas are calculated as 10% of the estimated number of mature bulls in each area (Gorn and Dunker 2015).

Between 1995 and 2014, the allowable harvest for Seward Peninsula muskox ranged from 2%-8%, peaking in 2008 (**Figure 5**) (Gorn and Dunker 2015). After the population declined in 2012 and Schmidt

and Gorn (2013) reported on the importance of mature bull muskoxen in a population (see Biological Background section), the allowable harvest has remained at 2% of the population estimate. Over the same time period, realized harvest has been below allowable harvest in all years except 2011 (**Figure 5**).

Between 1995 and 2011, the muskox harvest quota in Unit 23SW ranged from 6 muskox to 18 muskox (OSM 2014). Between 1995 and 2017, annual harvest ranged from 0 muskox to 18 muskox (**Table 1**) (Dunker 2018, pers. comm.). Most of the harvest occurred under State regulations. Since 2008, no muskox have been harvested by Federal registration permit in Unit 23 SW (**Table 1**) (Adkisson 2018, pers. comm.). Often, the more accessible muskox are found on State lands, so the harvest quota may already be reached before Federally qualified subsistence users have an opportunity to access Federal lands (Adkisson 2018, pers. comm.). Since 2012, non-Federally qualified users from Kotzebue and Noorvik have harvested over half of the muskox from Unit 23 SW (ADF&G 2018).



**Figure 5.** Harvest rates for Seward Peninsula muskox (Gorn and Dunker 2015). Pre-hunt harvest rate is the allowable harvest and realized harvest rate is the actual harvest.

**Table 1.** Muskox harvest in Unit 23 SW (Dunker 2018, pers. comm., Adkisson 2018, pers. comm.).

Year	FX2302 Issued	FX2302 Harvest	Tier II TX106 Issued	Tier II TX106 Harvest	RX106 Issued	RX106 Harvest	DX106 Issued	DX106 Harvest	Total Harvest
1995	7	6							6
1996	9	3							3
1997	6	1							1
1998	8	2	2	1					3
1999	8	0	1	1					1
2000	4	1	8	5					6
2001	6	2	11	6					8
2002	4	0	9	9					9
2003	6	2	10	3					5
2004	6	2	12	6					8
2005	4	1	8	3					4
2006	6	1	13	3					4
2007	10	2	30	10					12
2008	5	0	0	0	49	16	2	0	16
2009	4	0	0	0	27	17	1	1	18
2010	0	0	0	0	25	6			6
2011	0	0	0	0	8	7			7
2012	0	0	4	0					0
2013	0	0	5	2					2
2014	4	0	4	3					3
2015	2	0	4	3					3
2016	3	0	3	1					1
2017	1	0	3	3					3
2018	2		3						

**OSM Recommendation:**

- maintain status quo
- initiate proposal to modify or eliminate the closure
- other recommendation

**Justification**

The harvestable surplus of muskoxen in Unit 23 SW is very low and the population cannot sustain increases in harvest. No muskox have been harvested under Federal regulations in Unit 23 SW since 2008. Continuing the current closure is necessary to conserve the muskox population while providing for subsistence opportunity and a meaningful rural subsistence priority.

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## U.S. Department of Interior National Park Service



### Law Enforcement Update Spring 2019

#### Northwest Arctic Conservation Law Enforcement Working Group

The NPS is working closely with the NANA Trespass Program, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management to collaborate and coordinate on Law Enforcement Issues specific the Northwest Arctic on an ongoing based. To that end, we have formed interagency working group, which will meet formally at least four times a year. To date, the group has met twice and meeting discussion has been fruitful. This working group will serve to increase the effectiveness of the various conservation law enforcement agencies in the area, as well as to establish a consolidated public message campaign and include public engagement in the enforcement process.

#### Patrols

Increased Field Patrols are planned, including joint interagency patrols. Expectations are to maintain a greater presence in Cape Krusenstern through mid-summer and more boat and snowmachine based patrols in Noatak N. Pres. and Kobuk Valley N.P., with continual aerial patrols throughout all Federal Lands. Several joint interagency patrols are planned for this summer.

#### Staffing

- Will be hiring two additional Permanent Law Enforcement Rangers: one based in Kotzebue and one based in Nome; anticipated to fill those positions this summer.
- Until those permanent positions are filled, the NPS will have one supervisor and two seasonal law enforcement rangers based in Kotzebue this summer; an increase from 2 to 3 rangers from last summer. Jim Hans will one of the seasonal rangers, whom worked in Kotzebue as a ranger last year.
- The NPS is always interested in hiring local residents. If any residents of the Northwest Arctic are interested in a career as a Law Enforcement Ranger, whether in Kotzebue or anywhere in the Country, please contact District Ranger Joe Dallemolle.
- We are also looking for local volunteers that may be willing to assist with projects and field work.

#### Permit Reminders

- A permit is required for cutting any standing tree greater than 1" in diameter.
- A permit is required for any temporary campsite, tent platforms, shelter, or other temporary facility that will remain in place for over 14 days.
- Permits applications are available at the National Park Service Office in Kotzebue.

\*Will include FY 2018 Commercial Guide, Transport, and Air Taxi Statistics at the RAC Meeting if those statistics are available at that time. Complete reports were not available as of March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019.



## Northwest Arctic Conservation Law Enforcement Working Group

### **Members**

Damon Schaeffer, Senior Director of Lands & Facilities, NANA  
Scott Bjork, Wildlife Trooper, AWT  
Scott Sample, Chief Ranger NPS  
Joseph Dallemolle, District Ranger NPS  
David Zabriskie, Deputy Refuge Manager, USFWS  
Steven Strader, Zone Officer, USFWS  
Walker Gusse, Ranger, BLM

### **Mission (Draft)**

“To establish a periodic forum for the Conservation/Land Management Law Enforcement Personnel in the Northwest Arctic and immediate area in order to collaborate on issues, coordinate operations, and to consolidate interagency public messaging for the purpose of better fulfilling their individual agency missions and to better serve the people of the Northwest Arctic and the general public”

### **Intent**

This working group is intended to remain relatively informal as an entity, but function as a periodic forum to discuss law enforcement issues, investigations, and plan field operations in a consolidated manner involving all the conservation/land management agencies’ law enforcement officers or their Senior Officers in the Northwest Arctic. Stakeholder organization and public input, questions, concerns, and advice is always welcome by all agencies. Such organizations and the public are encouraged to contact individual agencies at any time for these matters. Pertinent issues will be conveyed to the working group as a whole, and stakeholder organizations may be invited to participate in future meetings.

The working group plans to meet formally four times a year, and whenever possible to meet the day prior to the NWARAC meetings in order to include outside organization stakeholders in discussions and updates.

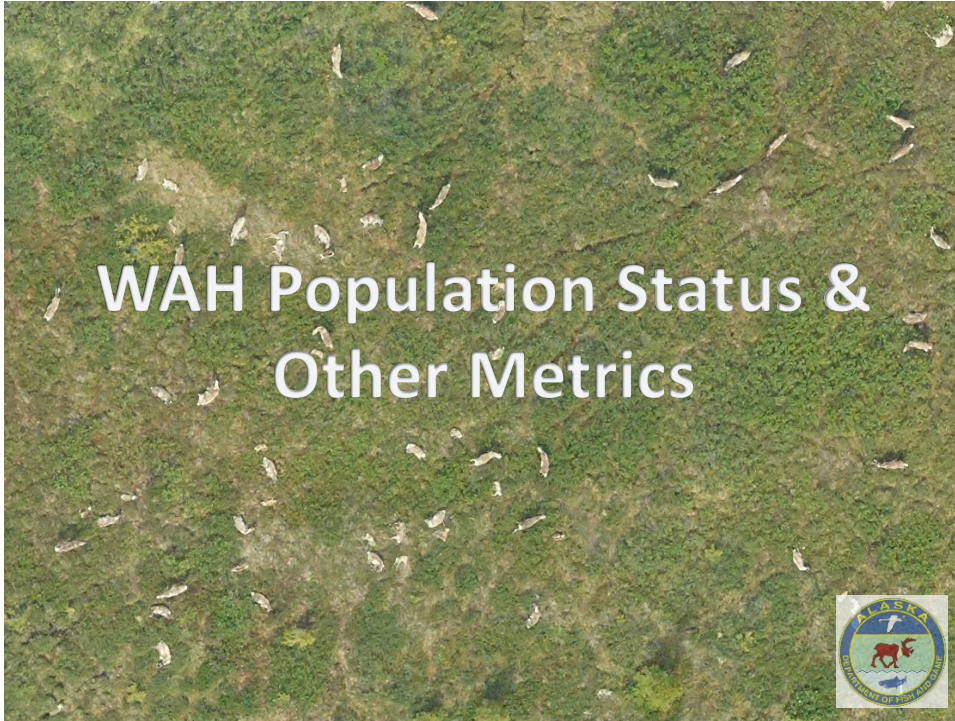
The working group will further endeavor to solicit public input into Law Enforcement issues throughout the year outside of the quarterly meetings, during community relations events, field operations, one-on-one discussions, and other avenues. Members of the group will also work to present consolidated interagency law enforcement updates and messaging to the communities of the Northwest Arctic, the SRCs and NWARAC , and at other community and organizational events when practical and pertinent.

Furthermore, the meetings of this working group are not in any way meant to replace interagency collaboration and communication at other times and in other settings throughout the year. Agency personnel will continue to work and communicate with one another throughout the year.

### **Updates**

A verbal update and summary of current specific action items and discussions will be presented at the Spring NWARAC.

The first meeting of this working group was held on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The Second Meeting is scheduled to be held April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the day prior to the Spring NWARAC Meeting.



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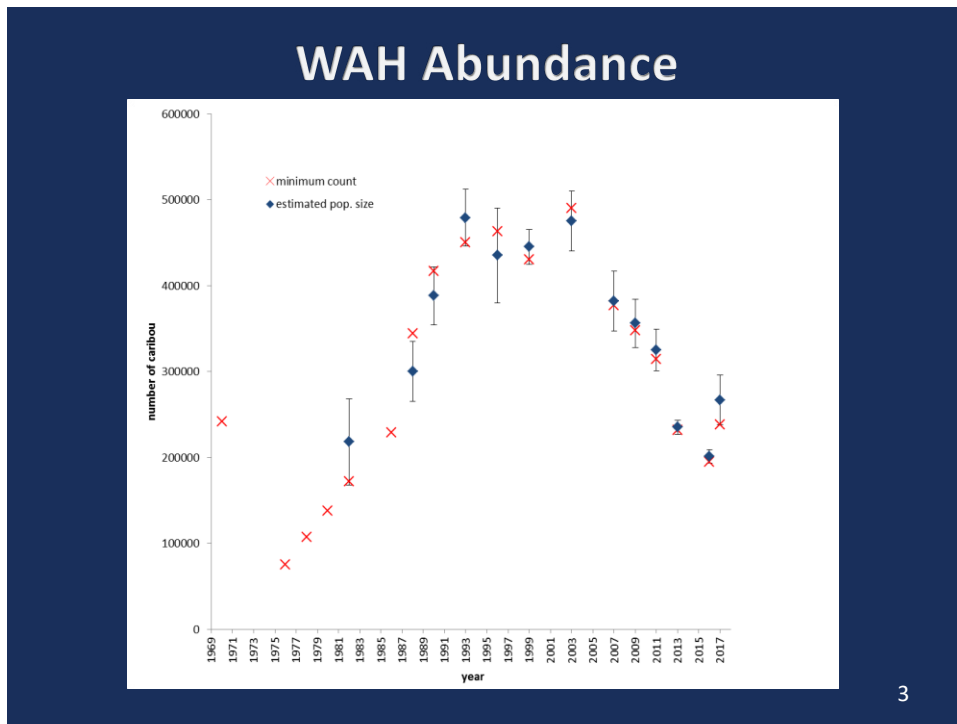
## 2017 Census Results

- Rivest Estimate: 259,000 +/- 26,779
  - Minimum Count: > 239,055
- A census was attempted and failed in 2018
  - It is unlikely the WAH increased between 2017 and 2018
- Planning for census in 2019

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### Adult Cow Survival

- **2016-17 Adult Female Survival – average (84%)**
  - Suggests the likelihood of growth in 2017 was very high
- **2017-18 Adult Female Survival – low (71%)**
  - Suggests the likelihood of growth in 2018 was unlikely



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## Calf Recruitment



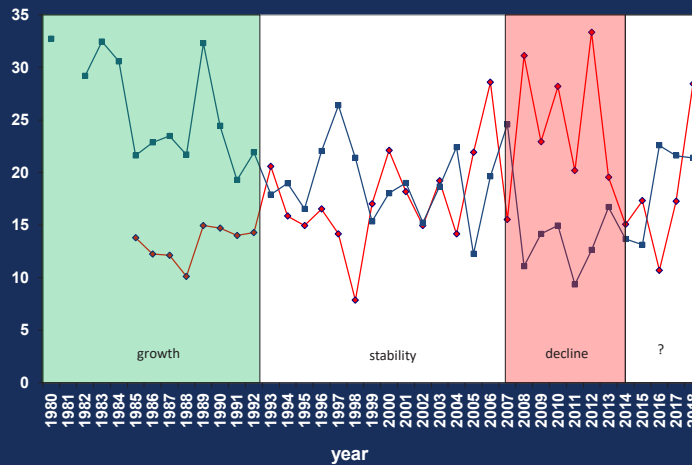
- 2017 Yearling Recruitment – high (22:100 adults)
- 2018 Yearling Recruitment – high (21:100 adults)

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## Population trajectory

Blue line = calf recruitment; # of short yearlings:100 adults  
 Red line = adult cow mortality; # of cows died:100 collared cows



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- 2017 Calf Production – high (83%)
- 2018 Calf Production – high (86%)

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## Neonate Study 2017

- In 2017 predation was the leading cause of mortality accounting for 79% (34) of all mortalities
  - Brown Bear (16)
  - Eagles (5)
  - Wolves (4)
  - Unknown predator (9)
- Non-predation mortalities account for 21% (9)
- Annual survival 42%



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## Neonate Study 2018

- June 2-8<sup>th</sup> deployed 76 collars
  - 26 mortalities to date (last flight mid-January)
  - Brown Bear (3)
  - Abandonment (8)
  - Unknown Predator (2)
  - Unknown (13) (not yet retrieved)



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## Fall Composition Surveys



- 2016 Fall Herd Composition
  - 41 bulls: 100 cows – good
  - 54 calves: 100 cows – high
- 2017 Fall Herd Composition
  - 54 bulls: 100 cows – high
  - 57 calves: 100 cows – high

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## Management Level

Adult Cow Survival < 80%      80-88%      > 88%  
 Calf Recruitment < 15:100      15-22:100      > 22:100

Management Level and Harvest Level	Population Trend		
	Declining Low: 6%	Stable Med: 7%	Increasing High: 8%
<b>Liberal</b>	Pop: 265,000+ Harvest: 16,000-22,000	Pop: 230,000+ Harvest: 16,000-22,000	Pop: 200,000+ Harvest: 16,000-22,000
<b>Conservative</b>	Pop: 200,000-265,000 Harvest: 12,000-16,000	Pop: 170,000-230,000 Harvest: 12,000-16,000	Pop: 150,000-200,000 Harvest: 12,000-16,000
<b>Preservative</b>	Pop: 130,000-200,000 Harvest: 8,000-12,000	Pop: 115,000-170,000 Harvest: 8,000-12,000	Pop: 100,000-150,000 Harvest: 8,000-12,000
<b>Critical</b> Keep Bull: Cow ratio ≥40 Bull:100 Cow	Pop: <130,000 Harvest: 6,000-8,000	Pop: <115,000 Harvest: 6,000-8,000	Pop: <100,000 Harvest: 6,000-8,000

11

11



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# Western Arctic National Parklands Wildlife Report - 2019

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



- CAPE KRUSENSTERN NATIONAL MONUMENT
  - NOATAK NATIONAL PRESERVE
  - KOBUK VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

## Caribou

### 2018

- Due to a change in the caribou's migration pattern, ADFG and NPS could only collar 3 caribou at Onion Portage in September, assisted by Kotzebue and Point Lay students.
- Insect relief from cooler weather prevented a successful photo count in 2018.

### 2019

- To increase collar numbers, caribou will be captured and collared by helicopter using nets - end of March/early May.
- Another photo count will be attempted by ADFG this summer.

Monitoring Years	Total # of Collars Deployed	Current # of Active Collars	Avg. Survival 1 Year After collaring (%)	Avg. Deaths 1 Year After Collaring (%)	Avg. % of Collared Cows with Calves
2009-2018	203	52	79.49	17.20	67.49

Table I. Summarized data for adult female caribou collared at Onion Portage, Kobuk Valley National Park between September - August, 2009-2018.

	2017	2018	Interpretation
<b>Herd Count (estimated)</b>	259,000	-	
<b>Calf Production</b>	83%	86%	Good in both years
<b>Calf Survival</b>	42%	Pending	
<b>Yearling Recruitment</b>	22:100	21:100	Good in both years
<b>Bull to Cow Ratio</b>	54:100		Good in 2017
<b>Adult Cow Survival</b>	84%	71%	Avg. in 2017, Poor in 2018
<b>Herd Mgmt. Level</b>	Conservative & Stable	Conservative & Stable	No change

Table 2. Western Arctic Herd demographics for 2017 and 2018.

## Moose

### 2018

- Significant declines in Unit 23 moose populations prompted an Emergency Special Action (WSA 18-04) to close the Federal winter cow moose season and all non-subsistence moose hunting on public lands.
- Closing the cow season will aid in the recovery of the population and moderate further declines.
- A moose calf mortality study was conducted in Spring 2018.
- The Fall 2018 Moose composition survey was completed for the Upper Kobuk area.

Contact Information:

Raime Fronstin, Wildlife Biologist

raime\_fronstin@nps.gov, 907.442.8313

2019

- The Spring 2019 Moose count survey is scheduled for March 2019 in the Upper Kobuk area.

Year	Survey Area	Calf: Adult	Population #	Trend
2013	Lower Noatak	11:100	1478	
2018	Lower Noatak	13:100	886	40% decrease
2012	Lower Kobuk/Squirrel River	8:100	2546	
2017	Lower Kobuk/Squirrel River	15:100	1346	47% decrease
2011	Selawik/Tagagawik	11:100	1739	
2016	Selawik/Tagagawik	14:100	940	46% decrease

Table 3. Moose demographics by survey area and year.

## Dall Sheep

2018

- Compared with prior years, estimates suggest a decline in sheep in the Central Delongs/Trail Creek areas, while the Western Bairds population remained relatively stable.

2019

- Annual surveys in these areas will continue.
- Sheep hunting will remain closed in the Baird, Delong, and Schwatka Mountains, and the remainder of GMU 23 under Federal regulations except in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

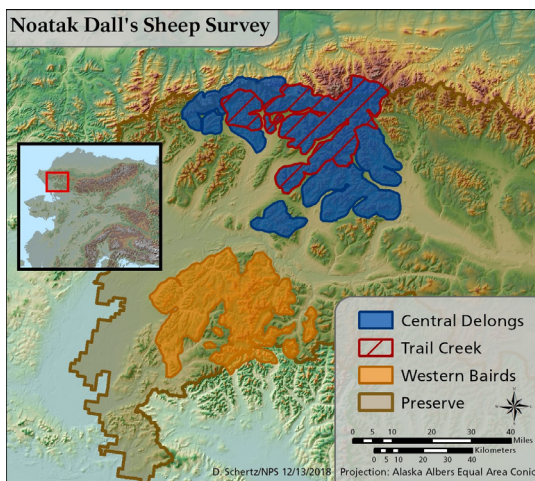


Figure 1. 2018 Dall sheep survey areas in Noatak National Preserve.

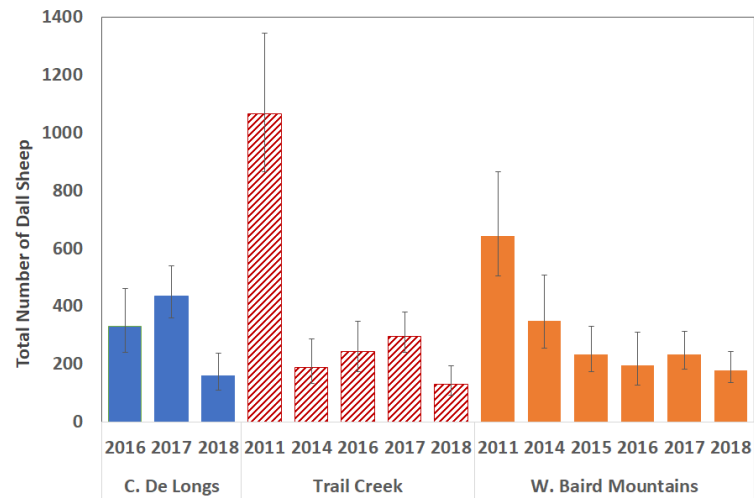


Figure 2. Dall sheep population estimates for 3 survey areas in Noatak National Preserve, from 2011-2018.

## Muskoxen

### 2018

- Count and survival estimates indicate a 4% decrease in the Cape Thompson population from 2011-2018, primarily due to low female yearling survival.
- Two federal and three state harvest permits were issued in 2018.

### 2019

- The annual count and composition survey is scheduled for March 2019
- The federal hunts (FX2312 & FX2303) permit applications will open in mid-June and close mid-July. Application notification and instruction will be posted around town and broadcast via radio and internet.

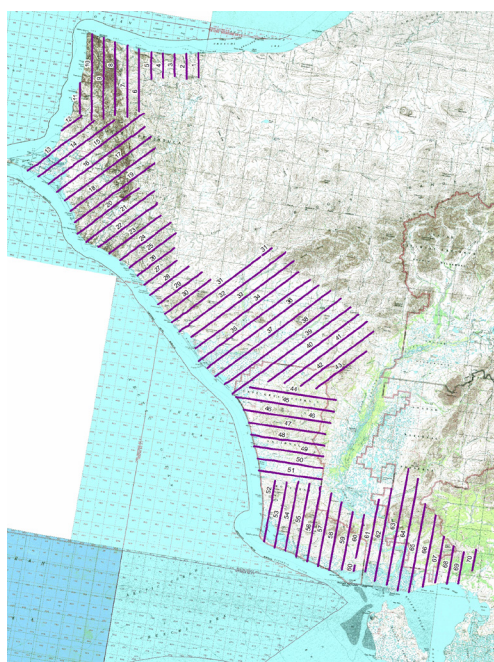


Figure 3. 2019 Muskox survey area, Cape Thompson.

	2016	2017	2018
All Bulls to Cows Ratio	47:100	67:100	47:100
Mature Bull to Cow Ratio	35:100	59:100	36:100
Yearling to Cow Ratio	15:100	32:100	28:100

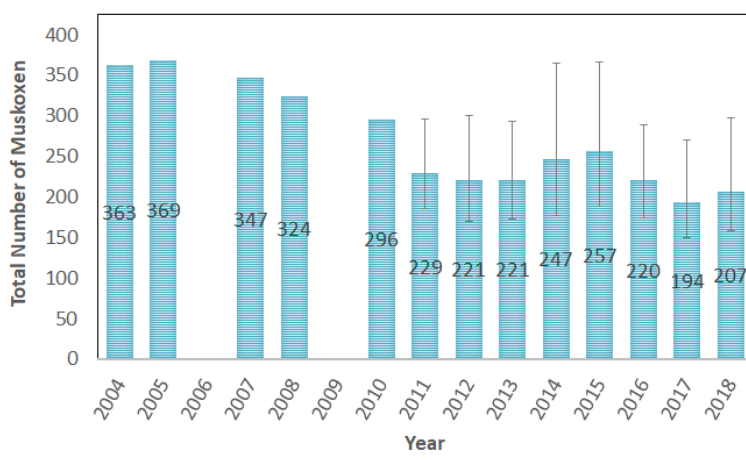


Figure 4. Table of muskoxen group composition for 2016-2018 (top). Total estimated muskoxen population in Cape Thompson from 2004-2018 (bottom). Data prior to 2011 are minimum counts. Distance sampling was used from 2011 on.

## Brown Bears

### 2018

- Annual brown bear surveying for the arctic parks began in 2016, on a rotating basis. In 2018, brown bear surveys were conducted in Gates of the Arctic National Park (results from all surveys below in Table 4).

### 2019

- Survey areas rotate for annually for 4 years and every 5th year is an off year. No brown bear surveys will be conducted in 2019.
- Results from 1st cycle of surveys will be analyzed, interpreted, and published.

Survey Area	Year	Area Surveyed (km <sup>2</sup> )	Adult Density (# bears/1000 km <sup>2</sup> )	Total Density (# bears/1000 km <sup>2</sup> )	Estimated # of Adults in Area
Seward Peninsula	2015	19,998	35.6	21.0	420
Lower Noatak Drainage	2016	23,596	67.5	106.4	1694
Upper Noatak Drainage	2017	23,559	30.6	41.8	720
Gates of the Arctic NP	2018	18,213	28.3	31.0	515

Table 4. Brown Bear density and abundance estimates per survey area and year.

## Additional Research

Study Focus	Collaborating Agencies *	Location **	Purpose
Wolves	NPS	NOAT	This year, WEAR will begin a pilot study to gain more knowledge about local wolf demographics.
Seabirds	NPS	CAKR, BELA	Monitoring coastlines for die-offs.
Loons	NPS	CAKR, BELA	Population numbers, distribution, habitat use, genetic variation and egg contamination.
Lagoons and Whitefish	NPS, WCS, UAF, Alex Whiting, Cyrus Harris	CAKR, Kotlik, & Aqulaaq lagoons	Monitoring long term changes in coastal lagoons. Subsistence focus.
Elodea	NPS, ADFG, UAF	CAKR, NOAT	Surveying high-risk lagoons for presence of invasive Elodea plant species.

\* WCS – Wildlife Conservation Society, UAF – University of Alaska Fairbanks; \*\* NOAT – Noatak National Preserve, CAKR – Cape Krusenstern National Monument, BELA – Bering Land Bridge National Preserve

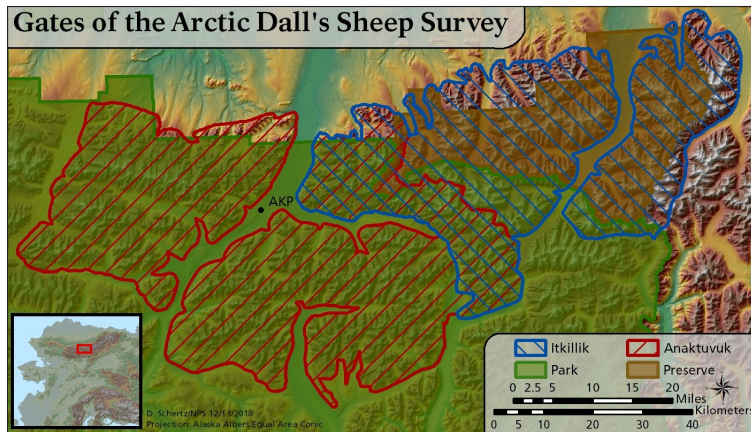
**Western Arctic National Parklands** – Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/KotzebueMuseum/> **Arctic Network Inventory and Monitoring Program** <https://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/arcn/> **Cape Krusenstern National Monument** <http://www.nps.gov/cakr>  
**Kobuk Valley National Park** <http://www.nps.gov/kova/index.htm>



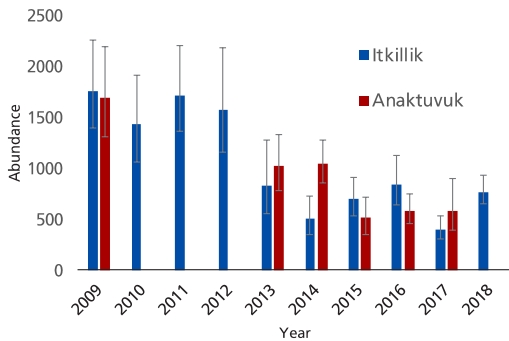
# Dall's Sheep – 2018 Survey Summary

## Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve

The National Park Service conducted an aerial survey for Dall's sheep in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve between July 2nd and 7th, 2018. This survey area includes portions of game management units (GMU) 24A, 24B, 26A, and 26B. The survey method uses distance sampling following transects based on elevation contours to estimate the total population. This survey was conducted using a single aircraft based out of Galbraith Lake.



**2018 Study Areas** surveyed for Dall's sheep in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. (Above)



**Total Dall's Sheep Distance Sampling Estimates 2009-2018** for the Anaktuvuk and Itkillik subareas within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Alaska. (Above)

In total, 136 out of 154 transects were completed in approximately 42 hours of flight time between the Itkillik and Anaktuvuk subareas (See map upper right).

**Estimates:** The provisional estimates for total sheep by subarea are 578 (95% Bayesian Credibility Interval: 387 - 897) in the Anaktuvuk and 765 (95% CI: 649 – 925) in the Itkillik.

These estimates are approximately stable when compared to the previous couple of years. The lamb to ewe-like ratio in both subareas is approximately average, in the Itkillik, it is potentially low. For the full estimate breakdowns see the table below.

**Upcoming surveys:** We will continue surveys in these study areas annually because the Itkillik is a long term dataset and the Anaktuvuk has an important subsistence value. As part of a five year rotation in 2020, the survey area will be expanded to cover almost all of Gates of the Arctic National Park.

**Provisional 2018 Dall's Sheep Estimates** for the Anaktuvuk and Itkillik subareas within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Alaska. (Below)

	Itkillik		Anaktuvuk	
	Mean	95% CI*	Mean	95% CI*
Total sheep	765	(649 - 925)	578	(387 - 897)
Adults	645	(544 - 790)	482	(314 - 771)
Lambs	120	(95 - 167)	96	(59 - 166)
Lambs:Ewe-like	0.24	(0.18 – 0.33)	0.39	(0.19 – 0.69)

\* 95% CI = 95% Bayesian Credible Intervals

**Contact Information:** Eric Wald  
ARCN Program Manager  
(907) 455-0624

4175 Geist Rd  
Fairbanks AK 99709  
<https://www.nps.gov/im/arcn/dallsheep.htm>





## Federal Subsistence Board News Release



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Bureau of Land Management  
National Park Service  
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Forest Service

**For Immediate Release:**  
January 31, 2019

**Contact:** Caron McKee  
(907) 786-3880 or (800) 478-1456  
caron\_mckee@fws.gov

### Call for Proposals to Change Federal Subsistence Hunting and Trapping Regulations

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) is accepting proposals through March 27, 2019 to change Federal regulations for the subsistence harvest of wildlife on Federal public lands for the July 1, 2020–June 30, 2022 regulatory years. The Board will consider proposals to change Federal subsistence hunting and trapping seasons, harvest limits, methods of harvest, and customary and traditional use determinations.

#### Submit proposals:

- **By mail or hand delivery**  
Federal Subsistence Board  
Office of Subsistence Management – Attn: Theo Matuskowitz  
1011 East Tudor Road, MS-121  
Anchorage, AK 99503-6199
- **Online at <https://www.regulations.gov>**  
Search for docket number FWS-R7-SM-2018-0015.
- **At any Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting**  
A current list of meeting dates and locations can be found at <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regions>, or by contacting the Office of Subsistence Management at the phone number or email address below. Due to the recent lapse in funding for the Federal government budget, some of the meeting dates published in the proposed rule (84 FR 623; January 31, 2019) have been changed. Revised meeting dates and locations will be announced in subsequent news releases as they become available.

The proposed rule, *Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska—2020–21 and 2021–22, Subsistence Taking of Wildlife Regulations*, published in the Federal Register on January 31, 2019 (84 FR 623).

You may call the Office of Subsistence Management at 800-478-1456 or email [subsistence@fws.gov](mailto:subsistence@fws.gov) with questions.

Additional information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program may be found on the web at [www.doi.gov/subsistence](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence) or by visiting [www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska](https://www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska).

**Missing out on the latest Federal subsistence issues?** If you'd like to receive emails and notifications on the Federal Subsistence Management Program you may subscribe for regular updates by emailing [fws-fsb-subsistence-request@lists.fws.gov](mailto:fws-fsb-subsistence-request@lists.fws.gov).

-###-

1011 East Tudor Road MS-121 • Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199 • [subsistence@fws.gov](mailto:subsistence@fws.gov) • (800) 478-1456 / (907) 786-3888  
This document has been cleared for public release #20601312019.



U.S.C. 4321–4370f), and have made a preliminary determination that this action is one of a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. This proposed rule involves a safety zone lasting for 2 hours that will prohibit entry within 100-yards of swim participants. Normally such actions are categorically excluded from further review under paragraph L63(a) of Appendix A, Table 1 of DHS Instruction Manual 023–01–001–01, Rev. 01. A preliminary Record of Environmental Consideration supporting this determination is available in the docket where indicated under **ADDRESSES**. We seek any comments or information that may lead to the discovery of a significant environmental impact from this proposed rule.

#### G. Protest Activities

The Coast Guard respects the First Amendment rights of protesters. Protesters are asked to contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section to coordinate protest activities so that your message can be received without jeopardizing the safety or security of people, places, or vessels.

#### V. Public Participation and Request for Comments

We view public participation as essential to effective rulemaking, and will consider all comments and material received during the comment period. Your comment can help shape the outcome of this rulemaking. If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this rulemaking, indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation.

We encourage you to submit comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. If your material cannot be submitted using <http://www.regulations.gov>, contact the person in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document for alternate instructions.

We accept anonymous comments. All comments received will be posted without change to <https://www.regulations.gov> and will include any personal information you have provided. For more about privacy and the docket, visit <https://www.regulations.gov/privacyNotice>.

Documents mentioned in this NPRM as being available in the docket, and all public comments, will be in our online docket at <https://www.regulations.gov>

and can be viewed by following that website's instructions. Additionally, if you go to the online docket and sign up for email alerts, you will be notified when comments are posted or when a final rule is published.

#### List of Subjects in 33 CFR Part 165

Harbors, Marine safety, Navigation (water), Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Security measures, Waterways.

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Coast Guard is proposing to amend 33 CFR part 165 as follows:

#### PART 165—SAFETY ZONE; TANAPAG HARBOR, SAIPAN, CNMI

- 1. The authority citation for part 165 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 46 U.S.C. 70034 (previously codified in 33 U.S.C 1231); 46 U.S.C. 70051 (previously codified in 50 U.S.C. 191); 33 CFR 1.05–1, 6.04–1, 6.04–6, and 160.5; Department of Homeland Security Delegation No. 0170.1.

- 2. Add § 165.T14–0020 to read as follows:

#### 165. T14–0020 Safety Zone; Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, CNMI.

(a) *Location.* The following area, within the Guam Captain of the Port (COTP) Zone (See 33 CFR 3.70–15), all navigable waters within a 100-yard radius of race participants in Tanapag Harbor, Saipan. Race participants, chase boats and organizers of the event will be exempt from the safety zone.

(b) *Effective Dates.* This rule is effective from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. on March 31, 2019.

(c) *Enforcement.* Any Coast Guard commissioned, warrant, or petty officer, and any other COTP representative permitted by law, may enforce this temporary safety zone.

(d) *Waiver.* The COTP may waive any of the requirements of this rule for any person, vessel, or class of vessel upon finding that application of the safety zone is unnecessary or impractical for the purpose of maritime security.

(e) *Penalties.* Vessels or persons violating this rule are subject to the penalties set forth in 46 U.S.C. 70036 (previously codified in 33 U.S.C. 1232) and 46 U.S.C. 70052 (previously codified in 50 U.S.C. 192).

Dated: January 23, 2019.

**Christopher M. Chase,**  
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard, Captain of the Port, Guam.

[FR Doc. 2019–00563 Filed 1–30–19; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 9110–04–P**

#### DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

##### Forest Service

#### 36 CFR Part 242

#### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

##### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### 50 CFR Part 100

[Docket No. FWS–R7–SM–2018–0015; FXFR13350700640–190–FF07J00000; FBMS#4500129154]

RIN 1018–BD11

#### Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska—2020–21 and 2021–22 Subsistence Taking of Wildlife Regulations

**AGENCIES:** Forest Service, Agriculture; Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

**SUMMARY:** This proposed rule would establish regulations for hunting and trapping seasons, harvest limits, and methods and means related to taking of wildlife for subsistence uses during the 2020–21 and 2021–22 regulatory years. The Federal Subsistence Board is on a schedule of completing the process of revising subsistence taking of wildlife regulations in even-numbered years and subsistence taking of fish and shellfish regulations in odd-numbered years; public proposal and review processes take place during the preceding year. The Board also addresses customary and traditional use determinations during the applicable cycle. When final, the resulting rulemaking will replace the existing subsistence wildlife taking regulations. This rule would also amend the general regulations on subsistence taking of fish and wildlife.

#### **DATES:**

*Public meetings:* The Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils will hold public meetings to receive comments and make proposals to change this proposed rule on several dates between February 5 and March 12, 2019, and then will hold another round of public meetings to discuss and receive comments on the proposals, and make recommendations on the proposals to the Federal Subsistence Board, on several dates between September 19 and November 5, 2019. The Board will discuss and evaluate proposed regulatory changes during a public meeting in Anchorage, AK, in April 2020. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific information on dates and locations of the public meetings.

*Public comments:* Comments and proposals to change this proposed rule must be received or postmarked by March 27, 2019.

**ADDRESSES:**

*Public meetings:* The Federal Subsistence Board and the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils' public meetings will be held at various locations in Alaska. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific information on dates and locations of the public meetings.

*Public comments:* You may submit comments by one of the following methods:

- *Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for FWS-R7-SM-2018-0015, which is the docket number for this rulemaking.
- *By hard copy:* U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management, 1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121, Attn: Theo Matuskowitz, Anchorage, AK 99503-6199, or hand delivery to the Designated Federal Official attending any of the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council public meetings. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for additional information on locations of the public meetings.

We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us (see the Public Review Process section below for more information).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Chair, Federal Subsistence Board, c/o U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attention: Thomas C.J. Doolittle, Office of Subsistence Management; (907) 786-3888 or [subsistence@fws.gov](mailto:subsistence@fws.gov). For questions specific to National Forest System lands, contact Thomas Whitford, Regional Subsistence Program Leader,

USDA-Forest Service, Alaska Region; (907) 743-9461 or [twhitford@fs.fed.us](mailto:twhitford@fs.fed.us).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

Under Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (16 U.S.C. 3111-3126), the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretaries) jointly implement the Federal Subsistence Management Program. This program provides a rural preference for take of fish and wildlife resources for subsistence uses on Federal public lands and waters in Alaska. The Secretaries published temporary regulations to carry out this program in the **Federal Register** on June 29, 1990 (55 FR 27114), and final regulations were published in the **Federal Register** on May 29, 1992 (57 FR 22940). The Program has subsequently amended these regulations a number of times. Because this program is a joint effort between Interior and Agriculture, these regulations are located in two titles of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): Title 36, "Parks, Forests, and Public Property," and Title 50, "Wildlife and Fisheries," at 36 CFR part 242.1-28 and 50 CFR part 100.1-28, respectively. The regulations contain subparts as follows: Subpart A, General Provisions; Subpart B, Program Structure; Subpart C, Board Determinations; and Subpart D, Subsistence Taking of Fish and Wildlife.

Consistent with subpart B of these regulations, the Secretaries established a Federal Subsistence Board to administer the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The Board comprises:

- A Chair appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture;
- The Alaska Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;

- The Alaska Regional Director, National Park Service;
- The Alaska State Director, Bureau of Land Management;
- The Alaska Regional Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- The Alaska Regional Forester, USDA-Forest Service; and
- Two public members appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

Through the Board, these agencies and public members participate in the development of regulations for subparts C and D, which, among other things, set forth program eligibility and specific harvest seasons and limits.

In administering the program, the Secretaries divided Alaska into 10 subsistence resource regions, each of which is represented by a Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council). The Councils provide a forum for rural residents with personal knowledge of local conditions and resource requirements to have a meaningful role in the subsistence management of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands in Alaska. The Council members represent varied geographical, cultural, and user interests within each region. Members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

**Public Review Process—Comments, Proposals, and Public Meetings**

The Councils have a substantial role in reviewing this proposed rule and making recommendations for the final rule. The Federal Subsistence Board, through the Councils, will hold public meetings on this proposed rule at the following locations in Alaska, on the following dates:

Region 1—Southeast Regional Council .....	Wrangell .....	February 12, 2019.
Region 2—Southcentral Regional Council .....	Anchorage .....	February 26, 2019.
Region 3—Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council .....	Kodiak .....	February 21, 2019.
Region 4—Bristol Bay Regional Council .....	Naknek .....	February 12, 2019.
Region 5—Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council .....	Bethel .....	March 12, 2019.
Region 6—Western Interior Regional Council .....	Anchorage .....	February 20, 2019.
Region 7—Seward Peninsula Regional Council .....	Nome .....	March 5, 2019.
Region 8—Northwest Arctic Regional Council .....	Kotzebue .....	February 27, 2019.
Region 9—Eastern Interior Regional Council .....	Fairbanks .....	March 5, 2019.
Region 10—North Slope Regional Council .....	Utqiagvik .....	February 13, 2019.

During April 2019, the written proposals to change the subpart D, take of wildlife regulations, and subpart C, customary and traditional use determinations, will be compiled and distributed for public review. During a

subsequent public comment period, written public comments will be accepted on the distributed proposals. The Board, through the Councils, will hold a second series of public meetings in September through November 2019,

to receive comments on specific proposals and to develop recommendations to the Board at the following locations in Alaska, on the following dates:

Region 1—Southeast Regional Council .....	Petersburg .....	October 8, 2019.
Region 2—Southcentral Regional Council .....	Seward .....	October 2, 2019.

Region 3—Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council .....	Kodiak .....	September 19, 2019.
Region 4—Bristol Bay Regional Council .....	Dillingham .....	November 5, 2019.
Region 5—Yukon—Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council .....	Bethel .....	October 12, 2019.
Region 6—Western Interior Regional Council .....	Aniak .....	October 8, 2019.
Region 7—Seward Peninsula Regional Council .....	Nome .....	October 22, 2019.
Region 8—Northwest Arctic Regional Council .....	Kotzebue .....	October 28, 2019.
Region 9—Eastern Interior Regional Council .....	Fairbanks .....	October 15, 2019.
Region 10—North Slope Regional Council .....	Utqiagvik .....	October 22, 2019.

Prior to both series of meetings, notices will be published of specific dates, times, and meeting locations in local and statewide newspapers, along with announcements on radio, television and social media sites. Locations and dates may change based on weather or local circumstances. The amount of work on each Council's agenda determines the length of each Council meeting, but typically the meetings are scheduled to last 2 days. Occasionally a Council will lack information necessary during a scheduled meeting to make a recommendation to the Board or to provide comments on other matters affecting subsistence in the region. If this situation occurs, the Council may announce on the record a later teleconference to address the specific issue when the requested information or data is available. These teleconferences are open to the public, along with opportunities for public comment; the date and time will be announced during the scheduled meeting and that same information will be announced through news releases and local radio, television, and social media ads.

The Board will discuss and evaluate proposed changes to the subsistence management regulations during a public meeting scheduled to be held in Anchorage, Alaska, in April 2020. The Council Chairs, or their designated representatives, will present their respective Councils' recommendations at the Board meeting. Additional oral testimony may be provided on specific proposals before the Board at that time. At that public meeting, the Board will deliberate and take final action on proposals received that request changes to this proposed rule.

Proposals to the Board to modify the general fish and wildlife regulations, wildlife harvest regulations, and customary and traditional use determinations must include the following information:

- a. Name, address, and telephone number of the requestor;
- b. Each section and/or paragraph designation in this proposed rule for which changes are suggested, if applicable;
- c. A description of the regulatory change(s) desired;

d. A statement explaining why each change is necessary;

e. Proposed wording changes; and

f. Any additional information that you believe will help the Board in evaluating the proposed change.

The Board immediately rejects proposals that fail to include the above information, or proposals that are beyond the scope of authorities in § \_\_\_\_\_.24, subpart C (the regulations governing customary and traditional use determinations), and §§ \_\_\_\_\_.25 and \_\_\_\_\_.26, subpart D (the general and specific regulations governing the subsistence take of wildlife). If a proposal needs clarification, prior to being distributed for public review, the proponent may be contacted, and the proposal could be revised based on their input. Once distributed for public review, no additional changes may be made as part of the original submission. During the April 2020 meeting, the Board may defer review and action on some proposals to allow time for cooperative planning efforts, or to acquire additional needed information. The Board may elect to defer taking action on any given proposal if the workload of staff, Councils, or the Board becomes excessive. These deferrals may be based on recommendations by the affected Council(s) or staff members, or on the basis of the Board's intention to do least harm to the subsistence user and the resource involved. A proponent of a proposal may withdraw the proposal provided it has not been considered, and a recommendation has not been made, by a Council. After that, the Board must approve withdrawal of a proposal. The Board may consider and act on alternatives that address the intent of a proposal while differing in approach.

You may submit written comments and materials concerning this proposed rule by one of the methods listed in **ADDRESSES**. If you submit a comment via <http://www.regulations.gov>, your entire comment, including any personal identifying information, will be posted on the website. If you submit a hardcopy comment that includes personal identifying information, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

We will post all hardcopy comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Comments and materials we receive, as well as supporting documentation we used in preparing this proposed rule, will be available for public inspection on <http://www.regulations.gov>, or by appointment, between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays, at: USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503.

*Reasonable Accommodations*

The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to these meetings for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodation needs to the Office of Subsistence Management, 907-786-3888, [subsistence@fws.gov](mailto:subsistence@fws.gov), or 800-877-8339 (TTY), at least 7 business days prior to the meeting you would like to attend.

*Tribal Consultation and Comment*

As expressed in Executive Order 13175, "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments," the Federal officials that have been delegated authority by the Secretaries are committed to honoring the unique government-to-government political relationship that exists between the Federal Government and federally Recognized Indian Tribes (Tribes) as listed in 79 FR 4748 (January 29, 2014). Consultation with Alaska Native corporations is based on Public Law 108-199, div. H, Sec. 161, Jan. 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 452, as amended by Public Law 108-447, div. H, title V, Sec. 518, Dec. 8, 2004, 118 Stat. 3267, which provides that: "The Director of the Office of Management and Budget and all Federal agencies shall hereafter consult with Alaska Native corporations on the same basis as Indian tribes under Executive Order No. 13175."

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act does not provide specific rights to Tribes for the subsistence taking of wildlife, fish, and shellfish. However, because tribal members are affected by subsistence fishing, hunting, and trapping regulations, the Secretaries, through the Board, will provide federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native corporations



an opportunity to consult on this proposed rule.

The Board will engage in outreach efforts for this proposed rule, including a notification letter, to ensure that Tribes and Alaska Native corporations are advised of the mechanisms by which they can participate. The Board provides a variety of opportunities for consultation: Proposing changes to the existing rule; commenting on proposed changes to the existing rule; engaging in dialogue at Council meetings; engaging in dialogue at the Board's meetings; and providing input in person, by mail, email, or phone at any time during the rulemaking process. The Board commits to efficiently and adequately providing an opportunity to Tribes and Alaska Native corporations for consultation in regard to subsistence rulemaking.

The Board will consider Tribes' and Alaska Native corporations' information, input, and recommendations, and address their concerns as much as practicable.

#### Developing the 2020–21 and 2021–22 Wildlife Seasons and Harvest Limit Regulations

Subpart C and D regulations are subject to periodic review and revision. The Federal Subsistence Board currently completes the process of revising subsistence take of wildlife regulations in even-numbered years and fish and shellfish regulations in odd-numbered years; public proposal and review processes take place during the preceding year. The Board also addresses customary and traditional use determinations during the applicable cycle.

The current subsistence program regulations form the starting point for consideration during each new rulemaking cycle. The regulations at § \_\_\_\_\_.24 pertain to customary and traditional use determinations; the regulations at § \_\_\_\_\_.25 pertain to general provisions governing the subsistence take of wildlife, fish, and shellfish; and the regulations at § \_\_\_\_\_.26 pertain to specific provisions governing the subsistence take of wildlife.

The text of the proposed amendments to 36 CFR parts 242.24, 242.25, and 242.26 and 50 CFR parts 100.24, 100.25, and 100.26 is the final rule for the 2018–2020 regulatory period for wildlife (83 FR 50758; October 9, 2018).

These regulations will remain in effect until subsequent Board action changes elements as a result of the public review process outlined above in this document.

#### Compliance With Statutory and Regulatory Authorities

##### *National Environmental Policy Act*

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement that described four alternatives for developing a Federal Subsistence Management Program was distributed for public comment on October 7, 1991. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was published on February 28, 1992. The Record of Decision (ROD) on Subsistence Management for Federal Public Lands in Alaska was signed April 6, 1992. The selected alternative in the FEIS (Alternative IV) defined the administrative framework of an annual regulatory cycle for subsistence regulations.

A 1997 environmental assessment dealt with the expansion of Federal jurisdiction over fisheries and is available at the office listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. The Secretary of the Interior, with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture, determined that expansion of Federal jurisdiction does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment and, therefore, signed a Finding of No Significant Impact.

##### *Section 810 of ANILCA*

An ANILCA § 810 analysis was completed as part of the FEIS process on the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The intent of all Federal subsistence regulations is to accord subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands a priority over the taking of fish and wildlife on such lands for other purposes, unless restriction is necessary to conserve healthy fish and wildlife populations. The final § 810 analysis determination appeared in the April 6, 1992, ROD and concluded that the Federal Subsistence Management Program, under Alternative IV with an annual process for setting subsistence regulations, may have some local impacts on subsistence uses, but will not likely restrict subsistence uses significantly.

During the subsequent environmental assessment process for extending fisheries jurisdiction, an evaluation of the effects of this rulemaking process was conducted in accordance with § 810. That evaluation also supported the Secretaries' determination that these rules will not reach the "may significantly restrict" threshold that would require notice and hearings under ANILCA § 810(a).

##### *Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA)*

This proposed rule does not contain any new collections of information that require Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. OMB has reviewed and approved the collections of information associated with the subsistence regulations at 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100, and assigned OMB Control Number 1018–0075, which expires June 30, 2019. An agency may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

##### *Regulatory Planning and Review (Executive Order 12866)*

Executive Order 12866 provides that the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) in the Office of Management and Budget will review all significant rules. OIRA has determined that this proposed rule is not significant.

Executive Order 13563 reaffirms the principles of E.O. 12866 while calling for improvements in the nation's regulatory system to promote predictability, to reduce uncertainty, and to use the best, most innovative, and least burdensome tools for achieving regulatory ends. The executive order directs agencies to consider regulatory approaches that reduce burdens and maintain flexibility and freedom of choice for the public where these approaches are relevant, feasible, and consistent with regulatory objectives. E.O. 13563 emphasizes further that regulations must be based on the best available science and that the rulemaking process must allow for public participation and an open exchange of ideas. We have developed this rule in a manner consistent with these requirements.

##### *Regulatory Flexibility Act*

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) requires preparation of flexibility analyses for rules that will have a significant effect on a substantial number of small entities, which include small businesses, organizations, or governmental jurisdictions. In general, the resources to be harvested under this proposed rule are already being harvested and consumed by the local harvester and do not result in an additional dollar benefit to the economy. However, we estimate that two million pounds of meat are harvested by subsistence users annually and, if given an estimated value of \$3.00 per pound, this amount would equate to about \$6 million in food value statewide. Based upon the amounts and

values cited above, the Departments certify that this rulemaking will not have a significant economic effect on a substantial number of small entities within the meaning of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

#### *Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act*

Under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*), this proposed rule is not a major rule. It will not have an effect on the economy of \$100 million or more, will not cause a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, and will not have significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or the ability of U.S.-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises.

#### *Executive Order 12630*

Title VIII of ANILCA requires the Secretaries to administer a subsistence priority for rural Alaskan residents on public lands. The scope of this program is limited by definition to certain public lands. Likewise, these proposed regulations have no potential takings of private property implications as defined by Executive Order 12630.

#### *Unfunded Mandates Reform Act*

The Secretaries have determined and certify pursuant to the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, 2 U.S.C. 1502 *et seq.*, that this rulemaking will not impose a cost of \$100 million or more in any given year on local or State governments or private entities. The implementation of this rule is by Federal agencies and there is no cost imposed on any State or local entities or tribal governments.

#### *Executive Order 12988*

The Secretaries have determined that these regulations meet the applicable standards provided in §§ 3(a) and 3(b)(2) of Executive Order 12988, regarding civil justice reform.

#### *Executive Order 13132*

In accordance with Executive Order 13132, the proposed rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment. Title VIII of ANILCA precludes the State from exercising subsistence management authority over fish and wildlife resources on Federal lands unless it meets certain requirements.

#### *Executive Order 13175*

Title VIII of ANILCA does not provide specific rights to tribes for the subsistence taking of wildlife, fish, and

shellfish. However, as described above under *Tribal Consultation and Comment*, the Secretaries, through the Board, will provide federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native corporations an opportunity to consult on this proposed rule.

#### *Executive Order 13211*

Executive Order 13211 requires agencies to prepare Statements of Energy Effects when undertaking certain actions. However, this proposed rule is not a significant regulatory action under E.O. 13211, affecting energy supply, distribution, or use, and no Statement of Energy Effects is required.

#### **Drafting Information**

Theo Matuskowitz drafted this proposed rule under the guidance of Thomas C.J. Doolittle, Jr. of the Office of Subsistence Management, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska. Additional assistance was provided by:

- Daniel Sharp, Alaska State Office, Bureau of Land Management;
- Clarence Summers, Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service;
- Dr. Glenn Chen, Alaska Regional Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- Carol Damberg, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and
- Thomas Whitford, Alaska Regional Office, USDA—Forest Service.

#### **List of Subjects**

##### *36 CFR Part 242*

Administrative practice and procedure, Alaska, Fish, National forests, Public lands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wildlife.

##### *50 CFR Part 100*

Administrative practice and procedure, Alaska, Fish, National forests, Public lands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wildlife.

#### **Proposed Regulation Promulgation**

For the reasons set out in the preamble, the Federal Subsistence Board proposes to amend 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100 for the 2020–21 and 2021–22 regulatory years.

- The text of the proposed amendments to 36 CFR 242.24, 242.25, and 242.26 and 50 CFR 100.24, 100.25, and 100.26 is the final rule for the 2018–2020 regulatory periods for wildlife (83 FR 50759; October 9, 2018).

Dated: December 21, 2018.

**Thomas C.J. Doolittle,**

*Acting Assistant Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

Dated: December 21, 2018.

**Thomas Whitford,**

*Subsistence Program Leader, USDA—Forest Service.*

[FR Doc. 2019–00424 Filed 1–30–19; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3411–15–4333–15–P**

## **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

### **38 CFR Part 17**

#### **RIN 2900–AQ47**

#### **Urgent Care**

**AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is proposing to amend its regulations that govern VA health care. This rule would grant eligible veterans access to urgent care from qualifying non-VA entities or providers without prior approval from VA. This rulemaking would implement the mandates of the VA MISSION Act of 2018 and increase veterans' access to health care in the community.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before March 4, 2019.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments may be submitted through <http://www.Regulations.gov>; by mail or hand-delivery to: Director, Regulation Policy and Management (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, North West, Room 1063B, Washington, DC 20420; or by fax to (202) 273–9026. (This is not a toll-free telephone number.) Comments should indicate that they are submitted in response to “RIN 2900–AQ47 Urgent Care.” Copies of comments received will be available for public inspection in the Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Room 1063B, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays). Please call (202) 461–4902 for an appointment. (This is not a toll-free telephone number.) In addition, during the comment period, comments may be viewed online through the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) at <http://www.Regulations.gov>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joseph Duran, Director of Policy and Planning, 3773 Cherry Creek North Drive, Denver, CO 80209. [Joseph.Duran2@va.gov](mailto:Joseph.Duran2@va.gov). (303) 370–1637. (This is not a toll-free number.)





U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Bureau of Land Management  
National Park Service  
Bureau of Indian Affairs

## Federal Subsistence Board Informational Flyer



Forest Service

**Contact:** Regulatory Affairs Division Chief  
(907) 786-3888 or (800) 478-1456  
subsistence@fws.gov

### How to Submit a Proposal to Change Federal Subsistence Regulations

Alaska residents and subsistence users are an integral part of the Federal regulatory process. Any person or group can submit proposals to change Federal subsistence regulations, comment on proposals, or testify at meetings. By becoming involved in the process, subsistence users assist with effective management of subsistence activities and ensure consideration of traditional and local knowledge in subsistence management decisions. Subsistence users also provide valuable wildlife harvest information.

A call for proposals to change Federal subsistence fishing regulations is issued in January of even-numbered years and odd-numbered years for wildlife. The period during which proposals are accepted is no less than 30 calendar days. Proposals must be submitted in writing within this time frame.

You may propose changes to Federal subsistence season dates, harvest limits, methods and means of harvest, and customary and traditional use determinations.

#### **What your proposal should contain:**

*There is no form to submit your proposal to change Federal subsistence regulations. Include the following information in your proposal submission (you may submit as many as you like):*

- Your name and contact information (address, phone, fax, or E-mail address)
- Your organization (if applicable).
- What regulations you wish to change. Include management unit number and species. Quote the current regulation if known. If you are proposing a new regulation, please state, “new regulation.”
- Write the regulation the way you would like to see it written in the regulations.
- Explain why this regulation change should be made.
- You should provide any additional information that you believe will help the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) in evaluating the proposed change.

1011 East Tudor Road MS-121 • Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199 • subsistence@fws.gov • (800) 478-1456 / (907) 786-3888  
This document has been cleared for public release #0605132015.

**You may submit your proposals by:**

1. By mail or hand delivery to:  
Federal Subsistence Board  
Office of Subsistence Management  
Attn: Theo Matuskowitz  
1011 E. Tudor Rd., MS-121  
Anchorage, AK 99503
2. At any Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting (A schedule will be published in the Federal Register and be announced statewide, bi-annually, prior to the meeting cycles)
3. On the Web at <http://www.regulations.gov>

Submit a separate proposal for each proposed change; however, do not submit the same proposal by different accepted methods listed above. To cite which regulation(s) you want to change, you may reference [50 CFR 100](#) or [36 CFR 242](#) or the proposed regulations published in the Federal Register: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>. All proposals and comments, including personal information, are posted on the Web at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

For the proposal processing timeline and additional information contact the Office of Subsistence Management at (800) 478-1456/ (907) 786-3888 or go to <http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/proposal/submit.cfm>.

**How a proposal to change Federal subsistence regulations is processed:**

1. Once a proposal to change Federal subsistence regulations is received by the Board, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) validates the proposal, assigns a proposal number and lead analyst.
2. The proposals are compiled into a book for statewide distribution and posted online at the Program website. The proposals are also sent out the applicable Councils and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the Interagency Staff Committee (ISC) for review. The period during which comments are accepted is no less than 45 calendar days. Comments must be submitted within this time frame.
3. The lead analyst works with appropriate agencies and proponents to develop an analysis on the proposal.
4. The analysis is sent to the Councils, ADF&G and the ISC for comments and recommendations to the Board. The public is welcome and encouraged to provide comments directly to the Councils and the Board at their meetings. The final analysis contains all of the comments and recommendations received by interested/affected parties. This packet of information is then presented to the Board for action.
5. The decision to adopt, adopt with modification, defer or reject the proposal is then made by the Board. The public is provided the opportunity to provide comment directly to the Board prior to the Board's final decision.
6. The final rule is published in the Federal Register and a public regulations booklet is created and distributed statewide and on the Program's website.

**A step-by-step guide to submitting your proposal on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov):**

1. Connect to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) – there is no password or username required.
2. In the white space provided in the large blue box, type in the document number listed in the news release or available on the program webpage, (for example: FWS-R7-SM2014-0062) and select the light blue “Search” button to the right.

3. Search results will populate and may have more than one result. Make sure the Proposed Rule you select is by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and **not** by the U.S. Forest Service (FS).
4. Select the proposed rule and in the upper right select the blue box that says, "Comment Now!"
5. Enter your comments in the "Comment" box.
6. Upload your files by selecting "Choose files" (this is optional).
7. Enter your first and last name in the spaces provided.
8. Select the appropriate checkbox stating whether or not you are providing the information directly or submitting on behalf of a third party.
9. Fill out the contact information in the drop down section as requested.
10. Select, "Continue." You will be given an opportunity to review your submission.
11. If everything appears correct, click the box at the bottom that states, "I read and understand the statement above," and select the box, "Submit Comment." A receipt will be provided to you. Keep this as proof of submission.
12. If everything does not appear as you would like it to, select, "Edit" to make any necessary changes and then go through the previous step again to "Submit Comment."

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**Missing out on the latest Federal subsistence issues?** If you'd like to receive emails and notifications on the Federal Subsistence Management Program you may subscribe for regular updates by emailing [fws-fsb-subsistence-request@lists.fws.gov](mailto:fws-fsb-subsistence-request@lists.fws.gov). Additional information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program may be found on the web at [www.doi.gov/subsistence/index.cfm](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/index.cfm) or by visiting [www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska](http://www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska).

**Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

c/o Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199  
Telephone: (907) 786-3888, Fax: 907-786-3989  
Toll-Free: 1-800-478-1456

RAC NWARAC 19009.ZS

Anthony Christianson, Chair  
Federal Subsistence Board  
c/o Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

Dear Chairman Christianson:

The Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) submits this FY2018 annual report to the Federal Subsistence Board under the provisions of Section 805 (a)(3)(D) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). At its public meeting in Kotzebue, Alaska on October 24-25, 2018, the Council identified concerns and recommendations for this report. The Council wishes to share information and raise a number of concerns aligned with the implementation of Title VIII of ANILCA and the continuation of subsistence uses in the Northwest Arctic Region. *[The Council approved this report at its winter 2019 meeting in Kotzebue.]*

**1. More research needed to understand wildlife populations and distribution**

There needs to be more research to better understand changes in wildlife distribution affecting Federally qualified subsistence users in the Northwest Arctic region. Specifically, the Council identifies the need for research to better understand the distribution and abundance of caribou. Federally qualified subsistence users rely on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH), which provides an important subsistence resource for many families throughout the region. The availability of research data on caribou distribution and abundance would assist decision makers in managing this important subsistence resource.

Additionally, local observations note the encroachment of beavers in the Northwest Arctic, specifically in areas where the animals have not previously been seen. Beaver lodge and dam construction has been associated with changes in hydrology. Beavers are also associated with changes to water quality and potentially affecting human health, with the spread of the infectious intestinal parasite *Giardia lamblia*. Research data on beaver distribution and abundance would assist decision makers in better management of this resource.

## **2. Population data needs for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd**

There is a critical need for timely WACH population data. Those data are essential to effective management of caribou in the region. The WACH provides meat essential to ensuring the food security needs of Federally qualified subsistence users in the Northwest Arctic Region. Over the past three years, during a decline of the WACH population, the Council initiated two special action requests and a Federal wildlife regulatory proposal. These actions sought to conserve the WACH while providing Federal subsistence hunting opportunity consistent with Title VIII of ANILCA. The WACH is a primary resource for all users, yet the Alaska Department of Fish and Game failed to conduct the annual population survey of the herd in 2018. The Council is concerned about the status of the herd and requests updated and timely population data be provided to the Council.

## **3. Disturbances to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Leaders Migration**

Over the years, the Council has heard extensive public testimony describing the adverse effects to Federally qualified subsistence users resulting from disturbing the WACH leaders migration. This behavior is caused by non-local users, who are not aware of or do not respect the local tradition known as "let the leaders pass." It would be helpful if there were convenient ways for locals out in the field to timely report their observations of behavior that disrupts caribou migration. The Council requests support from both State and Federal law enforcement with addressing this persistent problem.

## **4. Need for updated population data on Dall sheep**

The Council is concerned about the decline in Dall sheep throughout the region. Most of the Dall sheep population is found on National Park Service and State lands. As such, the National Park Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game need to make it a priority to regularly obtain current Dall sheep population census data for the Northwest Arctic region. The Council requests that reports on the population status be provided at its meetings. Management and recovery of sheep in the Northwest Arctic region would benefit from updated sheep population census data.

Thank you for the opportunity for this Council to assist the Federal Subsistence Management Program in meeting its charge of protecting subsistence resources and uses of these resources on Federal public lands and waters in the Northwest Arctic Region. If you have questions about this report, please contact me via Zach Stevenson, Subsistence Council Coordinator, with the Office of Subsistence Management at 907-786-3676 or zachary\_stevenson@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Enoch Attamuk Shiedt,  
Chair

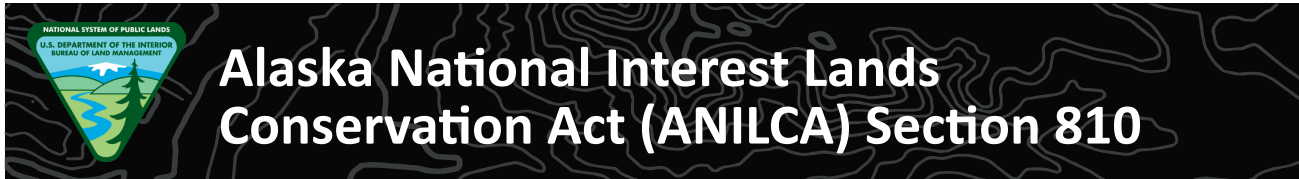
Chairman Christianson

3

cc: Federal Subsistence Board  
Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
Thomas Doolittle, Acting Assistant Regional Director,  
Office of Subsistence Management  
Jennifer Hardin, PhD., Subsistence Policy Coordinator,  
Office of Subsistence Management  
Greg Risdahl, Fisheries Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management  
Chris McKee, Wildlife Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management  
Katerina Wessels, Acting Council Coordination Division Supervisor,  
Office of Subsistence Management  
Zach Stevenson, Subsistence Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management  
George Pappas, State Liaison, Office of Subsistence Management  
Ben Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Mark Burch, Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Interagency Staff Committee  
Administrative Record

DRAFT





- ✓ **All alternatives** may result in a significant restriction of subsistence uses for all rural communities in the planning area.
- ✓ **Alternatives A and D** generally have the greatest impacts to subsistence.

## Background

Subsistence is the traditional way of life for many residents of Alaska and is central to the customs and traditions of many cultural groups. Major subsistence activities throughout the planning area include the hunting of birds, caribou, and moose; fishing for salmon, whitefish, and other fish; trapping; harvesting of plants and berries; and gathering logs for firewood, housing, artwork, and other customary uses. Movements and timing of activities coincide with seasonal changes and are dictated by the availability of resources, and more recently by hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations, as well as employment, and school schedules.

A Preliminary Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Section 810(a) Evaluation of the effects of federal decisions in each alternative required the BLM to determine whether there may be a significant restriction to the abundance of, availability of, or access to subsistence resources.

## Methodology

The effects analysis focused on the following three management actions identified to have the most potential to restrict:

- **Areas open to locatable mineral development (in areas of high and medium locatable mineral potential) in known subsistence use areas.** Impacts could occur to the availability of subsistence resources. Subsistence users would likely make some adjustments to where they might traditionally harvest resources and then target resources that would be less affected by mineral development activities
- **Off-highway vehicle (OHV) closures to subsistence use areas.** Summer subsistence OHV travel restrictions could obstruct existing routes to subsistence resources used by rural communities.
- **Right-of-way (ROW) exclusion or avoidance areas.** Areas open for ROW development could impact availability by changing species movement patterns. Access to subsistence resources and traditional harvest areas could be of low to high magnitude depending on the portions of the nearby communities' harvest areas that are affected and could be adverse or beneficial.

To determine the effects of a management decision, it was first analyzed by looking at the number of acres of overlap between the management decision area and the subsistence use area. It then went through a second analysis where it was determined whether the management area intersected a known travel route, whether closure would occur during the season when the resource is harvested, and/or the closure decision would impact a resource that is heavily relied upon by a community.

## Summary of ANILCA Findings by Alternative

**Alternative A (no changes from current conditions).** Alternative A may result in a significant restriction to subsistence uses for the communities of Aniak, Anvik, Bethel, Crooked Creek, Chuathbaluk, Grayling, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Lime Village, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Marshall, McGrath, Nikolai, Nulato, Russian Mission, Shageluk, Sleetmute, Stony River, and Unalakleet.

**Alternative B.** Alternative B may result in a significant restriction to subsistence uses for the communities of Aniak, Anvik, Crooked Creek, Chuathbaluk, Grayling, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Lime Village, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Marshall, McGrath, Nikolai, Shageluk, Sleetmute, Stony River, and Unalakleet.

**Alternative C.** Alternative C may result in a significant restriction to subsistence uses for the communities of Aniak, Anvik, Crooked Creek, Chuathbaluk, Grayling, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Lime Village, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Marshall, McGrath, Nikolai, Russian Mission, Shageluk, Sleetmute, Stony River, and Unalakleet.

**Alternative D.** Alternative D may result in a significant restriction to subsistence uses for the communities of Aniak, Anvik, Bethel, Crooked Creek, Chuathbaluk, Grayling, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Lime Village, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Marshall, McGrath, Nikolai, Nulato, Russian Mission, Shageluk, Sleetmute, Stony River, and Unalakleet.



## What's Next?

**Preliminary ANILCA Section 810 Evaluation.** Since the BLM had a positive finding in the Preliminary ANILCA Section 810 Evaluation, the BLM will undertake the notice and hearing procedures required by ANILCA § 810(a)(1) and (2) in conjunction with release of the BSWI Draft RMP/EIS to solicit public comment from the potentially affected communities. In conjunction with each Draft EIS public meeting, the BLM will hold ANILCA Section 810 hearings with an opportunity for public testimony on subsistence resources and activities in or near potentially affected communities.

**Final ANILCA Section 810 Evaluation.** The determination of whether the requirements of ANILCA 810 have been met will be analyzed in the Final ANILCA 810 Evaluation using public input from the communities where subsistence hearings are held.

# Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Project EEA Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Status-at-a-Glance

- Alaska Native consultation and outreach for the **Environmental & Economic Assessment (EEA)** was initiated in Spring 2017 and continues.
- The 2018 *Public Comment Summary Report* is available for viewing at:  
[https://go.nps.gov/Ambler\\_Comment\\_Summary](https://go.nps.gov/Ambler_Comment_Summary)
- The EEA Impacts Assessment chapter is nearing completion.
- The Draft EEA is expected to be available for public review in mid-July 2019.

## Impact Assessment Topics

The Impact Assessment portion of the EEA is nearing completion. This is a critical chapter in which information gained from public input and data from subject matter experts is used to evaluate impacts of each of the two proposed routes on NPS lands (see map on page 2). Environmental, social and economic impacts to resources and rural and traditional lifestyles including subsistence activities are examined.

Impact topics are: Caribou, Fish, Subsistence, Permafrost, Hydrology, Wetlands, Archeology, Visitor Experience, Wild & Scenic Rivers and Water Quality.

Results from the Impact Assessment will be used to determine the recommended route across NPS lands, and to develop permit requirements to minimize adverse effects. If you have input regarding whether we've captured the most significant impact topics for this task, please let us know by contacting:

Greg Dudgeon, Superintendent  
4175 Geist Rd, Fairbanks AK 99709  
Email: [yuga\\_ambler\\_road@nps.gov](mailto:yuga_ambler_road@nps.gov)

## Newsletter #4

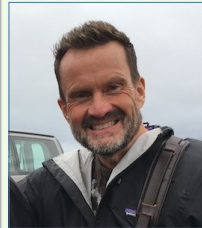
March 2019



Welcome! We appreciate your participation!

## Superintendent's Message

Dear Friends,



Welcome to the fourth installment in a newsletter series dedicated to keeping our tribal partners and members of the public informed about the Environmental and Economic Analysis (EEA) for the 20 mile stretch of the proposed Ambler Access Road that crosses National Park Service (NPS) lands.

You may recall that our last newsletter announced the completion of the *Public Comment Summary Report* (available online at [https://go.nps.gov/Ambler\\_Comment\\_Summary](https://go.nps.gov/Ambler_Comment_Summary)). Since then, the NPS has been drafting the Impacts Assessment chapter of the EEA. This involves the analysis of resources and values that would be impacted by a road across NPS lands. The impact topics are summarized on page 1 of this newsletter.

We expect to have a full draft of the EEA ready for public review in mid-July, 2019. In the meantime, Alaska Native consultation and outreach continues. I would like to extend my thanks to all who have taken the time to provide input thus far. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

Thank you.

Greg Dudgeon, Superintendent  
Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve

## Project Overview

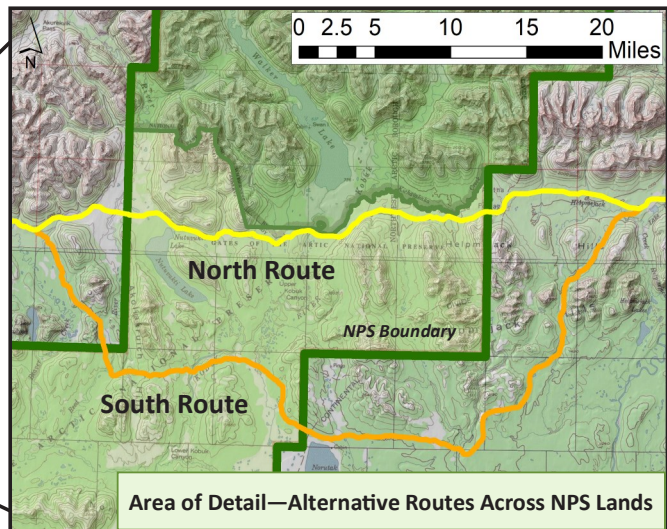
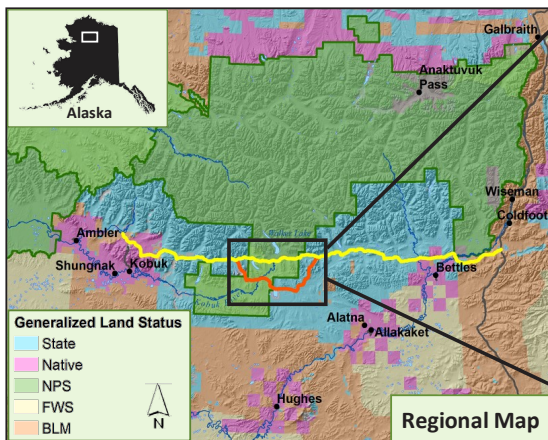
On November 24, 2015, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) submitted a right-of-way permit application for the *Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Project*. The proposal is for the construction of a 211-mile long, all-season, controlled-access industrial road connecting the Ambler Mining District with the Dalton Highway. Approximately 20 miles of the proposed road crosses NPS lands (see map below).

The NPS is legally required to permit a right-of-way for this project by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). In addition, ANILCA directs that an Environmental and Economic Analysis (EEA) be prepared for the road across NPS lands in order to: 1) determine a preferred right-of-way route, and 2) develop appropriate terms and conditions for the right-of-way permit.

Two alternative routes across NPS lands were identified by AIDEA in the project application materials (see map below). The EEA will examine each of these.

## Project Schedule

Estimated Date	Planning Phase
Fall 2017 – Winter 2018	Public Input
Spring 2018 – Early Summer 2019	Prepare Draft EEA
Mid-July 2019	Draft EEA Available for Public Review
Fall 2019	Prepare Final EEA
Early Winter 2020	Release Final EEA



## Regarding Public Access

The AIDEA right-of-way permit application states that “access to the road would be controlled and primarily limited to mining-related industrial uses, although some commercial uses may be allowed under a permit process”. The application is being reviewed in that context. If there is a request for public access in the future, the NPS will treat it as a new undertaking and conduct an appropriate level of review at that time.

## BLM Update

AIDEA has funded the remaining balance of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) permitting process for the proposed 211-mile road. Please refer to the BLM ePlanning webpage (<https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/plans-in-development/alaska/AmblerRoadEIS>) for updates on the timeline for completion of the Environmental Impact Statement.

## What’s Next?

The NPS expects have the Draft EEA ready for public review in mid-July 2019. Alaska Native consultation and outreach will continue.

## Helpful Link

NPS Project Website: [https://go.nps.gov/Ambler\\_ROW](https://go.nps.gov/Ambler_ROW)



## CULTURAL RESOURCE UPDATE

### **Cape Krusenstern National Monument**

- **Lagoon and Coastline Survey**-As part of an ongoing goal of monitoring changes to the coastline and lagoon, we plan to travel the shore to evaluate sites while out at Cape Krusenstern during the summer.

### **Noatak National Preserve**

- **Copter Peak Helicopter Survey**-This year we will be continuing our project that is looking for information from a series of ca. 11,000 year old caribou hunting sites, and documentation of several massive stone tool workshop and quarry locations.
- **Desperation and Feniak Lakes**-Over the next two-three years we will be looking at and removing old fuel and oil barrels around Desperation and Feniak Lakes that were left their during mineral and gas exploration projects.

### **Kobuk Valley National Park**

- **Onion Portage Cabin**-We will be visiting the Giddings cabin for check the condition of the cabin and do any repairs that are needed to keep it maintained.

### **All WEAR Parks and Bering Land Bridge National Preserve**

- **Pleistocene Animal and Archaeology Survey**-Over the next three-four years we will be visiting locations in the parks to find new locations of mammoths or old animals that may have been sites of old human activities.

Kotzebue Cultural Resources Team: Justin Junge–Archaeologist, Hannah Atkinson–Anthropologist  
Contact: 907-442-8331

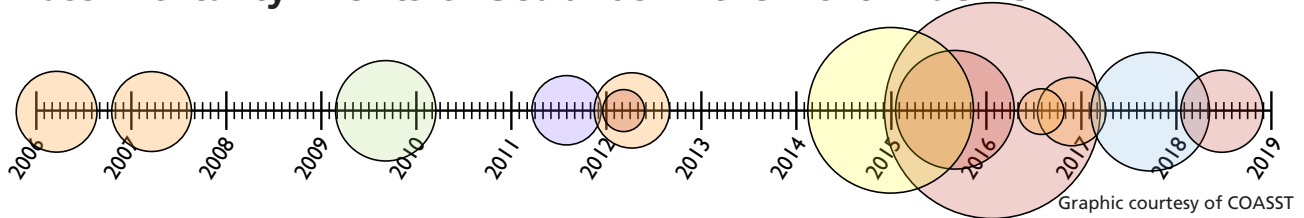


# Cape Krusenstern National Monument

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Mass Mortality Events of Seabirds in the North Pacific



Collectively across the past five years, almost the entire coastline of the NE Pacific has been affected by one, if not more, seabird mortality events, making the 2014-2018 period in the NE Pacific the most anomalous set of years given the duration, geographic extent and taxonomic spread of seabird mortality events. Bubbles in the timeline are scaled to peak regional encounter rate in Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) surveys. Smallest: Common Murre Gulf of AK (Feb 2012) @ 2.1 carcasses/km. Largest: Common Murre in Gulf of AK (Jan 2016) @ 53 carcasses/km.

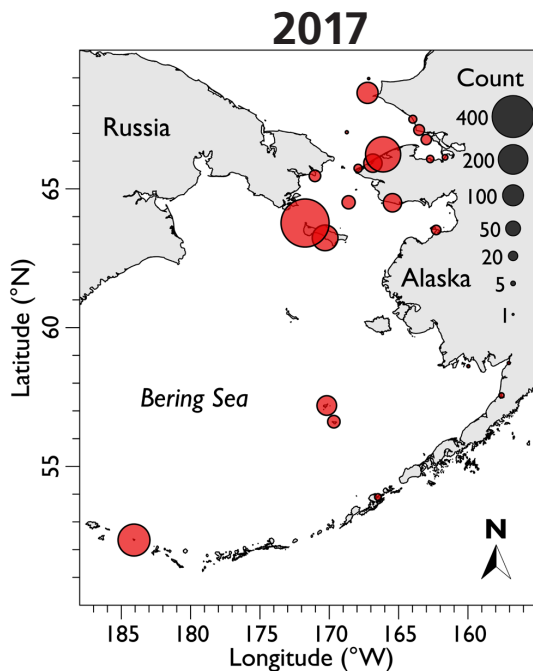
### Issue & Response



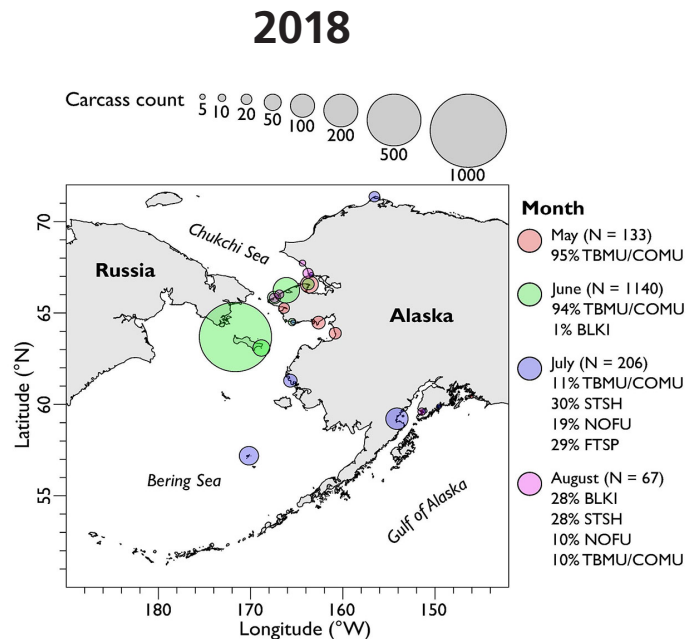
In 2017 and 2018, people witnessed dead and dying seabirds along coasts of the northern Bering and southern Chukchi seas. The National Park Service (NPS) surveyed the coastlines of Cape Krusenstern National Monument in September 2017 and August of 2018 to document the extent and magnitude of the die-offs there. During those surveys,

the freshest carcasses were collected for testing of disease and biotoxins at the USGS National Wildlife Health Center. NPS is working with COASST, USFWS, USGS Alaska Science Center, NOAA, UAF, Kawerak and the Aleut Tribal Government to understand these events and determine underlying causes, and to share this information with communities.

### Extent and Magnitude of Die-offs in Bering and Chukchi Seas



Primary species affected were Short-tailed Shearwaters and Northern Fulmars. Graphic courtesy of COASST.



BLKI= Black-legged Kittiwake, COMU= Common Murre, FTSP= Fork-tailed Storm Petrel, NOFU= Northern Fulmar, STSH= Short-tailed Shearwater, TBMU=Thick-billed Murre. Graphic courtesy of COASST.



## Disease & Toxins

So far, as with the 2017 die-off in the Bering and Chukchi seas, the birds in 2018 appear to have died from starvation (20 carcasses examined by the USGS National Wildlife Health Center). However, just under half of the birds collected in the 2017 die-off showed low levels of saxitoxin, a neurotoxin produced

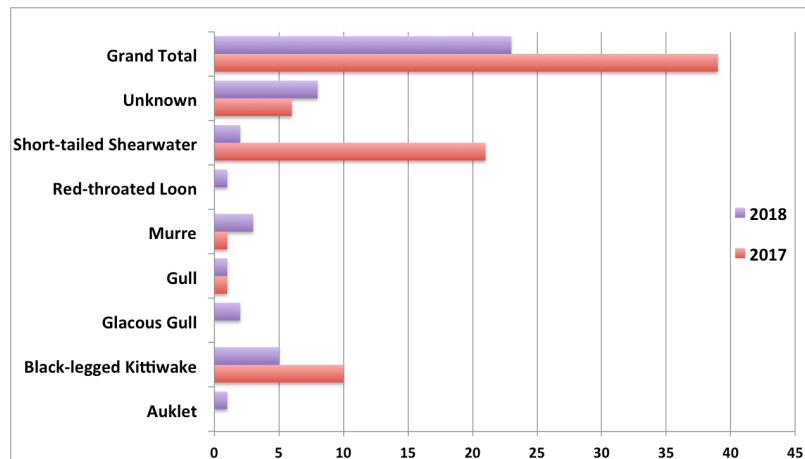
by algae. Scientists know very little about lethal levels of saxitoxin for seabirds or the quantities that physically or behaviorally impair the birds and will continue to investigate this issue. Results about neurotoxin levels in the 2018 specimens will be available in 2019 (see USGS handout).

## Cape Krusenstern Surveys

We counted carcasses on portions of the beach between Sisualik and the northern park boundary; 39 carcasses were counted in 2017 and 23 carcasses in 2018. We typically found fewer carcasses on beaches of Cape Krusenstern NM than those of Bering Land Bridge NP, consistent with ocean currents and beach deposition patterns for this region (see handout). Short-tailed Shearwaters

characterized the 2017 event, whereas murre and Black-legged Kittiwake carcasses were the most abundant in 2018. In both years, we surveyed near the end of these events and likely missed a larger pulse of carcasses washed ashore. Notably, we observed large groups of sea stars washed ashore at Espenberg in Bering Land Bridge NP in 2018.

Species composition (right) for ground-based carcass surveys in Cape Krusenstern National Monument in late September 2017 and in July and August of 2018. We identified carcasses to species when possible but many were in advanced states of decay and often could not be identified. Common and Thick-billed Murres are lumped as Murres.



## Future Activities

For more information about NPS activities focussed on seabird die-offs, contact: [stacia\\_backensto@nps.gov](mailto:stacia_backensto@nps.gov) 907.455.0669

For more information about seabird die-offs in Alaska, contact: [KATHY\\_KULETZ@FWS.GOV](mailto:KATHY_KULETZ@FWS.GOV)

In 2019, NPS would like to connect COASST with Kivalina, Deering, and Wales, to deliver a full presentation on seabird die-offs and provide a short training for village residents on the Die-off Alert (DoA) Protocol currently used in Shishmaref, and by USFWS and NPS. The DoA protocol is an effort to document these events across large areas as they begin to unfold. Die-off reporting from Kivalina, Deering, and

Wales, can strengthen our collective understanding of these widespread mass mortality events and the health of the marine environment. An important aspect of this effort will include providing communities with realtime information on die-offs as they occur that will incorporate their observations in the broader context of the northern Bering and southern Chukchi seas.



COASST established monitoring of beached birds in Alaska in 2006 that now includes 106 beaches and 624 surveys annually from Ketchikan east to the end of the Aleutian Islands and north to Kotzebue in the Chukchi Sea, but coverage is sparse in many regions, particularly in the Arctic.



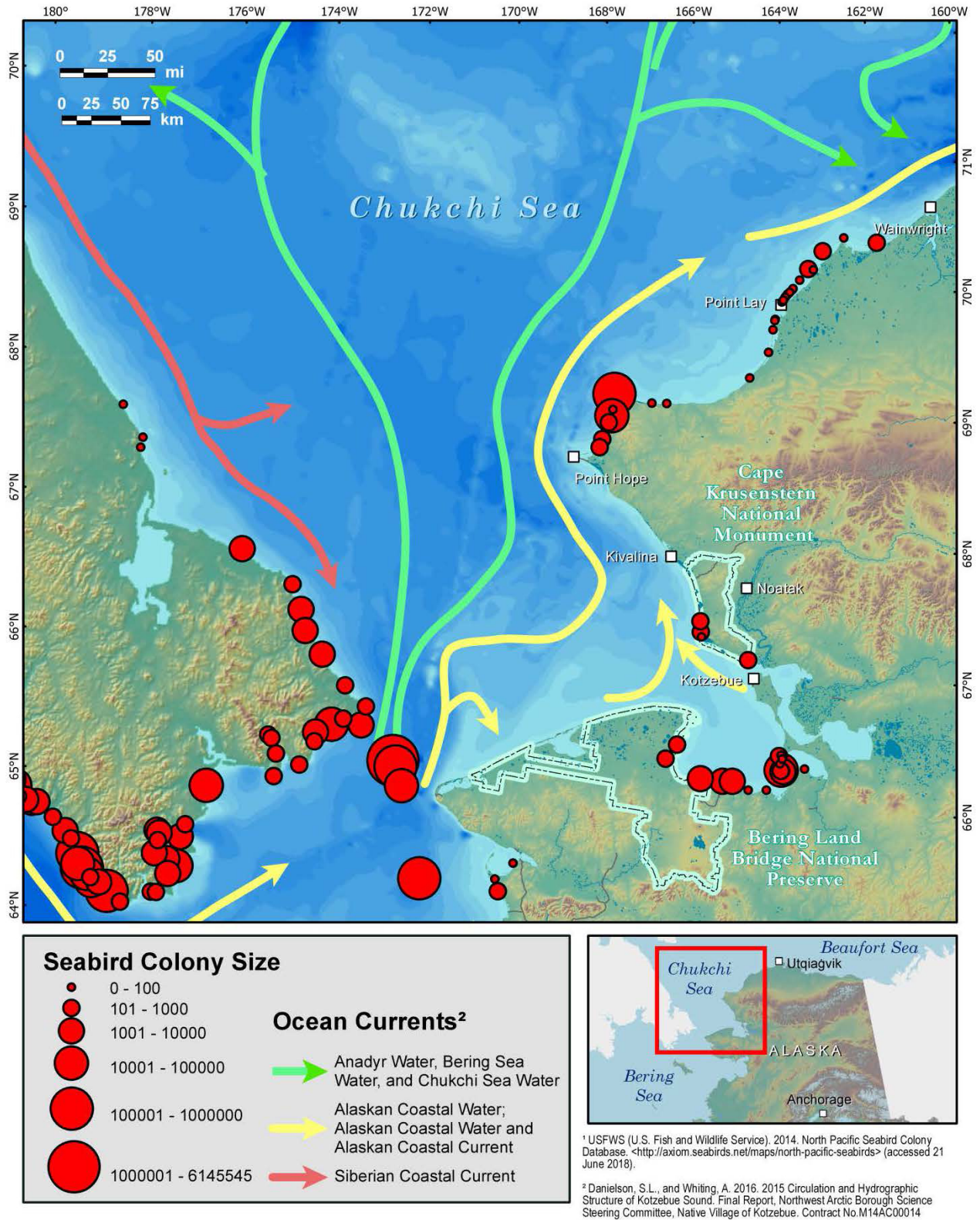


Figure 1. Southern Chukchi Sea showing major ocean currents and seabird colonies.



# Harmful Algal Bloom Toxins in Alaska Seabirds

**USGS Alaska Region  
Alaska Science Center  
USGS National Wildlife Health  
Center and  
USFWS Alaska Region  
Migratory Bird Management**



**September 2018**

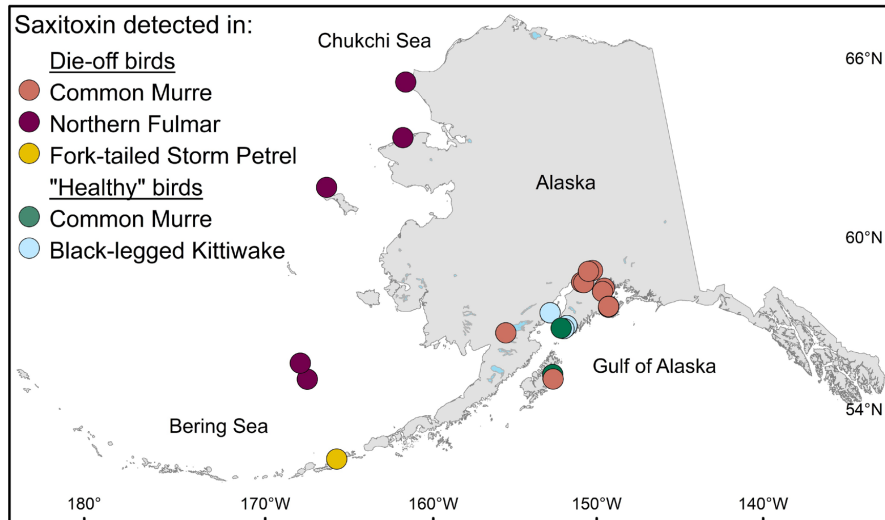
Photos: Common Murres, Northern Fulmar, Common Murres; S. Schoen, USGS.

## Seabird die-offs

Unusually large numbers of dead seabirds have been found on shorelines and lakes throughout Alaska during 2015-2018. More than 45,000 dead Common Murres (*Uria aalge*) were counted in the Gulf of Alaska in 2015-2016, and many dead birds have been reported from the Bering and Chukchi seas in 2017-2018. Seabird die-offs occur irregularly, but recent die-offs were unusual due to the large number and variety of species affected, the long die-off duration, and the large spatial extent. Coastal residents and scientists have been monitoring the size and scope of these die-offs, as well as investigating potential causes.

## Why did the birds die?

Necropsy information from more than 200 birds examined by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) and the USGS Alaska Science Center (ASC) found that birds starved to death. This finding was presumably related to changes in prey availability associated with persistently warm ocean temperatures. Preliminary tests by the National Ocean and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) also detected saxitoxin, a harmful algal bloom (HAB) neurotoxin, in some birds, prompting further study. To evaluate whether HAB toxins may have contributed to seabird deaths, the ASC, in collaboration with NOAA and other partners, tested birds from multiple locations during 2015-2017 for saxitoxin and domoic acid. Samples included tissues from die-off carcasses harvested during necropsies, as well as tissues from apparently healthy (hereafter "healthy") birds captured live via noose pole or collected at colonies (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The distribution of sampled seabirds with detectable levels of saxitoxin in Alaska from 2015-2017. Detectable levels of saxitoxin (>1-2 µg/100g) were found in both die-off (31 of 69) and "healthy" (22 of 63) birds.

## What are harmful algal blooms?

Harmful algal blooms are large growths of algae that produce potentially harmful toxins. These toxins are produced by certain phytoplankton species, and can cause severe illness or death in animals if ingested in

high enough concentrations. The primary HAB neurotoxins in Alaska are saxitoxin and domoic acid. Little is known about what levels of these toxins could cause illness or death in seabirds.

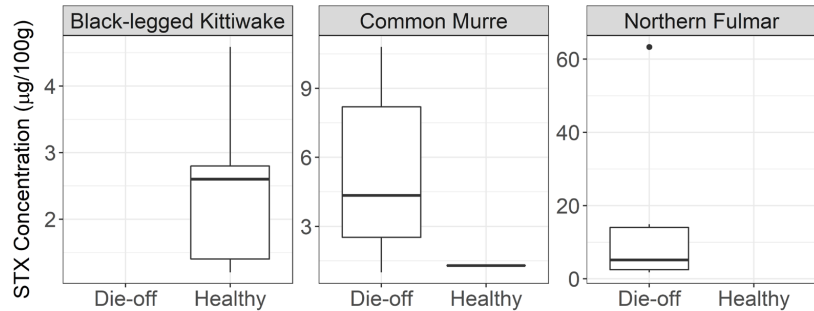
**U.S. Department of the Interior  
U.S. Geological Survey  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**



**HAB toxins in Alaska seabirds**

Saxitoxin was common in both die-off (45%) and “healthy” (35%) birds across different seabird species, locations, seasons, and years. Concentrations also varied by tissue type. Trace levels of domoic acid were found in only 1% of the 86 seabirds tested.

The occurrence of saxitoxin differed by species. We found detectable levels of saxitoxin in about one-third of: “healthy” Black-legged Kittiwakes (*Rissa tridactyla*), “healthy” murre, and die-off murre. In contrast, saxitoxin was detected in almost 90% of die-off Northern Fulmars (*Fulmarus glacialis*). Quantifiable levels of saxitoxin were highest in fulmars, followed by die-off murre (Figure 2). All saxitoxin levels were below advisory limits for human consumption of shellfish (80 µg/100 g); however, these limits do not apply to seabirds, and thus we cannot advise on human harvest or consumption at this time. The NWHC and ASC are currently investigating the impacts of low-level exposure of HAB toxins on birds.



**Figure 2.** Die-off and apparently healthy birds from 2015–2017 with quantifiable levels of saxitoxin (STX). In each boxplot the horizontal line is the median, the box represents the first and third quartiles, the whiskers extend to the highest and lowest values within 1.5x the inter-quartile range, and points denote outliers.



Photos: Black-legged Kittiwakes, Common Murre; S. Schoen, USGS.

**HAB toxins in forage fish & invertebrates**

The ASC also tested forage fish and invertebrates, the typical prey of seabirds, for HAB toxins. We found that they also contained detectable levels of saxitoxin (31% of 85 samples) and domoic acid (12% of 34 samples). Studies to better understand how HAB toxins move through the marine ecosystem are currently underway.

**Conclusions**

- Unusual seabird die-offs have occurred throughout Alaska since 2015.
- The direct cause of death was attributed to starvation.
- Saxitoxin was found in both die-off and apparently healthy seabirds.
- There is no evidence that seabirds died from acute toxicity, but little is known about the effects of low-level saxitoxin exposure on seabirds.



Photos: Common Murres; S. Schoen, USGS.

**What should you do if you find dead or dying seabirds or have questions?**

- Report observations of sick/dead birds to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (1-866-527-3358; AK\_MBM@fws.gov).
- Participate in monitoring efforts on your local beaches with the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST; www.coasst.org).
- Contact Caroline Van Hemert (907-786-7167; cvanhemert@usgs.gov) or Sarah Schoen (907-786-7467; sschoen@usgs.gov) with questions.

**Acknowledgments**

This work was made possible by the large collaborative effort of many partners. We would like to thank the Aleut community of St. Paul Island, Kawerak, Inc., Alaska Sea Grant, the NOAA Beaufort Lab and the NOAA Northwest Fisheries Science Center, the National Park Service, and COASST.



## Fall 2019 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Aug. 18</i>	<i>Aug. 19</i>	<i>Aug. 20</i>	<i>Aug. 21</i>	<i>Aug. 22</i>	<i>Aug. 23</i>	<i>Aug. 24</i>
<i>Aug. 25</i>	<i>Aug. 26</i>	<i>Aug. 27</i>	<i>Aug. 28</i>	<i>Aug. 29</i>	<i>Aug. 30</i>	<i>Aug. 31</i>
<i>Sept. 1</i>	<i>Sept. 2</i> <b>LABOR DAY HOLIDAY</b>	<i>Sept. 3</i>	<i>Sept. 4</i>	<i>Sept. 5</i>	<i>Sept. 6</i>	<i>Sept. 7</i>
<i>Sept. 8</i>	<i>Sept. 9</i>	<i>Sept. 10</i>	<i>Sept. 11</i>	<i>Sept. 12</i>	<i>Sept. 13</i>	<i>Sept. 14</i>
<i>Sept. 15</i>	<i>Sept. 16</i>	<i>Sept. 17</i>	<i>Sept. 18</i>	<i>Sept. 19</i> <b>K/A — Cold Bay</b>	<i>Sept. 20</i>	<i>Sept. 21</i>
<i>Sept. 22</i>	<i>Sept. 23</i>	<i>Sept. 24</i>	<i>Sept. 25</i>	<i>Sept. 26</i>	<i>Sept. 27</i>	<i>Sept. 28</i>
<i>Sept. 29</i>	<i>Sept. 30</i>	<i>Oct. 1</i>	<i>Oct. 2</i> <b>SC — Seward</b>	<i>Oct. 3</i>	<i>Oct. 4</i>	<i>Oct. 5</i>
<i>Oct. 6</i>	<i>Oct. 7</i>	<i>Oct. 8</i> <b>WI — Aniak</b>	<i>Oct. 9</i>	<i>Oct. 10</i>	<i>Oct. 11</i>	<i>Oct. 12</i>
<i>Oct. 13</i>	<i>Oct. 14</i> <b>COLUMBUS DAY HOLIDAY</b>	<i>Oct. 15</i> <b>EI — Fairbanks</b>	<i>Oct. 16</i>	<i>Oct. 17</i> <b>AFN — Fairbanks</b>	<i>Oct. 18</i>	<i>Oct. 19</i>
<i>Oct. 20</i>	<i>Oct. 21</i>	<i>Oct. 22</i> <b>NS — Utqiagvik</b>	<i>Oct. 23</i> <b>SP — Nome</b>	<i>Oct. 24</i>	<i>Oct. 25</i>	<i>Oct. 26</i>
<i>Oct. 27</i>	<i>Oct. 28</i> <b>NW — Noatak</b>	<i>Oct. 29</i>	<i>Oct. 30</i> <b>BB — Dillingham</b>	<i>Oct. 31</i>	<i>Nov. 1</i>	<i>Nov. 2</i>
<i>Nov. 3</i>	<i>Nov. 4</i>	<i>Nov. 5</i> <b>SE — Saxman (Ketchikan)</b>	<i>Nov. 6</i> <b>YKD — St. Mary's</b>	<i>Nov. 7</i>	<i>Nov. 8</i>	<i>Nov. 9</i>

# Winter 2020 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb. 2	Feb. 3 <i>Window Opens</i>	BB — Naknek		Feb. 6	Feb. 7	Feb. 8
Feb. 9	Feb. 10	YKD — Bethel		Feb. 13	Feb. 14	Feb. 15
Feb. 16	Feb. 17 <b>PRESIDENT'S DAY HOLIDAY</b>	Feb. 18	Feb. 19	Feb. 20	Feb. 21	Feb. 22
Feb. 23	Feb. 24	SE — Petersburg			Feb. 28	Feb. 29
Mar. 1	Mar. 2	EI — Fairbanks		Mar. 5	Mar. 6	Mar. 7
Mar. 8	Mar. 9	Mar. 10	Mar. 11	Mar. 12	Mar. 13 <i>Window Closes</i>	Mar. 14





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

**Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

**Charter**

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

- (3) A recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the Region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs.
  - (4) Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.
- e. Appoint three members to each of the Cape Krusenstern National Monument and the Kobuk Valley National Park Subsistence Resource Commissions and one member to the Gates of the Arctic National Park Subsistence Resource Commission in accordance with Section 808 of ANILCA.
- f. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.
- g. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.
- h. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.
- i. Provide recommendations for implementation of Secretary's Order 3347: Conservation Stewardship and Outdoor Recreation, and Secretary's Order 3356: Hunting, Fishing, Recreational Shooting, and Wildlife Conservation Opportunities and Coordination with States, Tribes, and Territories. Recommendations shall include, but are not limited to:
  - (1) Assessing and quantifying implementation of the Secretary's Orders, and recommendations to enhance and expand their implementation as identified;
  - (2) Policies and programs that:
    - (a) increase outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans, with a focus on engaging youth, veterans, minorities, and other communities that traditionally have low participation in outdoor recreation;
    - (b) expand access for hunting and fishing on Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service lands in a manner that respects the rights and privacy of the owners of non-public lands;
    - (c) increase energy, transmission, infrastructure, or other relevant projects while avoiding or minimizing potential negative impacts on wildlife; and
    - (d) create greater collaboration with states, tribes, and/or territories.

- j. Provide recommendations for implementation of the regulatory reform initiatives and policies specified in section 2 of Executive Order 13777: Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs; Executive Order 12866: Regulatory Planning and Review, as amended; and section 6 of Executive Order 13563: Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review. Recommendations shall include, but are not limited to:

Identifying regulations for repeal, replacement, or modification considering, at a minimum, those regulations that:

- (1) eliminate jobs, or inhibit job creation;
- (2) are outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective;
- (3) impose costs that exceed benefits;
- (4) create a serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with regulatory reform initiative and policies;
- (5) rely, in part or in whole, on data or methods that are not publicly available or insufficiently transparent to meet the standard for reproducibility; or
- (6) derive from or implement Executive Orders or other Presidential and Secretarial directives that have been subsequently rescinded or substantially modified.

At the conclusion of each meeting or shortly thereafter, provide a detailed recommendation meeting report, including meeting minutes, to the Designated Federal Officer (DFO).

5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Council Reports.** The Council reports to the Federal Subsistence Board Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.
6. **Support.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide administrative support for the activities of the Council through the Office of Subsistence Management.
7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years.** The annual operating costs associated with supporting the Council's functions are estimated to be \$150,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.0 staff years.

8. **Designated Federal Officer.** The DFO is the Subsistence Council Coordinator for the Region or such other Federal employee as may be designated by the Assistant Regional Director – Subsistence, Region 7, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will:
  - (a) Approve or call all of the advisory committee’s and subcommittees’ meetings;
  - (b) Prepare and approve all meeting agendas;
  - (c) Attend all committee and subcommittee meetings;
  - (d) Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest; and
  - (e) Chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.
9. **Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings.** The Council will meet 1-2 times per year, and at such times as designated by the Federal Subsistence Board Chair or the DFO.
10. **Duration.** Continuing
11. **Termination.** The Council will be inactive 2 years from the date the Charter is filed, unless, prior to that date, it is renewed in accordance with the provisions of section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.
12. **Membership and Designation.** The Council's membership is composed of representative members as follows:

Ten members who are knowledgeable and experienced in matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife and who are residents of the Region represented by the Council. To ensure that each Council represents a diversity of interests, the Federal Subsistence Board in their nomination recommendations to the Secretary will strive to ensure that seven of the members (70 percent) represent subsistence interests within the Region and three of the members (30 percent) represent commercial and sport interests within the Region. The portion of membership representing commercial and sport interests must include, where possible, at least one representative from the sport community and one representative from the commercial community.

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

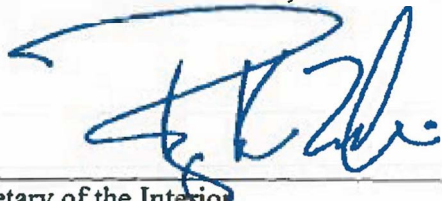


Members will be appointed for 3-year terms. A vacancy on the Council will be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

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

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

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



Secretary of the Interior

DEC 01 2017

Date Signed

DEC 04 2017

Date Filed





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