

KODIAK/ALEUTIANS Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council



USFWS

Karluk Lake and Mountains.

Meeting Materials

March 23, 2010

Kodiak

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KODIAK/ALEUTIANS SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, Kodiak, Alaska
March 23, 2010
9:00 a.m.

DRAFT AGENDA

The public is invited to testify throughout the meeting. Please complete and submit a testifier's form to the Coordinator. The Coordinator will give your form to the Chair, and the Chair will call on you.

- 1. **Call to Order** (*Mitch Simeonoff, Chair*)
- 2. **Roll Call and Establish Quorum** (*Pat Holmes, Secretary*)3
- 3. **Welcome and Introductions** (*Mitch Simeonoff, Chair*)
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12. **New business**

13. **Next Meeting** 90

- A. Confirm September 21, 2010 Meeting and Establish Location
- B. Establish Date and Location of 2011 Winter Meeting

Adjourn

Teleconferencing is available upon request. You must call the Office of Subsistence Management at 1-800-478-1456, 786-3888 or 786-3877, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting to receive this service. Please notify the Regional Coordinator which agenda topic interests you and whether you wish to testify regarding it.

If you have a question regarding this agenda or need more information, please call Michelle Chivers, Regional Council Coordinator, toll free at 1-800-478-1456, 786-3888 or 786-3877; fax 907-786-3898; email michelle_chivers@fws.gov.

Thank you for participating in this public meeting of the Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory Council.

REGION 3—Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Yr Apptd <i>Term Expires</i>	Member Name	City
1	2007 <i>2010</i>	Thomas L. Schwantes	Kodiak
2	2001 <i>2010</i>	Patrick B. Holmes	Kodiak
3	2009 <i>2010</i>	Richard Koso	Adak
4	2004 <i>2010</i>	Samuel I. Rohrer	Kodiak
5	1995 <i>2011</i>	Alfred B. Cratty Jr.	Old Harbor
6	<i>2011</i>	Vacant	
7	2008 <i>2011</i>	Alexander Panamaroff	Larsen Bay
8	2009 <i>2012</i>	Della Trumble	King Cove
9	2000 <i>2009</i>	Speridon M. Simeonoff Sr. - Chair	Akhiok
10	2007 <i>2009</i>	Thomas R. Johnson, Jr.	Kodiak

**KODIAK/ALEUTIANS
SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**March 31, 2009
Anchorage, Alaska
(via teleconference)**

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present:

Speridon Simeonoff
Sam Rohrer
Patrick Holmes
Thomas Schwantes
Tommy Johnson
Rick Koso

Excused:

John Parker

Unexcused Absence:

Jim Hamilton
Al Cratty
Alex Panamaroff

Federal/State Agencies Present:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management:

Michelle Chivers, Pippa Kenner, Gary Goldberg, Laura Greffenius, Steve Fried

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge: Gary Wheeler, Bill Pyle

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge: Nancy Hoffman

Bureau of Indian Affairs: Pat Petrivelli

Alaska Department of Fish and Game: George Pappas, Larry VanDaele, Donn Tracy, Rob Baer, Jim McCullough

Court Reporter: Nathan Hile

Public present: Iver Malutin, Kodiak Native Association; Paul Chervenak, Kodiak F&G Advisory Committee; Don Fox, Fish and Game Advisory Committee; John Polaski, Shoonaq Tribe; Mike Petersen, Woody Island Tribal Council; Harry Dodge, Roxanne Aday, Native Village of Afognak

Call to Order

Chairman Speridon Simeonoff called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Roll Call/Confirmation of Quorum

Council coordinator, Michelle Chivers, called roll. Quorum was established.

Election of Officers

Chair: Rick Koso nominated Speridon Simeonoff. Motion seconded by Pat Holmes. Motion passed unanimously (6-0-4).

Vice Chair: Sam Rohrer nominated Al Cratty. Motion seconded by Rick Koso. Motion passed unanimously (6-0-4).

Secretary: Tom Schwantes nominated Pat Holmes. Motion seconded by Rick Koso. Motion passed unanimously (6-0-4)

Chair – Speridon Simeonoff

Vice Chair – Al Cratty

Secretary – Patrick Holmes

Review and Adoption of Agenda

After a few amendments, Rick Koso made a motion to adopt the agenda. Motion seconded by Tom Schwantes. Motion passed unanimously (6-0-4).

Review and Adoption of Minutes of September 26, 2008 meeting in Kodiak

Rick Koso made a motion to adopt the minutes of September 26, 2008. Motion seconded by Pat Holmes. Motion passed unanimously (6-0-4).

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Mitch Simeonoff – Akhiok

The Village of Akhiok and the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission, plan to have a seal camp this summer in August. Seals will be brought into camp to teach the residents of the villages how to can and smoke seal meat to preserve it longer. This will be held in conjunction with the Kids Petroglyph Camp, in which the Aliituuq Museum in Kodiak participates. There will be two other seals camps, one in April in Yakutat, and one will be held in Juneau.

He went on a goat hunt this past year and said that a goat hunt is always an awesome experience. There were some bear problems this year. A couple of bears have been on a rampage destroying cabins along one side of Olga Bay. The two bears are pretty well habituated now, so he figured in a month or so, the bears will be coming out of hibernation and doing the same thing again until it is time to climb back into the hole to hibernate.

Pat Holmes – Kodiak

At the Buskin River in Kodiak, they experienced a run failure for sockeye this year, so most people have gone over to the Litnik or Pasagshak rivers to fish. The Pasagshak had a good run, but is a tough place for people to fish because you have to launch your boat out through the surf.

Afognak will be having it Spirit Camp again this year. Mr. Holmes was invited by the Kodiak Regional Aquaculture (KRA) to represent subsistence users. The KRA is revising their comprehensive plan and want to get input from the villages and people in Kodiak on subsistence systems that need enhancement. The KRA is currently doing a project over in Port Lions on reds and silvers. Once the KRA gets their questionnaire out Mr. Holmes will try to send it out to the different tribal groups and individuals for their input. He stated that the KRA is interested in the local subsistence.

Rick Koso – Adak

Mr. Koso stated that during the summer some Native camps are also held in Sand Point and Dutch Harbor. They teach the kids how to prepare salmon, seal, and how to smoke fish. Elders teach kids traditional customs. Mr. Koso stated that as far as the King Cove/Cold Bay Road, it did pass through the House and Senate, but still has a few more hurdles to jump, but they've made it through the big ones.

Sam Rohrer, Kodiak – Nothing to report.

Tommy Johnson, Kodiak – Nothing to report.

Tom Schwantes, Kodiak – Nothing to report.

CALL FOR WILDLIFE PROPOSALS – deadline April 30th

No proposals were generated during the meeting.

AGENCY REPORTS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service — Office of Subsistence Management

Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Subsistence Board and the Alaska Boards of Fisheries and Game

Gary Goldberg stated that this was an informational item and no presentation was planned, but he would entertain any questions the Council may have. Rick Koso asked Mr. Goldberg at what point do regulations regarding possession of migratory birds go into effect. Mr. Koso stated that he asked this question at the last meeting and was told that a response would be drafted and would be sent to the Council. Mr. Goldberg stated that possession of migratory birds is outside the scope of this MOU. The MOU is mostly about coordination and communication between the Federal Subsistence Board and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Pat Holmes mentioned that he was tickled with the MOU and stated that it is nice to see no confrontations between the two agencies.

Two-Year Cycle — Projected Regulatory Schedule

Mr. Goldberg referred the Council to the chart and briefly explained how the regulatory cycle will work for both fisheries and wildlife. No comments were received from the Council.

Tracking Bear Claws in Handicraft

Mr. Goldberg first stated that the Office of Subsistence Management was asking all councils if they would like to nominate one of its members to be on a committee to work on this issue, but would ask again at the end of his presentation. Mr. Goldberg then gave the council some background on a proposal that was submitted by the State of Alaska to refine Federal regulations, which in the State's view, allows for unconstrained commercial sale of handicrafts made from brown bear parts, and creates market incentives for poaching. Based on a recommendation from ADF&G Commissioner Denby Lloyd, the Federal Subsistence Board deferred the proposal to the next wildlife cycle pending the formation of a work group. The Federal Subsistence Board directed that the work group include representation from Regional Advisory Councils. There was a pre-work group meeting held on January 21, 2009 to clarify the intent of the work group and to explore possible ways to address the issue. The staff developed the following draft charge for the work group: Develop a method or methods to recommend to the Federal Subsistence Board and Board of Game for tracing brown bear claws made into handicrafts that is enforceable and culturally sensitive commensurate with the need to provide conservation of this wildlife resource. The work group mechanics are as follows: Federal and/or State staff will present this issue to the Regional Advisory Councils at their winter 2009 meetings. Interested councils may provide the name of a member to represent the council at the meetings of the work group. A meeting of the work group will occur prior to May 1, 2009 to address the draft charge and develop a recommendation for consideration by the Boards by January 2010. One or two meetings are anticipated.

Mr. Koso asked if this was due to a Native vs. non-Native problem and if it has been an on-going problem. Mr. Goldberg said that this was a directive that was given by the Federal Subsistence Board. Mr. Koso asked if there had been some illegal killing of bears for parts, like the gall bladder. Mr. Goldberg stated that he could not speak to that since he did not know.

Mr. Goldberg asked the Council if they would like to have one of its members on this committee. Tom Schwantes recommended Rick Koso. Mr. Koso said he appreciated the nomination but declined because he gets stuck in Adak quite frequently and might not be able to attend the committee meetings. Tom Schwantes withdrew that nomination and nominated Sam Rohrer to serve on that committee. Motion was seconded by Rick Koso. Motion passed unanimously (6-0-4)

Chistochina Court Case Summary

Mr. Goldberg gave the Council a quick summarization of the Chistochina Court case. No comments were received from the Council.

Izembek National Wildlife Refuge

Nancy Hoffman introduced herself. She is the new Refuge Manager at the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Cold Bay. She gave the Council a brief summarization of the report provided in the Council book.

Caribou

Ms. Hoffman stated that a correction needed to be made to the paragraph regarding caribou collaring in Unit 9D. Corrected wording "Three caribou collars were on mortality mode, two were observed on the ground and had no animal remains on them, while one radio collar was not observed."

The Izembek Refuge coordinated with the State to do fall caribou composition counts in October. The table on the first page shows results of both the cow-calf ratios and the bull ratios. Currently there is no hunting in Unit 9D and the recommendation is to continue that closure until there are signs of recovery. For the caribou in Unit 10 (Unimak Island) the Refuge was unable to conduct a population count because of weather, and the new pilot that just came on board is still going through the training to get his certification to conduct low elevation flights and landings of airports. The State conducted a composition count in October of 2008. The cow/calf ratio was six calves to 100 cows, pretty much the same as the previous year. There still seems to be a decline in the caribou numbers on Unimak so the Refuge is proposing that caribou hunting be closed until the population can recover to allow a more sustainable harvest.

Bears

The State bear hunt took place on Unimak Island between October and December of 2008. Three bears were sealed at the refuge headquarters.

Brant

Brant surveys were not conducted in Mexico this year. They were canceled due to violence in the area. In February of this year surveys were conducted. Those numbers are outlined in the table. Bag limits for brant were relaxed in the fall of 2008 to three brant per day because the average exceeded the threshold of 135,000 birds.

Emperor geese

The spring survey netted a total of 64,944 birds. This is more than a 15 percent decline from the 2008 survey. The 3-year average from 2006 and 2008 was 72,864. A 3-year average of 80,000 is needed to consider an open season.

Avian Influenza

The Izembek Refuge continues to collect samples for the Alaska avian influence surveillance program. Last fall, 470 samples were collected from hunter harvest from tundra swans and 200 of those samples were from Steller's eiders.

Tom Schwantes asked if the emperor goose numbers were down because there was no survey due to having a new pilot. Ms. Hoffman stated that the new pilot is not involved in that survey. This is a consistent survey using the same technique, method and approach. So it is a fair reasonable number.

Mr. Koso asked about the migratory bird possession limits. He stated that at the last meeting this was brought up to Val Urban and Pete Probasco. A letter was supposed to be sent to the council to clarify why there is a difference between Federal and State possessed migratory birds. Mitch Simeonoff asked Ms. Chivers if a letter was received. Ms. Chivers said no. Ms. Pippa Kenner said she did look into this and came up with the following information. The Federal and State migratory bird hunting regulations are the same and they come from the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. She said the difference is the interpretation of the definition of the daily possession limit and when you can go hunting again. Mr. Koso asked that a report with clarification come from OSM so that the report can be put out and everybody will be aware. Ms. Kenner said she will follow up on it.

Mr. Koso asked Ms. Hoffman if the caribou bull ratio declines in Unit 9D and on Unimak Island could be from guides taking the big bulls or wolf predation or a combination of both. Ms. Hoffman stated that she did not have data to justify either way. She said Unit 9D is closed to hunting. She was not sure about Unit 10 Unimak Island. Sam Rohrer stated that he felt the decline had nothing to do with sport hunting since Unit 9D is closed to all hunting. Ms. Greffenius said that in the last couple of years Lem Butler was concerned about the same pattern of Unit 9D being exhibited on Unimak Island as well. Ms. Greffenius stated that the Refuge is considering a proposal to decrease the harvest in Unit 10. She stated that a summary of recent composition counts are included in the Izembek Refuge summary. She also stated that the Office of Subsistence Management has provided monies for a collaring project. The State is conducting the collaring work and there should be a report coming from Lem Butler some time in the near future.

Mr. Holmes stated that the surveys are really important, so he suggested borrowing a pilot from somewhere. He said when he worked for ADF&G he had some success in working with the Coast Guard in helping out with training and survey work. Mr. Koso said he noticed in the report that the calf ratio jumped up to 39 this year, but the bull ratio is declining in both Unimak and Unit 9D. He asked if this was due to the guides or wolf predation.

Ms. Hoffman said the Refuge had a joint meeting with the Alaska Peninsula Refuge and the State about the caribou herds and survey techniques. It was decided that a joint post-calving aggregation count would be done in July. This will be the first time this has happened in a very long time. They felt that this was a positive move in the right direction and they hope to find improvements. The data will be reviewed at the next Council meeting. She also stated that the calf ratio is improving since there is no hunting in Unit 9D. There could be other factors like weather, health of the herd, lack of hunting. There could be many variables, but she could not state what caused that.

Mr. Rohrer said that he read Lem Butler's report and noted that Mr. Butler thinks that having a wolf control program had a dramatic effect on the calving ratio. In the summer of 2008, 28 wolves were killed in the calving grounds. Obviously having the wolf control was a good idea. He congratulated the State in this effort. Ms. Hoffman made a clarification that there is no data to support that the increase in the calf:cow ratio was due to wolf control. Mr. Holmes stated that in previous survey they had the lowest survival in the entire State and the highest wolf population. It seems to him that this is cause and effect. With regard to surveys, he said in the past he had flown with commercial pilots to do some of his survey work. He did not find it acceptable that for 3 years in a row no surveys were conducted because they did not have a pilot.

Mr. Schwantes asked if the emperor goose surveys are conducted in the same area every year. Ms. Hoffman said yes. Mr. Schwantes asked why they conduct the surveys the same area every year instead of expanding the survey to see if some of those geese are moving to other areas. Ms. Hoffman said they

conduct the surveys wherever the birds are concentrated or are staged. The birds land or rest in those areas where they're going to have protection, an area that is relatively predator-free, and has a good food base, so they can get enough energy to move on to the next stage. Those are the areas where the surveys take place because those are the places they usually go. Mr. Schwantes asked if the Council could get a map showing survey areas. Ms. Hoffman said she would get a map to Ms. Chivers showing the survey areas of emperor geese for her to send to Council members.

Mr. Koso said that he sees a lot of emperor geese in Adak, an excess of 200–300 geese in Clam Lagoon. He asked if they ever survey out as far as Adak. It seems that the survey numbers are always just below 80,000, like they don't want to create or allow a subsistence hunt. Ms. Hoffman asked when he sees those geese. Mr. Koso replied that they see them December, January, and part of February. Ms. Hoffman said the geese are migrating their way up the chain and probably arrive just in time for the spring count. Mr. Koso thanked her for her input and the map she will provide to the Council.

Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge

Bill Pyle gave the Council a brief summarization of the activities for the Kodiak Refuge.

Fisheries

The Karluk River chinook salmon run has historically provided a popular sport fishery and has also served local subsistence users, however, escapements have been in a downward trend in the last few years. In 2005 there were close to 4,800 fish, last year there were only 752 fish. That shows several years below ADF&G lower escapement goal. These decreased escapements are a serious concern not only to the communities of Larsen Bay and Karluk, but to Federal and State fishery managers. The forecast for 2009 does not look promising, relative to the Karluk and Ayakulik fisheries. In response to this, ADF&G has issued two emergency orders in February of 2009 to restrict sport fishing in an effort to achieve and facilitate the escapement goal. One restriction was a bag limit of one fish per day with an annual limit of two fish that are greater than 20 inches in length. One the Karluk it is catch and release only. The Kodiak Refuge is collaborating with the Department of Fish and Game in regards to trying to ascertain what limiting factors in the fresh water phase of the fish's life cycle may or may not be contributing to this decline. Proposals are being developed to study the Chinooks in the Karluk to examine the distribution of chinook salmon fry. Then they will focus on the areas where young Chinook occur and examine abundance and other habitat factors.

Brown Bear

In May, Kodiak Refuge will be conducting brown bear density surveys. This year they will be doing assessments on the Aliulik and Spiridon peninsulas. This will be done in collaboration with the State.

There is an on-going study of bear habitat use and preference. It is an ADF&G project in the Old Harbor vicinity.

There is another project going on in the Upper Karluk watershed which involves GPS collars looking at locations of bear and habitat use.

Deer

Deer mortality surveys will be conducted in three locations in April. The results of those surveys will be in the report to the Council this fall. The Refuge supports ADF&G in their survey of deer hunters, which is a questionnaire distributed in May to approximately half of the deer hunters.

The Refuge issued 49 designated deer hunting permits since last fall. Most of those reported back.

Roosevelt Elk

Last fall three permits were issued for hunting under Federal subsistence regulations. No elk were taken under those permits.

Sea Otter

Last fall a proposal was submitted to designate critical habitat for the southwest stock of northern sea otter. The northern sea otter stocks range from the western Aleutians to Kodiak and across to the Alaska Peninsula. This proposal included critical habitat that is 10 fathoms in depth, and it includes all near shore water around Kodiak and the Kodiak Archipelago, extending out into the Aleutians. The public comment period ran from December through mid-February. Public comments are being evaluated and the final regulation is being prepared. The Fish and Wildlife Service examined the potential for conflict with personal fisheries. The basic assessment was that based on what they know about sea otter diets, that there were no significant potential implications as far as critical habitat designation was concerned. Mr. Wheeler added that any project requiring any Federal help would require consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service. This does not affect subsistence harvest of sea otters.

Migratory Birds

In June, the Refuge will survey populations of selected colonial nesting seabirds, including gulls and terns, between Chiniak and South Cape along the east and southwest end of Kodiak Island.

In August, the Refuge will be doing population assessments in Uyak and Uganik bays, of various near-shore coastal birds, including harlequin ducks. Results from these surveys will be compared to previous surveys to determine whether our management efforts have tended to stop the decline previously documented for the harlequin population in Uyak Bay. The Refuge has been doing outreach efforts, on a regular basis, contacting residents of Larsen Bay and presenting posters with a rundown of concerns. We are asking the lodges to participate by keeping a log of harlequins harvested. Their reports have been very conservative in terms of their harvest practices regarding harlequin duck.

A migratory bird subsistence harvest survey was conducted a few years ago in coordination with the Anchorage field office of Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Department of Fish and Game. The next survey will probably happen in 2010, following the restructuring of the survey. Migratory Bird Management has contracted the Department of Fish and Game to conduct the restructuring and setting up of that survey.

The Refuge hired a new bird biologist by the name of Robin Corcoran. He is currently the senior biologist at the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge Complex. He is scheduled to arrive at the Kodiak Refuge in May.

The Refuge will be running their annual summer science salmon camp.

The Refuge has an active management program regarding invasive species that is largely supported through grants. They also partner regularly with the Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District to conduct surveys and outreach of coastal lands in Olga Bay and Uganik Bay. Field crews visited 63 sites. The good news is that they only found a couple of small infestations, so they are doing some follow up with the land owners. The Fish and Wildlife Service was sued over its invasive management program in Alaska. The outcome of that lawsuit is pending but expected to be resolved soon. In the meantime, the Refuge agreed to stop herbicide applications on refuges in Alaska until procedural requirements are met through the National Environmental Policy Act.

The Federal Aviation Administration is developing an environmental impact statement regard the

extension of runway safety areas at the Kodiak Airport. They release their initial results a few weeks ago and are expected to release the draft environmental impact statement sometime early this summer.

Mr. Pyle mentioned that there were two proposals submitted to the State regarding reindeer (proposals 159 and 160) which the Refuge did not support. Three proposals were submitted regarding goats (proposals 163, 164, and 165). The Refuge supported one of those three. Mr. Schwantes asked which proposals they did not support and why. Mr. Pyle stated that these proposals will be covered under Larry VanDaele's presentation.

Pat Holme's asked if the reduction of sea otter populations will affect Natives using sea otters for handicrafts. Gary Wheeler replied that it will have no impact on the use of sea otters. The idea of establishing critical habitat, it just identifies those areas that are most important to maintain and to help species recover.

Pat Holmes complimented the Refuge on its public relation efforts regarding harlequin ducks. He heard that lodges are trying to be a bit more conservative as they trophy hunt for harlequins. Mr. Holmes then asked about the reduction of cormorants around Kodiak. Mr. Wheeler stated that they probably have over 20 years of winter bird counts and is not aware of a trend of reduced numbers of cormorants, but they will keep an eye on it.

Alaska Department of Fish & Game

Larry VanDaele gave the Council an overview of the big game animals on Kodiak.

Sitka Black-tailed Deer

The winter weather was a very tough on the deer this year, especially this last month. Worst case scenario is that they anticipate lower population numbers due to the tough winter. In the past three years, there has been a decline from 6,000 deer to 3,000 deer. Hunter success has also declined.

Roosevelt Elk

The elk population is going down. It went from around 900 elk down to 620 elk. ADF&G plans to reduce the time that the registration hunt would be open and reduce the number of permits to be issued, probably by half. Sam Rohrer asked if there have been any sightings of elk on the island. Mr. VanDaele stated that they have not seen any elk on the Kodiak mainland for the past three years. The Afognak Native Corporation in cooperation with Natives of Kodiak and Ouzinkie are working with ADF&G to find ways to minimize their logging impacts on elk. They are also working on their access permits to allow hunters to hunt where the elk population can handle a hunt, and to keep the hunters out of areas where the population cannot handle a hunt.

Mountain Goat

Mr. VanDaele stated that the goat population is doing very well. The population has doubled in the last ten years. They now estimate 2,200 goats on Kodiak Island, so in 10 years the population has more than doubled. The majority of this increase has occurred on the south and west end of the island. More goats are taken on Kodiak Island than any other place in the State of Alaska. The average harvest has been about 150 goats per year. The Board of Game received three proposals regarding goat. The first proposal had to do with allocating a specific number of permits to guides for non-resident hunters who have to be guided. The Board opted not to pass that one because they felt it was not appropriate at this time. The second proposal would have allowed permits to be available throughout the State throughout the season. The Board rejected the proposal since they did not want to jeopardize the cooperative goat program which was a compromise by the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, ADF&G, the

Kodiak Fish and Game Advisory Committee and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The third proposal was for a new goat hunt registration area. Mr. VanDaele asked Paul Chervenak from the Kodiak Fish and Game Advisory Committee to speak on this proposal. Mr. Chervenak stated that he is the vice-chair of the Kodiak Fish and Game Advisory Committee and he is also the Chair of the Joint Kodiak Mountain Goat Committee. Mr. Chervenak said the Committee met and came up with a proposal to change the drawing areas 475 and 477 and changed it to a registration hunt which starts and runs concurrent with the drawing hunt at the north end of the island, from August through October and the registration hunt will start immediately after that and continue through mid-December. The permits will be available statewide. Starting 2010, are 475 and 477 will strictly be a registration hunt. There will no longer be a drawing hunt in those areas. It was unanimous among all users.

Brown bears

The brown bear population on Kodiak Archipelago is stable in most areas and increasing in other areas. Last year they increased the number of permits and so there was an increase in the number of bears harvested. About nine percent of the bears harvested are Boone and Crockett sized large bears.

The ADF&G is conducting a nutritional ecology study where they take hair from 500 different bears and using that hair to determine what they are eating in different parts of the archipelago. This is in conjunction with Washington State University.

Another bear research project ADF&G is conducting is bear behavior around weirs, looking for ways to minimize bear impacts to fish weirs and fish technicians.

The bear management plan for Kodiak continues to be a document in the making with the Kodiak Unified Bear Subcommittee actively holding meetings. ADF&G just completed a course at the Kodiak Community College to teach people how to view bears in an ethical manner. Also, for public outreach regarding Kodiak bears ADF&G continues with bear safety presentations with a series of newspaper and public presentations.

Bears within the village of Old Harbor and around Kodiak were quite a challenge last year. There were more bears than ever in those two locations. ADF&G continues close coordination with various law enforcement agencies, the Borough, Kodiak Refuge, and waste management. As a result, there were no human injuries, but there was some property damage. The villages of Port Lions and Larsen Bay still have a few problems, but nothing like it used to be before they put up the landfill and the electric fence, so there has been a tremendous success in those areas.

Furbearers

The beaver population is low. River otter harvest is down.

Reindeer

The feral reindeer population remains stable at around 200 to 250 reindeer. In 2001 the State authorized a same-day airborne hunting of that herd. Interest has continued to increase since harvest has increased tremendously. There are two proposals before the Board of Game to start managing these feral reindeer for a sustained yield. The Board amended and passed the proposal so that the reindeer will be managed for a sustained yield. The season will be the same as the deer season, which is August 1 through the end of January. The bag limit is one reindeer. All meat must be salvaged. You must get a caribou harvest ticket if you are a non-resident.

Buskin River Sockeye Salmon Fishery and Stock Assessment Project Update

Donn Tracy gave the Council a brief update on the Buskin River sockeye salmon assessment project. He mentioned that historically the Buskin River run has been healthy and they had not found any reason to restrict any of the fisheries until last year. The 2008 weir count was about 6,000 fish, which is the lowest on record. That resulted in the need to place restrictions on not only the sport fishery, which was closed in June, but also the low run last year resulted in a complete closure of the subsistence fishery. The run is hopefully going to be somewhat better this year. Last year they sampled the run for age composition and it looks like those cohorts necessary to support the strong runs they have seen in the past, are present again in the 2008 returns. It looks like they could possibly have a run of 8 to 10,000 fish for the 2009. So hopefully this year's run won't create a need for any restriction on subsistence users.

They have funding for the stock assessment project through 2009. ADF&G has submitted a proposal to continue this project. The application process is still underway in the Office of Subsistence Management. He informed the Council that ADF&G appreciates the support received from the Council over the years for this project.

Pat Holmes commended Donn Tracy for his work on this project. He also appreciates the outreach program where ADF&G brings in interns to work on the sampling. It is good to see some of those interns potentially become biologists in the future.

Afognak Lake Sockeye Salmon Progress Report

Rob Baer gave the Council a brief update on the 2008 Afognak Lake smolt studies. He mentioned that they experienced record-breaking high water in May, which pretty much wiped out the trap. The average rain fall is five inches in May, last May there was 15 inches of rain. For the time that the trap could not be fished, missing data were interpolated using information before and after the five day period during which the trap could not be fished. This allowed them to make a total estimate of smolt abundance. The estimate of approximately 196,000 smolt was less than those made in previous years. They also noticed a decrease in the condition of the smolt. The relatively poor smolt run and condition could be the result of colder spring water temperatures. This caused the eggs to hatch later and resulting fry to emerge from the gravel later. It also causes lower production of zooplankton, which are the primary food source for juvenile sockeye salmon

Mr. Baer stated that ADF&G has submitted a proposal for an additional four years of funding for this project. This project would continue the smolt outmigration studies and limnological work, as well as some additional work on smolt energy content that would provide a better picture of rearing conditions, and a more thorough evaluation of climate change effects.

Mr. Baer thanked the Council for their continued support of this project.

Mr. Holmes asked if the drop in lake temperatures will affect the adult returns and if this was a reflection of environmental change? Mr. Baer said this may be a bit of speculation, but he thought the reason the juvenile fish were staying in the lake longer was because they don't have the health and condition to leave sooner and still be successful. This is something they will be closely monitoring. Mr. Holmes thanked Mr. Baer for his excellent report and for keeping the Council up to date on an important system.

Charter Review

The Council did not recommend any changes to the current charter.

Location and Date for the 2009 Fall Council meeting.

Pat Holmes made a motion to hold the fall Council meeting in Sand Point or King Cove, with Cold Bay as a back-up meeting location if weather becomes an issue. Motion was seconded by Rick Koso. Motion passed unanimously (6-0-4).

Council's Justification: Due to the catastrophic decline in the Unit 9D caribou population, the Council would like to hold the meeting in King Cove or Sand Point to allow the surrounding communities to participate in the meeting when the Council addresses the subsistence caribou in Unit 9D and Unit 10. The Council understands that cost of transportation can sometimes be difficult, so they suggested that a teleconference be set up if a need arose. If weather is an issue in getting to King Cove or Sand Point, then Cold Bay will be the back-up meeting location. Chair Simeonoff asked for a roll call vote. Support of this decision was unanimous (6-0-4)

Tom Schwantes made a motion to hold the Fall 2009 Council meeting on September 10, 2009. Motion seconded by Pat Holmes. Motion passed unanimously (6-0-4).

Adjournment

Rick Koso made a motion to adjourn. Tom Schwantes seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 12:15p.m

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

//s//

7/7/09

Michelle Chivers, DFO
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Date

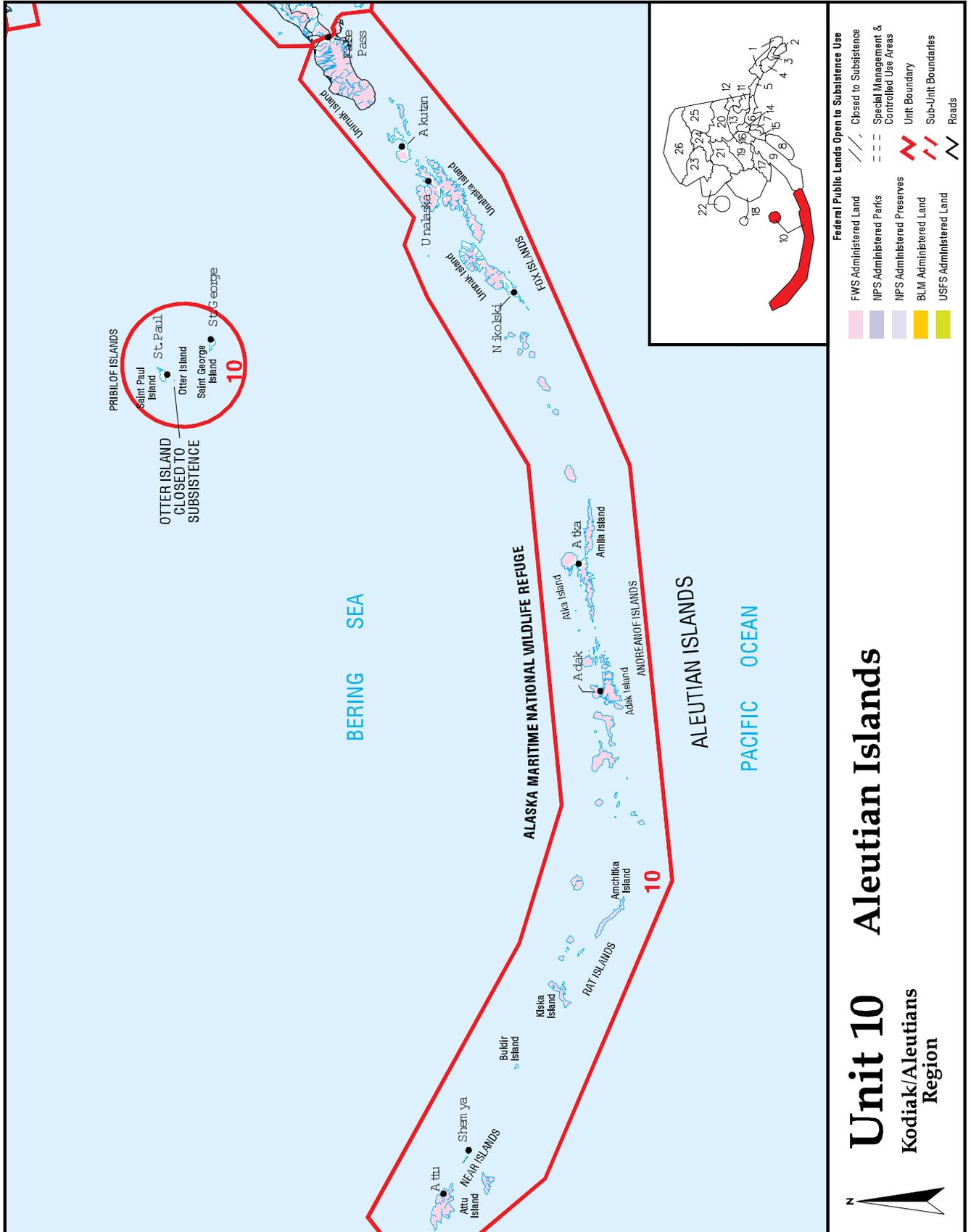
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6/30/09

Speridon Simeonoff, Chair

Date

These minutes will be formally considered by the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its next meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.



Aleutian Islands

Unit 10 Kodiak/Aleutians Region



WP10-01 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP10-01 requests the addition of a definition for “drawing permit” to the Federal subsistence management regulations. <i>Submitted by the USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management</i>
Proposed Regulation	<i>Statewide-General Regulations</i> § __.25(a) Definitions Drawing permit—a permit issued to a limited number of Federally qualified subsistence users selected by means of a lottery held for all Federally qualified subsistence users submitting valid applications for such permits and who agree to abide by the conditions specified for each hunt. Drawing permits are issued based on priorities determined by 36 CFR 242.17 and 50 CFR 100.17.
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Support Proposal WP10-01 with modification to simplify and clarify the definition. The modified regulation would read: <i>Statewide-General Regulations</i> § __.25(a) Definitions Drawing permit—a permit issued to a limited number of Federally qualified subsistence users selected by means of a random drawing.
Southeast Regional Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Regional Council Recommendation	
Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Regional Council Recommendation	
Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council Recommendation	
Western Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
Seward Peninsula Regional Council Recommendation	
Northwest Arctic Regional Council Recommendation	
Eastern Interior Regional Council Recommendation	

continued on next page

WP10-01 Executive Summary (continued)	
North Slope Regional Council Recommendation	Support
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

**DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP10-01**

ISSUES

Proposal WP10-01, submitted by the USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management, requests the addition of a definition for “drawing permit” to the Federal subsistence management regulations.

DISCUSSION

Existing Federal subsistence management regulations do not include a definition for “drawing permit” (§§ __.4 and __.25(a)). However, because this term is used in the hunting regulations (§ __.26(n) (19)), a definition should be provided.

Existing Federal Regulation

Statewide-General Regulations

§ __.25(a) Definitions—No existing definition

Proposed Federal Regulation

Statewide-General Regulations

§ __.25(a) Definitions

Drawing permit—a permit issued to a limited number of Federally qualified subsistence users selected by means of a lottery held for all Federally qualified subsistence users submitting valid applications for such permits and who agree to abide by the conditions specified for each hunt. Drawing permits are issued based on priorities determined by 36 CFR 242.17 and 50 CFR 100.17.

Existing State Regulation

Definitions

Drawing permit—a permit issued to a limited number of people selected by means of a lottery held for all people submitting valid applications for such permits and who agree to abide by the conditions specified for each hunt.

Extent of Federal Public Lands/Waters

This proposal would apply to the entire state. Federal public lands comprise approximately 65% of Alaska and consist of 23% Bureau of Land Management, 15% National Park Service, 21% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and 6% U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service lands.

Effects of the Proposal

The addition of this definition does not affect fish and wildlife populations, subsistence uses or other uses (i.e., sport/recreational or commercial). The Federal Subsistence Management Program has used drawings as one way to distribute permits among residents of a community that are similarly situated relative to

customary and traditional uses of those wildlife populations. Current hunting regulations use the phrase “drawing permit” to describe the permit for the Unit 19A moose hunt, and there have been other situations where drawings have been used to distribute registration permits among qualified applicants. Proposal WP10-09, submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, requests a drawing permit hunt. The addition of a definition for “drawing permit” to the Federal regulations would help provide clarity to regulations.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP10-01 **with modification** to simplify and clarify the definition.

The modified regulation would read:

Statewide-General Regulations

§ __.25(a) Definitions

Drawing permit—a permit issued to a limited number of Federally qualified subsistence users selected by means of a random drawing.

Justification

The definition clarifies a term that is used in the Federal subsistence hunting regulations and does not affect fish and wildlife populations, subsistence uses or other uses. The modified wording simplifies the definition and makes it clear that drawing permits are based on a “random” drawing for all similarly situated Federally qualified subsistence users.

STATUS OF WP10-02 (DEFERRED WP08-05)

Proposal WP10-02 (deferred proposal WP08-05), submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, requested clarification of the existing Federal Subsistence management regulation governing the use of brown bear claws in handicrafts for sale. The proposal specifically asked for the removal of all unit-specific regulations related to the statewide sale of brown bear handicrafts made of skin, hide, pelt or fur and that sales of brown bear handicrafts made of claws, bones, teeth, sinew, or skulls should occur only between Federally qualified subsistence users.

Proposal WP10-02 was deferred by the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) at its May 2008 meeting at the suggestion of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, pending formation of a workgroup to address the issue of developing a method of tracking brown bear claws made into handicrafts for sale. The Board voted unanimously to defer the proposal “to allow a work group to address this issue of sale and tracking, specifically whether or not it’s even feasible” (FSB 2008:117). The Board directed that the working group include representatives from all interested Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (Councils) and State and Federal staff (FSB 2008: 102-119).

An initial scoping meeting between Federal and State staff was held in January 2009; at that meeting a draft charge was developed¹. A briefing was provided to all Councils during the Winter 2009 meeting cycle on the status of the workgroup, and Councils selected representatives to participate in the workgroup. The workgroup, including representatives from nine Councils, and Federal and State staff met in June 2009. At that meeting, participants from the Councils posed a number of questions directed at whether or not bear claw tracking is a problem for subsistence users, and if regulations needed to be changed. These questions prompted Federal and State staff to conduct further research, and to meet as agency staff to compare notes and to follow up on research questions, which they did twice during summer 2009. The work group attempted to meet again during the summer of 2009, but this was not possible. In the interim, another briefing on the status of the workgroup was provided to the Councils at the Fall 2009 meetings.

FUTURE DIRECTION

The workgroup, including Council members, will meet during spring/summer 2010 to address the questions raised at its first meeting, and to begin working towards resolution of the issues. This will provide ample time for the workgroups’ findings to be presented to each Council for their recommendations during the Fall 2010 meeting cycle, and for a full report to be provided to the Federal Subsistence Board for action at its January 2011 meeting. A report will also be provided to the Alaska Board of Game at an appropriate meeting. Proposal 10-02 (WP08-05) will be deferred until that time.

LITERATURE CITED

FSB. 2008. Transcripts of the Federal Subsistence Board proceedings, April 29, 2008. Office of Subsistence Management, FWS. Anchorage, AK.

¹ Draft charge for workgroup:

Develop a method(s) to recommend to the Federal Subsistence Board and Board of Game for tracking brown bear claws made into handicrafts that is enforceable and culturally sensitive, commensurate with the need to provide conservation of this wildlife resource.

WP10-03 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP10-03 requests the addition of a general provision in Federal subsistence management regulations to allow the harvest of fish and wildlife by participants in a cultural or educational program. <i>Submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management</i>
Proposed Regulation	<i>See the analysis for the proposed regulation language.</i>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Support Proposal WP10-03 with modification to simplify the proposed regulation.
Southeast Regional Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Regional Council Recommendation	
Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Regional Council Recommendation	
Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council Recommendation	
Western Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
Seward Peninsula Regional Council Recommendation	
Northwest Arctic Regional Council Recommendation	
Eastern Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
North Slope Regional Council Recommendation	Support Proposal WP10-03 with Modification to simplify the proposed regulation.
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS WP10-03

ISSUES

Proposal WP10-03, submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management, requests the addition of a general provision in Federal subsistence management regulations to allow the harvest of fish and wildlife by participants in a cultural or educational program.

DISCUSSION

This proposal is a housekeeping measure intended to provide clarity in the guidelines for issuing permits for the harvest of fish and wildlife by cultural and educational programs. Doing so will help to inform the public, fish and wildlife managers, Office of Subsistence Management staff, members of the Interagency Staff Committee, and members of the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) of the guidelines currently in use by Office of Subsistence Management staff with regard to permits to harvest wildlife and fish for cultural and educational programs. Since the Federal program began in 1990, the process for issuing permits has gone through a number of changes. Because some of these changes have not been well documented, there is some confusion over the process. The intent of this regulation then is to provide clarity in Federal subsistence management regulations.

Currently, there is no specific provision allowing for the harvest of wildlife for cultural and educational programs although there is a general allowance that provides for such a practice. A specific provision allows for the harvest of fish for a cultural and educational program.

Most requests speaking to the allowance of fish or wildlife harvests on behalf of a cultural or educational program are on behalf of culture camps sponsored by Native nonprofit organizations. Requests for permits also have been received from a substance abuse rehabilitation program and for college courses. The permits are typically requested both to teach cultural and educational activities associated with harvest, and to provide food for participants in the cultural and educational program. Once a program has been approved for a permit, follow-up requests (referred to as repeat requests in the regulation), may be made annually for up to five years by the same cultural or educational program to harvest the same animal species and amount.

Existing Federal Regulation

Program structure

§____.10(d)

(5) The Board may implement one or more of the following harvest and harvest reporting or permit systems:

(iii) The fish and wildlife is taken by individuals or community representatives permitted (via a Federal Subsistence Registration Permit) a one-time or annual harvest for special purposes including ceremonies and potlatches.

General regulations

No existing regulation

Fish regulations**§____.27(e)**

(2) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management may issue a permit to harvest fish for a qualifying cultural/educational program to an organization that has been granted a Federal subsistence permit for a similar event within the previous 5 years. A qualifying program must have instructors, enrolled students, minimum attendance requirements, and standards for successful completion of the course. Applications must be submitted to the Office of Subsistence Management 60 days prior to the earliest desired date of harvest. Permits will be issued for no more than 25 fish per culture/education camp. Appeal of a rejected request can be made to the Federal Subsistence Board. Application for an initial permit for a qualifying cultural/educational program, for a permit when the circumstances have changed significantly, when no permit has been issued within the previous 5 years, or when there is a request for harvest in excess of that provided in this paragraph (e)(2), will be considered by the Federal Subsistence Board.

Proposed Federal Regulation**Program structure****§____.10(d)**

(5) The Board may implement one or more of the following harvest and harvest reporting or permit systems:

(iii) The fish and wildlife is taken by individuals or community representatives permitted (via a Federal Subsistence Registration Permit) a one-time or annual harvest for special purposes including ceremonies and potlatches.

General regulations**§____.25(g) Cultural/educational program permits**

(1) A qualifying program must have instructors, enrolled students, minimum attendance requirements, and standards for successful completion of the course. Applications must be submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board through the Office of Subsistence Management 60 days prior to the earliest desired date of harvest. Generally permits will be issued for no more than one large mammal per cultural/educational program, permits will be issued for no more than 25 fish per cultural/educational program, and permits for the harvest of shellfish will be addressed on a case by case basis. Any animals harvested will count against any established Federal harvest quota for the area in which harvested.

(2) Application for an initial permit for a qualifying cultural/educational program, for a permit when the circumstances have changed significantly, when no permit has been issued within the previous 5 years, or when there is a request for harvest in excess of that provided in paragraph

(g)(1), will be considered by the Federal Subsistence Board. Appeal of a rejected request can be made to the Federal Subsistence Board.

(3) A permit to harvest fish, wildlife, or shellfish for a qualifying cultural/educational program which has been granted a Federal subsistence permit for a similar event within the previous 5 years may be issued by the Federal in-season manager (for fisheries) or the Federal local land manager (for wildlife). Requests for follow-up permits must be submitted to the in-season or local land manager 60 days prior to the earliest desired date of harvest.

(4) Federal in-season and local land managers will report the re-issue of any cultural/educational program permits and the harvest results to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management.

Fish regulations

§ ____ .27(e)

(2) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management may issue a permit to harvest fish for a qualifying cultural/educational program to an organization that has been granted a Federal subsistence permit for a similar event within the previous 5 years. A qualifying program must have instructors, enrolled students, minimum attendance requirements, and standards for successful completion of the course. Applications must be submitted to the Office of Subsistence Management 60 days prior to the earliest desired date of harvest. Permits will be issued for no more than 25 fish per culture/education camp. Appeal of a rejected request can be made to the Federal Subsistence Board. Application for an initial permit for a qualifying cultural/educational program, for a permit when the circumstances have changed significantly, when no permit has been issued within the previous 5 years, or when there is a request for harvest in excess of that provided in this paragraph (e)(2), will be considered by the Federal Subsistence Board.

State Regulations

5 AAC 92.034 Permit to take game for cultural purposes

The commissioner may issue a permit for the taking of game for the teaching and preservation of historic or traditional Alaskan cultural practices, knowledge, and values, only under the terms of a permit issued by the department upon application. A permit may not be issued if the taking of the game can be reasonably accommodated under existing regulations. For purposes of this section, "game" includes (1) deer; (2) moose; (3) caribou; (4) black bear; (5) mountain goat; (6) small game; (7) furbearers; and (8) any migratory bird for which a federal permit has been issued.

Regulatory History

At the inception of the Federal Subsistence Management Program, all requests for permits to allow harvests for special purposes between regulatory cycles were treated as special actions that went directly to the Board. In 2000, the Board adopted a general provision in Federal regulations that delegated authority to Office of Subsistence Management to issue special harvest permits for repeated requests from

cultural and educational camp operators (§____.25(c)(4)¹; 66 FR 10148, February 13, 2001). Thus, the initial request went to the Board and any subsequent requests to the Office of Subsistence Management. This regulation included provisions for issuing permits to harvest up to 25 fish and one species of wildlife (deer, moose, caribou, black bear, or mountain goat only). These species were included in the regulation because permits had previously been distributed for these species. At the time of its adoption, the Board expressed the desire to evaluate the effectiveness of the regulation following its implementation (FWS 2004).

Concurrently, in 2000 the Board also adopted regulations to manage fisheries occurring in Federal public waters. As part of this activity, the Board adopted a regulation addressing the subsistence take of fish on behalf of cultural and educational programs (§____.27(e)(2); 66 FR 33745, June 25, 2001). The regulation adopted by the Board required that initial requests are considered by the Board and repeat requests are considered by Office of Subsistence Management. The Board gave the Office of Subsistence Management the authority to issue repeat permits for the harvest of up to 25 fish per program. It should be noted that this regulation was adopted even though a similar regulation (described in the previous paragraph) already existed in general provisions of Federal regulations, which was probably an oversight.

In November 2003 the Board rescinded the general provisions regulation that delegated authority to the Office of Subsistence Management to issue cultural and educational permits (§____.25(g) [§____.25(c)(4)]; 69 FR 40177, July 1, 2004). Instead of a regulation, the Board established guidelines for issuing permits for the harvest fish and wildlife for cultural and educational programs. Additionally, the Board delegated the authority to issue repeat permits to field managers.

When a permit to harvest wildlife by a cultural or educational program is issued, at the same time a letter containing guidelines for delegation is completed by the analyst at the Office of Subsistence Management and sent to the Federal field manager by the policy coordinator at the Office of Subsistence Management. The guidelines require that the field manager become familiar with the management history of the species and with the State and Federal regulations and management plan, and be up-to-date on population and harvest status information. Also, the guidelines direct the field manager to consult with the local ADF&G fish and wildlife managers.

Effects of the Proposal

If this proposal is adopted, the provision in fish regulations for issuing cultural and educational permits should be rescinded. The description of how to apply for a permit to harvest fish or wildlife as part of a cultural or educational program that is in the Federal subsistence regulation booklets published for the public will flow directly from the new regulation requested in this proposal.

If this proposal is not adopted, there will continue to be confusion among the public, fish and wildlife managers, Office of Subsistence Management staff, members of the Interagency Staff Committee, and members of the Federal Subsistence Board concerning the issuing of these permits.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP10-03 with modification to simplify the proposed regulation.

¹ The regulation located at §____.25(c)(4) in Federal regulations was later moved to §____.25(g) during a reorganization of the Federal regulations (66 FR 33745–33746, June 25, 2001).

The modified regulation should read:

General regulations

§____.25(g) Cultural/educational program permits

(1) A qualifying program must have instructors, enrolled students, minimum attendance requirements, and standards for successful completion of the course. Applications must be submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board through the Office of Subsistence Management and should be submitted 60 days prior to the earliest desired date of harvest. Harvests must be reported and any animals harvested will count against any established Federal harvest quota for the area in which it is harvested.

(2) Requests for follow-up permits must be submitted to the in-season or local manager and should be submitted 60 days prior to the earliest desired date of harvest.

Justification

The harvest of fish and wildlife by participants in cultural and educational programs is generally allowed in the Federal Subsistence Management Program regulations. Proposal WP10-03 will further clarify for fish and wildlife managers, Office of Subsistence Management staff, members of the Interagency Staff Committee, and members of the Federal Subsistence Board the cultural and educational permit regulations.

LITERATURE CITED

FWS. 2004. Staff analysis for Proposal WP04-26. Pages 178–188 in Federal Subsistence Board Meeting Materials May 18–21, 2004. Office of Subsistence Management, FWS. Anchorage, AK. 622 pages.

WP10-04 Executive Summary	
General Description	This proposal would remove Units 6, 12, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D and 20E from the areas for which the Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management has the delegated authority to open, close or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits. <i>Submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management</i>
Proposed Regulation	<p>§ __.26 (f)(3)</p> <p><i>The Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management, FWS, is authorized to open, close, or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx in Units 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D, and 20E, with a maximum season of November 1–February 28. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve lynx populations or to continue subsistence uses, only within guidelines listed within the ADF&G Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, and only after staff analysis of the potential action, consultation with the appropriate Regional Council Chairs, and Interagency Staff Committee concurrence.</i></p>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Support proposal WP10-04 with modification to delete the regulatory language found in § __.26 (f)(3), and delegate the authority to open, close, or adjust Federal lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx via a delegation of authority letter only.
Southeast Regional Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Regional Council Recommendation	
Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Regional Council Recommendation	
Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council Recommendation	
Western Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
Seward Peninsula Regional Council Recommendation	
Northwest Arctic Regional Council Recommendation	

continued on next page

WP10-04 Executive Summary (continued)	
Eastern Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
North Slope Regional Council Recommendation	Support proposal WP10-04 with modification to delete the regulatory language found in §__.26 (f)(3), and delegate the authority to open, close, or adjust Federal lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx via a delegation of authority letter only.
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS WP10-04

ISSUE

This proposal, submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management, would remove Units 6, 12, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D and 20E from the areas for which the Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management has the delegated authority to open, close or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits.

DISCUSSION

Lynx trapping seasons are adjusted annually based on recommendations determined using Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Tracking Harvest Strategy for managing lynx (FSB 2001). The Alaska Board of Game removed Units 6, 12, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D and 20E from the list of units that are managed using the lynx harvest strategy. Based on this action these units should also be eliminated from regulation.

Existing Federal Regulation

§__.26 (f)(3)

The Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management, FWS, is authorized to open, close, or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx in Units 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D, and 20E, with a maximum season of November 1–February 28. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve lynx populations or to continue subsistence uses, only within guidelines listed within the ADF&G Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, and only after staff analysis of the potential action, consultation with the appropriate Regional Council Chairs, and Interagency Staff Committee concurrence.

Proposed Federal Regulation

§__.26 (f)(3)

The Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management, FWS, is authorized to open, close, or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx in Units ~~6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D, and 20E,~~ with a maximum season of November 1–February 28. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve lynx populations or to continue subsistence uses, only within guidelines listed within the ADF&G Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, and only after staff analysis of the potential action, consultation with the appropriate Regional Council Chairs, and Interagency Staff Committee concurrence.

Regulatory History

In 1987, ADF&G adopted a Tracking Harvest Strategy for managing lynx (ADF&G 1987). This strategy calls for shortening or closing trapping seasons when lynx numbers are low, and lengthening or opening seasons when lynx are abundant. In the spring of 1992, the Alaska Board of Game adopted

maximum possible seasons for a number of management units within the State. Authority to make season adjustments within seasonal windows was delegated to ADF&G by the Alaska Board of Game. The decision to adjust the season is based upon the reported number of lynx harvested and the percentage of kittens within the total harvest.

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) endorsed the State's strategy for setting seasons on lynx and has regularly made annual adjustments to the Federal seasons to align with the State seasons. In 2001 the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB 2001) added a statewide regulatory provision and issued a Delegation of Authority Letter (**Appendix I**) so that the Office of Subsistence Management could adjust lynx trapping regulations through the use of the ADF&G tracking harvest strategy. This delegated authority requires coordination with ADF&G, consultation with the appropriate Federal land management agencies, and development of a staff analysis to evaluate the effects of the changes to the season and harvest limit and Interagency Staff Committee concurrence.

In March 2008, the Alaska Board of Game eliminated the lynx tracking strategy in the interior game management units and established permanent seasons for Unit 20. Unit 12 was previously removed from the tracking strategy and in March 2009 the Alaska Board of Game eliminated the tracking strategy for Unit 6.

Effects of the Proposal

When the Board first delegated its authority to the Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management, Units 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D, and 20E were managed by the State using the lynx strategy. Over time, however, the State has removed a number of units from its lynx tracking strategy. If this proposal is adopted it would align Federal and State regulations regarding lynx management.

There should be no impacts on wildlife populations as season and harvest limits can still be changed through the normal regulatory cycle or through special action if needed. There will be no adverse impacts to subsistence users as season and harvest limits may still be changed. This proposed change only addresses the authority delegated to the Assistant Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence Management.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support proposal WP10-04 **with modification** to delete the regulatory language found in § __.26 (f)(3), and delegate the authority to open, close, or adjust Federal lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx via a delegation of authority letter only (**Appendix II**).

The regulation would be deleted:

§ __.26 (f)(3) [*Reserved*]

The Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management, FWS, is authorized to open, close, or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx in Units 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D, and 20E, with a maximum season of November 1–February 28. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve lynx populations or to continue subsistence uses, only within guidelines listed within the ADF&G Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, and only after staff analysis of the potential action, consultation with the appropriate Regional Council Chairs, and Interagency Staff Committee concurrence.

Justification

There should be no impacts on wildlife populations as season and harvest limits can still be changed via the normal regulatory cycle or via special action if needed. There will be no impacts to subsistence users as season and harvest limits may still be changed. This proposed change is only addressing the authority delegated to the Assistant Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence Management. The current delegation is already done through a letter and the regulatory language in §__.26 (f)(3) is redundant and not needed. The draft letter found in **Appendix II** would update the delegation of authority letter making it more consistent with other delegation letters issued throughout the state by the Board.

LITERATURE CITED

ADF&G, Division of Wildlife Conservation. 1987. Report to the Board of Game on lynx management. 30 pages.

ADF&G, Division of Wildlife Conservation. 2009. Recommendations for the 2008–2009 lynx trapping seasons: Interior Alaska Tracking Harvest Strategy. 2 pages.

FSB. 2001. Transcripts of the Federal Subsistence Board proceedings, May 9, 2001. Anchorage, AK.



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

Federal Subsistence Board

3601 C Street, Suite 1030
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199



FOREST SERVICE

JUN 15 2001

FWS/OSM/C:/LynxDelegation

Mr. Thomas H. Boyd
Assistant Regional Director, Subsistence Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
3601 C Street, Suite 1030
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Boyd:

This letter delegates regulatory authority from the Federal Subsistence Board to you as Project Leader of the Office of Subsistence Management to issue special actions when necessary to assure the conservation of healthy lynx populations and to provide for subsistence uses of lynx, consistent with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, on Federal lands subject to ANILCA Title VIII.

Overview

It is the intent of the Federal Subsistence Board that lynx management by Federal officials be coordinated with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and involve Regional Advisory Council representatives to conserve healthy lynx populations while providing for subsistence uses. Federal managers are expected to cooperate with State managers and minimize disruption to resource users and existing agency programs, as agreed to under the Interim Memorandum of Agreement for Coordinated Fisheries and Wildlife Management for Subsistence Uses on Federal Public lands in Alaska.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

1. Delegation: The Project Leader of the Office of Subsistence Management is hereby delegated authority to approve special actions affecting lynx on Federal lands as outlined under **2. Scope of Delegation.**

2. Scope of Delegation: The regulatory authority hereby delegated is limited to authority to open, close, or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve lynx populations or to continue subsistence uses, only within guidelines listed within the Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, and only after staff analysis of the potential action and Staff Committee concurrence.

Mr. Thomas H. Boyd

2

All other proposed changes to codified regulations, such as customary and traditional use determinations or adjustments to method or means of take, shall be directed to the Federal Subsistence Board.

The Federal lands subject to this delegated authority are those described in the Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska. You will coordinate your decisions with all affected Federal land managers and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

3. Effective Period: This delegation of authority is effective from the date of this letter, and continues until revoked by the Federal Subsistence Board.

4. Guidelines for Delegation: You will review special action requests or situations that may require a special action and all supporting information to determine (1) if the request/situation falls within the scope of delegation, (2) if the action would be consistent with the conservation of healthy lynx populations, and (3) what the consequences of taking an action may be on potentially affected subsistence users and non-subsistence users. You will consider the management history of lynx in the affected region, current State and Federal lynx regulations and management plans, and lynx population and harvest status information. Requests not within your delegated authority will be forwarded to the Federal Subsistence Board for consideration. You will keep a record of all special action requests and their disposition.

You will immediately notify the Federal Subsistence Board and notify/consult with appropriate ADF&G managers, Regional Advisory Council members, and other affected Federal conservation unit managers concerning special actions being considered. You will issue timely decisions. Users, affected State and Federal managers, law enforcement personnel, and Regional Advisory Council representatives will be notified before the effective date/time of decisions.

5. Support Services: Administrative support for management activities will be provided by the Office of Subsistence Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

6. Authority: This delegation of authority is established pursuant to 36 CFR 242.10(d)(6) and 50 CFR 100.10(d)(6).

This delegation of authority will assure conservation of lynx populations through sound management decisions in cooperation with State managers, thereby providing for the long-term needs of the subsistence user.

Sincerely,



Mitch Demientieff, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board

Attachment: Tracking Harvest Strategy for Lynx

cc: Members of the Federal Subsistence Board

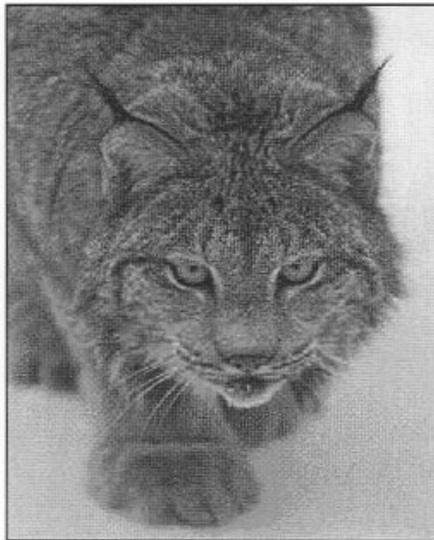
Mr. Stanley Pruszanski, Assistant Regional Director - Law Enforcement

Mr. Walter Soroka, Deputy Assistant Regional Director - Law Enforcement

Mr. Frank Rue, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Tracking Harvest Strategy for Lynx

by Howard Golden
Furbearer Biologist, Southcentral Region



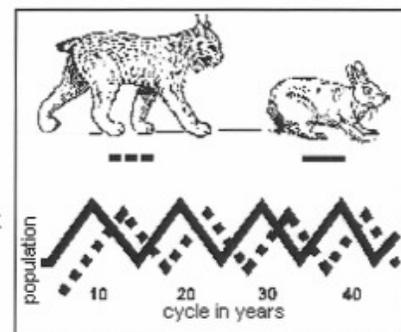
Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) populations in Alaska and much of Canada fluctuate greatly over a 9-11-year period, responding mainly to the abundance of snowshoe hares (*Lepus americanus*). Lynx population trends are closely tied with those of snowshoe hares even when other prey is available. Lynx respond directly to changes in hare abundance through the number of kittens that are produced and the survival of kittens and adults. This response by lynx follows the hare population cycles, which are remarkably synchronous in northern latitudes.

Managers of lynx harvest in these areas must be able to respond with appropriate harvest regulations to ensure sustainable harvests are maintained. A tracking harvest strategy is one method for managing the harvest of populations in a fluctuating environment. Under a tracking harvest strategy, harvest is increased while a population is growing and is decreased during a population decline. In 1987, the Alaska Department of Fish

and Game (ADF&G) and the Board of Game (BOG), which authorizes seasons and bag limits in Alaska, adopted a tracking harvest strategy to allow the dynamic management of lynx based on the ability of populations to support harvest. This was in response to concerns by lynx managers that high lynx-pelt prices would encourage excessive harvest during the declining phase of the lynx cycle.

The tracking harvest strategy applies to the road-connected areas of Interior and Southcentral Alaska that have high trapper use. Several criteria are used to determine if lynx seasons should be changed, including:

1. Percent kittens in the harvest
2. Evidence of increasing or decreasing populations of both lynx and hares
3. Period of pelt primeness
4. Potential negative effects of early seasons' orphaning kittens too young to survive
5. Possible effects of late seasons on higher harvests due to increased movement and greater vulnerability of lynx



The tracking harvest strategy for lynx was implemented in 1988. The strategy resulted in season closures in some units when lynx populations seemed to be at low levels but later allowed seasons in those units to reopen once lynx populations began to increase. The tracking harvest strategy became difficult to use because of the need to issue emergency orders to change seasons outside the usual regulatory schedule established by the BOG. This problem was resolved in 1992 when the BOG authorized ADF&G to

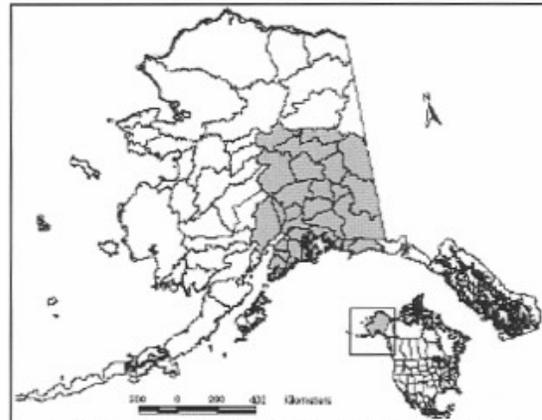
Lynx Tracking Harvest Strategy

Page 2 of 2

change season lengths within the broad seasons of 1 November-28 February in Interior game management units and 10 November-28 February in Southcentral units. ADF&G is not authorized to modify bag limits under this plan because that is a BOG allocation prerogative. There is a no-limit bag for lynx trapping throughout most of the state.

Every spring ADF&G biologists analyze data collected over winter during the trapping season to determine the most appropriate lynx seasons for the next winter. Biologists use a variety of tools to make their decisions. These tools include:

1. Track counts in snow to monitor the relative abundance of lynx and snowshoe hares
2. Pelt measurements to estimate the proportion of kittens in the harvest
3. Biological measurements from lynx carcasses purchased from trappers
4. Harvest data to determine where and how many lynx were trapped
5. Reports from trappers to get their on-the-ground observations
6. Other things like weather and snow conditions and pelt prices



Tracking harvest strategy area (shaded) and Game Management Unit boundaries in Alaska.

The new seasons may be long during the high years in a population cycle, closed during a low period, or somewhere in between during the middle years.

LynxTrak: A Tool for Lynx Harvest Managers



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Last Modified 08/10/2001 14:02:00

LynxTrak: A Tool for Lynx Harvest Managers

by Howard Golden
Furbearer Biologist, Southcentral Region



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To aid lynx managers achieve sustainable harvest objectives under the tracking harvest strategy, I developed a rule-based model, called **LynxTrak**, as a decision-making tool. The advantage of the rule-based model is that it provides a documented, logical structure to the decision-making process that is both intuitive and experiential. Such models can process quantitative data but are most useful when coping with qualitative information to reach decisions. Rule-based models build on what is known using available literature, in-house databases, and the collective knowledge of experts. These types of models have become known as knowledge-based systems or expert systems. Expert systems are now widely used to address many situations in natural resource management, such as management of rangelands and lake systems, prescribed burning, and population modeling. The knowledge base for **LynxTrak** incorporates material from pertinent literature, lynx researchers, managers, and trappers in Alaska and Canada, and from Alaskan

lynx harvest data gathered through pelt sealing.

Expert systems are used with a computer program shell to incorporate the user's experience and available information into a decision tree, which is the foundation of the rule-based model. Designers of a model first establish all potential decisions or goals that could reasonably be made regarding a particular situation. Next, questions using qualitative variables are formulated about the specific conditions or situations that may exist. Finally, a set of rules is devised as if-then scenarios that direct the user toward an informed, logical, and consistent decision. This modeling approach can provide the user with a protocol that, because it is fully documented, ensures accountability. Lynx harvest managers in southcentral Alaska have been using the model for the last few years.



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Contact: Howard Golden (mailto:%20howard_golden@fishgame.state.ak.us)

Division Webmaster: <mailto:%20wcweb@fishgame.state.ak.us>

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Last Modified 08/10/2001 14:02:14

Mr. Peter J. Probasco
Assistant Regional Director, Subsistence Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Probasco:

This letter delegates regulatory authority from the Federal Subsistence Board to you as Project Leader of the Office of Subsistence Management to take action when necessary to assure the conservation of healthy lynx populations and to provide for subsistence uses of lynx, consistent with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, on Federal lands subject to ANILCA Title VIII. This supersedes and replaces the original delegation letter dated June 15, 2001.

Overview

It is the intent of the Federal Subsistence Board that lynx management by Federal officials be coordinated with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and involve Regional Advisory Council representatives to conserve healthy populations while providing for subsistence uses. Federal managers are expected to cooperate with State managers and minimize disruption to resource users and existing agency programs, as agreed to under the Memorandum of Understanding for Coordinated Fisheries and Wildlife Management for Subsistence Uses on Federal Public lands in Alaska (December 18, 2008).

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

1. Delegation: The Project Leader of the Office of Subsistence Management is hereby delegated authority to issue special action regulations affecting lynx on Federal lands as outlined under **2. Scope of Delegation.**

2. Scope of Delegation: The regulatory authority hereby delegated is limited to authority to open, close or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve lynx populations or to continue subsistence uses, only within guidelines listed within the Lynx Harvest Management Strategy.

All other proposed changes to codified regulations, such as customary and traditional use determinations or adjustments to method or means of take, shall be directed to the Federal Subsistence Board.

The Federal lands subject to this delegated authority are those described in the Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska. You will coordinate your decisions with all affected Federal land managers and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

3. Effective Period: This delegation of authority is effective from the date of this letter, and continues until revoked by the Federal Subsistence Board.

4. Guidelines for Delegation: You will become familiar with the management history of lynx in the region, with the current State and Federal regulations and management plans, and be up-to-date on population and harvest status information. You will review situations that may require action and all supporting information to determine (1) if the request/situation falls within the scope of authority, (2) if significant conservation problems or subsistence harvest concerns are indicated, and (3) what the consequences of taking an action may be on potentially affected subsistence users and non-subsistence users. Requests not within your delegated authority will be forwarded to the Federal Subsistence Board for consideration. You will keep a record of all special action requests and their disposition.

You will immediately notify the Federal Subsistence Board and notify/consult with local ADF&G managers, Regional Advisory Council members, and other affected Federal conservation unit managers concerning actions being considered. You will issue timely decisions. Users, affected State and Federal managers, law enforcement personnel, and Regional Advisory Council representatives will be notified before the effective date/time of decisions.

5. Support Services: Administrative support for management activities will be provided by the Office of Subsistence Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

6. Authority: This delegation of authority is established pursuant to 36 CFR 242.10(d)(6) and 50 CFR 100.10(d)(6).

This delegation of authority will assure conservation of lynx populations through sound management decisions in cooperation with State managers, thereby providing for the long-term needs of the subsistence user.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Fleagle, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board

cc:

Members of the Federal Subsistence Board
Interagency Staff Committee
Tina Cunning, ADF&G

WP10-05 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP10-05 seeks to update, clarify, and simplify the regulations regarding accumulation of harvest limits for both fish and wildlife. <i>Submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management</i>
Proposed Regulation	<p>§ __.25(c) <i>Harvest Limits.</i></p> <p>(1) <i>Harvest limits authorized by this section and harvest limits established in State regulations may not be accumulated, unless specified otherwise in §§ __.26 or __.27 or __.28.</i></p> <p>(2) ****</p> <p>(3) <i>A harvest limit may applies apply to the number of fish, wildlife, or shellfish that can be taken daily, seasonally and/or during a regulatory year or held in possession.; however, harvest limits for grouse (in some Units), ptarmigan, and caribou (in some Units), are regulated by the number that may be taken per day. Harvest limits of grouse, and ptarmigan are also regulated and the number that can be held in possession.</i></p>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Support
Southeast Regional Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Regional Council Recommendation	
Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Regional Council Recommendation	
Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council Recommendation	
Western Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
Seward Peninsula Regional Council Recommendation	
Northwest Arctic Regional Council Recommendation	
Eastern Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
North Slope Regional Council Recommendation	Support

continued on next page

WP10-05 Executive Summary (continued)	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS WP10-05

ISSUES

Proposal WP10-05, submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management, seeks to update, clarify, and simplify the regulations regarding accumulation of harvest limits for both fish and wildlife.

DISCUSSION

A prohibition against accumulating Federal and State harvest limits has been included in the statewide general Federal subsistence regulations since 1990 (§__.25(c)(1)). Wording in Section __.25(c)(3) dates back to 1994; this section identifies the species for which harvest limits apply. There is a need to update both Sections __.25(c)(1) and (3). While the Board has addressed a number of area specific proposals concerning the accumulation of harvest limits over the years, these two sections of the general regulations have not been updated to reflect changes to the unit and area specific regulations; the current proposal addresses those inconsistencies.

Existing Federal Regulations

Statewide – Subsistence taking of fish, wildlife, and shellfish: general regulations

§__.25(c) *Harvest Limits.*

(1) *Harvest limits authorized by this section and harvest limits established in State regulations may not be accumulated.*

(2)****

(3) *A harvest limit applies to the number of fish, wildlife, or shellfish that can be taken during a regulatory year; however, harvest limits for grouse, ptarmigan, and caribou (in some Units) are regulated by the number that may be taken per day. Harvest limits of grouse and ptarmigan are also regulated by the number that can be held in possession.*

Proposed Federal Regulations

Statewide – Subsistence taking of fish, wildlife, and shellfish: general regulations

§__.25(c) *Harvest Limits.*

(1) *Harvest limits authorized by this section and harvest limits established in State regulations may not be accumulated, **unless specified otherwise in §§__.26 or __.27 or __.28.***

(2)****

(3) *A harvest limit **may applies apply** to the number of fish, wildlife, or shellfish that can be taken **daily, seasonally and/or** during a regulatory year **or held in possession.** ~~; however, harvest limits for grouse (in some Units), ptarmigan, and caribou (in some Units), are regulated by the number~~*

that may be taken per day. Harvest limits of, grouse, and ptarmigan are also regulated and the number that can be held in possession.

Existing State Regulations

In State hunting regulations a harvest (bag) limit applies to a regulatory year unless otherwise specified, and includes animals taken for any purpose, including for subsistence. State hunting regulations provide daily limits for wolves (all or part of Units 9, 10, 13, 17 and 19); caribou (all or part of Units 21, 22, 23, 24 and 26); coyote (Units 6–17, 19 and 20); grouse (1–7, 9, 11–26); hare (all or part of Units 1–5 and 14) and ptarmigan (Units 1–26).

State regulations do not prohibit the accumulation of harvest limits taken in State sport, personal use, and subsistence fisheries across most of Alaska (Kotzebue, Norton Sound-Port Clarence, Yukon-Northern, Kuskokwim, Bristol Bay, Aleutian Islands, Alaska Peninsula, Chignik, Kodiak, Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound areas). In the Southeast Area, the State prohibits fishers from possessing salmon taken in the sport fishery on the same day as salmon taken in either subsistence or personal use fisheries (5 AAC 01.745(b); 5 AAC 77.682(e)). In the Yakutat Area, the State prohibits possession of personal use-taken and sport-taken salmon on the same day (5 AAC 77.628(f)).

In State subsistence fish regulations, ten areas (Norton Sound-Port Clarence, Yukon-Northern, Bristol Bay, Aleutian Islands, Alaska Peninsula, Chignik, Kodiak, Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound and Southeast (5 AAC 01)) have annual harvest limits for some species of freshwater fish. The annual subsistence harvest limits specified in the Aleutian Islands, Chignik and Kodiak areas are the same as those in Federal subsistence regulations and the subsistence fisheries in these three areas are administered using State permits. There is no State subsistence daily, possession or annual harvest limit regulations for freshwater fisheries in two areas (Kotzebue and Yakutat). Only one area (Southeast Alaska) has a specific State subsistence regulatory daily and possession limit (for one species at one location; 5 AAC 01.760). Most State sport fish harvest regulations are based on daily and possession limits (5 AAC 47-75).

Extent of Federal Public Lands and Waters

This proposal would apply to the entire state. Federal public lands comprise approximately 65% of Alaska and consist of 23% Bureau of Land Management, 15% National Park Service, 21% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and 6% U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service lands.

Regulatory History

Accumulating Federal and State harvest limits

The current wording in Section __.25(c)(1) that addresses the prohibition against accumulating Federal and State harvest limits dates back to 1990. Based on requests from subsistence users, ADF&G, and the review and recommendations of the Southcentral Alaska and Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) supported several exemptions to and clarification of the general prohibition against accumulation of harvest limits in Section __.25(c)(1).

In 2004, the Board authorized accumulation of subsistence harvest limits for salmon in the Copper River drainage upstream from Haley Creek with harvest limits for salmon authorized under State of Alaska sport fishing regulations (27(i)(11)(B)). In 2005, the Board also authorized the accumulation of Federal subsistence fish annual harvest limits with State sport fishing limits for the Southeast Alaska area (27(i)(13)(vii)).

In 2006, the Board allowed accumulation of Federal subsistence fishing harvest limits with State of Alaska sport fishing harvest limits within the Chugach National Forest and in the Copper River drainage downstream from Haley Creek provided that the accumulation of fishing harvest limits would not occur in the same day (27(i)(11)(A)).

In 2009, the Board clarified regulations by stipulating that a subsistence fisher may not accumulate Federal subsistence harvest limits authorized for Southeast Alaska Area with any harvest limits authorized under any State of Alaska fishery with the following exceptions: annual and seasonal Federal subsistence harvest limits may be accumulated with State sport fishing harvest limits provided that accumulation of harvest limits does not occur during the same day (27(i)(13)(vii)). That year, the Board further clarified that fishers may not possess subsistence taken and sport taken fish of a given species on the same day in the Yakutat (27(i)(12)(viii)) and Southeast Alaska (27(i)(13)(xi)) Areas.

Current Federal subsistence management regulations that address applicability for subsistence take of wildlife (§__26) provide the following clarification concerning accumulation of harvest limits (§__26(e)(1)):

Except as specified in paragraphs (e)(2) or (f)(1) of this section, or as otherwise provided, you may not take a species of wildlife in any unit, or portion of a unit, if your total take of that species already obtained anywhere in the State under Federal and State regulations equals or exceeds the harvest limit in that unit.

Sections __26(e)(2) and (f)(1) address established community harvest limit allowances and an allowance for accumulating hunting and trapping harvest limits.

The regulations that address applicability for subsistence taking of fish (§__27) provides the following clarification concerning accumulation of harvest limits:

(§__27(a)(2)) The harvest limit specified in this section for a subsistence season for a species and the State harvest limit set for a State season for the same species are not cumulative, except as modified by regulations in §__27(i). This means that if you have taken the harvest limit for a particular species under a subsistence season specified in this section, you may not, after that, take any additional fish of that species under any other harvest limit specified for a State season.

The regulations that address applicability for subsistence taking of shellfish (§__28) provides the following clarification concerning accumulation of harvest limits:

(§__28(d)(1)) The harvest limit specified in this section for a subsistence season for a species and the State harvest limit set for a State season for the same species are not cumulative. This means that if you have taken the harvest limit for a particular species under a subsistence season specified in this section, you may not, after that, take any additional shellfish of that species under any other harvest limit specified for a State season.

Application of harvest limits

The current wording in Section __25(c)(3) dates back to 1994 and specifies that harvest limits apply to “regulatory year”, with the exception of ptarmigan, and in some units for grouse and caribou.

Current Federal hunting regulations (§__26) include daily limits for beaver (Unit 9 and 17), caribou (all or part of Units 21–24 and 26); hare (all or part of Units 1–5 and 14); and wolf (part of Unit 19). There

are daily and possession limits for grouse (all or part of Units 1–7, 9 and 11–25); ptarmigan (Units 1–26); and beaver (all or part of Units 7, 11, 13 and 25).

When Federal subsistence management regulations for fish (§ __.27) were first implemented on October 1, 1999, there were no specified daily or possession limits for fish in Federal regulations except on the Kenai Peninsula. Since that time, the Federal Subsistence Board has established daily and/or possession limits for specific fish species and locations in 5 of 13 fishery management areas. Federal regulatory provisions for daily harvest and/or possession limits for specific species of fish were first established in the Southeast Area in 2001, the Yukon-Northern and Cook Inlet areas in 2002, the Bristol Bay Area in 2003, and the Yakutat Area in 2006.

Current Federal subsistence management regulations include daily and/or possession limits for sockeye and coho salmon, steelhead trout, brook trout, grayling, Dolly Varden, cutthroat trout, and rainbow trout in all or parts of the Southeast Area. Yakutat Area regulations include a daily harvest and possession limit for Dolly Varden and address a daily limit for steelhead trout.

In parts of the Cook Inlet Area there are specific daily harvest and possession limits in Federal regulations for Chinook, sockeye, coho and pink salmon; Dolly Varden/Arctic char; lake trout and rainbow/steelhead trout. In other parts of the Cook Inlet Area, Federal subsistence regulations specify that the daily harvest and possession limits for fish are the same as those in Alaska sport fishing regulations. In a November 24, 2008 letter to OSM, Federal Subsistence Board Chairman Fleagle clarified that the Board's intent was that Federal subsistence and State sport harvest limit for fish not be accumulated for the Kasilof and Kenai river drainages and vicinity.

Federal subsistence management regulations also specify daily and possession limits for rainbow trout in the Bristol Bay Area and daily and possession limits for grayling in a part of the Yukon-Northern Area. There are no Federal daily or possession limits for fish in the Kotzebue, Norton Sound-Port Clarence, Kuskokwim, Aleutian Islands, Alaska Peninsula, Chignik, Kodiak, or Prince William Sound areas. Federal subsistence management regulations specify annual harvest limits for fish species and locations in seven areas (Aleutian Islands, Alaska Peninsula, Chignik, Kodiak, Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound, and Southeast). There are no daily, possession or annual limits for fish under Federal subsistence management regulations in three areas (Kotzebue, Norton Sound-Port Clarence, and Kuskokwim).

Shellfish regulations (§ __.28) include daily and possession limits as well. There are daily limits for shellfish in Bering Sea Area. There are daily and/or possession limits for shellfish in the Cook Inlet, Kodiak, and Alaska Peninsula-Aleutian Islands Areas.

Effects of the Proposal

Proposal WP10-05 does not affect fish and wildlife populations, subsistence uses or other uses (i.e., sport/recreational or commercial). Rather, the proposal seeks to update, clarify, and simplify Sections __.25(c) (1) and (3), all of which reference accumulation of harvest limits. Section __.25(c)(1) dates back to 1990 and Section __.25(c)(3) dates back to 1994. The proposed wording changes retain the general prohibition of accumulation of Federal and State harvest limits, and points to unit and area specific regulations for details and exceptions. Unit and area specific regulations currently provide daily, daily and possession, or possession limits for ptarmigan, grouse, caribou, wolf, hare, beaver, fish and shellfish. This proposal does not change any unit or area specific Federal subsistence regulations concerning accumulation of harvest limits or the timeframe (daily, seasonal or regulatory year) for harvest limits.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP10-05.

Justification

The general regulations concerning accumulation of harvest limits need to be updated to reflect Board action over the years. The Board has addressed a number of proposals concerning accumulation of harvest limits; the approved exceptions are reflected within the Federal hunting and trapping (§__.26), fishing (§__.27), and shellfish (§__.28) regulations. The changes to the general regulations proposed herein recognize all of the previously approved exceptions. This proposal does not affect fish and wildlife populations, subsistence users or other users. Given the number of species, areas and units affected, and the changes that may occur in the future, it is appropriate to use more general wording in these general regulations.

WP10-42 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP10-42 requests the closure of the Federal season for caribou in Unit 10 (Unimak Island) during the fall and winter seasons due to decreased population and low productivity of the caribou herd. <i>Submitted by the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Manager and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game</i>
Proposed Regulation	Unit 10 — Unimak Island only — Caribou <i>Two caribou by Federal registration permit</i> No Federal open season <i>Aug. 1—Sept. 30</i> <i>Nov. 15—Mar. 31</i>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Support
Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS WP10-42

ISSUES

Proposal WP10-42, submitted by the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Manager and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, requests the closure of the Federal season for caribou in Unit 10 (Unimak Island) during the fall and winter seasons due to decreased population and low productivity of the caribou herd.

DISCUSSION

The Unimak Island Caribou Herd has shown a marked decrease in both population and calf recruitment over the past four years. The intent of this proposal is to adopt into Federal regulation the actions taken in Emergency Special Action WSA09-06 and Temporary Special Action WSA 09-07 to provide an opportunity for the caribou population to recover by eliminating additional mortality caused by harvest.

Existing Federal Regulation

Unit 10 — Unimak Island only — Caribou

Two caribou by Federal registration permit

Aug. 1 – Sept. 30

Nov. 15 – Mar. 31

Proposed Federal Regulation

Unit 10 — Unimak Island only — Caribou

Two caribou by Federal registration permit

No Federal open season

Aug. 1 – Sept. 30

Nov. 15 – Mar. 31

Existing State Regulation

Unit 10 — Umnak and Unimak Island — Caribou

Residents and non-residents

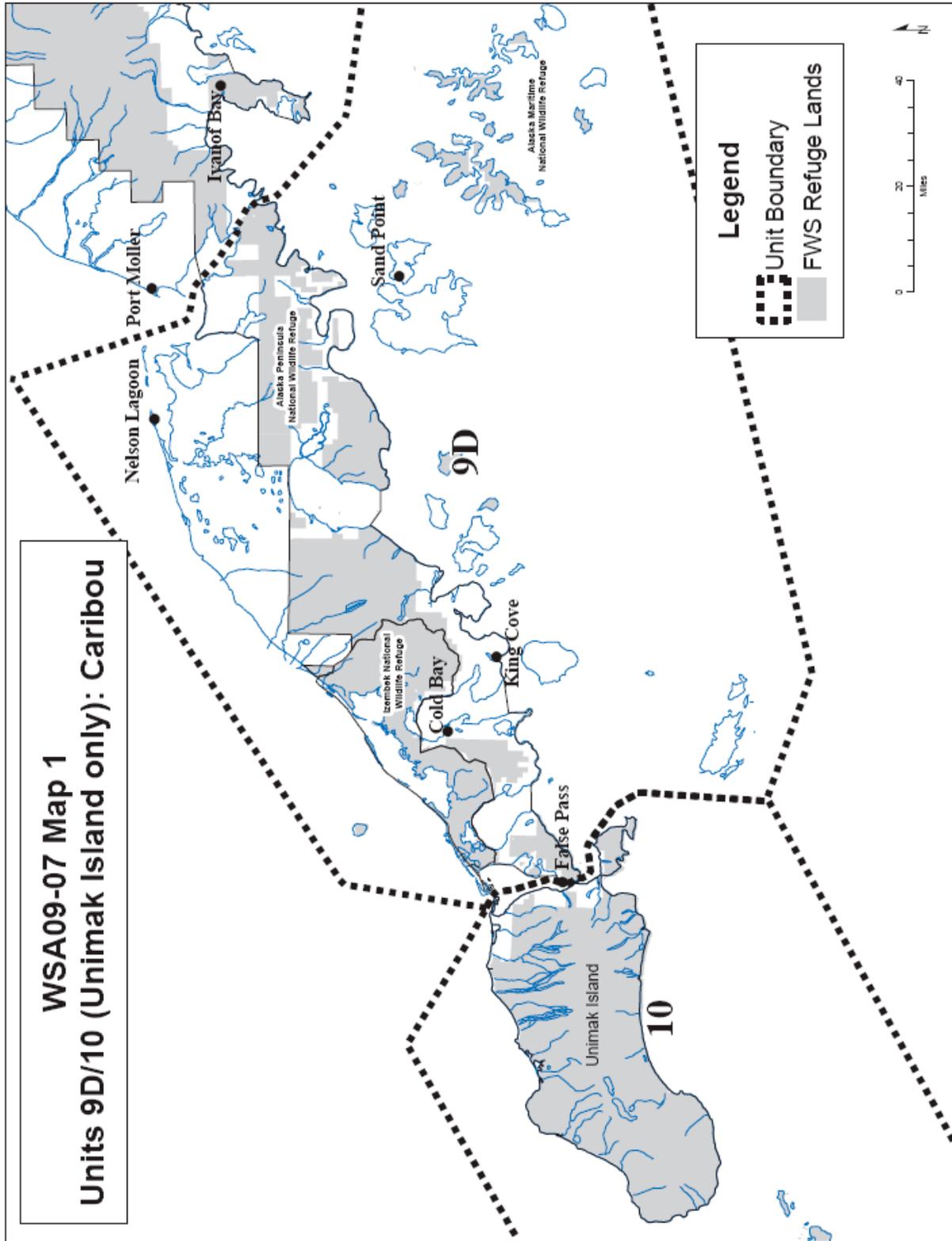
No open season

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 90% of Unit 10 (Unimak Island) and are managed by the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) (**Map 1**).

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Residents of False Pass, King Cove, Akutan, and Sand Point have a positive customary and traditional use determination for caribou in Unit 10 (Unimak Island).



Regulatory History

The Unimak Island Caribou Herd showed a precipitous decline in population in the early 1980s and by the early 1990's required a Federal management response. In response to this decline, caribou harvest in Unit 10 (Unimak Island) was closed to non-Federally qualified subsistence users in 1991. In 1993, the herd continued to decline and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) closed the State harvest by Emergency Order and the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) issued Special Action SA93-01 to close Units 9D and 10 (Unimak Island) to all caribou harvest.

In 1997, the Board approved Special Action SA97-01 to open a caribou season in Units 9D and 10, after caribou surveys indicated there was a sufficient increase in bulls to allow a subsistence harvest on Federal public lands. Special Action SA98-05 established a subsistence hunt via registration permit and SA99-04 authorized caribou harvest for Sept. 1 – Mar. 31 for 1 caribou and allowed for a designated hunter provision. In 2000, the Board adopted Proposal WP00-29 establishing a two caribou harvest limit by Federal registration permit in Unit 10 during the fall season of Aug. 1 – Sept. 30 and the winter season from Nov. 15, 2003– Mar. 31, 2004. The State general season was reopened in 2001 to allow residents to harvest one caribou from Aug. 10 – Sept. 30 or Nov. 15 – Mar. 31 and allowed nonresidents one caribou from Sept. 1 – Sept. 30 (Butler 2005).

In 2003, the Board authorized Special Action WSA03-08 increasing the caribou harvest limit from 2 to 4 caribou for Unit 10 (Unimak Island) during the fall season of Aug. 1 – Sept. 30, 2003. Temporary Special Action (WSA03-10) was approved by the Board to extend the increased harvest limit into the winter season from Nov. 15, 2003 to Mar. 31, 2004.

In 2004, Proposal WP04-40 (FWS 2004) was adopted by the Board increasing the harvest number from 2 caribou to 4 caribou for Unit 10 (Unimak Island).

In 2008, the Board adopted Proposal WP08-25 (FWS 2008a) decreasing the harvest number from 4 to 2 caribou for Unit 10 (Unimak Island) in response to the caribou population decrease.

The Alaska Board of Game closed all hunting for caribou on Unimak Island (Unit 10) at its February 27 – March 9, 2009 meeting (State Proposal 54). The Federal Subsistence Board authorized Emergency Special Action WSA09-06 on July 1, 2009, closing the fall caribou season from Aug. 1 through Sept. 29 and authorized Temporary Special Action WSA09-07 on November 10, 2009 to close the remainder of the season.

Biological Background

Caribou on Unimak Island and the Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd (SAPCH; Unit 9D) were originally managed as a single population. However, the caribou on Unimak Island displayed a fidelity to calving grounds on the island and subsequent genetic sampling of the herds showed enough distinction to classify them as two different herds. Management objectives were not defined for the SAPCH until 2007, and to date, the Unimak Island Caribou Herd has no management plan. In recent years, no significant dispersal between the Unimak Island Caribou Herd and the SAPCH has been documented. The Unimak Island Herd reached a peak in 1975 with an estimated population of 5000 animals and then decreased to 300 animals by the early 1980s. Calf recruitment into the population is critical for population growth to keep pace with the mortality rate of adults. In 1993, caribou harvesting in Unit 10 was closed in response to the declining population. By 1997, the population had shown an increase in the bull:cow ratio and the Board approved Special Action SA97-01 to open a caribou season in Units 9D and 10 after caribou surveys indicated there was a sufficient increase in bulls to allow a subsistence harvest on Federal public

lands. The population remained stable, with approximately 1,000 animals, until 2005 when population composition surveys suggested a decline had begun.

In 2005, caribou population composition surveys (**Table 1**) estimated 730 caribou with ratio of 45 bulls:100 cows, with large bulls making up 39% of all bulls. However, during fall composition surveys in 2008, biologists estimated 9 bulls:100 cows. The 2008 estimate is a significant decrease from the 2007 estimate of 31 bulls:100 cows (Butler 2008) and represents a 71% decrease in the bull:cow sex ratio. Caribou have a polygynous mating system in which a single male is capable of inseminating many females, however research has shown that there is a sex-ratio threshold in caribou (sex ratio ≤ 0.08), as well as other ungulates, below which fecundity may collapse (Bergerud 1974). The 2008 estimate of 9 bulls:100 cows is precipitously close to this threshold.

In 2008, the ratio of 7 calves:100 cows was similar to ratios observed in 2005 and 2007 but was significantly lower than previous surveys in 2000 and 2002 that had ratios of 26 calves:100 cows. Calf recruitment from 2005–2008 was not sufficient to offset adult mortality and helps to explain the overall decreasing population trend for the Unimak Island Herd. In addition, immigration from the SAPCH which is speculated to already not occur, is less likely as SAPCH calf recruitment is also at its lowest levels since 2000 (6 calves:100 cows) (Butler 2007).

In October 2009, a fall composition survey was completed on Unimak Island and showed further reduction in bull:cow ratios (5 Bulls:100 cows) and calf: cow ratios (3 calves:100 cows) from the fall 2008 composition survey (Butler 2009, pers. comm.).

The results of the population composition surveys from 2005–2009 suggest a strong population decline for the Unimak Island Caribou Herd. Specific limiting factors causing the low calf recruitment and subsequent population decline are not known. Valkenburg et al. (2001) noted that lichen biomass is low on the Alaska Peninsula due to historically sustained grazing by caribou, although Butler (2007) acknowledged that habitat assessment data has not been available in recent years. However, the pregnancy rate for Unimak caribou indicates that the herd is in good nutritional condition in this area (Butler 2009, pers. comm.), but calf recruitment still remains low (Butler 2008). Valkenburg et al. (2001) stated that, typically, predation is an important limiting factor to caribou populations, and at that time, predation on the Unimak Island Herd did not seem high enough to be the sole contributor to the population decline. However, this may have changed since 2001 and more recent studies of calf predation on the Unimak Island Herd need to be done (Butler 2009, pers. comm.). In 1999, the prevalence of pneumonia was noted in NAPCH calves, but not in SAPCH calves (Valdenburg et al. 2001) and no recent disease research has been done on Unimak Island. Access to Unimak Island is difficult; therefore recent research has not been done to determine if disease, predation, or any other specific limiting factor is responsible for the decline in the Unimak Island Caribou Herd.

Management Direction

In 2007, ADF&G revised the Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd Operational Plan (Draft) to reflect the separation of the SAPCH and the Unimak Caribou Herd (ADF&G and FWS 2007). To date, no formal management objectives have been defined by ADF&G for the Unimak Island Caribou Herd due to the difficult logistics to access the island to provide data for management purposes. General ADF&G management objectives are to keep the Unimak Herd at 1,000 to 1,500 animals due to limited habitat on the island. In lieu of a formal management plan for the Unimak Herd, management objectives for the SAPCH, as outlined in the 2007 Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd Operational Draft Plan, may provide a framework for the population management objectives for the Unimak Herd. The SAPCH draft management plan is to sustain a total population of 3,000–3,500 animals, maintain a fall bull:cow ratio of

Table 1. Unimak caribou herd (uch) composition surveys and population estimates, 2000–2008.

Regulatory Year	Bulls:100 cows	Calves: 100 cows	% Calves	% Cows	% Bulls	Small bulls (% of bulls)	Medium bulls (% of bulls)	Large bulls (% of bulls)	Sample size	Population counts
2000	40	21	13	62	25	34	32	33	406	983 ^a
2002	54	31	17	54	29	50	22	29	392	1262 ^b
2004										1006 ^b
2005	45	7	5	66	29	24	37	39	730	1009 ^b
2006										806 ^b
2007	31	6	4	73	23	28	34	38	433	
2008	9	6	5	86	9	33	33	33	260	

^a Count by Rod Schuh, registered guide, in May

^b Winter count by Izembek National Wildlife Refuge staff

Source: Butler (2008)

20–40:100, and discontinue harvest when the SAPCH is below 875 and has been in a period of decline for three years (ADF&G and FWS 2007). The Federal caribou season was closed in Unit 9D initially by Emergency and Temporary Special Actions in 2007 (WSA 07-03 and WSA 07-04). In 2008, WP08-26 was adopted by the Federal Subsistence Board closing the Unit 9 caribou season (FWS 2008b).

Harvest History

Since 2001, the State has had a general hunt in Unit 10 (Unimak Island) for one caribou with seasons of Sept. 1 –Sept. 30 for nonresidents and Aug. 10–Sept. 30 and Nov. 15–Mar. 31 for residents. The Unimak Caribou harvest has averaged 16 caribou annually from 2001–2007 (**Table 2**). Residents have harvested an average of 3 caribou and non-residents have averaged a harvest of 11 caribou annually from 2001–2005 (**Table 3**).

Table 2. Comparison of Federal and State reported Unimak Island caribou harvest in Unit 10, 2001–2007.

Year	Federal Registration Permits (OSM database)			State Harvest Tickets (Table 2) (ADF& G database)			Total Reported Harvest
	Permits Issued	Bulls Harvested	Cows Harvested	Harvest Reports	Bulls Harvested	Cows Harvested	
	2001	0	0	0	25	19	
2002	0	0	0	48	11	1, 1 unk	13
2003	0	0	0	47	10	3 unk	13
2004	0	0	0	59	15	6 unk	21
2005	0	0	0	158	16	1 unk	17
2006	0	0	0	365	10	1, 3 unk	14
2007	16	2	0	289	13	n/a	15

Source: ADF&G 2009 and FWS (2009)

Note: Unimak Island harvest only; these numbers do not include Adak harvest from Unit 10.

Prior to 2007, few Federal registration permits (RC101) were issued to hunt caribou on Unimak Island. However, in 2007, 16 permits were issued to hunt under the Federal registration hunt (RC101) and 2 caribou were reported being harvested (Table 2). The increase in permits is most likely due to the closure of caribou harvest in Unit 9D for both Federal and State seasons in regulatory year 2007/08 (FWS 2008b). However, despite the increase in permits issued in 2007, 50% (8 of 16) reported that they did not hunt, 25% reported they did hunt (2 of 8), and the remaining six permittees did not submit a hunting report (FWS 2009). In 2007, the Unimak Caribou Herd was also exhibiting signs of population decline and a low calf:cow ratio. Therefore, in 2008 the Board decreased the harvest limit for the Federal subsistence hunt from four to two caribou (FWS 2008a). Harvest under the State general hunt has been primarily bulls since 2001 with total harvest numbers remaining below 21 animals annually (**Table 2**). In 2009, the Alaska Board of Game closed the caribou season on Unimak Island due to a low population estimate (State Proposal 54).

Effects of the Special Action

If this proposal is adopted, the Federal caribou hunting season for Unit 10 would be closed and opportunity would be suspended for Federally qualified subsistence users to harvest caribou in Unit

Table 3. Unimak caribou annual hunter residency and success, 2001–2005.

Regulatory Year	Successful				Unsuccessful				Total Hunters ^b
	Local Resident	Nonlocal Resident	Nonresident	Total ^b (%)	Local Resident ^a	Nonlocal Resident	Nonresident	Total (%)	
2001-02	0	5	14	19 (95)	0	1	0	1 (5)	20
2002-03	0	5	7	12 (92)	0	1	0	1 (8)	13
2003-04	0	1	9	10 (77)	0	2	1	3 (23)	13
2004-05	0	2	12	15 (71)	0	5	1	6 (29)	21
2005-06	0	4	11	15 (94)	0	0	1	1 (6)	16

^a Local residents are residents of Unimak Island

^b Includes hunters of unknown residency

Source: Butler (2007)

10 for 2010–2012. However, there are conservation concerns for this herd. The Unimak Island caribou population is decreasing and there has been little calf recruitment within the population for the past several years. Any harvest would have detrimental effects on the caribou herd and eventually on subsistence users, by driving the population of the herd to the point where recovery is more difficult. Both the bull:cow and calf:cow ratios are extremely low and do not support a continued harvest at this time.

If the caribou seasons are closed in Unit 10, Federal and State regulations would be aligned thereby eliminating harvest mortality and allowing an opportunity for the Unimak Island caribou herd to recover. Historically, Federal subsistence harvest has been low, with only 2 bulls reported harvested in total from 2001 to 2007 (**Table 2**). Closure of Unit 10 caribou harvest could adversely affect Federally qualified subsistence users by eliminating all harvest of caribou under either Federal or State regulations.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP10-42

Justification

The results of the population composition surveys from 2005–2009 suggest a population decline for the Unimak Island Caribou Herd due to low calf recruitment. Calf recruitment is critical for population growth to keep pace with the mortality rate of adults. Caribou have a lower reproductive potential due to females not typically producing young until over two years of age and then having only one calf per year. The loss of an adult caribou to the population creates an additional challenge for population growth by removing viable breeding animals from the population. There is also a lag effect in waiting for female calves to reach sexual maturity, if they survive to adulthood.

Both the bull:cow and calf:cow ratios are extremely low and a cause for concern for conservation of the herd. Eliminating the harvest opportunity would allow the herd to grow and would provide for subsistence harvests in the future. The closure of the harvest for the Unimak Herd in 1993 allowed the herd to rebound and subsistence harvest for bulls was reopened in 1997 after surveys showed a surplus of bulls in the Unimak Island Caribou Herd. Closure of the harvest of caribou on Unimak Island is justified by the decline of the population, low bull: cow ratios, and low calf recruitment.

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WP10-43/44 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposals WP10-43 and -44 seek to restrict wolf hunting and trapping in Unit 10 where wolves do not occur. <i>Submitted by the Alaska Wildlife Alliance</i>
Proposed Regulation	<p>Unit 10 — Wolf Hunting <i>Unit 10 where wolves occur</i> 5 Wolves <i>Aug. 10–April 30</i></p> <p>Unit 10 remainder 5 Wolves <i>No Federal open season</i> <i>Aug. 10–April 30</i></p>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Neutral
Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	Oppose
Written Public Comments	1 Oppose

**DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP10-43 AND -44**

ISSUES

Proposals WP10-43 and -44, submitted by the Alaska Wildlife Alliance, seek to restrict wolf hunting and trapping in Unit 10 where wolves do not occur.

DISCUSSION

Proposal WP10-43 requests that wolf hunting be closed in that portion of Unit 10 where wolves do not occur. Proposal WP10-44 requests that the wolf trapping season be closed in that portion of Unit 10 where wolves do not occur.

Existing Federal Regulations

Unit 10 — Wolf Hunting

5 Wolves

Aug. 10–April 30

Units 10 — Wolf Trapping

No limit

Nov. 10–Mar. 31

Proposed Federal Regulations

Proposal WP10-43:

Unit 10 — Wolf Hunting

Unit 10 where wolves occur

5 Wolves

Aug. 10–April 30

Unit 10 remainder

~~*5 Wolves*~~

~~*No Federal open season*~~

~~*Aug. 10–April 30*~~

Proposal WP10-44:

Unit 10—Wolf Trapping

Unit 10 where wolves occur

No limit

Nov. 10–Mar. 31

Unit 10 remainder

~~*No limit*~~

~~*No Federal open season*~~

~~*Nov. 10–April 30*~~

Existing State Regulations

Unit 10— Wolf Hunting

10 Wolves

Aug. 10–May 25

Units 10-Wolf Trapping

No limit

Nov. 10–Mar. 31

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 59% of Unit 10 and consist of 100% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) land (see Unit 10 Map). All of the FWS land is part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge.

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Rural residents of Units 6, 9, 10 (Unimak Island only), 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and Chickaloon have a positive customary and traditional use determination to harvest wolves in Unit 10.

Regulatory History

Since 1990, the Federal subsistence hunting season for wolves in Unit 10 has been August 10 to April 30. Between 1990 and 1994 the Federal harvest limit in Unit 10 for wolves was two. In 1994 the harvest limit was raised to 5 wolves based on action taken by the Federal Subsistence Board on a proposal submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and supported by the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council). Since 1990 the Federal subsistence wolf trapping season in Unit 10 has been November 10 to March 31 with no harvest limit.

In 2004, Defenders of Wildlife submitted Proposal WP05-02 requesting that wolf hunting seasons in Units 1, 3-4, 5A, 6-7, 9-13, 14C, 15-21, and 24-26 be closed until September 15. The Council opposed that proposal. In its comments concerning Proposal WP05-02, the Council noted that there was no conservation concern and the wolf harvest had been relatively small (FSB 2005). Consistent with Regional Advisory Council recommendations, the Federal Subsistence Board rejected Proposal WP05-02.

Biological Background

Wolves (*Canis lupus*) occur at low to moderate densities on Unimak Island (Butler 2006). Biological information on Unimak Island wolves is limited. Peterson (1967) reported that wolves had occasionally immigrated to islands west of Unimak, by crossing on ice flows.

Wolves have probably been part of Alaska fauna since the Pleistocene glaciation (Murie 1944). Wolves first breed at age two to four and produce pups in dens during the spring (Mech et al. 1998). Litters average five or six pups. Wolves abandon the den after about eight weeks and live at sites above ground until early autumn when the entire pack roams a large territory for the rest of the fall and winter. Wolves live at low densities in a structured population of territorial packs (Mech and Boitani 2003). Meier et al. (2006) reported that 28% of the wolves leave their packs each year, and that most offspring eventually leave the pack. Dispersing wolves form new packs when they locate dispersers of the opposite sex from another pack and a vacant area to establish a territory (Rothman and Mech 1979). Wolf pack territories overlap one another and change over time (Meier et al. 2006). As a pack makes its way around its

territory, it may encounter and engage with other wolves within its territory at any time. A fight to the death can occur during such encounters. Predation by other wolves is probably the major cause of natural mortality among adult wolves (Meier et al. 2006, Adams et al. 2008). With high reproductive capacity, good survival of young, and high dispersal rates, wolf populations are able to quickly respond to changes in prey abundance. Wolves are opportunistic carnivores; prey species on Unimak Island likely include caribou, small mammals, birds, salmon and various marine species that are available along the coast.

Harvest History

Hunters occasionally take wolves opportunistically in the fall and early spring when they are hunting other species. Some wolf trapping occurs in the False Pass, Unimak Island area (Fall et al. 1996).

Wolves harvested by trapping and hunting in Alaska must be sealed by an ADF&G representative or appointed fur sealer. During the sealing process, information is obtained on the date and location of take, sex, color of pelt, estimated size of the wolf pack, method of take, and access used. Between regulatory years 1999/2000 and 2008/09, the reported harvest of wolves in Unit 10 ranged from 0 to 4 wolves per year (**Table 1**). Most were harvested in the months of September and October. Butler (2006) observed that harvest has had little effect on wolf population of Unit 10.

Table 1. Reported wolf harvest and method of take for Unit 10 (ADF&G 2009 and 2010).

Regulatory Year	Reported Total Harvest	Method of take for total harvest from Units 10				
		Trap/snare	(%)	Shot	%	Unk
1999/2000	0	0		0		0
2000/01	2	0		2	100	0
2001/02	2	0		1	50	1
2002/03	2	0		2	100	0
2003/04	4	0		4	100	0
2004/05	0	0		0	100	0
2005/06	4	0		4	100	0
2006/07	0	0		0		0
2007/08	0	0		0		0
2008/09	0	0		0		0

Effects of the Proposal

If Proposal WP10-43 and -44 were adopted, the Federal wolf hunting and trapping seasons in that portion of Unit 10 which does not currently have wolves would be closed. There are wolves on Unimak Island and they have occasionally immigrated to islands west of Unimak, by crossing on ice flows. The proposals would add complexity to the Federal regulations with virtually no affect of subsistence users or the resource. If either of the proposals were adopted, it would cause Federal and State regulations to be further out of alignment.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Neutral on Proposals WP10-43 and -44.

Justification

These proposals would have virtually no affect on subsistence users or the resource.

Even if these proposals were adopted by the Federal Subsistence Board, hunters and trappers would still be able to take wolves under State regulations on Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge lands. As such, the adoption of these proposals by the Federal Subsistence Board would not have the effect sought by the proponent.

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Comments WP10-43 and WP10-44
January 29, 2010; Page 1 of 1

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Comments to the Regional Advisory Council

Wildlife Proposal WP10-43: This proposal requests federal regulations state there is no wolf hunting season in portions of Unit 10.

Wildlife Proposal WP10-44: This proposal requests federal regulations state there is no wolf trapping season in portions of Unit 10.

Introduction: Wolf distribution in the Aleutians is limited to Unimak Island. It is unlikely that wolves will disperse to other Aleutian Islands because of the distance between Unimak Island and other Aleutian Islands. Because wolf trapping can only occur on islands with wolves, wolf trapping does not occur on the majority of islands in Unit 10. Under WP10-44, if wolves were to colonize other islands, a trapping season for wolves would automatically be opened on that island. The proposal is circular with no meaningful effect on hunting opportunity in Unit 10. Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in benefits for wolf conservation or federal subsistence use of wolves in Unit 10. The only effect of this proposal is to make wolf trapping regulations in Unit 10 unnecessarily complicated.

Impact on Subsistence Users: There is no impact on federal subsistence users if these proposals are adopted. Federal subsistence hunters and trappers will still be able to hunt or trap wolves wherever they occur on all lands in Unit 10 under state regulations.

Opportunity Provided by State: The state provides wolf hunting opportunity on all islands in Unit 10. The wolf hunting season is August 1 through May 25, and the bag limit is 10 wolves per day. The state provides wolf trapping hunting opportunity on all islands in Unit 10. The wolf trapping season is November 10 through March 31, with no harvest limit.

Recommendation: Oppose.

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

Oppose. We have a very high level of respect for Alaska's wolf population and believe they are integral to the fabric of Alaska. However, they have to have population control measures that will enable prey species to live within balance of what their habitats will provide. Wolves have to be included into the management process in an active enough manner to provide maximum human benefit from the prey species. This type of management provides the best stewardship possible for the prey species as well as all people who depend upon or enjoy the benefit of high density population equilibriums. As the Federal Subsistence Board is mandated with providing important subsistence hunting opportunities and the scope of these proposals takes away from that objective, we encourage the Board not to pass these proposals.

Alaska Professional Hunters Association

FEDERAL FISHERIES CLOSURE REVIEW
FCR10-02

Closure Location: Kodiak Area Federal public waters in Womens Bay, Gibson Cove, and near shore waters around the Karluk River mouth and Afognak Island.

Current Federal Regulation:

§ __.28 (k) (4) (iv) (E) The waters of the Pacific Ocean enclosed by the boundaries of Womens Bay, Gibson Cove, and an area defined by a line ½ mile on either side of the mouth of the Karluk River, and extending seaward of 3,000 feet, and all waters within 1,500 feet seaward of the shoreline of Afognak Island are closed to the harvest of king crab except by Federally-qualified subsistence users.

Closure Dates: June 1 through January 31

Current State Regulation:

The State has closed the Kodiak Area commercial fishery, but still allows the harvest of king crab by subsistence users as follows:

5 AAC 02.420 SUBSISTENCE KING CRAB FISHERY (1) the annual limit is three king crab for a household; 2) all crab pots used for subsistence fishing and left in saltwater unattended longer than a two-week period shall have all bait and bait containers removed and all doors secured fully open; (3) notwithstanding 5 AAC 02.010(i), no more than one crab pot may be used to take king crab; (4) king crab may be taken only from June 1 through January 31, except that the subsistence taking of king crab is prohibited in waters 25 fathoms or more in depth during the 14 days immediately before the opening of a commercial king or Tanner crab fishing season in the location; (5) only male king crab seven inches or greater in width of shell may be taken or possessed.

Regulatory Year Initiated: 1995/1996.

The Federal Subsistence Board closure decision was made November 14, 1994 (FSB 1994), the regulation was initially published February 1995 in the Federal Register (60 FR 10317), and the final regulation was published in June 1995.

Proposal number of initial closure and any subsequent proposals: RFR94-03¹.

The initial closure was the result of Federal Subsistence Board deliberations on RFR94-03 submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game requesting that Federal subsistence harvests of red king crab *Paralithodes camtschaticus* be restricted to males with a shell size greater than or equal to seven inches. This would have aligned Federal with existing State regulations. The Federal Subsistence Board did not adopt a size limit, but did close Federal public waters to non-qualified users as per recommendation of the Interagency Staff Committee (FSB 1994).

In 2002, the Federal Subsistence Board took action on FP03-07, submitted by the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, which requested a decrease in the annual harvest limit from six to three male red king crabs per household and adoption of a seven-inch shell width minimum size limit (FSB 2002). Following

¹ This Request for Reconsideration appears to be in reference to the 1994/95 Federal Subsistence regulations relating to king crab regulations in the Kodiak Area rather than to a previously submitted regulatory proposal. (See opening remarks by Federal Subsistence Board Chair on pages 3 and 4 of FSB 1994.)

the recommendation of the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Federal Subsistence Board adopted the minimum shell width requirement along with a gear reduction limit of one pot of any size, but did not reduce the harvest limit. This action aligned Federal regulations for shell size and gear with those of the State, but maintained the closure to non-Federally qualified users and allowed a greater harvest limit for Federally qualified users.

While the State has closed commercial fishing, it still allows subsistence fishing for red king crab in the Kodiak Area. However, in 1996 the Alaska Board of Fisheries reduced the subsistence daily bag and possession limit for red king crab from six per person to three per household per year due to conservation concerns. The State has continued to oppose proposals seeking an increase in these harvest limits. For example, 2005 regulatory proposal #434, which sought to increase the subsistence annual household limit for red king crab in the Kodiak Area from three to ten, was opposed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG 2005) and subsequently failed to pass at the Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting (ABF 2005) for conservation reasons.

Closure last reviewed: 2005 (FCR05-02).

Justification for original closure (Section 815(3) criteria):

The closure was made for resource conservation concerns. Historically, there were large numbers of red king crab in the Kodiak Management Area, and this species supported a large commercial fishery along with other uses (Mattes and Spalinger 2007). In the 1970s the commercial harvest of red king crab in the Kodiak Area ranged between 12 and 24 million pounds. A near peak commercial harvest of red king crab occurred in the 1980/81 season, but three years later the harvest precipitously declined. The four top historical producing areas were closed to commercial red king crab fishing for the first time, but the stocks have still not recovered.

Subsistence crab harvests in the Kodiak Area dropped dramatically with the decline of the red king crab stock. The estimated subsistence harvest for the Kodiak vicinity was almost 18,000 red king crabs in 1982, but declined to less than 6,000 red king crabs by the 1990s (FSB 2002 and 1994). About one-quarter of this harvest may have been taken within the Chiniak Bay area, which includes Federal public waters of Womens Bay and Gibson Cove.

Council recommendation for original closure:

The Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory Council did not discuss or recommend a closure of this fishery in its review of RFR94-03, but did recommend rejection of the proposed seven-inch minimum size limit.

State recommendation for original closure:

The State did not request, recommend, or support a closure to non-Federally qualified subsistence users in 1994, but had only requested adoption of a seven-inch minimum size limit (RFR94-03). The State had already adopted a seven-inch minimum size limit for Kodiak Area subsistence red king crab fisheries in 1990.

Other significant comments presented when the Board adopted the original closure:

Neither the State nor the Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory Council had requested the original closure. A closure to non-Federally qualified users was suggested by the Interagency Staff Committee in its comments concerning RFR94-03.

Current resource abundance related to management objective:

No specific management objective has been set for either the Federal or State red king crab subsistence fisheries in the Kodiak Area. However the State has set a total threshold abundance of 5.12 million

fertilized females for reopening the commercial fishery (Pengilly and Schmidt 1995). State trawl survey estimates have continued to remain well below this level, and the 2008 survey estimate of the total adult female population was 6,846, of which 29% had egg clutches that were half full (Spalinger 2009). This was the lowest estimated number of adult females reported from annual surveys conducted during the most recent 10 year period (1999-2008 range: 74,259-6,846 adult females).

Womens Bay has been recognized as an important nursery area for red king crab, and studies of juveniles have shown that Womens Bay has much higher numbers than two nearby bays (Cummiskey et al. 2008, Dew 1991, Dew et al. 1992, and FSB 2002).

Resource population trend:

Since relatively few red king crabs are captured in the State trawl survey each year, it is not possible to accurately determine trends since small differences in catches result in large differences in population estimates (Spalinger 2009). However, these surveys show that the red king crab stock in the Kodiak Area has remained at very low abundance levels with no indication of rebuilding.

Harvest trend and/or fishing effort:

Subsistence red king crab harvests in the Kodiak Area have been very small since the collapse of the stock (FSB 2002). An Alaska Department of Fish and Game subsistence permit is required to participate in the Federal subsistence crab fishery, and annual harvests documented through these permits have often been well under 100 red king crabs per year.

OSM PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION:

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

Justification:

There is a conservation concern for this species in the Kodiak Area, which includes Federal public waters in Womens Bay, Gibson Cove, and near shore waters around the Karluk River mouth and Afognak Island. The Kodiak Area red king crab stock remains at very low levels of abundance with no indication of improvement over the near term. Marine waters under Federal jurisdiction in Womens Bay are a known nursery area for the larger Chiniak Bay, and are easy to access from the Kodiak road system. Restricting the taking of red king crab in Federal public waters for non-subsistence uses is necessary for the conservation of the red king crab resource and to help ensure continuation of Federal subsistence uses.

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McLees Sockeye Escapement Performance Report FY 2009

Title: Estimation of sockeye salmon escapement into McLees Lake, Unalaska Island (continuation of FIS 04-403).

Project Number: 07-405

Investigator(s): Derek Hildreth (derek_hildreth@fws.gov) and Doug McBride (doug_mcbride@fws.gov), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 605 W. 4th Ave., Room G-61, Anchorage, AK 99501; Phone (907) 271-2888. Fax (907) 271-2786.

Co-Investigator(s): Robin Waldrin, (r_waldrin@ounalashka.com), Qawalangin Tribe, Box 334, Unalaska AK. 99685. (907) 581-2920; fax (907) 581-3644. Tax ID number: 92-0134953. DUNS number: 081979059.

Forest Bowers (forrest_bowers@fishgame.state.ak.us), Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Box 920587, Unalaska AK. 99692. (907) 581-1239; fax (907) 581-1572. Tax ID number: 92-73-0006-k. DUNS number: 809387475.

Matt Foster (matt_foster@fishgame.state.ak.us), Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 211 Mission Road, Kodiak AK. 99615. (907) 486-1857; fax (907) 486-1847. Tax ID number: 92-6001185. DUNS number: 809387475.

Project Objectives and Results

The objectives of the project are to:

1. Enumerate the daily passage of sockeye salmon through the weir;
2. Describe the run-timing, or proportional daily passage, of sockeye salmon through the weir;
3. Estimate the weekly sex and age composition of sockeye salmon such that simultaneous 90% confidence intervals have a maximum width of 0.20; and
4. Estimate the mean length of sockeye salmon by sex and age.

A weir was constructed at the outflow to McLees Lake and was operational by 1 June 2009 with one sockeye passing the weir on that date. Fish numbers peaked on 2 July when 4,752 fish were counted passing the weir. There was another surge of sockeye on 5 July when 1,584 fish passed the weir. Fish numbers then declined by an order of magnitude, and continued at a steady rate of approximately 100 – 300 fish per day until 15 July, when the rate dropped below the threshold cumulative passage of 1%. After four days of these numbers, the decision to close the weir was made. The weir was removed on 18 July. It was estimated that 750 fish remained below the weir after the weir removal, and this number was included in the yearly escapement data.

Appendix A depicts the escapement at McLees Lake weir since the projects inception in 2001. The total escapement measured at McLees Lake for 2009 was 10,120 sockeye salmon. As can be seen, 2009 was one of the lowest escapement numbers since the projects' commencement. A written summary for this project year will be available in spring 2010. The final year of this project was scheduled to be 2009. Due to the declining nature of the sockeye salmon returns for this fishery, and having consulted with the Office of Subsistence Management as well as other interested parties, the AFWFO will be submitting an out-of-funding-cycle proposal for funding consideration for 2010 – 2011.

Consultations and Capacity Development

One local resident was hired by the Qawalangin Tribe as a technician to take daily counts of fish passage and to record data on the age, length, and sex of the fish that were sampled for these parameters. The Qawalangin Tribe expresses strong interest in maintaining the escapement monitoring for the foreseeable future, and discussions have continued regarding ways in which they would be able to manage a greater portion of this and other monitoring projects. They have hired a grant-writer to assist in this process. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game remained active in their assistance, providing logistical support as well as technical consultation.

Methods:

The methods for this project have not changed appreciably.

Schedule:

The operating schedule remained essentially the same. Data recording began on 1 June as one fish was seen to pass on that date. The weir was removed prior to 1 August because fish passage numbers were below the threshold of 1% of the total cumulative passage. The weir was removed on 18 July 2009.

Staffing:

Staffing remained the same as past years. The resident hired By the Qawalangin Tribe as a technician completed the season without incident.

Budget:

Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office:

Total Annual Budget (2009)	\$62,008
Expenditures thru December	\$62,008
Balance thru December	\$0
Anticipated Remaining Expenditures	\$0
Anticipated Final Balance	\$0

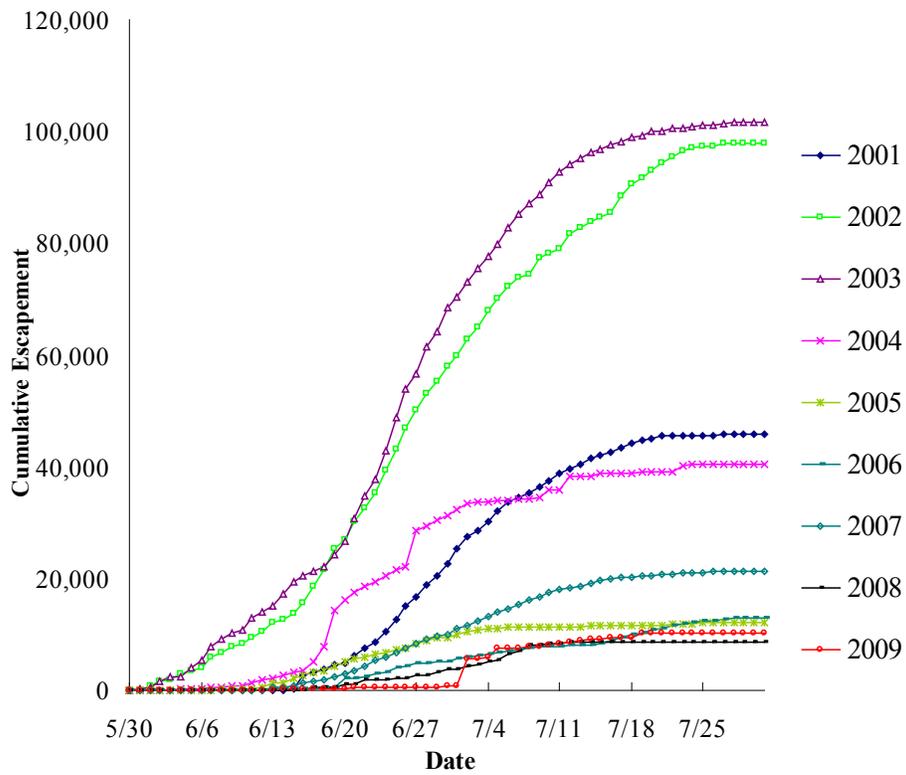
Qawalangin Tribe:

Total Annual Budget (2009)	\$13,168
Expenditures thru December	\$13,168
Balance thru December	\$0
Anticipated Remaining Expenditures	\$0
Anticipated Final Balance	\$0

Alaska Department of Fish and Game:

Total Annual Budget (2009)	\$1,135
Expenditures thru December	\$1,135
Balance thru December	\$0
Anticipated Remaining Expenditures	\$0
Anticipated Final Balance	\$0

Appendix A. Number of sockeye salmon observed passing the weir at McLees Lake, 2001–2009.





United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
1390 Buskin River Road
Kodiak, Alaska 99615-0323
(907) 487-2600



Activity Report
Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
September 2009 – February 2010

The following report describes the activities of Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge staff associated with subsistence activities during late 2009 and early 2010.

Brown Bear

Stream Use Surveys

Each year we monitor bear use along streams to evaluate trends in use and composition to support bear population management. To assess bear use and population composition we count and classify bear groups during low-level aerial surveys of six streams on southwest Kodiak Island during July-August when bear concentrations peak. Results this year indicated that bear stream use declined in 2009 to 58 bears/survey compared to the long-term average of 83 bears/survey. The proportion of single bears versus families was also different. Adult females with cubs composed 11% of bears compared to the long term average of 17%. We believe this is probably just a short term deviation due to low salmon returns in 2009. However, lower numbers for several years with average or better salmon runs could indicate a decline in productivity or in the bear population.

Karluk River Basin Research

In 2009, we evaluated field methods in preparation for launching a full-scale study of bear movements and resource use in 2010. We acquired extensive movement data on three female bears captured and radio-collared in late May. We sampled habitat at 570 bear use locations and documented bedding, fishing, travel, and feeding on berries, forbs, grasses, and sedges. Collared bears occupied higher elevations (range 900 – 1,400 feet) initially before moving to lower elevations (range 400 – 900 feet) during salmon runs. Daily activity patterns consisted of low activity between 2am–3am and 1pm–4pm, and high activity between 6am–7am and 9pm–10pm. Seasonal home range varied in apparent response to availability of local habitat resources. Home range and amount of weekly movement was minimal before late July and after early September. During August, home range and weekly movement was greatest, probably due to a combination of factors including nutritional need to find adequate food (salmon, berries) and traditional seasonal movement patterns.

Sitka Black-tailed DeerMortality Surveys

In April, we will conduct our annual deer mortality surveys at Chief Cove (west Kodiak Island), north Sitkalidak Strait (east Kodiak Island), and west Olga Bay (south Kodiak Island). These surveys provide a reasonable means of estimating the level of deer mortality and survival over the winter period in various portions of the Island.

Subsistence Permit Summary

Federal Subsistence regulations allow for customary and traditional harvest of Roosevelt Elk, Sitka Black-tailed Deer, and Brown Bear on Kodiak Refuge lands in the Archipelago. All rural residents qualify for federal elk and deer hunts. In the case of brown bear, a small number of permits are issued to residents in all six villages. Federal designated deer hunter and subsistence elk permits may be obtained at Refuge headquarters in Kodiak. All permittees are required to carry permits, as well as state licenses and tags, while hunting. Table 1 shows the number of permits issued for each species.

Table 1. Federal subsistence permits issued and animals harvested, Unit 8, 2005-09.

SPECIES	2005/06 Issued / Harvested	2006/07 Issued / Harvested	2007/08 Issued / Harvested	2008/09 Issued / Harvested	2009/10 Issued / Harvested
DEER	49 / 68	56 / 76	32 / 58	49 / 81	55 / 39 Prelim.
BEAR	5 / 3	5 / 2	5 / 0	6 / 1	4 / 1 Prelim.
ELK	5 / 0	10 / 0	6 / 0	3 / 0	5 / 0

Sea OtterSea Otter Prey Species Collections

Marine Mammals Management (MMM) is conducting a study of dietary composition (via stable isotope analysis) of archived sea otter whiskers collected from beach cast, harvested, and live-capture animals. The Refuge, in cooperation with NOAA, has agreed to assist the study by collecting samples of otter prey species. Samples sent to the MMM lab will be used to establish reference data for isotope levels found in different food prey species.

Migratory BirdsCoastal Waterbird Surveys

In August, we surveyed waterbirds along the western coastline of the refuge. The survey covered most of Uyak and Uganik Bays and portions of Viekada Bay as supported by the Refuge's vessel M/V Ursa Major II. We counted 231 harlequin ducks in Uyak Bay in August, 2009 compared to 383 in August, 2007. Evaluation of trend indicated substantial difference between bays with slight decline noted in Uganik Bay and consistent steep decline in Uyak Bay (Figure 1). In addition to surveying, we captured and banded molting (flightless) harlequin ducks at locations in both Uyak and Uganik Bays. We captured 15 ducks in Uyak Bay and 27 ducks in Uganik Bay. Two of the 42 captured ducks were "re-captures" previously caught and banded in 2007 very near

the initial capture location where they were originally banded. Every captured duck was tested for avian influenza; none were found to be infected with the disease.

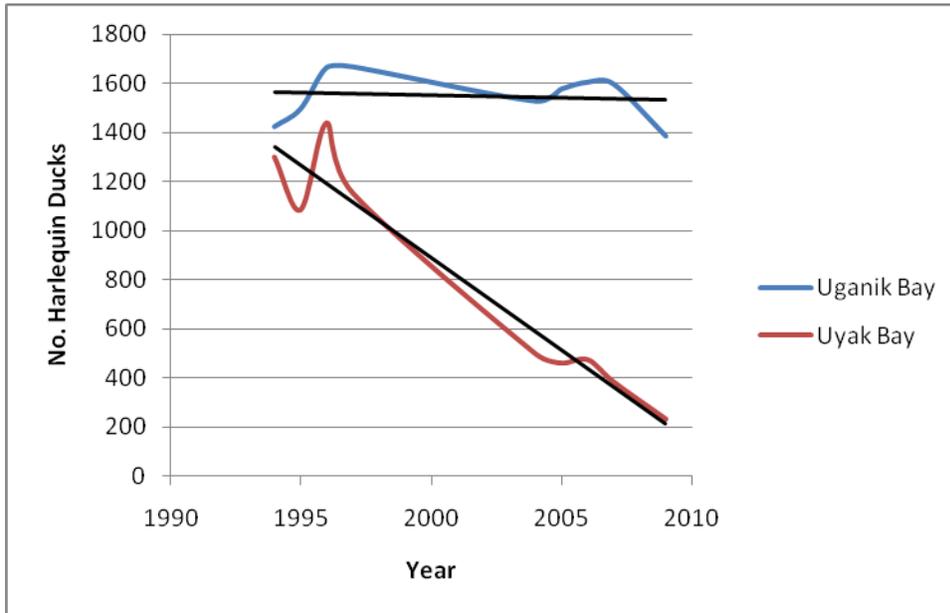


Figure 1. Trend in numbers of harlequin duck counted on standard survey transects in Uganik and Uyak Bay adjacent to western Kodiak Island, August 1994 to August 2010.

Harlequin Duck Outreach and Monitoring Results

Lodges and guiding outfits in Larsen Bay were contacted during the 2008-2009 duck hunting season regarding the decline in harlequin duck numbers in Uyak Bay seen over the last 10 years. A voluntary restriction in harvest was discussed and encouraged among five lodge owners and the Larsen Bay Tribal Council. Declines in Uyak Bay may be the result of multiple factors including harvest and habitat changes. Because numbers remain low and this species is slow to reproduce, the Refuge continues to emphasize a voluntary harvest restriction and outreach to raise awareness of harlequin duck conservation in this area.

Kittlitz's Murrelet Study

The Refuge, in cooperation with the USGS, will continue to study this rare and secretive seabird on the rugged scree slopes found in southwestern Kodiak Island. Results thus far have yielded substantial new information on nesting ecology and behavior. The field crew, comprised of a graduate student/biological technician and volunteer assistants, is scheduled to undertake field work in late May.

Winter Marine Seabird Surveys

In mid-February, Refuge staff will board the M/V Ursa Major II to complete surveys of marine birds on boat-based transects in Uyak, Uganik, and Viekoda Bays. Conducted annually since 1986, these surveys provide results used to evaluate trends in winter abundance of commonly occurring marine birds including: harlequin duck, Barrow's goldeneye, common merganser, red-breasted merganser, black scoter, surf scoter, white-winged scoter, long-tailed duck, cormorants, loons, grebes, marbled murrelet, pigeon guillemot, and common murre. Preliminary results may be available at the winter Regional Advisory Committee meeting.

Migratory Bird Harvest Surveys

Migratory bird subsistence harvest surveys will be jointly conducted by the Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) this year in the Kodiak Archipelago. Purposes of the survey are to assess trends in subsistence harvest practices, to facilitate harvest management, and to promote conservation. We plan to survey a portion of the City of Kodiak and four villages including Akhiok, Karluk, Larsen Bay and Port Lions. Two surveyors will conduct the survey in different areas following each of four harvest seasons (spring 2010 through winter 2011).

This harvest survey has its basis in a 1997 amendment to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This amendment recognized the customary and traditional use of migratory birds by local Alaska residents and allowed for a regulated spring-summer subsistence bird harvest in selected areas. Harvest regulations were issued in 2003. Since 2004 the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council has regularly assessed harvest every two to three years in each of the 11 harvest areas. Results from the last survey (2006) can be accessed and viewed at <http://alaska.fws.gov/ambcc/harvest.htm>.

No changes are expected in federal regulations for the Kodiak area for 2010. The Kodiak road-connected area including interior rivers, ponds and exposed tidelands remain closed. The Migratory Bird Management Office expects to distribute 2010 regulations prior to the opening of the April hunting season.

Fisheries

Sport Fish Guide Permits

On most of Kodiak Refuge, there is no limit on the number of sport fish guides that may be authorized to operate. In a few Refuge drainages, however, the number of authorized guides has been limited. The objective of the limited entry system is to make available to the public a variety of recreational fishing opportunities while also protecting Refuge resources and visitor experience opportunities in those portions of the Refuge that might otherwise be subject to intense recreational use. Consistent with Federal regulations, we issue limited entry sport fish guiding permits for a five-year term, with an option to renew for another five years. Our limited-entry program was initiated in 2000 and all the permits issued at that time will expire December 31, 2010. In preparation for the end of the current permit term, we conducted a comprehensive review of our sport fish guiding program in 2009. On February 1, 2010, we issued a prospectus and request for proposals for sport fish guiding services on the Ayakulik, Dog Salmon, Little, and Uganik Rivers. The Prospectus describes competitive permit offerings for portions of these four rivers within Kodiak Refuge and permit application requirements and procedures that will be used to select guides to operate within these areas. Selected guides will receive a special use permit authorizing operation for a five-year period (beginning January 1, 2011), with the possibility of non-competitive renewal for another five years. The permit application period is open from February 1 through April 2, 2010.

Study of Chinook Salmon Fry of the Karluk River

The Refuge and the Sport Fish Division of ADF&G initiated a cooperative project to study Chinook salmon in the Karluk River drainage in 2009. The objective of the 2009 fieldwork was to systematically sample the distribution and relative abundance of Chinook salmon fry with minnow traps in the Karluk River drainage below Karluk Lake. Sampling of fish and aquatic

habitat was distributed among five time periods and 23 different river sections between April and October.

We found surprisingly few Chinook salmon fry (52 fish), and most of these were caught in the fall within the lower third of the Karluk River. In addition to Chinook salmon fry, we captured small Dolly Varden (3,767), steelhead/rainbow trout (1,616), sockeye salmon (2,452), coho salmon (519), stickleback (471), lamprey (2 fish), and freshwater sculpin (1). We expect that continued sampling and evaluation will reveal whether any factors in the freshwater environment are adversely affecting Chinook salmon.

Changes in Refuge Staff

New Deputy Refuge Manager

Mike Getman retired last fall after 30 years of government service and 10 years at Kodiak Refuge as Deputy Refuge Manager. Kent Sundseth was hired as the new Deputy Refuge Manager from the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge in Homer where he worked five years as the Manager of the Aleutian Islands Unit and Pribilof Islands Sub-unit. Mr. Sundseth has worked in coastal Alaska for the past 11 years and brings with him some great expertise from his work on the major rat eradication project on Rat Island in the Aleutians and from his work at the Alaska Islands and Oceans Visitor Center in Homer. Kent began his duty in Kodiak on March 1.

New Park Ranger

Jason Oles recently joined the Refuge staff as a Park Ranger. His past work includes maintenance, law enforcement, EMS, search and rescue, and bear management in various parts of the country. His most recent bear management experience was at Katmai National Park as well as Glacier National Park in Montana. He was hired to facilitate the O'Malley bear viewing program and act as a Visitor Services field employee for the Refuge.

Wildlife Biologist (Subsistence Species)

We expect to hire a new employee by March and to have the positioned staffed by May. Principal duties will include inventory, monitoring, and conducting studies on subsistence species and other ungulates (particularly deer, elk, and mountain goats) and coordination with subsistence users and the Regional Advisory Committee.

Visitor Center Education & Interpretation

F.U.N. and R.A.D.

The Refuge's Visitor Center has been a buzz with activity through the fall and winter months with educational activities and public events. Refuge staff and community volunteers have welcomed local children to Families Understanding Nature (FUN) programs every week. Offered as a bimonthly program last year, we doubled our efforts based on popularity and now offer this program weekly. The Center also unveiled a new education program this fall known as Refuge Adventure and Discovery (RAD). RAD is tailored for 4th-6th grade students as an after school education program that features outdoor learning through games, scavenger hunts, hikes, and crafts.

Will Troyer Visits

In October 2009, we celebrated National Wildlife Refuge Week with a special guest speaker, retired biologist and Refuge Manager, Will Troyer, who enthralled visitors with tales of early bear research in the 1950s and signed copies of his new book, *The Bear Wrangler*.

Free Conservation Film Series

The Center has also welcomed the local community to a free conservation film series each month for screenings of productions with regional, national and international relevance. The last in our series of films will be The Far North Film Festival, a three-day traveling series of juried short and feature-length conservation films.

Tribe Mergini Sea Duck Exhibit

Currently the Center has an exhibit of 19 hand-carved wooden sea ducks. This special Tribe Mergini exhibit collection, on loan from Nancy Hillstrand, was originally done by the artist Alan Bennett. It will be on display from February 5 until April 3.

Other Cooperation

Tribal Wildlife Grants

Old Harbor Tribal Council submitted a proposal to use grant support for bear-proofing the town's landfill and for undertaking associated measures to reduce bear-human conflict. FWS decisions on proposals are expected in May. If approved, the Refuge will provide assistance with technical and educational concerns, as requested.

Larsen Bay Tribal Council has continued to make progress towards completion of its Tribal Wildlife grant. The Council acquired new hardware, software, and orthoimagery (aerial images) of the Uyak-Karluk region in support of its goal to build resource management capacity.

Soil Survey

Soils form a foundation for terrestrial ecosystems. Knowledge of soils is important for a variety of reasons including understanding the production capacity of the land and for structural developments. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) completed soil and vegetation surveys of the Karluk and Sturgeon River watersheds in summer 2009. The agency plans to survey the area around Akhiok and Old Harbor in summer 2010. The NRCS is conducting these surveys at the request of Native Corporations and the Refuge. Results from these surveys will be combined with results acquired elsewhere in the archipelago area during 2007-2012, and then published by the NRCS. Such results serve as a primary standard for soils information in the U.S.

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game Report to the Kodiak-
Aleutian Islands Region Subsistence Advisory Council: Update
through 2009 on the Buskin River Sockeye Salmon Fishery and
Stock Assessment Project**

**By
Julia Schmidt**

February 2009

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Division of Sport Fish



PROGRESS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Buskin River drainage, located on Kodiak Island approximately 2 miles southwest from the city of Kodiak, traditionally supports the single largest subsistence salmon fishery within the Kodiak/Aleutian Islands Region. The fishery occurs in nearshore marine waters adjacent to the river mouth and targets several species of salmon, although sockeye salmon typically comprise 81% of the total subsistence harvest. Between 2004 and 2008 federally qualified subsistence users annually harvested approximately 7,800 Buskin River sockeye salmon, which accounted for 56% of the total sockeye salmon harvest reported for the Kodiak/Aleutians federal subsistence region (Table 1). In addition, 65% of all Kodiak area subsistence users reporting activity during this period harvested salmon from the Buskin River fishery. Due to lower sockeye salmon escapement into the Buskin River during 2008 and 2009, subsistence fishery markers were extended, essentially closing the subsistence fishery. In 2008, subsistence users harvested only 2,660 sockeye which accounted for only 31% of total sockeye salmon harvest reported in this federal subsistence region and 52% of the effort. The 2009 subsistence harvest is not available at this time.

Location	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2004-2008 Ave
Buskin River	9,421	8,239	7,577	11,151	2,664	7,810
Old Harbor/Sitkalidak	594	1,156	530	623	546	690
Alitak Bay	928	1,388	1,038	799	827	996
Karluk Village	865	744	894	495	768	753
Larsen Bay/Uyak Bay	515	1,409	583	560	812	776
Uganik Bay	816	616	800	629	966	765
Afognak Bay	567	696	451	490	594	560
Remainder Afognak Island	1,370	986	675	782	1375	1,038
Total	15,076	15,234	12,548	15,529	8,552	13,388

Table 1.- Kodiak Area reported federal subsistence harvest of sockeye salmon by location, 2004-2008.

In order to ensure sustained sockeye salmon production over a long time period, in 2000 a stock assessment study was initiated by Alaska Department Fish and Game (ADF&G) with funding from the Office of Subsistence Management to establish a Biological Escapement Goal (BEG) based on a population model which incorporates brood-year tables constructed from annual escapement and harvest figures with the age composition of annual runs. Samples of adult sex ratios, average length and age class are collected each year over the course of the run from both escapement and the subsistence harvest. Because development of the brood table requires age composition data collected over at least 3 generations, annual data gathering for completion of the study is necessary over a 12-15 year period. Currently, an escapement goal range for Buskin

Lake set at 8,000 - 13,000 sockeye salmon is used for management of the subsistence, sport and commercial fisheries to ensure a sustained yield from the population. An annual sockeye salmon escapement objective for Catherine and Louise lakes (reported as Lake Louise) has not yet been established.

Sockeye salmon escapements are annually quantified through inseason counts of adult fish migrating into the drainage. A salmon counting weir located on Buskin River for this purpose has been operated by ADF&G since 1985. In 2002 a second weir was installed on a major tributary stream flowing into the Buskin River from Catherine and Louise lakes.

2009 PROJECT RESULTS

Escapement

Buskin River sockeye salmon weir was located at the outflow of the Buskin Lake; and was fish tight at 1:30 pm on 22 May. This is the first year of Buskin Lake weir remaining operational until the end of September. The lake weir was pulled for the season at 9 am on 30 September. Final escapement: 7,757 sockeye, 89,844 pink, 10, 624 coho, 149 chum, 3 Chinook and 15, 804 Dolly Varden up river and 139 down. The resulting sockeye escapement of 7,757 is the well below the 10-year average escapement of 16,127 and just below the lower escapement goal of 8,000. The 2009 sockeye escapement is the second lowest count on record since a weir began operation in 1985 (Figure 1).

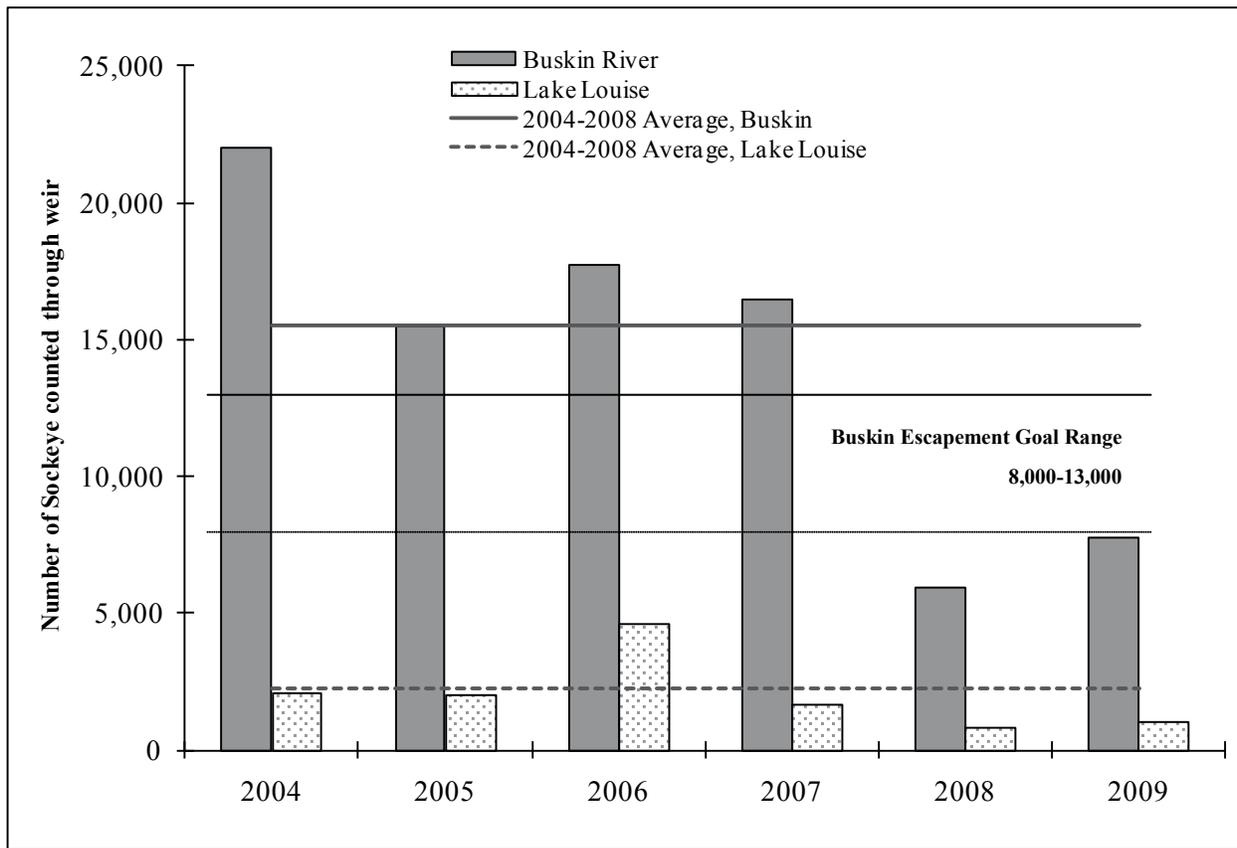


Figure 1.- Buskin River and Lake Louise sockeye salmon escapement, 2004-2009.

Historically the Buskin weir located at the outlet would be operational mid May to end of July, after which it would be removed at the outlet and reinstalled the same day at the lower weir location. The final sockeye escapement would be the count at the Lake plus any additional sockeye observed during a float between the two weirs on the day the weir was moved and those sockeye counted at the lower weir. The lake cumulative total would be transferred to the lower weir tally sheets and any sockeye at the lower site would be added to the running cumulative count. In 2009 weir operations were conducted differently. The lake outlet weir was installed 22 May and remained operational continually until 30 September. On 3 August when the lower weir came online, lake sockeye escapement counts were transferred to the lower weir tally sheets (as in the past); and all species were continued to be recorded at the lake weir, resulting in two different counts (one from each weir). Between 4 August and 13 September the lower weir was inoperable due to high water a total of 10 days and was pulled for the season the morning of 17 September. The lake weir did not suffer the effects of high water and daily counts were collected. Since the lower weir was out for 10 days and was pulled two weeks early, the final sockeye escapement is the count from the lake weir.

The Lake Louise tributary weir was located approximately one-eighth mile upstream of the Buskin River confluence. The weir was installed on 3 June and remained in operation continuously until 1 September. The total Lake Louise weir count was 922 sockeye salmon, which, like Buskin River, is the second lowest since the weir began operation and less than one-third of the recent 5 year average count.

Timing of the 2009 Lake Louise run was similar to other years in that the majority of the escapement coincided with high water events, three of which occurred on 21 July, 5 and 28 August. More than 63% of the total weir count was recorded during these three days. Sockeye movement into the Lake Louise tributary appears to be directly related to rain fall and the level of water in the stream. When the water level is low, sockeye do not enter the Lake Louise tributary, but rather hold in the 'pump house hole' on the Buskin River. The weir was operational for a total of 91 days, and no sockeye were observed 69 of those days. Nineteen percent of the run had been counted by 22 July and 58% on 5 August and 91% on 28 August compared to the run timing of the Buskin River: 25% 16 June, 50% 21 June and 75% on 16 July (Figure 2).

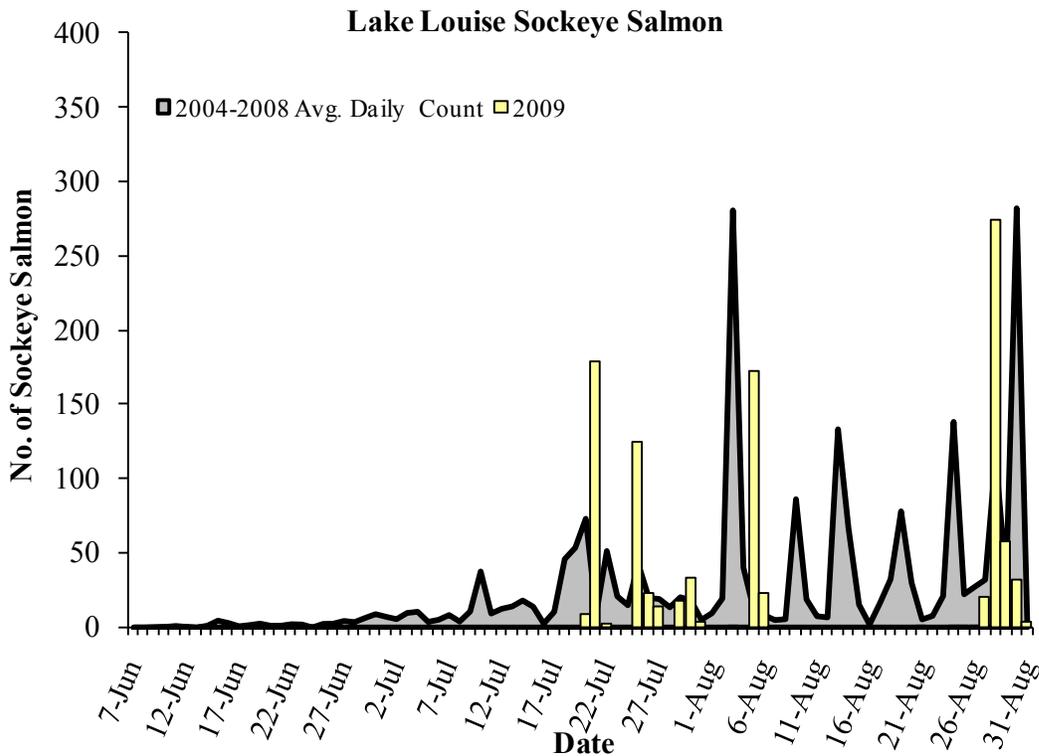
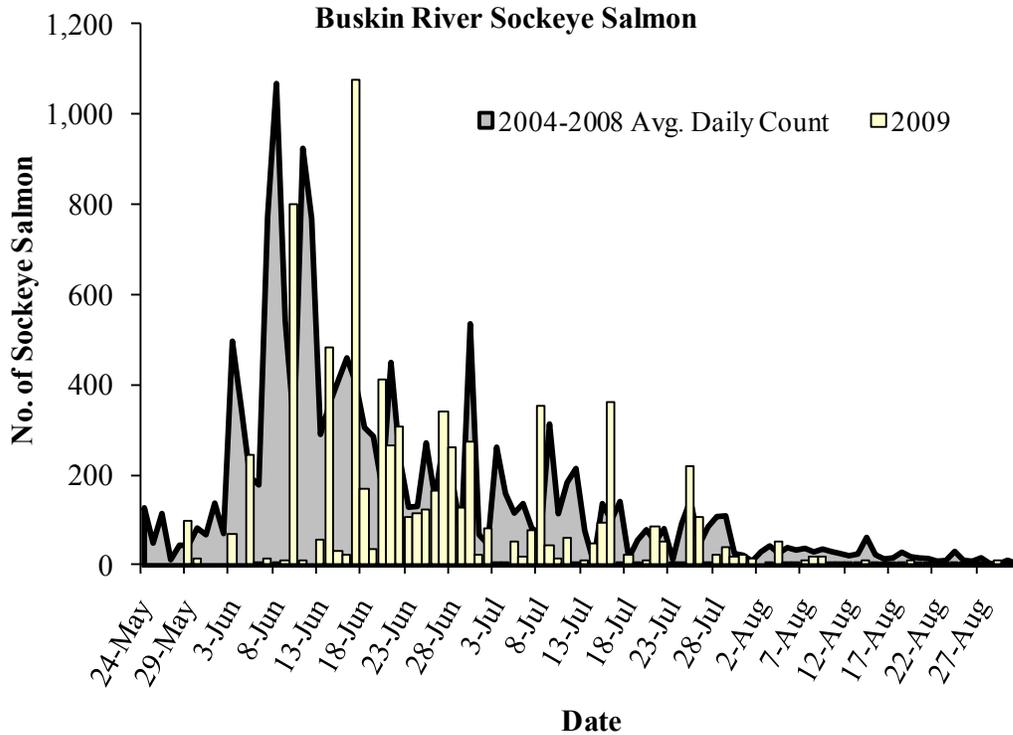
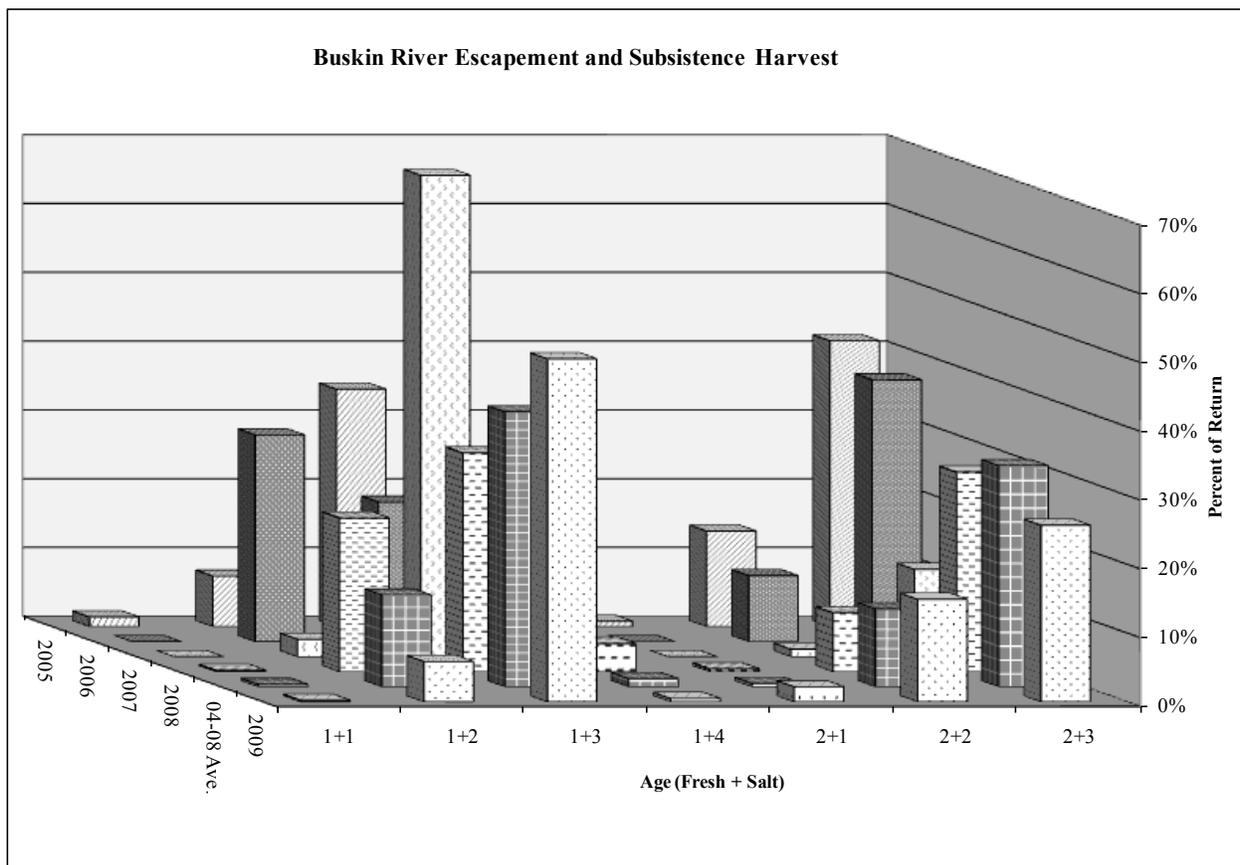


Figure 2.- Recent year daily sockeye salmon weir counts into Buskin Lake and Lake Louise.

the 2nd indicates years ocean life.) Between 4 and 14 June, a total of 112 sockeye salmon were sampled from the subsistence harvest, resulting in two dominant age classes: 1.3 (64%) and 2.3 (19%). At Lake Louise weir, 184 sockeye salmon were sampled; however ages were determined for just 96 fish due to high scale re-absorption rates, most likely resulting from the relatively long inriver residence of sampled fish prior to their capture at the weir. Most fish bound for Lake Louise were 2.2 (47%), but also 1.3 (27%) and 1.2 (16%).

Sex and age samples from the escapement and subsistence harvest indicate that during most years the Buskin Lake run component is primarily comprised of age 1.3 and 2.3 fish, which is similar to the 2009 data results (Figure 4). Sample age and length data collected from the Louise Lake escapement typically are different than those from Buskin Lake, containing a substantially larger proportion of age 1.2 and 1.3 fish. The 2009 data diverged from this trend with 2.2 comprising the dominant age class. Age and length of the sockeye salmon subsistence harvest typically differs markedly from that of escapements, consisting almost exclusively of large 1.3 and 2.3 fish (most likely a result of size selectivity by gillnets used in the fishery). The 2009 sample age composition of subsistence caught fish was fairly similar to the normal trend.



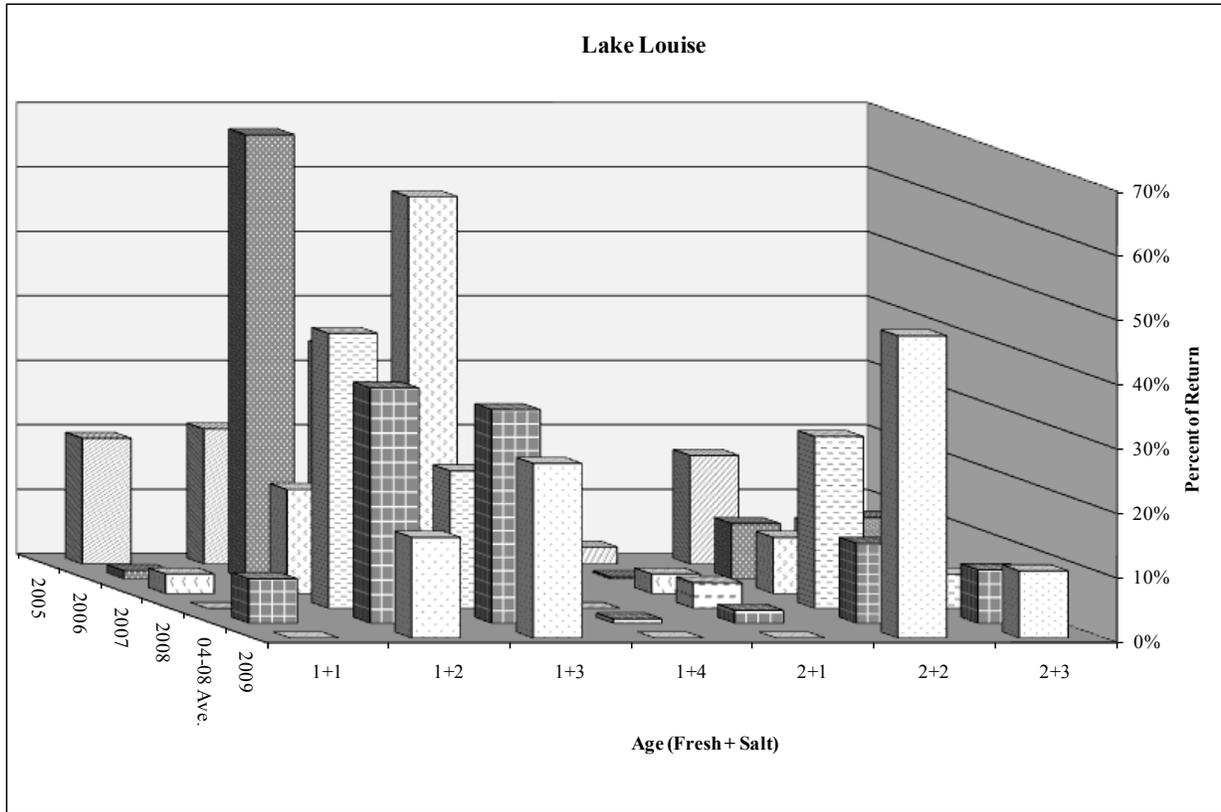


Figure 4.- Relative frequency comparison of sample age compositions from the Buskin Lake and subsistence harvest and Lake Louise, 2005-2009.

In 2007 an absence of typical contributions from younger age classes in the run indicated that a two-three year trend of relatively lower escapements might occur until cohorts from the next brood year fully recruit into the adult population. The record low weir counts in 2008 and 2009 strongly suggest this event may now be taking place. Conversely, the similarity of the 2009 sample age compositions for all run components to those collected in the longer term suggests that duration of a current low escapement cycle may be relatively short.

Mean length of females in the Buskin Lake escapement was 511 mm (SE = 3.85), while mean length of males was 540 mm (SE = 4.88) (Figure 5). Mean length of females in the sampled subsistence harvest was 541 mm (SE = 2.72), and 564 mm (SE = 5.97) for males. Mean length of Lake Louise females was 502 mm (SE = 4.67) and male mean length 538 mm (SE = 4.1).

As a result predominantly younger age classes in the population, the Lake Louise run is typically comprised largely of fish smaller in size than those returning to Buskin Lake. However in 2009 larger fish were observed in Lake Louise with a very small size difference between Buskin Lake and Lake Louise escapement. Average length of sockeye salmon taken in the subsistence harvest typically differs markedly from that of escapements, resulting from a predominance of larger fish selected by gillnets used in the fishery.

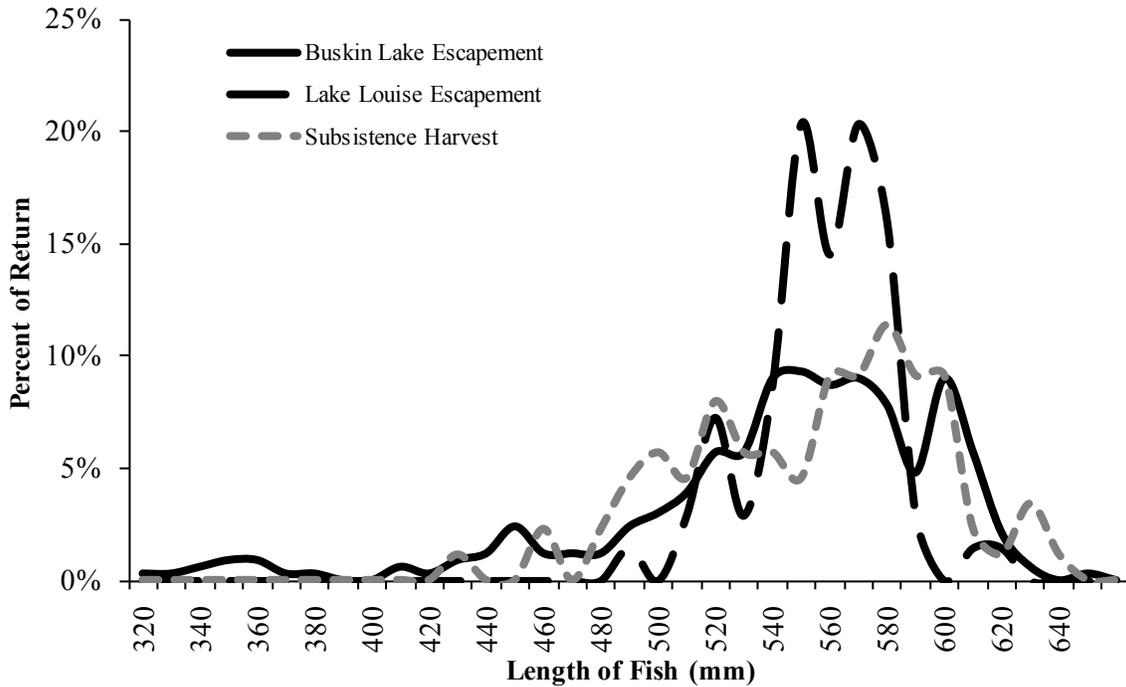


Figure 5.- Length frequency distribution of sockeye salmon from the Buskin Lake and Lake Louise escapements and the Buskin River drainage subsistence harvest, 2009.

Reconstruction of the Buskin Lake portion of the sockeye salmon run by its various components indicate that although historically the total return has remained relatively stable at around 19,000 fish, between 2004 and 2008, the estimated total increased substantially to an average 25,000 fish (Figure 6). During the same period subsistence harvests have averaged around 31% of the total run and, by harvest volume, constituted the most important user group dependent on the Buskin River sockeye salmon resource. 2009 subsistence and sport fish harvest numbers are not currently available. Commercial harvest of sockeye salmon in 2009 was zero.

GENETIC TESTING

Early in 2008, ADF&G's genetic laboratory conducted analyses of Buskin and Lake Louise sockeye salmon escapement samples collected in 2005; genetic differences were distinct enough to hypothesize the run components could in fact constitute separate populations. Between 7 and 14 June, a total of 41 sockeye salmon were sampled from Buskin subsistence harvest in order to genetically apportion Buskin and Lake Louise harvest components for more precise run reconstruction. Analysis of these samples is pending and dependent on additional future funding for the stock assessment project.

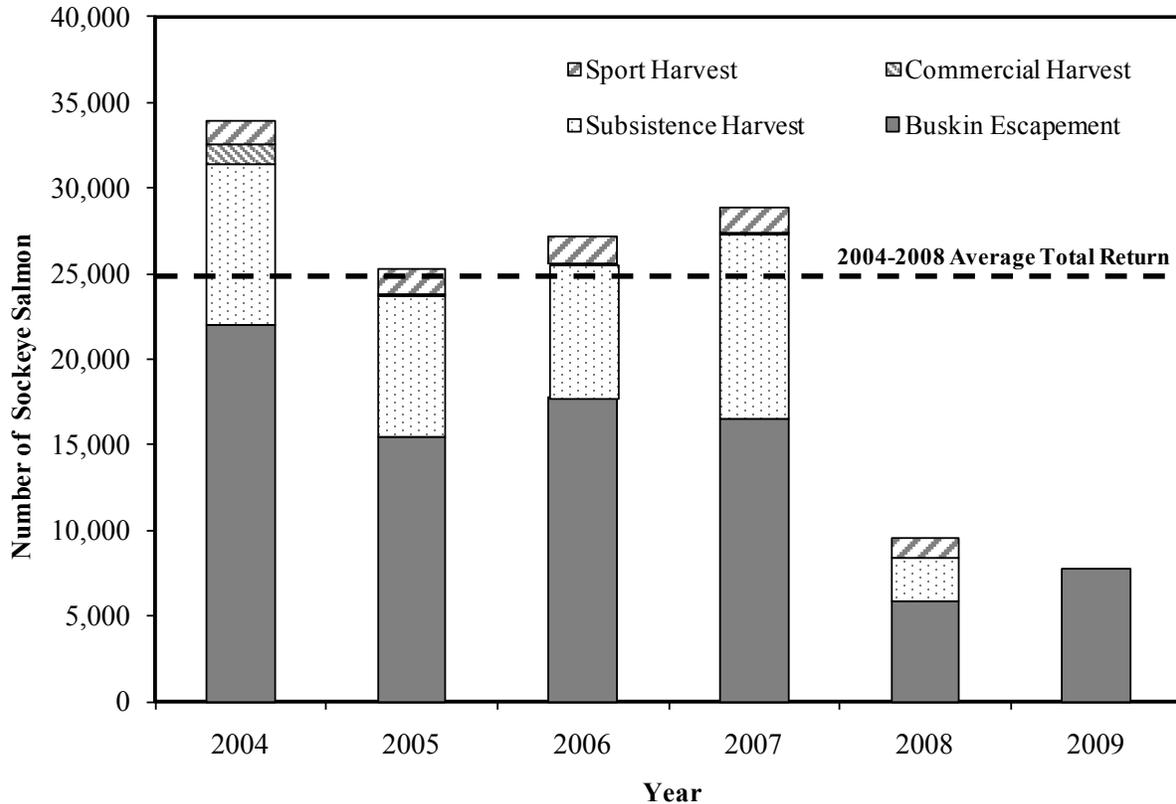


Figure 6.- Composition of total sockeye salmon return to the Buskin River, 2004-2009.

SUBSISTENCE USER INTERVIEWS

In response to a priority information need recently identified by the Kodiak/Aleutians Region Subsistence Advisory Council (RAC), beginning in 2007 verbal interviews taken on the fishing grounds with Buskin River subsistence users have been conducted to determine user residency and patterns of historic fishing effort. Interviews were conducted again in 2009, where technicians opportunistically contacted subsistence users on the fishing grounds in front of the Buskin River while concurrently sampling the harvest for age and mean length. The 2009 survey sample was collected over the duration of the subsistence fishery, providing residency and effort data not currently available from subsistence permit returns. Only 2 subsistence users were interviews obtained prior to closure of the subsistence fishery.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Since 2001 ADF&G and the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge have maintained a cooperative agreement to use the Buskin Rive weir as a platform for the Kodiak Summer Salmon Camp Program, which provides school-aged children a medium for activities and science-based learning. In 2009, Salmon Camp participants came to the Buskin Lake weir four times during which the young participants were shown the weir operation and given interactive demonstrations on identifying, counting and sampling salmon. New this year, the Salmon Art Camp participants were given the opportunity to create their own freshwater macro-invertebrate

after listening to a power point presentation on the life cycle and different types of macro-invertebrate (Figure 7).

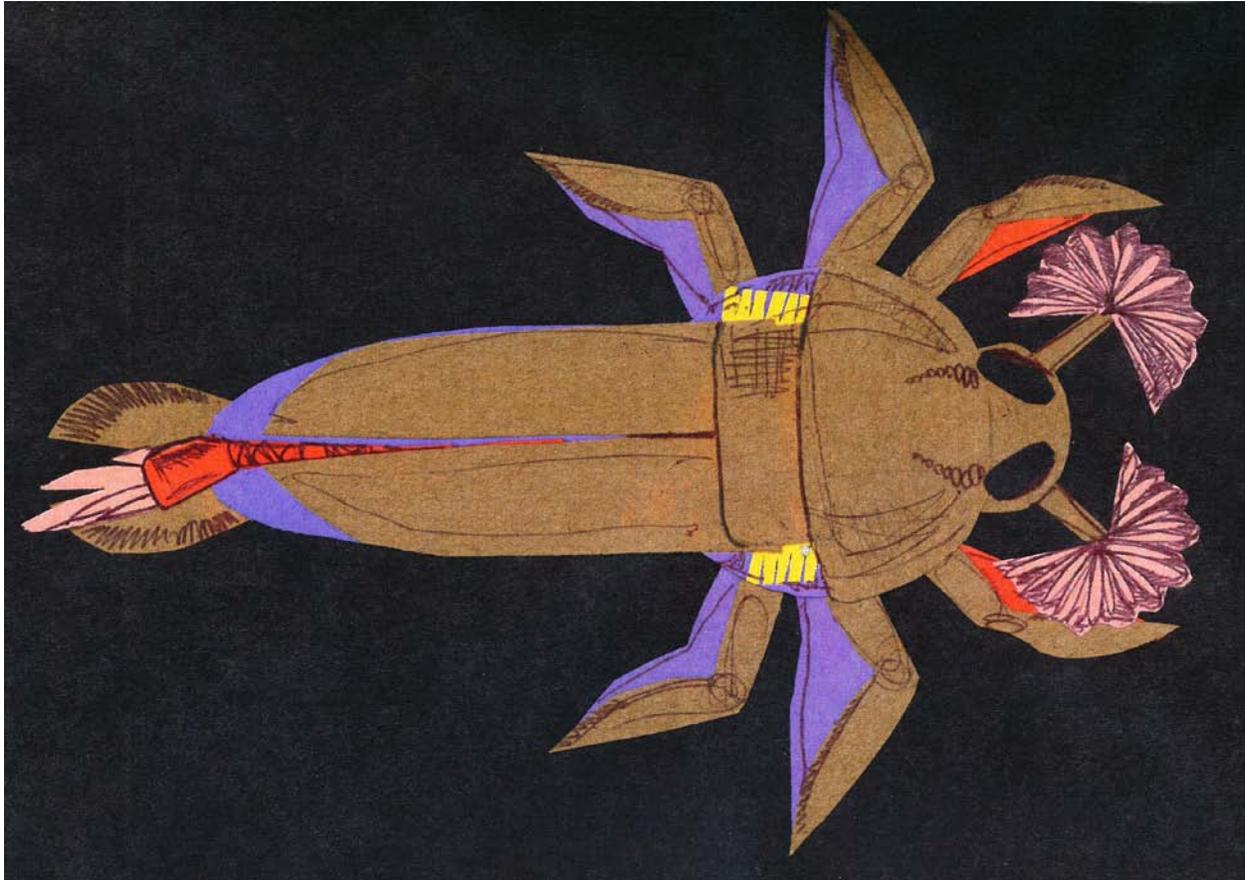


Figure 7.- Example of Salmon Art Camp participant's original freshwater macro invertebrate, 2009.

Since 2003, the Buskin River project has been a vehicle for fisheries-based education and development of career interest for young subsistence users through establishment of a high school intern program, in which students gain knowledge of the principles involved in fisheries management and research while obtaining field experience in fisheries data collection methods and techniques. Unfortunately due to an unexpected change in State of Alaska hiring procedures which precluded a local hiring preference, two Kodiak District high school student intern positions were not hired in 2009.

In order to avoid continuation of this circumstance, future recruitment of the student intern positions will include a local hire preference to ensure project objectives are achieved, and Kodiak's federally qualified subsistence users continue to benefit from a previously successful fisheries program capacity building component. The high school intern program has been an outstanding success, to the extent that eight of 12 former interns have continued their employment with the department as seasonal Fish and Wildlife Technicians while attending college.

CONCLUSION

Annual implementation of the Buskin River sockeye salmon weir project made possible with funding from the Federal Subsistence Management Program has been crucial for inseason escapement monitoring necessary to sustain the health of the stock while providing maximum harvest opportunities for subsistence users. Continuation of this project has also allowed for additional analysis of run productivity to augment the ongoing sockeye salmon stock assessment study which will result in establishment of a refined BEG. With exception of the 2008 and 2009 returns, Buskin sockeye abundance has remained relatively stable. However, because of the fact this run is fully utilized by harvesters, future poor returns similar to 2009 may necessitate further inseason fishery restrictions.

Fall 2010 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Window

August 30–October 15, 2010 current as of 02/22/10

Meeting dates and locations are subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 22	Aug. 23	Aug. 24	Aug. 25	Aug. 26	Aug. 27	Aug. 28
		NS—Barrow				
Aug. 29	Aug. 30 WINDOW OPENS	Aug. 31	Sept. 1	Sept. 2	Sept. 3	Sept. 4
Sept. 5	Sept. 6 HOLIDAY	Sept. 7	Sept. 8	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Sept. 11
Sept. 12	Sept. 13	Sept. 14	Sept. 15	Sept. 16	Sept. 17	Sept. 18
Sept. 19	Sept. 20	Sept. 21	Sept. 22	Sept. 23	Sept. 24	Sept. 25
		KA—TBA	BB—Naknek			
Sept. 26	Sept. 27	Sept. 28	Sept. 29	Sept. 30 <small>END OF FY2010</small>	Oct. 1	Oct. 2
		SE—Sitka			YKD—TBA	
Oct. 3	Oct. 4	Oct. 5	Oct. 6	Oct. 7	Oct. 8	Oct. 9
		WI—McGrath			NWA—Kotzebue	
Oct. 10	Oct. 11 HOLIDAY	Oct. 12	Oct. 13	Oct. 14	Oct. 15	Oct. 16
			EI—Central		WINDOW CLOSES	
			SC—Cordova			
			SP—Nome			

Winter 2011 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Window

February 15–March 24, 2011 current as of 03/02/10

Meeting dates and locations are subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Feb. 13</i>	<i>Feb. 14</i>	<i>Feb. 15</i> <i>Window Opens</i>	<i>Feb. 16</i>	<i>Feb. 17</i>	<i>Feb. 18</i> NWA— Kotzebue	<i>Feb. 19</i>
<i>Feb. 20</i>	<i>Feb. 21</i> HOLIDAY	<i>Feb. 22</i>	<i>Feb. 23</i>	<i>Feb. 24</i>	<i>Feb. 25</i>	<i>Feb. 26</i>
<i>Feb. 27</i>	<i>Feb. 28</i>	<i>Mar. 1</i> EI—Tanana WI—Fairbanks	<i>Mar. 2</i>	<i>Mar. 3</i>	<i>Mar. 4</i>	<i>Mar. 5</i>
<i>Mar. 6</i>	<i>Mar. 7</i> NS—Barrow	<i>Mar. 8</i>	<i>Mar. 9</i>	<i>Mar. 10</i>	<i>Mar. 11</i>	<i>Mar. 12</i>
<i>Mar. 13</i>	<i>Mar. 14</i>	<i>Mar. 15</i>	<i>Mar. 16</i>	<i>Mar. 17</i>	<i>Mar. 18</i>	<i>Mar. 19</i>
<i>Mar. 20</i>	<i>Mar. 21</i>	<i>Mar. 22</i>	<i>Mar. 23</i>	<i>Mar. 24</i> <i>Window Closes</i>	<i>Mar. 25</i>	<i>Mar. 26</i>