

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199
Phone: (907) 786-3888, Fax: (907) 786-3898
Toll-Free: 1-800-478-1456

In Reply Refer To
R26066

JUL 21 2026

Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, AK 99518-1599

Spencer Rearden, Refuge Manager
Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 346
Bethel, AK 99559

Dear Commissioner Vincent-Lang and Manager Rearden,

I write on behalf of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) to express concerns about user conflicts in Unit 18 and to request hunter check stations be established during the fall moose season at hub community airports.

The Council held a public meeting March 15-17, 2026, in Bethel, during which Council members and regional participants raised repeated concerns about increasing user conflicts between local subsistence hunters and visiting nonlocal hunters. The thriving moose population in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region has attracted more and more hunters in recent years who access the region by air and boat. This increase in hunters has coincided with increasing reports of trespassing, wanton waste, and improper meat care. Local residents have observed edible portions of moose being left in the field, while only the antlers are transported out. This is not only illegal, but it violates the principles of ethical and respectful harvest and also undermines food security and cultural values in our communities.

The Council feels that one effective way to address these issues would be to establish hunter check stations at major hub airports in the region, such as Bethel, Aniak, St. Mary's, and Emmonak. Check stations would serve several important purposes:

- Verification of meat salvage: Ensure that all legally required edible portions of harvested animals are transported out of the field
- Meat quality assurance: Provide an opportunity to assess the condition of meat being brought out to reduce wanton waste

- Education and outreach: Offer a venue for hunter education and outreach, including information on the importance of respectful harvest and good meat care, land status maps, and opportunities for donating meat to local residents
- Data Collection: Opportunity to improve data about harvest numbers, locations, and compliance with regulations

The Council recognizes that the vastness of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and limited enforcement resources present significant challenges. However, by placing check stations at key transportation hubs, impacts could be optimized, helping to ensure that all hunters are held to high standards of stewardship and compliance.

The Council respectfully requests that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, in consultation with local communities, Tribal governments, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, and Refuge law enforcement, explore the feasibility of establishing seasonal hunter check stations at Bethel, Aniak, St. Mary's, Emmonak, and other appropriate hub airports during peak hunting periods. The Council invites you to discuss this matter with us at its upcoming fall meeting in Bethel October 27-29, 2026.

Thank you for considering the Council's concerns and request. The Council looks forward to your response. If you have any questions or would like to follow up, please contact me through our Subsistence Council Coordinator Brooke McDavid at (907) 891-9181 or brooke_mcdavid@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Cleveland
Chair

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Office of Subsistence Management
Interagency Staff Committee
Sergeant Walter Blajeski, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, Bethel
Daniel Shamhart, Regional Chief of Law Enforcement, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Curtis Stevens, Patrol Captain, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Benjamin Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Aaron Poetter, Federal Subsistence Liaison, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Administrative Record