



DIVISION OF SUBSISTENCE

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Since 1978, the Division of Subsistence of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has been charged with quantifying wild resource harvests by conducting studies across Alaska. In order for managers and policy makers to provide for customary and traditional uses, researchers must periodically collect and update harvest information from the public. This involves collecting basic data on wild resource harvest and use as well as documenting the context of harvest patterns. The Division has conducted systematic household surveys in over 270 rural communities in Alaska, the results of which appear in the online Community Subsistence Information System (CSIS).

Subsistence Harvest Trends of Prince of Wales Island

A study to update community subsistence harvest and use information for the communities of Craig, Klawock, and Thorne Bay Alaska

Why Conduct This Research?

The purpose of this project is to produce updated, reliable estimates of subsistence harvest and uses in the communities of Klawock, Craig, and Thorne Bay. Reliable and current harvest assessments provide fisheries and wildlife managers with important data to ensure a subsistence priority in opportunities to harvest through regulatory processes. The study will also document local observations of harvesting practices, harvest trends, as well as resource abundance and characteristics over time. There will also be a component focused solely on the harvest of large land mammals.

The Division of Subsistence last conducted comprehensive harvest surveys for Klawock, Craig, and Thorne Bay in 1998. The documented importance of large land mammals (primarily deer) to Prince of Wales Island (POWI) communities and the subsequent demographic and economic changes that have occurred in these communities since the last survey effort indicate the need for updated estimates. The recent transition of Ketchikan to a federally recognized rural community also underlines the need to document contemporary harvest practices. By conducting household surveys, this study will compare and contrast harvests today with those of the past, including the areas used and distances traveled to collect wild foods. Survey questions will examine the reasons that harvest patterns may have changed and how harvesters have responded to changes in the community and environment.



After the initial comprehensive surveys are administered, a follow-up survey effort will occur annually, with a singular focus on the harvest and use of deer, black bear, moose, mountain goat, and wolves. Large land mammal harvest surveys will compliment permit data to document harvesting activities within the communities.

In addition to surveys, this project will include interviews with knowledgeable residents about past and present use and harvest of all wild resources.

Project Objectives

The goal of this project is to understand recent trends in the harvests and uses of wild resources in the context of social, economic, and environmental changes. To accomplish this, the project has three objectives:

1

Produce reliable estimates of fish, large land mammals, and other wild resources harvested and used for subsistence in Klawock, Craig, and Thorne Bay.

2

Create comprehensive spatial maps of subsistence harvest areas.

3

Document local observations of subsistence harvesting practices and potential changes in resource populations, harvesting trends, and areas used.

How we use this data

The information gathered in this study will assist local, state, and federal policy makers in their management responsibilities for wild resources. The data will be available to local and regional advisory councils that make recommendations for regulatory changes and can assist the Alaska Board of Fisheries, Board of Game, and the Federal Subsistence Board in the informed management of fish and wildlife in the region.



Community Participation

The success of this project relies on the participation of Klawock, Craig, and Thorne Bay residents, and project outcomes benefit the communities and their harvesters by ensuring subsistence is prioritized. Local research assistants and project staff will communicate with residents about the project and why their participation in the study is important. All data collected through this study will be confidential, and participation in the survey is voluntary and anonymous.

At the conclusion of both phases of the project, we will present results of the study for review at a community data review meeting. Community feedback will be incorporated into the final reports, which will be published on the ADF&G website. A summary of research results will also be distributed to community residents.

Project Timeline

This is a two part, multi-year study, beginning in July of 2026 and concluding in December of 2030.

2026

Aug – Dec: Community consultation

2027

Jan – March: Comprehensive surveys and interviews

March – Oct: Data analysis and review

Oct – Dec: Community data review meetings

2028

Jan – March: Large land mammal surveys

March – April: Follow up interviews

Dec: Final report published (comprehensive surveys)

2029

Jan – March: Final large land mammal surveys

March – April: Final follow up interviews

April – Dec: Data analysis and review

2030

Feb: Community data review meetings

Dec: Final report published (large land mammals)

Funding for this project is provided through the Office of Subsistence Management Fisheries Research Monitoring Program and the USFWS Wildlife Restoration Grant.