

**KODIAK/ALEUTIANS SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Egan Center  
Anchorage, Alaska  
March 10, 2016  
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

**TELECONFERENCE:** call the toll free number: 1-866-820-9854 , then when prompted enter the passcode: 4801802

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

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

**AGENDA**

\*Asterisk identifies action item.

- 1. **Roll Call and Establish Quorum** (*Secretary*).....KA-3
- 2. **Invocation**
- 3. **Call to Order** (*Chair*)
- 4. **Welcome and Introductions** (*Chair*)
- 5. **Review and Adopt Agenda\*** (*Chair*) .....KA-1
- 6. **Election of Officers**
  - Chair (*DFO*)
  - Vice-Chair (*New Chair*)
  - Secretary (*New Chair*)
- 7. **Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes\*** (*Chair*) .....KA-4
- 8. **Reports**
  - Council Member Reports
  - Chair’s Report
- 9. **Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items**
- 10. **Old Business** (*Chair*)
  - a. WP16-21 Section 804 Analysis

*(Will be discussed during a joint session with the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council starting at 1:30 p.m.)*

**11. New Business (Chair)**

- a. Call for Federal Fish and Shellfish Regulatory Proposals\* (*OSM Fisheries*).....225
- b. Identify Priority Information Needs for FRMP\* (*OSM Fisheries*)
- c. Approve FY2015 Annual Report (*Council Coordinator*) .....KA-17

**12. Agency Reports**

*Unless a special report is requested by the Council, all agencies should be prepared to only provide written reports for this meeting.*

**13. Future Meeting Dates\***

- Confirm date and location of Fall 2016 meeting .....235
- Select date and location for Winter 2017 meeting .....236

**14. Closing Comments**

**15. Adjourn (Chair)**

**To teleconference** into the meeting, call the toll free number: 1-866-820-9854, then when prompted enter the passcode: 4801802

*Reasonable Accommodations*

The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodation needs to Karen Deatherage, 907-786-3564, karen\_deatherage@fws.gov, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on February 20, 2016.

**REGION 3**  
**Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

<b>Seat</b>	<b>Year Apptd Term Expires</b>	<b>Member Name Community</b>
<b>1</b>	2010 <b>2016</b>	<b>Antone Shelikoff</b> Akutan
<b>2</b>	2001 <b>2016</b>	<b>Patrick Holmes</b> Kodiak <span style="float: right;"><b>Secretary</b></span>
<b>3</b>	2008 <b>2016</b>	<b>Richard Koso</b> Adak
<b>4</b>	2004 <b>2016</b>	<b>Samuel Rohrer</b> Kodiak
<b>5</b>	2011 <b>2017</b>	<b>Thomas Schwantes</b> Kodiak
<b>6</b>	2014 <b>2017</b>	<b>Coral Chernoff</b> Kodiak
<b>7</b>	2014 <b>2017</b>	<b>Rebecca Skinner</b> Kodiak
<b>8</b>	2009 <b>2018</b>	<b>Della Trumble</b> King Cove <span style="float: right;"><b>Vice Chair</b></span>
<b>9</b>	2000 <b>2018</b>	<b>Mitch Simeonoff, Sr.</b> Akhiok <span style="float: right;"><b>Chair</b></span>
<b>10</b>	2012 <b>2018</b>	<b>Melissa Berns</b> Old Harbor

KODIAK/ALEUTIANS SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

September 29-30, 2015

Kodiak Best Western Inn, Kodiak, Alaska

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m., Tuesday, September 29, 2015.

**Roll call**

A quorum was established with the following council members present or teleconferencing: Melissa Berns, Coral Chernoff, Patrick Holmes, Rebecca Skinner, Antone Shelikoff, Tom Schwantes, Mitch Simeonoff (via telephone), Della Trumble (via telephone). Absent: Rick Koso, Sam Rohrer.

*(Invocation – Pat Holmes)*

Agency Staff in Attendance

Karen Deatherage, OSM, Anchorage  
Palma Ingles, OSM, Anchorage  
Tom Kron, OSM, Anchorage  
Don Rivard, OSM, Anchorage  
George Pappas, OSM, Anchorage (telephone)  
Orville Lind, OSM, Anchorage (telephone)  
Tom Evans, OSM, Anchorage (telephone)  
Heather Tonneson, USFWS, Anchorage  
Aaron Poe, USFWS, Anchorage (telephone)  
Eric Taylor, USFWS Migratory Bird Management, Anchorage (telephone)  
Bill Pyle, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge  
William Leacock, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge  
Tevis Underwood, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge  
Kevin Van Hatton, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge  
Tonya Lee, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge  
Anne Marie LaRosa, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge  
Robin Corcoran, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge  
Stacey Lowe, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge  
Doug Damberg, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge (telephone)  
Glenn Chen, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage  
Dan Sharp, Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage (telephone)  
Lisa Fox, ADF&G, Cold Bay and Kodiak  
Steve Schrof, ADF&G, Kodiak  
Tyler Polum, ADF&G, Kodiak  
Heather Finkle ADF&G, Kodiak  
James Jackson, ADF&G, Kodiak  
John Crye, ADF&G, Kodiak  
Daria Ruhl, ADF&G, Kodiak  
Nate Svoboda, ADF&G, Kodiak

Drew Crawford, ADF&G, Juneau (telephone)  
Dave Crowley, ADF&G, King Salmon (telephone)

Tribal and Public Members in Attendance

John Reft, Kodiak  
Kelly Krueger, Sun'aq Tribe  
Natasha Hayden, Native Village of Afognak  
Pam Bumstead, Sun'aq Tribe  
Tom Lance, Sun'aq Tribe  
Dick Rohrer  
Bennita Berestoff  
Andy Berestoff  
Alicia Andrew, Karluk Tribe (telephone)  
Katherine Reft, Karluk Tribe (telephone)

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was amended by adding 1) Under New Business, Aleutians/Bering Sea Islands Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC); 2) Under Tribal Organizations, Karluk Native Tribe regarding Karluk River salmon and shellfish issues; 3) Under Agency Reports – ADF&G, Board of Fish Agenda Change Request #6 regarding Upper Station and Frazer Lake salmon management. USFWS Proposed Rule was moved above Rural Determination under Old Business due to presenter scheduling. Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge asked to present their report on 10/29 in the afternoon. Schwantes motioned to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Skinner. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from the Winter 2014 Meeting

Skinner moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Schwantes. Motion passed unanimously.

Council Service Awards

Awards were presented by Tom Kron to Antone Shelikoff for five years of service, Rick Koso (absent) for ten years of service and Mitch Simeonoff (telephone) for fifteen years of service.

Council Member Reports.

*Pat Holmes.* Red fishing was mediocre because using old equipment. This Spring, juvenile fur seal out there. Beachcombing is good, worrying about disease for starfish. Noticed increase in deer tracks (Mission Beach). Deer are improving on this end of the island. Applaud Tonya Lee and Afognak tribe for their work with young folks.

*Coral Chernoff.* Emperor Geese. Looks like healthy populations. There was talk of doing counts starting on April 24 or 25, but the last geese seen were on April 22 in the Bell Flats area. Went week after week to observe them. Regularly saw 160 in Women's Bay. These were probably not included in the counts up north. Observed 1<sup>st</sup> geese (10) back here on September 12<sup>th</sup>. No one is studying geese. Perhaps have more local observations. Attended the Kodiak Regional Meeting for AMBCC. A proposal was submitted for Alaska Native to allow the use of non-edible parts for art. The bird list is limited and from the museum pieces, it looks like many of those birds that they made coats or hats out of do not appear on that list. As an artist and

someone who likes to use all parts of the animal, frustrating to throw away feathers and hides. In late August we didn't see many deer. But did see does with fawns and they were still spotted.

*Tom Schwantes.* Still some concern regarding the availability of salmon though Buskin did real well. Pasagshak was a big failure this year. Deer population looks really healthy, there were lots on the road system. Not a lot observed on the south end. Folks are still looking to get emperor geese.

*Melissa Berns.* Very busy summer with tribe and summer camps. Great salmon return around Old Harbor. Deer population has rebounded on Old Harbor and Siklik Island. Seeing a lot more of does/multiple fawns. Have a grant for tribe to teach about efficient wood harvesting respectfully and providing for elders. Seeing lots of dead murrets floating in our boat harbor. There were low crab stocks for subsistence harvesting this year. Goats were close enough to harvest. There is a shellfish study through the tribe and school district to get data about the PSP levels on local beaches. We still subsist despite the issues.

*Antone Shelikoff*

Submitted a written report but will share a few things. Used to do surveys for ADF&G and am impressed with them. In August there is usually a culture camp but this year didn't participate. There seems to be a little less this year for help to clean up creeks.

*Rebecca Skinner*

Kodiak Borough was contacted over the summer by their DC office regarding the Subsistence Access Management Act of 2015. Borough postponed action on a resolution pending action by the Federal Subsistence Board. Also been involved in the trawl groundfish fishery which opened for cod in September, as well as new tests for PSP that have higher levels and can be taken into field for immediate results.

*Mitch Simeonoff*

Seen lots of Emperor geese in the area including young. There was a healthy population of goats with lots of hunters. Lots of seals, Steller sea lions getting caught in lines. Sea otter populations are growing, trying to keep them out of clam beds. Had pretty good subsistence and cultural camp in Akhiok this summer.

*Della Trumble*

There is snow on the mountains which is early this year. Fishing went well this season. No caribou drawing, which is concerning. The tribe and Izembek staff participated in culture camp this summer.

### **Tribal and Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items**

John Reft of Sun'aq Tribal Council testified on his own behalf. Appreciates the time Coral put into the Emperor goose issue and sightings. Doesn't believe they are counted on the south end of the island, and indicated that to AMBCC in Fairbanks. Reft believes the geese drive away the ducks so you can't get the ducks. Thinks we need to get the word out to the Coast Guard to give the birds they don't eat to the locals. There are too many sea otter eating our shellfish.

## **Old Business**

### *National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) Proposed Rule on Hunting*

Heather Tonneson and Ann Marie LaRosa provided an update on the NWRS proposed rule on hunting, including the USFWS mission and requirements of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) to maintain healthy populations of wildlife in their natural order. Holmes and Schwantes expressed concerns with current regulations prohibiting berry picking and other resource gathering by recreational users in refuges. Tonneson explained that the USFWS received overwhelming number of comments from villages concerned about overharvest of berries from non-subsistence users. Skinner asked how refuges were defining natural diversity as it relates to a timeline, and raised questions about temporary closures and losing the opportunity to start over if needed. Holmes stated it should be left at 12 months and that this issue represented conflicted between ADF&G and USFWS. He requested that this ruling be done by region not statewide. Tonneson responded that 1997 National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act directs USFWS to look at the past but doesn't require achievement of primitive America like NPS. It's species dependent and there is no absolute timeline. She stated you can refer to Definitions in the ruling which highlights historic conditions. Tonneson mentioned that another hearing was scheduled in Kodiak for December 2 but that may be shifted. Several Council members recommended closures stay at 12 months because they can get lost after 3 years. The Council also expressed that closures be done on an area by area basis, not statewide.

Dick Roher testified about how emergency closures impacted the guide industry. He cited the shutdown and how it cost guides. Ann Marie LaRosa explained how the government shutdown was different than temporary closures.

## **Rural Determination**

Tom Kron updated the Council on the Federal Subsistence Board work session in July and how the Board divided the rural determination process into three phases; namely, 1) the Board voted to adopt the proposed rule as written, 2) the Board voted to adopt pre-2007 rural status, and 3) the Board voted to direct staff to develop options to determine future non-rural determinations for the Board's consideration. OSM expects to have draft recommendations by the Board's January 2016 meeting.

## **New Business**

### *Wildlife Proposals*

Tom Kron, with Tom Evans on the phone, presented WP16-21 submitted by the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council requesting that the caribou season in Units 9C remainder and 9E be modified from having no open season to a To Be Announced season and open to federally qualified subsistence users.

Holmes moved to support WP16-21 as modified by OSM. Seconded by Shelikoff. Skinner supported giving the manager flexibility to establish a hunt when the population allowed but both she and Schwantes were concerned about driving the population down to where it was when the hunt was closed. Drew Crawford from ADF&G noted that the Department supported WP16-21 as modified by OSM. The Council decided to table the motion until after agency report from ADF&G.

*Aleutian Bering Sea Island (ABSI) Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC)*

Aaron Poe from USFW presented the LCC mission to take on large scale issues like climate change and bring together as much agency data as possible. There are currently five (5) LCC's in Alaska with 130 different organizations working at various levels. Kodiak is within the Western Alaska LCC, while the remainder of the region is within the ABSI LCC. Different teams within each LCC work on fish, commercial fisheries, subsistence and cultural resources, marine mammals, seabirds and terrestrial vegetation. Poe introduced a list of current threats including extreme weather conditions, changes in timing of traditional subsistence harvests, algal blooms, PSP, water temperature increases, ocean acidification, increased vessel traffic and coastal erosion. Poe discussed the upcoming Aleutian Life Forum, a science and local knowledge event. Deatherage is currently trying to get the Council to meet in Unalaska in conjunction with the Forum, tentatively scheduled for August 13-19, 2016.

*Alaska Board of Fish Proposal #194*

Holmes introduced Proposal #194 from the Unalaska Native Fishermen's Association regarding protection in Unalaska Bay from commercial sea trawlers. Homes moved that the Council support Proposal #194, coming before the Alaska Board of Fish at their 2016 meeting. Shelikoff seconded. Council members requested a copy of the proposal. Schwantes moved to table the motion to allow Council time to review the proposal. Seconded by Skinner. The motion to table was passed unanimously.

*Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP)*

Don Rivard, OSM, provided a briefing on the FRMP program, its six regions and mission. Kodiak/Aleutians is located within the Southwest Region of the FRMP and shared with Bristol Bay Subsistence Council. Rivard presented some program guidelines and history, and responsibilities of the Technical Review Committee (TRC). He also outlined recent modifications to the program, including specific guidelines with five criteria for proposals and agency participation. The FRMP Southwest Region received 7 proposals, some of which were priority information needs previously identified by the Council. Rivard clarified the Council has the option of providing comments or a formal motion of support for each proposal. Rivard provided overview and rank for each proposal. The Council engaged in considerable discussion on its role in reviewing the proposals, what proposals meet region needs, and how to rank them relative to the Bristol Bay proposals. Skinner was concerned that the priority information needs were skewed to areas outside of Kodiak, and wanted to have more input. Rivard explained that priority information needs were brought before the Council a year ago, prior to Skinner's appointment.

The Council did not reach agreement on where to rank proposals because they believed they were competing for funding. Some members ranked Kodiak area proposals (16-401/16-402) at the top. Heather Finkle from ADF&G addressed the need for climate change baseline data requested in 16-401. Council members were also concerned about 16-452 and its potential benefits to the communities of Cold Bay, Sand Point and King Cove. Council members remarked that any proposal addressing immediate or urgent subsistence needs should be ranked highest, regardless of location. The Council's comments were captured by Rivard for communication to the FRMP lead, and requests will be put forth in the Council's annual report to



have the Council more involved in the beginning, including review of the proposals prior to or during the review by the TRC. The Council felt it had more input in the past, and requested to see full proposals so they could have a better understanding of project needs. Kron explained the three parts of the process, 1) TRC review, 2) Council review and 3) Interagency Staff Committee review. All three would be presented separately to the Board in January for final decisions.

Meeting was recessed at 5:30 p.m.

## September 30, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

### Agency Reports

#### Tribal Governments

##### *Sun'aq Tribe*

Tom Lance, Natural Resources Department Director, provided an update on Tribal concerns including impacts of sea otters and derelict crab pots in Women's Bay. They also have concerns with an invasive species of crayfish in Buskin Lake, particularly given the warming climate and potential for increased infestation. The Tribe is looking to team up with the Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association, ADF&G and the Kodiak Saltwater Conservation District to address the issue. Increasing numbers of trapped crayfish are causing concerns about impacts on the Buskin watershed. Another concern is Navy training exercises in Gulf of Alaska and possible impacts on salmon. The Sun'aq Tribe was involved in a protest to oppose the Navy and others causing degradation to Gulf of Alaska, including past, present and proposed activities.

John Reft, Vice Chair, testified about concerns of naval exercises and impacts on king crab, Dolly Varden predation on salmon eggs and fry, and bears overrunning the Buskin River. Reft believes the bears pose a safety problem, are overprotected and should be thinned out by local hunting guides. He does not believe the crab issue in Women's Bay is a result of ghost fishing, but of sea otter predation. Reft discussed the AMBCC meeting of the Native Caucus in Fairbanks and a decision to keep the Emperor goose hunt closed until 2017 to give the Caucus time to work out differences.

##### *Karluk Tribe (telephone)*

Katherine Reft with the Karluk Tribe discussed problems with commercial fisheries in their area as well as the Tribe's relationship with ADF&G. ADF&G has opened up commercial fishing at the mouth of the Karluk during the fall times when locals subsistence fish. She explained that this was not just a problem for the Village of Karluk but also for people who come down with camps to try to put their fish away. Alecia Andrew, the Tribal Council President, stated that the Tribe has tried to work for years with ADF&G locally and there is no communication. The Tribe is ready to assert their rights as a reservation to protect the fishery for the people. Reft explained that they don't see the fish that ADF&G claims are coming through the weir and that ADF&G is either double counting or misidentifying fish, and are only concerned with red salmon. The Tribe wants people to know that they are tired of it and nobody is listening.

James Jackson, ADF&G area management biologist for salmon and herring in Kodiak, reported that the Sockeye Salmon runs had exceeded or nearly exceeded escapement goals. He also clarified that commercial doesn't fish the mouth of the river, rather the mouth of the lagoon. Reft explained it didn't matter - they were both the same to tribe. Jackson reported that king salmon may not be retained, and that they have well trained technicians to identify types of fish. Holmes suggested setting up a dedicated beach seine for subsistence given that the fish haven't been in the lagoon as much as in the past. Jackson remarked that ADF&G would be happy to work with the tSockeye Salmon tribe to set up a way to hold the fish so they can come and get them. He also suggested that the tribe speak direct to him or the regional supervisor Nick Sagalkin regarding subsistence, or the Board of Fish. Jackson stressed that most of the complaints they get out of Karluk have to do with sports fishing and a limited availability of king salmon.

George Pappas, OSM, (via telephone) provided overview of the issues discussed between the OSM and the Karluk Tribe, including those above as well as the timing of blue flies, Coho fishing, steelhead handling, and inability of locals to meet their subsistence needs. The tribe also expressed concerns over scallop trawlers and impacts on crabs. Pappas explained that this was a unique area with federal jurisdiction in marine waters from the beach.

Mark Stichert, area management biologist for shellfish and ground fisheries in Kodiak, Chignik and Alaska Peninsula, responded to the scallop issue. He cited unique nature of state and federal co-management of commercial fishery. ADF&G requires 100% observer coverage on vessels. There are no restrictions in terms of where the vessels can fish, however, it is a small fishery. ADF&G recognizes that vessels use hard on bottom contact equipment. They set a maximum cap on the amount of tanner crab that can be taken, and shut down the scallop fishery if the cap is exceeded. ADF&G does not show any king crab bycatch. Pappas stated that subsistence users can submit a proposal to the Board to close area to non-Federally qualified users by area or time or both, or a fisheries special action request to ensure that Federally qualified users are meeting their needs. An example of how this is done is the king crab fishery in Women's Bay. Stichert added that they could also petition the Board of Fish and he would assist. Holmes said the Council could support a proposal for the next Board cycle if the tribe was interested in coming up with a draft. Berns recommended contacting her or Pat to get contact information for the ADF&G advisory committee in that area. Stichert stated that scallops fall under the statewide miscellaneous shellfish meeting in April, 2017. Jackson added the next Board of Fish meeting for Kodiak is in spring of 2016. Skinner asked Jackson to clarify counts, and Jackson responded that ADF&G counts all salmon species in this area. He also mentioned that due to funding shortages the weir may be pulled earlier next year.

#### *Native Village of Afognak Tribal Council*

Natasha Hayden updated the Council on activities of the Tribal council, including a reduced number of culture camps this year because money was diverted for a mess hall. The Tribe obtained cultural use permits to harvest deer and seal out of season, and held sea otter and salmon harvesting/processing demonstrations. The Tribe also partnered with Sun'aq to protest the DOD northern area training offshore. The Tribe participated in government to government consultation with DOD prior to training and is working to establish consultation when training

programs are designed. Tribal members are concerned about seeing lots of dead birds on the beach. The Tribe is actively involved in the Gulf of Alaska bycatch management process. Hayden participated in a round table at Port Lions with industry, processors and small boat fishermen. The Tribe is raising the issue of blood quantum, particularly as it relates to sea otter harvest which requires  $\frac{1}{4}$  native. Hayden put in a plug for the culture camp and invited all to attend a fundraising auction and dinner in February.

## Federal & State

### *Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge*

Kevin VanHattan, fisheries biologist, reported on a project using time lapse photography system to enumerate Sockeye Salmon moving into the system. Ann Marie LaRosa updated Council on staffing issues, including the loss of the subsistence biologist position. She appreciated Council support regarding the position, and asked for help from the Council to get local youth interested in the ANSEP (Alaska Native Science and Engineering) positions. She also provided information on the Western Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) water temperature monitoring program, clarifying that monitoring programs were not designed for past rather future comparisons. Berns remarked that the Alutiiq Tribe in Old Harbor worked with the refuge to install temperature gauges up the Big Creek system to monitor for increases related to climate change. LaRosa reported that a decision on the Karluk Lake Enhancement proposal should be out by the end of the month.

Bill Leacock, wildlife biologist for the Refuge presented an update on brown bear stream surveys and distributed preliminary results showing bear use at multiple streams and rivers in Kodiak, salmon abundance with bear attendance, and air/stream temperature relationships. Leacock highlighted the impact of elderberry crops on bear movements. LaRosa mentioned a joint project with ADF&G to look at bear and berry relationships. The Refuge did not do a deer survey this year but anecdotal evidence suggests deer populations are doing well. ADF&G and the Refuge are cooperating on goat monitoring project to look at habitat, vegetation impacts and carrying capacity.

Robin Corcoran, bird biologist reported on Emperor geese surveys, a near shore marine birds survey, common murres and die offs. Corcoran distributed an Emperor goose winter survey update which showed stable populations compared to the 2010 survey, and increased numbers of Canada goose. A breeding bird survey showed unusually large number of murres in Afognak and Shuyak which may be related to colony abandonment in other areas. The observed Kodiak murre die off carcass study showed emaciation related to lack of food. Researchers are exploring harmful algae blooms and PSP as possible culprits. Corcoran shared information about COASST – the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team program and its Kodiak based observations of increased murre deaths. She concluded with news on steady numbers of puffins, black oyster catchers, harlequin ducks and pelagic cormorants. Uyak Bay on the west side where bird declines have occurred will be surveyed next year.

Tonya Lee, refuge information technician, reported on Kodiak subsistence salmon use patterns project, the subsistence permit system, marking and tagging sea otters and the USFWS Region 7 *Share Your Plate* project. Project monies were received to purchase fish processing equipment

for subsistence demonstrations. Pat Holmes and Melissa Berns commented on how much Lee's work is appreciated.

Dick Rohrer, local hunting and sportfish guide commented on the sea duck harvest. He believes that the restricted bag limits and enforcement is helping the population to recover and does not think additional restrictions are needed at this time.

*USFWS Migratory Bird Management*

Eric Taylor, division chief presented (via telephone) Emperor goose distribution and management. He provided an historical overview of population objectives and hunting closures, as well as 3 year average current data reflecting 81,875 birds. This population is above the line where hunting could be considered and/or resumed, however growth rate is still not substantive. The AMBCC had proposals to open goose season, the July data showed an increase in population, the Pacific Flyway Council (PFC) supported a hunt, and subsequently, the AMBCC approved a limited goose harvest in 2016. The Pacific Flyways Council (PFC) endorsed the hunt and USFWS approved regulations for a 1) limited harvest of 3500 birds, 2) a harvest allocation system either by individual, family or village, 3) an effective monitoring system and 4) a revision of the PFC Emperor Goose Management Plan by 2017. Concerns by the AMBCC, the USFWS, the Native caucus and ADF&G regarding illegal harvest, proposed harvest numbers, survey designs and population data delayed the hunt until 2017. Council members are asked to weigh in on population objectives, surveys, harvest strategy and research/management priorities. Taylor clarified that Emperor geese occur across five different Alaska Native rural regions and all should have a voice at the table.

*Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.*

Stacey Lowe, wildlife biologist presented an update on caribou in Unit 9D, the Southern Peninsula Herd (SAP), Unimak Island herd, Pacific Black Brandt, tundra swans on Izembek and Pavlof Units, as well as avian influenza monitoring. Only 1 of 20 permits issued for the SAP herd was filled. Minimum counts were conducted for SAP and Unimak herds, with increasing trends for both. The Refuge is working with USGS on eel grass monitoring in Izembek Lagoon and monitoring sea lions via remote cameras on Unimak Island. Cameras detected that walrus are also hauling out on Unimak, some 2200 last year. There was a walrus mortality event between Unimak and King Salmon, where 30-50 died. Cause will be unattainable due to decomposition stage. The event happened around the same time as large sea bird mortality event reported by the Kodiak Refuge. Approximately 200 common murre, as well as kittiwake, horned puffin and shearwater carcasses were found where birds died from emaciation. Between Cold Bay, False Pass, King Cove and lower Peninsula, an estimated 2000-3,000 birds died this summer. Lowe reported on successful Refuge outreach programs, including an open house, youth events, a culture camp, waterfowl decoy contests and more. The Refuge is currently reviewing applications for a second wildlife biologist. Lowe encouraged Council members and the public to visit the Refuge website for updates on projects.

Doug Damberg informed the Council (via telephone) that he was leaving as Refuge manager to take a regional position in Anchorage. He also discussed other staffing issues. Pat Holmes thanked Damberg for reaching out to the community, and said he hoped the Refuge got the airplane it needed for surveys.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)

Northern Alaska Peninsula (NAP), Southern Alaska Peninsula (SAP) & Unimak Caribou Herds.

David Crowley, area biologist (via telephone) reported that the SAP herd continues to grow with 45 bull/cow ratio and 45 calves/cow ratio. Body condition looks good. ADF&G issued 177 Tier II permits with only 70 animals harvested to date. Going from Tier II to general season next year for SAP, including non-residents. NAP herd showing recovery at 2,700 animals with 40 bull/cow ratio and 34 calves/cow ratio. Will be opening a Tier II hunt with 200 permits next year to residents of 9C and 9E. The Unimak Island calf mortality study showed 70% survival with a fall study planned. There are slight increases in bull and calf ratios and overall population. Wolf harvests on Unimak are not high but it seems like there are fewer wolves. Wolf numbers on the SAP seem stable. The wolf control program on NAP has been largely unsuccessful so it will be suspended for this year. Crowley reported a current population of 200 caribou on Unimak, with an objective of 1200.

Berns moved to restate motion on the floor for WP16-21 for caribou seasons in Units 9C and 9E. Skinner asked for clarification regarding the total number of permits issued. Crowley indicated a total of 200 permits would be issued, combining both the federal and state hunts. Berns called for a vote. Motion to support WP16-21 passed unanimously.

Kodiak Island brown bears, deer, elk, and mountain goats.

Nate Svoboda, area biologist for Kodiak reported that brown bears on the Kodiak Archipelago are stable to increasing at 3,500 animals. Early green-up prevented surveys the last two years. Bears in town have been fewer than in previous years. ADF&G is currently working with AK Waste Management to address concerns about the lack of bear-resistant garbage containers. Deer populations are rebounding after harsh winters in 2011 and 2012 and have excellent body condition. Tony Corcoran, based out of Anchorage, will be doing a genetic based population study of deer on Island. Elk harvests have been successful with 64 animals out of an estimated population of 942. Mountain goat populations are estimated at 2,700 with 344 harvested last year. ADF&G believes goats are reaching carrying capacity.

Holmes queried Crowley on activities related to the NWRS proposed rule. Crowley confirmed that the taking of brown bears with cubs is not permitted in Unit 9, nor is the taking of brown bears over bait or with traps/snares or aircraft. Wolves are allowed to be taken by trap during denning in June.

Holmes moved to oppose the USFWS NWRS Proposed Rule on Hunting and it was seconded by Schwantes. The motion passed unanimously.

Upper Station Sockeye Salmon

James Jackson, area biologist in Kodiak and Heather Finkle, ADF&G lead research biologist shared that early and late run escapements met lower goals due to commercial restrictions. ADFG likely missed a lot of fish because they were late. Finkle reported on research showing healthy and large Sockeye Salmon smolt compared to Karluk. She clarified that there are historical water temperature data for Upper Station but now they are getting continuous data. Jackson reported that budget cuts may force a future cut of weir.

### Afognak Lake Sockeye

Darin Ruhl, project investigator, reported on Sockeye Salmon stock monitoring which showed low smolt estimates. Escapement has been within the upper and lower goals since 2008. Zooplankton biomass remained low in 2015. ADF&G coordinated with cultural camps at the weir. For 2016, FRMP funding will continue for smolt assessment and limnological monitoring.

### Buskin River Sockeye

Tyler Polum, assistant area sportfish biologist reported 8700 Sockeye Salmon, above the upper escapement goal as well as 65,000 pinks and 900 silvers. He is getting a lot of reports of smaller fish from the subsistence fishery. ADF&G is using mitigation funds from the airport 50 expansion for a radio telemetry project on silvers. Skinner asked about crayfish in Buskin Lake. Polum responded that little is known about crayfish, they were officially documented in 2000 but don't appear to be a current threat.

### *Office of Subsistence Management Report*

Tom Kron, OSM, shared the written report.

### *Agenda Change Request (ACR) #6 to the Alaska Board of Fish.*

James Jackson reported that ACR #6 is a request to change the Alitak District Salmon Management Plan, however, no specific changes were requested. There are no stocks of concern in the District. Jack salmon are showing up in Frazier but are not included in escapement. Culling of Jacks by ADF&G occurred in 2014 and 2015. The Council did not make a motion to take action on ACR # 6.

### *Proposal 194 to Board of Fish to close Unalaska Bay to Pollock Trawl Fishery.*

Mark Stichert stated that #194 would be taken up at March 2015 BOF meeting. The entire Unalaska Bay is closed to Pollock trawl fishing under Federal regulations. Holmes asked that the Council support the closure because it impacts subsistence mackerel and herring. Schwantes did not think this was a subsistence issue. Stichert confirmed that ADF&G sees this as an allocation issue.

Holmes moved to support Proposal #194 to close the inner part of Unalaska Bay to Pollock fishing. Seconded by Shelikoff. Holmes, Shelikoff, Simeonoff and Trumble voted in favor. Schwantes, Skinner, Chernoff and Berns opposed. Motion fails.

### **Draft Annual Report**

The Council decided to include the following items of concern in their 2015 Annual Report: Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, USFWS National Wildlife Refuge Proposed Rule on Hunting, Funding for Subsistence Biologist position at Kodiak NWR, Emperor goose legal and illegal hunting, Sea otter impacts on shellfish, Aircraft for Izembek NWR, Council meeting locations, USFWS Regional Information Tech (RIT) positions, and the Kagalaska caribou removal issue.

### **All Council Meeting**

Karen Deatherage reported on the proposed agenda for the All Councils meeting to be held during the week of March 7, 2016 in Anchorage.

### **Future Meeting Dates**

Karen Deatherage presented the possibility of holding the Fall 2016 Council meeting in conjunction with the Aleutian Life Forum which is tentatively scheduled for mid-August in Dutch Harbor. This would provide an excellent opportunity to meet with members of the community in addition to a large number of tribal representatives attending the Forum.

Schwantes moved to hold the Fall 2016 Council meeting in Dutch Harbor in Mid-August. If this is not approved, then the alternative would be September 28-29 in Sand Point. Seconded by Holmes. Passed unanimously.

### **Closing Comments**

*Mitch Simeonoff.* Thank you everybody. Sorry didn't make it in – lots of wind out here. Thank you Melissa for filling in.

*Della Trumble.* Thanks for another good meeting. See you at the meeting Anchorage this winter. Have good holidays and a good winter.

*Coral Chernoff.* Thank you Melissa for filling in and Karen for all your help. Really appreciate working with all you people on here. Great comments, looking forward to next meeting.

*Pat Holmes.* Did get a hold of Sam Roher's dad and Sam is hunkered down waiting for storm to pass. This has been the most productive meeting I've ever been at. Think Karen is on the way if she's not already, she will soon be the best coordinator we have ever had. Appreciate all the folks on the Council, Palma's help on anthropology, Tom and Glenn are always here. This was a swell meeting.

*Tom Schwantes.* Also express appreciation to Karen for the meeting and timely receipt of materials. Melissa has done an outstanding job, thank you. Really appreciate all the Council comments in our discussions.

*Antone Shelikoff.* It was good to meet you Karen. You did a good job Melissa.

*Rebecca Skinner.* Thanks to everyone.

*Melissa Berns.* Thank you all for bearing with me. Very productive meeting, and looking forward to our next meeting. Hope to get to Dutch Harbor and meet with the tribes.

Meeting adjourned 8:07 p.m. September 30, 2015

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

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_

*Karen Deatherage, DFO  
Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS*

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_

Melissa Berns  
Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

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.

DRAFT



**Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**  
**c/o U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
**Office of Subsistence Management**  
**1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121**  
**Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199**

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Mr. Tim Towarak, Chair  
Federal Subsistence Board  
c/o U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 E. Tudor Road, Mail Stop 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Towarak:

The Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) appreciates the opportunity to submit this annual report to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) under the provisions of Section 805(a)(3)(D) and Section 805(c) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). At its public meeting held in Kodiak on September 29-30, 2015, the Council brought forward the following concerns and recommendations for its FY2015 Annual Report. The report was approved at the Council's winter 2016 meeting held in Anchorage. The Council wishes to share information and raise a number of concerns dealing with implementation of Title VIII of ANILCA and the continuation of subsistence uses in the Kodiak/Aleutians Region.

**1. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP)**

The Council appreciated the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) presentation on the FRMP at its September 29-30, 2015 meeting in Kodiak. OSM staff agreed to submit the concerns and recommendations outlined in the attached letter to Stewart Cogswell, the FRMP program lead. The Council is concerned that its involvement with the FRMP is too late in the process and did not allow for important input on whether projects meet Priority Information Needs and should be funded. The Council would also like to know why FRMP regions are currently inconsistent with subsistence regions and if this could be changed for consistency. The Council perceives there are allocation discrepancies between how funds are distributed to areas within the FRMP regions.

Recommendation(s): On this issue, the Council has already transmitted a letter with some recommendations to Stewart Cogswell, Fisheries Division Chief with the Office of Subsistence Management (enclosed), and incorporates those recommendations by reference.

Mr. Towarak

## **2. National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) Proposed Rule on Hunting**

At both its February and September regular cycle meetings, the Council heard presentations from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Refuges staff on the *Proposed Rule on Hunting in National Wildlife Refuge Lands in Alaska*. The Council believes its relationship with refuge staff in the region has improved; however, it is discouraged with the way this and some other issues are being communicated to subsistence users. The Council believes it has had little opportunity to provide input on the proposed rule, and voted to oppose the proposed rule on September 30. The Council is disappointed that the Rule has already been submitted to the Washington, D.C. office for approval. The 1997 National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act was brought up in the NWRS presentation as a supporting document for the Rule; however, the Council was not provided with a copy of this document at the meeting, nor does it have a good understanding of its requirements and implementation relative to the Rule.

The Council has specific concerns about extending the temporary closure review timeframe from twelve months to *up to* three years. The Council would like to know who will determine the time necessary for temporary closures, and believes such closures may be overlooked during a longer review period. The Council will be submitting comments to USFWS when the public comment period is announced in the Federal Register.

## **3. Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Staffing**

In 2014, the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge lost an important subsistence biologist position. The individual who held that position was extremely helpful to the Council, and provided critical information on ungulate research and subsistence issues for the Refuge. We believe the Refuge is no longer able to provide that caliber of information, and that the lack of such information is detrimental to the Council and the Kodiak subsistence community.

The Council would like to see funding returned to the Refuge to fill this position. The Refuge Manager expressed the possibility of filling the position with an Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) student. Council members will encourage local youth to apply for an ANSEP position should it become available.

## **4. Emperor Geese**

The Council is pleased to hear progress towards a limited Emperor Goose hunt. Over the years the Council has expressed concerns regarding the validity of population surveys, and is gratified survey methods are being reviewed and/or modified. The Council continues to have issue with a proposed 3,500 harvest limit, which equals the estimated number of birds illegally harvested in the Yukon Delta region. This harvest limit would essentially leave no birds available for subsistence users in the Kodiak/Aleutians area. The Council would like for the Emperor Goose season to be opened in early March to allow Kodiak users to hunt when birds are present. The Council is greatly concerned with allocation and would like to be actively involved with the various decision-making bodies for Emperor Goose management as the issue proceeds.

The Council has sent a letter to the Suna'q Tribe, the local Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (AMBCC), the Pacific Flyway Council, and Sonny Squartsoff, the

Mr. Towarak

AMBCC statewide representative, to ensure timely communication regarding meetings and meeting summaries. The Council requests that its Council Coordinator foster relationships with the various leads for migratory bird management to complement this effort.

### **5. Sea Otters**

The Council would like to inform the Board about the impacts of sea otters on subsistence resources in the region, particularly throughout the Kodiak Archipelago. The Council recognizes that the management of marine mammals is outside the authority of the Board; however, local communities, tribes and the Council believe sea otters are negatively impacting shellfish resources, which do fall under the Board's jurisdiction. Locals are regularly reporting increasing numbers of sea otters, including in areas where sightings were previously rare.

Recommendation(s): The Council is requesting comprehensive survey data on sea otter populations, subsistence shellfish harvest data from areas that may be affected by sea otter predation, mark and tagging information on sea otters, and comparative data between areas where sea otters are and are not present. The Council would also like to know if sea otter predation studies have been conducted in the region or if such studies can be initiated to determine impacts. It is the Council's hope that this information will stimulate a discussion on sea otter management. The Council will be gathering data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for historical and current shellfish (Tanner, Dungeness and king crabs) harvests, as well as harvests of clams. The Council is willing to work with representatives from the Sea Otter Commission, USFWS, and others to address a management plan for the issue. The Council would like to have a presentation from the Sea Otter Commission at its next meeting to address these issues.

### **6. Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Aircraft**

The Council had previously received a commitment from the USFWS Region 7 office to always have an aircraft available to Izembek National Wildlife Refuge for resource surveys. The Council would like assurances that this commitment will be met, particularly given the current caribou subsistence resource issues on the Alaska Peninsula.

### **7. Council Meeting Locations**

The Council is concerned about the lack of opportunities to meet in rural communities outside the regional hubs of Kodiak and Cold Bay. The Council believes that many communities are not represented due to budget restrictions. This is particularly true for communities along the Aleutian Chain. This Council has never in its history held a meeting in an Aleutian Islands community, but is expected to represent people in that part of the region. Given that half of the current membership of the Council is comprised of Kodiak residents, any time the Council meets outside of Kodiak the travel costs for meetings automatically double. Additionally, due to the nature of air carrier service in the region (where almost all flights have to go through Anchorage), all travel costs are higher per capita when compared to any other region. Thus, an increase in cost should not be a primary consideration when determining meeting locations.

Mr. Towarak

Recommendation(s): The Council would like approval from the Office of Subsistence Management to hold its fall 2016 meeting in Dutch Harbor in conjunction with the Aleutian Life Forum. The Forum will provide an unprecedented opportunity for Council members to meet with local residents along the Aleutian Chain and Alaska Peninsula to learn about subsistence issues facing those communities. The Council will work with local community members to achieve lower lodging costs and believes early planning could help achieve a successful meeting at minimal costs.

### **8. Refuge Information Technicians (RIT)**

The Council values and appreciates the service of the USFWS Refuge Information Technicians (RIT) including our local Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge RIT, Tonya Lee. RITs provide essential information that benefit Council members and the public.

Recommendation(s): The Council recommends that the USFWS expand the RIT base to include more individuals from Refuges on the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutians. The Council believes this will help maintain continuity with tribes, and provide timely insight on important local issues.

### **9. Kagalaska Caribou Issue**

The Council is disappointed with the handling of the Kagalaska caribou and Sand Point/Chirikof cattle issues. Pressure to donate edible meat and/or hides to local communities came from our congressional delegation rather than collaboration between the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge and communities.

Recommendation(s): If there is removal of invasive or non-indigenous species and these species can be considered subsistence resources, the Federal agencies involved in their removal should be reaching out to local communities when planning disposal of meat and other useful animal parts. Otherwise, communities view the disposal as waste carried out by the Federal agencies, which is prohibited by their own regulations.

The Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council appreciates the Board's attention to these matters and the opportunity to assist the Federal Subsistence Management Program in meeting its charge of protecting subsistence resources and uses of these resources on Federal public lands and waters. We look forward to continuing discussions about the issues and concerns of subsistence users of the Kodiak/Aleutians Region. If you have questions about this report, please contact me via Karen Deatherage, Subsistence Council Coordinator, with the Office of Subsistence Management at 1-800-478-1456 or, (907) 786-3564.

Sincerely,

Speridon M. Simeonoff  
Chair

Mr. Towarak

Enclosure

cc: Federal Subsistence Board  
Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
Eugene R. Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management  
Acting Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management  
Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management  
Interagency Staff Committee  
Administrative Record

DRAFT

**Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
C/o Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

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**'JAN 2 6 2016**

Mr. Stewart Cogswell  
Fisheries Division Chief  
Office of Subsistence Management  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Cogswell:

The Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) is authorized by Section 805 of the Alaska National Interest Claims Conservation Act (ANILCA) and its charter to initiate, review and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters related to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands within the region. I am writing on behalf of the Council to provide comment on proposed fisheries research projects.

The Council held a public meeting in Kodiak on September 29-30, 2015 regarding various subsistence issues. During that meeting, the Council received a briefing from Office of Subsistence Management staff regarding the Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) and appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations on the identified proposed fisheries research projects. Overall, the Council is concerned that its involvement with the FRMP is too late in the process and does not allow for important input about how projects align with priority information needs. The Council is also interested in knowing why FRMP regions are inconsistent with subsistence regions, as this causes confusion and a sense of competition between Councils that are combined into the same FRMP region.

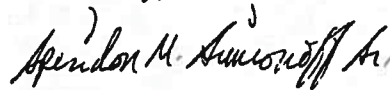
The Council would like to consult with principal investigators during proposal development to ensure projects meet Priority Information Needs. The Council would also like to review proposals prior to the Technical Review Committee to ensure those needs are correctly assessed. The Council would appreciate the opportunity to discuss Priority Information Needs and rankings with other Councils within its FRMP region to gain a better understanding of regional needs and avoid unnecessary competition. The Council also suggests that each Council identify Priority Information Needs in its annual report to the Board.

Mr. Cogswell

The Council is very discouraged with the low ranking of the Kodiak Island salmon projects 16-401, *Kodiak Lakes Ecological Assessment* and 16-402, *Kodiak Akalura Sockeye Salmon Camera System*. The Council believes these projects directly address subsistence resource shortages and should be given priority over projects that do not address populations of concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FRMP. We look forward to continuing discussions about the issues and concerns of subsistence users in the Kodiak/Aleutians Region. Please contact Karen Deatherage, Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management, at (907) 786-3564 with any questions.

Sincerely,



Speridon M. Simeonoff, Sr.  
Chair

cc: Kodiak/Aleutian Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
Interagency Staff Committee  
Eugene R. Peltola Jr., Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management  
Amee Howard, Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management  
Jennifer Hardin, Anthropology Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management  
Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management  
Administrative Record



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## ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES 2016/2017 Cycle Tentative Meeting Schedule

### Lower and Upper Cook Inlet Finfish; Kodiak Finfish; Statewide King and Tanner Crab and Supplemental Issues (Except Southeast and Yakutat)

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: Monday, April 11, 2016

Meeting Dates	Topics	Location	Comment Deadline
<b>October 18-20, 2016</b> [3 days]	<b>Work Session</b> Public hearing (October 18 only), ACRs, cycle organization, Stocks of Concern	<b>Kenai/Soldotna</b> Soldotna Sports Center	Oct. 4, 2016
<b>Nov. 28-Dec. 1, 2016</b> [4 days]	<b>Lower Cook Inlet Finfish</b>	<b>Homer</b> Kachemak Bay Research Reserve	Nov. 14, 2016
<b>January 10-13, 2017</b> [4 days]	<b>Kodiak Finfish</b>	<b>Kodiak</b> Best Western Kodiak Inn	Dec. 27, 2016
<b>February 23-March 8, 2017</b> [14 days]	<b>Upper Cook Inlet Finfish</b>	<b>Anchorage</b> Sheraton Anchorage	Feb. 9, 2017
<b>March 13-17, 2017</b> [5 days]	<b>Statewide King and Tanner Crab and Supplemental Issues</b> (Except Southeast and Yakutat)	<b>Anchorage</b> Meeting Site TBD	Feb. 27, 2017

Total Meeting Days: 30

Agenda Change Request Deadline: August 18, 2016 [60 days prior to fall worksession]

Amended November 2015



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**Alaska Department of Fish and Game Report to the Kodiak-  
Aleutian Islands Subsistence Regional Advisory Council: Update  
through December 31, 2015 on the Buskin River Sockeye Salmon  
Fishery and Stock Assessment Project**

**By  
Tyler Polum**

**January, 2016**

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**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 about 75% of the total subsistence harvest (Table 2). Between 2010 and 2014, federally qualified subsistence users harvested an average of 4,060 Buskin River sockeye salmon, which accounted for 32% of the total sockeye salmon harvest reported for communities on Kodiak Island (Table 1). In addition, about half of all Kodiak area subsistence users reporting activity during this period harvested salmon from the Buskin River fishery (Table 3). During 2008 and 2009, low sockeye escapement on the Buskin and closure of the subsistence fishery prompted subsistence users to fish elsewhere, however, participation and harvests have increased significantly since then, corresponding with rebounding sockeye returns to the Buskin Drainage. Historically, 40-50% of the sockeye harvest in the Kodiak area has come from the Buskin fishery and half of all permit holders in the region report fishing Buskin.

**Table 1.- Kodiak Area reported federal subsistence harvest of sockeye salmon by location, 2010-2014<sup>a</sup>.**

Location	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010-2014 avg.
Buskin River	1,476	4,674	2,606	6,083	5,459	4,060
Old Harbor/Sitkalidak	501	391	455	621	160	426
Alitak Bay	767	643	987	1,013	940	870
Karluk Village	127	276	150	417	393	273
Larsen Bay/Uyak Bay	705	737	616	863	2,484	1,081
Uganik Bay	1,077	1,123	1,051	752	1,007	1,002
Afognak Bay	2,146	1,978	1,711	2,012	3,001	2,170
Remainder Afognak Island	1,502	2,186	2,906	2,949	1,968	2,302
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,301</b>	<b>12,008</b>	<b>10,482</b>	<b>14,710</b>	<b>15,412</b>	<b>12,183</b>

<sup>a</sup> Source: ADF&G Division of Commercial Fisheries, Kodiak. 2015 data unavailable.

**Table 2.- Buskin River drainage reported subsistence salmon harvest by species, 2010-2014<sup>a</sup>.**

Year	Permits	Reported Subsistence Harvest									
		Chinook		Sockeye		Coho		Pink		Chum	
		No. Fish	% of Total	No. Fish	% of Total	No. Fish	% of Total	No. Fish	% of Total	No. Fish	% of Total
2010	164	16	1%	1,476	63%	679	29%	146	6%	38	2%
2011	255	11	<1%	4,674	92%	287	6%	67	1%	15	0%
2012	280	1	<1%	2,606	69%	978	26%	154	4%	12	<1%
2013	308	8	<1%	6,083	89%	611	9%	117	2%	39	<1%
2014	330	29	<1%	5,459	76%	1,537	21%	121	2%	11	<1%
Average	267	13	0	4,060	1	818	0	121	0	23	0

<sup>a</sup> Source: ADF&G Division of Commercial Fisheries, Kodiak. 2015 data unavailable.

**Table 3.- Federal subsistence harvest locations in the Kodiak Area by number of permits fished, 2010-2014<sup>a</sup>.**

Location	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010-2014
						avg.
Buskin River	164	255	224	308	330	256
Old Harbor/Sitkalidak	25	21	29	30	23	26
Alitak Bay	29	31	34	28	27	30
Karluk Village	6	6	4	10	6	6
Larsen Bay/Uyak Bay	31	31	26	27	46	32
Uganik Bay	45	40	40	35	33	39
Afognak Bay	90	81	70	85	89	83
Remainder Afognak Island	52	49	61	61	58	56
Number issued	442	514	488	584	612	528

<sup>a</sup> Source: ADF&G Division of Commercial Fisheries, Kodiak. 2015 data unavailable.

In 2000, in order to ensure sustained sockeye salmon production over time, a stock assessment study was initiated by Alaska Department Fish and Game (ADF&G) on the Buskin River. It was funded by the Office of Subsistence Management with the goal to establish a Biological Escapement Goal (BEG) for the sockeye salmon run on the Buskin. The BEG is based on a population model which incorporates annual escapement and harvest figures with the age composition of annual returns to estimate the total production of each year class (known as a brood table). Samples of male to female ratios, average length and age classes are collected each year over the course of the run from the escapement and the subsistence harvest. Because development of the brood table requires age composition data collected over at least 3 generations, annual data collection for completion of the study is necessary over a 12-15 year period. The current escapement goal range is set at 5,000 - 8,000 sockeye salmon and 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 enumerated through in-season counts of adult fish migrating into the drainage. A salmon counting weir located on Buskin River has been operated by ADF&G for this purpose since 1985. In 2002, a second weir was installed on a major tributary stream flowing into the Buskin River from Catherine and Louise lakes.

## **2015 PROJECT RESULTS**

### *Escapement*

The 2015 count at the Buskin River weir was 8,718 sockeye salmon. This is less than the recent 5-year average of 12,102 (Figure 1). The Buskin River weir, located at the outlet of Buskin Lake, was operational on 19 May and continued through 15 October. Timing of the 2015 run was later than historic run timing, with 25% of the run counted by 10 June, 50% by 2 July, and 75% by 16 July (Figure 2). Typically, 75% of the Buskin River sockeye run is counted in June, but this year more than half of the escapement was counted in the month of July.

The Lake Louise tributary weir was located approximately one-eighth mile upstream of the Buskin River confluence, below the Chiniak Highway. The weir was installed on 2 June and continued through 29 September. The final Lake Louise weir count was 280 sockeye salmon (Figure 1), which was less than the recent 5-year average of 582; typically the Lake Louise return peaks in mid-August (Figure 3).

Timing of the 2015 Lake Louise run was similar to other years in that the majority of the escapement coincided with high water or rain events. The majority of the escapement was counted during periods of high water.

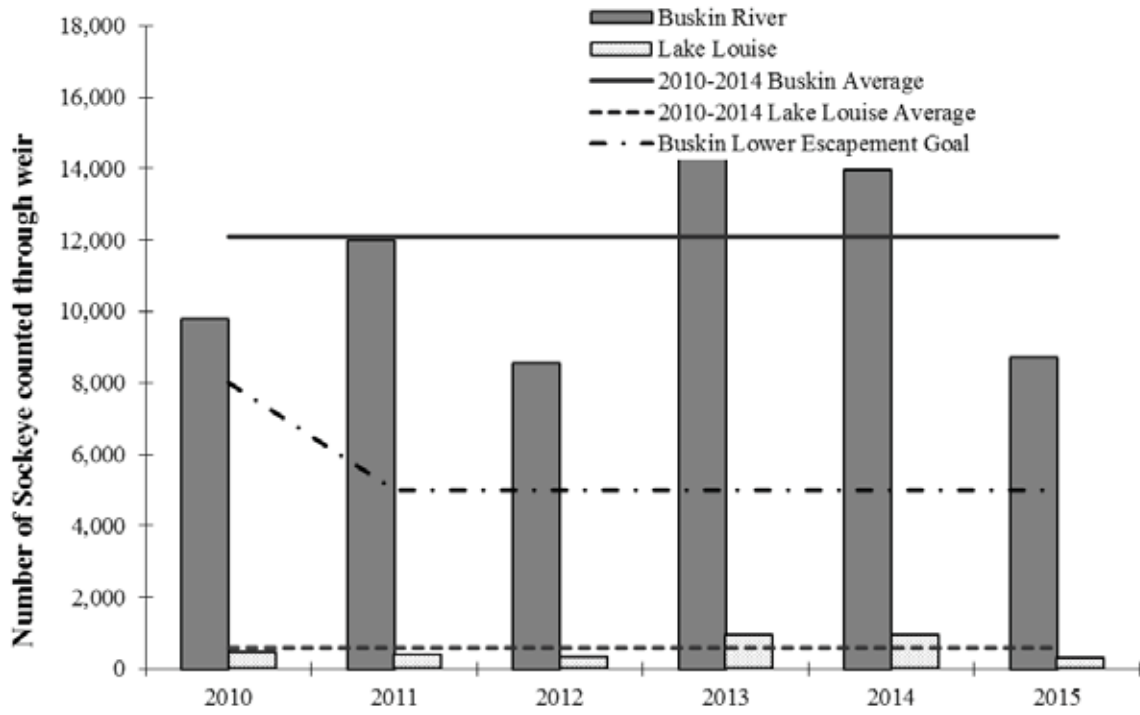


Figure 1.- Buskin River and Lake Louise sockeye salmon escapement, 2010-2015.

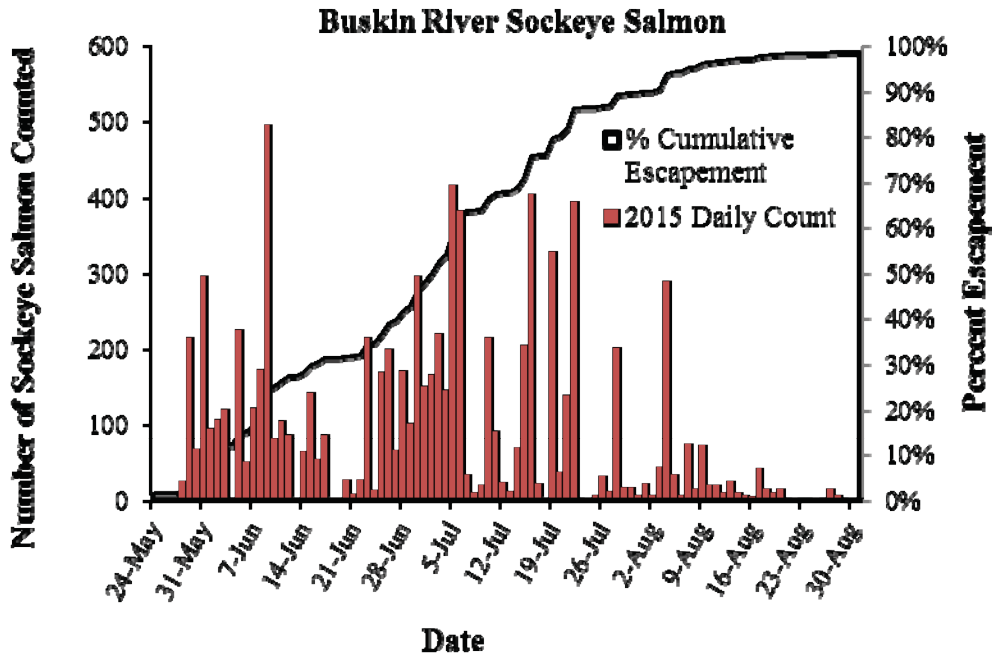


Figure 2.- 2015 daily sockeye salmon weir counts into Buskin Lake through 31 August.

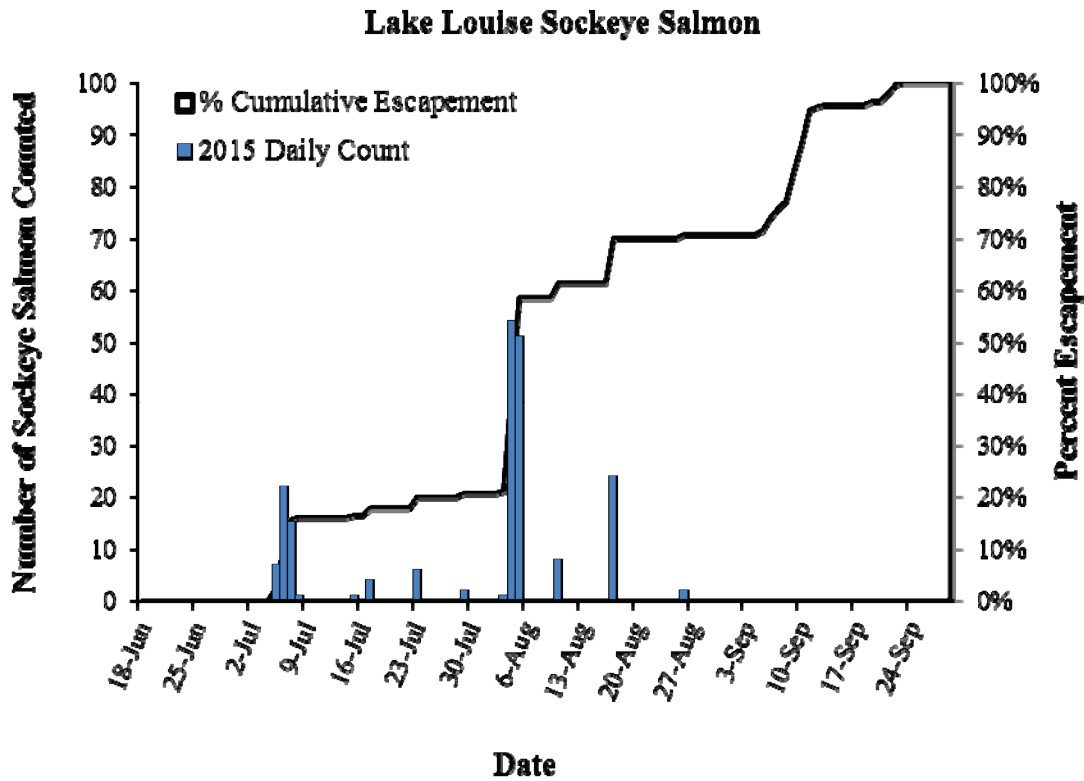


Figure 3.- 2015 daily sockeye salmon weir counts into Lake Louise through 29 September.

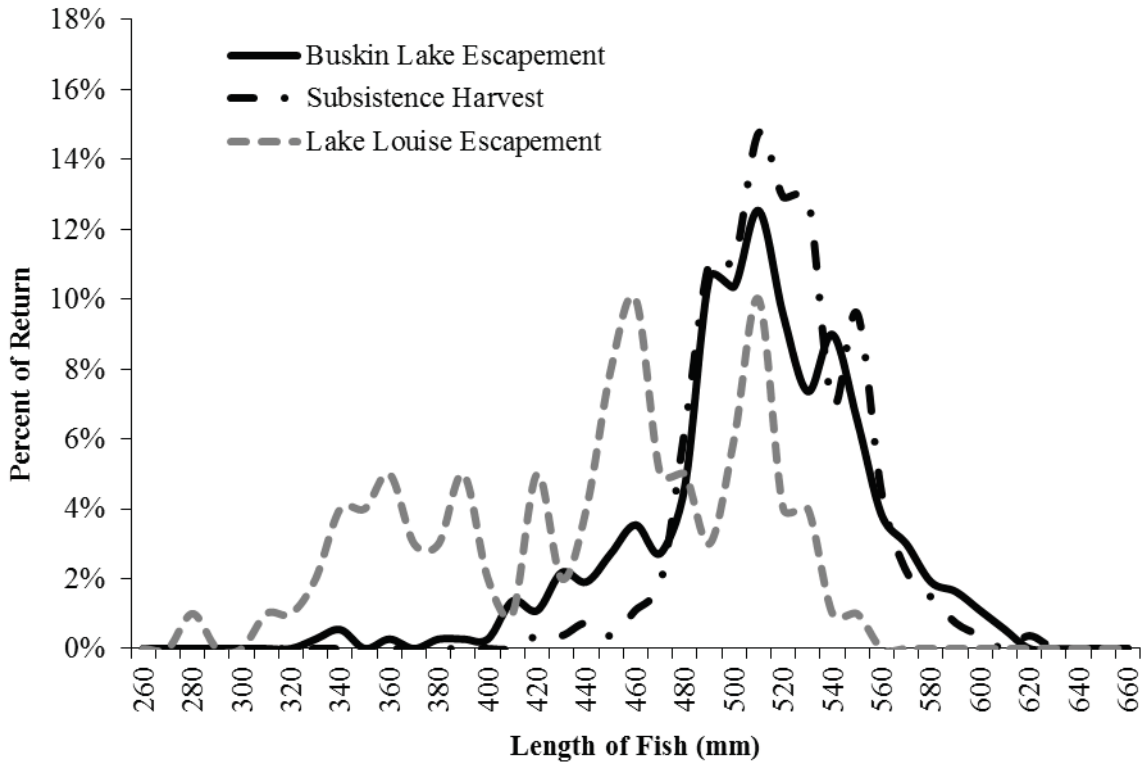
An emergency order was issued in 2015 liberalizing the Buskin River sport fishery. On 12 June, the bag limit for Buskin River sockeye was increased to 5 per day for the remainder of the season when the escapement was predicted to exceed the upper escapement goal of 8,000 fish. No emergency orders were issued for the subsistence fishery in 2015.

*Stock Assessment*

In 2015, at the Buskin Lake weir, 367 sockeye salmon captured from the escapement were sampled for age, sex and length between 31 May and 28 July; between 26 May and 11 July, a total of 272 sockeye salmon were sampled from the subsistence harvest; and at the Lake Louise weir, 38 sockeye salmon were sampled for age, sex and length while 62 more were sampled only for length and sex.

Typically, 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. Age classes in the subsistence fishery are generally similar but there are typically fewer age 1.2 and 2.2 fish sampled in the subsistence fishery than at Buskin Lake. These younger fish are generally smaller and the size selectivity of gillnets lends to catching larger, older fish. In 2015, the primary age classes in the escapement samples were age 1.3 fish at 40%, age 2.3 fish at 31% and age 2.2 fish at 17%. In the subsistence fishery, the primary age classes were age 1.3 fish at 53% and age 2.3 fish at 32%. Sampling goals for Buskin Lake and the subsistence fishery were achieved without difficulty.

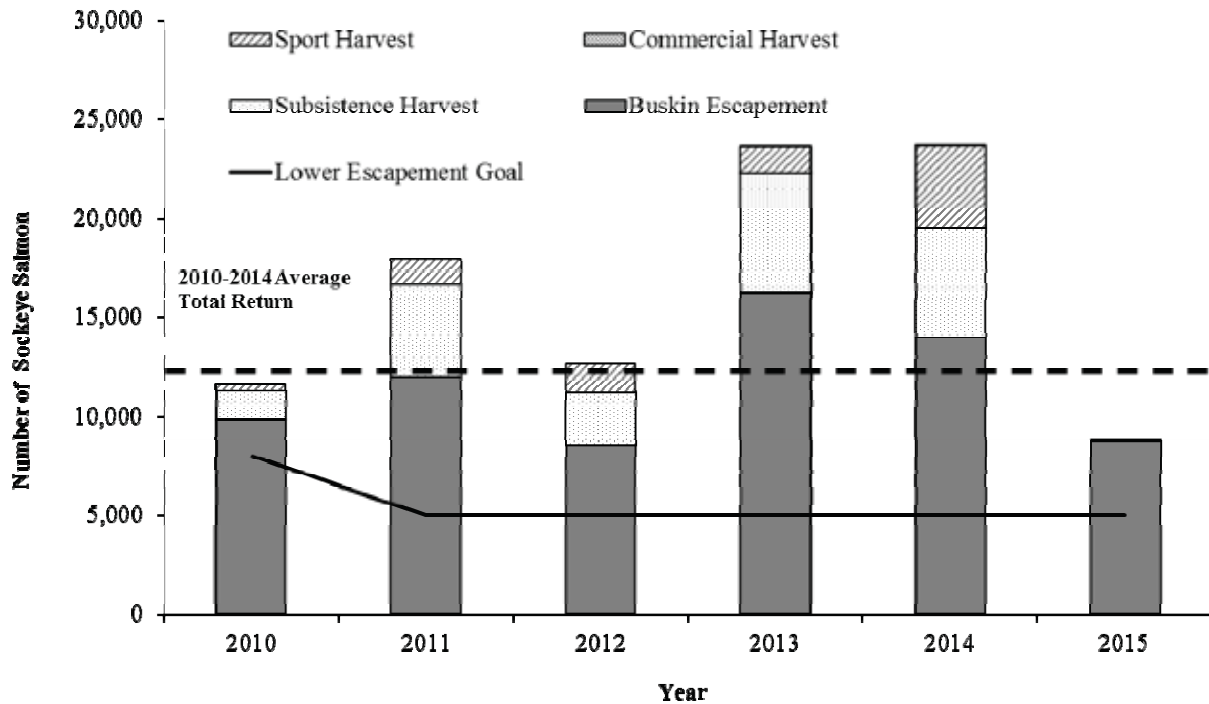
Sample age and length data collected from the Lake Louise escapement typically are different than those from Buskin Lake and the subsistence fishery, containing a substantially larger proportion of age 1.2 fish as well as comprising smaller fish, generally. At Lake Louise in 2015, the primary age classes were age 2.2 fish at 34% and age 2.1 fish at 26%. This season, only 38 sockeye salmon were sampled for age at the Lake Louise weir due to many fish arriving late in the season when their scales were too resorbed to age. Length and sex information alone was collected for all other sockeye sampled that did not have readable scales.



**Figure 4.- Length frequency distribution of sockeye salmon from the Buskin Lake and Lake Louise escapements and the Buskin River drainage subsistence harvest, 2015.**



Reconstruction of the Buskin Lake portion of the sockeye salmon run by its various harvest components indicate that historically the total return has remained relatively stable at around 19,000 fish, however between 2000 and 2004, the estimated total increased substantially to an average of 33,500. The recent five-year average (2010-2014) is below the historical average at about 12,000 fish (Figure 5). During the last five years subsistence harvests have averaged 22% of the total run and, by number of fish harvested, constituted the most important user of the Buskin River sockeye salmon resource. Subsistence and sport fishery harvests for 2015 are unavailable at this time, however, and the 2015 total return should be considered a minimum estimate.



**Figure 5.- Composition of total sockeye salmon return to the Buskin River, 2010-2015.**

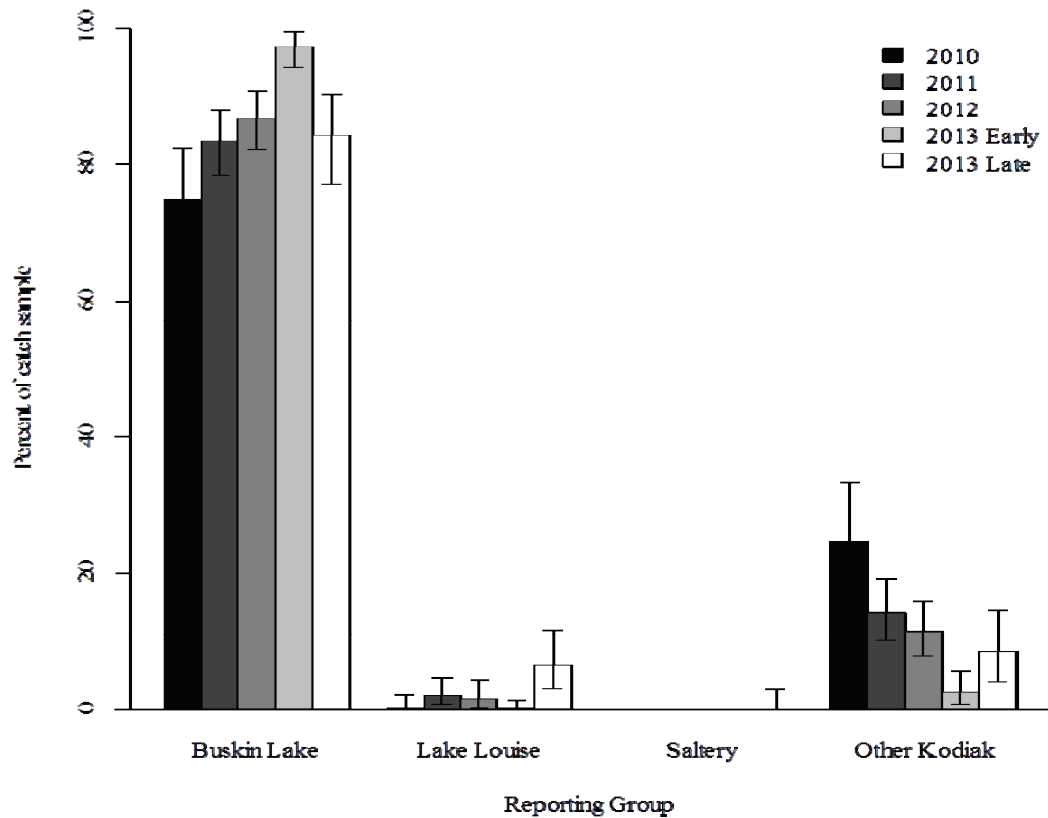
Note: 2015 sport and subsistence harvest unavailable.

**GENETIC TESTING**

In 2008, ADF&G’s genetics laboratory conducted analyses of Buskin and Lake Louise sockeye salmon escapement samples collected in 2005. Genetic differences in the populations were distinct enough to conclude that the two runs could be identified through genetic testing alone. Between 31 May and 30 June, 2015, a total of 334 sockeye salmon were sampled from Buskin subsistence harvest in order to genetically apportion Buskin and Lake Louise harvest components for more precise run reconstruction. These samples will be pooled with those collected in 2016-17 for analysis in 2017.

Analysis of previous genetic samples, from 2010-2013, was conducted during the spring of 2014. Harvest of Lake Louise bound sockeye ranged from 0.1% to 6.5% of the total subsistence harvest while sockeye from systems other than the Buskin drainage ranged from 10.9% to 24.7%

of the harvest (Figure 6). In 2013, there were enough samples to apportion them between ‘early’ and ‘late’ harvested fish. This found that the proportion of Lake Louise fish in the harvest increased from 0.1% to 6.4% over the course of the season. It was expected that a low percentage of the harvest was comprised of Lake Louise fish due to later run-timing and smaller size, however, it was not expected that other Kodiak sockeye salmon stocks could make up nearly a quarter of the harvest in some years.



**Figure 6.- Composition of sockeye salmon harvested in the Buskin subsistence fishery 2009-2013.**

### SUBSISTENCE USER INTERVIEWS

In response to a priority information need recently identified by the Kodiak/Aleutians Region Subsistence Advisory Council (RAC), verbal interviews taken on the fishing grounds with Buskin River subsistence users have been conducted annually since 2007 to determine residency of subsistence users and patterns of historic fishing effort. Interviews were conducted in 2015, where technicians opportunistically contacted subsistence users on the fishing grounds in front of the Buskin River, and at the boat harbors in the City of Kodiak, while sampling the harvest for

age, sex and length information. The 2015 survey sample was collected over the duration of the subsistence fishery, providing residency and effort data not currently available from subsistence permit returns. A total of 16 subsistence users were interviewed beginning 6 June (Table 4).

**Table 4.- Results from verbal interviews conducted with Buskin River subsistence users between 6 and 30 June, 2015.**

<b>User Statistics:</b>			
<b>Total Users Interviewed:</b>	16		
<b>Interview dates:</b>	June 6 - June 30		
<b>User Demographics</b>			
	<b>Kodiak</b>	<b>Alaska</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>Residency</b>	15	1	0
	<b>Buskin</b>	<b>Pasagshak</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>Location of Traditional Subsistence Use</b>	14	1	0
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>Have Occasionally Fished Other Areas</b>	12	4	

\*Other areas occasionally fished: Pasagshak, Litnik, Port Lions, Saltery, Alitak, Barak

**CAPACITY BUILDING**

Since 2001 ADF&G and the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge have maintained a cooperative agreement to use the Buskin River 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 June of 2015, 36 elementary school students visited the Buskin Lake weir on two different occasions to learn about salmon anatomy, life histories and how a weir functions.

Since 2003, the Buskin River project has also been a vehicle for fisheries-based education and development of career interests for young subsistence users through establishment of a high school intern program. During this internship, students gain knowledge of the principals involved in fisheries management and research while obtaining field experience in fisheries data collection methods and techniques. The intern program annually employs two top qualified students who work on the Buskin project under supervision of ADF&G staff between June 1 and July 31. The high school intern program has been an outstanding success, to the extent that at least five former interns are currently employed with ADF&G as seasonal Fish and Wildlife Technicians or Fisheries Biologists, and 17 of 23 former interns have returned to work for the Department at some point.

**CONCLUSION**

With exception of the 2008 and 2009 returns, Buskin River sockeye abundance has remained relatively stable and has allowed for continued, sustained harvest by subsistence users and

anglers alike. In 2015, the escapement exceeded the upper end of the Biological Escapement Goal with uninterrupted opportunity for harvest by subsistence and sport users.

Annual implementation of the Buskin River sockeye salmon weir project, made possible with funding from the Fisheries Research Monitoring Program, has been essential for in-season management that is necessary to sustain the health of the Buskin River sockeye salmon stock while providing maximum harvest opportunity for subsistence users. Continuation of this project will allow for additional analysis of run productivity to aid in the ongoing assessment of sockeye salmon returns to the Buskin River. It will also aid in refining the BEG concurrent with triennial Board of Fisheries meetings, as in the 2011 cycle when the goal was changed as a direct result of this project.



## United States Department of the Interior



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
 Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge  
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### Federal Subsistence Activity Report Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, September 2015 – January 2016

#### 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. Rural residents qualify for federal elk and deer hunts, and a small number of brown bear permits are issued to village residents (Table 1). Federal designated deer hunter and subsistence elk permits can be obtained at the Kodiak Refuge headquarters and at some villages. Permittees are required to carry their Federal subsistence permits, current state licenses, harvest tickets, and lockin tags (bear) while hunting.

**Table 1. Federal subsistence permits issued and estimated number of animals harvested based on harvest reports, Unit 8, 2008-2015.**

Species	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Deer*	81(74)	56(38)	67(42)	70(52)	20(11)	46(21)	45(39)	39 (**)
Bear	6(1)	6(1)	7(1)	5(2)	2(0)	4(0)	3(0)	1 (**)
Elk	3(0)	5(0)	8(1)	6(0)	2(0)	5(2)	9(1)	4 (2)

\*Multiple deer eligible to be harvested per permit

\*\*Incomplete reporting. Season ongoing

#### Brown Bears

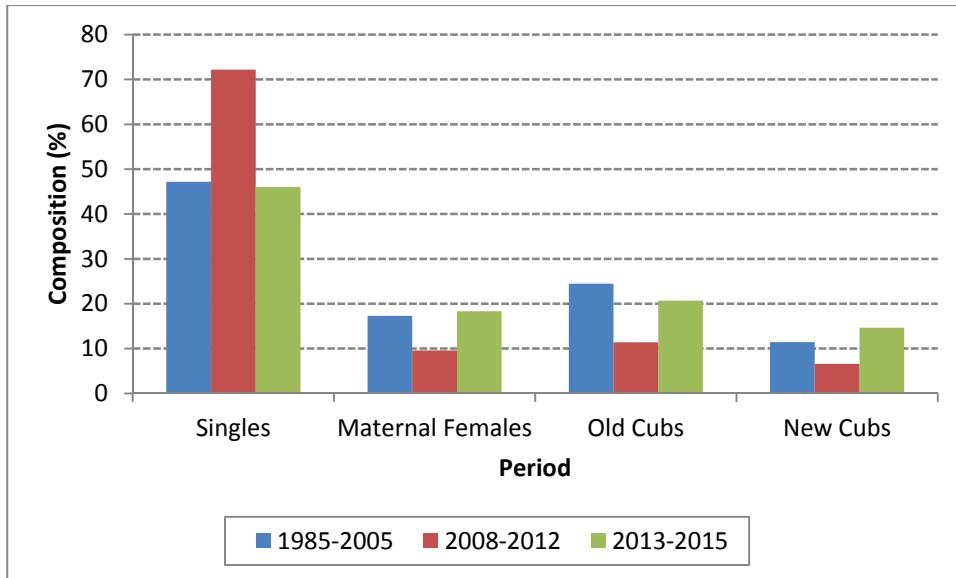
##### Population Assessment

The Refuge, in cooperation with ADF&G, tries to carry out an annual survey (the *Intensive Aerial Survey*) in late May to monitor brown bear population trends on Kodiak Island. No surveys were conducted in either 2014 or 2015 despite full preparation and agency commitments because high winter and spring temperatures triggered an early leaf-out of deciduous shrubs and trees in areas targeted for survey. Such advanced green-up is unacceptable for the survey because it would conceal bears, influence observation rates, and bias comparison of bear abundance among years. In cooperation with ADF&G we plan on carrying out these surveys in two areas during May 2016 – an area that includes the Frazer Lake and Red Lake watersheds and adjacent areas and an area that includes the Sturgeon River watershed.

*Brown Bear Stream Surveys:* Following established protocol, the Refuge aerially surveys bear usage of a network of six streams during July and August in southwest Kodiak Island. Bears seasonally congregate along these streams to feed on spawning sockeye salmon and chum salmon (Sturgeon River). A primary purpose of the survey is to estimate trend in composition of the bear population that uses these streams. In the case of this survey, composition refers to the proportion of bears observed in four categories: single bears, female bears with dependent cubs, cubs greater than one year old, and cubs less than one year-old. Results of composition monitoring can identify whether the pattern observed over several years is indicative of potential population stability, growth or decline. However, results of composition surveys do not measure population size, which is assessed separately.

In 2015, we conducted 16 surveys (average number of surveys is eight) between 9 July and 25 August. The highest number of bears was recorded during mid-July surveys. Thereafter, bear stream use slowly declined coincident with ripening of salmonberry and red elderberry. The average number of bears counted per survey on the Southwest Network was much less than the long-term average (1985 to 2005) - 23 bears/survey vs. 85 bears/survey. Single bears represented a slightly lower proportion of the population than the long-term average (41% vs. the long-term average of 47%). Maternal bears comprised 18% of all bears counted this year compared to the long-term average of 17%. Cubs of the Year (COY) made up 14% of all bears observed, while older cubs comprised 26% versus the long-term averages of 11% and 24%, respectively. Family groups made up 59% of all bear groups recorded versus the long-term average of 53%.

These data suggest that the bear population is correlated with the strength of salmon runs. This year's and last year's higher proportions of family groups compared to the period 2008-2013 (Figure 1); specifically, the proportion of maternal females (with cubs), old cubs, and new cubs returned to a level similar to 1985-2005. This appears to be strongly related to the relatively strong salmon runs in 2013 and 2014 and, possibly, good berry crops. The low numbers of bears counted since 2008 may suggest that the population may be lower than historic averages. Or there may be other reasons. Nevertheless, the Refuge is investigating this with ongoing research and monitoring.



**Figure 1.** Percentage composition of four classes of a brown bear population observed along selected streams of southwestern Kodiak Island over three time periods.

#### Bear Mortality

Analysis of ADF&G records indicated mortality of 106 bears within the Refuge boundary during 1 July 2014 through 30 June 2015. Of this total, 102 were recreational hunter-harvested and four were killed in defense of life and property. Total documented bear mortality in the archipelago was 190, lower than average mortality of 217 bears recorded during 2006-2010. About three-quarters of the hunter harvest has been composed of adult males in the archipelago and within the Refuge boundary.

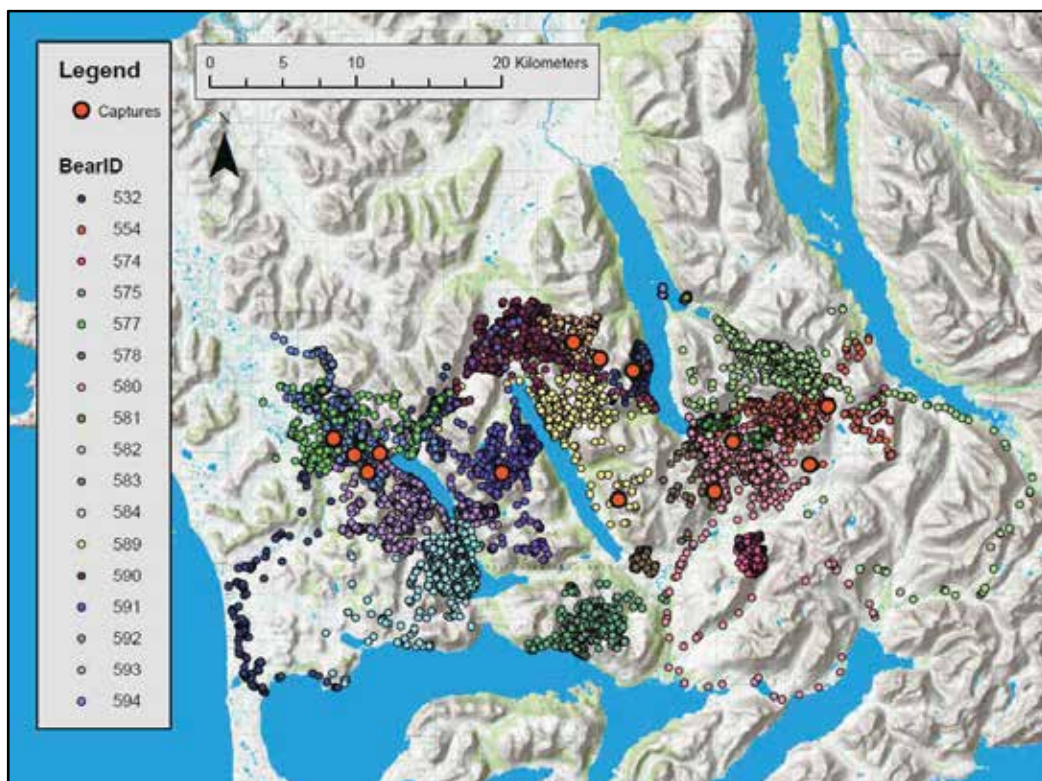
#### Bear-Salmon Research

In 2015, the Refuge concluded fieldwork on a three-year cooperative study of brown bear-sockeye salmon foraging ecology in southwestern Kodiak Island. This cooperative project with the University of Montana-Flathead Lake Biological Station, University of Wyoming, and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) investigates how fluctuations in sockeye salmon abundance and timing in spawning streams influences brown bear movements, distribution, and exploitation. The study involved multi-year monitoring of abundance and timing of migration on selected spawning streams and stream-specific and regional monitoring of bear movements (Figure 2).

Fieldwork began in mid-May. Radio-collared bears were monitored from June through early November. Salmon abundance and bear density was monitored at nine streams using time-lapse camera monitoring systems. Nine remote time-lapse camera monitoring systems were used to monitor salmon runs on nine streams. Total escapement in the nine streams was 448,082. We deployed 39 remote time-lapse camera systems to monitor bear use of these streams. Bears began to show up in earnest on streams in early July. By the third week of July many bears disappeared from the streams despite an abundance of salmon. Elderberry ripened early this year – beginning around the 19<sup>th</sup> of July. This is the same time that bears began leaving salmon streams. Our radio-telemetry data confirms that they had indeed moved

to elderberry patches where they stayed until the third week of August when most returned to the salmon streams.

An Annual Progress Report is available and a technical paper entitled *Kodiak Brown Bears Surf the Salmon Red Wave: Direct Evidence from GPS Collared Individuals* was accepted for publication in the journal Ecology. To optimize nutrition, brown bear not only require abundant salmon but also sustained availability of salmon over time. Study results described in the Ecology paper show how radio-collared bears maximized their use of sockeye salmon by visiting a variety of streams that differed in the chronology of salmon spawning. The greater number of sites visited; the longer bears utilized salmon. The PhD student affiliated with the project and University of Montana is scheduled to conclude his dissertation in May.



**Figure 2.** Movements of radio-collared brown bear during summer 2015, southwestern Kodiak Island.

### Bear-Berry Research

In 2015 the Refuge, in partnership with the ADF&G and Kodiak Brown Bear Trust, initiated a two-year pilot study. The primary goal is to develop, test, and select repeatable standard methods for monitoring year-to-year variation in relative abundance and phenology of selected berry-producing species important to brown bear. Fieldwork in 2015 involved plot- and camera-based sampling of red elderberry, salmonberry, blueberry, and devils-club (Figure 3). Good progress was made in development and testing of potential sampling approaches at four study sites, ranging from Red Lake to the roaded area near Kodiak, Kodiak Island. Results indicated that berry abundance was relatively high in 2015 notwithstanding the absence of a comparative baseline. For example, elderberry averaged 45 fruit clusters/plant among three study sites and the



percentage of fruit in fruit clusters ranged from 73% at Uganik Lake to 86% at Karluk Lake. Density of salmonberry fruit averaged 36–39/m<sup>2</sup> among three study sites, while relative size of salmonberry fruit averaged 77–79% between two study sites in southwestern Kodiak Island, but smaller (44–52%) in two plots of the road system area. Perhaps the reduced salmonberry size was due to incomplete pollination associated with prolonged cool and wet weather during the flowering period. Results of camera-based phenology monitoring indicated an apparent tendency of early initial fruit ripening of salmonberry (early July) and elderberry (mid- July), possibly associated with prolonged and consistent above-average air temperatures between winter and summer.



**Figure 3.** A fieldworker samples abundance of salmonberry on a study plot.

### **Sitka Black-tailed Deer**

In May 2014, Refuge biologists expanded upon a new approach to aerially survey Sitka black-tailed deer. Due to reduced staff capacity no survey will be conducted during 2015. Anecdotal observations suggest that populations have continued to increase throughout the archipelago in response to consecutive mild winters.

### **Roosevelt Elk**

Radio-collared elk provide a basis for ADF&G's efforts to track herd locations and estimate herd composition and population size for harvest management. Results from the ADF&G's fall 2015 elk survey indicated a population size of 972 elk, which is near the population

objective of 1,000 animals. A total of 80 elk were harvested under state regulations during the 2015 season. The Waterfall herd, which summers in the vicinity of Refuge lands on Afognak Island, increased from 80 to 100 elk between 2014 and 2015. Three elk were harvested in 2015 from the Waterfall herd, including two harvested under federal subsistence regulations.

## **Mountain Goat**

Biologists with the ADF&G and Refuge cooperatively survey the mountain goat population of Kodiak Island in August. Results of the survey have facilitated harvest management by providing information on trend in herd composition (e.g., kids/100 adults) and herd sizes by hunt area. Though the majority of hunters probably hunt goat primarily for recreation purposes, a number of Kodiak Island residents hunt goat for subsistence purposes, particularly goat habitat occurs near several village communities, and where the harvest is managed as a registration permit hunt (hunt area 480, largely Refuge lands).

In 2015, we conducted aerial surveys of approximately 40% of known goat summer range on Kodiak Island. A total, of 777 adults and 236 kids, was counted. The ADF&G issued 294 drawing permits and 1,496 registration permits. A total 105 goats was harvested during the drawing hunts and 208 goats were harvested during the registration hunt. It is expected that an additional 15-25 goats may be harvested in registration hunt 480 between now and mid-March when the season closes. Hunter harvest of goats in 480 increased after state regulations extended the hunting season 95 days and increased the bag limit from one to two goats.

## **Reindeer**

Distribution of reindeer is restricted to southwestern Kodiak Island where suitable habitat occurs. Over the past 20 years, herd size has fluctuated between 300 and 335 animals. In late May 2015, the ADF&G counted a total 375 reindeer consisting of 291 adults and 84 calves. Preliminary results indicated that 33 reindeer were harvested in 2015, which is the highest recorded, and is about twice the level of recent annual harvests following prohibition of an allowance to hunt the same day a hunter is transported to the field (i.e., same-day airborne).

## **Migratory Birds**

### Nearshore Marine Bird Surveys

In summer 2015, the Refuge continued a survey initiated in 2011 focusing on marine nearshore birds in the intertidal zone and shallow inshore waters. We conducted surveys in June and August, when the majority of resident breeding birds had established nests and populations were relatively stable. August surveys allowed us to estimate productivity of species with distinctive juvenile plumages, including marbled murrelets and pigeon guillemots. Surveys were conducted from small skiffs using the Refuge research boat, the M/V Ursa Major II, as a mobile home base. In summer 2015, Refuge staff surveyed the northern end of Kodiak Island and Afognak and Shuyak Islands, completing 101 transects along approximately 1,243 miles of shoreline. This region was last surveyed in June and August 2012. The most commonly encountered species included: black-legged kittiwakes, glaucous-winged and mew gulls, tufted and horned puffins, common murre, marbled murrelets, pigeon guillemots, and harlequin ducks (Table 2).

This season's marine bird surveys documented a tremendous increase in the number of common murre in the region. We counted over 25 times the number of common murres in 2015 compared to 2012 (an increase from 292 murres in 2012 to 7,667 in 2015). Murres were also observed much closer to shore than is typical, in 2012 only 6% of common murres were counted within a quarter mile of shore, but that percentage increased to 57% in 2015. Additionally, we have not observed such a major change in murre distribution in surveys of other regions adjacent to Kodiak Island during 2011-2014. The inshore movement by these murres, which prefer deeper water for diving, preceded the major die-off event in the Gulf of Alaska. Analysis of population estimates based on transect densities is still ongoing and Table 2 compares preliminary transect counts from 2012 and 2015.

**Table 2.** Preliminary counts for select marine bird and mammal species surveyed on transects in June and August, 2012 and 2015 by Kodiak Refuge on the north end of Kodiak Island and Afognak and Shuyak Islands.

	June 2012 Counts	June 2015 Counts	August 2012 Counts	August 2015 Counts
<b>Nearshore Transects</b>				
Harlequin Duck	447	423	1,387	908
Barrow's Goldeneye	21	54	37	18
Common Merganser	13	61	123	32
Bald Eagle (Adult)	257	181	194	209
Bald Eagle (Subadult)	66	25	39	74
Black Oystercatcher	129	179	242	395
<b>Nearshore &amp; Offshore Transects</b>				
Pelagic Cormorant	290	516	209	687
Red-faced Cormorant	8	3	20	6
Mew Gull	166	406	1,302	749
Glaucous-winged Gull	3,148	1,976	3,662	2,762
Black-legged Kittiwake	4,629	8,602	8,504	15,908
Arctic Tern	102	88	36	20
Aleutian Tern	2	12	0	0
Common Murre	34	2,045	258	5,622
Pigeon Guillemot	1,347	1,088	1,548	702
Kittlitz's Murrelet	1	0	12	0
Marbled Murrelet	1,513	1,529	3,362	689
Tufted Puffin	1,260	1,339	1,429	1,445
Horned Puffin	330	374	681	535
<b>Marine Mammals</b>				
Sea Otter	1,163	1,111	1,570	1,172
Harbor Seal	340	203	266	180

#### Seabird Die-off Event 2015-2016

We have had very high numbers of common murres in the Kodiak Archipelago since early spring, averaging 20-60 times higher than normal. They are deep diving seabirds usually found in the 150-300 foot depth zone, and it is very unusual to see them in shallow water close to shore and at the heads of bays. In early April 2015 we started receiving reports of dead common

murres on beaches. In August the number of dead murres washing up on beaches all over Kodiak increased dramatically. Refuge biologists have been monitoring murre numbers and the die-off and we shipped over 40 carcasses to the National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, WI for evaluation. Results indicated that the birds were emaciated; starvation was the probable cause of death. Investigations are ongoing but the birds have been tested for Avian Influenza and West Nile Virus, examined for parasites, and routine bacterial and fungal cultures have been conducted and the findings have been negative or unremarkable. Samples will be sent to outside labs to screen for toxins related to harmful algal blooms.

Common murres are estimated to number 13-20 million globally. Previous large-scale die-off events of this species have occurred in the Gulf of Alaska with death attributed to severe storms or warming sea surface temperatures in association with extreme El Nino events impacting the distribution and/or species composition of forage fish. An unusual aspect of the current die-off is its large-scale. Beginning this past spring dead birds have been seen on beaches throughout the Gulf of Alaska with reports from the Kenai and Alaska Peninsulas and into the eastern Aleutian Islands. Citizen Science beach combing programs operated along the Washington-Oregon-California coasts also reported significantly higher than normal numbers of dead common murres. This may be the first time a simultaneous die-off event has been recorded in Alaska and along the Pacific coast in the lower 48 continuous states. For more information on the murre die-off see the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) blog: <http://blogs.uw.edu/coasst/>

In addition, the Service's Alaska Migratory Bird Management Office has produced a very useful one-page fact sheet on the Alaska Seabird Die-off that can be viewed at:

[http://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Region\\_7/NWRS/Zone\\_1/Alaska\\_Maritime/PDF/Seabird%20Dieoff%20Fact%20Sheet%20010716.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Region_7/NWRS/Zone_1/Alaska_Maritime/PDF/Seabird%20Dieoff%20Fact%20Sheet%20010716.pdf)

#### Sea Duck Banding

In 2006, Refuge biologists discovered a group of over 100 female Barrow's goldeneye molting in Blue Fox Bay, an area adjacent to Kodiak Refuge on Afognak Island. Although Barrow's goldeneyes are considered a common breeding bird in the Kodiak area, generally they molt at other locations, particularly on large freshwater lake complexes in the interior boreal forest of Alaska. Blue Fox Bay, where the group of females have been banded in three previous years (2006; 2010; 2012), may be one of the few locations where this species molts in the marine environment. In August 2015, we captured and banded 32 female Barrow's goldeneye in Blue Fox Bay and recaptured another 11 goldeneye previously banded at this location. Recaptures included a female banded in August of 2006 that is at least 10 years-old based on her age when first captured.

### **Fisheries**

#### Outcome of Karluk Lake Nutrient Enrichment Proposal

On January 22, the Refuge released its Environmental Assessment and announced its final decision regarding a special use permit request by the Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association (KRAA) to conduct nutrient enrichment to restore productivity in the Karluk Lake watershed.

The Service evaluated KRAA's proposal and after examining the long term record, found that the Karluk sockeye runs are within their historical range of abundance and not "severely adversely affected", therefore the need for a fishery restoration project on Kodiak NWR was not demonstrated. The Service then selected the Current Management (No Action) Alternative as the best way to conserve the abundance of natural salmonid populations and their habitat for continued human and wildlife use over the long term. Copies of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) can be found on the Kodiak Refuge website: [www.fws.gov/refuge/Kodiak](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Kodiak).

#### Refuge Sockeye Population Monitoring Project

In 2015 we initiated a project to monitor escapement of sockeye salmon returning to Akalura Lake. Field methods involved subsampling salmon passage at the monitoring site with a time-lapse camera programmed to record a burst of three images per minute between late June and mid-October. Additionally, passage was continuously monitored with a video camera between 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM after 21 July. Video data are used to calibrate the subsample of passage data collected from the time-lapse camera. In the office, photos and video were reviewed and fish were enumerated. We recorded a total of 2,206 sockeye salmon in the subsample of images from time-lapse camera, not included a 10-day gap of missing data between 27 July and 6 August. Initial review of video data revealed passage of 3,127 sockeye salmon. After review of video data concludes, we will estimate (minimum) escapement for the late July to mid-October period.

#### Networked Monitoring of Salmon Habitat Temperatures

Supported by a grant from the Western Alaska Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC), The Refuge coordinated implementation of a collaboratively-developed strategic plan for automated, hourly monitoring of temperature of important salmon streams and lakes. The purpose of the network is to coordinate temperature monitoring in accordance with identified data collection standards and to make these data publically accessible. Presently, network partners include the Refuge, USFWS/Office of Subsistence Management, U.S. Geological Survey, Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor, Larsen Bay Tribal Council, Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak, ADF&G, and KRAA. Fieldwork by network partners in 2015 focused on establishment of monitoring sites, which collectively now comprise 27 streams and 25 lakes.

### **Education, Outreach, and Other Noteworthy Activity**

#### Proposed Changes to Regulations on Alaska National Wildlife Refuge Lands

On 8 January, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a proposed rule to clarify that predator control is not allowed on national wildlife refuges in Alaska, unless necessary to meet refuge purposes, federal laws or Service policy, and is consistent with the agency's conservation mission. The rule was developed in response to public interest and concern about predator control and recent liberalization of predator harvest within the State of Alaska. The proposed rule would also prohibit certain methods and means for non-subsistence harvest of predators, as well as update procedures for closing an area or restricting an activity on refuges in Alaska. These proposed changes would not apply to harvest of fish or wildlife under federal subsistence regulations. A 60-day public comment period on proposed regulations ends on 8 March, 2016. For details on the proposed regulation changes see:

[http://www.fws.gov/alaska/nwr/ak\\_nwr\\_pr.htm](http://www.fws.gov/alaska/nwr/ak_nwr_pr.htm)

#### Alaska Migratory Bird Calendar Contest

Tonya Lee is currently working with teachers and students of village communities on the 2017 Migratory Bird calendar contest for the theme “Working Together to Save Migratory Birds”. The purpose of the contest is to encourage local children to learn about bird conservation. Student entries will be submitted in mid-February followed by Refuge-sponsored judging of entries in Kodiak in late February. Highest ranked entries will be forwarded for final judging in Anchorage. . The 2016 calendar features several entries from Kodiak Island students.

#### Invasive Plant Management

Since 2003, the Refuge has consistently operated an integrated pest management (IPM) program to address the threat that highly invasive plants pose to native fish and wildlife habitat resources. In 2015 we applied IPM methods in partnership with landowners and the Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District to control highly invasive plants in 10 areas (Akalura Cannery, Alitak Cannery, Buskin River, Camp Island vicinity, Garden Island, Harvester Island vicinity, Uganik Cannery, and Refuge, Coast Guard, and State Park properties in Kodiak). In partnership with the District, we conducted surveys and outreach during July at remote residences in Kiliuda and Ugak Bays. The Canada thistle investigation at Garden Island in Uganik Bay apparently was eradicated following five control missions. For more on the Refuge’s IPM strategy see:

[http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Kodiak/what\\_we\\_do/resource\\_management.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Kodiak/what_we_do/resource_management.html).



# United States Department of the Interior



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Izembek National Wildlife Refuge  
P.O. Box 127  
Cold Bay, Alaska 99571

Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Report for the  
Kodiak/Aleutians Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
Spring Meeting – March 2016  
(Compiled in January 2016)



## **INVENTORY AND MONITORING STUDIES**

### **Caribou**

#### **Unit 9D (Southern Alaska Peninsula)**

In total, 75 permits were allocated to five communities (15 permits each; Cold Bay, King Cove, Sand Point, False Pass, and Nelson Lagoon) for the 2015-16 federal subsistence hunt. The Federal hunt is a split season and was open from August 10 to September 20, 2015 and November 15, 2015 to March 31, 2016. To date, 8 caribou have been harvested and reported for the federal subsistence hunt.

At the time of submission of this report, the 2015-2016 winter minimum population survey has not been conducted. The survey is planned to be conducted in late March or early April. Population survey data is reported in Table 1 as a reference, but does not include any new data since the previous report.

Table 1. Summary of Southern Alaska Peninsula caribou herd winter minimum population counts and fall composition surveys (2004 to 2015) conducted by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Winter minimum population count</b>	<b>Fall Bulls : 100 Cows</b>	<b>Fall Calves : 100 Cows</b>	<b>Fall composition sample size</b>
2004-2005	1,872	36	7	966
2005-2006	1,651	30	6	1,040
2006-2007	770	16	1	713
2007-2008	NA	15	1	431
2008-2009	NA	10	39	570
2009-2010	NA	21	43	679
2010-2011	NA	28	47	532
2011-2012	1,061	40	20	920
2012-2013	NA	45	20	500
2013-2014	NA	50	40	600
2014-2015	1,316	45	45	884
2015-2016	--	NA	NA	NA

“NA” indicates no data was collected.

“Year” covers the period October-April. USFWS winter minimum population counts are normally conducted December through April; ADF&G fall composition ratios are calculated from an October survey.

### **Unit 10 (Unimak Island)**

At the time of submission of this report, the 2015-2016 winter minimum population survey has not been conducted. The survey is planned to be conducted in late March or early April. Population survey data is reported in Table 2 as a reference, but does not include any new data since the previous report.



Table 2. Summary of Unimak Island caribou herd winter minimum population counts and fall composition surveys (2004 to 2015) conducted by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Year	Winter minimum population count	Fall Bulls : 100 Cows	Fall Calves : 100 Cows	Fall composition sample size
2004-2005	1,006	NA	NA	NA
2005-2006	1,009	45	7	730
2006-2007	806	NA	NA	NA
2007-2008	NA	31	6	433
2008-2009	NA	9	6	260
2009-2010	400	5	3	221
2010-2011	224	8	8	284
2011-2012	94	6	7	117
2012-2013	NA	9.5	3	83
2013-2014	NA	10	19	67
2014-2015	230	15	22	127
2015-2016	--	NA	NA	NA

“NA” indicates no data was collected.

“Year” covers the period October-April. USFWS winter minimum population counts are normally conducted December through April; ADF&G fall composition ratios are calculated from an October survey.

## WATERFOWL

### Pacific Brant

An index of productivity for the entire Pacific population of brant is generated from ground-based count ratios of adult to juvenile birds conducted in Izembek Lagoon and adjacent areas each fall when the birds are staging for migration. Brant productivity data have been collected at Izembek National Wildlife Refuge for over 50 consecutive years. Brant production counts were conducted in the fall between 5 September and 24 October 2015 at observation points throughout Izembek Lagoon including: Grant’s Point, Round Island/Outer Marker, Operl Island mud flats, and the areas between Neuman Island and Blaine Point. Counts were also conducted in southwestern areas of Izembek Lagoon inside Norma Bay, from the south shoreline of Norma Bay, and from the shoreline in the south central area of the lagoon between Norma Bay and Applegate Cove. In total, we classified 92,972 birds. The total percent of juvenile brant was 12.9%. This continues a declining trend in the brant productivity observed during the fall surveys at Izembek for the last several years (Figure 1).

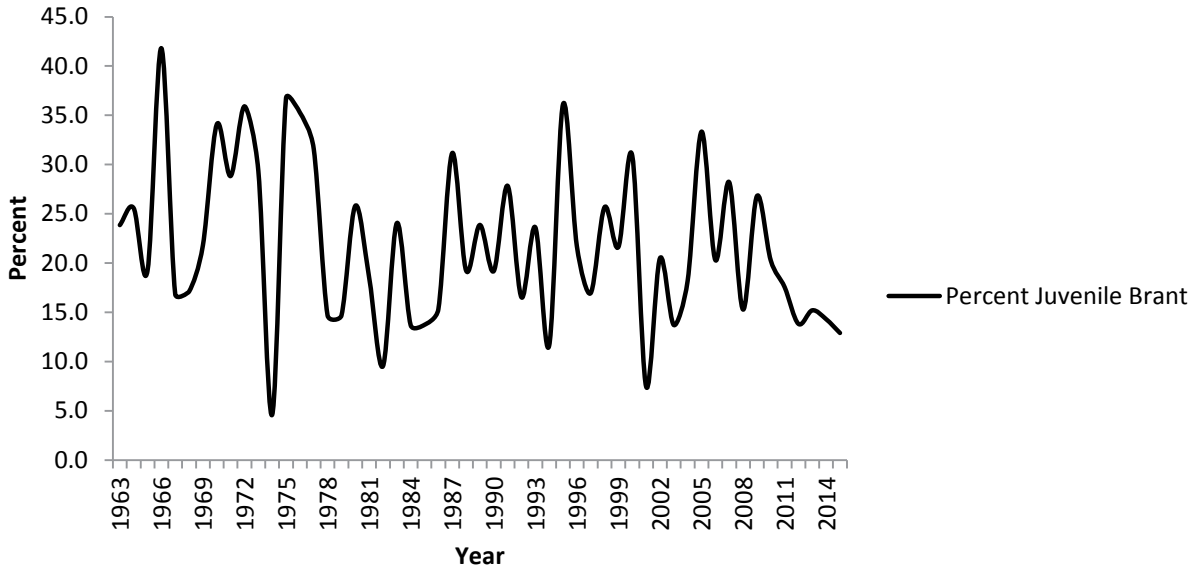


Figure 1. Percent of juvenile Pacific brant observed in annual ground based surveys conducted during fall staging in Izembek Lagoon from 1963-2015.

### **Avian Influenza and Avian Blood Parasites**

Izembek NWR continued collaborating with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to collect Avian Influenza samples from hunter-harvested waterfowl in September and October 2015. In total, 937 samples were collected. Samples collected from hunter harvested waterfowl included 200 samples from geese and 326 from ducks. The remaining samples were collected from fecal samples from live birds that are collected from feces located on the ground and included 203 samples from gulls and 208 samples from Emperor geese.

### **Water Temperature Monitoring**

In August 2015, the water temperature sensor stations that were deployed in streams utilized by salmon during 2014 were recovered to download the data, exchange sensors, and collect additional stream discharge data. The data are currently being reviewed and analyzed to assess trends and temperature extremes. The temperature sensors record stream temperatures at hourly intervals throughout the year and will provide a significant amount of temperature data for each stream across multiple years. These data will be used to establish a baseline record of annual stream temperatures on the refuge, and will also be added to a statewide database that hosts a long term monitoring network for southwest Alaska. During 2016, we will continue to monitor water temperature at the established sites.

## **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

### **Christmas Bird Count**

The annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was conducted on December 28, 2015 by refuge staff. A total of 2,098 birds were observed during the survey. Weather conditions during the survey were poor with winds gusting to 32mph and heavy rain and fog occurred during

periods of the count. Some of the freshwater lakes and ponds had partial ice coverage, however Cold Bay and Izembek Lagoon were free of ice.

### **Izembek Refuge Bird Checklist Brochure**

The refuge has completed updating the bird checklist and printed new brochures available for the public in our visitor center. If you are interested in receiving copies, please contact the refuge office (907) 532-2445.



**Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
C/o Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

RAC KA15046.KD

**JAN 26 2016**

Mr. Mitchell R. Ellis  
Regional Refuge Chief  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 225  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Ellis:

The Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments regarding the United States Fish and Wildlife Service *Proposed Rule on Hunting in National Wildlife Refuge Lands in Alaska*. The Council represents subsistence harvesters of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands and waters of the Kodiak and Aleutian Islands region, including the Kodiak, Izembek and Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuges.

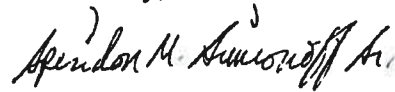
The Council was established by the authority in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Section 805 of ANILCA and the Council's charter recognize the Council's authority to initiate, review and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters related to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands within the region. Council provides a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations regarding any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife within the region.

The Council received an update on the proposed rule from USFWS personnel at its public meeting held on September 29-30, 2015 in Kodiak. After careful deliberation, the Council voted unanimously to oppose the proposed rule in its entirety. The Council's stated that the proposed rule would unnecessarily restrict hunting of predators, particularly in those areas where predation impacts important subsistence resources such as caribou. The Council is also very concerned with extending the temporary closure review timeframe from twelve months to *up to* three years. The Council would like to know who will determine the time necessary for temporary closures, and believes such closures may be overlooked during a longer review period.

Mr. Ellis

Thank you once again for the opportunity to comment. Please contact Karen Deatherage, Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management, at (907) 786-3564 with any questions.

Sincerely,



Speridon M. Simeonoff, Sr.  
Chair

cc: Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
Interagency Staff Committee  
Eugene R. Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management  
Amea Howard, Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management  
Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management  
Administrative Record

**Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
c/o Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 East Tudor Road M/S 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

KA RAC15047.KD

**JAN 26 2016**

Bruce Dale  
Council Member, Pacific Flyway Council  
c/o Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
1800 Glenn Highway  
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Dear Mr. Dale,

I am writing on behalf of the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) regarding your involvement with the management of Emperor Geese pursuant to the Pacific Flyway Management Plan. The Council has had a longstanding history with Emperor Goose management and maintains an ardent interest in proposed changes to the Pacific Flyway Management Plan, upcoming meetings, and other related activities.

The Council was established by the authority in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Section 805 of ANILCA and the Council's charter recognize the Council's authority to initiate, review and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters related to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands within the region. The Council provides a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations regarding any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife within the region.

The Council would appreciate it if you could share meeting announcements, meeting summaries and/or minutes, opportunities to provide input into changes to the Pacific Flyway Management Plan, and other relevant information concerning Emperor Goose management with our Council Coordinator, Karen Deatherage at the Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage. She can be reached via phone at (907) 786-3564, email at [Karen\\_deatherage@fws.gov](mailto:Karen_deatherage@fws.gov), or mail at the address listed above. Upon receipt of materials from your organization, Ms. Deatherage will ensure they are distributed to the Council members. The Council believes this will greatly assist our efforts in keeping the communities we serve apprised of the status of Emperor Goose management activities. The Council will in turn keep you informed on any actions we take regarding this issue.

Mr. Dale

The Council looks forward to working with you, and very much appreciates your contribution to this important subsistence resource. If we can assist you in any way, please let us know.

Sincerely,



Speridon M. Simeonoff, Sr.  
Chair

cc: Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
Interagency Staff Committee  
Eugene Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management  
Pete Probasco, Assistant Regional Director, Migratory Birds and State Programs  
Dan Rosenberg, Study Committee Member, Pacific Flyway Council  
Amee Howard, Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management  
Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management  
Administrative Record

**Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**  
**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
c/o Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 East Tudor Road M/S 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

KA RAC15048.KD

**JAN 26 2016**

Kelly Krueger  
Kodiak Archipelago Regional Management Body  
Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (AMBCC)  
Sun'aq Tribe  
312 West Marine Way  
Kodiak, Alaska 99615

Dear Ms. Krueger,

I am writing on behalf of the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) regarding your involvement with the management of Emperor Geese pursuant to the Pacific Flyway Management Plan. The Council has had a longstanding history with Emperor Goose management and maintains an ardent interest in proposed changes to the Pacific Flyway Management Plan, upcoming meetings, and other related activities.

The Council was established by the authority in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Section 805 of ANILCA and the Council's charter recognize the Council's authority to initiate, review and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters related to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands within the region. The Council provides a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations regarding any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife within the region.

The Council would appreciate it if you could share meeting announcements, meeting summaries and/or minutes, opportunities to provide input into changes to the Pacific Flyway Management Plan, and other relevant information concerning Emperor Goose management with our Council Coordinator, Karen Deatherage at the Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage. She can be reached via phone at (907) 786-3564, email at [Karen\\_deatherage@fws.gov](mailto:Karen_deatherage@fws.gov), or mail at the address listed above. Upon receipt of materials from your organization, Ms. Deatherage will ensure they are distributed to the Council members. The Council believes this will greatly assist our efforts in keeping the communities we serve apprised of the status of Emperor Goose management activities. The Council will in turn keep you informed on any actions we take regarding this issue.



Ms. Kruger

The Council looks forward to working with you, and very much appreciates your contribution to this important subsistence resource. If we can assist you in any way, please let us know.

Sincerely,



Speridon M. Simeonoff, Sr.  
Chair

cc: Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
Interagency Staff Committee  
Eugene Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management  
Pete Probasco, Assistant Regional Director, Migratory Birds and State Programs  
Amee Howard, Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management  
Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management  
Administrative Record

**Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
c/o Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 East Tudor Road M/S 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

KA RAC15049.KD

**JAN 26 2016**

George "Sonny" Squartsoff  
Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council  
Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak (Kodiak Archipelago Region)  
P.O. Box 42  
Port Lions, Alaska 99550

Dear Mr. Squartsoff,

I am writing on behalf of the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) regarding your involvement with the management of Emperor Geese pursuant to the Pacific Flyway Management Plan. The Council has had a longstanding history with Emperor Goose management and maintains an ardent interest in proposed changes to the Pacific Flyway Management Plan, upcoming meetings, and other related activities.

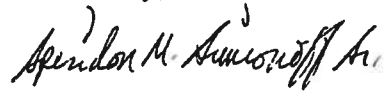
The Council was established by the authority in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Section 805 of ANILCA and the Council's charter recognize the Council's authority to initiate, review and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters related to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands within the region. The Council provides a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations regarding any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife within the region.

The Council would appreciate it if you could share meeting announcements, meeting summaries and/or minutes, opportunities to provide input into changes to the Pacific Flyway Management Plan, and other relevant information concerning Emperor Goose management with our Council Coordinator, Karen Deatherage at the Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage. She can be reached via phone at (907) 786-3564, email at [Karen\\_deatherage@fws.gov](mailto:Karen_deatherage@fws.gov), or mail at the address listed above. Upon receipt of materials from your organization, Ms. Deatherage will ensure they are distributed to the Council members. The Council believes this will greatly assist our efforts in keeping the communities we serve apprised of the status of Emperor Goose management activities. The Council will in turn keep you informed on any actions we take regarding this issue.

Mr. Squartsoff

The Council looks forward to working with you, and very much appreciates your contribution to this important subsistence resource. If we can assist you in any way, please let us know.

Sincerely,



Speridon M. Simeonoff, Sr.  
Chair

cc: Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
Interagency Staff Committee  
Eugene Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management  
Pete Probasco, Assistant Regional Director, Migratory Birds and State Programs  
Amee Howard, Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management  
Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management  
Administrative Record

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

**Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

**Charter**

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

- (4) Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.
    - e. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.
    - f. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.
    - g. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.
5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Council Reports.** The Council reports to the Federal Subsistence Board Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.
6. **Support.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide administrative support for the activities of the Council through the Office of Subsistence Management.
7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years.** The annual operating costs associated with supporting the Council's functions are estimated to be \$150,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.0 staff years.
8. **Designated Federal Officer.** The DFO is the Subsistence Council Coordinator for the Region or such other Federal employee as may be designated by the Assistant Regional Director – Subsistence, Region 7, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will:
  - Approve or call all of the advisory committee's and subcommittees' meetings,
  - Prepare and approve all meeting agendas,
  - Attend all committee and subcommittee meetings,
  - Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and
  - Chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.
9. **Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings.** The Council will meet 1-2 times per year, and at such times as designated by the Federal Subsistence Board Chair or the DFO.
10. **Duration.** Continuing.
11. **Termination.** The Council will be inactive 2 years from the date the Charter is filed, unless prior to that date it is renewed in accordance with the provisions of Section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.

- 12. Membership and Designation.** The Council's membership is composed of representative members as follows:

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

For geographic membership balance, it is a Council goal to seat four members who reside on the Kodiak Archipelago, three members who reside on the Alaska Peninsula, and three who reside on the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands.

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

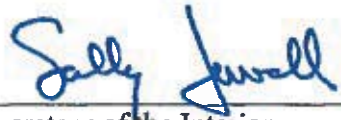
Members will be appointed for 3-year terms. A vacancy on the Council will be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

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

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

- 13. Ethics Responsibilities of Members.** No Council or subcommittee member will participate in any specific party matter in which the member has a direct financial interest in a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, agreement, or related litigation with the Department.
- 14. Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFO's approval, subcommittees may be formed for the purpose of compiling information and conducting research. However, such subcommittees must act only under the direction of the DFO and must report their recommendations to the full Council for consideration. Subcommittees must not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency. The Council Chair, with the approval of the DFO, will appoint subcommittee members. Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish their assignments, subject to the approval of the DFO and the availability of resources.

15. **Recordkeeping.** Records of the Council, and formally and informally established subcommittees or other subgroups of the Council, shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2, and other approved Agency records disposition schedule. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.



Secretary of the Interior

NOV 20 2015

Date Signed

DEC 03 2015

Date Filed