



WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA
SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Materials

March 26-27, 2019
Fairbanks



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On the cover...

The most productive Kanuti trail camera has documented moose, black bear, lynx, wolverine, red squirrel, spruce grouse, and wolf along an active game trail. This site seems to be most active in spring, summer, and fall. The trail is largely obscured by winter snow which can be deep- unless you can stay on top like this wolf!



USFWS photo

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WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Pike’s Waterfront Lodge
Fairbanks

March 26-27, 2019 | 9:00 a.m. daily

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

11. New Business (Chair)

a. Wildlife Closure Reviews*

- 1) WCR18-20 (Unit 24 Moose) 5
- 2) WCR 18-39 (Unit 19A Moose) 16
- 3) WCR 18-43 (Unit 19A remainder Moose) 25

b. Call for Federal Wildlife Proposals* 37

c. Council Charter Review* 71

d. Approve FY2018 Annual Report* 46

e. Alaska Board of Game Call for Proposals 51

12. Agency Reports

(Time limit of 15 minutes unless approved in advance)

Tribal Governments

Native Organizations

Special Actions

USFWS

- a. Preliminary 2019 Yukon River Pre-Season Outlook (USFWS/ADFG)
- b. Refuge Updates: Kanuti, Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko and Yukon Delta 53

NPS

- a. Gates of the Arctic National Park (Marcy Okada)

BLM

- a. Central Yukon Resource Management Plan
- b. Ambler Road
- c. Anaktuvuk Pass Ice Road
- d. Bering Sea-Western Interior Resource Monitoring Plan
- e. Donlin Mine

ADF&G

Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association

- a. Yukon River Fisheries/Central Yukon Resource Management Plan

OSM

- a. General Update
- b. Fisheries Program Updates

13. Future Meeting Dates*

Confirm Fall 2019 meeting date and location (*Aniak or McGrath, October 8-9, 2019*) 68

Select Winter 2020 meeting date and location 69

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

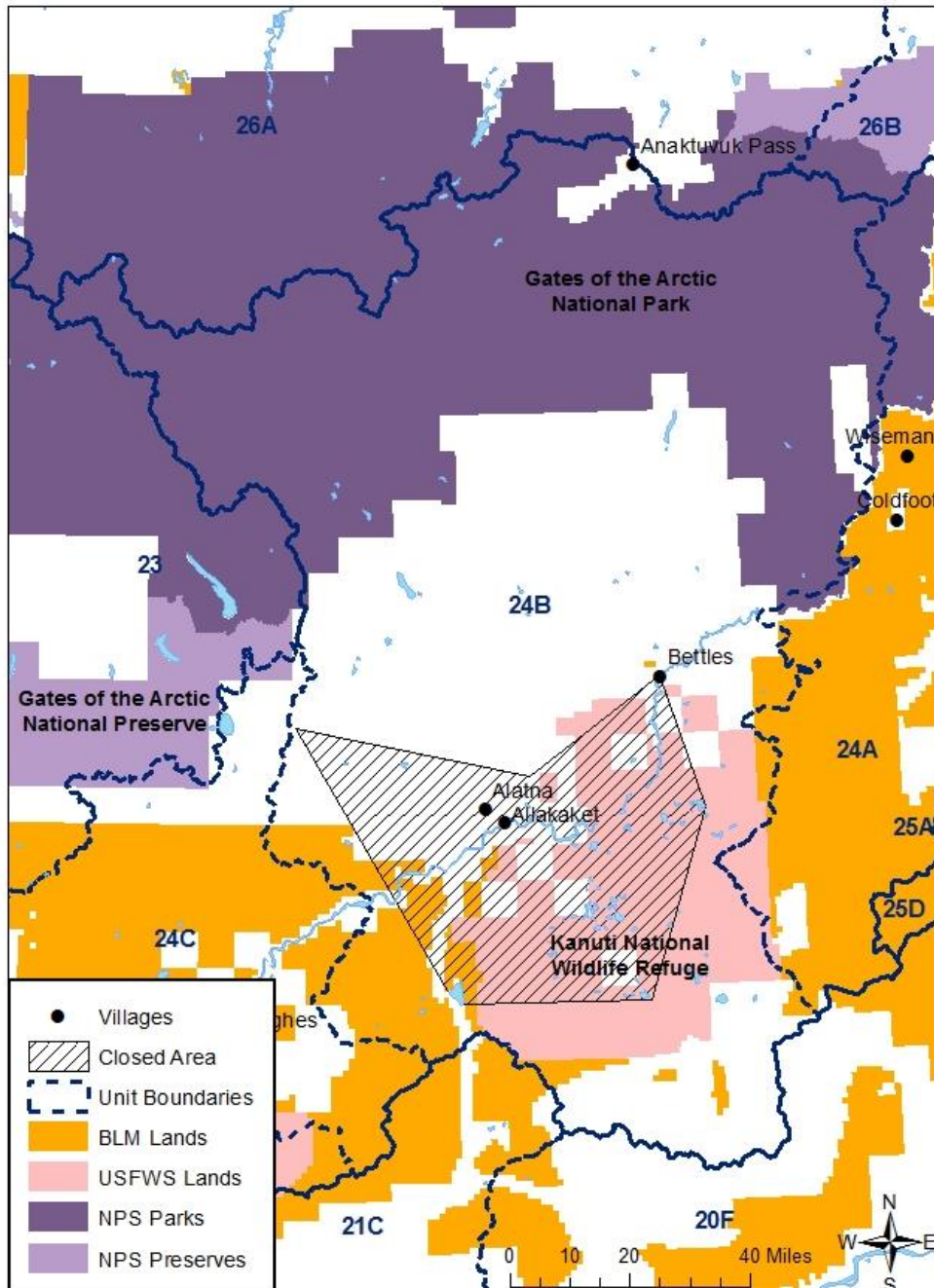
The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodation needs to Karen Deatherage, 907-786-3564, karen_deatherage@fws.gov, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on October 1, 2018.

REGION 6
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Year Appointed <i>Term Expires</i>	Member Name and Community
1	2016 2019	Shirley J. Clark Grayling
2	2004 2019	Donald V. Honea Jr. Ruby
3	1993 2019	Pollock Simon Sr. Allakaket
4	1993 2020	Raymond L. Collins McGrath Vice-Chair
5	1993 2020	Jack L. Reakoff Wiseman Chair
6	2017 2020	Tommy Kriska Koyukuk
7	2008 2020	Timothy P. Gervais Ruby
8	2021	VACANT
9	2006 2021	Jenny K. Pelkola Galena Secretary
10	2018 2021	Goodwin G. Semaken Kaltag

FEDERAL WILDLIFE CLOSURE REVIEW
WCR18-20

Closure Location: Unit 24B remainder, Kanuti Controlled Use Area (**Map 1**) — Moose



Map 1. Federal hunt area closure for moose in Unit 24B remainder, Kanuti Controlled Use Area.

Current Federal Regulation

Unit 24–Moose

Unit 24B, remainder—1 bull by State harvest ticket Aug. 25-Oct. 1.

OR

1 antlered bull by State registration permit Dec. 15-Apr. 15.

Federal public lands in the Kanuti Controlled Use Area, as described in Federal regulations, are closed to taking of moose, except by Federally qualified subsistence users of Unit 24, Koyukuk, and Galena hunting under these regulations

Closure Dates: Year-round

Current State Regulation

Unit 24B–Moose

Residents - One bull HT Sept. 1-Sept. 25

OR

Residents - One antlered bull by permit available online at <http://hunt.alaska.gov> or in person in Hughes, Allakaket, and Fairbanks beginning Dec. 6 RM833 Dec. 15-Apr. 15

Nonresidents – One bull with 50-inch antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side HT Sept. 5-Sept. 25

Regulatory Year Initiated: 1992

Regulatory History

The Kanuti Controlled Use Area (CUA) was created in 1979 under State regulations to address user conflicts and biological concerns and is important in maintaining reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses of moose (ADF&G 2010). In 1990, the Kanuti CUA was adopted into Federal subsistence regulations from State regulations and was part of Unit 24 remainder. The season was Aug. 25-Sept. 25 with a harvest limit of one bull. The Kanuti CUA consists of that portion of Unit 24 bounded by a line from the Bettles Field VOR to the east side of Fish Creek Lake; to Old Dummy Lake; to the south end of Lake Todatonten (including all water of these lakes); to the northernmost headwaters of Siruk Creek; to the highest peak of Double Point Mountain; and then back to the Bettles Field VOR. The Kanuti CUA is

closed during moose hunting seasons to the use of aircraft for hunting moose, including transportation of any moose hunter or moose part.

In 1992, the Tanana Chiefs Conference submitted Proposal P92-115, requesting the Kanuti CUA be closed to moose hunting except by residents of Alatna, Allakaket, Bettles, Evansville, and Hughes because subsistence needs were not being met. The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) adopted Proposal P92-115 with modification, closing the Kanuti CUA to moose hunting except by Federally qualified subsistence users to provide opportunity to all users with a customary and traditional use determination (C&T) for moose in Unit 24. Additionally, harvest met or exceeded the estimated harvestable surplus, recommending limiting harvest to conserve the moose population (FSB 1992).

In 2006, the Board adopted Proposal WP06-34 to change the closing date of the moose season in Unit 24 remainder from Sept. 25 to Oct. 1 and to require a Federal registration permit during the extended Federal season of Sept. 26-Oct. 1. An extended season provided additional opportunity, and survey data indicated the Unit 24 remainder moose population could sustain a modest increase in harvest. The Board also adopted Proposal WP06-36 to divide Unit 24 into four subunits to maintain consistency with State regulations, which subdivided Unit 24 to improve manageability. The Kanuti CUA became part of Unit 24B remainder.

Between 2007 and 2010, the Board approved several special action requests (WSA06-08, WSA07-09, WSA07-10, WSA09-15) for extensions or establishments of winter seasons in Unit 24B because of extreme cold weather and unmet subsistence needs.

In 2010, the Board adopted Proposal WP10-67 with modification to establish Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and BLM lands as a separate hunt area, specify the harvest limit as one antlered bull to discourage inadvertent cow harvest, and add a winter season of Dec. 15-Apr. 15 to provide additional opportunity in an area with low harvest success rates. The Board also stipulated the winter season would sunset on June 30, 2014.

Also in 2010, the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) adopted Proposal 94, which reduced the size of the Kanuti CUA under State regulations to accommodate access to a private cabin. As a result, the boundary of the State CUA has been out of alignment with the Federal CUA boundary since 2010.

In 2012, the Board adopted Proposal WP12-57 to redefine the hunt areas in Unit 24B to reduce user confusion by aligning State and Federal hunt area boundaries (although State and Federal boundaries of the Kanuti CUA were still out of alignment). The Kanuti CUA became part of two hunt areas: Unit 24B, all drainages of the Koyukuk River downstream from and including the Henshaw Creek drainage and Unit 24B remainder. The Henshaw Creek hunt area had a winter season (Dec. 15-Apr. 15) whereas Unit 24B remainder did not. The Board also adopted Proposal WP12-58 with modification to clarify permit requirements by requiring one Federal registration permit for both fall and winter seasons.

In 2014, the Board adopted Proposal WP14-29, making the Dec. 15-Apr. 15 season indefinite to provide additional opportunity. No impacts to the moose population had been observed since the winter season was established in 2010.

In 2016, the Board adopted Proposal WP16-42, establishing a winter season upstream of the Henshaw Creek drainage to provide additional opportunity. This resulted in the Henshaw Creek hunt area and Unit 24B remainder being collapsed into one hunt area, meaning all of the Kanuti CUA was part of Unit 24B remainder again.

In 2018, the Board adopted Proposal WP18-35 to remove “antlered” from the harvest limit for the fall season and to require a State harvest ticket and State registration permit for the fall and winter seasons in Unit 24B remainder, respectively. This eliminated the Federal registration permit requirement, aligning State and Federal reporting requirements.

Federal public lands comprise approximately 56% of the Kanuti CUA and consist of 87% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) managed lands and 13% Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed lands (**Map 1**).

Closure last reviewed: 2012 – WCR12-20

Justification for Original Closure:

In 1992, the Board closed the Kanuti CUA to moose hunting except by Federally qualified subsistence users via adoption of Proposal P92-115 with modification. As harvest met or exceeded the estimated harvestable surplus, the Board supported the closure to conserve the moose population and to provide continued opportunity for all users with C&T for moose in Unit 24.

Section §815(3) of ANILCA states:

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

Council Recommendation for Original Closure:

The Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils were not yet established in 1992. However, the Interior Regional Council took no action on the original closure (Proposal P92-115) due to lack of input from the Koyukuk River Fish and Game Advisory Committee (FSB 1992).

State Recommendation for Original Closure:

The State opposed the original closure, stating the Kanuti CUA already restricted non-local use by prohibiting aircraft. Additionally, the State commented that local residents harvested the majority of moose in the Kanuti CUA, unlike other parts of Unit 24 where non-local harvest was greater (FSB 1992).

Biological Background

The Koyukuk River Moose Hunters’ Working Group in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) developed the Koyukuk River Moose Management Plan (Management Plan) in 2001 to guide moose management in the Koyukuk River drainage in response to concerns about

overharvest (ADF&G 2001). The Management Plan made many regulatory recommendations to conserve the Koyukuk River drainage moose population that were adopted by the BOG and the Board. Goals of the Management Plan include managing the moose population on a sustained yield basis, protecting and enhancing moose habitat, and managing predation on moose (ADF&G 2001). ADF&G has the additional population objectives of 10,000-12,000 moose for all of Unit 24 and 4,000-4,500 moose for Unit 24B, specifically (Stout 2018).

ADF&G, BLM, and the USFWS cooperatively conduct aerial moose surveys in Kanuti NWR during November to estimate moose abundance and composition. Since 1999, the survey methodology (Geospatial Population Estimator technique) and area (Kanuti NWR) has remained the same, allowing direct comparisons between surveys (Julianus and Longson 2018).

Between 1989 and 2017, the moose population in Kanuti NWR ranged from 551 moose to 2,010 moose (**Figure 1**) (Stout 2014, 2018, Julianus and Longson 2018). The highest estimate was in 1993 and cannot be directly compared to later surveys due to changes in survey methodology. Poor survey conditions and low sample size may have influenced the lowest estimate in 2013 (Stout 2014). Since 1999, the highest population estimate was 1,311 moose in 2017. However, population models indicate no trend in the data, suggesting the Kanuti NWR moose population has been stable since 1999 (Julianus and Longson 2018).

Moose density estimates parallel moose population estimates. Between 1989 and 2017, the moose density in Kanuti NWR ranged from a high of 0.76 moose/mi² in 1993 to a low of 0.20 moose/mi² in 2013 (Stout 2014, 2018, Julianus and Longson 2018). Since 1999, the highest density estimate was 0.48 moose/mi² in 2017. These density estimates are typical of Interior Alaska moose populations that are limited by predation and indicate the Kanuti NWR moose population persists at a low-density dynamic equilibrium (Julianus and Longson 2018). Habitat limitations also affect moose densities in the Kanuti CUA. Moose densities in the upper Koyukuk drainage (north of Hughes) are significantly less than densities in the lower Koyukuk drainage where broad areas of riparian habitat are found (ADF&G 2001).

In low density moose populations, a ratio of 30-40 bulls:100 cows may be necessary to ensure adequate breeding as cows are sparsely distributed (ADF&G 2001). Between 1989 and 2017, bull:cow ratios ranged from 51 bulls:100 cows in 2010 to 75 bulls:100 cows in 2017 (**Figure 2**) (Stout 2014, 2018, Julianus and Longson 2018). These high bull:cow ratios indicate sufficient numbers for breeding and that bulls are not being overharvested.

Fall calf:cow ratios of < 20 calves:100 cows, 20-30 calves:100 cows, and > 30-40 calves:100 cows indicate declining, stable, and growing moose populations, respectively (ADF&G 2001). Between 1989 and 2017, fall calf:cow ratios in Kanuti NWR ranged from 17 calves:100 cows in 1989 to 58 calves:100 cows in 2008 (**Figure 2**) (Stout 2014, 2018, Julianus and Longson 2018). Since 2004, calf:cow ratios have exceeded 30 calves:100 cows in all years surveyed and 40 calves:100 cows in 7 out of 9 years surveyed. These high calf:cow ratios suggest adequate productivity for population growth.

Predation by wolves and bears in Unit 24B is likely limiting growth of the moose population (ADF&G 2001, Stout 2014, 2018). The Management Plan lists black bear predation on calves and wolf predation on all moose as significant mortality factors (ADF&G 2001). During Board discussion on Proposal P92-115, 100 moose were estimated to be predated by wolves from the Kanuti CUA each year, decreasing the harvestable surplus from 156 moose/year to 56 moose/year (FSB 1992). While the Kanuti NWR moose

population has been statistically stable since 1999, the observed population increase in 2017 may be partially due to reduction in wolf numbers (Julianus and Longson 2018). From 2012-2018, ADF&G conducted wolf control in Unit 24B, including along the western boundary of Kanuti NWR (ADF&G 2018a, Julianus and Longson 2018). Mild winters since 2009 may also have enhanced overwinter calf survival, increasing recruitment and contributing to population increases (Julianus and Longson 2018).

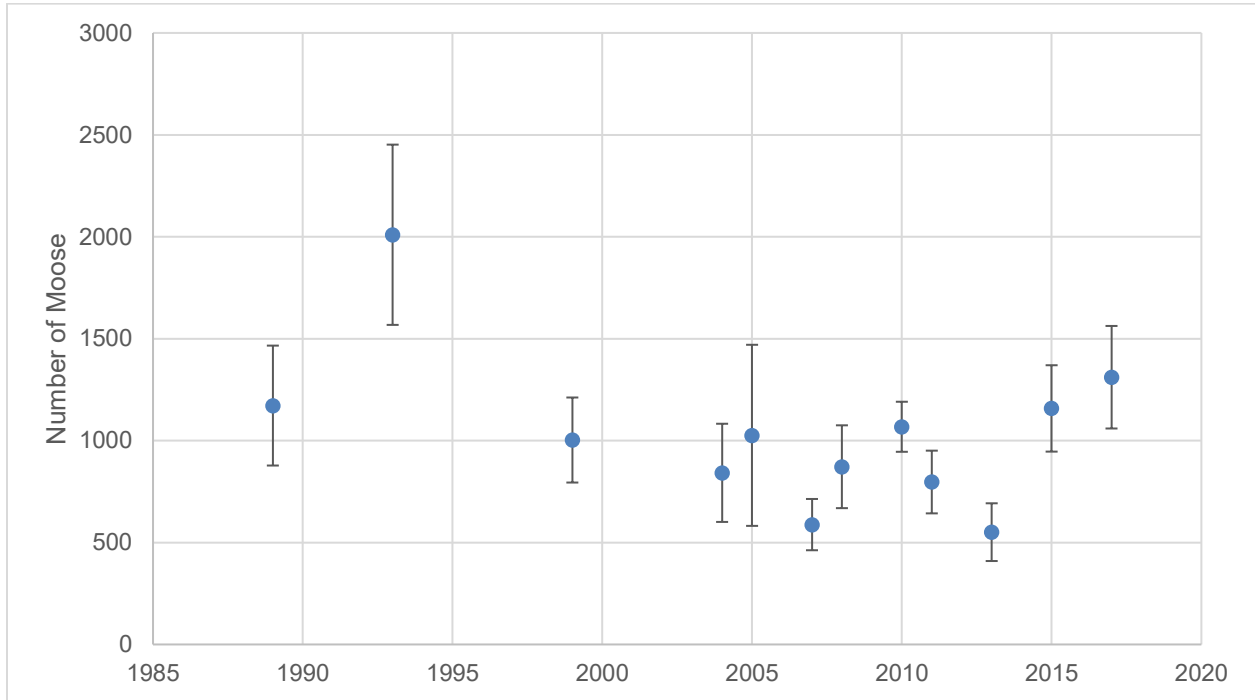


Figure 1. Population estimates for moose in Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge (Stout 2014, 2018, Julianus and Longson 2018).

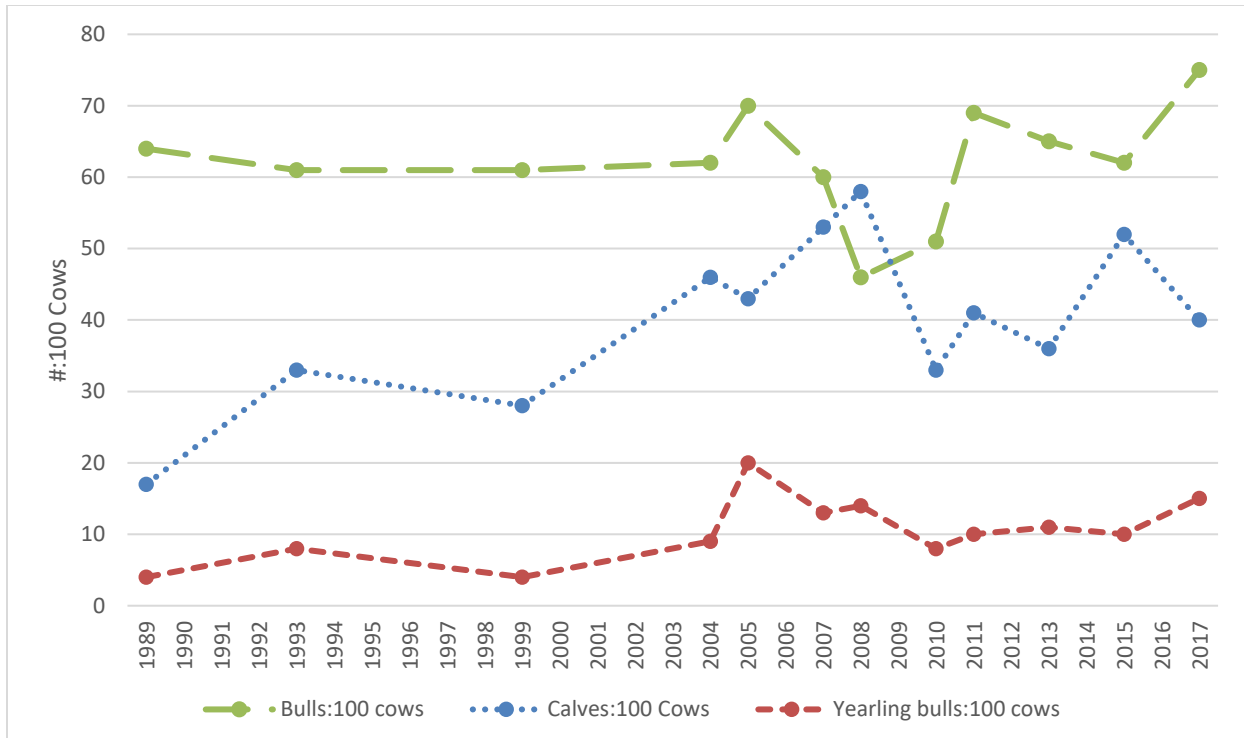


Figure 2. Bull:cow, calf:cow, and yearling bull:cow ratios for Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge (Stout 2014, 2018, Julianus and Longson 2018).

Harvest History

The Management Plan prescribes a maximum annual harvest rate of 5% for the Kanuti CUA moose population (ADF&G 2001). The Management Plan considers this a conservative harvest rate that is necessary due to significant mortality from predation. Given the 2017 population estimate for Kanuti NWR (1,311 moose), the 2017 harvestable surplus for Kanuti NWR was 65 moose.

As Federal public lands in the Kanuti CUA are closed to non-Federally qualified users, all moose harvest occurs under Federal regulations by Federally qualified subsistence users. Users with C&T for moose in the Kanuti CUA include residents of Unit 24, Galena, Kobuk, Koyukuk, Stevens Village, and Tanana. However, the primary harvesters are from Allakaket, Alatna, Bettles, and Evansville (FSB 1992).

In 1992, when the Board closed the Kanuti CUA to moose harvest by non-Federally qualified users, an estimated 50-75 moose were being harvested from the CUA by both subsistence and sport hunters each year, although annual reported harvest was 30 moose. ADF&G and Kanuti NWR staff recommended harvest from the CUA not exceed 50 moose per year (FSB 1992). A representative from the Tanana Chiefs Conference (the proposal’s proponent) testified that harvest pressure on moose was increasing because local people were depending more on moose to meet their subsistence needs given declines in caribou abundance. The Chair of the Interior Regional Council testified that subsistence needs in Allakaket and Alatna were not being met. The ADF&G representative testified that unlike other portions of Unit 24, most of the harvest from the Kanuti CUA was by local residents because of aircraft restrictions (FSB 1992).

Between 2006 (when Unit 24 was divided into subunits) and 2017, moose harvest by Federal registration permit in Unit 24B totaled 14 moose, ranging from 0-2 moose reported harvested per year (OSM 2018). Over the same time period, a total of 71 Federal permits were issued, ranging from 2-14 permits per year (**Figure 3**) (OSM 2018).

Also between 2006 and 2017, annual reported moose harvest under State regulations in Unit 24B ranged from 23 - 49 moose and averaged 34.5 moose (**Figure 4**) (ADF&G 2018b). Non-local hunters accounted for the majority of the reported moose harvest in Unit 24B. Federally qualified subsistence users (those with C&T) only accounted for 28% of the reported moose harvest on average (ADF&G 2018b). Since the closure of the Kanuti CUA in 1992, reported moose harvest, moose hunters, and harvest success rates under State regulations in Unit 24B have all trended downward (**Table 1**) (ADF&G 2018b). Over 95% of reported harvests occur in September (Stout 2018).

Illegal and unreported moose harvest in Unit 24 is significant and hampers management (Stout 2014). Between 2006 and 2015, ADF&G has estimated unreported moose harvest for all of Unit 24 as 135-144 moose per year and that 60-70% of unreported harvests are cows (Stout 2014, 2018). Using community household survey data between 1997 and 2002, Stout (2018) estimated unreported harvest rates for non-local hunters and local residents of Unit 24 as 17.7% and 76%, respectively. Much of the unreported harvest likely occurs between Oct. and Mar. These data are based on intermittent household surveys, historical information, and public interviews (Stout 2014, 2018).

Between 1997 and 2011, annual moose harvest by the communities primarily responsible for moose harvest within the Kanuti CUA (Alatna, Allakaket, Bettles, and Evansville) ranged from 26-55 moose/year according to household survey data and from 3-10 moose/year according to State harvest reports (**Table 2**) (ADF&G 2018b, 2018c). This corresponds to unreported harvest rates of 81%-92% (**Table 2**). The number of moose actually harvested from the Kanuti CUA is unknown. The household survey data does not specify area and the State harvest reports are for all of Unit 24B.

Table 1. Averages of reported harvest, number of hunters, and harvest success rates for moose in Unit 24B according to State harvest reports (ADF&G 2018b).

Years	Moose Harvest	Moose Hunters	Success Rate (%)
1987-1991	59.6	116.2	51.5
1992-2004	45.2	108.4	41.5
2005-2017	34.5	98.0	35.5
1992-2017	39.8	103.2	38.5

Table 2. Community household survey and reported moose harvests (ADF&G 2018b, 2018c).

Year	Alatna	Allakaket	Bettles	Evansville	Household Survey Total	Reported Harvest Total	% Unreported
1997	9	43	0	3	55	7	87.3
1998	5	37	7	4	53	10	81.1
1999	6	37	2	2	47	8	83.0
2001	6	35	no data	no data	41	6	85.4
2002	12	35	0	0	47	4	91.5
2011	4	19	2	1	26	3	88.5

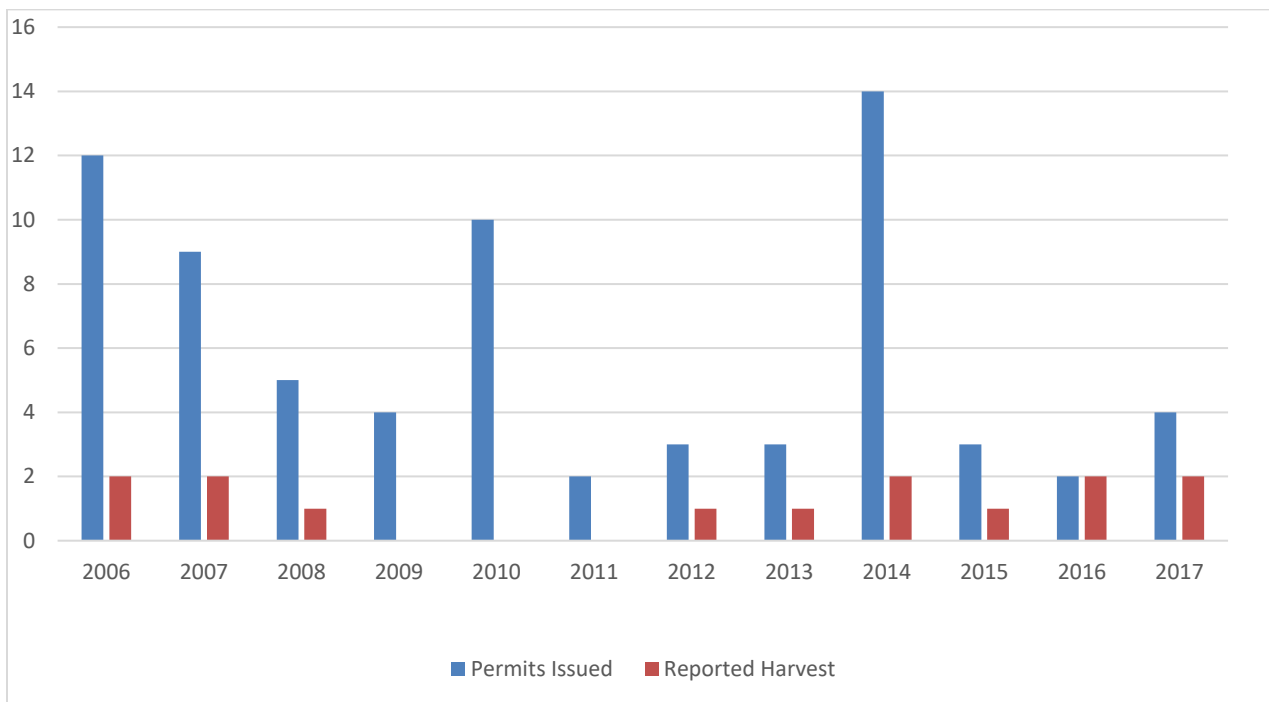


Figure 3. Number of permits issued and moose reported harvested for the Federal registration permit moose hunt in Unit 24B (OSM 2018).

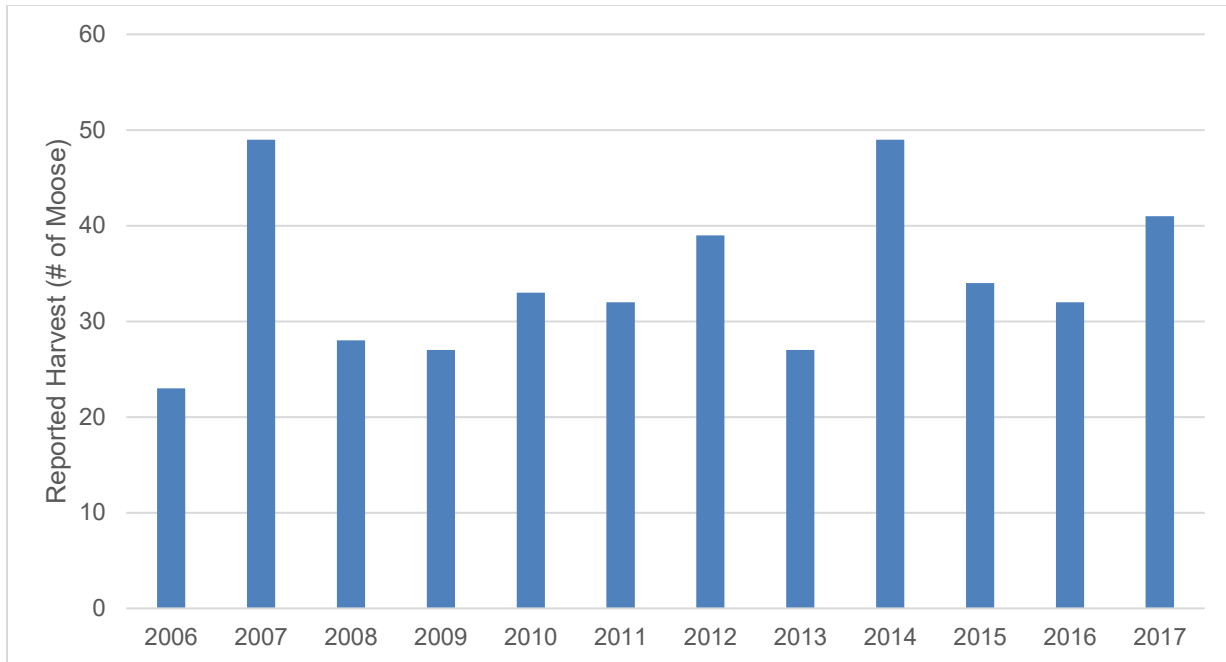


Figure 4. Reported moose harvested under State regulations in Unit 24B (ADF&G 2018b).

OSM Recommendation:

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

Justification

The Kanuti CUA was closed for biological and continuation of subsistence uses reasons. Biologically, the closure no longer seems warranted, primarily due to very high bull:cow ratios. Consistently high bull:cow ratios suggest there are surplus bulls available for harvest and only bulls can be legally harvested in Unit 24B. While the Kanuti CUA moose population has remained statistically stable since the closure was initiated in 1992, high calf:cow ratios and observed increases in the 2015 and 2017 population estimates indicate the moose population may be growing. Moreover, harvest of mature bulls in a population with high bull:cow ratios should not materially affect population growth.

Prior to the 1992 closure, local hunters harvested most of the moose from the Kanuti CUA due to aircraft restrictions. This contrasts with other portions of Unit 24 (pre-1992 and now) where non-local hunters harvest the majority of the moose. Since 1992, average annual reported harvest from Unit 24B has declined. This suggests opening the Kanuti CUA to non-Federally qualified users may result in only modest increases in reported moose harvests. A rural subsistence priority would be maintained by the longer Federal fall season.

However, whether or not the closure remains warranted for the continuation of subsistence uses is not clear. Extremely high unreported harvest rates and intermittent household surveys preclude accurate harvest information for Federally qualified subsistence users. Whether or not subsistence needs of Federally qualified subsistence users are being met is unknown, although high bull:cow ratios indicate bulls are available for harvest.

A conservative approach would be to recommend opening the Kanuti CUA for a limited time (e.g. 2-4 years) to evaluate any changes in the moose population, bull:cow ratios, and harvest.

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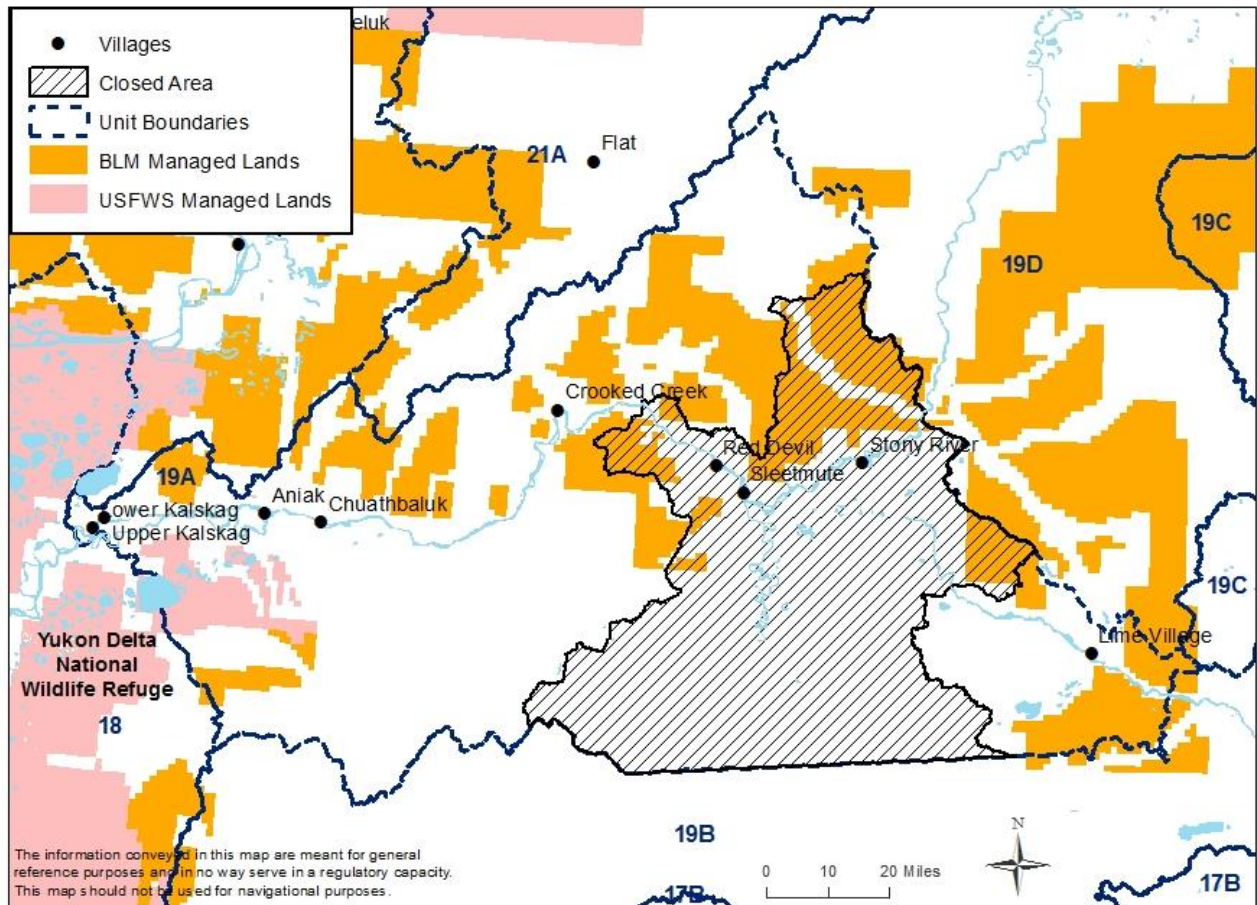
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FEDERAL WILDLIFE CLOSURE REVIEW WCR18-39

Closure Location: Eastern portion of Unit 19A (**Map 1**) – Moose



Map 1. Federal hunt area closure for moose in Unit 19A, north of the Kuskokwim River, upstream from (but excluding) the George River drainage, and south of the Kuskokwim River upstream from (and including) the Downey Creek drainage, not including the Lime Village Management Area.

Current Federal Regulation

Unit 19A–Moose

Unit 19A, north of the Kuskokwim River, upstream from (but excluding) the George River drainage, and south of the Kuskokwim River upstream from (and including) the Downey Creek drainage, not including the Lime Village Management Area. No Federal open season

Federal public lands are closed to the harvest of moose.

Closure Dates: Year round

Current State Regulation

Unit 19A–Moose

Unit 19A remainder

Residents and Nonresidents

No open season

Regulatory Year Initiated: 2007

Regulatory History

In 1990, Federal hunting regulations were adopted from State regulations. The moose season in Unit 19A was Sept. 1-Sept. 20, Nov. 20-Nov. 30, and Feb. 1-Feb. 10. The harvest limit was one moose, although antlerless moose could be taken only from Nov. 20-Nov. 30 and from Feb. 1-Feb. 10.

In 1992, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) adopted Proposal P92-111 with modification to change the Unit 19A moose season to Sept. 5-Sept. 25, Jan. 1-Jan. 10, and Feb. 1-Feb. 5 to provide harvest opportunity during Russian orthodox holidays in January (FSB 1992). Antlerless moose could only be taken during the winter seasons. The Board rejected Proposal P92-66 to liberalize moose hunting regulations in several units including Unit 19A because moose densities were too low to sustain increased harvests.

In April 1994, the Board deferred Proposal P94-54 to align Unit 19A Federal harvest limits and seasons with State regulations because not all affected Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (Councils) had considered the proposal. In November 1994, the Board adopted P94-54 with modification, aligning Unit 19A Federal moose regulations with State regulations with the exception of retaining the January season (FSB 1994). Unit 19A was divided into two hunt areas: that portion north of the Kuskokwim River upstream from, but not including the Kolmakof River drainage and south of the Kuskokwim River upstream from, but not including the Holokuk River drainage (Unit 19A east) and Unit 19A remainder. The seasons in both hunt areas were Sept. 1-Sept. 20, Nov. 20-Nov. 30, Jan. 1-Jan. 10, and Feb. 1-Feb. 10. The harvest limit in Unit 19A east was one moose, although antlerless moose could only be taken during the February season. The harvest limit in Unit 19A remainder was one bull.

In 2003, the Board adopted Proposal WP03-31 to shorten the February season in Unit 19A east to Feb. 1-Feb. 5 and eliminate the antlerless moose season because of declines in the Unit 19A moose population.

In 2004, the Board adopted Resolution 04-1 to support the Central Kuskokwim Moose Management Plan (Management Plan) (ADF&G 2004). The Board also adopted Proposal WP04-58 to eliminate the November, January, and February moose seasons in Unit 19A. Additionally, the Board adopted Proposal WP04-59 with modification to combine the Unit 19A hunt areas, require a State registration permit, and change the harvest limit to one antlered bull. These restrictions addressed severe declines in the Unit 19A moose population and complied with the Management Plan.

In 2006, the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) closed moose hunting in Unit 19A remainder (same as Federal hunt area Unit 19A east below) due to conservation concerns (OSM 2006). Subsequently, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) submitted Special Action WSA06-01b to close moose hunting in Unit 19A, North of the Kuskokwim River, upstream from but excluding the George River drainage, and south of the Kuskokwim River upstream from and including the Downey Creek drainage, not

including the Lime Village Management Area (Unit 19A east). (WSA06-01a requested limiting hunter numbers in Unit 19A remainder). The Board approved WSA06-01b to conserve the moose population and align with State regulations.

In 2007, the Board adopted Proposal WP07-35 with modification to close moose hunting in Unit 19A east (the modifications applied to Unit 19A remainder) because of continued conservation concerns for the Unit 19A moose population including low productivity, bull:cow ratios, and density combined with historically high hunting pressure (OSM 2007). The Western Interior Council submitted and supported the proposal because of conservation concerns over the moose resource. The Yukon-Kuskokwim Council also supported WP07-35 for conservation reasons (OSM 2007).

Moose hunting in Unit 19A east has remained closed under Federal and State regulations since 2007. In 2008, the Board rejected Proposal WP08-35 to establish a moose season in Unit 19A east due to continued conservation concerns. The closure was reviewed in 2011 by WCR10-39 and in 2014 by WCR14-39. The Western Interior Council recommended continuing the closure during both reviews.

In 2019, the BOG will consider Proposal 127, which requests opening a Tier I registration hunt for moose in Unit 19A east. (This hunt area is Unit 19A remainder under State regulations).

Federal public lands comprise approximately 18% of Unit 19A east and consist of 100% Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed lands (**Map 1**).

Closure last reviewed: 2014 – WCR14-39

Justification for Original Closure:

§815(3) of ANILCA states:

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

A portion of §816(b) of ANILCA states:

The Secretary....may temporarily close any public lands (including those within any conservation unit) or any portion thereof, to subsistence uses of a particular fish and wildlife population only if necessary for the reasons of public safety, administration, or to assure the continued viability of such population.

The combination of low moose population densities, low calf production and survival, low bull:cow ratios and high hunting pressure contributed to declines in the Unit 19A moose population. In response to these conservation concerns, the Board closed moose hunting in Unit 19A east in 2007.

Council Recommendation for Original Closure:

The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior Councils supported the closure to protect the moose resource for future generations.

State Recommendation for Original Closure:

The State supported the closure due to continued conservation concerns for the Unit 19A moose population. The BOG closed State managed lands in Unit 19A remainder (same as the Unit 19A east Federal hunt area) to moose hunting at its March 2006 meeting.

Biological Background

In 2004, ADF&G in cooperation with the Central Kuskokwim Moose Management Planning Committee published the Central Kuskokwim Moose Management Plan (Management Plan) (ADF&G 2004). State management objectives for the composition of the moose population in Unit 19A are the same as those in the Management Plan (Peirce 2018, ADF&G 2004):

- Maintain a minimum fall post hunt bull:cow ratio of 20-30 bulls:100 cows.
- Maintain a minimum fall post hunt calf:cow ratio of 30-40 calves:100 cows.
- Maintain no fewer than 20% calves (short-yearlings) in late winter.

ADF&G has the additional intensive management objectives for both Units 19A and 19B (Peirce 2018, Seavoy 2014):

- Achieve a moose population of 13,500-16,500 moose (7,600-9,300 in Unit 19A) with 750-950 moose available for harvest annually.

Predation by wolves, black bears, and brown bears influences moose abundance in Unit 19 and may be limiting population growth (Peirce 2018, Keech et al. 2011). ADF&G conducts intensive management in Unit 19A to reduce predation on moose. Wolf control has been ongoing in the wolf control focus area since 2006. In 2013 and 2014, black and brown bears were removed from the Bear Control Focus Area (BCFA) (**Map 2**) (Peirce 2018). ADF&G removed 89 bears (84 black and 5 brown) and 64 bears (54 black and 10 brown) in 2013 and 2014, respectively (ADF&G 2014).

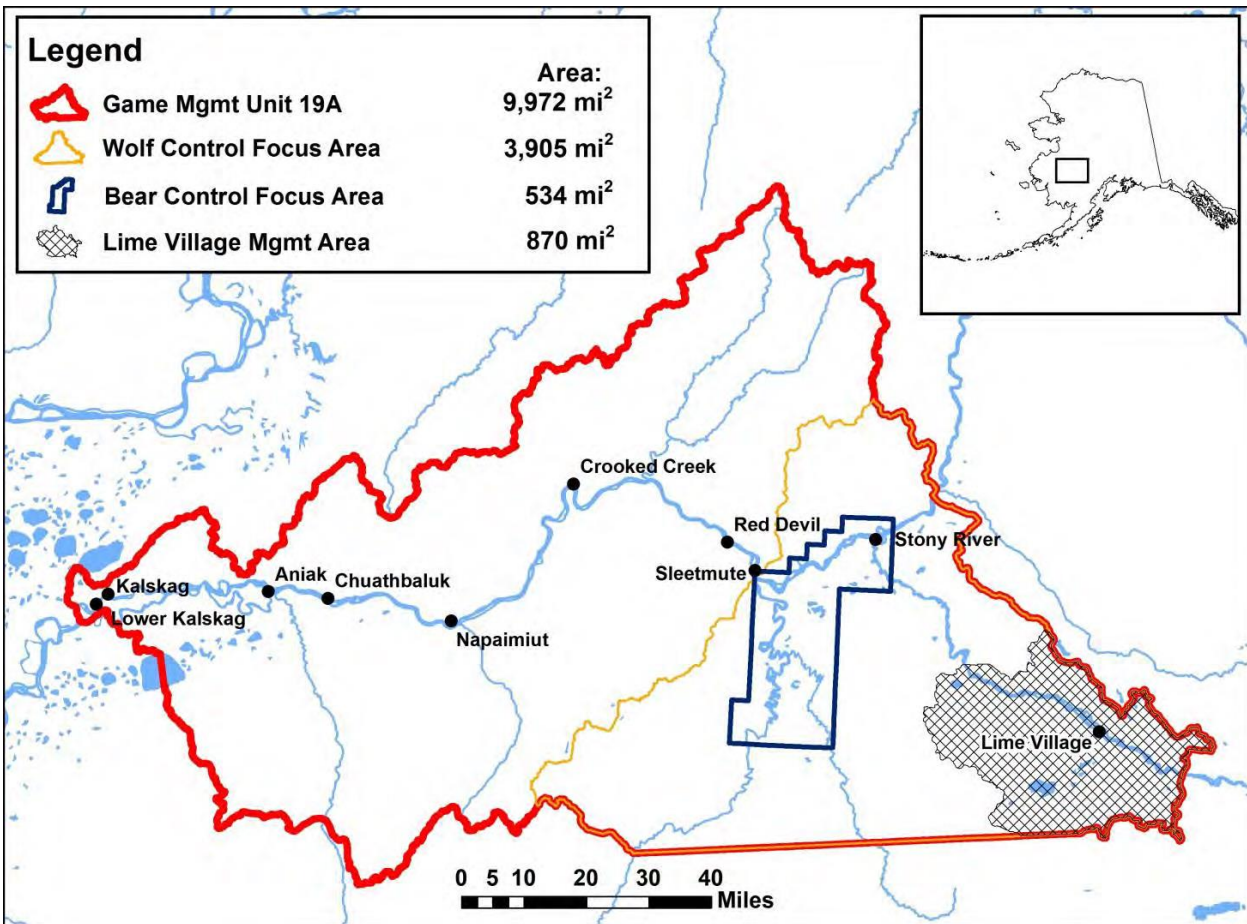
ADF&G conducts aerial surveys in Unit 19A to estimate the moose population in March (**Map 3**) (Peirce 2018, Seavoy 2014). The Federal closed area, Unit 19A east, primarily falls into the Unit 19A east (Holitna) moose survey area (MSA). ADF&G surveys the Holitna MSA every three years and the Aniak MSA opportunistically (Seavoy 2014). Since 2005, the Unit 19A moose population has appeared relatively stable due to overlapping confidence intervals, but remained well below the State's management objective of 7,600 moose (**Figure 1**).

Moose densities of 0.75-0.93 moose/mi² are required to meet State population objectives (Seavoy 2014). Between 1998 and 2017, estimated moose density in Unit 19A ranged from 0.25 moose/mi² to 1.5 moose/mi² (**Table 1**). The highest densities occurred in the BCFA, which comprises only 14% of the Holitna MSA (**Maps 2-3**) (ADF&G 2018a, Peirce 2018). The BCFA estimates are not representative of the entire Holitna MSA or the Federal Unit 19A east hunt area due to the limited survey area and because

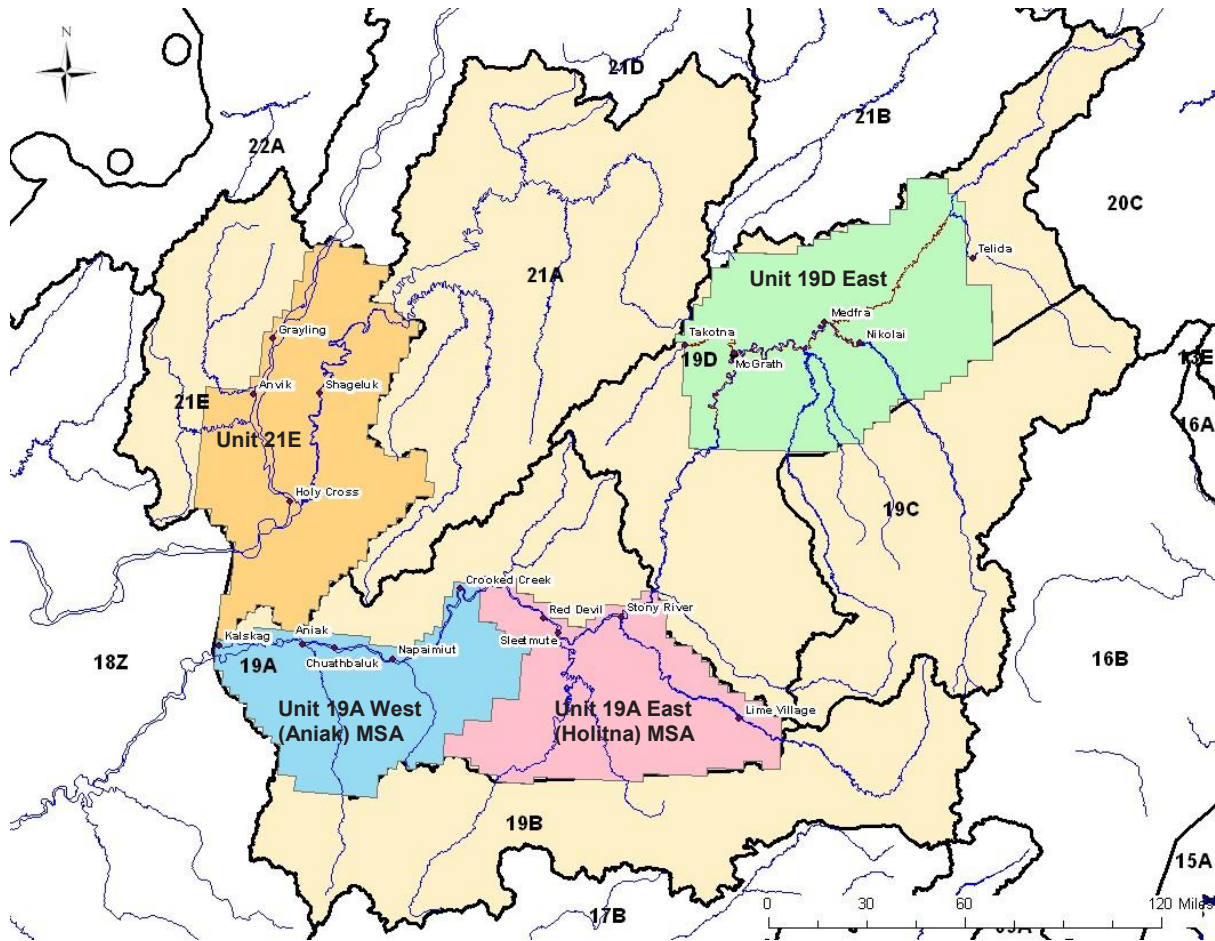
bear removal likely influenced moose abundance in that area. Additionally, most radio-collared moose in Unit 19A display limited movements (Seavoy 2014).

ADF&G conducts aerial surveys to estimate the composition of the Unit 19A moose population in November (Peirce 2018). Between 1987 and 2017, the bull:cow ratio in the Holitna MSA ranged from 6 bulls:100 cows to 58 bulls:100 cows (**Figure 2**). The lowest bull:cow ratio occurred in 2001, but has exceeded management objectives since 2007. Intense hunting pressure and predation likely contributed to the low bull:cow ratio in 2001 (Boudreau 2004). Over the same time period, the calf:cow ratio in the Holitna MSA ranged from 8 calves:100 cows to 72 calves:100 cows (**Figure 2**). The lowest calf:cow ratio also occurred in 2001. Since 2011, the calf:cow ratio has been within or above management objectives (Peirce 2018, ADF&G 2018a, Seavoy 2014).

Twinning rates indicate nutritional status and habitat quality (Peirce 2018). Twinning rates in the BCFA were 56% and 63% in 2013 and 2014, respectively, suggesting habitat is not limiting the moose population in the BCFA (Peirce 2018).



Map 2. Unit 19A wolf control focus area and bear control focus area (ADF&G 2018a).



Map 3. Units 19, 21A, and 21E showing the 3 scheduled moose survey areas (MSA): Unit 19D East moose survey area, Unit 19A East (Holitna), and Unit 21E moose survey area. Also shown is the Unit 19A West (Aniak) moose survey area which is surveyed opportunistically. The area south of the Kuskokwim River includes both the Unit 19A East (Holitna) and Unit 19A West (Aniak) survey areas (Seavoy 2014).

Table 1. Moose density estimates in Unit 19A (moose/mi²). See Maps 2-3 for survey areas (ADF&G 2018a, Peirce 2018, Seavoy 2014, ADF&G 2004).

Year	South of Kuskokwim	Unit 19A West (Aniak)	Unit 19A East (Holitna)	Bear Control Focus Area
1998			1.25	
2001		0.7		
2005	0.27			
2006		0.39		
2008			0.44	
2010		0.33		
2011			0.25	
2011			0.43 ^a	
2014				1.50 ^a
2017		1.3	0.52 ^a	1.36 ^a

^a Includes a sightability correction factor

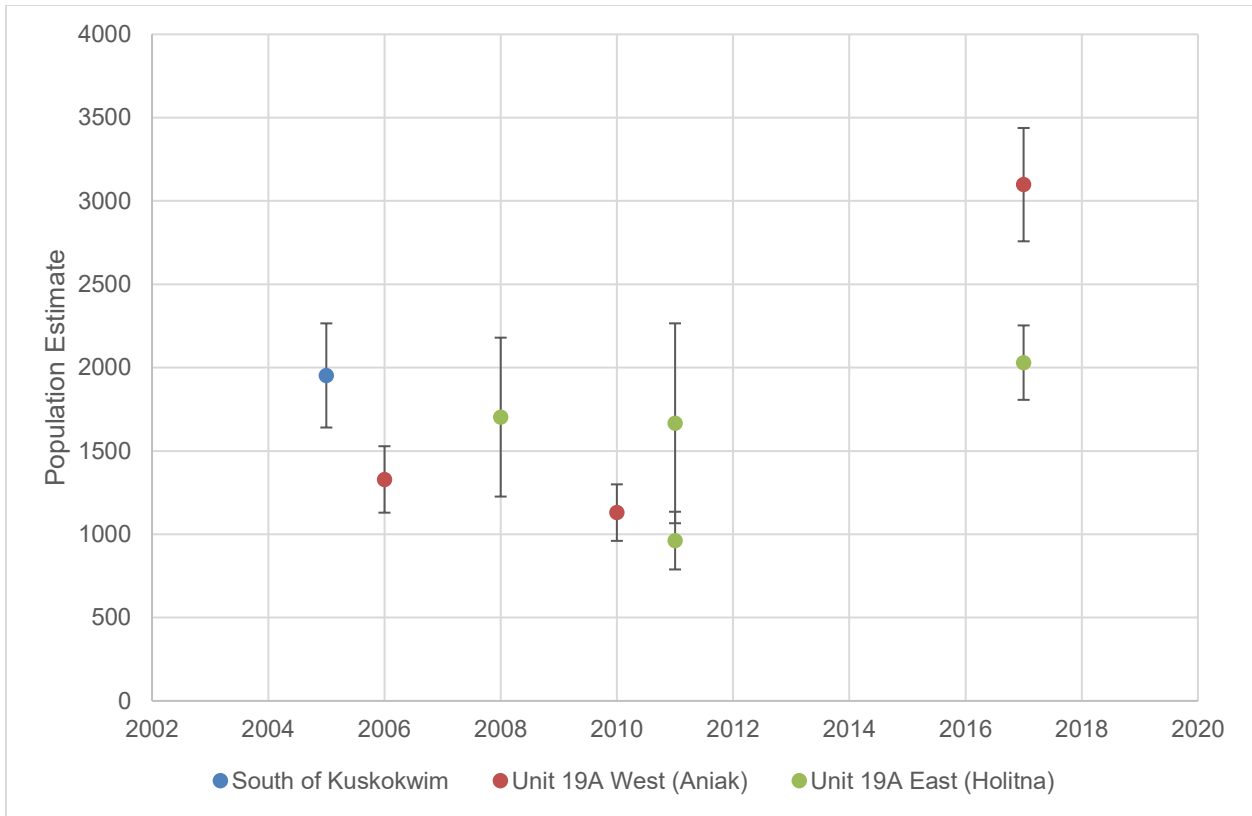


Figure 1. Population estimates for moose in Unit 19A with 90% confidence intervals. The higher estimate in 2011 and the 2017 estimate in the Unit 19A East (Holitna) survey area include sightability correction factors. See Map 3 for survey areas (ADF&G 2018a, Seavoy 2014).

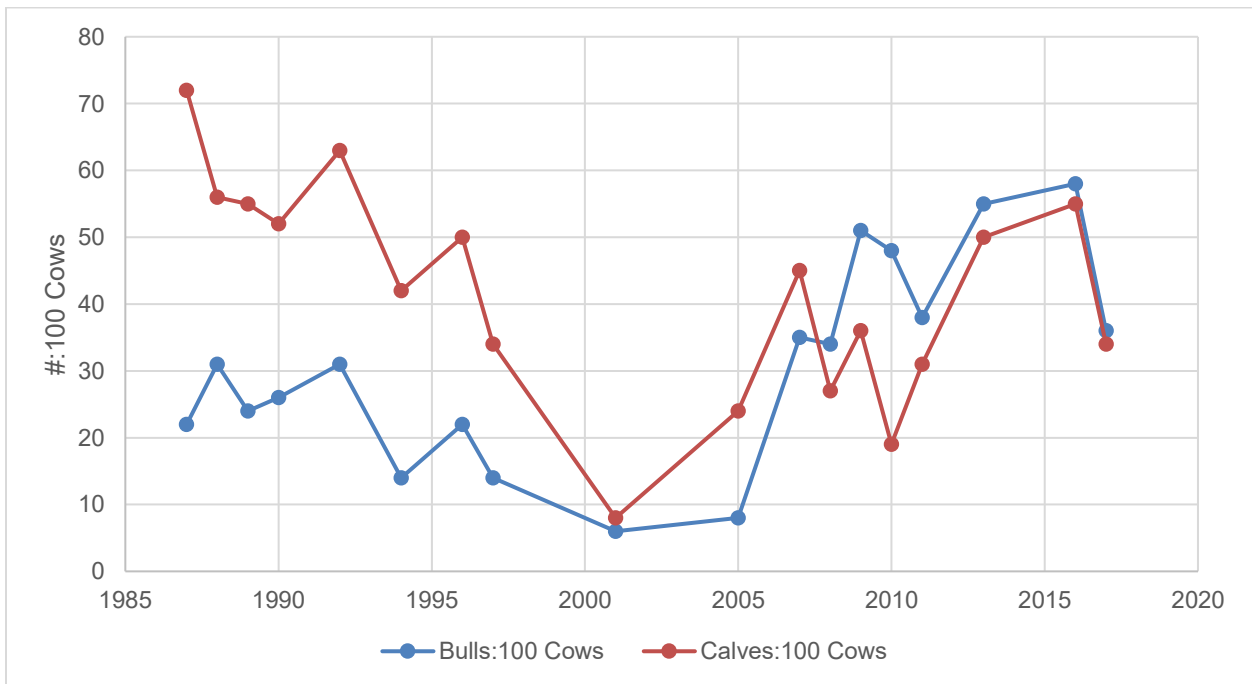


Figure 2. Fall bull:cow and calf:cow ratios for the Unit 19A East (Holitna) moose survey area (Peirce 2018, ADF&G 2018a, Seavoy 2014).

Harvest History

No legal moose harvest has occurred in Unit 19A east since 2006 when the season was closed under both Federal and State regulations. Between 1994 and 2005, reported annual moose harvest in Unit 19A ranged from 67-184 moose and averaged 127 moose (**Figure 3**). Over the same time period, local residents (defined as residents of Units 19A and 19B) harvested 30% of the total reported harvest on average (ADF&G 2004, 2018b). However, harvest reporting is low in many areas of rural Alaska. ADF&G (2004) estimated actual harvest in rural areas as 50-72% greater than reported harvest, resulting in an estimated 57-66 moose/year being harvested by local residents between 1994 and 2005 in Unit 19A.

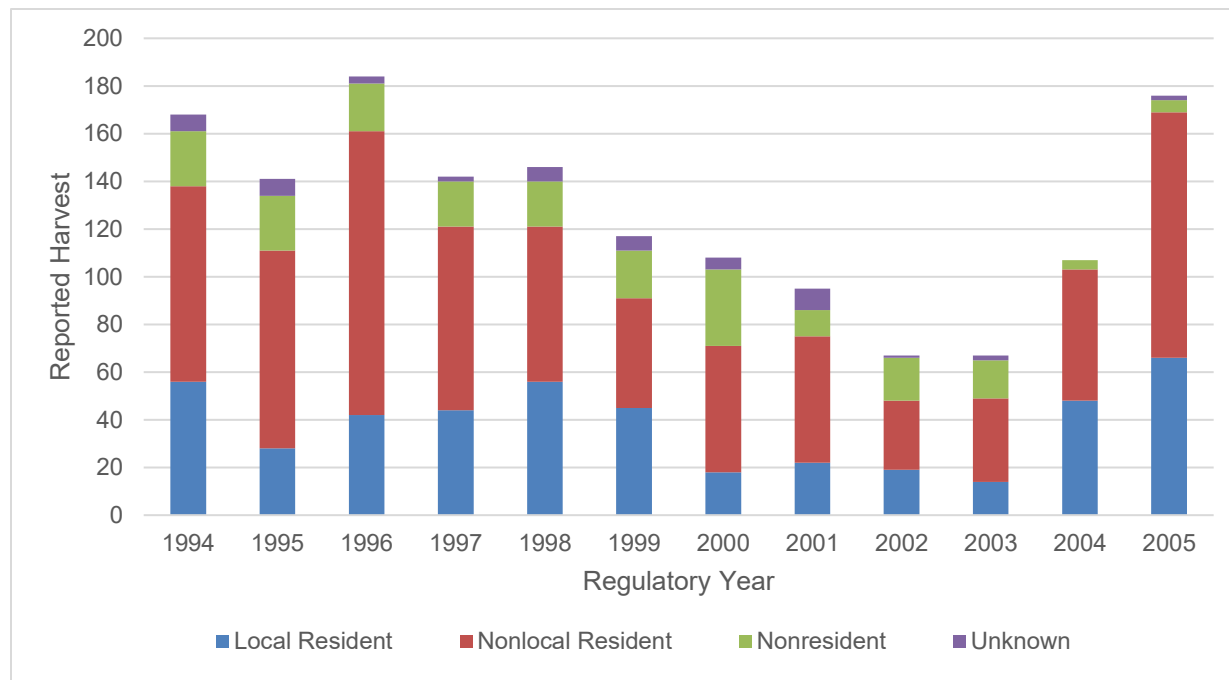


Figure 3. Reported moose harvest in Unit 19A by residency (ADF&G 2004, 2018b). Moose hunting in Unit 19A East was closed in 2006 and has remained closed under State and Federal regulations.

OSM Recommendation:

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

Justification

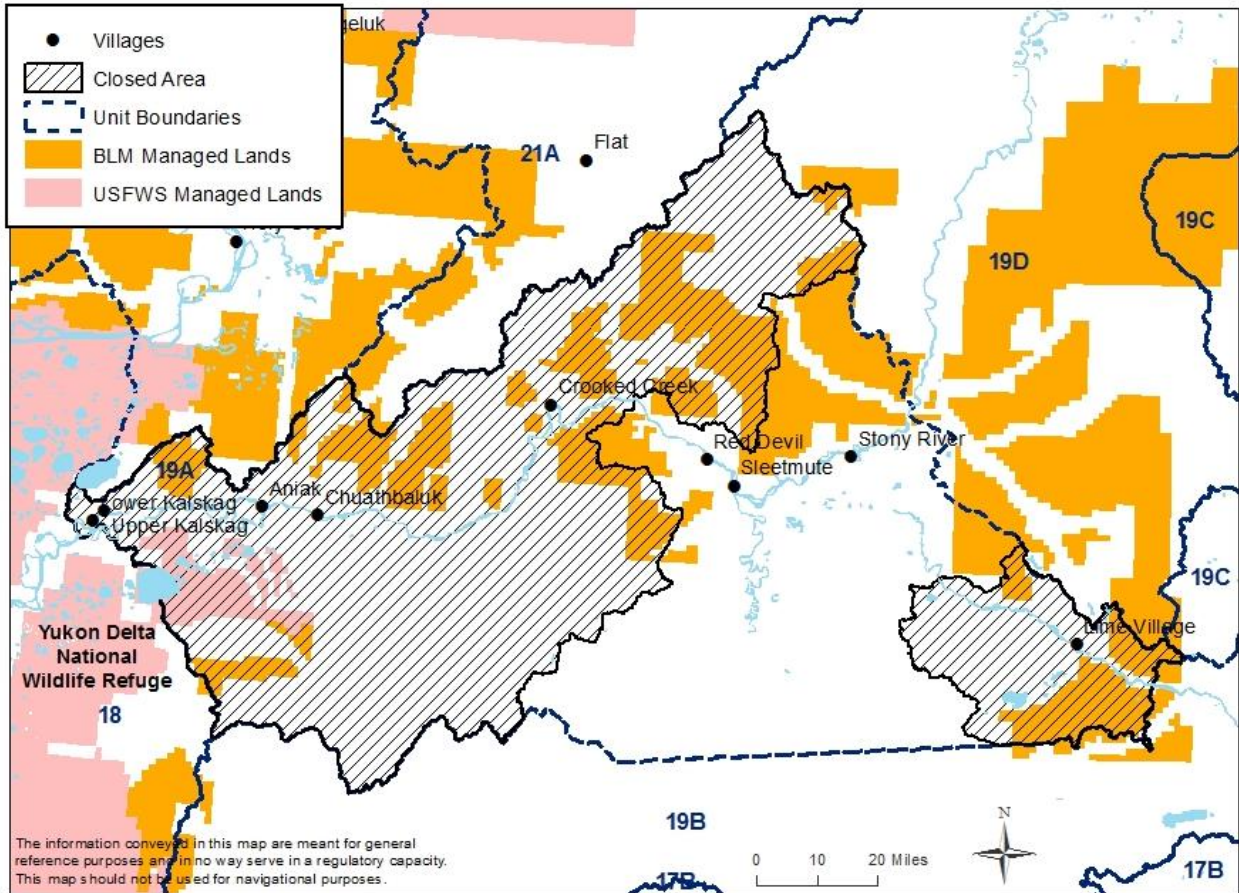
Moose abundance in Unit 19A east has not significantly changed since the hunt area closed in 2007 because of conservation concerns. Therefore, the Federal lands closure in Unit 19A East should be retained.

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**FEDERAL WILDLIFE CLOSURE REVIEW
WCR18-43**

Closure Location: Unit 19A remainder (**Map 1**)—Moose



Map 1. Federal hunt area closure for moose in Unit 19A remainder.

Current Federal Regulation

Unit 19A—Moose

Unit 19A, remainder—1 antlered bull by Federal drawing permit or a State permit. Sept. 1-20.

Federal public lands are closed to the taking of moose except by residents of Tuluksak, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Aniak, Chuathbaluk, and Crooked Creek hunting under these regulations. The Refuge Manager of the Yukon Delta NWR, in cooperation with the BLM Field Office Manager, will annually establish the harvest quota and number of permits to be issued in coordination with the State Tier I hunt. If the allowable harvest level is reached before the regular season closing date, the Refuge Manager, in consultation with the BLM Field

Office Manager, will announce an early closure of Federal public lands to all moose hunting

Closure Dates: Year round

Current State Regulation

Unit 19A–Moose

*Kuskokwim River drainage downstream from, and including, One antlered bull Sept. 1- 20
the George River drainage, and downstream from and by permit
excluding the Downey Creek drainage*

Regulatory Year Initiated: 2007

Regulatory History

In 1990, Federal hunting regulations were adopted from State regulations. The moose season in Unit 19A was Sept. 1-Sept. 20, Nov. 20-Nov. 30, and Feb. 1-Feb. 10. The harvest limit was one moose, although antlerless moose could be taken only from Nov. 20-Nov. 30 and from Feb. 1-Feb. 10.

In 1992, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) adopted Proposal P92-111 with modification to change the Unit 19A moose season to Sept. 5-Sept. 25, Jan. 1-Jan. 10, and Feb. 1-Feb. 5 to provide harvest opportunity during Russian orthodox holidays in January (FSB 1992). Antlerless moose could only be taken during the winter seasons. The Board rejected Proposal P92-66 to liberalize moose hunting regulations in several units including Unit 19A because moose densities were too low to sustain increased harvests.

In April 1994, the Board deferred Proposal P94-54 to align Unit 19A Federal harvest limits and seasons with State regulations because not all affected Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (Councils) had considered the proposal. In November 1994, the Board adopted P94-54 with modification, aligning Unit 19A Federal moose regulations with State regulations with the exception of retaining the January season (FSB 1994). Unit 19A was divided into two hunt areas: that portion north of the Kuskokwim River upstream from, but not including the Kolmakof River drainage and south of the Kuskokwim River upstream from, but not including the Holokuk River drainage (Unit 19A east) and Unit 19A remainder. The seasons in both hunt areas were Sept. 1-Sept. 20, Nov. 20-Nov. 30, Jan. 1-Jan. 10, and Feb. 1-Feb. 10. The harvest limit in Unit 19A east was one moose, although antlerless moose could only be taken during the February season. The harvest limit in Unit 19A remainder was one bull.

In 2003, the Board adopted Proposal WP03-31 to shorten the February season in Unit 19A east to Feb. 1-Feb. 5 and eliminate the antlerless moose season because of declines in the Unit 19A moose population.

In 2004, the Board adopted Resolution 04-1 to support the Central Kuskokwim Moose Management Plan (Management Plan) (ADF&G 2004). The Board also adopted Proposal WP04-58 to eliminate the November, January, and February moose seasons in Unit 19A. Additionally, the Board adopted Proposal WP04-59 with modification to combine the Unit 19A hunt areas, require a State registration permit, and

change the harvest limit to one antlered bull. These restrictions addressed severe declines in the Unit 19A moose population and complied with the Management Plan.

In 2006, the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) established a Tier II only moose hunt in Unit 19A, Kuskokwim River drainage downstream from, and including, the George River drainage, and downstream from and excluding the Downey Creek drainage (same as the Federal Unit 19A remainder hunt area) and eliminated the registration permit hunt to conserve the moose resource (OSM 2006). Subsequently, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) submitted Special Action WSA06-01a to require a permit in Unit 19A remainder that worked in concert with the State's Tier II hunt (WSA06-01b requested closing moose hunting in eastern Unit 19A). The Board approved WSA06-01a with modification, requiring a Federal drawing or State Tier II permit and closing moose hunting in Unit 19A remainder except by residents of Tuluksak, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Aniak, Chuathbaluk, and Crooked Creek (OSM 2007). A limited harvestable surplus required a §804 analysis, which determined these six communities to be the most dependent on the Unit 19A moose population (OSM 2006).

In 2007, the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council submitted Proposal WP07-35, requesting the same changes as WSA16-01. The Board adopted Proposal WP07-35 with modification because of continued conservation concerns for the Unit 19A moose population including low productivity, bull:cow ratios, and density combined with historically high hunting pressure (OSM 2007). The modification was to delegate authority to the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge manager to annually establish the harvest quota and number of available draw permits. The Western Interior and Yukon-Kuskokwim Councils and ADF&G supported the proposal because of conservation concerns over the moose resource (OSM 2007).

Federal regulations for moose in Unit 19A remainder have not changed since 2007. In 2008, the Assistant Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), with unanimous consent of the Interagency Staff Committee, rejected WSA08-07 to extend the Unit 19A remainder moose season by 10 days, ending Sept. 30 because the request did not meet the criteria in §__.19(b) and (c) of ANILCA for accepting Special Action requests. Specifically, there was not an unusual, significant, or unanticipated change in resource abundance or hunting conditions (OSM 2008).

Federal public lands comprise approximately 27% of Unit 19A remainder and consist of 86% Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed lands and 14% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) managed lands (**Map 1**).

Closure last reviewed: 2007 – WP07-35

Justification for Original Closure:

§815(3) of ANILCA states:

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

The combination of low moose population densities, low calf production and survival, low bull:cow ratios and high hunting pressure contributed to declines in the Unit 19A moose population. In response to these conservation concerns, the Board closed moose hunting in Unit 19A remainder except by residents of Tuluksak, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Aniak, Chuathbaluk, and Crooked Creek in 2007.

Council Recommendation for Original Closure:

The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior Councils supported the closure to protect the moose resource for future generations.

State Recommendation for Original Closure:

The State supported the closure due to continued conservation concerns for the Unit 19A moose population and to better align with State regulations. The State established a Tier II only hunt in a portion of Unit 19A in 2006.

Biological Background

In 2004, ADF&G in cooperation with the Central Kuskokwim Moose Management Planning Committee published the Central Kuskokwim Moose Management Plan (Management Plan) (ADF&G 2004). State management objectives for the composition of the moose population in Unit 19A are the same as those in the Management Plan (Peirce 2018, ADF&G 2004):

- Maintain a minimum fall posthunt bull:cow ratio of 20-30 bulls:100 cows.
- Maintain a minimum fall posthunt calf:cow ratio of 30-40 calves:100 cows.
- Maintain no fewer than 20% calves (short-yearlings) in late winter.

ADF&G has the additional intensive management objectives for both Units 19A and 19B (Peirce 2018, Seavoy 2014):

- Achieve a moose population of 13,500-16,500 moose (7,600-9,300 in Unit 19A) with 750-950 moose available for harvest annually.

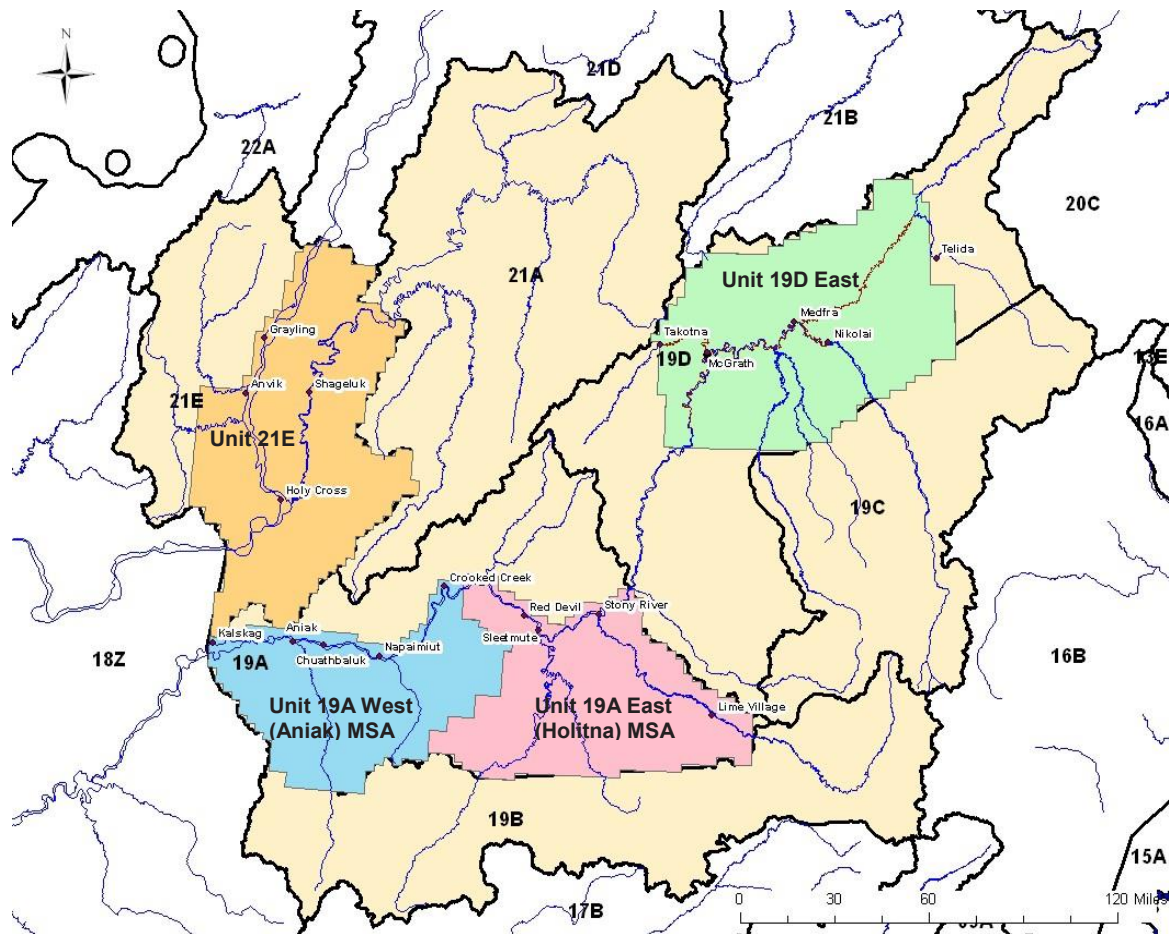
ADF&G conducts aerial surveys in Unit 19A to estimate the moose population in March (**Map 2**) (Peirce 2018, Seavoy 2014). The Federal closed area, Unit 19A remainder, primarily falls into the Unit 19A West (Aniak) moose survey area (MSA). ADF&G only surveys the Aniak MSA opportunistically, but surveys eastern Unit 19A every 3 years (**Map 2**) (Seavoy 2014). While the moose population in the Unit 19A West (Aniak) MSA appeared relatively stable between 2006 and 2010, it increased significantly in 2017 (**Figure 1**). ADF&G also surveyed the entire Unit 19A West hunt area (TM680) for the first time in 2017, estimating 4,135 moose (Peirce 2018, pers. comm.).

Moose densities of 0.75-0.93 moose/mi² are required to meet State population objectives (Seavoy 2014). Between 1998 and 2017, estimated moose density in Unit 19A ranged from 0.25 moose/mi² to 1.3 moose/mi² (**Table 1**) (ADF&G 2018a, Peirce 2018, Seavoy 2014, ADF&G 2004, Peirce 2018, pers. comm.). While the 2017 density estimate for the Unit 19A West (Aniak) MSA of 1.3 moose/mi² is the highest ever recorded for this area and is well above State population objectives, the 2017 density estimate for the entire Unit 19A West hunt area is only 0.7 moose/mi², which is just below State management objectives (**Table 1**).

ADF&G conducts aerial surveys to estimate the composition of the Unit 19A moose population in November (Peirce 2018). Between 1987 and 2017, the bull:cow ratio in Unit 19A ranged from 6 bulls:100 cows to 58 bulls:100 cows (**Figure 2**). Between 2004 and 2017, the bull:cow ratio in the Aniak MSA ranged from 20 bulls:100 cows to 42 bulls:100 cows. The lowest bull:cow ratio occurred in 2001, but has met or exceeded management objectives since 2007. However, the 2017 bull:cow ratio in the Aniak MSA just met management objectives (20 bulls:100 cows). Intense hunting pressure and predation likely contributed to the low bull:cow ratio in 2001 (Boudreau 2004).

Between 1987 and 2017, the calf:cow ratio in Unit 19A ranged from 8 calves:100 cows to 72 calves:100 cows (**Figure 3**) (Peirce 2018, Seavoy 2014). Between 2004 and 2017, the calf:cow ratio in the Aniak MSA ranged from 23 calves:100 cows to 64 calves:100 cows. The lowest calf:cow ratio also occurred in 2001. Since 2011, the calf:cow ratio has been within or above management objectives. The 2017 calf:cow ratio in the Aniak MSA is the highest ever recorded (Peirce 2018, pers. comm.).

Predation by wolves, black bears, and brown bears influences moose abundance in Unit 19 and may be limiting population growth (Peirce 2018, Keech et al. 2011). ADF&G conducts intensive management in Unit 19A to reduce predation on moose. However, management activities only occur in eastern Unit 19A, although the Lime Village Management Area is included in the wolf control focus area (ADF&G 2018a).



Map 2. Units 19, 21A, and 21E showing the 3 scheduled moose survey areas (MSA): Unit 19D East moose survey area, Unit 19A East (Holitna), and Unit 21E moose survey area. Also shown is the Unit 19A West (Aniak) moose survey area which is surveyed opportunistically. The area south of the Kuskokwim River includes both the Unit 19A East (Holitna) and Unit 19A West (Aniak) survey areas (figure from Seavoy 2014).

Table 1. Moose density estimates in Unit 19A (moose/mi²). See Map 2 for survey areas. The TM680 State hunt area is similar to the Federal Unit 19A remainder hunt area, but does not include the Lime Village Management Area (ADF&G 2018a, Peirce 2018, Seavoy 2014, ADF&G 2004, Peirce 2018, pers. comm.).

Year	South of Kuskokwim River	Unit 19A West (Aniak)	Unit 19A East (Holitna)	Unit 19A West hunt area (TM680)
1998			1.25	
2001		0.7		
2005	0.27			
2006		0.39		
2008			0.44	
2010		0.33		
2011			0.25	
2011			0.43 ^a	
2014				
2017		1.3 ^a	0.52 ^a	0.7 ^a

^a Includes a sightability correction factor

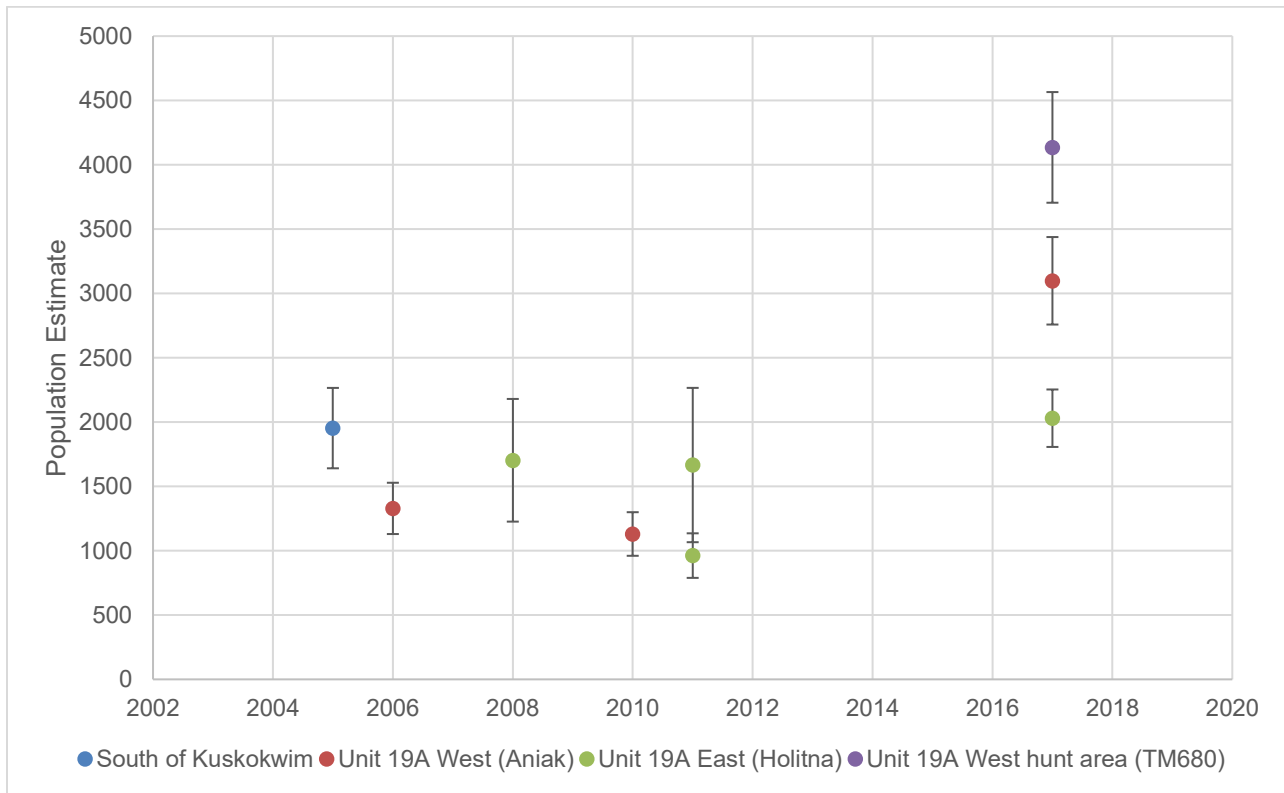


Figure 1. Population estimates for moose in Unit 19A with 90% confidence intervals. The higher estimate in 2011 and the 2017 estimate in the Unit 19A East (Holitna) survey area include sightability correction factors. See Map 2 for survey areas. The TM680 State hunt area is similar to the Federal Unit 19A remainder hunt area, but does not include the Lime Village Management Area (ADF&G 2018a, Seavoy 2014, Peirce 2018, pers. comm.).

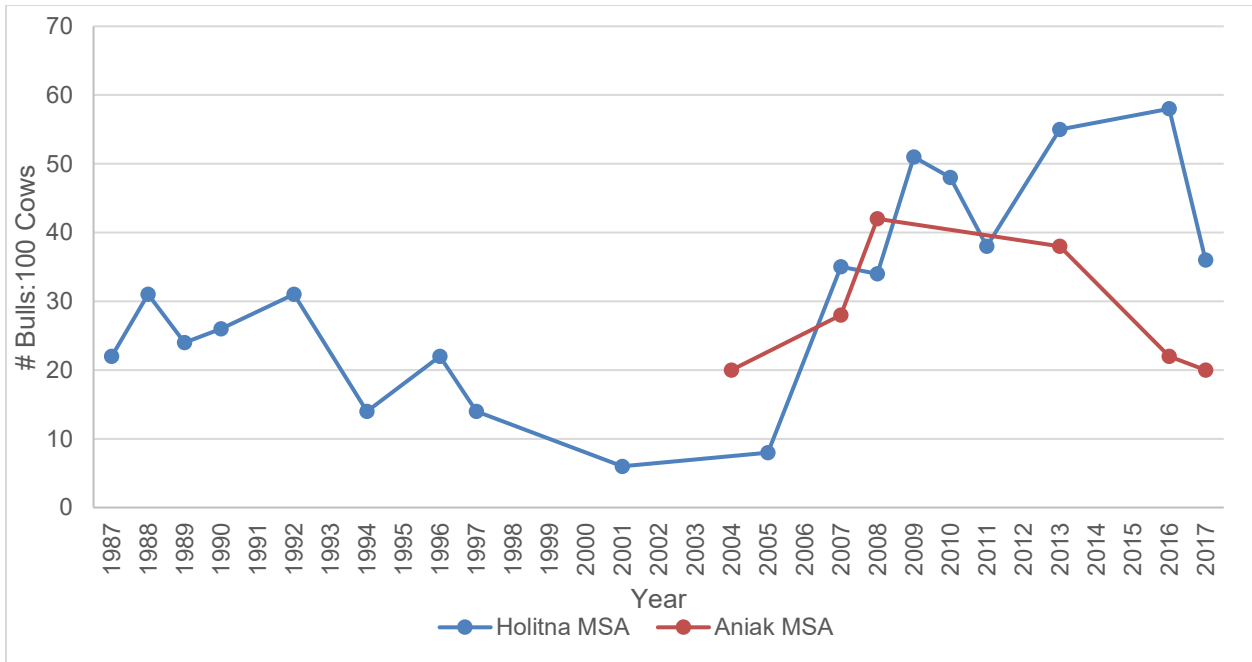


Figure 2. Fall bull:cow ratios for the Unit 19A East (Holitna) and Unit 19A West (Aniak) moose survey areas (Peirce 2018, ADF&G 2018a, Seavoy 2014, Peirce 2018, pers. comm.). See Map 2 for survey areas.

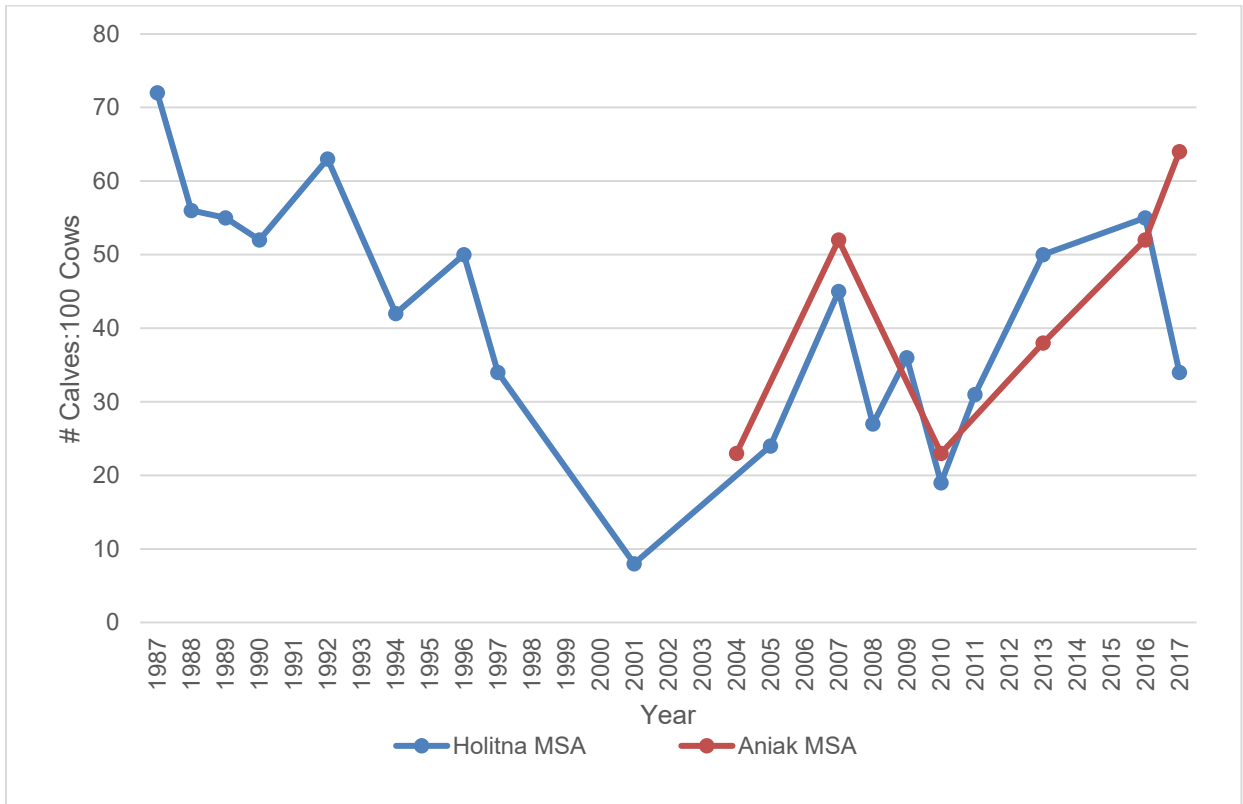


Figure 3. Fall calf:cow ratios for the Unit 19A East (Holitna) and Unit 19A West (Aniak) moose survey areas (Peirce 2018, ADF&G 2018a, Seavoy 2014, Peirce 2018, pers. comm.). See Map 2 for survey areas.

Harvest History

Since 2006, moose harvest in Unit 19A remainder has only occurred under a State Tier II hunt, TM680, and a Federal drawing permit hunt, FM1901. Harvest for both hunts is limited to antlered bulls and restricted to Alaska residents. Harvest on Federal public lands is restricted to residents of Tuluksak, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Aniak, Chuathbaluk, and Crooked Creek.

Between 1994 and 2005, prior to any closures, annual reported moose harvest in all of Unit 19A ranged from 67-184 moose and averaged 127 moose (ADF&G 2004, 2018b). Between 2006 and 2017, annual reported moose harvest in Unit 19A remainder averaged 98 moose, ranging from 32-157 moose (**Figure 4**) (ADF&G 2018b, OSM 2018). Over the same time period, annual reported harvest on Federal public lands averaged 22 moose, ranging from 6-45 moose (OSM 2018). On average, 19% of the Unit 19A remainder moose harvest between 2006 and 2017 has occurred on Federal public lands.

In 2006, ADF&G estimated the harvestable surplus of moose as 60 bulls for all of Unit 19A remainder (TM680 hunt area) and as 20 bulls on Federal public lands only (ADF&G 2006, OSM 2007). Most moose harvest on Federal public lands in Unit 19A remainder occurred on Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) (ADF&G 2006). ADF&G estimated the harvestable surplus of moose for the Yukon Delta NWR portion of Unit 19A remainder as 16 bulls with a few additional harvests from BLM lands (ADF&G 2006).

Between 2006 and 2016, the moose population in the Unit 19A West (Aniak) MSA appeared stable, suggesting the harvestable surplus had not changed (**Figure 1**). Since 2007, annual reported harvest has exceeded 60 bulls, the harvestable surplus. Since 2012, annual reported harvest has exceeded 110 moose (**Figure 4**). On Federal public lands, harvest has exceeded 20 bulls/year since 2014. While the number of available Tier II and Federal drawing permits has not changed substantially, hunter success rates have steadily increased since 2006 (**Table 2**).

The significant increase in the 2017 population estimate for the Unit 19A West (Aniak) MSA suggests a parallel increase in the harvestable surplus. A conservative harvest rate of 5% yields a harvestable surplus of 207 bull moose for the Unit 19A remainder hunt area, which is well above annual reported moose harvests. However, low 2016 and 2017 bull:cow ratios in the Unit 19A West (Aniak) MSA indicate few surplus bulls.

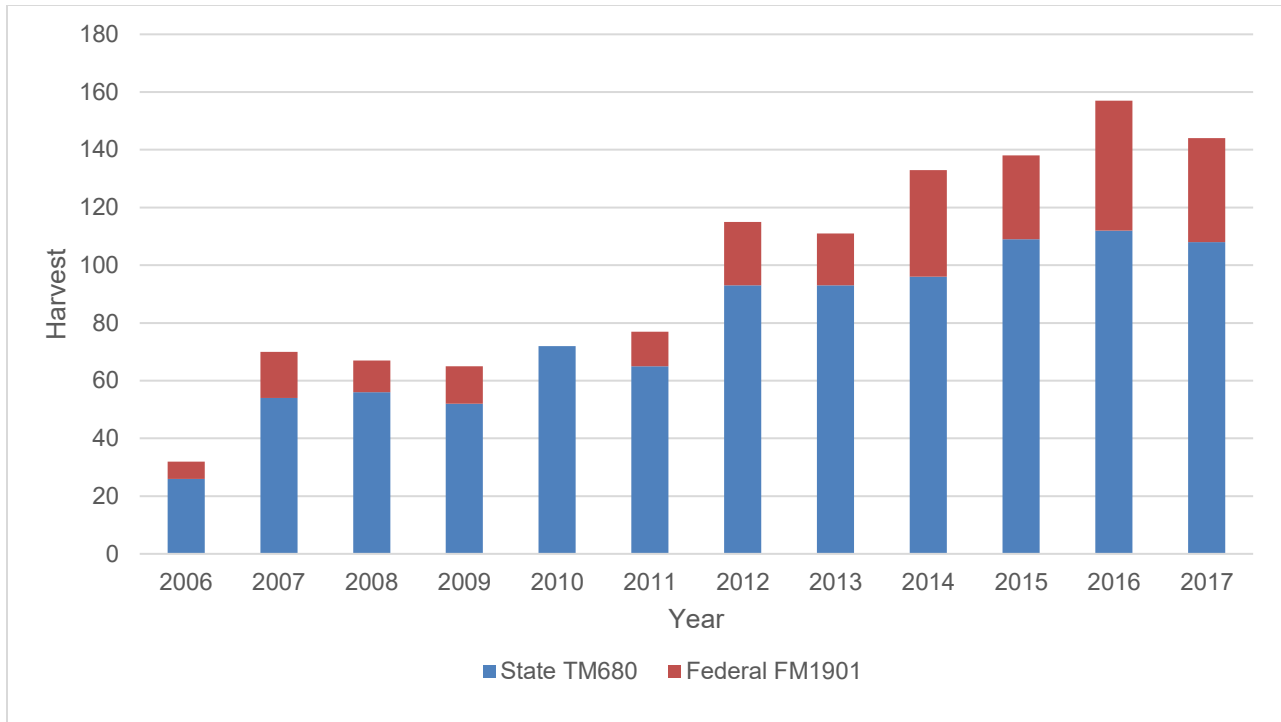


Figure 4. Reported moose harvest in Unit 19A remainder (ADF&G 2018b, OSM 2018).

Table 2. Number of permits issued and success rates for the State Tier II, TM680 hunt and the Federal drawing permit, FM1901 hunt (ADF&G 2018b, OSM 2018).

Year	TM680 Issued	TM680 Success (%)	FM1901 Issued	FM1901 Success (%)
2006	197	13	92	13
2007	227	24	92	25
2008	230	24	97	14
2009	231	23	92	22
2010	200	36	*	*
2011	200	33	72	29
2012	165	47	82	43
2013	222	42	74	32
2014	191	50	92	64
2015	200	55	77	73
2016	197	57	96	65
2017	195	55	96	62

* No data available

OSM Recommendation:

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

Justification

No change to the closure is currently recommended. While Federal harvest may have exceeded the harvestable surplus on Federal public lands between 2014 and 2016, harvest can be adjusted by the in-season Federal manager who can set the quota, number of available permits, and close the season when the quota is met. While the 2017 moose density estimate for the Unit 19A West (Aniak) MSA increased significantly and is above State management objectives, the density estimate for the entire Unit 19A West hunt area is much lower and just within State management objectives. Additionally, the 2016 and 2017 bull:cow ratios for the Unit 19A West (Aniak) MSA are low, just meeting State management objectives. As moose harvest in Unit 19A West is restricted to bulls only, a robust bull:cow ratio is recommended before relaxing the closure. For these reasons, no change to the closure is recommended at this time.

While Lime Village Management Area is a separate hunt area under State regulations, it is part of Unit 19A remainder under Federal regulations. The §804 analysis (part of Proposal WP07-35) failed to realize this. Currently, residents of Tuluksak, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Aniak, Chuathbaluk, and Crooked Creek (§804 communities) can hunt in the Lime Village Management Area while residents of Lime Village cannot. OSM recommends establishing a new hunt area for the Lime Village Management Area or adding Lime Village to the §804 communities. Submittal of a regulatory proposal is necessary to make these changes.

OSM also recommends removing the regulatory language referring to establishing quotas and permit numbers and delegating authority to a Federal land manager to set quotas and permit numbers via a delegation of authority letter only. Creation of a delegation of authority letter for the Federal in-season manager will serve to simplify regulations and allow for management flexibility through adjustment of in-season winter hunt parameters. Submittal of a regulatory proposal is also necessary to delegate authority.

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Federal Subsistence Board News Release



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

Forest Service

For Immediate Release:
January 31, 2019

Contact: Caron McKee
(907) 786-3880 or (800) 478-1456
caron_mckee@fws.gov

Call for Proposals to Change Federal Subsistence Hunting and Trapping Regulations

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

Submit proposals:

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

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

You may call the Office of Subsistence Management at 800-478-1456 or email subsistence@fws.gov with questions.

Additional information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program may be found on the web at www.doi.gov/subsistence or by visiting www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

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

-###-

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This document has been cleared for public release #20601312019.



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

G. Protest Activities

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

V. Public Participation and Request for Comments

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

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

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

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

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

List of Subjects in 33 CFR Part 165

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dated: January 23, 2019.

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

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

BILLING CODE 9110–04–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

36 CFR Part 242

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 100

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

RIN 1018–BD11

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

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

ACTION: Proposed rule.

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

DATES:

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

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

ADDRESSES:

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

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

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

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

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

USDA–Forest Service, Alaska Region; (907) 743–9461 or twhitford@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

Public Review Process—Comments, Proposals, and Public Meetings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

d. A statement explaining why each change is necessary;

e. Proposed wording changes; and
 f. Any additional information that you believe will help the Board in evaluating the proposed change.

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

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

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

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

Reasonable Accommodations

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

Tribal Consultation and Comment

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

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

an opportunity to consult on this proposed rule.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Compliance With Statutory and Regulatory Authorities

National Environmental Policy Act

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

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

Section 810 of ANILCA

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

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

Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA)

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

Regulatory Planning and Review (Executive Order 12866)

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

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

Regulatory Flexibility Act

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

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

Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act

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

Executive Order 12630

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

Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

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

Executive Order 12988

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

Executive Order 13132

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

Executive Order 13175

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

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

Executive Order 13211

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

Drafting Information

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

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

List of Subjects

36 CFR Part 242

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

50 CFR Part 100

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

Proposed Regulation Promulgation

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

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

Dated: December 21, 2018.

Thomas C.J. Doolittle,

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

Dated: December 21, 2018.

Thomas Whitford,

Subsistence Program Leader, USDA—Forest Service.

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

BILLING CODE 3411–15–4333–15–P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

38 CFR Part 17

RIN 2900–AQ47

Urgent Care

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.
ACTION: Proposed rule.

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

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

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

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



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

Federal Subsistence Board Informational Flyer



Forest Service

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

How to Submit a Proposal to Change Federal Subsistence Regulations

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

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

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

What your proposal should contain:

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

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

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

You may submit your proposals by:

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

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

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

How a proposal to change Federal subsistence regulations is processed:

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

A step-by-step guide to submitting your proposal on www.regulations.gov:

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

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

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

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

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

RAC/WI 18029.KD

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

Dear Chairman Christianson:

The Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council submits this FY2018 annual report to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) under the provisions of Section 805 (a)(3)(D) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). At its public meeting in Galena, Alaska on October 11-12, 2017, the Council identified concerns and recommendations for this report. The Council wishes to share information and raise a number of concerns aligned with the implementation of Title VIII of ANILCA and the continuation of subsistence uses in the Western Interior Region. [*This report was approved at the Council's winter 2019 meeting in Fairbanks.*]

1. Resource monitoring and evaluation

The Council is very concerned about resource monitoring and evaluation of caribou in the region. The vast majority of research appears to be focused on winter foraging of lichen, while the caribou summer feeding regime is largely overlooked. While lichen provides important carbohydrates, spring and summer vegetation such as cotton grass provide critical protein sources.

Observations in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge show that the tundra is up to 50% devoid of snow cover when caribou are calving. Bare tundra makes available essential protein resources from grass flowers, forbs, and shrub leaves. Limitations to the caribou calving range by lichen absence/presence needs to be reevaluated. Sedge blossom, forb and shrub leaf drive calving range carrying capacity. Lack of lichen on calving ranges has erroneously led managers to call for herd suppression. Caribou herds are limited not by the availability of lichen as much as snow depth, spring phenology, and predation. Caribou winter habitat forage is predominantly lichen, typically accessed during migrations. Many lichen-rich areas in North Central Alaska historically used by caribou have had little use for decades.

Chairman Christianson

The Council believes the lack of information about annual forage production reduces the effectiveness of State and Federal managers to manage caribou, particularly with respect to recruitment and the overall health of animals as they approach the winter months. The lack of information does not allow for making informed habitat management decisions during critical summer months when caribou are calving and acquiring fat reserves for survival.

Recommendation. The Council asks that the Board encourage the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Bureau of Land Management, along with other Federal agencies, take a more holistic approach to resource monitoring. This could occur by not limiting research to winter periods and lichen consumption, but rather assess the *annual* intake of vegetation by caribou, and how the overall habitat seasonally contributes to caribou reproduction and survivability.

2. Office of Subsistence Management comments to the Alaska Boards of Fish and Game

The Council requests that the Federal Subsistence Board direct the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) to cite the authority under which OSM delivers comments on proposals to the Alaska Boards of Fisheries and Game. The Council appreciates the Board's response to a similar inquiry presented in its 2017 Annual Report to the Board wherein the Board outlined the protocol by which the OSM comments are reviewed and submitted to the State. The Council does not believe, however, the response addressed concerns when OSM comments are in conflict with Council positions on State board proposals. In addition, there are frequent incidences where OSM fails to comment on proposals impacting subsistence where the Council has taken a position.

Recommendation: The Council believes that OSM is a facilitating organization and therefore should not be submitting comments to the Alaska Boards of Fisheries or Game outside of the Regional Advisory Councils. As stated earlier, the Council would like the Board to cite the authority and/or policy under which OSM submits these comments. The Council recognizes that comments to the State Boards are critical to ensuring that subsistence resources are available to rural communities, but would prefer that OSM staff resources be redirected towards assisting Councils with written comments to the State Boards from their respective communities.

3. Regulation publications deadline

This Council is concerned over the late release of regulations for the 2018-2020 regulatory wildlife cycle. The final rule for the Federal Subsistence Management Regulations for the Taking of Wildlife on Federal public lands and waters in Alaska was published in the Federal Register (83 FR 50758) on October 9, 2018 – one hundred (100) days after previous regulations had expired on June 30. Printed copies of the regulation books were not available until after the Council conducted its fall meeting cycle on October 10-11, 2018 in Galena. As a result, subsistence users did not know which regulations had been changed at the Board's meeting held April 10-13, 2018. The late delivery of published regulations forced many subsistence users to rely on regulations that were outdated and possibly illegal.

Chairman Christianson

Recommendation: The Council would like the Board to inform the Secretary of the Interior that Federal subsistence fish and wildlife regulations are published to implement a priority for subsistence uses on Federal public lands as required by ANILCA. Subsistence uses on Federal lands in Alaska are not under State authority, and the timely publication of Federal regulations is critical to thousands of subsistence users for legal take of wild foods. Delays in publishing the regulations undermine the intent of ANILCA and are harmful to subsistence users.

4. National Wildlife Refuge staffing

The Council remains concerned over current National Wildlife Refuge staffing, particularly in the Western Interior Region. The past several years have seen a marked decrease in staffing, including the loss of 11 employees when the McGrath office of the Innoko National Wildlife Refuge closed. The Nowitna, Innoko and Koyukuk National Wildlife Refuge complex in Galena is currently down by four or five staff. Hiring freezes and delayed position approvals have reached critical levels at these refuges, resulting in the loss of both long and short term monitoring of fish and wildlife populations, as well as habitat health. The Kanuti and Yukon Delta Refuges have also been negatively impacted. Existing staff at all of these refuges are unable to perform the normal function of properly overseeing these Federal lands on behalf of the local communities that rely on them, and the American public.

Recommendation: The Council would appreciate it if the Federal Subsistence Board would continue to stress the need for adequate staffing for National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska, particularly in those field offices where local research plays a critical role in managing subsistence resources for rural communities.

5. NPFMC national standards and fishery stocks

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Act mandated that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries develop guidelines to ensure that U.S. marine fisheries are scientifically monitored, regionally managed, and legally enforced under a number of requirements, including ten national standards.

The Council believes that the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) management of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island (BSAI) trawl fleet is in violation of National Standard 8 – Communities that requires the following:

Conservation and management measures shall, consistent with the conservation requirements of this Act (including the prevention of overfishing and rebuilding of overfished stocks), take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities by utilizing economic and social data that meet the requirement of paragraph (2) [i.e., National Standard 2], in order to (a) provide for the sustained participation of such communities, and (b) to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities.

Chairman Christianson

Chinook Salmon populations on the Yukon River have failed for nearly 20 years. Similarly, runs on the Kuskokwim River have also failed for multiple years. This Council believes that both the BSAI and NPFMC have grossly underestimated the socioeconomic impacts on the communities in our region that have endured reduced subsistence and zero commercial harvests for Chinook Salmon. Subsistence is in fact an economy and the continual suffering of our communities is evidence that the NPFMC is not upholding National Standard 8.

Recommendation: The Council asks the Federal Subsistence Board to request that the NPFMC take immediate measures to come into compliance with National Standard 8 by recognizing the significant socioeconomic impacts to local communities caused by commercial fishing that resulted in poor salmon runs. One way to move toward compliance is to reduce the allowable bycatch for Chinook Salmon by commercial trawlers. The Council requests that the NPFMC take immediate action to remedy the conditions and provide respite for communities in the Yukon/Kuskokwim drainages that have been suffering due to poor management of salmon in the marine environment.

6. Effects of hatchery fish on wild salmon stocks

The Council is equally concerned over the potential impact of hatchery fish on wild stocks of Alaska salmon, in both marine and freshwater environments. Hundreds of millions of Chum and Pink Salmon fry are released into the marine environment from Alaska, British Columbia and Washington. There appear to be no data available to understand the impacts of this competing population or the biological carrying capacity of the marine environment to sustain these numbers. Indigenous fish stocks must compete for food with these hatchery fish, which are released into the oceans well-fed and vigorous.

Recommendation: The Council believes it is critical that responsible agencies manage for the potential impacts of hatchery fish to ensure the conservation and sustainability of wild stocks of salmon in Alaska.

Thank you for the opportunity for this Council to assist the Federal Subsistence Management Program in meeting its charge of protecting subsistence resources and uses of these resources on Federal public lands and waters. We look forward to continuing discussions about the issues and concerns of subsistence users of the Western Interior Region. If you have questions about this report, please contact me via Karen Deatherage, Subsistence Council Coordinator, with the Office of Subsistence Management at karen_deatherage@fws.gov, or 1-800-478-1456 or 907-786-3564.

Sincerely,

Jack Reakoff
Chair

Chairman Christianson

cc Federal Subsistence Board

Thomas Doolittle, Acting Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management

Orville Lind, Acting Deputy Assistant Regional Director

Office of Subsistence Management

Jennifer Hardin, PhD, Subsistence Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management

Greg Risdahl, Fisheries Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management

Chris McKee, Wildlife Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management

Carl Johnson, Supervisory Program Analyst, Office of Subsistence Management

Karen Deatherage, Subsistence Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management

Mark Burch, Special Projects Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Interagency Staff Committee

Administrative Record

DRAFT

CALL FOR PROPOSALS
Alaska Board of Game
Arctic, Western, and the Interior Regions
2019/2020 Meeting Cycle

The Alaska Board of Game calls for proposed changes in the regulations pertaining to hunting, trapping, and the use of game for the following regions:

- 1) Arctic and Western Region (GMUs 18, 22, 23, AND 26A);
- 2) Interior and Northeast Arctic Region (GMUs 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26B, AND 26C)

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, May 1, 2019

The Alaska Board of Game is accepting proposed changes to hunting and trapping regulations for the Interior, Arctic, & Western Regions (Game Management Units 12, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26) including the following topics:

Hunting seasons and bag limits, including subsistence and general hunts for all species; trapping seasons and bag limits; big game prey populations and objectives for intensive management; predation control areas implementation plans; restricted areas including controlled use areas, management areas, closed areas, and closures in state game refuges.

Proposed changes to 5 AAC Chapter 92, Statewide Provisions *specific to the GMUs in these regions* will be accepted. This includes regulations under the categories of: general provisions, permits, permit conditions and provisions, methods and means, possession and transportation, and the use of game.

The following topics will be considered for all Game Management Units:

Brown Bear Tag Fee Exemptions

Reauthorization of Antlerless Moose Hunts (*State statute requires all antlerless moose hunts be reauthorized annually.*)

Proposals may be submitted by mail, fax, or online:

Online: www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.proposal

Email: dfg.bog.comments@alaska.gov (attachments only)

Mail: ADF&G, Boards Support Section

P.O. Box 115526

Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Fax: (907) 465-6094

Proposals must be received by Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at the Boards Support Section office in Juneau. (A postmark is NOT sufficient for timely receipt).

You are encouraged to submit proposals at the earliest possible date on Board of Game proposal forms available from the Boards Support Section regional offices and on the website at: www.boardofgame.adfg.alaska.gov. All proposals must contain an individual's name and an organizational name if appropriate, contact telephone number, and address. Regional proposals must specify the applicable region or game management unit.

Providing clarity on the proposal form helps the board, advisory committees, and the public more fully understand the proposed regulatory changes. Proposals that are incomplete or unclear may be omitted from the proposal book. You are encouraged to contact the Boards Support Section staff if you have questions or need assistance with completing the proposal form. All proposals are reviewed and formatted prior to publication. Proposals published in the proposal book will be referenced with the appropriate Alaska Administrative Code citation and include a brief description of the action requested. Proposals with emotionally charged language will be rejected or redacted as they detract from the substance of the proposals, may draw opposition not germane to the element(s) of the proposal, and may elicit nonresponsive charges from the public/board members. Proposals not meeting this call or submitted late will not be published.

Following publication, proposal books will be available to the advisory committees, agencies, and the public for review and comment. Proposals will be available online at www.boardofgame.adfg.alaska.gov.

Proposals received per the above "Call for Proposals" deadline will be considered by the Board of Game at the Arctic and Western Region Meeting scheduled for January 2020, and the Interior and Northeast Region Meeting for March 2020. For more information, please contact the ADF&G Boards Support Section at (907) 465-4110 or email kristy.tibbles@alaska.gov.



Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge's Report to the Western Interior Regional Subsistence Advisory Council February 2019

Wildlife/Fish/Plant Work

Moose Population Surveys

We did not attempt a moose survey in fall 2018 as Alaska Department of Fish and Game was dedicating their resources to survey a different game management unit this year. Thus, our latest population estimate is from the 2017 survey (Table 1; Fig. 1).

Table 1. Summary statistics for moose population surveys conducted in the Kanuti NWR Survey Area, Game Management Unit 24B, Alaska, 2004–2017, using the GeoSpatial Population Estimator method. Statistics include population estimates plus 90% confidence intervals.

	2004	2005	2007	2008	2010	2011	2013	2015	2017
Survey Area (sq. miles) ¹	2,710	2,710	2,714	2,715	2,714	2,714	2,714	2,714	2,714
# Units Surveyed	103	82	150	80	164	151	105	134	130
Population Estimate + Range	842 (602–1,083)	1,025 (581–1,470)	588 (463–714)	872 (669–1,075)	1,068 (946–1,191)	797 (644–951)	551 (410–693)	1,158 (947–1,370)	1,311 (1,059–1,562)
Standard Error	146	270	76	124	75	93	86	129	153
Moose Density (moose/mi ²)	0.31	0.38	0.22	0.32	0.39	0.29	0.20	0.43	0.48
Estimated Cows	403	471	276	432	569	388	283	559	610
Estimated Bulls	252	331	167	199	293	268	183	316	457
Bulls:100 Cows	62	70	60	46	51	69	65	56	75
Yearling Bulls:100 Cows	9	20	13	14	7	10	11	9	15
Calves:100 Cows	46	43	53	58	33	41	36	50	40

¹ Survey areas vary among years depending on how survey units were delineated

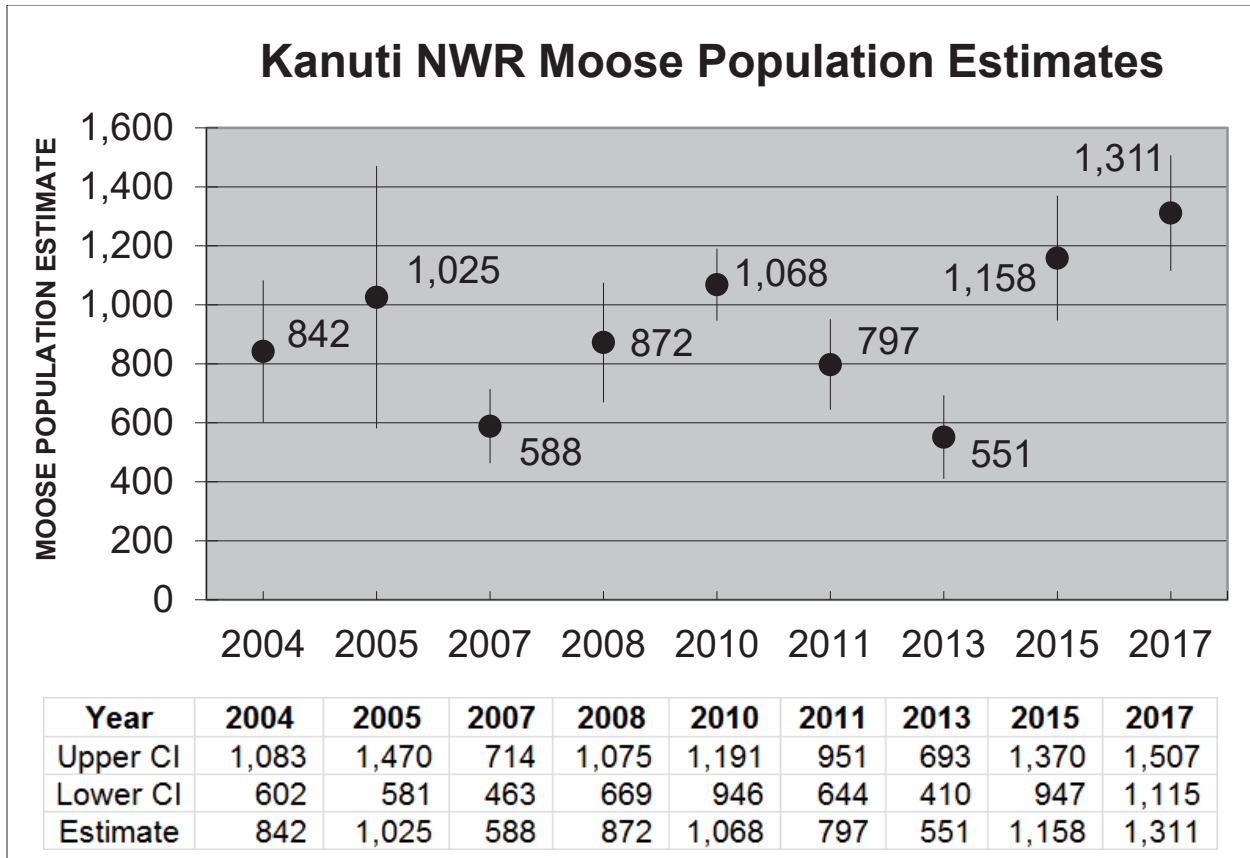


Figure 1. Observable moose population estimates by year on Kanuti NWR, Game Management Unit 24B, Alaska, 2004–2017. Error bars represent the 90% confidence interval for each year.

Lesser Yellowlegs Study

Lesser Yellowlegs (*dzolnołga*) is a conspicuous and noisy medium-sized shorebird that breeds in interior Alaska, including Kanuti Refuge, and winters throughout the Tropics. Because yellowlegs are declining across North America, biologists are now studying them more closely to determine the cause(s) of the decline. In 2018, biologists near Anchorage put tiny GPS satellite transmitters on yellowlegs there to study their movements and determine potential threats to them throughout their annual cycle between their tropical staging and wintering grounds and their boreal breeding grounds in Alaska. In June 2018, Kanuti staff did surveys near Kanuti Lake cabin to determine how many yellowlegs were breeding there and whether there were enough birds to warrant a study like that done in Anchorage. Indeed, yellowlegs were fairly common along the Kanuti River so in 2019 Kanuti staff will attempt to capture 10 yellowlegs, fit them with tiny GPS transmitters that will send their locations to our office via satellite, and we will document where they migrate through and to, and what potential threats they face throughout the year.

Breeding Bird Surveys

Refuge biologists completed the Kanuti River survey route that starts below the mouth of the Kanuti Kilolitna River and ends south of Lake Taiholman on June 11, 2018. Bird numbers were

in the range of previous surveys. We attempted to survey the route on the Kanuti River that spans the Kanuti Canyon but we had to cancel due to bad survey weather.

Scaup and Scoter Survey

On June 8, Refuge biologists completed an aerial survey targeting breeding pairs of scaup and scoters on the Refuge. This survey is scheduled later than Migratory Bird Management's annual spring survey which best targets dabbling ducks and is too early for scaup and scoters. Scaup and scoters are Species of Concern due to declining numbers. The crew again flew 20 transects over prime diving duck habitat on Kanuti Refuge, totaling about 360 km in length, and in approximately 3 hours. Observations of the two focal species totaled 83, composed mostly of scaup. Estimates (plus standard error) for the 1,123-km² survey area were 1,546 ± 325 scaup and 328 ± 130 Surf Scoters.

Molting Goose Survey

Refuge biologists completed the annual aerial molting goose survey on July 6. The survey included 25 line transects covering Greater White-fronted Goose ("white-fronts") habitat on the Refuge, as well as the mouth of the Kanuti River, and Lake Todatonten. The 25 transects are located in three core areas ("hot spots") historically used by molting white-fronts: 1) South Fork Koyukuk River area in the north, 2) Katalahosa Lake area in central Refuge, and Kanuti Lake-Mud Lakes area to the south. Below are our preliminary results.

For white-fronts this year, we saw 219 birds, including 182 adults and 37 young. Most white-fronts were at the Mud Lakes; this area annually hosts the most white-fronts. We also saw 64 adult and 73 young Canada Geese. Numbers for both white-fronts and Canada Geese are on the low side compared to prior years, but within the range of variation that we observe annually. We again observed no white-fronts at Lake Todatonten; dabbling duck numbers there were also down. It does appear that the lake is continuing to dry, with more vegetation filling in from the edges.

Snowshoe hare survey

In June 2018 Refuge biologists revisited three snowshoe hare pellet transects that they set up in June 2015 near the Kanuti Lake cabin. Other research has found a strong correlation between the number of hare droppings counted on pellet transects and actual hare density. Despite observing high numbers of hares in Bettles this winter and spring, we detected pellets on only 2 of 90 transects resulting in an estimate of 0.06 hares/hectare. It is unclear at this point if there are fewer hares near the cabin, or if the transects are not located in favorable hare habitat. We also deployed three more transects along the main stem Koyukuk River, just upriver of South Fork, to capture an area in the north of the Refuge.

Lynx collaring project

In 2018 Kanuti NWR joined a multi-refuge and multi-agency effort to track the movements of lynx on the landscape. Other refuges include Tetlin, Yukon Flats, and Koyukuk, and there is also trapping near Wiseman by University of Alaska Fairbanks personnel. Between March 5 and April 18, former (see Personnel section) Kanuti Wildlife Biologist Churchwell and three volunteers from Tetlin NWR captured 13 lynx, including 11 adults, south and southwest of Bettles. They fitted each lynx with a GPS collar so that we can track their movements by

satellite. As of mid-December 2018, 10 lynx were still alive with their collars still transmitting locations.

Salmon Studies: Henshaw Creek Weir

Although Tanana Chiefs Conference staff attempted to establish a weir on Henshaw Creek this past summer, they had to abort the project due to chronically high water levels.

Dalton Highway weed pull

Refuge personnel participated in one weed-pull along the Dalton Highway in June 2018 in cooperation with the Bureau Land Management (BLM), and Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges (“Friends”). The weed-pull occurred during June 18–22 and our primary goals were to remove white sweet clover and bird vetch near river crossings where invasive plants might be transported to remote lands.

Fire Management

Wildfire Activity

Fire activity was minimal during the 2018 season with just one fire burning within the boundaries of the refuge. In September a human-caused fire burned 193 acres on Kanuti NWR. Due to the seasonality of the fire, no suppression action was taken and the fire was rained on soon after it started.

Personnel

After three years at Kanuti Refuge, Wildlife Biologist **Roy Churchwell** moved to Juneau to be the area biologist for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in the Juneau-Douglas area.



Roy Churchwell (USFWS photo)

Allakaket resident **Steven Bergman, Sr.**, continues to be the Refuge's Liaison via a contract with the Allakaket Tribal Council. He is the point-person for issuing federal/state moose harvest permits, tracking hunting efforts/harvest and state hunting license vendor. Steven plays a key role with enhancing communications and cooperation between the Allakaket Tribe and the Refuge. Allakaket and Alatna have a consistently high federal subsistence permit reporting compliance because of Steven's effort.

Environmental Education and Outreach

Dragonfly Day

Kanuti, Arctic, and Yukon Flats Refuges hosted the 7th annual Dragonfly Day on June 23, 2018. Partners included the Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges and National Park Service. The event occurred at Tanana Lakes Recreation Area and was open to the public. Participants were able to catch, examine, and learn how to identify several species of dragonflies and damselflies found in the area. When not catching dragonflies during the nature walk, there were various crafts and activity stations where participants could learn more about these insects. Approximately 350 visitors attended the event.



Some of the activities offered at Dragonfly Day included making beaded necklaces, coloring stained glass art, dragonfly-inspired rock art, and applying removable tattoos.

Annual Allakaket & Alatna Winter Event

The annual Allakaket & Alatna Winter Event, which typically takes place in late February or early March, was canceled in 2018 due to widespread flu in both communities. The event has been well attended over the years and brings community members, refuge staff, National Park Service staff, and Friends of Alaska's National Wildlife volunteers together to share important updates and news. The event also provides K–12 students with a day of in-class educational and fun opportunities to learn about a variety of FWS-related subjects. Tentative plans are underway for the next Allakaket & Alatna Winter Event, planned for late winter of 2019.

Henshaw Creek Science Camp

We were unable to host a Science Camp at Henshaw Creek in 2018. However, we are interested in trying to host the camp again in summer 2019.

Arctic Interagency Visitor Center

The Arctic Interagency Visitor Center (AIVC) in Coldfoot, Alaska, is a key point of contact for information on Kanuti, Yukon Flats, and Arctic National Wildlife Refuges. Vince Matthews, Refuge Subsistence Specialist for Arctic, Kanuti, and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges, helped staff the visitor center and supervised the FWS Student Conservation Association intern, Sarah Gage. Along with BLM and NPS staff, volunteers and interns, USFWS helps visitors from around the world appreciate and connect with the wildlands and wilderness of Kanuti, Arctic, and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, the BLM Dalton Highway Corridor, and other federal public lands in the area.



2018 AIVC staff (USFWS photo)

Youth Outreach

Native high school youth from across America attended the 2018 Native Youth Community Adaptation and Leadership Congress in July at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia. Refuge Subsistence Coordinator Vince Mathews was a faculty member for the Youth Congress, attending along with Alaska Native youth pictured below. Alaska's Native youth teamed up with Native youth from American Samoa, Hawaii, New Mexico, Maine, and many other states. The 100-plus Native youth provided eye-opening perspectives addressing the Congress' challenge: "How can we support ALL generations to engage with the land while honoring and respecting indigenous/traditional ecological knowledge and the environment?"



Alaska Native Youth and adult mentors at the 2018 Native Youth Community Adaptation & Leadership Congress. They are sharing the shape of Alaska with their hands. (FWS photo)

Questions?

If you have any questions about the Refuge, feel free to call the refuge staff at 877-220-1853. Our headquarters office is located in the Fairbanks Federal building at 101 12th Avenue. Our field station is located near the airport at Bettles, along with the NPS ranger station and visitor center. If any WIRAC members are ever in the vicinity of Fairbanks or Bettles, we invite you to stop by for a visit!

Website

The Refuge website has been updated and contains reports, photos, maps, and other helpful information. Folks are encouraged to visit the website to learn more about Kanuti Refuge. <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/kanuti/>

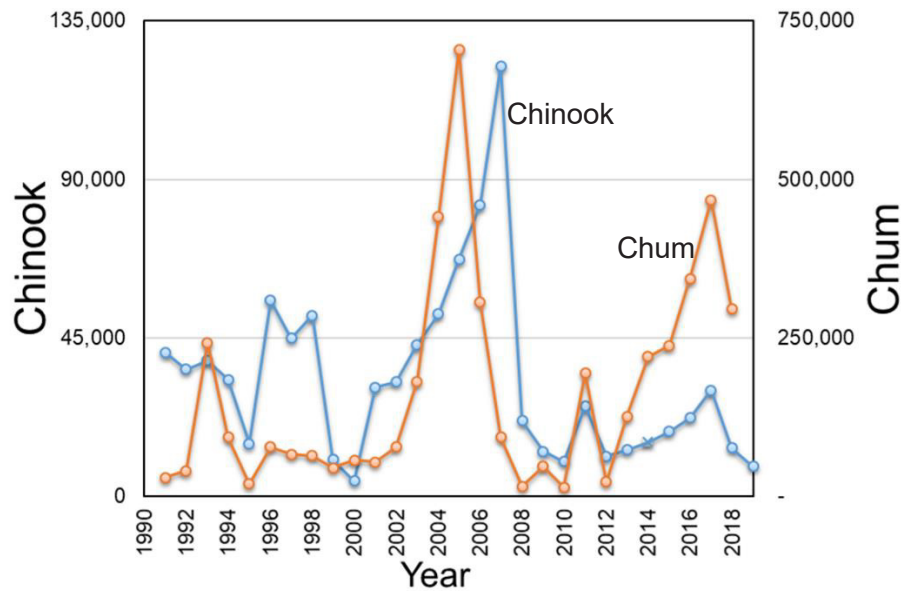
Facebook

Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge has a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/kanuti.refuge). Interesting information about happenings on the Refuge and its wildlife and habitats are contained in this regularly updated web page.

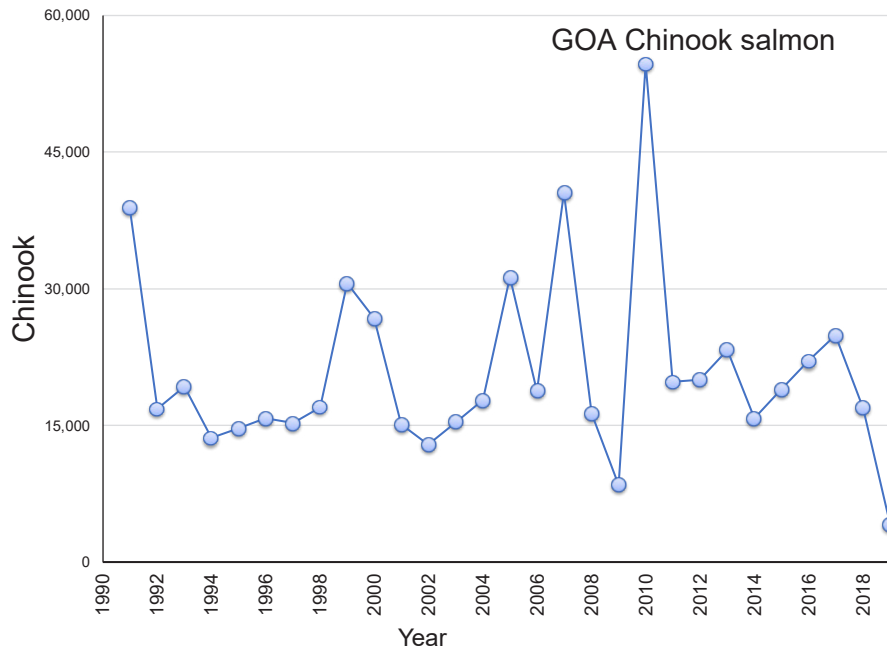
North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) salmon bycatch update

Update on salmon bycatch trends

Updated bycatch mortality of Chinook and chum salmon in the Bering Sea pollock fishery (through February 29, 2019) is shown below:



Updated Chinook salmon bycatch mortality in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fisheries (through February 28, 2019) is shown below:



Current activities relative to Chinook and Chum salmon bycatch

Lower Chinook bycatch limits in 2019: Amendment 110 to the Bering Sea and Aleutian Island Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP), implemented in July 2016, modified the Chinook and chum salmon bycatch avoidance program in the Bering Sea pollock fishery (see attached flyer for more information), to provide for lower bycatch caps that would be in place when a three-river index of Western Alaska inriver run abundance (Unalakleet River, Upper Yukon River, and Kuskokwim River) falls below a 250,000 Chinook salmon threshold, based on the State of Alaska's post-season inriver Chinook salmon run size assessment. The ADF&G estimate of Chinook in the three rivers was below the estimate in October 2018, thus for 2019 the Bering Sea pollock fishery is operating under lower bycatch limits in both the A (Winter) and B (Summer) seasons. These are an overall annual cap of 45,000¹ and a performance standard of 33,318. More information on relative fishery performance under these lower limits will be provided in October 2019.

Salmon Bycatch Genetics Workshop: The NPFMC will be hosting a public workshop on salmon bycatch genetics issues in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and Bering Sea and Aleutian Island (BSAI) groundfish fisheries on April 15-16, 2019 at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle, WA. The purpose of the workshop is to facilitate feedback on how stock composition reports can be improved to better inform industry bycatch avoidance efforts. The workshop will also facilitate development of the appropriate spatial and temporal resolution of stock identification, and other associated analyses that could be used by stakeholders to minimize salmon bycatch. The Council will be provided a summary report of results from the workshop in June 2019. The meeting will be available to the public online. An agenda for the meeting will be available soon on the Council's website.

June 2019 Council meeting: Due to the Government shutdown the Council postponed consideration of the annual BSAI and GOA salmon genetics reports, Incentive Program reports from pollock industry and updated SeaShare (food donation of bycaught fish) program information to the June Council meeting. At that time these reports as well as the report from the April bycatch workshop will be presented. The Council will meet from June 3-11 in Sitka, AK.

Please contact Diana Stram at diana.stram@noaa.gov for additional information.

¹ Annual cap levels are further divided by A and B season and by the 4 fishery sectors.

Bering Sea Salmon Bycatch Update North Pacific Fishery Management Council, July 2017

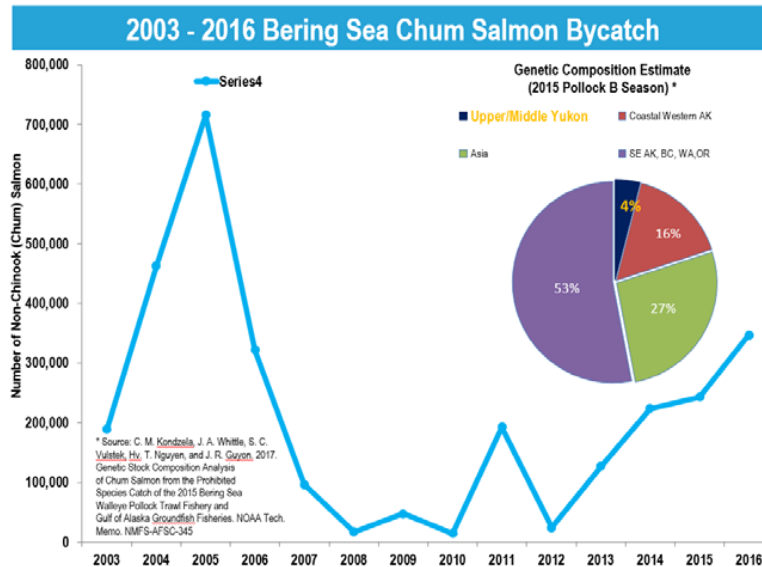
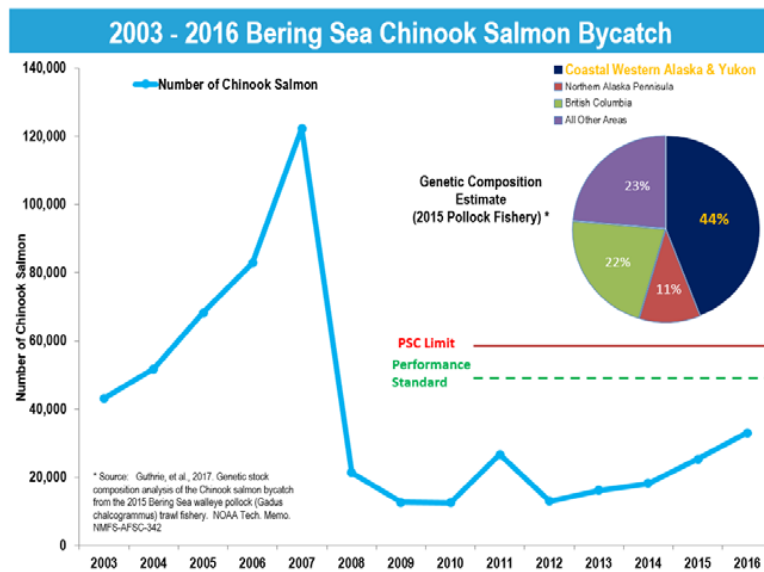
Salmon are caught incidentally in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) offshore trawl fisheries, especially in the pollock pelagic trawl fishery. Salmon are considered a prohibited species catch (PSC) in groundfish fisheries, and cannot be retained for sale. Nearly all salmon taken as bycatch are Chinook salmon and chum salmon.



Bycatch Amounts and Origin

The incidental catch of salmon in groundfish fisheries is closely monitored to ensure that all salmon are counted, and representative samples are taken for genetic identification of the area of origin. Every vessel in the pollock fishery is required to have 100% observer coverage. This provides very precise count of salmon bycatch, as the observers count every salmon caught. A total of 32,560 Chinook salmon and 347,138 non-Chinook salmon (i.e., chum salmon) were taken as bycatch in the Bering Sea groundfish fisheries in 2016. A history of salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea groundfish fisheries is shown by the adjacent figures.

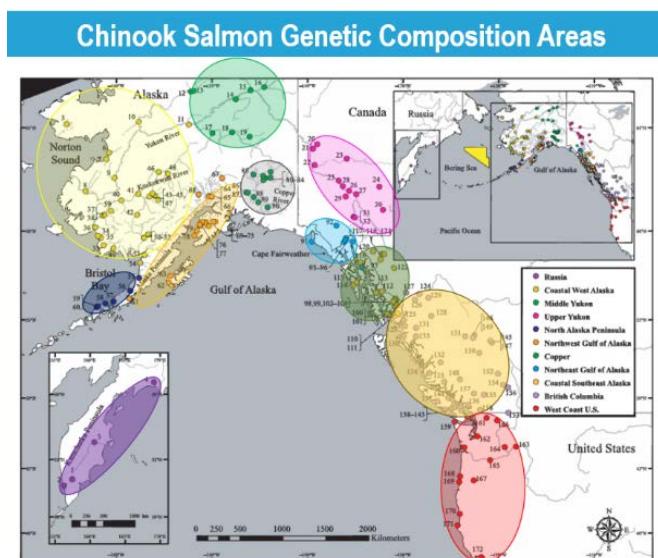
Collection of genetic information from salmon taken as bycatch also provides information on what river systems the salmon originated. For example, in 2015, 44% of the Chinook salmon bycatch was estimated to have originated from coastal western Alaska (40%) and the middle/upper Yukon River systems (4%). The 2015 chum salmon samples indicate that most most salmon bycatch is from Asia (primarily hatchery fish), with only 4% from the middle and upper Yukon River and 16% from coastal western AK river systems. 2015 had an unusually high proportion from



SEAK, BC, WA and OR. In most years this contribution is much lower and the Asian contribution comprises the majority. Annual monitoring of the bycatch indicates that the composition of the bycatch varies somewhat from year to year (for example, in 2014, there was a higher proportion of chinook salmon from coastal western Alaska and Yukon [49%] and a much higher proportion of chum salmon from Asia [56%]). Chinook salmon bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska is almost entirely composed of fish from Southeast Alaska, British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest.

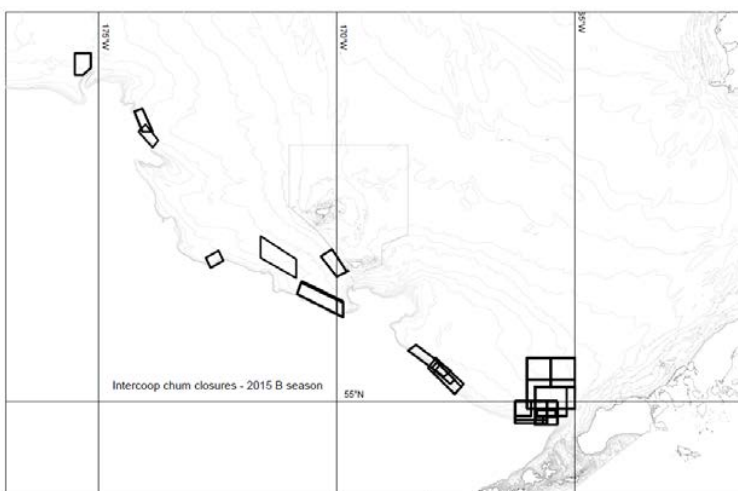
Because the salmon are also measured and scale samples are taken for aging, scientists can estimate the ‘adult equivalents’ of the bycatch. That is, an estimate of how many of the bycaught salmon would have returned as adults to spawn.

By comparing the adult equivalent numbers with the run size of fish returning to the various river systems, scientist can then estimate the impacts of salmon bycatch on the runs in the different regions. In all but the highest years (e.g., 2007), Chinook salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea is less than 3 % and Chum salmon bycatch is less than 1 % of the total returns to Western Alaska Rivers.



Bycatch Management Measures

Since the mid-1990s, the Council and NMFS have developed and implemented a series of measures to minimize the incidental catch of Chinook and chum salmon in the groundfish trawl fisheries. These measures have primarily focused on closure areas and catch limits. Experience over time showed that the industry, working cooperatively, can more effectively avoid salmon bycatch by sharing data and using a system of short term closure areas in areas where higher rates of salmon bycatch occur (for example, the adjacent figure shows the closures that were established to avoid chum salmon in 2015), and using salmon bycatch excluders in pollock trawls. Recent management changes to minimize salmon bycatch are described below.



Amendment 91

In 2011, Amendment 91 established two Chinook salmon PSC limits for the pollock fishery—60,000 (total) and 47,591 (performance standard) Chinook salmon. Under Amendment 91, the PSC limit is 60,000 Chinook salmon for the entire pollock fishery fleet participating in an industry-developed contractual arrangement, called an incentive plan agreement (IPA). An IPA establishes a program to minimize bycatch at all levels of Chinook salmon abundance. The IPA provides annual reports to the Council that evaluate whether the IPA was effective at providing incentives for vessels to avoid Chinook salmon at all times while fishing for pollock.

The sector-level performance standard ensures that the IPA is effective and that sectors cannot fully harvest the Chinook salmon PSC allocations under the 60,000 Chinook salmon PSC limit in most years. Each year, each sector is issued an annual threshold amount that represents that sector's portion of 47,591 Chinook salmon. For a sector to continue to receive Chinook salmon PSC allocations under the 60,000 Chinook salmon PSC limit, that sector can only exceed its annual threshold amount 2 times within any 7 consecutive years. Under the current program, if a sector fails this performance standard, it will be allocated a portion of the 47,591 Chinook salmon PSC limit each subsequent year. This program provides the pollock fishery participants with incentives to limit Chinook salmon bycatch to the performance standard in every year, but provides the fleet with some flexibility should it encounter unanticipated changes in the fishery due to weather, operating conditions, or the status of target or bycatch species stocks.



Amendment 110

The Council developed Amendment 110 in response to multiple years of historically low Chinook salmon abundance, which resulted in significant restrictions for subsistence users in western Alaska and failure to achieve conservation objectives. While Chinook salmon bycatch impact rates had been low under Amendment 91 and had not exceeded the performance standard, the Council wanted to further minimize Chinook salmon bycatch at low levels of salmon abundance. Implemented in July 2016, Amendment 110 also incorporated chum salmon bycatch measures into the existing IPAs.

The amendment added two provisions to provide incentives to the pollock fleet to minimize Chinook salmon and chum salmon bycatch to the extent practicable. The first provision requires cooperatives to include 13 specific requirements in the IPAs to describe the measures and incentives the cooperative used to manage Chinook salmon and chum salmon bycatch. Some of these IPA requirements include: incentives for the operator of each vessel to avoid Chinook salmon and chum salmon bycatch under any condition of pollock and Chinook salmon abundance in all years; rewards for avoiding Chinook salmon, penalties for failure to avoid Chinook salmon at the vessel level, or both; and an explanation of how the incentive measures in the IPA are expected to promote reductions in a vessel's Chinook salmon and chum salmon bycatch rates relative to what might have occurred in absence of the incentive program rewards and penalties.

The second provision of Amendment 110 added a new lower Chinook salmon performance standard and PSC limit for the pollock fishery in years of low Chinook salmon abundance in western Alaska. By October 1 of each year, the State of Alaska provides a Chinook salmon abundance using the 3-System

Index for western Alaska based on the post-season in-river Chinook salmon run size for the Kuskokwim, Unalakleet, and Upper Yukon aggregate stock grouping. When this index is less than or equal to 250,000 Chinook salmon, NMFS will apply the lower performance standard and low PSC limit for the following year. In a low Chinook salmon abundance year, NMFS will set the performance standard at 33,318 Chinook salmon and the PSC limit at 45,000 Chinook salmon for the following fishing year. Based on data on run reconstructions, the low threshold would have been reached in 2000, and again from

<u>Amendment 91</u>	<u>Amendment 110</u>
<p>Performance Standard</p> <p>47,591 Each pollock sector (shoreside, at-sea, mothership, CDQ) gets relative share of total for year.</p> <p>Incentive – If a sector exceeds its share in 2 or 7 years, it is limited to the performance share thereafter.</p> <p>Overall PSC Limit</p> <p>60,000 The entire pollock fishery is shut down if this limit is hit.</p>	<p>If Western AK 3-river system index > 250,00 then Performance standard = 47,591 and Overall PSC Limit = 60,000</p> <p>If Western AK 3-river system index < 250,00 then Performance standard = 33,318 and Overall PSC Limit = 45,000</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"><p>Western AK 3-river system index: Each year, ADF&G provides a Chinook salmon abundance using the 3-System Index for western Alaska based on the post-season in-river Chinook salmon run size for the Kuskokwim, <u>Unalakleet</u>, and Upper Yukon aggregate stock grouping</p></div>

2010 through 2014. In years with no determination of a low Chinook salmon abundance, NMFS will manage under the 47,591 Chinook salmon performance standard and 60,000 Chinook salmon PSC limit. A comparison of the different PSC limits are shown in the adjacent text box.

Salmon Donation Program

In 1993, the Council and NMFS established a Prohibited Species Donation Program, whereby fishermen can retain salmon and halibut PSC for distribution for hunger-relief. At this time, SeaShare is the only organization authorized to distribute this fish. SeaShare enlists fishermen, processors, and downstream service providers to efficiently handle donated fish. Funding is provided by corporations, foundations, and individuals to support the costs involved. Since inception, SeaShare has reclaimed 4.2 million pounds of fish that would otherwise have been wasted.

In 2015 for example, donations were received from 138 fishing boats, 34 at-sea processors, and 15 shore plants. Fishermen and processors donated their time to retain, clean and freeze the fish. SeaShare then recruited additional partners to receive, store, re-process (sort, trim, steak, glaze, pack), and ship finished products to food banks and feeding centers. Donations included 482,165 pounds of PSC salmon and 48,285 pounds of PSC halibut. Of that total, 182,000 pounds were distributed in Alaska and over 300,000 pounds outside of Alaska.

Alaska locations that received seafood from SeaShare in 2015 included: Anchorage, Kenai, Juneau, Nome, Cordova, Kotzebue, Fairbanks, Galena, and other more remote locations. The Kawerak Corp in Nome sent PSC fish on to: Diomedea, Savoonga, Gambell and Wales. The Maniilaq Association and NANA Corp in Kotzebue distributed fish to the villages of: Deering, Buckland, Selawik, Kiana, Ambler, Kobuk, Shungnak, Noorvik, Noatak and Kivalina. In the last 3 years, SeaShare has donated over 630,000 pounds of fish in Alaska, equating to 2.5 million servings of high protein seafood.

For more information: www.NPFMC.org and www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov



Reducing Bycatch in Alaska



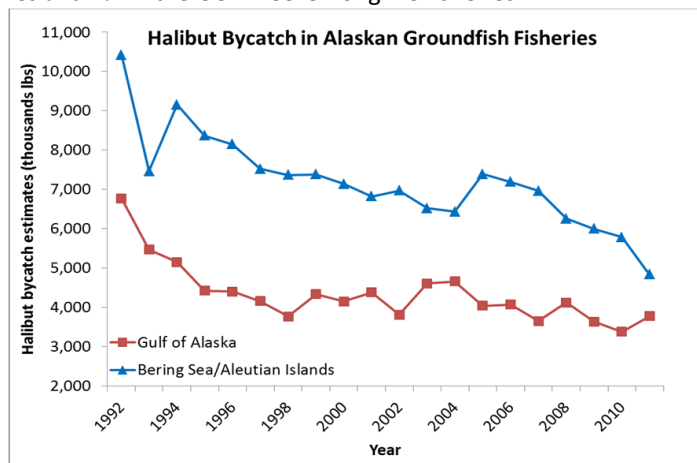
The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to minimize bycatch while also allowing for optimum yield in the fisheries. The Council has implemented new measures or refined existing measures to reduce bycatch of prohibited species, such as Chinook and chum salmon, Pacific halibut, and crab in the Federal fisheries. These species are integral to the health of Alaskan marine ecosystems and to State and Federal economies. This paper shares highlights of recently implemented restrictions.

Pacific halibut bycatch reduction

Numerous subsistence users, charter vessels and commercial halibut fishermen rely on Pacific halibut. Halibut bycatch reduction is a priority for the Council and State of Alaska. Halibut size at age has decreased over the last decade and the entire Pacific halibut biomass is in decline along the Pacific coastal corridor.

Bycatch limits

- In June 2012, the Council took action to reduce halibut bycatch limits by 15% in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) trawl fisheries and longline catcher vessel fisheries and 7% in the GOA freezer longline fisheries.
- In 2012, the Council established a halibut bycatch limit in the central GOA Rockfish Program that is 12.5% less than the historical average, and required that 45% of any unused bycatch must be left in the water and not used in other trawl fisheries that year.
- In 2008, the Council established cooperative management in the BSAI non-pollock trawl catcher processor sector and reduced halibut bycatch by about 8% over four years.



Source: IPHC 2011 (net weight).

King, tanner and snow crab bycatch reduction

Gear modifications

- In 2011, new regulations required all BS flatfish fisheries to elevate their trawl sweeps off the seafloor to reduce habitat damage and crab mortality. In 2013, this requirement was extended to all central GOA flatfish fisheries.
- Pot fishing gear is required to have biodegradable panels to prevent lost pots from 'ghost fishing' and tunnel openings or escape panels to reduce crab bycatch.

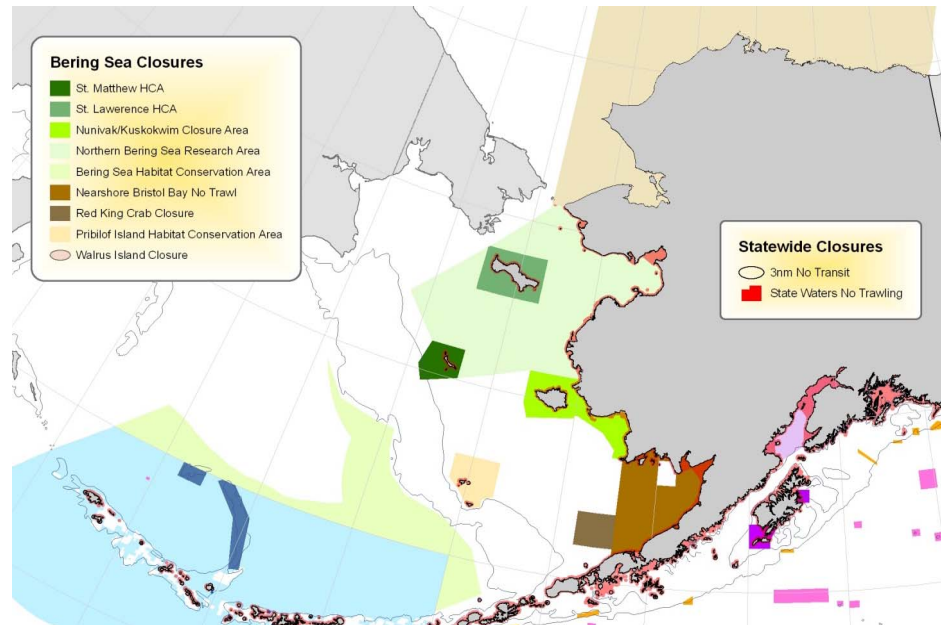


Bycatch limits

Bycatch limits are established for some red king, Tanner, and snow crab stocks by the Council in the BS groundfish fisheries and by the State in the statewide scallop fisheries. Bycatch limits are area specific to reduce impacts on local populations and fluctuate based on annual estimates of crab abundance.

Area closures

Several closures were applied in the Bering Sea in the mid-1990s to conserve red and blue king crab stocks, such as the Red King Crab Savings Area, the Nearshore Bristol Bay Closure, and the Pribilof Islands Habitat Conservation Area. In 2010, the Council adopted a bottom trawl closure in Marmot Bay to reduce bycatch of Tanner crabs, enhancing existing trawl closure areas designed to protect red king crabs.



Chinook salmon bycatch reduction

Chinook salmon are an integral part of subsistence, sport, and commercial harvests in Alaska. The Council has implemented numerous management measures to reduce Chinook salmon bycatch over the years.

Bering Sea

In 2011, the Council implemented a new Chinook salmon bycatch avoidance program for the Bering Sea pollock fishery, which includes:

- A hard cap on the number of Chinook salmon that can be taken in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. This maximum limit requires immediate closure to all further pollock fishing for the remaining season.
- Incentive plan agreements to keep bycatch lower than the cap level. These agreements include explicit incentives and penalties for the pollock fleet to avoid Chinook salmon in all conditions.
- An industry program to close areas of the pollock fishing grounds when Chinook salmon bycatch rates are high in those areas.
- Requirements for every pollock vessel to have at least one observer onboard at all times. It requires a full count of all salmon caught, with genetic sampling to determine stock of origin.

Gulf of Alaska

- In 2012, a bycatch cap of 25,000 Chinook salmon was established for the western and central GOA pollock trawl fisheries.
- In 2013, the Council approved a hard cap (7,500 salmon) on Chinook bycatch in all remaining GOA trawl fisheries.
- Full retention of Chinook salmon is also required in all trawl fisheries. Retention of salmon supports research to identify the stock of origin of Chinook salmon bycatch in the GOA.



For more information: (907)271-2809 or www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc

Fall 2019 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

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

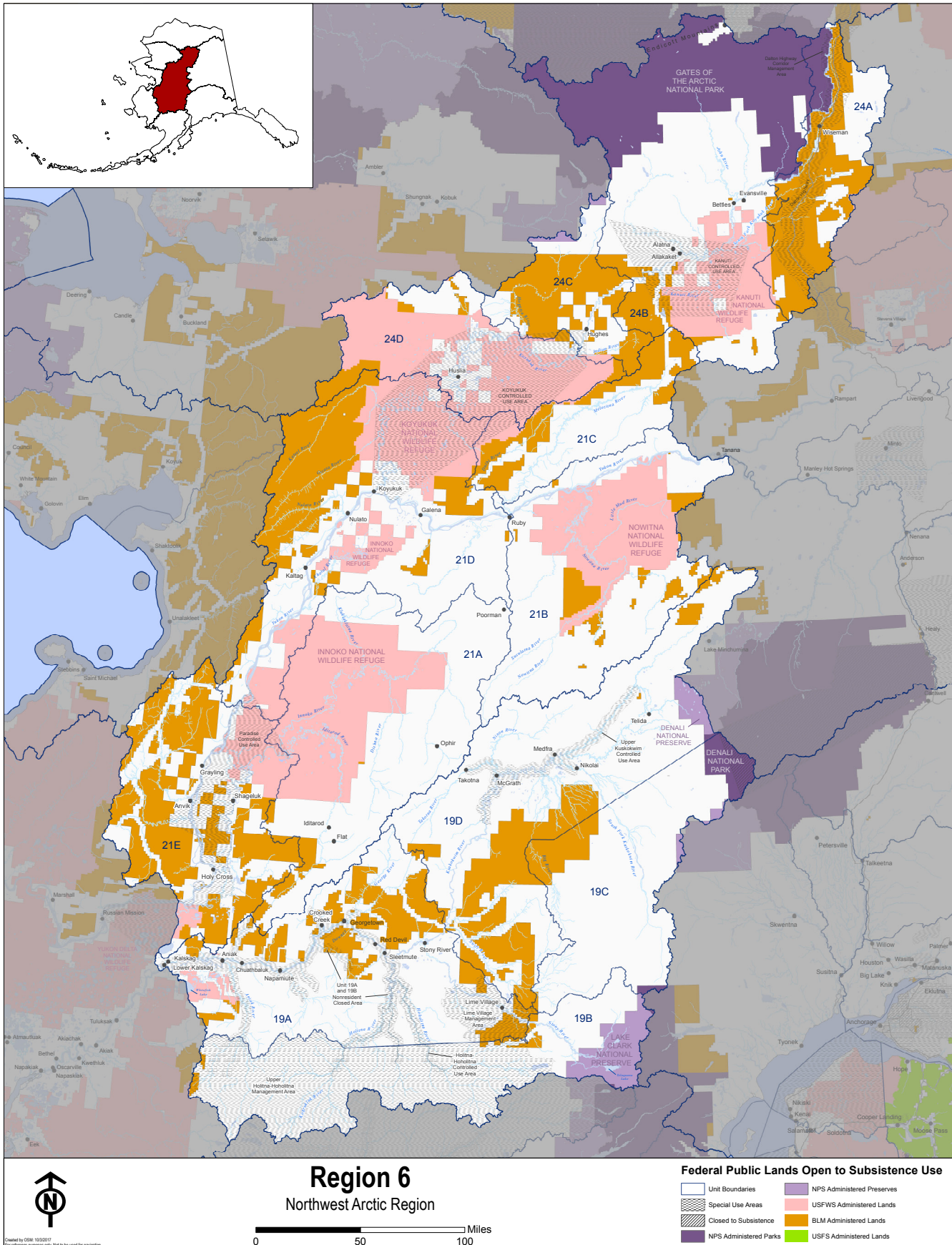
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 18	Aug. 19	Aug. 20	Aug. 21	Aug. 22	Aug. 23	Aug. 24
Aug. 25	Aug. 26	Aug. 27	Aug. 28	Aug. 29	Aug. 30	Aug. 31
Sept. 1	Sept. 2 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY	Sept. 3	Sept. 4	Sept. 5	Sept. 6	Sept. 7
Sept. 8	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Sept. 11	Sept. 12	Sept. 13	Sept.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

Winter 2020 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Feb. 2</i>	<i>Feb. 3</i> <i>Window Opens</i>	<i>Feb. 4</i>	<i>Feb. 5</i>	<i>Feb. 6</i>	<i>Feb. 7</i>	<i>Feb. 8</i>
<i>Feb. 9</i>	<i>Feb. 10</i>	<i>Feb. 11</i>	<i>Feb. 12</i>	<i>Feb. 13</i>	<i>Feb. 14</i>	<i>Feb. 15</i>
<i>Feb. 16</i>	<i>Feb. 17</i> PRESIDENT'S DAY HOLIDAY	<i>Feb. 18</i>	<i>Feb. 19</i>	<i>Feb. 20</i>	<i>Feb. 21</i>	<i>Feb. 22</i>
<i>Feb. 23</i>	<i>Feb. 24</i>	<i>Feb. 25</i>	<i>Feb. 26</i>	<i>Feb. 27</i>	<i>Feb. 28</i>	<i>Feb. 29</i>
<i>Mar. 1</i>	<i>Mar. 2</i>	<i>Mar. 3</i>	<i>Mar. 4</i>	<i>Mar. 5</i>	<i>Mar. 6</i>	<i>Mar. 7</i>
<i>Mar. 8</i>	<i>Mar. 9</i>	<i>Mar. 10</i>	<i>Mar. 11</i>	<i>Mar. 12</i>	<i>Mar. 13</i> <i>Window Closes</i>	<i>Mar. 14</i>

Region 6 Western Interior Alaska Map



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

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Charter

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Council Reports.** The Council reports to the Federal Subsistence Board Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.
6. **Support.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide administrative support for the activities of the Council through the Office of Subsistence Management.
7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years.** The annual operating costs associated with supporting the Council's functions are estimated to be \$180,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.15 staff years.
8. **Designated Federal Officer.** The DFO is the Subsistence Council Coordinator for the Region or such other Federal employee as may be designated by the Assistant Regional Director – Subsistence, Region 7, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will:

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

Ten members who are knowledgeable and experienced in matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife and who are residents of the Region represented by the Council.

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

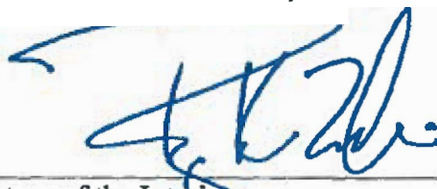
The Secretary of the Interior will appoint members based on the recommendations from the Federal Subsistence Board and with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

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

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

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

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


Secretary of the Interior

DEC 01 2017

Date Signed

DEC 04 2017

Date Filed

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