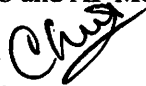


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members
FROM: Chris Oliver 
Executive Director
DATE: January 28, 2008
SUBJECT: Protected Resources Report

ESTIMATED TIME 1 HOUR

ACTION REQUIRED

Receive report on Protected Resources issues and take action as necessary.

BACKGROUND

A. Update on SSL Recovery Plan, FMP Consultation, BiOp, and EIS

In December 2007, the Council received an update on Steller sea lion issues, including a revised schedule for the FMP-level consultation and the EIS. This schedule includes coordination of NEPA and ESA analyses and the rulemaking process. The goal is to have fishery management revisions effective for the 2010 fishing year. The Protected Resources Division (PRD) of NMFS is on schedule for completion of the final Revised SSL Recovery Plan and the draft status quo Biological Opinion (BiOp). PRD has hired a new SSL coordinator, and their review of the comments received on the draft recovery plan is nearly complete and should be available on their web site when the final recovery plan is completed, currently scheduled for release to the public in early March 2008.

The Council had previously requested that the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS on new SSL protection measures be delayed until the final SSL Recovery Plan was published and made available to the public. However, the Council reconsidered this request in December 2007, and requested that NMFS proceed with publication of the NOI as soon as practicable. And as part of the EIS schedule, the Council requested that the NOI include a scoping period that extends at least 30 days after NMFS releases the final SSL Recovery Plan and that the scoping period overlap the Council's April 2008 meeting (the Council's motion is attached as Item B-8(a) and the NOI is Item B-8(b)). A revised EIS and consultation schedule is attached as Item B-8(c).

The new EIS and consultation schedule requires the Council's SSL Mitigation Committee (SSLMC) to finalize its recommendations for changes in SSL protection measures by the Council's June 2008 meeting. The SSLMC met in early January 2008 to complete identification of information needed to evaluate the proposals for revising SSL protection measures. NMFS is preparing data packages for each proposal to inform the Committee's recommendations to the Council. The SSLMC will meet in March to review the final SSL Recovery Plan and develop an initial set of recommendations. The SSLMC intends to complete its work in May when it reviews the draft *status quo* BiOp and finalizes its recommended changes to SSL protection measures; those recommendations will be informed by both the final SSL Recovery Plan and the draft BiOp.

Some implications of this schedule to the Council process include a need for 1) Council review of the SSLMC's initial recommendations and review of the final SSL Recovery Plan at its April 2008 meeting, and 2) Council review of revised recommendations informed by the draft status quo BiOp at the June 2008 meeting. The Council is scheduled to select a preferred alternative for changes in SSL protection measures in June 2008; that decision will formulate the "proposed action" that will be evaluated in the EIS and will be the subject of a revised BiOp. SSLMC Chairman Larry Cotter will provide the Council with an update on the SSLMC progress and the process for completing its work; minutes of the January SSLMC meeting, excluding a lengthy data needs table, are attached as Item B-8(d).

B. NMFS Review of BOF Kanaga Sound Pollock Proposal

At the December 2007 meeting, the Council received a request from the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) to consider a small pollock fishery in State waters in Kanaga Sound in the Aleutian Islands. That request and proposal is attached as Item B-8(e). The Council agreed to ask NMFS to review this proposal in light of potential effects on SSLs and to limit the review to an informal consultation; the Council's motion to make this request is attached as Item B-8(f). NMFS' Office of Protected Resources completed this review and the NMFS letter is attached as Item B-8(g). NMFS concluded that the proposed Kanaga Sound pollock fishery could have adverse effects on SSLs, and a formal Section 7 consultation would be required to more fully evaluate effects on SSLs from the proposed fishery.

December 2007 Council Meeting:

Issue of when to publish a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for changes in SSL protection measures.

Motion: The Council moves to amend a previous motion that requested that the NOI to prepare an EIS be delayed to April 2008. The Council requests that a letter be sent to NMFS acknowledging that Council and NMFS staff have developed a new schedule for completion of the final SSL recovery plan, status quo BiOp, and EIS that addresses the Council's previous concerns and desire to meet a 2010 deadline for implementation of new regulations. The NOI may be published earlier and that the scoping period be scheduled so that it overlaps and provides for a 30-day review period after publication of the final SSL recovery plan.

Passed without objections.

Notes: The Council acknowledges that the revised SSL EIS schedule reflects the Council's intent. The Council desires that the EIS scoping period occur such that the public will have a minimum of 30 days to submit scoping comments after publication of the final SSL recovery plan. The scoping notice should direct the public to review the final SSL recovery plan when developing their comments regarding the NOI. The scoping period would also overlap the Council's April 2008 meeting.



Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) on Revisions to the Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures

All PDF files on this site can be viewed using Adobe Acrobat Reader software or free tools for the visually disabled.

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council intend to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) on revisions to Steller sea lion protection measures. The proposed action is to revise the Steller sea lion protection measures for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries. The scope of the SEIS will analyze the impacts to the human environment resulting from modifications to the existing protection measures.



Steller sea lion bull with female. Photo: NOAA Fisheries

SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

- 72 FR 72992, December 26, 2007. Notice of Intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) on revisions to Steller sea lion protection measures. Written comments must be received by April 21, 2008.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, November 2001
- Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures
- Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee
- Steller Sea Lion Recovery Plan
- Section 7 Consultations Under the Endangered Species Act - Biological Opinions
- BSAI and GOA Groundfish Fishery Management Plans
- Alaska Groundfish Fisheries Final Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
- Stock Assessment Reports
- Tips for Submitting Effective Public Comments

Public Comment Period

Written comments on issues and alternatives for the SEIS should be sent to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, Attn: Ellen Sebastian.

Comments may be submitted by:

- E-mail: SSL-SEISM@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line the following document identifier: SSL SEIS. E-mail comments, with or without attachments, are limited to 5 megabytes;
- Mail: P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802;
- Hand Delivery to the Federal Building: 709 West 9th Street, Room 420A, Juneau, AK; or
- Fax: 907-586-7557

Verifications

We conducted a sales verification of EuroChem from October 22, 2007, through October 24, 2007. We have made changes, as appropriate, to EuroChem's data to reflect our verification findings. See the sales verification report dated November 13, 2007, and the computer programs attached to the preliminary results analysis memorandum dated December 17, 2007, for the specific changes we made. In addition, we intend to conduct a verification of EuroChem's cost submission after we issue these preliminary results.

Preliminary Results of Review

As a result of this review, we preliminarily determine that a dumping margin of 0.00 percent exists for EuroChem for the period July 1, 2006, through December 31, 2006.

Extension of Time Limit for Final Results of the New-Shipper Review

Section 751(a)(2)(B)(iv) of the Act requires the Department to issue the final results of a new-shipper review of an antidumping duty order within 90 days after the date the preliminary determination is issued. The Act provides further that, if the case is extraordinarily complicated, the Department may extend the 90-day period to 150 days.

We determine that this new-shipper review is extraordinarily complicated and that it is not possible to complete the final results within 90 days of issuance of these preliminary results. Specifically, we find that the issues associated with whether and how to adjust EuroChem's natural-gas costs are extraordinarily complicated.

Therefore, in accordance with section 751(a)(2)(B)(iv) of the Act and 19 CFR 351.214(i)(2), we are extending the time period for issuing the final results of this review by 60 days to May 15, 2008.

Public Comment

We will disclose the documents resulting from our analysis to parties in this review within five days of the date of publication of this notice. Any interested party may request a hearing within 30 days of the publication of this notice in the *Federal Register*. If a hearing is requested, the Department will notify interested parties of the hearing schedule.

Interested parties are invited to comment on the preliminary results of this review. Because we have not yet made a determination with respect to the treatment of costs for natural gas, we will notify interested parties of the schedule for filing case briefs and

rebuttal briefs after we issue the decision memorandum, which will include an explanation of our decision, a cost calculation, sales-below-cost test, and margin recalculation.

We intend to issue the final results of this new-shipper review, including the results of our analysis of issues raised in the written comments, within 150 days after the date on which the preliminary results are issued. See 19 CFR 351.214(l)(1).

Assessment Rates

The Department shall determine, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) shall assess, antidumping duties on all appropriate entries, in accordance with 19 CFR 351.212. The Department will issue assessment instructions for EuroChem directly to CBP 15 days after the date of publication of the final results of this new-shipper review.

Because we found no margin for the U.S. sale subject to this new-shipper review, we preliminarily intend to instruct CBP to liquidate the entry without regard to antidumping duties. If we calculate a margin for the U.S. sale subject to this review for final results of review, because we have entered the value of EuroChem's U.S. sale, we will calculate an importer-specific assessment rate based on the ratio of the total amount of antidumping duties calculated for the examined sale to the total entered value of the sale pursuant to 19 CFR 351.212(b)(1).

The Department clarified its "automatic assessment" regulation on May 6, 2003 (68 FR 23954). This clarification applies to entries of subject merchandise during the POR produced by EuroChem where EuroChem did not know that its merchandise was destined for the United States. In such instances, we will instruct CBP to liquidate unreviewed entries at the all-others rate if there is no rate for the intermediate company(ies) involved in the transaction. For a full discussion of this clarification, see *Antidumping and Countervailing Duty Proceedings: Assessment of Antidumping Duties*, 68 FR 23954 (May 6, 2003).

Cash-Deposit Requirements

The following cash-deposit requirements will be effective for all shipments of the subject merchandise entered, or withdrawn from warehouse, for consumption on or after the publication date of the final results of the new-shipper review, as provided by section 751(a)(2)(C) of the Act: (1) The cash-deposit rate for EuroChem (*i.e.*, for subject merchandise both manufactured and exported by EuroChem) will be that established in the final results of this

review, except if the rate is less than 0.50 percent, and therefore, *de minimis* within the meaning of 19 CFR 351.106(c)(1), in which case the cash-deposit rate will be zero; (2) for previously reviewed or investigated companies not listed above, the cash-deposit rate will continue to be the company-specific rate published for the most recent period; (3) if the exporter is not a firm covered in this review or the original less-than-fair-value (LTFV) investigation but the manufacturer is, the cash-deposit rate will be the rate established for the most recent period for the manufacturer of the merchandise; and (4) the cash-deposit rate for all other manufacturers or exporters will continue to be 64.93 percent, the all-others rate established in the LTFV investigation. See *Urea From the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; Final Determination of Sales at Less Than Fair Value*, 52 FR 19557 (May 26, 1987). These cash-deposit rates, when imposed, shall remain in effect until further notice.

Notification to Importers

This notice also serves as a preliminary reminder to importers of their responsibility under 19 CFR 351.402(f)(2) to file a certificate regarding the reimbursement of antidumping duties prior to liquidation of the relevant entries during this review period. Failure to comply with this requirement could result in the Secretary's presumption that reimbursement of antidumping duties occurred and the subsequent assessment of double antidumping duties.

We are issuing and publishing this notice in accordance with sections 751(a)(2)(B) and 777(i)(1) of the Act and 19 CFR 351.214.

Dated: December 17, 2007.

David M. Spooner,
Assistant Secretary, for Import
Administration.

[FR Doc. 07-6155 Filed 12-21-07; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3510-DS-M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE57

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Groundfish Fisheries in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; intent to prepare an environmental impact statement; request for written comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS, in consultation with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), announces its intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) on revisions to Steller sea lion protection measures, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The proposed action is to revise the Steller sea lion protection measures for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fisheries. The scope of the SEIS will be to determine the impacts to the human environment resulting from modifications to the existing protection measures. NMFS will accept written comments from the public to determine the issues of concern and the appropriate range of management alternatives to be addressed in the SEIS.

DATES: Written comments must be received by April 21, 2008.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on issues and alternatives for the SEIS should be sent to Sue Salveson, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, Attn: Ellen Sebastian. Comments may be submitted by

- E-mail: SSL-SEISM@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line the following document identifier: SSL SEIS. E-mail comments, with or without attachments, are limited to 5 megabytes;
- Mail: P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802;
- Hand Delivery to the Federal Building: 709 West 9th Street, Room 420A, Juneau, AK; or
- Fax: 907-586-7557.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gretchen Harrington, (907) 586-7228 or gretchen.harrington@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), the United States has exclusive fishery management authority over all living marine resources found within the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The management of these marine resources, with the exception of certain marine mammals and birds, is vested in the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary). The Council has the responsibility to prepare fishery management plans for those marine resources off Alaska requiring conservation and management. Management of the Federal groundfish fishery located off Alaska in the EEZ is carried out under

the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area and the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMPs). These FMPs, their amendments, and implementing regulations (found at 50 CFR part 679) are developed in accordance with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable Federal laws and executive orders, notably NEPA and the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The Council is considering revising the Steller sea lion protection measures for the groundfish fisheries based on new information available regarding the potential interactions between Steller sea lions and groundfish fisheries. NMFS and the Council have determined that the preparation of an SEIS may be required for this action because revisions to the groundfish fishery regulations to protect Steller sea lions may result in significant impacts on the human environment not previously analyzed in the Final SEIS for Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures (November 2001). Thus, NMFS, in consultation with the Council, is initiating scoping for an SEIS in the event that an SEIS is needed.

NMFS is seeking information from the public through the SEIS scoping process on the range of alternatives to be analyzed; and on the environmental, social, and economic issues to be considered in the analysis. Written comments generated during this scoping process will be shared with the Council and incorporated into the SEIS.

The SEIS would be integrated with the related ESA documents that have been or are being prepared to address Steller sea lion issues to avoid redundancy, while providing a decision-making document that analyzes the potential impacts of the proposed action and its alternatives on the human environment. Related ESA documents (biological assessments, biological opinions, and a draft recovery plan) and background information are available on the NMFS Alaska Region website at <http://stellersealions.noaa.gov/>.

The SEIS on revisions to Steller sea lion protection measures will supplement the Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures Final SEIS (November 2001), which is available on the NMFS Alaska Region website at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/seis/sslpm/default.htm>.

The preferred alternative for Steller sea lions protection measures in the 2001 SEIS was the area and fishery specific approach, which allowed for

different protection measures specific to the type of fishery in the Aleutian Islands, Bering Sea, and Gulf of Alaska. NMFS implemented the current protection measures in 2003 (68 FR 204, January 2, 2003). This approach was a precautionary response to concerns about Steller sea lions and was intended to reduce the economic impact of the protection measures on participants in the groundfish fisheries. The protection measures in the preferred alternative were determined to neither jeopardize the continued existence of Steller sea lions nor adversely modify their designated critical habitat. Further, this approach met the Magnuson-Stevens Act mandates, especially with regards to safety at sea, minimizing bycatch, minimizing impacts to fishing communities, and attaining optimum yield.

Steller sea lion protection measures for the groundfish fishery currently include (1) global harvest controls for Steller sea lion prey species (pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel); (2) spatial harvest controls specific to prey species, gear type, and proximity to rookery, haulout, or forage areas to limit prey species removal in an area; (3) temporal harvest controls for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel, including seasonal apportionments to limit prey species removal during certain times of the year; and (4) a vessel monitoring system requirement for all vessels (except vessels using jig gear) fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, or Atka mackerel.

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to revise the Steller sea lion protection measures for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries based on new information available regarding the potential interactions between Steller sea lions and groundfish fisheries. The purpose of the proposed action is to maintain adequate protection for Steller sea lions to avoid jeopardy of extinction and destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat under the ESA, while minimizing to the extent practicable the impacts to the fishing industry and coastal communities that result from complying with the protection measures. The revisions are necessary to ensure the best scientific information available is used to: (1) ensure the fisheries are not likely to result in jeopardy of extinction and destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat; (2) alleviate any unnecessary restrictions for the fleet to improve efficiency and ensure economic viability for the industry; and (3)

minimize potential adverse economic impacts on coastal communities.

Alternatives

The SEIS will evaluate a range of alternative management measures for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries. The Council's Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee (SSLMC) is reviewing the latest scientific information regarding Steller sea lions and potential groundfish fisheries interactions and developing alternative Steller sea lion protection measures. The SSLMC has collected proposals from the public for changes to the Steller sea lion protection measures and is scheduled to evaluate and prioritize these proposals for Council consideration in June 2008. After Council consideration, the Council may recommend management measures to the Secretary for evaluation and implementation. Information regarding the SSLMC and the proposal evaluation process is available from the Alaska Region website at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/sslmc/default.htm>.

Alternatives may include those identified here, and those developed through public scoping, Council, and SSLMC processes. Possible alternatives could include one, or a combination of, the following:

1.No action – retain the current suite of Steller sea lion protection measures as are currently in place for fishing year 2008.

2.Change the current spatial management of the Atka mackerel, pollock, or Pacific cod fisheries in the GOA and/or BSAI by opening or closing areas near Steller sea lion rookeries, haulouts, and/or foraging areas.

3.Change the current temporal management of harvests in the GOA and/or BSAI Atka mackerel, pollock, and/or Pacific cod fisheries.

4.Change other management measures that currently apply to the GOA and/or BSAI Atka mackerel, pollock, and/or Pacific cod fisheries, such as changes to gear restrictions or the Aleutian Islands platoon management system for Atka mackerel.

Preliminary Identification of Issues

A principal objective of the scoping and public input process is to identify potentially significant impacts to the human environment that should be analyzed in the SEIS. The analysis will evaluate the effects of the alternatives for all resources, species, and issues that may directly or indirectly interact with Steller sea lions and the groundfish fisheries within the action area.

The primary issues to be analyzed are the effects of the proposed action and its alternatives on Steller sea lions and their designated critical habitat. Additional impacts to the following components of the biological and physical environment may be evaluated: (1) other species listed under the ESA and their critical habitat, and other species protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act; (2) target and non-target fish stocks, including forage fish and prohibited species; (3) seabirds; and (4) the ecosystem.

Social and economic impacts also would be considered in terms of the effects that changes in the Steller sea lion protection measures would have on the following groups of individuals: (1) those who participate in harvesting the groundfish resources; (2) those who process and market groundfish and groundfish products; (3) those who consume groundfish products; (4) those who rely on living marine resources in the management area, particularly Steller sea lions, for subsistence needs; (5) those who benefit from non-consumptive uses of Steller sea lions and other living marine resources; and (6) fishing communities.

Public Involvement

Scoping is an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed in an Environmental Impact Statement and for identifying the significant issues related to the proposed action. A principal objective of the scoping and public involvement process is to identify a reasonable range of management alternatives that, with adequate analysis, will delineate critical issues and provide a clear basis for distinguishing between those alternatives and for selecting a preferred alternative. Through this notice, NMFS is notifying the public that an SEIS and decision-making process for this proposed action has been initiated so that interested or affected people may participate and contribute to the final decision.

NMFS is seeking written public comments on the scope of issues, including potential impacts, and alternatives that should be considered in revising the Steller sea lion protection measures. Written comments will be accepted at the address above (see ADDRESSES). Written comments should be as specific as possible to be the most helpful. Written comments received during the scoping process, including the names and addresses of those submitting them, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection.

The public is invited to participate in the SSLMC meetings and Council meetings where the latest scientific information regarding Steller sea lions and fisheries interactions are being reviewed and alternative protection measures are being developed and evaluated. Future Council and SSLMC meetings will be noticed in the **Federal Register** and on the website at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/>. Additional information regarding regulatory, ESA, and NEPA activities for Steller sea lions is available at the website at <http://stellersealions.noaa.gov>. Please visit this website for more information on this SEIS and for guidance on submitting effective public comments.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: December 18, 2007.

James P. Burgess,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. E7-24951 Filed 12-21-07; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XD93

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Groundfish Fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; request for written comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS, in consultation with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, announces its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on salmon bycatch reduction measures in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI), in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The proposed action would replace the current Chinook and Chum Salmon Savings Areas in the BSAI with new regulatory closures, salmon bycatch limits, or a combination of both. These management measures could incorporate current or new bycatch reduction methods. The scope of the EIS will be to determine the impacts to the human environment resulting from these salmon bycatch reduction measures. NMFS will accept written comments from the public to determine the issues of concern and the

Draft Steller Sea Lion Measures Development Timeline (12/20/07) - assumes that all key events and document releases occur on schedule and that key staff are available to accomplish analytical workload.

2008												
SSL Project Components	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	jul	aug	sep	oct	nov	dec
Council Meetings		SSLMC status report on proposals		Review final Recovery Plan and SSLMC progress report		Review Status Quo BiOp, SSLMC recommendations, and SEIS scoping report and recommend (1) range of alternatives for EIS analysis and (2) preliminary preferred alternative for Action BiOp						
SSLMC Review Proposals and Recommend Alternatives	Proposal analysis		(2) Review final recovery plan and compare with proposal		(2) Review Status Quo BiOp and finalize recommendations							
ESA Documentation			(1) NOA and Release Final Recovery Plan		(1) Release draft Status Quo BiOp - May 1	Develop Action Biological Assessment based on Council prelim preferred alternative			Develop draft Action BiOp			Release draft Action BiOp
NEPA, Regulatory Flexibility Act, and EO 12866 Documentation	SEIS scoping period ends April 21				Develop scoping report	Scoping report to Council - June 1	Develop draft SEIS/RIR/IRFA					

2009												2010
jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	jul	aug	sep	oct	nov	dec	jan
	(1) Review preliminary DSEIS/RIR/IRFA, draft Action BiOp, SSLMC comments, and CIE review and (2) Chose preferred alternative				Take final action based on final Action BiOp, DSEIS/RIR/IRFA, and CAR							
SSLMC review of draft Action BiOp												
CIE Review		Complete final Action BiOp		Final Action BiOp to Council								
Preliminary DSEIS/RIR/IRFA to Council		Publish DSEIS/RIR/IRFA, 45-day comment period		Develop Comment Analysis Report (CAR) and submit to Council	Revise SEIS/RIR/IRFA to incorporate final action, CAR, and final action BiOp				Publish Final SEIS/RIR/IRFA	Sign ROD with final rule		
					Develop proposed rule	Publish proposed rule, 30-day public comment period	Respond to comments and develop final rule	Publish final rule	Final rule effective			

**North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee Meeting
January 6-8, 2008
Nexus Hotel and
Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Seattle**

Minutes

The Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee (SSLMC) convened in Seattle at the Nexus Hotel (January 6) and the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (January 7-8, 2008). Committee members present were: Larry Cotter (Chairman), Julie Bonney, John Gauvin, John Henderschedt, Dan Hennen, Frank Kelty, Kris Norosz (for Terry Leitzell), Steve MacLean, Stephanie Madsen, Max Malavansky Jr, and Beth Stewart. Also present were Bill Wilson (Council staff); Dr. Doug DeMaster (NMFS AFSC); Kaja Brix, Lisa Rotterman, Kristin Mabry, Steve Lewis, and Melanie Brown (NMFS AK Region staff); Earl Krygier, (ADF&G); Mel Morris (Chairman, Alaska Board of Fisheries); John Lepore (NOAA General Counsel AKR); several AFSC and NMML scientists; and several members of the public. Kaja Brix introduced a new staff member of NMFS Protected Resources Division, Dr. Lisa Rotterman, who is the new Steller sea lion coordinator for NMFS AK Region.

Bill Wilson reviewed the agenda (attached), the work schedule for the coming several days, and the handout materials provided to each committee member. The minutes of the SSLMC's October 16-18, 2007 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Mr. Cotter reviewed the main goals of this SSLMC meeting. The SSLMC must now work through proposals with a goal of developing a draft package of recommendations for the Council. The schedule calls for a preliminary package by the April 2008 Council meeting, and a final package by June 2008. Mr. Cotter noted that the Committee should develop an initial set of recommendations by March, at which time it can compare these recommendations with the final SSL Recovery Plan, due to be completed in March. Then in May the draft status quo Biological Opinion (BiOp) will be available, and the SSLMC will meet to review it and compare the BiOp with the Committee's recommendations and make changes as appropriate. The recommendations from the SSLMC's May meeting will go to the Council for approval at the Council's June meeting. Kaja Brix reported that NMFS PR intends to keep on schedule and have the final SSL Recovery Plan completed by early March 2008, and the draft status quo Biological Opinion by early May 2008.

Mr. Wilson and Ms. Brown presented the current EIS schedule, which reflects recent Council action in December 2007 that approves publishing the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS in December so that the scoping period is longer and covers the period of time at least 30 days after the final SSL Recovery Plan is released and during the April 2008 Council meeting. Mr. Wilson reviewed the NOI, and noted the desirability of having the SSLMC develop some recommended alternatives for analysis in the EIS. NEPA requires an analysis of several reasonable alternatives, in addition to status quo, and it would be helpful to NMFS if the SSLMC developed alternatives in addition to a preferred package of recommendations.

Ms. Madsen suggested that the current schedule will be difficult to maintain, since the Council is scheduled to complete a large number of tasks at a single meeting – the June 2008 meeting. The Committee discussed alternatives to the schedule, including perhaps a special Council meeting to provide more time to complete these tasks. Mr. Cotter suggested that the Committee press on and work toward completing a near-final package of recommendations for Council review in April 2008. By presenting a preliminary package of possible SSL protection measure changes in April, this would give the Council an additional meeting to become familiar with the SSL issues and an early view of what the SSLMC will

likely eventually recommend in June. The general Committee discussion was in agreement with asking the Council to consider spending some time at their April meeting going through SSL issues, the final SSL Recovery Plan, and the SSLMC's preliminary recommendations for changes in SSL protection measures. This would help the Council prepare for another major review of SSL issues at its June meeting, when the Council will review the draft status quo BiOp, and select alternatives for the EIS analysis and select the Council's preliminary preferred alternative. By addressing SSL issues in April, the SSLMC felt that the Council would be more prepared to complete the tasks identified for their June meeting.

Mr. Wilson and Mr. Morris reviewed actions taken by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) at their November 2007 meeting. These actions relate to several proposals being considered by the SSLMC. The BOF approved a revised definition of the pollock trip limits for the GOA (proposal # 34), rescinded the 2007/2008 state water pollock fishery in the Aleutian Islands (proposal # 35), disapproved a proposal for a maximum vessel size limit for the Aleutian Islands state waters P. cod fishery (proposal # 36), and disapproved a proposed pot-only A season fishery on B season quota in the Aleutian Islands state waters P. cod fishery (proposal # 37). Mr. Wilson reported that NMFS recently advised the Council that a modified Aleutian Islands Kanaga Sound pollock fishery in state waters would not be considered *de minimus*, and further analysis is recommended through the SSLMC process. This proposal continues to be considered by the SSLMC and will be folded into the consultation process. Mr. Cotter reminded the Committee that all of these proposals remain on the SSLMC's list for further review, but during the course of this meeting their status will be clarified.

The SSLMC discussed the EIS scoping process, and some asked whether there will be community meetings to reach out to these areas to facilitate receiving comments from more rural parts of Alaska. Mr. Lepore noted that the NOI states that the scoping process will include all SSLMC meetings and Council meetings between now and April 21, 2008; no additional scoping meetings are envisioned at this time. The Agency envisions funneling public input through the SSLMC and Council meeting process, since these are forums for reviewing SSL data and fishery interactions information. All comments concerning the scope of issues to be addressed in the EIS and the identity of significant issues related to the proposed action must be submitted in writing to NMFS, as provided in the NOI, to be considered by NMFS. Minutes from the SSLMC and Council meetings concerning these issues will be provided to NMFS for review.

Ms. Madsen suggested that the more important element of the SSLMC's work will be consideration of the draft BiOp in May 2008. The draft status quo BiOp will be a key document that will inform the SSLMC's final proposal review process. She questioned whether there would be sufficient time to review the BiOp and develop recommendations for Council review by June if the BiOp is not available until May. The Committee discussion was sympathetic and generally in agreement with concerns over this tight schedule, but most acknowledged that the SSLMC must accept this schedule and do its best to mesh its work with the schedule. By bringing SSL issues to the Council in April as well as June could help inform the Council and facilitate its making a decision in June on EIS alternatives.

Resource DVD and Data Set Review

Mr. Lewis and Ms. Mabry led the SSLMC through the contents of the new resource DVD handed out at this meeting. This DVD contains all of the information on previous CDs or DVDs, and adds the data sets requested by the SSLMC at its October 2007 meeting. It also contains the goals and objectives statements submitted by proposers (those in hand as of January 4, 2008), some new publications, and the presentations given at SSLMC meetings since the last DVD was handed out.

Mr. Lewis and Ms. Mabry noted the disclaimer for the DVD: the data sets contained on the DVD are for SSLMC use only, are only partial data sets, do not contain confidential data which would be used by NMFS analysts in the EIS, and do not contain all data sets or information the analysts

would use in the EIS. The DVD is to inform the Committee and its decision making process, and should not be used for other purposes. [Opening the DVD package constitutes acknowledgement of the disclaimer and agreement to the terms of the disclaimer.]

The SSLMC was advised that many of the data sets on the resource DVD require an understanding of the methods of data collection or reporting that underpin the numbers. Thus, there are caveats that must be considered when using these data sets, including, for example:

- Some data may be from multiple reporting methods (State statistical area, VMS data, observer data)
- There may be no data for some years when multiple years are aggregated or averaged
- Some data are confidential and thus are omitted
- Some fishing sectors may not have operated in all areas, years, fisheries
- Some data sets report target catch that may be multiple species
- Some data may be for overlapping geographic areas
- Some data for the GOA may be before, or after, the 2005 changes in SSL protection measures
- CPUE data may be weighted to facilitate comparisons across time or area

As an exercise for how to use the data sets on the new DVD, the Committee reviewed an example proposal, Proposal # 4. This exercise led to an overnight assignment for Committee members: to specify if any additional data sets are needed to evaluate any of the proposals. Mr. Cotter noted that the Committee needs to be clear on all proposals to be sure all data needed for final evaluations are in hand, either on the resource DVD or in data sets to be provided by staff. Then the process will proceed through evaluation of proposals, merging or modifying proposals, eliminating proposals that will likely not be viable under current understanding of SSL/fishery interactions, and through the final process of retaining proposals that optimize economic and fishery return yet minimize SSL and related environmental impacts. This process will include a tradeoff process and development of recommendations that, in the aggregate, have cumulative effects that the SSLMC believes will remain under the bar of jeopardy and/or adverse mod. Mr. Cotter noted that this proposal review, tradeoffs analysis, and development of recommendations will likely continue through two additional meetings: one in March and another in May 2008. Final recommendations, based on the above process, including comportsing the package of recommendations with the final SSL Recovery Plan and the draft status quo BiOp, will be submitted to the Council for their review at their June 2008 meeting.

Proposal Data Review

The Committee reviewed all proposals to finalize data needs and to identify data sets that need to be assembled. The following summarizes those discussions. Attached is an updated table of data needs for each proposal; this table will be more comprehensive than the list below as it contains not only this list but all previous data sets identified at previous SSLMC meetings.

Proposal 1 (combined with 29)

The proponents note that industry will provide a consensus request for the number of days to begin the BSAI pollock A season earlier than the current January 20 start date. Pollock roe maturation varies from year to year, so industry seeks flexibility in setting the A season opening date; ideally the start date could shift from year to year, within a specified window of time, and be determined within coops if allowed to do so. Proponents suggest opening the A season earlier could benefit SSLs by moving fishing further away from the SSL weaning season.

Data needs:

- Already have most of the data needed (Wilson 2005 paper)
- Industry will bring data on pollock roe if requested
- New pollock roe report on the DVD will be helpful – may not need more roe data
- Already have some bycatch data – need more on Chinook bycatch by week in A season
- Need data on when pollock vessels begin fishing sideboards in BSAI and GOA
- Need to address shoreside impacts
- Number of AFA C/Vs that participate in non-pollock fisheries in BSAI and GOA
- Adak Fisheries to provide information on AI cod fishery to evaluate impacts of an earlier BSAI pollock fishery

Proposal 2 (combined with 27)

Proposal will change (framework) the A/B BSAI pollock TAC split so that if overall TAC is < 1.3 million mt the A/B split would be 45/55 % versus the current 40/60 %; the 40/60 split would be retained for BSAI TACs > 1.3 million mt. An additional feature of this proposal is that the 5 % shifted into the A season would be restricted to harvest outside SSL CH (e.g. the SCA). Proponents need to specify the regulatory “teeth” that would be imposed to effect an early closure of B season to reflect any early start to the A season.

Data needs:

- Similar to needs for Proposal #1
- Pollock harvest data for inside/outside the SCA in the A season
- Bycatch of salmon other than Chinook by week in the B season and A season (helpful for # 1 also)
- Number of vessels that fish species other than pollock that could fish into sideboards earlier (primarily the cod fishery and the yellowfin sole fishery in the BSAI)
- The Amendment 80 analysis
- Number of vessels that currently can fish GOA sideboards and the regulations that accompany the sideboard fisheries
- Chinook salmon bycatch rates in the A and B seasons for the last 10 years to look at annual variability
- Some suggested coastwide Chinook salmon production data would be helpful in evaluating annual bycatch data
- Consider any products from the Council’s Chinook salmon bycatch committee that is working on changes to bycatch regulations

Proposal # 3

This would start the C/P pot cod fishery in the BSAI 15 days earlier, providing additional safe fishing days. This proposal would likely have little effect on SSLs, other fisheries, etc.

Data needs:

- Have some of the data with the proposal submission
- Some data will be confidential given the small number of participants in this fishery
- Weekly landings for this sector and for other sectors

- If need confidential data, ask the proponents to waive confidentiality restrictions

Proposal # 4

Proposal would shift some of the TAC in the BSAI H&L C/P cod fishery from the B season to the A season. Additional TAC would be fished only outside SSL CH.

Data needs:

- Have most of the data needed (provided by proposer in original submission)
- Updated seabird incidental take data

Proposal # 8 (new modifications)

This proposal has been modified from what was originally submitted. The proposal is to change the Atka mackerel fishery management in the Aleutian Islands to allow directed fishing for Atka mackerel between 10 and 20 nm of SSL sites in two discrete Bering Sea areas. The purpose is to increase the fishing grounds available to the 541/BS mackerel fishery. Proponent indicates this will result in more Atka mackerel fishing in areas where SSL numbers are increasing and less fishing in areas where SSL numbers are decreasing.

Data needs:

- Seguam and Akutan SSL sites trend data
- Atka mackerel harvest data in both areas
- Halibut bycatch data in this fishery for recent years
- Atka mackerel TACs by subareas
- Proponent would provide additional Sea State data on halibut bycatch for 2007

Proposal # 33

This proposal is a result of combining proposals 7 and 24. The proposal would change SSL regulations affecting the Atka mackerel fishery in AI sub-areas 542 and 543 to allow inter-cooperative agreements to control daily and weekly harvest rates at less than or equal 2001-2007 catch rates in lieu of HLA regulations. This proposal provides a new approach to managing harvest rates, but retains the 60/40 inside/outside CH limits, and may result in lowered catch rates than have occurred in recent years.

Data needs:

Proposer to provide suggested rate limits for analysis
Daily/weekly Atka mackerel catch data in AI
Number of LLPs that would qualify for this fishery as proposed
Final 2003 BiOp Supplement
Fritz and Lowe 1998
McDermott et al. 2005

Proposal # 9

This proposal affects the > 60' C/V pot cod fishery in the BSAI, and changes the TAC split from 51/49 to 80/20 in the A/B seasons. Data needed to evaluate this proposal are in hand.

Proposal # 10

This proposal has been merged with Proposal # 17; so # 17 will be retained for further analysis, with separate subareas as options.

Proposal # 11

Change the seasonal allocation in the Area 610 GOA pollock A/B/C/D splits to 1/3, 1/3, 1/6, 1/6. This would change the current split among seasons that is based on biomass levels in regions determined by the Plan Team.

Data needs:

- SSL site data (trends, counts) in Area 610
- Pollock harvest data (rates) for C/V sector
- Pollock biomass distribution data for recent years
- Number of LLPs endorsed for western and central GOA C/V pollock
- AEB will provide TAC revenue data

Proposal # 12

Change the Jude Island haulout closure from 20 to 10 n mi to allow pollock fishing in Pavlof Bay and adjacent areas from 10-20 n mi; the area opened would be limited to only the Pavlof Bay area.

Data needs:

- Pollock harvest data pre-SSL closure in Pavlof area
- Detailed map of current, and proposed, fishing areas around the Jude Island SSL site
- SSL trends and counts for Jude Island

Proposal # 13

Change the Bogoslof cod < 60' longline and jig fishery exemption area cap to a larger cap amount. Split the cap allocation between jig and longline gear. Allocate 1 % of the cod TAC to this exemption area fishery. Option to provide an allocation to pot vessels. This fishery provides a safer area for small vessels fishing out of Unalaska.

Data needs:

- Have most of data needed as provided with the proposal
- Sector data (jig and longline) for past years – some may be confidential – may need confidentiality waived by participants

Proposal # 14

Aggregate the GOA pollock seasonal TACs in A and B or the C and D seasons into two annual allocations when pollock biomass (TACs) are small.

Data needs:

- Martin Dorn modeling and analysis data for effects of aggregating A&B and C&D apportionments under various GOA pollock biomass assumptions

- Request Dr. Dorn to update model and analysis to include pollock growth and pollock size in fishery harvest

Proposal # 15

Allow pollock trawling to 3 n mi in the A/B season and to 10 n mi in the C/D season at Cape Ugat.

Data needed:

- SSL site data at Cape Ugat
- Harvests of pollock in Cape Ugat area – historic and recent (before 2000 and after 2003)

Proposal # 16

Open the GOA pollock C season later to avoid conflict in processing the end of the season pink salmon harvests and the beginning of the C season pollock harvests in Kodiak.

Data needed:

- Chinook salmon bycatch data August 25-September 1
- Harvests of pollock in the C season in GOA

Proposal # 17 (merged with # 10)

Change the cod TAC allocations in the central and western GOA for all gear types from 60/40 to as close as possible to 100/0. This proposal acknowledges that the Council is considering a GOA cod split, but this analysis and decision is well into the future.

Data needs:

- Cod harvest data for Areas 630, 620, and 610, by gear type

Proposal # 18

Allow cod trawling to 10 n mi in the A season (January 20-June 1) around the Chernabura SSL rookery. Proponents of this proposal were absent.

Data needs:

- Map of area involved
- SSL data at Chernabura
- Pre 2000 and post 2003 cod trawl harvest data in Area
- Pot harvest data by zone around Chernabura
- Need proponents to present and debate proposal at March 2008 meeting

Proposal # 19

Change the Dalnoi Point trawl closure to 0-20 n mi with option to 10 n mi.

Data needs:

- Harvests (catch rates, weekly) by zone around Dalnoi for all species trawl fisheries (Atka

- mackerel, cod, pollock)
- Bycatch rates (all PSC) by zone around Dalnoi, by gear type, time of year, pre 2000 and post 2003
- SSL data for Dalnoi and other Pribilof Island sites to show recent years' trends

Proposal # 20

Relax the Spitz Island closure to allow jig and pot cod fishing to the beach in a parallel fishery. BOF would also have to approve. Options would be an opening in winter only or summer only.

Data needs:

- SSL data for Spitz
- Pot and jig cod fishery harvest data for area (obtain from proponents) to identify the highest possible effort that might result from this action (worst case)
- Map with details of this area
- Number of pot and jig vessels that have LLPs endorsed for this fishery
- Look at the changes made in 2005 and how many vessels participated in the newly-relaxed fishery at Kak Island for comparison
- If some data are confidential, ask proponents to waive confidentiality

Proposal # 21

Change the current 0-20 n mi cod fixed gear (pot and jig only) closure at Sutwik SSL site to 0-3 n mi for < 60' vessels only. Option would be relaxing the closure in winter only or summer only. This proposal would also require BOF approval.

Data needs:

- SSL data for Sutwik
- General cod harvest data by sector in area
- Number of vessels that participate in the Chignik state waters cod fishery (obtain from ADF&G)

Proposal # 22

Change the pollock fishery SSL restrictions in the AI region to mirror the AI cod SSL restrictions. Option would be to change restrictions by subarea (541, 542, 543), to limit vessel effort and harvest effort in relaxed zones, or to consider only the Kanaga and Atka "boxes" as outlined in the proposal.

Data needs:

- Have most of data needed in the proposal package
- Proportion of areas open in CH in other areas around Alaska and the percent of pollock harvested inside and outside CH in these areas (to look at the parity issue)
- Where pollock fishing occurred pre 2000 in the AI and the percent of pollock harvested inside and outside what is now CH, but was not CH then, in the AI

Proposal # 23

Examine the options before the Council to split the BSAI cod TACs into AI and Bering Sea apportionments in the context of the SSLMC analyses and the accompanying consultation. The SSLMC discussed the efficacy of undertaking an analysis of a BSAI cod split. Since it is before the Council at its

February 2008 meeting, the SSLMC agreed to wait until the Council decides how to proceed.

Proposal # 25

Allow C/V Atka mackerel fishing to 10 n mi at the Kasatochi SSL site in Area 541.

Data needs:

- It is likely there will only be confidential data available on the fishery in this area (some C/V cod fishery incidental harvest of Atka mackerel but discarded but recorded by observers)
- Need waiver of confidentiality if this is an issue or cannot further evaluate this proposal

Proposal # 26

Establish A and B seasons for trawl C/V cod fishery in the BSAI instead of the current A/B/C seasons. Transfer TAC from the C season apportionment to the A season, resulting in a new A/B season apportionment of 89/11.

Data needs:

- CPUE and harvest and harvest rate data in the BSAI cod trawl C/V sector in the A, B, and C seasons
- Local depletion study report for cod at Cape Sarichef (Connors....)
- Amendment 85 analysis
- Halibut bycatch rates in the C and the A seasons

Proposal # 28

Extend the BSAI pollock B season to December 1 (from the current November 1). Proponents indicate this is a low priority proposal. SSLMC will retain this proposal, but may give it low priority. No additional data needs.

Proposal # 30 (BOF # 6)

Open a State waters or a State parallel pelagic trawl pollock fishery between 149 and 150 degrees in the GOA outside 3 n mi of Rugged, Chiswell, and Seal SSL sites.

Data needs:

- NMFS PR analysis of this proposal from 2 years ago
- Harvest data from old ADF&G Commissioner's permit fishery in this area

Proposal # 31 (BOF # 182)

Change the allocation of the Federal TAC from 25 % to 50 % in the western GOA state waters cod fishery. Currently about 60 % of the cod in the wGOA are harvested from state waters.

Data needs:

- Look at this proposal in context with the overall SSLMC proposal review in terms of impacts on SSLs. Report back to the BOF later.

Proposal # 32 (BOF # 185)

Limit the wGOA cod trawl fishery in state parallel waters to < 60' vessels year round.

Data needs:

- Harvest rate data in this area by vessel size
- Look at this proposal in context with the overall SSLMC proposal review in terms of impacts on SSLs. Report back to the BOF.

Proposal # 34 (BOF # 395)

GOA pollock trip limits. Approved by the Council and approved by the BOF. Remove from further SSLMC consideration.

Proposal # 35 (BOF # 396)

Rescind the 2007/2008 AI pollock fishery in state waters. The BOF closed this fishery. The SSLMC recommends sending a letter to the BOF asking their intentions for further consideration of this proposal by the SSLMC.

Proposal # 36 (BOF # 397)

Limit cod fishing in AI state waters for all gear to vessels < 60'. The BOF disapproved of this proposal. The SSLMC recommends sending a letter to the BOF asking their intentions for further consideration of this proposal by the SSLMC.

Proposal # 37 (BOF # 398)

Authorize a pot only cod fishery later in the A season that fishes on the B season TAC. The BOF disapproved this proposal. The SSLMC recommends sending a letter to the BOF asking their intentions for further consideration of this proposal by the SSLMC.

General Discussion

Dr. Hennen noted that some proposals being considered may have synergistic effects such as multiple proposals that would move TAC from late in the fishing year to earlier in the fishing year. The Committee should be aware of these synergistic or cumulative effects in its deliberations.

The Committee reviewed a listing of additional data sets that will be needed to help inform the proposal analysis process at the next meeting. Mr. Wilson will be the point of contact for additional data and will distribute these data to the Committee as they are received in the coming weeks. Some of these data will be generated by NMFS staff, while other data have been requested from proposers.

Some felt that it would be helpful if each Committee member, or each proposer, brought to the next SSLMC meeting a statement of the specific concerns they might have with each proposal; statements of the issues of concern could help focus the discussions and lead to mitigating measures for those proposals.

Proposals That May Merit More Immediate Council Attention

The SSLMC has identified several proposals that likely have little impact on SSLs, or may be perceived as SSL friendly, and that could improve fishery management and also benefit the industry. The Committee believes that these proposals could be moved forward for Council consideration now, and not continue through the SSLMC review process and the longer-term consultation. These include a proposal for improved Atka mackerel fishery management in the AI region using cooperatives (Proposal # 8), and a proposal for a very minor change in fishing season start date for the C pollock season in the GOA (Proposal # 16). These proposals would have no impact on SSLs, would improve management, would make the fishery more efficient and less burdensome, and could benefit SSLs. Some felt that such proposals ought to be forwarded immediately, while others noted that this could slow the consultation process by diverting agency attention and agency staff to these proposals and adversely affect the consultation schedule. The SSLMC agreed to support this concept, but the Committee would not forward these proposals but would support the individual proponents of these proposals to do so on their own. Mr. Cotter agreed to inform the Council of these proposals and the Committee's discussions at the Council's February 2008 meeting.

BOF Proposals

The SSLMC noted that some of the proposals under consideration by the Committee were submitted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) and the SSLMC believes that the BOF should be contacted for clarification of BOF intent for these proposals when they were originally submitted. These are SSLMC Proposals 35, 36, and 37 (BOF Proposals 396, 397, and 398, respectively). At their November 2007 meeting in Homer, the BOF took action on these three proposals: the BOF rescinded a state waters pollock fishery near Adak (Proposal 396), and disapproved a proposal for a vessel size limit in the AI state waters cod fishery (397), and disapproved a proposal for a pot cod fishery in the AI A season that would fish on the B season TAC (398). The SSLMC felt unclear on whether the BOF would like these issues to be further considered by the SSLMC. Mr. Cotter agreed to look into how best to contact the BOF for clarification.

Next Meeting and Work Schedule

The SSLMC will meet during the week of March 10-14, 2008 in Anchorage. The location of this meeting will be announced soon. This meeting will begin proposal analysis, categorization, consolidation, modification, and removal of some from further consideration. The final SSL Recovery Plan will be reviewed and discussed at this meeting, and the proposals still under active consideration will be evaluated with the conclusions presented in the final recovery plan. The SSLMC will develop an initial set of recommendations based on the work completed in the March meeting; this will be presented to the Council at its April 2008 meeting. The Council will be provided with a detailed overview of proposals that may be recommended to the Council, including the rationale and justification developed by the SSLMC.

The SSLMC will then meet to complete the proposal review process during the week of May 12-16, 2008 in Seward at the Alaska Sea Life Center. At this May meeting, the SSLMC will receive the draft status quo BiOp and prepare comments for the Council. The SSLMC will further evaluate proposals still under consideration in light of information presented in the BiOp. The SSLMC will then develop a final set of recommendations based on all of the Committee's previous work, including proposal review by the Proposal Ranking Tool, analysis of proposals using all available information and new data on SSLs and SSL/fishery interactions, comportsing proposals with the final SSL Recovery Plan and the draft status quo BiOp, consideration of public comment and input during SSLMC meetings over the past 2 years, and its own knowledge and consideration of information gathered during PowerPoint presentations from SSL and fishery researchers, reviewing new scientific publications, consideration of the large number of publications in the SSL Compendium compiled by Drs. Loughlin and Tagart, and many other information

and data sources. This final set of recommendations, and the rationale and justification for them, as well as the record built during the proposal review process, will be presented to the Council at its June 2008 meeting. The intent will be that this set of recommendations would be modified, and then approved by the Council as the “proposed action” for analysis in a supplemental draft EIS.

Adjourn

The Committee adjourned at 3:30 p.m. January 8, 2008.

Bill Wilson
Bill.wilson@noaa.gov

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee Meeting
January 6-8, 2008
Hotel Nexus, Seattle – January 6
[2140 North Northgate Way (I-5 Exit 173)]
Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Seattle – January 7&8

Purpose: Receive databases requested at last meeting, proceed with proposal analysis, work toward developing an initial package of recommendations for Council review.

AGENDA

January 6 - 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM – Nexus Hotel

1. Introductions and Opening Remarks, Announcements, Agenda Approval (Cotter)
2. Minutes of Last Meeting (Wilson)
3. Update on November 2007 Board of Fisheries and December 2007 Council Meetings, Including EIS Schedule (Wilson, Brown)
4. Development of Alternatives/NEPA/NOI Review (Brown/Wilson)
5. Review Proposal Statements on SSLMC's Goal and Objectives
6. Receive and Discuss Databases Requested for Proposal Review (Mabry, Lewis, Miller, Brown)
7. Identify Additional Information Needs or Data Requests

January 7 – 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM – AFSC

8. Continue Review of Databases
9. Analyze Proposals and Evaluate Tradeoffs

January 8 – 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM - AFSC

10. Continue Proposal Analysis – Develop Initial Recommendations
11. Define Additional Data Needs
12. Discuss Committee Meeting Schedule
13. Action Items, Closing Remarks, Adjourn (Cotter)

Public comment periods will be provided during the meeting.

Contact Bill Wilson at the Council offices if you have questions: 907-271-2809 or bill.wilson@noaa.gov

Proposal Summary List (January 6-8, 2008)

Proposal #	Description	Sector	Area	Proponent
1/29	Start pollock A season 5-15 days earlier	AFA pollock trawl	BSAI	APA/UCB
2/27	Framework pollock A/B TAC apportionment: 45/55 % if BSAI TAC <1.3 M mt; 40/60 % if BSAI TAC >1.3 M mt	AFA pollock trawl	BSAI	APA/UCB
3	Start C/P Cod fishery B season 17 days earlier	C/P cod pot	BSAI	Trident
4	Allow H&L C/P cod fishery to harvest 70% in A season, 30 % in B season from current 51/49%; additional A season harvest outside CH only	C/P cod H&L	BSAI	NPLA
8	Allow directed fishing for Atka mackerel between 10 and 20 nm of SSL sites in two discrete Bering Sea areas. The purpose is to increase the fishing grounds available to the 541/BS mackerel fishery	Atka mackerel trawl	EBS	H&G W.G.
9	Change A/B season cod apportionment in pot C/V >60' sector from 51/49 to 80/20 %	C/V cod pot	BSAI	UFMA
11	Change pollock ABCD season apportionment in GOA Area 610 to 1/3, 1/3, 1/6, 1/6	Pollock trawl	WGOA	AEB
12	Open a portion of Jude Is. closure outside 10 nm for pollock trawling (open Pavlof Bay)	Pollock trawl	WGOA	AEB
13	Increase harvest cap for Bogoslof exemption area for <60' jig and H&L sector to no more than 1% of the BSAI cod TAC; consider allowing pot vessels also; consider jig set aside of 10% of the cap	Cod jig, H&L; pot(?)	BSAI	UNFA
14	Aggregate GOA pollock A and B season TACs and aggregate C and D season TACs when GOA pollock TACs are low	Pollock trawl	GOA	AGDB
15	Allow pollock trawling to 3nm at Cape Ugat (Area 620) during A & B seasons and to 10 km in C & D seasons	Pollock trawl	CGOA	AGDB
16	Change GOA pollock C season start date from Aug 25 to Sept 1 (the humpy proposal)	Pollock trawl	GOA	AGDB
17/10	Change GOA cod (all gear) A/B seasonal TAC apportionments from current 60/40 to up to 100/0	Cod fixed/trawl	GOA	AGDB/AEB
18	Allow cod trawling to 10 nm Jan 20 to June 1 at Chernabura (WGOA)	Cod trawl	WGOA	WGF
	Change groundfish trawl closure around Dalnoi Pt from 0-3 to 0-20 n mi (option 0-10 n mi)	Groundfish trawl	EBS	St. George
20	Remove Spitz Is. 0-3 n mi closure to allow fishing	Cod jig/pot	CGOA	Chignik

Proposal #	Description	Sector	Area	Proponent
	to the beach for cod jig and pot gear			
21	Change Sutwik Is. 0-20 n mi closure to 0-3 n mi for cod jig and pot gear	Cod jig/pot	CGOA	Chignik
22	Change pollock fishery geographic closures in AI to match the cod fishery closures in the AI; option to change by subarea; option to limit harvest in relaxed zones; option to open only the Kanaga and Atka "boxes"	Pollock trawl	AI	AEC/Adak Fish
23	Split cod TAC apportionment between AI and BS	Cod (all sectors)	BSAI	AEC/Adak Fish
25	Allow C/V Atka mackerel fishing to 10 n mi at the Kasatochi SSL site in Area 541	Atka mackerel trawl	AI	AEC/Adak Fish
26	Change A/B/C seasonal BSAI cod trawl C/V apportionment from 74/11/15 to an A/B seasonal apportionment of 89/11	Cod C/V trawl	BSAI	UCB
28	Extend end of BSAI pollock B season from Nov. 1 to Dec. 1	Pollock trawl	BS	UCB
30*	Open closed areas >3 nm from Rugged, Chiswell, & Seal SSL sites between 149 & 150 in state waters to pollock trawling	Pollock trawl	CGOA	ADF&G
31*	Change allocation of cod in WGOA state waters fishery from 25% to 50% of Federal WGOA TAC	Cod jig, pot	WGOA	Sand Point
32*	Limit vessels to <60' in WGOA cod fishery in state waters	Cod jig, pot, H&L, trawl	WGOA	King Cove
33/7/24 33a/7/24	Change SSL regulations affecting Atka mackerel fishery in AI sub-areas 542 and 543 to allow inter-cooperative agreements to control daily and weekly harvest rates at less than or equal 2001-2007 catch rates in lieu of HLA regulations; option (a) to change date of fishery end	Atka mackerel	AI	H&G W.G./AEC & Adak Fish
35* BOF	Authorize AI state waters pollock fishery in Adak area	Pollock trawl	AI	BOF
36* BOF	Limit AI state waters cod fishery (all gear) to vessels <60'	Cod (all sectors)	AI	BOF
37* BOF	Allow AI state waters pot cod fishery late in A season harvesting B season pot TAC	Cod pot	AI	BOF

* SSLMC recommendations to be advisory; will require BOF approval

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME BOARD OF FISHERIES

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November 15, 2007

Mr. Eric Olson
Chairman
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. Olson:

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) is considering a proposal to rescind the State waters pollock fishery in the Aleutian Islands (AI). As you know, the Board approved this fishery for 2007 and 2008, with the GHL for the 2007 partly fishery contingent on approval by the Council of an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) for 3000 mt. Since the EFP was approved for 2007, the State fishery did not occur. As currently authorized, the fishery is scheduled to occur again in 2008, but the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has requested that the BOF rescind the authorization for the fishery based on pollock stock conservation and SSL issues.

Therefore, the Board has developed a Board-generated proposal, Proposal 396, to consider rescinding authorization for this fishery, and the BOF deliberated this issue at its meeting in Homer on November 13-15, 2007. During its November meeting, the BOF received testimony from the public that acknowledged the NMFS concerns over a 3000 mt fishery in 2008, but suggested that perhaps a smaller quota could still have economic benefits and at the same time avoid pollock stock conservation issues and avoid SSL concerns.

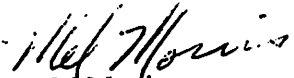
The BOF is sympathetic to the public comments received, and has reviewed a suggested alternative fishing strategy for AI pollock that may have merit. This alternative fishery is outlined in the attached report. The BOF is sensitive to the SSL issues involved, and wishes to avoid any action that could result in a jeopardy decision from NMFS. But the BOF also is concerned over the continuing lack of authorization for a pollock fishery in the AI region, and hopes that this alternative might be a satisfactory compromise. The attached discussion paper recommends a GHL of 454 MT to be harvested in the A season with the fishing season starting on March 1, 2008 and the fishing activity restricted to Kanga Sound.

We recognize that the Council's Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee is working to develop a set of recommendations for change in SSL protection measures, but we also recognize that this process may not conclude for several years. In the mean time, the BOF would like to implement some fishery measures that would benefit the AI region as soon as possible.

Therefore, the BOF asks that the Council request NMFS to evaluate a modified AI State waters pollock fishery based on the information presented to the BOF as described in the attached document. We ask that this occur on an informal level at this time, and if the result of this informal review requires that a formal consultation occur, the BOF asks that the consultation process stop at that point. We do not wish to complicate or otherwise sidetrack the Council's ongoing FMP level consultation by diverting resources to a formal consultation process.

We request that the Council take up this issue at its December 2007 meeting and in turn request that NMFS prioritize an analysis of the attached proposal. We look forward to continued cooperation between the BOF and the Council in managing marine fisheries in both state and Federal waters.

Sincerely,



Mel Morris

Board of Fisheries, Chairman

Discussion paper - prepared by dave fraser

Consultation on Aleutian Island Statewater Pollock

NMFS Protected Resources may be asked for an opinion on whether the 3000 metric ton pollock state water fishery between 174° W and 178° W longitude will result in Jeopardy or Adverse Modification of Steller sea lion (SSL) Critical Habitat.

The answer to the question rests in part upon an analysis of whether there is competitive limitation of SSL foraging success.

Competition that limits SSL foraging success for pollock in the Aleutian Islands (west of 170° W longitude) would require the existence of overlap in multiple dimensions.

1. Is the fishery target species (pollock) an important SSL prey species in the region?
2. Will fishery removals of pollock substantially reduce overall prey biomass?
3. Are the fishery removals of pollock the same sizes consumed by SSL?
4. Does the fishery occur in the same depths as SSL foraging depths?
5. Is the fishery's spatial distribution the same as the SSL foraging spatial distribution?

For competitive limitation to occur, it is necessary for overlap to take place in more than one dimension. For example, if there was an unlimited biomass of pollock and it rarely occurred in the diet of SSL, overlap in sizes consumed or overlap in depths of foraging and fishing would be of little importance. Similarly, if the spatial distribution didn't overlap, then overlap in depth would be of little importance.

The answers to the five questions are unlikely to be simple "yes/no" answers. Degree of overlap needs to be considered in each of the dimensions. Logically, small degrees of overlap are less of a concern than large degrees of overlap.

This discussion paper looks at each of the five questions.

Is the fishery target species (pollock) an important SSL prey species in the region?

Two major studies have been conducted on SSL scat in the AI, one covering 1990-1998 (Sinclair and Zeppelin 2002), and the other covering 1999-2005 (NMFS 2006b)

The 1990-1998 study found 15 other prey species in SSL scat in the Central/Western Aleutians (Region IV) in winter with equal or greater frequency of occurrence than pollock.

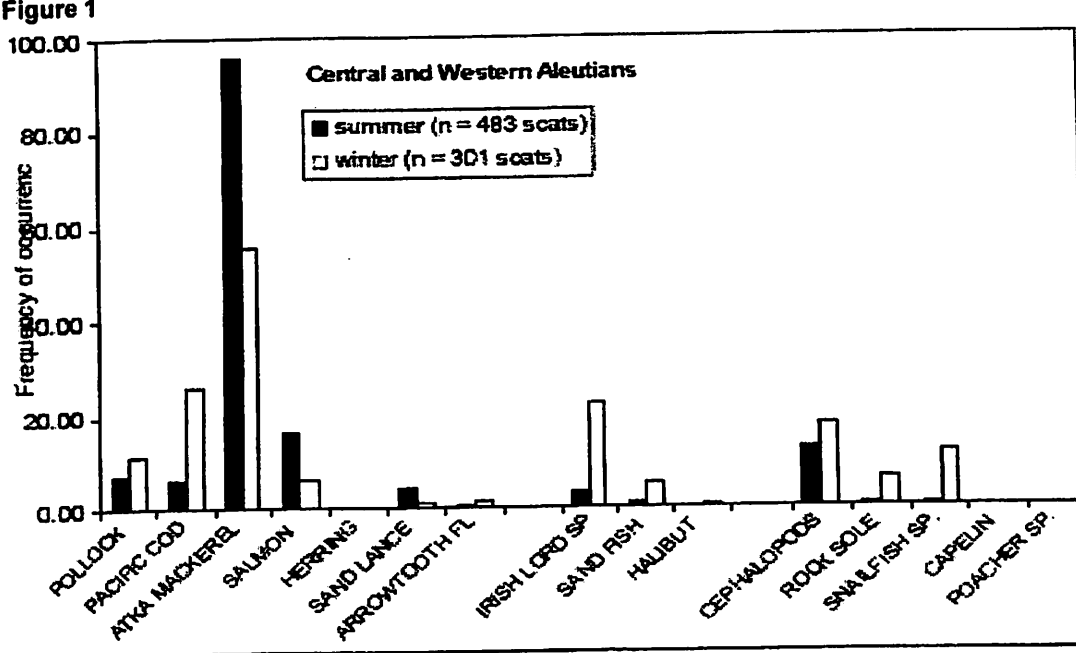
The following tables are condensed from Table 2 in Sinclair and Zeppelin and from Table 3.21 in the draft BiOp.

Table 1

from Sinclair and Zeppelin 2002		from NMFS 2006b	
Prey Species	FO in Scat	Prey Species	FO in Scat
Atka Mackerel	64.9%	Atka Mackerel	55.0%
Pacific cod	16.9%	Pacific cod	26.0%
Salmon,	23.6%	Irish Lords,	23.0%
Rock Greenlings,	21.6%	Cephalopods,	18.0%
Irish Lords,	12.8%	Snailfish,	12.0%
Snailfish,	11.5%	Pollock	12.0%
Cephalopods,	11.5%	Salmon,	6.0%
Kelp Greenlings,	4.1%	Rocksole,	6.0%
Other Greenlings,	3.4%	Arrowtooth	1.0%
Other flatfish	3.4%	Rock Greenlings,	na
Rockfishes,	3.4%	Kelp Greenlings,	na
Lumpsuckers,	2.7%	Other Greenlings,	na
Gunnels,	2.7%	Other flatfish	na
Rocksole,	2.7%	Rockfishes,	na
Arrowtooth	2.7%	Lumpsuckers,	na
Pollock	2.7%	Gunnels,	na

The following figure is take from the Central/Western Aleutian Island portion of figure 3.20 in the September 7, 2006 draft Biological Opinion.

Figure 1



Will fishery removals of pollock substantially reduce overall prey biomass?

Pollock is a relatively minor diet item for SSL in the AI. As shown in the scat data, at least fifteen other species are also present in the SSL diet.

Aleutian Island biomass estimates are available from the SAFE documents for some alternative prey species. However, for many of the prey species in the above table there are no biomass estimates available for the AI.

The combined AI biomass of 3 prey species for which separate estimates are available (Atka mackerel, P. cod, and POP) sum to roughly one million metric tons.

AI pollock biomass estimates are presented in the table below:

Table 2

Aleutian Island Pollock Biomass	
AI Pollock 2007 biomass (model 1 2006 SAFE)	141,000 tons
AI Pollock 2007 biomass (model 2A 2006 SAFE)	363,000 tons
AI Pollock biomass (2006 bottom trawl survey)	94,000 tons
AI Pollock 2007 ABC	44,500 tons
AI Pollock 2007 TAC	19,000 tons
Pollock statewater GHL	3,000 tons

The statewater GHL accounts for between 1% to 3% of the estimated pollock age 3+ biomass. This is far less than 1% of the overall biomass of prey species for which AI biomass estimates are available, and even less when other prey species are considered.

Are the fishery removals of pollock the same sizes consumed by SSL?

A paper by Zeppelin et al. 2004, presents a comparison of pollock and Atka mackerel sizes consumed by SSL and taken in commercial fisheries. The mean size of pollock consumed by SSL was shown to be 39.3 centimeters in that study. The mean size of pollock harvested by the commercial fishery was approximately 50 centimeters. The study estimated that there was a 56% overlap in the sizes of pollock harvested in the commercial fishery compared to those consumed by SSL.

This estimate of overlap does not reflect the overlap in the Aleutian Islands. Few, if any, of the pollock taken by the commercial fishery were harvested in the Aleutian Islands. This is due to the overwhelming dominance of Bering Sea hauls in the observer data base and that the directed pollock fishery was closed beginning in 1999.

The size composition of pollock in commercial harvests in the AI tends to have a much higher mean size than the pollock harvested in the Bering Sea or Gulf of Alaska. During the 2006 Aleutian Island Cooperative Acoustic Survey Study, size data was collected by

Steve Barbeaux from the pollock harvested. The mean size of pollock in the AICASS study was approximately 58 centimeters. The overlap for commercial pollock fisheries in the Aleutian Islands is substantially less than that presented in Zeppelin et al 2004.

The draft Biological Opinion presents a figure 3.21 taken from Zeppelin et al. 2004, portraying the overlap in sizes of pollock consumed by fisheries. The figure is presented below together with a graph of the pollock harvested in the 2006 AICASS study.

Figure 2

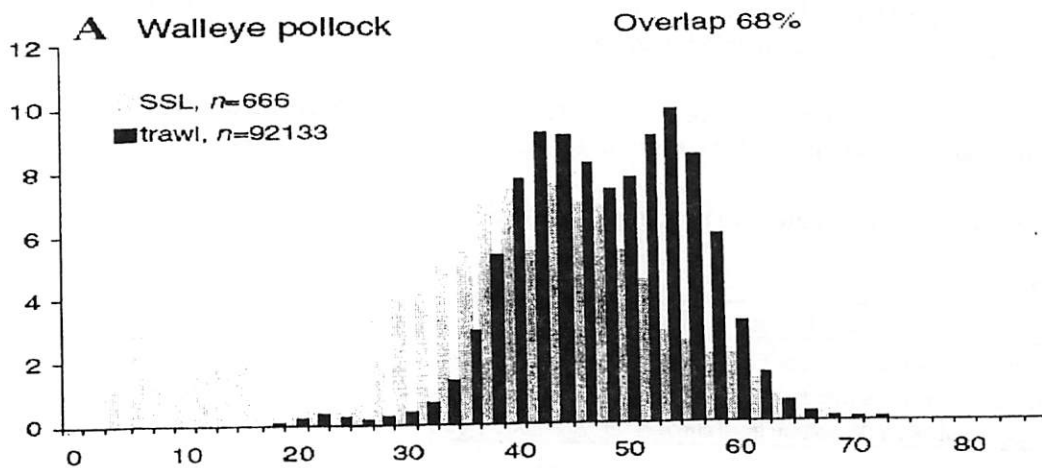
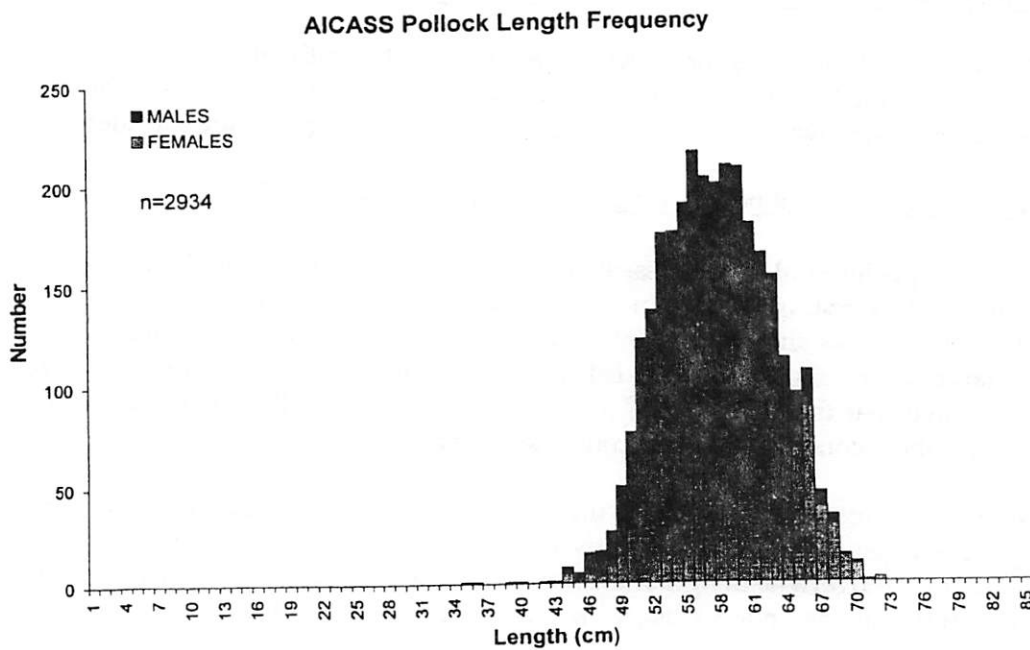


Figure 3



Does the fishery occur in the same depths as SSL foraging depths?

The draft Biological Opinion (Sept. 7th, 2006) presents summary data on SSL dive depths from several studies in table 3.13.

Table 3

Steller Sea Lion Dive Depths for Dives Greater than 4 Meters - from table 3.13, draft BiOp 9/7/06	
Mean dive depth in winter of adult female SSL (Alaska)	24 meters
Mean dive depth in summer of adult female SSL (Russia)	53 meters
Mean dive depths of juvenile SSL (4 studies)	13 to 39 meters
Mean Maximum dive depth of juvenile SSL (Washington)	144 meters
Mean Maximum dive depth of juvenile SSL (Alaska)	63 meters
Maximum dive depth in winter of adult female SSL (Alaska)	>250 meters
Percentage of dives deeper than 155 meters by adult female SSL in winter	4%
Percentage of Pollock trawls deeper than 200 meters in Kanaga Sound	80%

While the summary table only presents mean and mean maximum dive depths, some of the underlying papers provide dive data by depth bins which allows further examination of the degree of overlap between commercial fishing depths and SSL dive depths.

SSL dive information from two studies - "Diving Behaviour of Adult Female Steller Sea Lions in the Kuril Islands, Russia," Loughlin, 1998, (Table 3, page 28) and "ADF&G Wildlife Technical Bulletin No. 13," May 1996, (Table 2, pg. 144) - was used to examine potential overlap between SSL foraging depths and commercial pollock fishing depths in the Aleutian Islands.

The data on SSL dives depths from these studies was used to plot the cumulative proportion of dives deeper than a given depth.

An examination of NMFS observer program data (provided by Ren Narita at ASFC) for 4800 hauls in the Aleutian Island pollock fishery between 1990 and 1998 found less than 5% of pollock trawl hauls shallower than 150 meters

Two subsets of these hauls were plotted for the areas where most harvest under the EFP is expected - one in the Kanaga Sound area and one in the Atka Island/North Cape area. Less than 5% of the hauls in the Atka area were shallower than 150 meters, and more than 50% were deeper than 350 meters (figure 4). The Kanaga area was used to plot the cumulative proportion of trawl hauls for pollock shallower than a given depth in that area (figure 5).

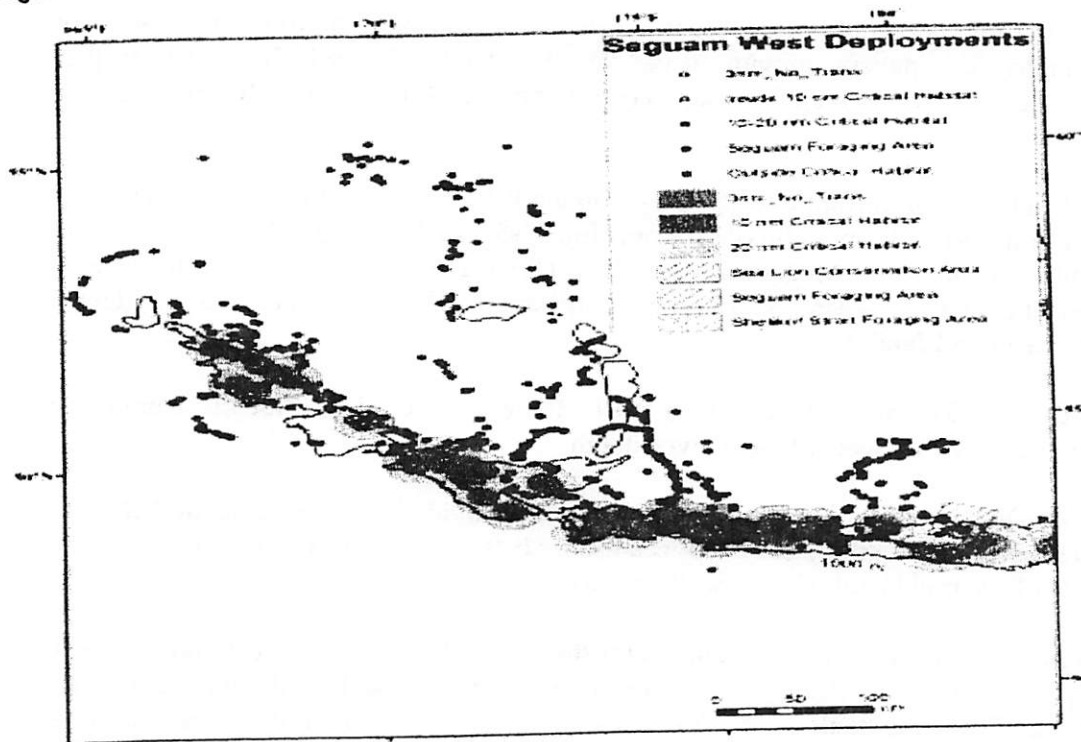
The plots of SSL dives and trawl hauls cross at approximately 150 meters. About 5% of SSL dives (excluding dives less than 4 meters) exceeded 150 meters, while less than 10% of Aleutian Island pollock hauls in Kanaga Sound were shallower than 150 meters.

Is the fishery's spatial distribution the same as the SSL foraging spatial distribution?

The best source of information on SSL foraging distribution is the satellite telemetry data. In February of 2000, four SSL were tagged at Seguam Pass. In April 2005 fifteen SSL were tagged in the Adak area. The data from these two sets of deployments are available to be viewed on line.

The draft Biological Opinion (September 7th 2006) presents an overview map (figure 3.19) of the data from all of these deployments. Given the scale of the map in the figure it is difficult to draw many inferences. However it is clear that at least some SSL spend a significant amount of time outside the 1000 meter isobath, well beyond the continental shelf.

Figure 6



As Bowen, et al, (September 2001) noted, "Data on SSL dive depth would be more useful if they were linked to bathymetry such that one could then estimate the fraction of benthic habitat available to different age and sex-classes."

In the final report by Bowen, et al, the authors discussed the use of satellite telemetry data. The panel stated (pg.35), "It should also be recognized that the appropriate sampling unit in these studies is the individual."

With the GIS tools available from the "Alaska Ecosystem Program Telemetry Research Page" (<http://nmml.afsc.noaa.gov/AlaskaEcosystems/sslhome/satellite/default.htm>) it is possible to view the 19 Aleutian Island satellite tag deployments individually and to "zoom in" to a fine local scale.

GIS maps of the Seguam Pass deployments are at:

<http://afscmaps.akctr.noaa.gov/website/seg2000feb/viewer.htm>

GIS maps of the Adak deployments are at:

<http://afscmaps.akctr.noaa.gov/website/eal2005apr/viewer.htm>

By looking at fine scale maps it becomes clear that the vast majority of satellite "hits" occur inside the 100 meter isobath. (*Unfortunately, the image capture function of ArcView software didn't seem to work - the reader will have to go on line and "zoom in" on the various deployments to view the area covered by the EFP in discreet segments.*) This is consistent with the dive data presented in the several studies referenced in the draft Biological Opinion (September 7th, 2006) indicating that the vast majority of dives are shallower than 100 meters.

Figure 7, (from Halflinger and fraser, 2001) below traces the movement of SSLID74, an 11 month old male pup, during period from 5/28 to 6/10. It is an example of a foraging trip well beyond the continental shelf.

During this time he wanders offshore far past the continental shelf break, then circles back to the west, making landfall at the west end of Atka Island, then he follows closely along the shoreline heading east for a few days, and finally heads back out past the shelf break again. He shows no interest in the portion of the shelf between 100 and 200 meters where commercial groundfish are targeted. Rather he appears to be foraging where the more likely prey is salmon, mictophids, and squid.

There is no indication of spatial overlap or temporal overlap with the cod and Pollock fishery which are winter fisheries, since this animal doesn't begin going offshore until summer.

The same animal is shown in figure 8 (also below) during the winter months from March through May when it rarely goes beyond the 100 meter isobath

This image in figure 8 zooms in on SSLID74, the male pup from figure 7, at Seguam Island. All at-sea locations from the time of tagging (2/29/2000) for the next 2 months (until 5/4/200) are contained in this image, and only one location during that period is significantly outside 3 miles.

Given the narrow shelf in the Aleutian Islands, spatial separation between SSL foraging locations and commercial pollock fishing activity may not be dramatic when measured in miles. However, when "data on SSL dive depth" is "linked to bathymetry" and examined by "individual," as suggested by Bowen, et al, it become clear that there is significant 3 dimensional spatial separation that is tied to bathymetry.

Conclusion

The picture that emerges from consideration of the data related to the multiple dimensions of overlap is not one that suggests competition with pollock fishing in the Aleutian Islands limits SSL foraging success.

In contrast to the conclusions of Sinclair and Zeppelin, which may be valid in the context of the Bering Sea or Gulf of Alaska, there is nothing in the Aleutian Island data that suggests spawning aggregations of pollock are an important target species for Aleutian Island SSL. Rather it appears that dispersed pollock form a minor opportunistic component of the prey field in the Aleutians (west of 170° W longitude). The fishery is separated in space both vertically (depth) and horizontally (distance from shore and bathymetry). Finally, to the minor degree that pollock are part of a much larger SSL prey field, the sizes of pollock harvested by the fishery are significantly larger than those consumed by SSL.

Each of the five dimensions of overlap examined show a very limited degree of overlap. Taken together, it is difficult to imagine that pollock fishery in the Aleutian Islands harvesting the full TAC, let alone 3000 metric tons, occurring 3 miles or more from listed SSL sites would result in either Jeopardy or Adverse Modification of SSL Critical Habitat.

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Responses to Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee Questions on BOF Proposal # 396 – AI State Water Pollock

Prepared by dave fraser – Adak Fisheries

The BOF decision under proposal #396 is whether to close the state water fishery or leave it open. Alternatively the BOF might reduce the 3,000 ton catch limit and further restrict where and when fishing could occur. The BOF could consider a GHL for just Kanaga Sound, based on a 14.27% exploitation rate applied to the 7,956 tons survey biomass for that block which would produce a local GHL of about 1135 tons.

Last year NMFS did an EA and Biological Opinion on an EFP for harvest of up to 3,000 tons in the area from 173-179 longitude. The EFP allowed fishing in the portions of statewater between 174-178 longitude that would be open in the fishery addressed by proposal #396.

That Biological Opinion addressed most of the questions posed by the SSLMC and found no jeopardy or adverse modification, so long as harvest was limited to 1000 tons in any one degree of longitude.

Notes on Board of Fish Proposal #396 and SSLMC “Objectives Questions”

1. Continue to avoid jeopardy and adverse modification.

- Is there additional fishing effort inside of SSL critical habitat?

Absent the statewater fishery, there is currently no directed pollock fishery inside AI SSLCH.

- Does the proposal provide trade-offs that reduce the total negative effects to SSL?
- Does the proposal open a substantial amount of critical habitat?

No.

The proposal only allows pollock fishing between 174 to 178 longitude inside that portion of state water that is not inside 3 miles from a haulout or 20 miles of a rookery. Given the bathymetry in that area, only a very small percent of the open area of state water would actually be subject to any pollock fishing. NMFS staff (Steve Lewis) could do a GIS analysis of the intersection of fishable depths, state water and SSL CH, which would probably show that less the 1% of AI SSL CH would be open to pollock fishing.

- Does proposal indirectly provide protection to additional sites?
- Does proposal indirectly affect nearby SSL sites?

There are SSL sites in the region. The affects were described in the NMFS EA and Biological Opinion on the 2007 EFP fishery.

- Does proposal affect important research site? (e.g. Chiswell)
- Does proposal offer additional measures to control fishing rate or effort?

Yes.

Fishing is limited to vessels 58' or less. There is also a limit on total removals (3000 tons) that is substantially less than the AI pollock ABC (19,000 tons). However, the statewater GHJ does not contain the sub-area limitation that was included in the 2007 EFP.

The BOF could further reduce the amount of the state water GHJ based on the 2007 survey of Kanaga Sound.

The preliminary results of the survey indicate roughly 7,956 tons of pollock biomass in Kanaga Sound. The draft stock assessment indicates total AI pollock biomass of 197,280 tons and an ABC of 28,160 tons which equates to an exploitation rate of about 14.27%.

The BOF could consider a GHJ for just Kanaga Sound based on a 14.27% exploitation rate applied to the 7,956 tons survey biomass for that block which would produce a local GHJ of about 1135 tons. This would be consistent with the Biological Opinion produced for the 2007 EFP fishery.

One further precautionary step would be to limit the statewater GHJ to 40% of the 1135 tons for the A season, *OR 454 MT.*

- Does the proposal reduce the no-fishing time between end of year (December) and first of year (January) fisheries at a critical time for SSL?

The proposal does not open the statewater pollock fishery until March 1st. It expands the winter closure.

- Does the proposal affect the number of fishing days required to harvest the quota?

No.

The AI pollock TAC is currently un-harvestable given the total closure of SSL CH. Allowing a small GHJ in a limited portion of statewater will not result in the TAC being attained.

2. Encourage development of a sound experimental design for monitoring.

NA

3. Minimize adverse social and economic impacts.

- Does the proposal provide economic benefits?

Yes.

Little, if any, AI pollock will be harvested under federal regulations until modifications are made to the total closure of SSL CH. Any pollock harvested in a statewater fishery provides economic benefit that would not otherwise be provided. These benefits would accrue to the participating harvesters, to the processing plant and to the community of Adak.

Beyond that direct value of a small amount of harvest from a statewater pollock fishery, this would be the 1st opportunity for 58' boats to test their equipment against AI pollock fishing conditions which differ substantially from what they are familiar with in the WGOA.

Because the sizes of AI pollock are substantially larger than what is typical in the Bering Sea the processing plant invested in specially designed processing machines last year to handle the larger sized pollock. This equipment did not perform as well as hoped and has been modified by the manufacturer. A small statewater fishery would provide an opportunity to further test and refine the equipment.

- What is the impact upon harvesting and/or processing efficiency?

Harvesters with small (<60') vessels would have an opportunity to catch pollock.

- Does the proposal have any effects on other fisheries?

No.

- Will the proposed action be further affected by recent or pending council actions?

No – except to the extent it provides a limited fishery that would be superceded when the new Biological Opinion is completed and SSL mitigation measures are restructured.

4. Minimize bycatch of PSC and other groundfish.

- Does the proposal potentially create bycatch issues in other SSL prey species?
- Does the proposal potentially create bycatch issues in PSC species?

No bycatch impacts are likely to occur. (see 2007 EFP EA/Biop)

5. Promote safety at sea.

- Does the proposal reduce or increase safety for the fleet?

State waters are much safer for small vessels than the area outside CH, 20 miles from SSL sites.

6. Minimize adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species in the BSAI and GOA

A state water pollock fishery in the AI is unlikely to impact any other endangered species. (see 2007 EFP EA/Biop)

Preliminary Report on 2007 AI EFP Survey, a Synopsis

NMFS is preparing an analysis of the 2007 AI EFP pollock survey to be presented to the Council in December. All of the information in this synopsis is preliminary.

The 1st leg of the survey began mid March with two vessels (the Muir Milach doing hydro-acoustic transects and the Intrepid Explorer doing verification hauls). The vessels spent just over a week. The area surveyed began at 173.00 degrees and ended at 179.00 degrees.

The Intrepid Explorer had to withdraw from the survey after the 1st leg of the survey. On the 2nd leg of the survey beginning in mid-April the Muir Milach did both hydro-acoustics and verification tows.

Between the two vessels, they devoted about 3 weeks of vessel time to the two legs of the survey.

The following table is summary of survey verification hauls.

VESSEL	DATE	OTC - kilograms	TYPE	LAT	LONG	Start Time	Block
Leg 1							
Intrepid Explorer	3/14/2007	510.2	verification	5207.6	17603.0	1630	D
Intrepid Explorer	3/15/2007	1.8	verification	5215.4	17507.1	1503	C
Intrepid Explorer	3/15/2007	768.9	verification	5214.5	17453.2	1854	B
Intrepid Explorer	3/15/2007	401.4	verification	5218.7	17444.4	2123	B
Intrepid Explorer	3/16/2007	854.8	verification	5226.8	17347.5	1339	A
Intrepid Explorer	3/16/2007	291.8	verification	5225.1	17343.1	1749	A
Intrepid Explorer	3/16/2007	332.1	verification	5217.6	17332.6	2127	A
Intrepid Explorer	3/17/2007	19.8	verification	5218.3	17449.7	915	B
Intrepid Explorer	3/17/2007	175.5	verification	5204.9	17615.3	2016	D
Intrepid Explorer	3/18/2007	350.9	verification	5158.1	17703.1	833	E
Intrepid Explorer	3/18/2007	213.6	verification	5151.5	17716.7	1224	E
Intrepid Explorer	3/19/2007	379.2	verification	5149.9	17724.2	124	E
Intrepid Explorer	3/19/2007	174.1	verification	5148.7	17732.3	929	E
Intrepid Explorer	3/19/2007	396.8	verification	5155.0	17736.7	2221	E
Intrepid Explorer	3/20/2007	11.1	verification	5154.9	17748.6	106	E
Intrepid Explorer	3/20/2007	44.9	verification	5139.2	17826.0	1407	F
Intrepid Explorer	3/20/2007	54.6	verification	5140.0	17832.3	1844	F
Leg 2							
Muir Milach	4/15/2007	336.85	verification	5153.1	17728.8	1212	E
Muir Milach	4/15/2007	358.06	verification	5151.4	17717.2	1844	E
Muir Milach	4/16/2007	1057.84	verification	5202.7	17619.8	1100	D
Muir Milach	4/17/2007	752.99	verification	5218.2	17446.4	345	B
Muir Milach	4/17/2007	1814.4	verification	5226.8	17347.6	2415	A

The cost of the survey was to be funded with "compensation" fishing by the survey vessels. However, with the loss of the Intrepid Explorer from the survey, it was necessary to recruit a third vessel for the compensation fishing. The maximum catch limit for the compensation fishing was 3000 tons of groundfish, with a maximum of 1000 tons to be harvested in any one degree block.

During the compensation fishing the Bristol Explorer had a generator failure which forced them to withdraw from the project. They were replaced by the Northwest Explorer.

The following table is a summary of the compensation hauls:

VESSEL	DATE	OTC - tons	TYPE	LAT	LONG	Start Time	Block
Bristol Explorer	3/16/2007	72.96	compensation	5219.0	17447.0	1	B
Bristol Explorer	3/16/2007	102.15	compensation	5216.0	17449.0	315	B
Bristol Explorer	3/18/2007	66.33	compensation	5213.0	17458.0	43	B
Bristol Explorer	3/18/2007	61.22	compensation	5219.0	17446.0	1658	B
Bristol Explorer	3/19/2007	112.24	compensation	5219.0	17445.0	12	B
Bristol Explorer	3/19/2007	107.14	compensation	5219.0	17446.0	432	B
Bristol Explorer	3/22/2007	102.58	compensation	5217.0	17448.0	1	B
Bristol Explorer	3/22/2007	97.92	compensation	5219.0	17445.0	303	B
Bristol Explorer	3/22/2007	116.57	compensation	5216.0	17451.0	700	B
Bristol Explorer	3/25/2007	9.44	compensation	5154.0	17733.0	131	E
Bristol Explorer	3/25/2007	0.94	compensation	5154.0	17734.0	543	E
Muir Milach	3/27/2007	28.53	compensation	5215.1	17451.8	600	B
Muir Milach	3/27/2007	33.28	compensation	5218.6	17456.3	800	B
Muir Milach	3/27/2007	47.55	compensation	5218.0	17446.8	1130	B
Northwest Explorer	4/5/2007	30.87	compensation	5159.0	17621.0	825	D
Northwest Explorer	4/6/2007	0.77	compensation	5216.0	17344.0	320	A
Northwest Explorer	4/6/2007	38.59	compensation	5217.0	17303.0	1055	A
Northwest Explorer	4/6/2007	84.89	compensation	5216.0	17311.0	1305	A
Northwest Explorer	4/6/2007	84.89	compensation	5216.0	17303.0	1555	A
Northwest Explorer	4/6/2007	69.46	compensation	5217.0	17318.0	1945	A

There were 20 commercial hauls resulting in an average haul size of over 50 tons per haul.

The following table presents a preliminary summary of species composition of all samples (including both survey verification hauls and targeted compensation fishing):

Verification Hauls Sample Weights	kilograms	percent
Total	15,163	100.00%
Pollock	10,549	69.57%
POP	4,301	28.37%
Other	312	2.06%

All the catch from the verification hauls (approximately 9.3 tons) was discarded. All of the catch from the compensation fishing was delivered to Adak.

The following table presents the fish ticket data for pollock delivered to Adak under the EFP:

AI EFP SURVEY COMPENSATION CATCH BY DELIVERY						
Date	Vessel	Fish Ticket #	Lbs Pollock	Lbs POP (including at sea discard)	Total Lbs	% POP
3/16/2007	Bristol Explorer	E07014811	349,226	36,799	386,025	10%
3/19/2007	Bristol Explorer	E07015063	729,371	35,471	764,842	5%
3/23/2007	Bristol Explorer	E07015476	656,152	42,867	699,019	6%
3/25/2007	Bristol Explorer	E07015671	22,899	0	22,899	0%
3/26/2007	Muir Milach	E07015782	105,239	3,361	108,600	3%
3/27/2007	Muir Milach	E07015992	203,408	37,695	241,103	16%
4/7/2007	N W Explorer	E07017001	512,335	167,792	680,127	25%

Compensation Catch Summary	
total tons pollock	1,170 tons
total tons (from OTC)	1,268 tons
Incidental (POP, etc.)	98 tons
average POP bycatch rate	8%

While the survey was completed successfully, the compensation fishery did not work out well for the participants. A variety of factors contributed to this outcome.

One of the major factors was a result of having to recruit additional vessels during the compensation fishery. The pre-season agreement was that the proceeds from the fishery were to be divided based on number of days a vessel participated in either the survey or the compensation fishery. Unfortunately this worked as a direct disincentive for the replacement vessel. The Northwest Explorer caught 20% of the compensation fish in during a single trip, almost all of which was caught during a little over 12 hours. However, given the other vessels had 40 days into the project, the Northwest Explorer received little benefit from continuing to fish and chose not to continue fishing.

NMFS's 9/17 letter to The Board of Fish states "EFP fishery participants were unable to find enough pollock to meet the 3000 mt limit." Though vessels did face a challenge avoiding POP, the pollock CPUE's encountered by the vessels in the compensation fishery were not the reason that the full 3000 tons were not harvested.

The problems of the economic disincentives built into the pooled compensation, were exacerbated by logistical problems working around the cod season and the loss of participating vessels. There were further problems related to dealing with POP bycatch in the processing plant and as well as problems with newly installed processing equipment designed to handle the larger average pollock that are encountered in the AI pollock fishery.

AGENDA B-8(f)
FEBRUARY 2008

December 2007 Council Meeting:

Alaska Board of Fisheries Request for an analysis of a proposal for a 450 mt pollock fishery in the Kanaga Sound area of the Aleutian Islands for 2008.

Motion: Given that formal consultation on fishery management measures is already occurring on a comprehensive level, and proposals are being evaluated under that process, the Council requests that NMFS evaluate this proposal and determine whether it has independent merit and can be implemented outside the ongoing process, or whether it should be included with all other proposals currently being evaluated.

Passed without objection.

Notes: The Council's intent is to ask for NMFS and NOAA GC to evaluate this proposal to determine if it should be integrated into the larger process of the ongoing SSL consultation or whether it could be looked at separately. If it has a *de minimus* impact on SSLs, and could be analyzed outside the larger ongoing SSL consultation process, then report back to the Council in February 2008.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

December 27, 2007

Mr. Chris Oliver, Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 W. 4th Avenue #306
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

Dear Mr. Oliver:


Thank you for your letter requesting our evaluation of a proposal by the State of Alaska (State) to manage a pollock fishery within the State waters of Kanaga Sound. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) requested an evaluation of the proposal to determine if it has independent merit and could be implemented outside the ongoing Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation process for the Alaska groundfish fisheries or if it should be included with proposals being evaluated by the Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee (SSLMC). We have reviewed the proposal and have enclosed a brief description of our concerns for Steller sea lions and their critical habitat.

Based on the concerns identified in the enclosure, the potential impacts from the proposed Kanaga Sound pollock fishery on Steller sea lions and their critical habitat are not *de minimus*. As requested by the Council, we will cease analysis of this proposal.

The SSLMC is scheduled to begin evaluation of proposed Steller sea lion protection measures revisions in January 2008. Proposal 35 is for a State-managed pollock fishery for 3,000 mt between 174° W longitude and 178° W longitude, which includes Kanaga Sound. Information will be provided to the committee to inform the analysis of Proposal 35, and this information also may be used to consider the proposed pollock fishery at Kanaga Sound.

We appreciate the State providing the Council and NMFS the opportunity to review the Kanaga Sound proposal. We look forward to continuing cooperation with the Council and the State in development of potential changes to the Steller sea lion protection measures for the groundfish fisheries.

Sincerely,

 for J/B
Dr. James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

Enclosure



Cc: Melvin Morris, Alaska BOF
Jim Marcotte, Alaska BOF
Eric Olson, NPFMC

Board of Fisheries Proposed Pollock Fishery in State Waters of Kanaga Sound

A BOF letter to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council requests review of the proposed fishery at an informal level (11/15/07). No formal consultation should be done.

Features of the Proposed Kanaga Sound Fishery:

1. GHL of 454 mt of pollock
2. Located in Kanaga Sound (No specific coordinates). NMFS assumes fishery would be in 0-3 nm waters on the north side of Kanaga Island.
3. Pollock harvest limited to A season beginning March 1, 2008
4. Limited to vessels < 58 ft LOA (probably 3 or less vessels)
5. No fishing within 3 nm of haulouts and within 20 nm of rookeries. NMFS assumes proposal uses the current description of sites so that Ship Rock is considered a haulout.

This brief analysis determines effects of the proposed fishery on Steller sea lions (SSL) and on their critical habitat (CH). Does it cause disturbance, increased risk of incidental takes or effects on CH that may impact foraging capabilities?

Pollock Stock (S. Barbeaux, 11/14/07 email)

Pollock stock assessment is Tier 5 with approximately 8,000 mt ABC (between 174 and 178 degrees W longitude). 454 mt of the 8,000 mt ABC is about 6 %, which is conservative assuming pollock is evenly distributed over the entire 174-178 area.

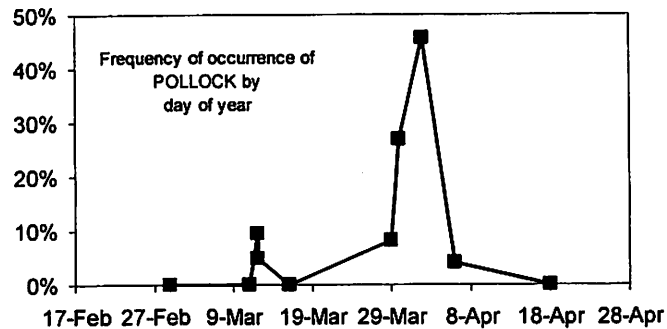
One concern is that the pollock harvest in Kanaga Sound may be on a 2000 year class with no replacement, and the pollock aggregation may be a small reservoir of what once was a larger population. The stock assessment does not take into account distinct aggregations. The fishery may impact a threshold number of spawners needed for good recruitment. No way to know if the pollock over the entire area (174-178) is composed of distinct aggregations or an interchangeable population with common pool of food and habitat.

Conclusion: We are not sure of the impact of the proposed fishery on the pollock stock. The quantity of fish if applied to the entire area does not seem like much, but if the pollock behaves in distinct aggregations, then this could result in localized depletion. Because of the concentrated location and timing of proposed fishing, it could be more of a concern for the pollock stock.

Diet in CAI (From L. Fritz NPBR proposal rationale 12/13/07)

1) Sea lion diet in the central Aleutians: Aggregated winter data suggests that pollock forms a small (frequency of occurrences generally less than 10%) part of the diet. However, pollock appear to aggregate for spawning in the Aleutians for relatively short periods of time. Sea lions are known to feed on fish that form ephemeral spawning aggregations. Pollock may be such a species for sea lions in the central Aleutians, rather than the mainstay of the diet as it is for sea lions in the eastern Aleutians. The table below shows the distribution of percent frequencies of occurrence of pollock in 361 scats sampled on 11 occasions from 6 sites within the central Aleutians between 172° and 180° W (Amukta to Amchitka Passes). These samples were collected between 29-February and 18-April in 1998-2005.

Pollock % Freq of Occ	Sampling Occasions
0	5
0.1% - 5%	2
5.1% - 10%	2
10.1% - 20%	0
20.1% - 50%	2
total	11



For 9 of the 11 occasions, the percent frequency of occurrence of pollock was 10% or less, but in 2 occasions, it ranged between 20-50%. These 2 sets of samples were collected in late-March early-April in 2002; one near Adak Island on Silak, and one on Amlia Island. The figure on the right above shows the temporal distribution (plotted by day of the year, lumping across years) of the same data, and suggests that pollock may be a relatively important, but a short-lived part of the diet of sea lions in the Central Aleutians in winter. It is these short periods of highly aggregated prey that sea lions may be dependent on, particularly in winter when prey species tend to be most dispersed.

Conclusion: Pollock may be an important part of diet during the time of the year when the proposed fishery would occur.

Effects on CH and Prey

This issue is likely the largest concern based on information below.

Spatial Concerns

SSL haulouts and rookeries in Kanaga Sound:

Three haulouts with 20 nm designated critical habitat (per 2000 BiOp) occur in this area. These are located in the eastern portion of the Central AI area for Steller sea lions (Yunaska to Tanaga Island). Kanaga Island is just east of Tanaga Island.

Kanaga/Ship Rock: Currently described as a haulout but proposed to be a rookery. Used year round.

Boborof: Haulout used mostly in winter.

Kanaga/N. Cape : Haulout used mostly in winter (March counts of 118 and 210 animals)

Ship rock and N. Cape are nonpup count trend sites.

All State waters in Kanaga Sound could potentially be closed if Ship Rock were treated as a rookery similar to other rookeries in western Alaska (See attached maps.). Two wedges of State water adjacent to Tanaga Island would remain open if Ship Rock is treated as a rookery.

For Ship Rock neither a 3 nm no transit under the ESA nor a 3 nm groundfish fishing closure under 50 CFR part 679 is established.

Non-pup Counts in June (Lowell Fritz, NMML, 10-15-07 memo)

Location	2004	2006	2007
Kanaga Ship Rock	229	No counts	331
Kanaga N. Cape	7	13	2
Boborof	49	21	No counts

These sites are located in the western edge of the eastern portion of the CAI which had a 20 percent drop in trend site counts between 2004 and 2007. Trend counts in the western portion of the CAI were last done in 2004 when there was a slight increase after steady, large declines since 1990.

Pup counts: Kanaga Ship Rock is now the 5th largest rookery of the 12 rookeries in the Central Aleutians (Yunaska through Kiska). There were 221 pups counted in 2005 on Ship Rock, and it produces more pups than 6 other locations in the Central Aleutians that are currently listed as rookeries.

Conclusions for SSL use of area: Ship Rock appears to be an important site for reproduction. Pregnant females are likely to be present in the area during the fishery. Because of increasing numbers of animals at Ship Rock, this may be an important site for the recovery of animals in the CAI and in the western portion of the CAI where counts have been declining

Proposed fishery would be prosecuted in an area that would potentially be closed if Ship Rock were described as a rookery. No protection would be provided to support reproduction as provided at other rookeries. This may have an impact on recovery.

Temporal Concerns

The proposed fishery is conducted during the A season, when pregnant females that may be nursing pups are likely to have high energy demands (later terms of pregnancy).

The fishery may disrupt and reduce pollock aggregations which could affect foraging efficiency. More energy would be required to obtain prey. The proposed fishery would overlap with the time period when pollock occurrence is more frequent in sea lion scat.

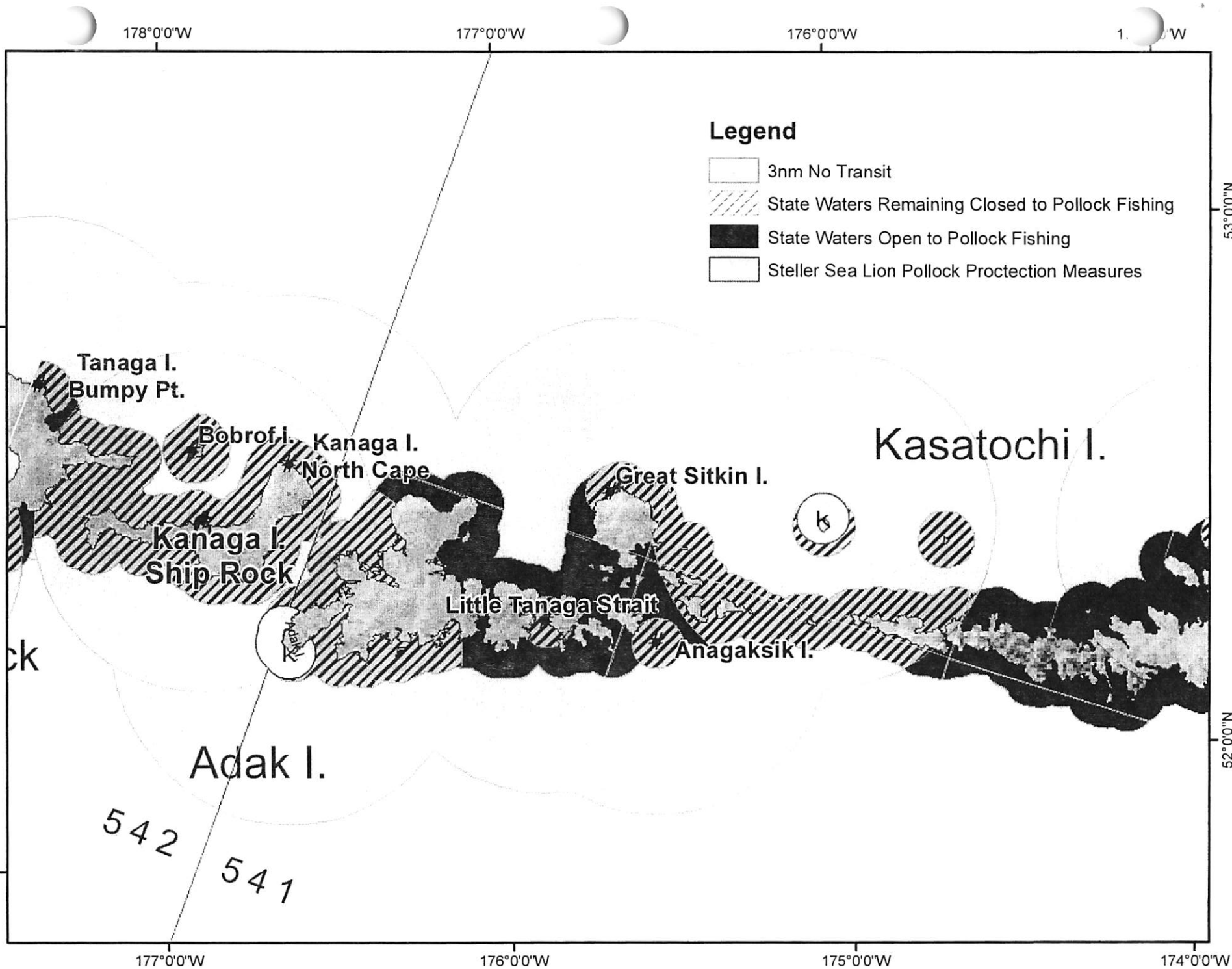
Conclusion: The timing of the fishery may be a problem because of the energy needs of the pregnant females and other animals using the pollock aggregations.

Disturbance:

The proposed fishery is likely to be of short duration and prosecuted by few small vessels. It would be conducted in nearshore waters which may have more animals present than 20 nm off shore of Steller sea lion sites. Because of the limited number of vessels and the short duration of the fishery, this is not likely to be a large concern.

Incidental Takes:

Steller sea lions may be encountered during fishing activities because of the nearshore location and vessel(s) would be present at a time when SSL are more dependent on pollock. With few small vessels participating over short time period, it is not likely that a take would occur.



178°0'0"W

177°0'0"W

176°0'0"W

175°0'0"W

Legend

- 3nm No Transit
- State Waters Remaining Closed to Pollock Fishing
- State Waters Open to Pollock Fishing
- Steller Sea Lion Pollock Protection Measures

Tanaga I.
Bumpy Pt.

Bobrof I. Kanaga I.
North Cape

Kanaga I.
Ship Rock

Little Tanaga Strait

Great Sitkin I.

Anagaksik I.

Kasatochi I.

Adak I.

542

541

177°0'0"W

176°0'0"W

175°0'0"W

174°0'0"W

53°0'0"N

52°0'0"N

H&G WORKGROUP

2104 SW 170TH STREET • BURIEN, WA 98166
PHONE (206) 660-0359 • FAX: (206) 243-7686

Mr. Eric Olson
Chairman, NPFMC
605 W. 4th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

January 31, 2008

RE: B-8- Protected Species Report (SSLMC proposals and committee progress report)

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The H&G Workgroup was formed in early 2006 to represent the head and gut (H&G) trawl sector on environmental issues affecting fisheries for flatfish, Atka mackerel and other demersal species targeted by the Amendment 80 sector. We are writing today to urge the Council to consider moving two SSLMC proposals (Number 8 and 16) forward on a faster track than the overall suite of proposals. While we do not want to delay the consideration of the other SSL proposals, we feel there are potential benefits of moving these proposals forward on an expedited schedule. This issue is discussed in the January 2008 minutes of the SSLMC and will likely be covered in SSLMC chairman Cotter's report to the Council in Seattle.

In January, the SSLMC reviewed the overall suite of proposals and agreed that the two above mentioned proposals are likely to be SSL neutral (Proposal 16) and most likely SSL-friendly (for Proposal 8) compared to the status quo. We feel that both proposals are also manageable for fast-tracked implementation because neither relaxes any of the status quo SSL protections and Proposal 8 may increase the degree of SSL protection over the status quo. Hence it may be possible for NMFS PR to consider these proposals under an informal Section 7 consultation.

The reason why we think these proposals should be considered as soon as possible is that neither is expected to have any negative effects on SSL and their approval is unlikely to need to be considered in light of the findings of a new biological opinion. Proposal 16 is a very small adjustment to the start date of the GOA pollock C season and its adoption would obviate the need for the industry to arrange a voluntary stand down each fall. Adoption of the proposal would ensure a later start date of the pollock fishery and therefore avoid concurrent pollock and salmon fishing. Proposal 8 seeks to allow the AI mackerel fishery participants to directly control mackerel catch rates in SSL Critical Habitat via inter-cooperative agreements that include all mackerel fishery participants who want to fish inside SSL critical habitat (HLA fishery). The current regulations require that the HLA fleet be divided into several "platoons" and these platoons then have

to fish as fast as they fished prior to Amendment 80 allocations or face the risk of forfeiting inside CH fishing opportunities. For instance if the fleet wanted to deploy fewer mackerel vessels or lower daily harvest rates, their inside CH fishing opportunities could be forfeited if NMFS in-season managers are unable to schedule a re-opening within the seasonal limitations or if there are scheduling conflicts with AI cod fishermen. With Amendment 80 in place, the tools exist to create a more rational and “lower and slower” mackerel fishery where catch can be stacked on a smaller number of vessels and fished at slower rates than have occurred historically during the competitive fishery. Thus the proposal provides for greater fishing efficiencies and lower daily harvest rates and reduced risk of competition with SSL foraging.

We thank the Council in advance for considering this request. Julie Bonney will be attending the Council meeting in Seattle in case you have any questions about the start date adjustment proposal for the GOA pollock C season. Likewise Lori Swanson and others with an interest in Proposal 8 will be available if you have questions.

Sincerely,



John R. Gauvin

RE: Qayassiq Walrus Commission Concerns to present to the Eski...

Subject: RE: Qayassiq Walrus Commission Concerns to present to the Eskimo Walrus Commission Meeting in Nome Jan 15,16, 2008

From: Helen Chythlook <hchythlook@bbna.com>

Date: Thu, 31 Jan 2008 15:48:06 -0900

To: 'Chris Oliver' <chris.oliver@noaa.gov>

CC: Jonathan Snyder <Jonathan_Snyder@fws.gov>

January 31, 2008

Hi Chris:

Frank Logusak, Sr., Chairman of the Qayassiq Walrus Commission (QWC) attended the recent Eskimo Walrus Commission up in Nome (Jan. 16,17, 2008). Frank is also the Eskimo Walrus Commission Representative for Bristol Bay. I believe Jonathan Snyder, Wildlife Biologist was in attendance and the person from NPFMC named Bill Wilson also attended the meeting. I don't know if Bill got to talk with Frank Logusak, Sr. while he was attending the Eskimo Walrus Commission meeting in Nome. I guess the Qayassiq Walrus Commission's main concern is that the trawl fishery in the Togiak Bay (Metervik/Kulukak Bay) is disturbing the Round Island walrus haulouts, walrus feeding habitat areas (clam beds), salmon smolt habitat areas, and other marine food sources ranging from Cape Newenham/Cape Peirce (walrus haulout and traditional hunting site), the Walrus Islands, main focus Round Island (main traditional Fall walrus hunting site and feeding/migrating area), Cape Seniavin (walrus haulout, feeding/migration area), Cape Constantine (walrus migrate to feed on clams) and migrate by Cape Constantine on their way to the Alaska Peninsula walrus haulout areas.

The Qayassiq Walrus Commission recommended the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to extend the current 3-mile boundary to ten miles out from Round Island. The elders and experienced walrus hunters, QWC Commissioners from nine QWC walrus hunting communities have expressed their concern that since trawl fishery opened in the area (Cape Newenham, Walrus Islands, Cape Constantine, Cape Seniavin all the way down to the North Aleutian Basin), the walrus are being disturbed from their existing haulout sites, and their feeding clam beds, and salmon smolts, as well as other marine mammals are being disturbed. That is what the QWC would like the NPFMC to help them with. That is why I send the copies of the Togiak Traditional Council and the Bristol Bay Native Association's Walrus TEK Map Documentation Project and brief walrus TEK summary to the NPFMC for their information.

I will be looking forward in hearing from you. On behalf of the Qayassiq Walrus Commission, I am willing to assist you in any way I can. I do travel a lot in my job as well. I will be in the office Jan. 31 (this afternoon) until the afternoon of February 5. Returning to BBNA offices Feb. 11th. Then I will be out of the BBNA offices Feb. 17-21, 2008, returning February 22nd (weather permitting).

Helen M. Chythlook
Marine Mammal Coordinator
Bristol Bay Native Association
P.O. Box 310
Dillingham, AK 99576
Direct Phone: 907-842-6240
Main Office Phone: 907-842-5257, ext. 340
Fax: 907-842-5932
Toll Free: 1-800-478-5257, ext. 340
Work e-mail: hchythlook@bbna.com

-----Original Message-----

From: Chris Oliver [<mailto:chris.oliver@noaa.gov>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 29, 2008 3:09 PM
To: Helen Chythlook
Cc: Bill Wilson; Jonathan Snyder

1/31/2008 4:27 PM




BRISTOL BAY NATIVE ASSOCIATION

*PO Box 310
Dillingham, Alaska 99576-0310
Tel: (907) 842-5257
Fax: (907) 842-5932*

Memorandum

To: North Pacific Fisheries Management Council

From:  Helen M. Chythlook, Marine Mammal Coordinator

Re: Qayassiq Walrus Commission Information and Attachments
to NPFMC letter dated December 13, 2007

Date: January 11, 2008

Enclosed is a Qayassiq Walrus Commission letter to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) dated December 13, 2007. Sorry for the delay in sending the letter out. We were waiting from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Marine Mammals Management Division staff to send an electronic copy of their walrus activities to be attached to your letter.

I am attaching an Overview of the Qayassiq Walrus Commission (QWC) for your information. I am attaching some Walrus TEK Map Documentations that were completed by the Bristol Bay Native Association Marine Mammal Program in collaboration with the Togiak Traditional Council in 2006. The maps show walrus migration and feeding routes. Local Alaska Native traditional knowledge is mentioned that the walrus and other marine mammals migrating routes are same as their feeding routes. They travel and follow their feeding habitat areas. The person who originally did the BBNA Walrus TEK Maps show some of Bristol Bay traditional walrus hunting sites, current walrus hunting sites, walrus haulout sites, migrating, and feeding sites. Some of these are slightly unaligned, but it is known that the walrus haulout and rookery sites are along the shorelines. Traditional walrus hunting sites are also along the shorelines, although some walrus have been sighted in bays and coves near the beach hunting areas.

Enclosed is the Walrus TEK Project, 'Subsistence Uses of Walrus in Bristol Bay' 2006 report for your information.

The Alaska Sea Life Center maps show harbor seal and spotted seals that were rehabilitated and released August 16, 2007 near Hagemeister Island and Jet a harbor seal released from the Naknek area September 20, 2007. These examples show the seals migration and feeding areas and updated tracking information can be accessed through the Alaska SeaLife Center's web page: alaskasealife.org.

Enclosed is the USFWS and USGS map tracking walrus tagged in Cape Senivian for your information. Further literature and information on walrus research projects can be accessed by contacting Jonathan Snyder, Wildlife Biologist for the USFWS Marine Mammals Management at (907)-786-3819.

Below is a list of walrus related literature references for your information:

Chythlook, Helen, "Final Report on: Walrus Traditional Ecological Knowledge Regarding Walrus Project," Dillingham, Alaska, 2006. Funded by the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund.

Fall, James A., and M.B. Chythlook, The Round Island Walrus Hunt: Reviving a Cultural Tradition. Cultural Survival Quarterly 22(3):59-62. Cultural Survival, Inc. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1998.

Jay, Chadwick V., S.D. Farley, and G.W. Garner, Summer Diving Behavior of Male Walruses in Bristol Bay, Alaska. Marine Mammal Science, 17(3);617-632 (July 2001).

Jay, Chadwick V., and S. Hills, Movements of Walruses Radio-tagged in Bristol Bay, Alaska. Arctic, Vol. 58, No. 2 (June 2005), p. 192-202.



BRISTOL BAY NATIVE ASSOCIATION

PO Box 310

Dillingham, Alaska 99576-0310

Tel: (907) 842-5257

Fax: (907) 842-5932

December 13, 2007

North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
605 West 4th, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Dear Sir or Madam:

At the December 13, 2007, Qayassiq Walrus Commission (QWC) Post Hunt Meeting, the QWC Commissioners would like to request the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council to support the Qayassiq Walrus Commission's concern that walrus haulout and feeding habitat areas are being disturbed by increase in the trawl fleet fishery. The Qayassiq Walrus Commission's main concern is their Yup'ik Eskimo traditional walrus hunting site in Round Island is being affected by the trawl fleet noise disturbing the walrus to haulout elsewhere. The noise of the trawl fleet fishery is affecting our traditional walrus hunt at Qayassiq. Also, the increase of trawl fishing for yellowfin sole fish is disturbing the walrus feeding habitats which is mainly the clam beds in the Walrus State Game Sanctuary area, including Togiak Bay, Kulukak Bay, from Cape Newenham down to the North Aleutian Basin area. The trawl fishery fleets are also catching by catch including king salmon, red salmon, and halibut which migrate into ocean waters to feed and return back to the Bristol Bay and Togiak waters. The trawl fisheries are also disturbing the salmon habitat areas and cleaning deep seabeds which walrus and the Bristol Bay residents harvest as their food resources. These fish species, along with our marine mammals are important year-round traditional Native food resources for the Bristol Bay residents extending from Cape Newenham down to the North Aleutian Basin.

The QWC Commission would like to work with NPFMC, the Eskimo Walrus Commission, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Bering Sea Fisherman's Association, and the Bristol Bay Economic Development Council in developing a coastal zone boundary, or a no-trawl fishery exclusion zone so the walrus, fish, and other marine mammals we eat will not become depleted.

North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
December 13, 2007
Page Two

We will be looking forward in hearing from you and working with you in resolving this issue.

Sincerely,

QAYASSIQ WALRUS COMMISSION



Frank Logusak, Sr.,
Chairman

cc: Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Bering Sea Fishermen's Association
Eskimo Walrus Commission
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Alaska Department of Fish & Game

Enclosure: Walrus map documentation (BBNA & Togiak Traditional Council)
USFWS & USGS walrus tracking maps
"Subsistence Uses of Walrus in Bristol Bay" Walrus TEK Project
Alaska Sea Life Center (tracking maps-harbor seals and spotted
seal maps)
ADF&G Map showing Walrus Islands

Qayassiq Walrus Commission-Background, History and Overview

Background and History

Members of the Alaska Native tribes in Bristol Bay, Alaska continue to practice a traditional way of life passed down from many past generations. The traditional walrus hunt at Round Island has customarily occurred in the early Spring and Fall seasons. Round Island, since time immemorial, has been a traditional hunting and camping area for walrus harvesting.

In 1960, the State of Alaska designated the cluster of islands outside of Togiak as a state game sanctuary. Included in the Walrus Islands Game Sanctuary was Round Island (or "Qayassiq" in Yupik). For over 30 years, Alaska Natives were unable to hunt walrus from this favored location. In the early 1990's hunters from Togiak and other Bristol Bay area villages successfully petitioned the Board of Game to reinstate subsistence access to hunt walrus on Round Island. After a long, four-year crusade Togiak and other Bristol Bay villages were successful in reinstating access to the Round Island traditional hunting grounds.

As a result, the Qayassiq Walrus Commission (QWC) was formed after the Board of Game gave permission for a limited subsistence walrus hunt on Round Island. The Board of Game set the harvest season and harvest limits, but all other regulations were developed through the cooperative agreement by the four signatories. The Eskimo Walrus Commission, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the QWC completed and signed a cooperative agreement in September 1995. The agreement outlines the hunt regulations and designates the responsibilities of each party involved.

In March 1995 the Qayassiq Walrus Commission (QWC) formed to oversee walrus harvest activities for the Bristol Bay area. The Qayassiq Walrus Commission has the authority to add new villages, determine walrus harvest allocation for each village and monitor harvest activities, and other factors related to the hunt. Originally, the QWC included seven area villages who were invited to co-manage the annual walrus hunt. Since that time, the membership has increased to nine villages. Currently, the QWC village representatives include nine villages of Togiak, Twin Hills, Manokotak, Aleknagik, Dillingham, Clarks Point, Ekuk, Ekwok, and New Stuyahok.

The tribal councils select a QWC Commissioner and an Alternate Commissioner who represents the QWC villages at a Fall QWC Pre-Hunt Meeting, and a QWC Post Hunt Meeting. At the meetings, the Commissioners are granted one vote in issues up for debate or election. The QWC Hunt Captains also participate at the QWC Commissioners meetings.

Current Harvest Guidelines:

After two successful harvest seasons, the Round Island walrus hunters proposed a few changes to the original cooperative agreement. In 1997, the QWC proposed to change the harvest season from October 31 to September 20 – October 20 and to increase the walrus harvest limit. The original harvest season increased the risk of personal injury and loss to the hunters, since Bristol Bay weather is extremely unpredictable during the Fall and early Winter season. Fierce storms often threaten the hunting parties and prevent villages from approaching Round Island, because in the past, skiffs, outboard and other hunting equipment have been lost by the storms.

The current QWC Round Island walrus hunting harvest season opens on September 10 and closes on October 20. During the harvest season, **ADF&F Round Island Access Permits** and **QWC Hunt Permits** are issued to allow hunting parties from member villages access to Round Island beaches for the specific activity of walrus hunting. During the rest of the year, visitors to Round Island are prohibited beach access. **Both permits are required and must be issued before departure to Round Island.**

The QWC Commissioners know that the QWC villages have traditionally hunted walrus each year when they are able to, and sometimes, there is the flexibility that walrus will not always be hunted each year due to unforeseeable circumstances. Nevertheless, the Native tradition of walrus hunting will continue on for many generations at Round Island. Generally, the permits are issued at the QWC Pre-Hunt Meeting, but may be completed any time before travelling to Round Island. Jim Woolington (Dillingham ADF&G) issues the Round Island Access Permits and BBNA Natural Resources Department issues the QWC Hunt Permits. The QWC hunt captains are required to have both permits on-hand while hunting on Round Island.

A maximum of 20 walrus may be taken **including** any walrus “struck and lost.” This means that any struck and lost will be subtracted from the total number allotted for the villages. During the QWC Pre-Hunt Meeting, the QWC Commissioners and hunters decide the allocation for each village.

In the 2001 QWC Pre-Hunt Meeting, the Qayassiq Walrus Commissioners drafted a proposal to the QWC Cooperators and the Board of Game for an earlier walrus hunt in the Eastside (Nushagak drainage villages) from September 10 –October 31 each year, but the Togiak and Twin Hills hunting dates would be unchanged.

The extreme weather conditions have prevented the Nushagak area villages and Togiak and Twin Hills from participating in the Round Island walrus hunt. BBNA presented the draft proposal to the QWC Cooperators for a Round Island walrus hunt extension in the event that bad weather prevents QWC communities from harvesting walrus.

At the March 2003 Board of Game meetings, the Board adopted an amended proposal revising the hunting period for walrus hunting on Round Island in the Walrus Islands State Game Sanctuary. The newly adopted hunting period for hunting begins September

10th and ends October 20th every year. Since the walrus hunt in the sanctuary is governed by a cooperative agreement and the changes adopted by the Board of Game required the cooperators to modify the Round Island Cooperative Agreement. In April 22, 2003, the four signatories to the cooperative agreement began updating this document. A final cooperative agreement was signed with the hunt date changes by September 3, 2003. Every time any walrus hunt issues need to be taken care of and proposals have to be drafted for the QWC Cooperators, they have to go through this process. The Qayassiq Walrus Commissioners are the primary one's responsible for drafting any proposals to change the annual Qayassiq (Round Island) subsistence walrus hunt date changes or take action on any walrus related issues. If the issue will make a significant change to the QWC Round Island Cooperative Agreement, then the four Cooperators consisting of QWC, EWC, ADF&G, and USFWS met and come to a consensus prior to signing off on the agreement amendments.

Harvest Monitoring

In 1992, with the cooperation of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, ADF&G, and BBNA, the QWC selected an Alaska Native to monitor the harvest for each village. The Monitor traveled to Round Island with each hunting party, documented the events, measured the length and girth of the walrus, tagged ivory tusks and prepared a summary report of the harvest season. For the past several years, BBNA upon approval of the QWC Commissioners have successfully employed a Round Island Harvest Monitor to monitor the walrus hunt.

From 2003 to 2005, the QWC approved to have Mary Cody, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service of Anchorage, and Helen Chythlook, QWC Executive Director and BBNA Staff to monitor the annual Qayassiq (Round Island) subsistence walrus hunt from September 7th to 22st. After September 22nd until October 20th, the QWC Commissioners authorized BBNA Natural Resources Department staff to hire Round Island Monitor's as needed for the walrus hunts. The Togiak and Twin Hills hunt crew shared a Round Island Harvest Monitor to monitor their walrus hunts. Generally, if no QWC Hunt Monitor is hired, the QWC Hunt Captain can be designated as the monitor during the Round Island hunt.

The staff conduct daily walrus counts, record weather conditions, conduct seabird counts, and if time allows count the Steller sea lions at Eastcape side of the Island. Having a monitor on site has been helpful to the QWC Hunt Captains and crew. They call Round Island via VHF radio, the monitor lets the hunt captains know the number of walrus currently on Main Beach of Round Island, the weather conditions (wind direction, kilometers, wave conditions, visibility conditions, etc), and answer any walrus population and monitor related questions. During the hunt, the monitor(s) are picked up at Boat Cove by the hunt captain/crew via outboat motor skiffs to the Main Beach designated walrus hunting site. The monitors collect data as mentioned earlier. A hunt monitor report is prepared prior to the Qayassiq Walrus Commission's Post Hunt meeting. The QWC Commissioners and QWC Hunt Captains attend the meetings and give a hunt report from their community and present any concerns to the Commission.

The QWC is proud to take an active role in harvest monitoring and hope to continue this project in the future years. The progress and some struggles of recent years shows Alaska Natives can co-manage and successfully manage their own Natural Resources. This, itself is a testament to all the hard work and dedication of the original walrus hunters who petitioned for the Round Island harvest. We as Alaska Natives are moving forward and will continue to do so with our Ancestors guiding us along the way of positive changes around our world.

After eleven successful harvest seasons, the QWC is proud to demonstrate the positive result of cooperation between the USFWS, the ADF&G, and the Eskimo Walrus Commission. Now that the walrus hunt has been established, the villages look forward to hunting walrus where their ancestors hunted, and sharing fresh walrus every Fall. The QWC also strives to assume greater responsibility for each harvest.



BRISTOL BAY NATIVE ASSOCIATION

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Overview: Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council (BBMMC)

BBMMC History:

In 1995 the 31-member tribes of the Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA) formed the Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council (BBMMC). The membership of BBMMC consists of a representative selected by each Tribal/Village Council. A 7-member Executive Council conducts the business for the BBMMC members. The Council consists of one member from each of the 5 sub-regions of Bristol Bay and two at-large members, all of which are selected by a vote of villages within each sub-region. The Bristol Bay Subregions of the BBMMC consist of the following: Nushagak Subregion includes: Aleknagik, Clarks Point, Dillingham, Ekwok, Ekuk, Koliganek, New Stuyahok, and Portage Creek. Togiak Bay Subregion includes: Manokotak, Togiak, and Twin Hills. The Kvichak Bay/Peninsula Subregion includes: Egegik, King Salmon, Naknek, Pilot Point, Port Heiden, South Naknek, and Ugashik. The Iliamna Lake Subregion includes: Igiugig, Iliamna, Kokhanok, Levelock, Newhalen, Nondalton, and Pedro Bay. The Chigniks Subregion includes: Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Lake, Ivanof Bay, and Perryville. The general membership and the Council are an accurate representation of the people of each sub-region; as a result they can come together and discuss the marine mammal concerns of each sub-region and look for ways to resolve those concerns.

The purpose of the BBMMC is to promote the conservation of marine mammal populations in the Bristol Bay marine ecosystem for subsistence use by tribal members. The Bristol Bay marine ecosystem represents an area of rich and varied biodiversity. To properly address current and future marine mammal issues in the Bristol Bay area, the BBMMC provides council members with a forum to express their needs and draw attention to their specific concerns. The BBMMC also provides state and federal agencies with the means to effectively communicate with the many villages in the BBNA region.

The BBMMC's Marine Mammal Program receives its funding from the National Marine Fisheries Service on an annual basis to monitor and manage the marine mammals in the Bristol Bay region. Marine Mammals are an integral part of the culture and economy in Native communities and have been for centuries. Bristol Bay houses a variety of marine mammals: Pacific walrus, harbor seal, beluga whale, Northern sea otter, Steller sea lions, spotted seal, bearded seal, and ringed seal. Native hunters have never looked to just one species for sustenance, they have depended on everything the ecosystem could provide them.

While numerous marine mammal organizations throughout the state are specific to one species,

the BBMMC was established to take an ecosystem approach to marine mammal issues. Rather than concentrating on one species -- its population and distribution, habitat, diet, use by humans, and other factors -- the BBMMC considers all marine mammal species in Bristol Bay. Its goal is to conserve marine mammal species and to promote healthy stocks to continue the traditional subsistence harvest of resources by tribal members. By considering all species as pieces of a bigger picture, BBMMC will be able to better inform tribal members of marine mammals and the overall health of the Bristol Bay ecosystem.

Projects-Examples of Completed Projects

The BBMMC would not only like to inform the tribal councils of marine mammal issues but involve them in establishing research priorities and carrying out the research as well. At each Fall meeting, the BBMMC establishes research priorities. Based upon these, research projects are developed and conducted. In order for BBMMC's research projects to be successfully implemented, and for cost effectiveness, BBMMC conducts research projects cooperatively and establishes a project team composed of experienced scientists and local village experts. Prior to the field season, the project team meet to review a draft project study plan, and delegate tasks or responsibilities that will be completed by each member. Some of the tasks or responsibilities include donations of staff time, equipment, and other projected-related items. The discussions focus on methods to successfully implement a project. For example, since 2002, BBMMC has cooperatively conducted a pilot project of tagging 5 beluga whales in the Kvichak River to study their movements. The project team consisted of the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee (ABWC), Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA), Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council (BBMMC), the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), and members of the Village of Levelock on the Kvichak River. By working together, the project was successfully completed. In 2004, and 2005, the focus of the project shifted to DNA collection and analysis. In 2004, skin was collected from 30 belugas, and in 2005, 13 skin biopsies were collected. In 2006, the beluga biopsy research project was continued in the Kvichak River. The research team successfully collected 50 beluga biopsies. The NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center will analyze with other Bristol Bay beluga skin samples collected by the hunters.

One of the Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council's (BBMMC) 2006 research project priorities is to expand their beluga tagging into the Nushagak area. Since 2002, the BBMMC, the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee (ABWC), Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Park Service (NPS) have cooperatively worked on a beluga satellite tagging project in the Kvichak River for two years. From 2004 to 2006, the BBMMC has worked with beluga project cooperators in conducting beluga biopsies (collecting beluga skin samples) in the Kvichak River for genetic marking recapture studies. This means, the skin samples are sent to the National Marine Mammal Laboratory who analyzes the samples and through genetics, they can estimate the population of beluga whales in the area they were sampled, as well as determine what beluga stock they came from, for example, Bristol Bay beluga stock. In 2007, the beluga biopsy project will continue at field site in Levelock and it will

be expanded to the Naknek River. Approximately 50 to 100 beluga biopsy samples are anticipated to be collected by the research field crew.

In the spring of 2006, BBMMC staff was contacted by the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee, BBMMC and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game that we will be conducting a beluga satellite tagging project in the Nushagak area and up to five beluga whales would be tagged to study their winter movements. The field site was in Dillingham. Two boat operators, who are beluga hunters from Aleknagik provided local expertise to the biologists and field crew. The beluga capturing sites ranged from the mouth of Wood River, Black Sleugh to the Snake River area in the Nushagak Bay. The Beluga Satellite Tagging was from September 5 to September 9, 2006. A report will be presented to the Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council at their November 2007 meeting. The Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council graciously thanks the Project cooperators for dedicating their time and research equipment in successfully completing the research projects. This is a prime co-management example of Native organizations and agencies cooperatively working together to get something done for the people of Bristol Bay.

Besides research projects, in 2003 the BBMMC Council developed the Bristol Bay Beluga Whale Management Plan. The Plan includes: goals, conservation measures, subsistence harvest guidelines, use of beluga whales, reporting and monitoring, education, information, and public involvement, research, and enforcement. Copies of the Plan were circulated to all 32 tribal villages for review, comment, and recommendations. The Plan is reviewed periodically by the BBMMC Council for amendments as needed.

Other Marine Mammal Program Projects

Steller Sea Lion TEK & Rookery Project

The Steller Sea Lion Research Initiative-Native Village of Perryville Project was successfully completed in 2004. This project was encouraged by the Native Village of Perryville due to the decline in Steller sea lions in their area and on the Alaska Peninsula region in general. Some of the Alaska Peninsula communities have not harvested Steller sea lions for subsistence use for more than ten years. Phase One of this Project was gathering important traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) information on subsistence uses of Steller sea lions from elders and subsistence users in the Perryville community.

Phase Two of the project was conducting a population assessment using accepted small boat survey techniques and the identification of Steller sea lion haulouts and rookeries. The underlying reasons for conducting this project were to document traditional knowledge regarding subsistence uses of Steller sea lions, to assess the Steller sea lion population in the area, to identify haulouts and rookeries, and to increase the local research capacity of Perryville residents through training and use of modern research techniques.

On April 22, 2004, the Bristol Bay Native Association Natural Resource Department staff met with the Native Village of Perryville Council to review the final Project Report to NMFS.

The Native Village of Perryville Council made comments and recommendations. The Council was concerned during the 2003 Steller sea lion population survey, no pups were counted at the sites. The Council recommended continuous population survey for three to five years to get an accurate population count with pups at the Steller sea lion rookery haulouts. A resolution from the Native Village of Perryville Council passed in December 2004 is attached and a program summary of the proposed continuation of the Native Village of Perryville's Steller Sea Lion Population Identification Project. BBNA will continue seeking additional funds to continue this Project as it is a community request from the Alaska Peninsula area. There needs to be up to date research data from the Bristol Bay region and the Alaska Peninsula region. We are willing to participate as Project Cooperators with any state or federal agencies, and non-profit organizations willing to provide funds or technical support in continuing this project on a long term basis.

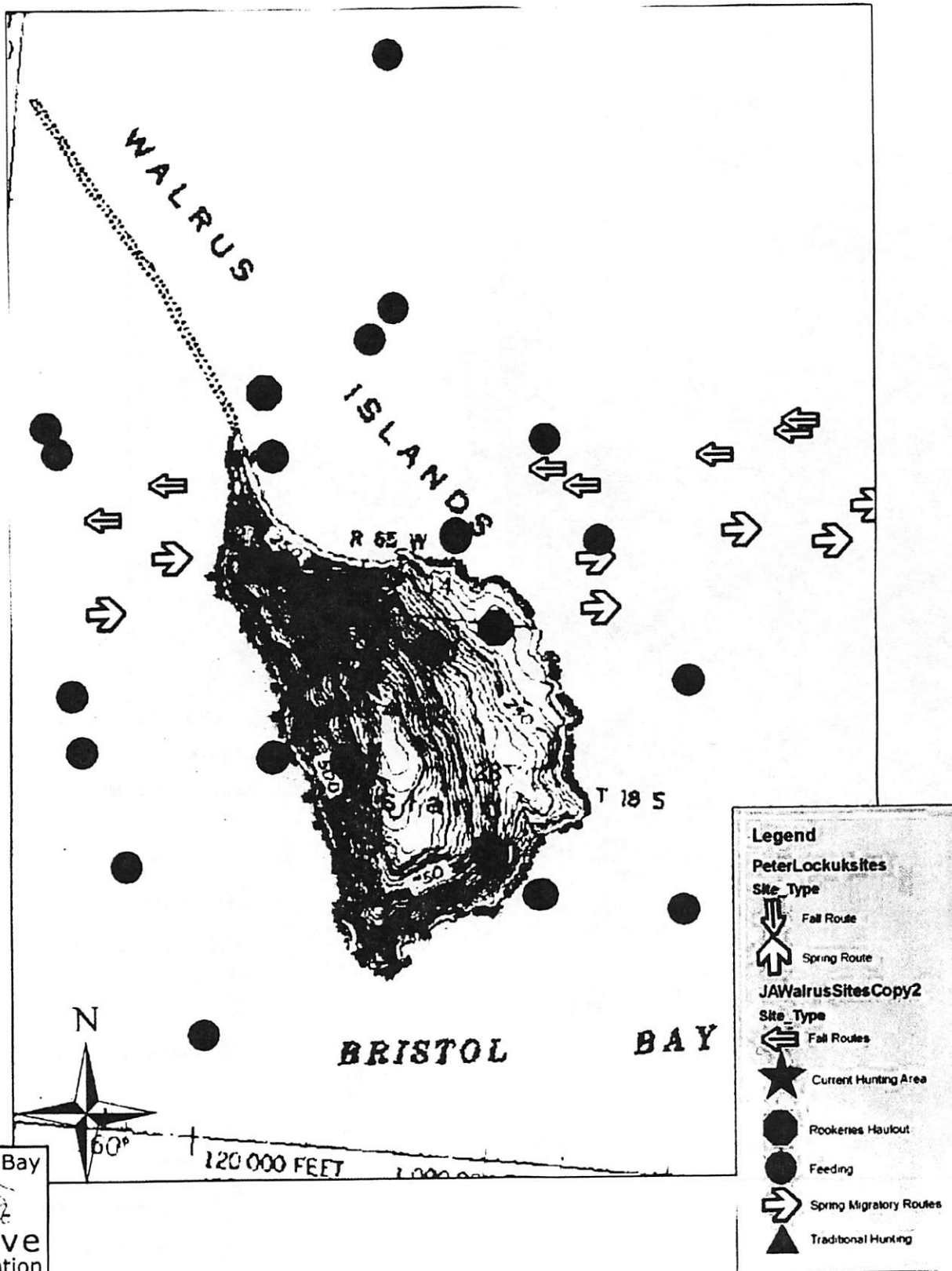
Walrus TEK Project

The Walrus TEK Project was recently conducted in Togiak, Alaska and it's intent was to gather important traditional ecological knowlege on subsistence uses of walrus in Bristol Bay. Two local research assistants from Togiak interviewed 15 elders and experienced walrus hunters on walrus TEK information, and map documentation by hunters was completed. The topics covered in the walrus traditional ecological knowledge project included: walrus population trends from ten years back to the present as observed from experienced traditional walrus elders and hunters; subsistence activities involving walrus, which included identification of historical traditional walrus subsistence sites; identification of current walrus subsistence sites; traditional methods of walrus hunting used by the Togiak Native ancestors and present methods used; weather patterns; identification of walrus migrating routes; identification of walrus haul-out sites; identification of walrus feeding areas; traditional subsistence uses of walrus meat, walrus skin, and preservation methods; walrus ivory and skin uses; traditional walrus conservation uses in ensuring the continuity of walrus hunting, and old time walrus hunting stories. BBNA completed the final report to the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund. We would like to seek additional funding to expand on this Project.

The BBMMC and the BBNA Marine Mammal Program works with all of the BBNA Tribally enrolled communities in other marine mammal related issues and work cooperatively with other state and federal agencies on research projects. If you have any questions, or have any marine mammel related questions, call us at (907)-842-5257, extension 340, or use our toll free number at 1-800-478-5257, extension 340. BBNA also has a web page of the Natural Resource Department Program at www.bbna.com.

"Subsistence Use of Walrus in Bristol Bay" Map Documentation 2006

WALRUS TEK Project in collaboration with
Togiak Traditional Council and the Bristol Bay Native Association

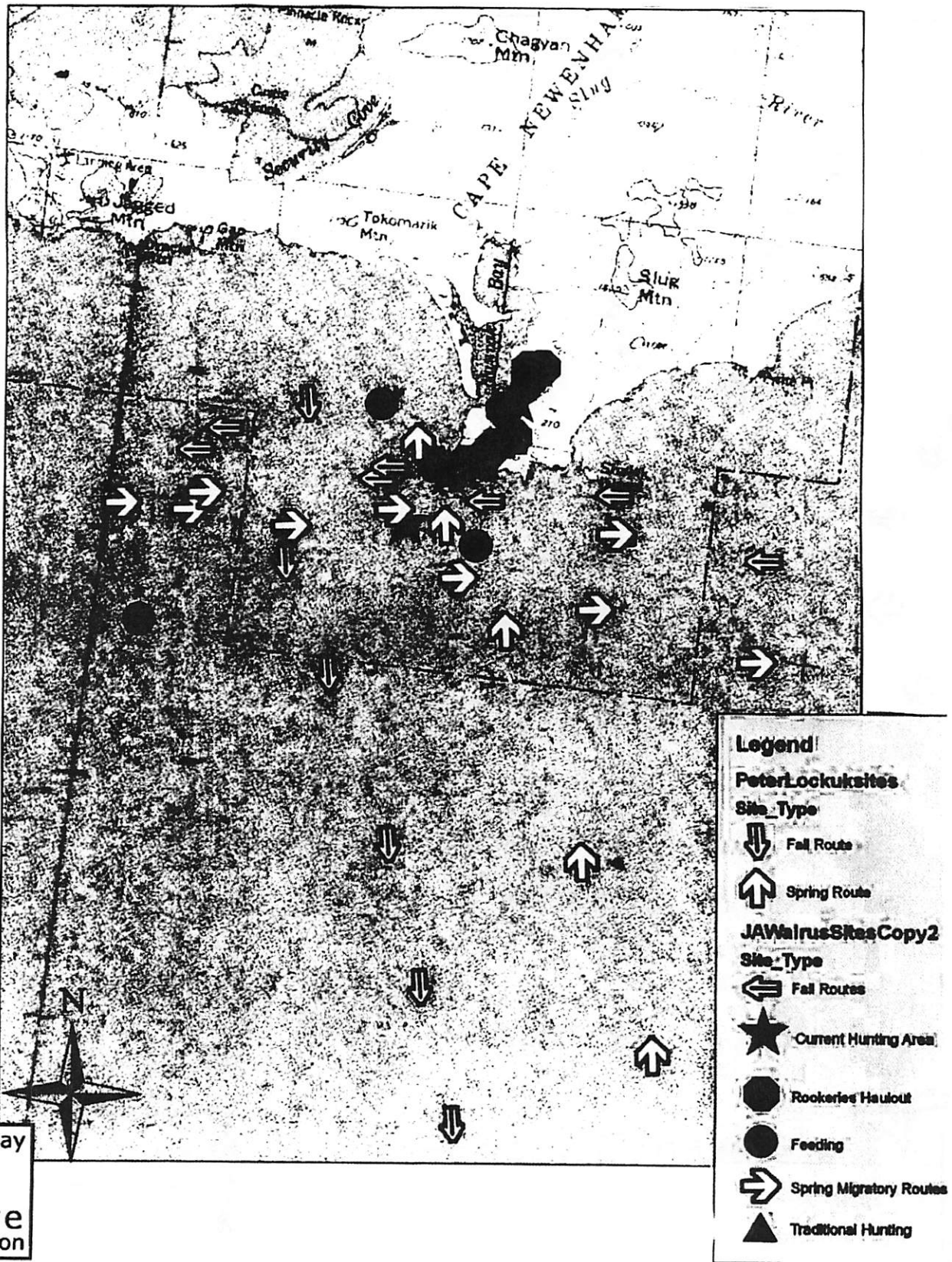


Bristol Bay
Native
Association

Map Source: "Subsistence Use of Walrus in Bristol Bay" 2006- Walrus TEK Project BBNA and Togiak Traditional Council report submitted to the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund.

“Subsistence Use of Walrus in Bristol Bay” Map Documentation 2006

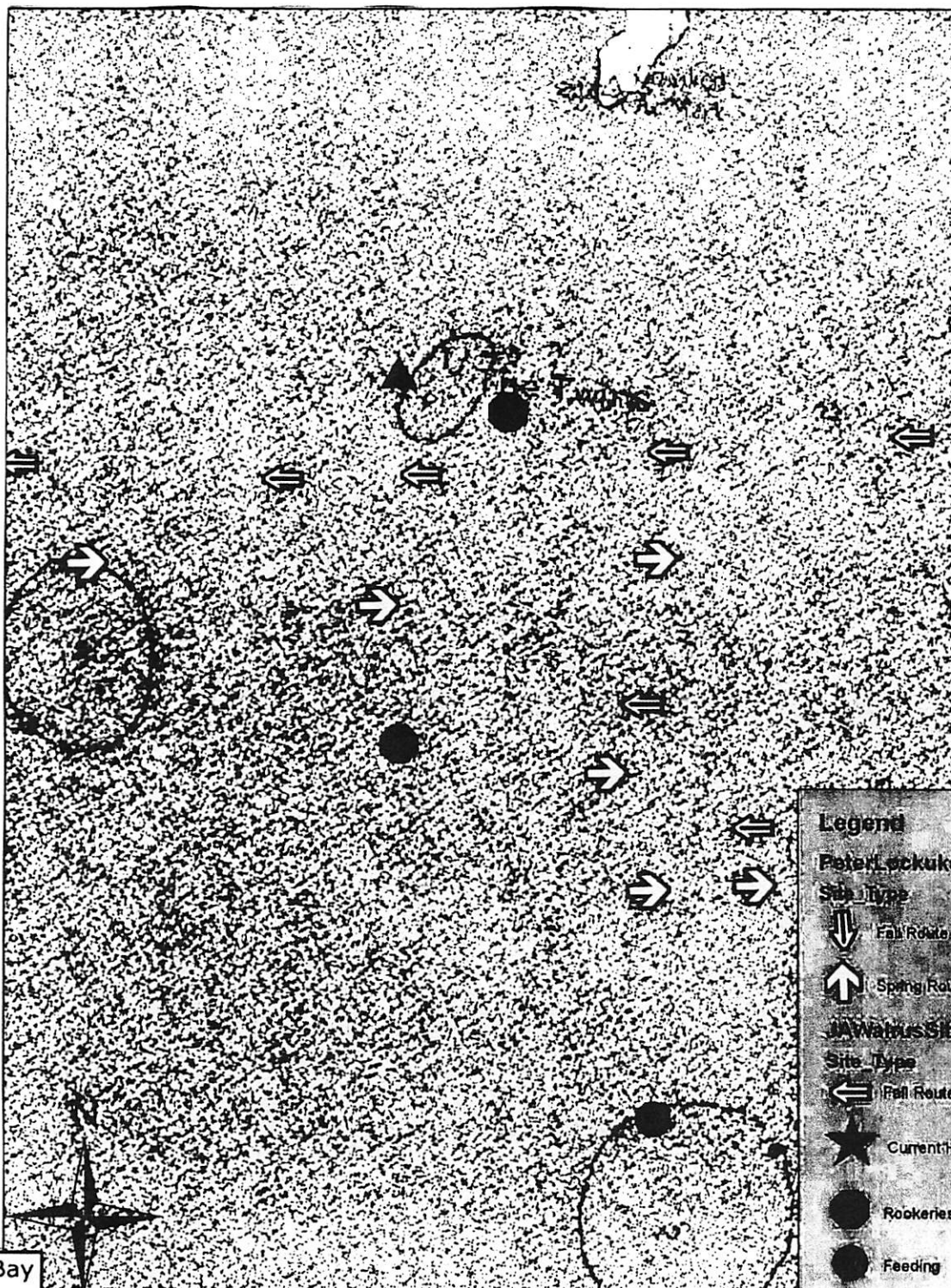
WALRUS TEK Project in collaboration with
Togiak Traditional Council and the Bristol Bay Native Association



Map Source: “Subsistence Use of Walrus in Bristol Bay” 2006- Walrus TEK Project BBNA and Togiak Traditional Council report submitted to the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund.

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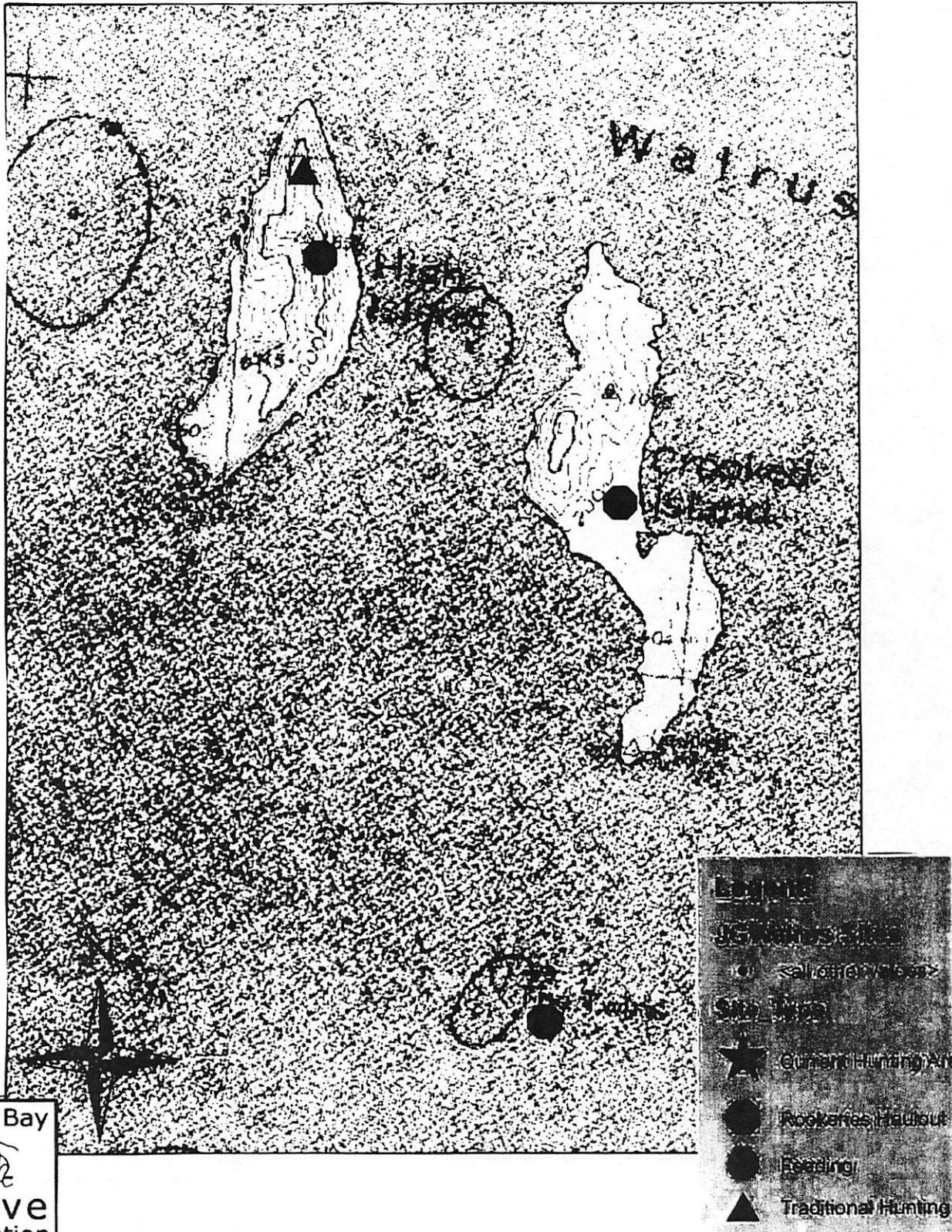
WALRUS TEK Project in collaboration with
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Map Source: “Subsistence Use of Walrus in Bristol Bay” 2006- Walrus TEK Project BBNA and Togiak Traditional Council report submitted to the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund.

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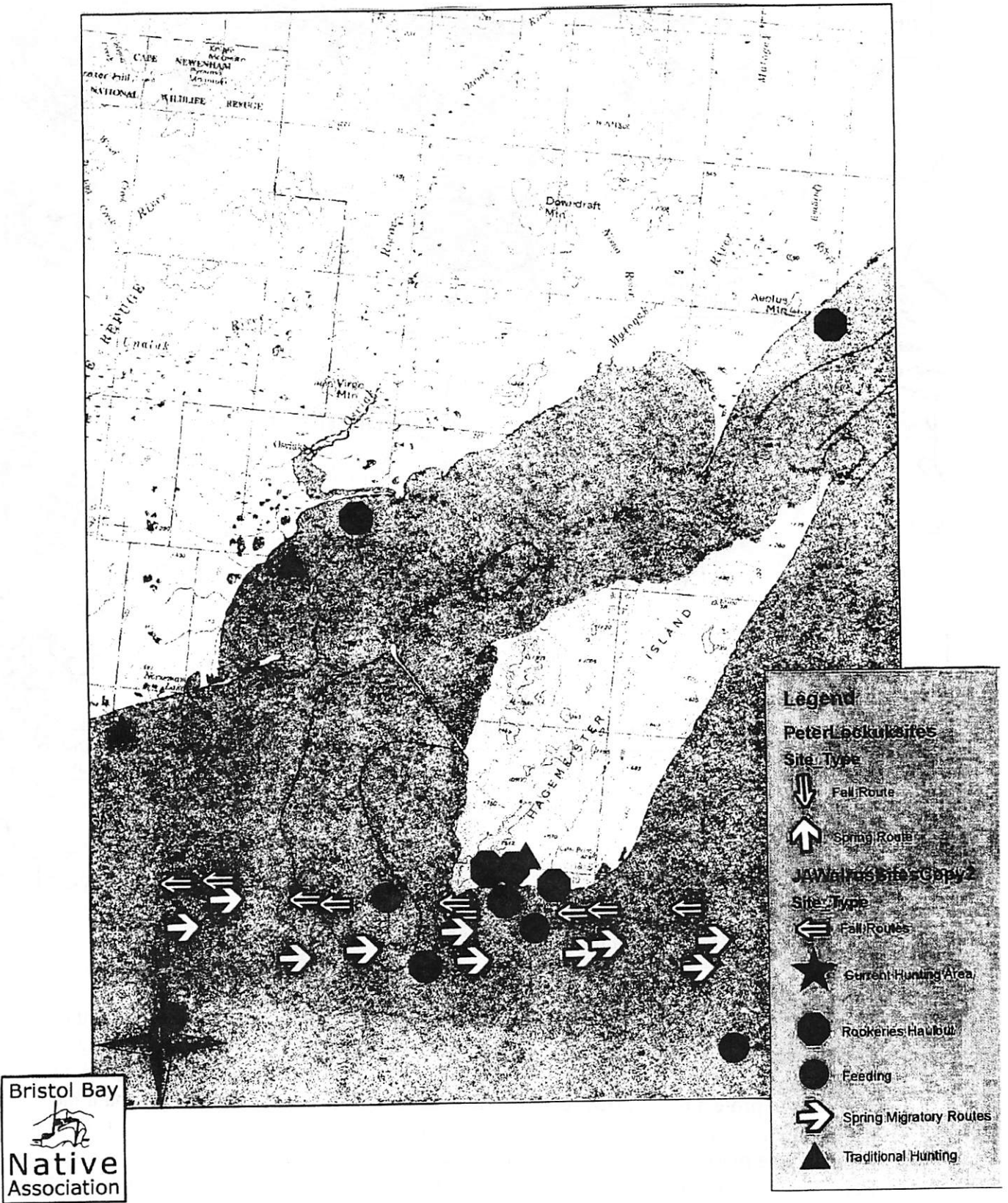
WALRUS TEK Project in collaboration with
Togiak Traditional Council and the Bristol Bay Native Association



Map Source: “Subsistence Use of Walrus in Bristol Bay” 2006- Walrus TEK Project BBNA and Togiak Traditional Council report submitted to the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund.

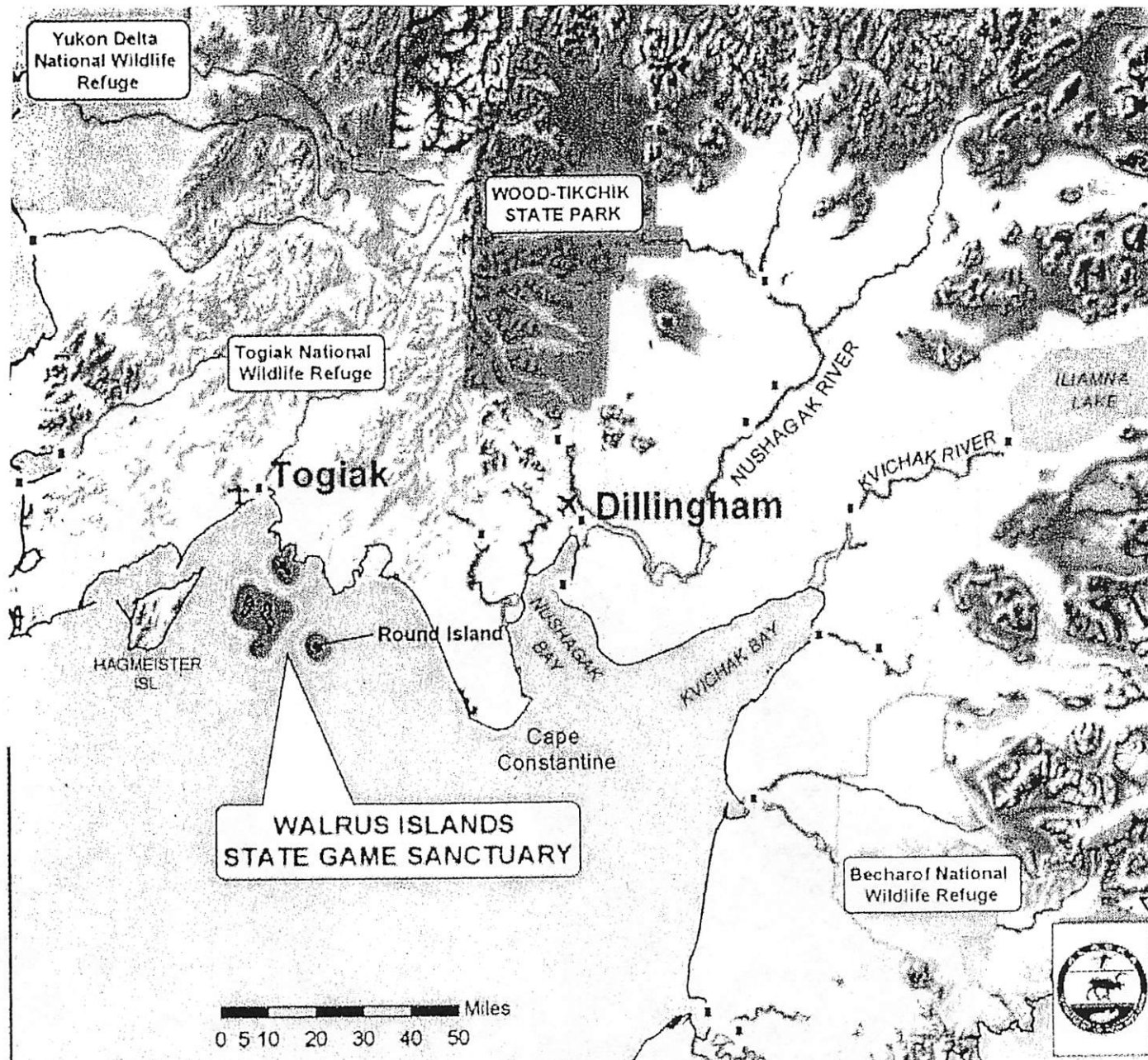
“Subsistence Use of Walrus in Bristol Bay” Map Documentation 2006

WALRUS TEK Project in collaboration with
Togiak Traditional Council and the Bristol Bay Native Association



Map Source: “Subsistence Use of Walrus in Bristol Bay” 2006- Walrus TEK Project BBNA and Togiak Traditional Council report submitted to the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund.

Qayassiq Walrus Commission 2008
Walrus Islands-Qayassiq (Round Island)
Hagemeister Island, and Islands Traditional Hunting Grounds

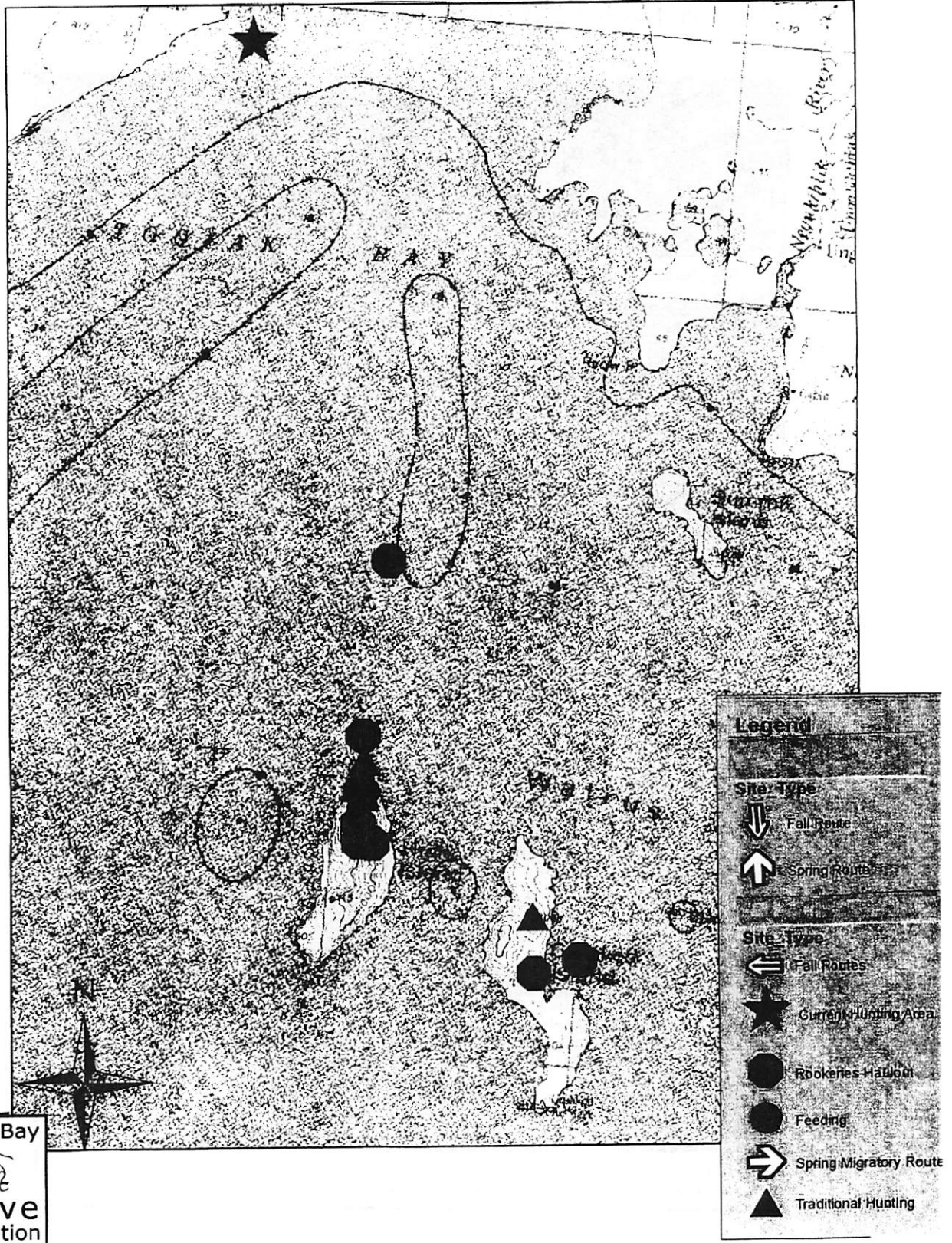


Map Source: ADF&G Round Island Report 2005

Walrus migrate and feed around Round Island, Hagemeister Island, Summit Island, Crooked Island, the Twins and extend beyond the three mile boundary managed by the State. Qayassiq Walrus Commission (QWC) recommends the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council extend walrus boundaries up to ten miles from the walrus haulout site areas to protect the walrus, seals, salmon, halibut, clams, and other marine mammal habitat and feeding areas. The recommended boundary to prevent trawl fisheries from depleting the marine mammals is ten mile boundary zone not open to trawl fishery from Cape Newenham, Togiak, Walrus Islands, Cape Constantine down to the North Aleutian Basin. The Togiak and other Yup'ik Eskimo elders traditional knowledge is the marine mammals migrating and feeding routes are the same as feeding. The animals follow their marine food resources in the Bristol Bay.

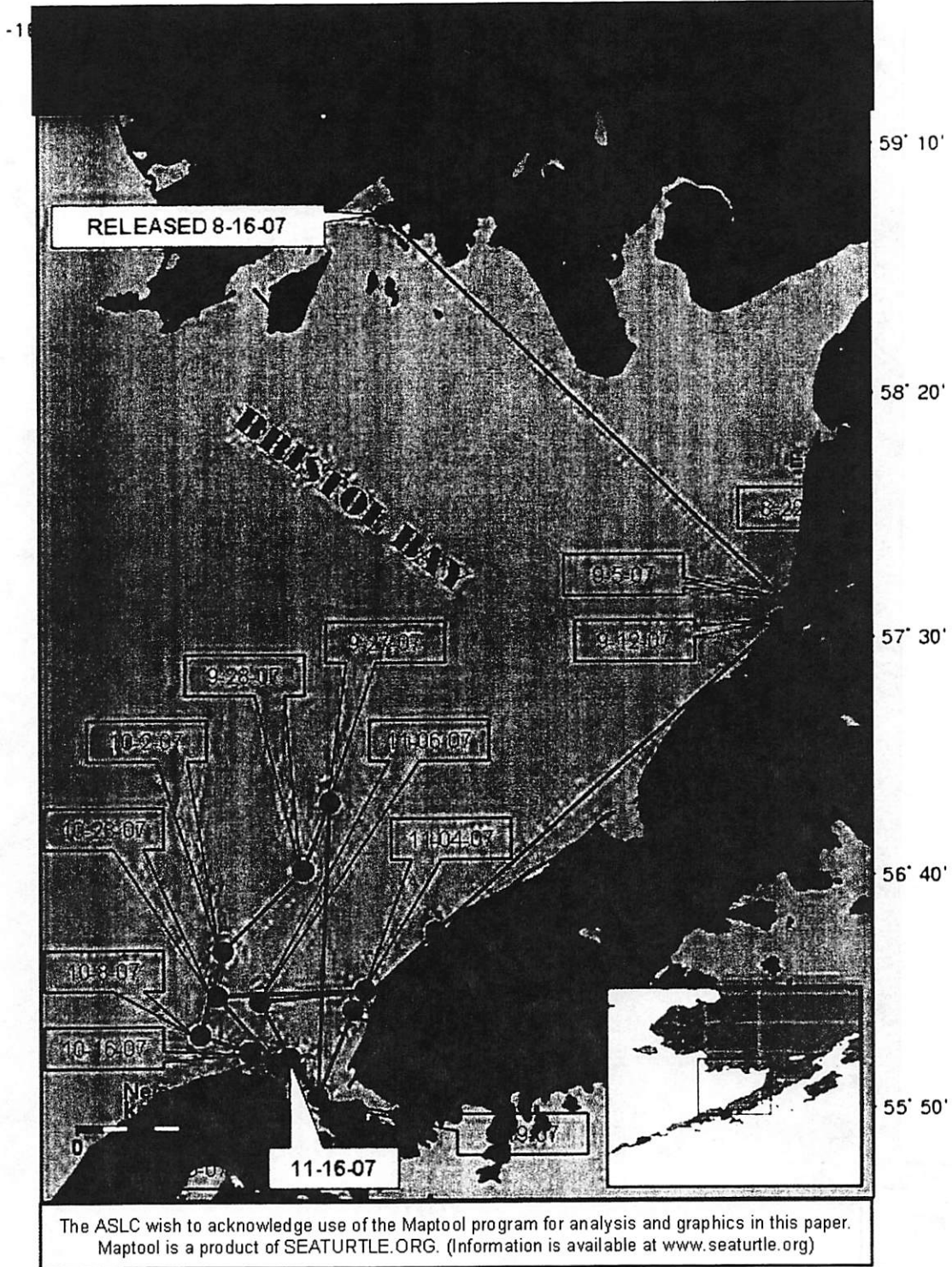
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WALRUS TEK Project in collaboration with
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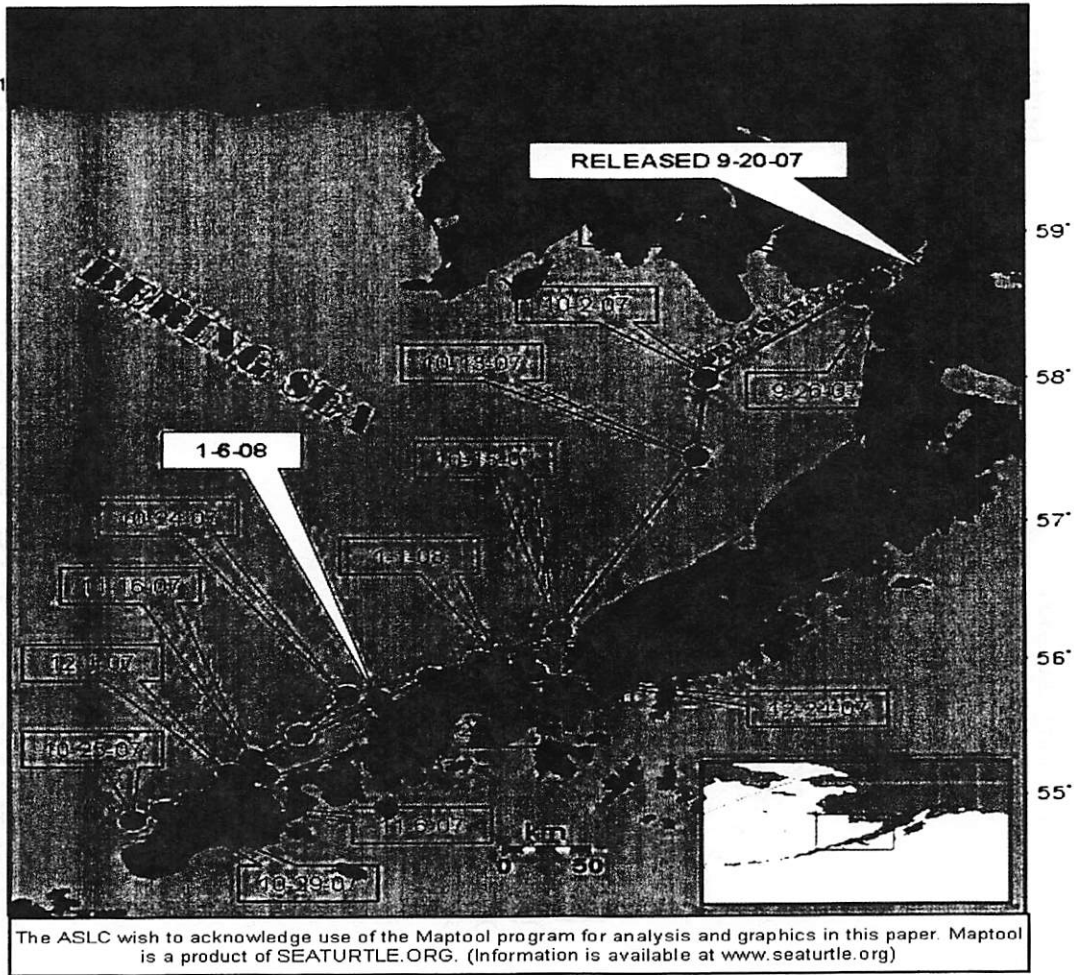


Map Source: “Subsistence Use of Walrus in Bristol Bay” 2006- Walrus TEK Project BBNA and Togiak Traditional Council report submitted to the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund.

This is a collaborative project between the Alaska SeaLife Center, the Bristol Bay Native Association Marine Mammal Program, Togiak Traditional Council, Naknek Village Council, and the Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council.



This spotted seal and harbor seal release is in collaboration with the Alaska Sea Life Center, Togiak Traditional Council, Naknek Village Council, Bristol Bay Native Association Marine Mammal Program, Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, and Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council



162°W

160°W

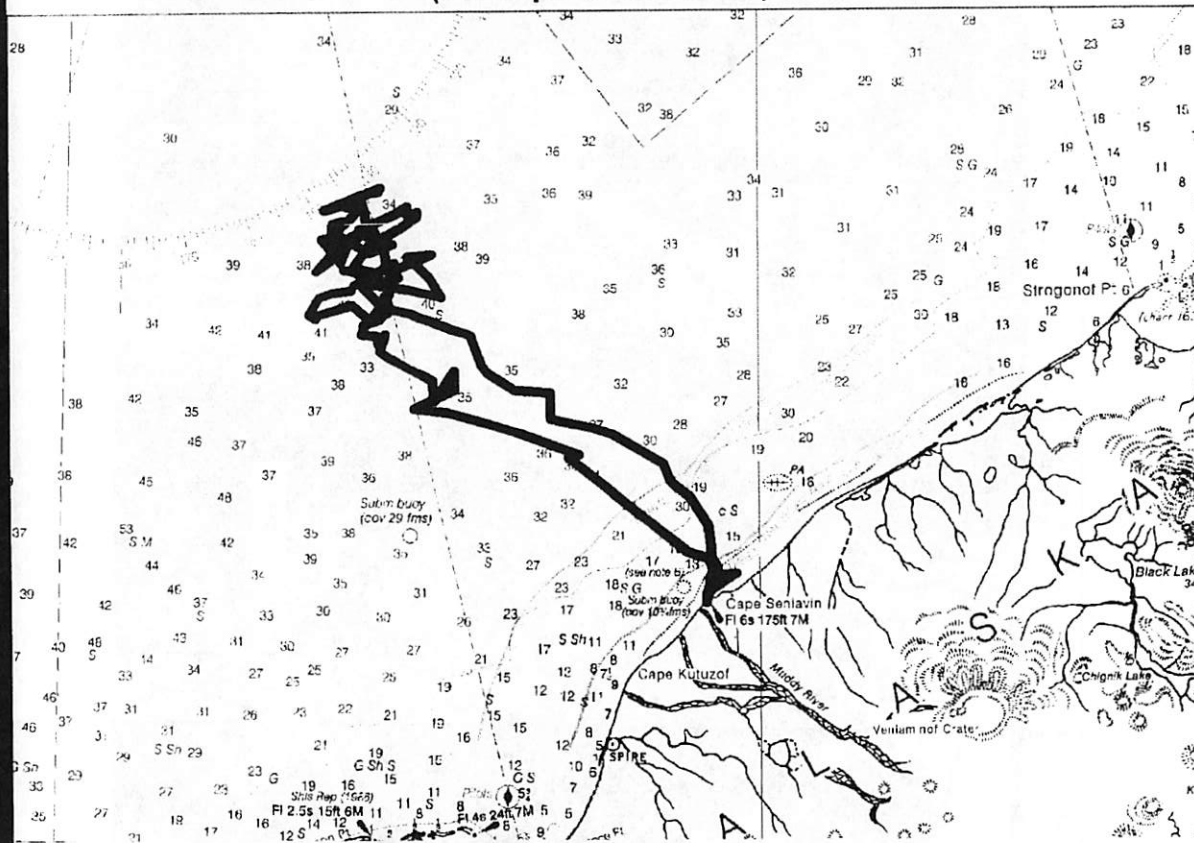
Walrus Monitored with Remotely Deployed Satellite Radio-Tag (23 Sep - 9 Oct 2007)

57°N



57°N

56°N

56°N





Behavior

-  Foraging
-  In water, not foraging



Depth

-  less than 70m
-  more than 70m

based on USGS GIS Compilation
of National Ocean Service
Bathymetry of United States
Waters scale: 1:250,000

NOAA Chart No. 16011
Soundings in fathoms

25

Nautical Miles

162°W

160°W

Final Report on:

“Walrus Traditional Ecological Knowledge Regarding Walrus Project”



Photo: 2004 Togiak subsistence walrus hunt crew taken prior to leaving for Round Island.

By

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Quyana cakneq! Thank you very much to the Togiak Traditional Council for participating in this Project and making it a success! ***Quyana!*** to Local Research Assistants Esther O. Thompson and Anita R. Atakitleg of Togiak for conducting one-on-one interviews in the Yup'ik Eskimo and English language while gathering important traditional ecological knowledge on subsistence uses of walrus in Bristol Bay, Alaska.

Quyana! to the following Togiak elders and experienced walrus hunters who provided valuable local traditional ecological knowledge on walrus in the Bristol Bay, Alaska area primarily in the Togiak area: Jack Gosuk, Annie Blue, Natalia Taday, Anna Alexie, Mary E. Bavilla, Robert Nicholai, Peter Tommy, Sr., Frank Logusak, Sr., Peter Lockuk, Sr., Posen Alexie, Wassillie Whymn, Sr., Elena Whymn, Evan Kinikalk, Elena A. Andrew, and John J. Antone. To this day, we know the Alaska Native people of Bristol Bay and the residents of Togiak, Alaska continue to traditionally subsistence hunt walrus as their Yup'ik Eskimo ancestors did. This traditional practice has been on-going since time immemorial and will continue.

Quyana! to the Project Cooperator staff: Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), Subsistence Division office, Dr. James Fall of Anchorage; ADF&G Subsistence Division staff of Dillingham: Molly B. Chythlook and Theodore M. Krieg. Currently, Molly Chythlook no longer works for ADF&G but is the Bristol Bay Native Association's Natural Resource Department Division Manager in Dillingham. Your technical support input concerning knowledge of the Alaska Native people's traditional way of life and Molly's Yup'ik language skills are greatly appreciated.

Quyana! to the Bristol Bay Native Association's (BBNA) Natural Resource Department for their technical support in making this project a success!

Quyana! to Sander Johnson IV, BBNA Records Management Specialist for his technical support in map documentation of Togiak elders and experienced walrus hunters.

Quyana! to Ms. Jeanne Schaaf, Chief, Cultural Resources, Lake Clark National Park & Preserve for her contribution to this report by providing archeological information on Qayassiq.

Quyana to those not mentioned, but who worked behind the scenes to make this Project a success! Your contributions to this Project are important.

Last but not least, ***Quyana*** to the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund for funding this very important project documenting traditional ecological knowledge on the use of walrus in Bristol Bay, Alaska.

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ABSTRACT

For centuries, in the Alaska Native culture, the people have learned about their traditional ways of life through oral history. The Native ancestors passed this on to the existing generation. The tradition of passing Alaska Natives traditional way of life to their families will continue into the next millennium. Alaska Natives also learn about how various daily tasks are done through observation. For example, as young children, they learn from watching an experienced hunter or elder butcher marine mammals, and large land animals. The person butchering walrus may let the young child try to butcher a piece of walrus meat, and commend them on the great job they are doing. Positive reinforcement was part of the Alaska Native elders' way of teaching the children about the traditional way of life. This made the youth feel enthusiastic and encouraged them want to learn more about doing various traditional activities. The lessons learned are an important component for survival in remote communities and sometimes harsh environmental conditions encountered while gathering, hunting, and fishing their traditional foods.

The Alaska Native people in Bristol Bay have traditionally harvested walrus for their subsistence needs, along with other fish and game resources. In 2004, expanding on to 2005, important traditional ecological knowledge about walrus in Bristol Bay, was gathered by two local research assistants, they interviewed 15 Togiak participants to document conservation of walrus, traditional and present preservation methods, traditional and present hunting methods, traditional and present uses of walrus, weather patterns, population trends, as well as other valuable anthropological information. Some map documentation was provided by the participants, particularly from the elder men hunters, and the younger experienced walrus hunters. Some ladies experienced in the traditional care of walrus and who also were raised in a traditional Native way of life participated in this Project. Subsistence walrus hunting has been one of the traditional practices of the Native people of Togiak, therefore the gathering of traditional ecological knowledge of subsistence uses was concentrated in that community.

This report will primarily focus on subsistence uses of walrus as part of the traditional way of life of the Togiak Yup'ik Eskimo elders and experienced walrus hunters. Togiak residents still rely heavily on their subsistence way of life to harvest food resources from the land and sea year-round to survive. The Togiak community wants to continue the traditional harvest of walrus and recommends this report as a reference source. They do not want agency regulators to use their traditional knowledge against their traditional way of life including harvesting walrus at Round Island or in any of the other areas walrus are hunted in Bristol Bay. This report will provide important traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) on Alaska Native traditional subsistence uses of walrus, as well as provide important conservation information.

INTRODUCTION

This report describes gathering important TEK of subsistence uses of walrus in Bristol Bay from experienced elders and walrus hunters of Togiak Alaska.

From October 2004 through March 2005, the gathering of TEK on subsistence uses of walrus was successfully completed by two hired and trained Local Research Assistant's (LRA) from Togiak. One-on-one interviews of 15 elders and experienced walrus hunters were conducted. The interviews were conducted primarily in the Yup'ik Eskimo language and were recorded in both Yup'ik and the English language. The LRA's documented walrus locational information on U.S.G.S. topographical maps and transcribed the recorded interviews in both Yup'ik and English into manuscript format.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

The Western terms used in documenting the Alaska Native traditional way of life is confusing to some of the Native people, words such as traditional ecological knowledge, subsistence, local traditional knowledge, native knowledge, and other related terms used were developed by the Western culture. In the Yup'ik culture, the traditional way of life or *piciryaraq* is the true meaning of simply, how they live their life. The Alaska Native people also do not have a word for subsistence in their language, but refer to 'our traditional way of life.' Although today, some Alaska Natives are combining the best of both worlds in their way of life. It is important to note each family has their unique ways of passing on the Native traditions they were taught by their Yup'ik elders and ancestors.

The closest definition relating to traditional ecological knowledge that best describes this term comes from Dr. Henry Huntington, of Anchorage, Alaska as follows:

"Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is a system of understanding one's environment. It is built over generations, as people depend on the land and the sea for their food, materials, and culture. TEK is based on observations and experience, evaluated in light of what one has learned from one's elders. People have relied on this detailed knowledge for their survival-they have literally staked their lives on its accuracy and repeatability. TEK is an important source of information and understanding for anyone who is interested in the natural processes at work in that area. While the scientific perspective is often different from the traditional perspective, both have a great deal to offer one another. Working together is the best way of helping us achieve a better common understanding of nature." (Huntington and Mymrin).

There is a common traditional understanding between Alaska Native communities. It was traditional for communities to come together and work on positive solutions to issues that caused disputes. Presently, Alaska Native people continue working with, for example, nonprofit organizations, and federal and state agencies to deal with issues and come to a cooperative consensus in decisions that affect their traditional way of life. The ongoing traditional conservation and preservation of the Alaska Native traditional way of life has been emphasized by the interviewed participants from Togiak. It is anticipated that the Western decision makers will respect the Togiak community and involve them in any future regulatory working meetings so they can provide local expertise and traditional knowledge in preserving their traditional way of life.

Community Background: Togiak, Alaska

Tuyuryaq, the Yup'ik Eskimo name for Togiak, is located approximately 67 air miles west of Dillingham. Dillingham is the hub of the Nushagak River, Nushagak Bay and Bristol Bay communities west to Togiak Bay. The 2000 U.S. Census for Togiak's population was 809 with 86.3% Alaska Natives. The community of Togiak relies on a cash economy subsistence way of life to supplement their living expenses. This means traditional activities of hunting marine mammals, large land animals, waterfowl including seabirds, fishing for salmon, and gathering wild edible berries and plants is practiced by the Togiak residents. Their main livelihood is seasonal commercial salmon gillnet fishing. Jobs are scarce in most rural Alaska communities and basic employment includes: work in local government offices (city council, traditional council), village corporation, health clinic, community health services, educational instructor and teacher aide employment at the elementary school, some seasonal construction employment, postal service employment, and other related job opportunities that become available throughout the year. The Togiak traditional harvest activities are on a yearly cycle. For example, food resources are harvested year-round depending on the time the fish, game, edible berries and plants, waterfowl, shellfish, and marine mammals become available or the season of gathering wild edible plants occurs. Helen Gregorio of Togiak describes the traditional food resources:

"The [Togiak] Bay is a rich source of sea mammals, fish, clams and water fowl. Other subsistence sources are the tundra for berries, eggs and spring greens, the streams for smelt and black fish in their season and the beach grass for baskets. The hills are abundant with wild tea, traditional medicines and various berries. Various animals are seen different times of the year such as bear, caribou, wolves, foxes and wolverine."

(Helen Gregorio, Unpublished Community Profile: Togiak, 2005).

Background Information on Qayassiq (Round Island)

Since time immemorial, the Yup'ik Eskimo traditional activity that has customarily occurred in the spring and fall is the walrus hunt at *Qayassiq* (Round Island). Round Island is part of the State Game Sanctuary managed by the State of Alaska, Department of Fish & Game. The other Walrus Islands, and coastal shorelines along Togiak Bay, Kulukak Bay, Metervik Bay, Asviak Bay, and the Cape Pierce and Cape Newenham areas are also traditional hunting areas, for walrus and other marine mammals including various seal species. Marine mammals are hunted year-round until the Bay freezes. Hunters resume hunting in the sea ice in early spring. Although some ice seal hunting occurs during the winter season.

Oral traditional knowledge documents Qayassiq as being a traditional Yup'ik walrus hunting site. Western scientists using radiocarbon dating have documented that Yup'ik ancestors have occupied Qayassiq as far back as 6,000 years. In 2004, Jeanne Schaaf NPS Archeologist and her archeological team collected some archeological artifacts found at Qayassiq. Archeological excavation of traditional Yup'ik Eskimo *qasgiqs* or sod house type dwellings found various stone implements that were used as tools, probably for hunting, household uses, and for other survival uses. Ms. Schaaf mentioned about their archeological findings at Qayassiq:

"The findings significantly alter our understanding of the region's prehistory, with clear evidence of island-based walrus hunting occurring here nearly 6,000 years ago...With this initial glimpse of site significance comes an understanding of the imperative to initiate in depth research on the island...[Qayassiq] or Round Island remains significant to the descendants of the central Yup'ik speaking people who occupied this portion of Bristol Bay at the time of the contact. Any archeological research should be done in partnership with the people of Togiak for

whom walrus hunting on Round Island is still an important subsistence activity.” (Unpublished preliminary report by Jeanne Schaaf, *et al*, April 2006).

In 1960, Qayassiq became part of the State Game Sanctuary. For over 30 years, Alaska Natives were prohibited from hunting walrus at their traditional hunting ground.. In the mid 1990's, traditional Yup'ik Eskimo hunters primarily from Togiak successfully petitioned the Board of Game to reinstate their traditional subsistence access to hunt walrus at Qayassiq (Round Island). Some of the Bristol Bay Native politicians also participated in this process, as well. (See Fall and Chythlook 1998 for more information concerning legalizing the hunt at Qayassiq).

As a result, the Qayassiq Walrus Commission (QWC) was formed after the Board of Game gave QWC permission for a limited subsistence walrus hunt on Round Island. The Board of Game set the walrus harvest season as well as harvest limits, but all other regulations were developed through the cooperative agreement by the four signatories. The Eskimo Walrus Commission, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the QWC completed and signed a cooperative agreement in September 1995. The agreement outlines the hunt regulations and designates the responsibilities of each party involved.

In March 1995, the QWC formed to oversee walrus harvest activities on Round Island for the Bristol Bay area. The QWC has the authority to add new villages, determine walrus harvest allocation for each village and monitor harvest activities, and other factors related to the traditional hunt. Originally, the QWC included seven area villages that were invited to co-manage the annual Fall walrus hunt. Since that time, the membership has increased to nine villages. Currently, the QWC village representatives include nine villages including Togiak. (Overview of the Qayassiq Walrus Commission, Bristol Bay Native Association, Dillingham, Alaska, updated 2005).

Qayassiq was and still is a prime traditional walrus hunting area, the annual traditional walrus hunt is regulated by the Alaska Board of Game which allows the Togiak and other Bristol Bay walrus hunters to hunt walrus during the Fall from September 10 to October 20.

OBJECTIVES

The main goal of this project is to gather important traditional ecological knowledge of subsistence uses of walrus in Bristol Bay through oral interviews. The project occurred in the village of Togiak, Alaska, in the Bristol Bay area. The objectives are:

1. use one-on-one interviewing techniques in gathering traditional ecological information regarding walrus in Togiak. Fifteen (15) elders or experienced walrus hunters will be interviewed.
2. hire local research assistants to conduct the interviews and transcriptions of this Project.
3. upon completion of transcripts, review oral history questionnaires and transcript, and if necessary, conduct additional follow up interview(s) with participant on topics to clarify further on walrus conservation issues and other related issues.
4. hire an experienced person in the Yup'ik Eskimo language and culture to review the completed TEK transcripts for quality control.

5. to compile a final report of the traditional ecological knowledge regarding walrus in Bristol Bay.

STUDY AREA

Togiak, Alaska is located on Togiak Bay, about two miles west of the mouth of Togiak River in southwest Alaska. It is approximately 67 air miles west of Dillingham, the hub of the majority of rural communities in the Bristol Bay region.

METHODS

One on one interviews were conducted using a portable micro digital voice recorder. The maximum amount of time per interview session was limited to two hours. Some follow up interviews were also conducted to complete the topic being covered. The interviews were conducted mainly in Yup'ik, as well as in the English language.

The local research assistants interviewed 15 elders and experienced walrus hunters as identified and recommended by the Togiak Traditional Council. Before the interviews took place, the local research assistants explained the project. Consent forms to participate in the project were signed by the interviewees authorizing BBNA to use the information they provided. Three participants interviewed chose to have their names not be disclosed and their transcripts will be referred to as Transcript I, II, and III. The interview process covered topics relating to walrus traditional ecological knowledge which included: walrus population trends from ten years back to the present as observed from experienced traditional walrus elders and hunters; subsistence activities involving walrus, identification of historic traditional walrus subsistence sites; identification of current walrus subsistence sites; traditional methods of walrus hunting used by the Togiak Native ancestors and present methods used; walrus feeding areas; walrus calving/breeding sites; walrus calving time of year; walrus haul-out sites; walrus migration routes; traditional walrus hunting seasons/dates; traditional walrus conservation uses in ensuring the continuity of walrus hunting (i.e. traditional conservation customary laws; recommendations/suggestions in walrus conservation of Bristol Bay walrus); walrus behavior observations; seasonal changes in subsistence activities; walrus ivory uses; traditional subsistence uses of walrus meat and preservation methods.

The Local Research Assistants transcribed the recorded interviews into manuscript format documents in both Yup'ik and English. After reviewing each participant's completed transcripts, the LRA, and the BBNA Project Coordinator reviewed the transcripts, and conducted some follow-up questions for further clarification of a topic previously discussed by the participants. The Local Research Assistants also plotted identified locations on USGS topographical maps. Some of the project participants were photographed for inclusion in the final report. A Traditional Yup'ik knowledge person and Yup'ik linguist reviewed the completed TEK transcripts for quality control.

RESULTS

Various topics were covered by the 15 Yup'ik Eskimo Togiak elders and experienced hunters during the interviews conducted by the two Local Research Assistants who were from different households. Some women were interviewed to get a woman's perspective on the traditional ways of taking care of the walrus and for their advice on other walrus traditional knowledge. The TEK contributed by the Togiak participants is a minute sample of the Yup'ik knowledge of walrus. In the Yup'ik Eskimo culture, part of their tradition is for the elders or parents are to

teach through observation to pass the traditional way of life on to children, extended family, others who are willing to listen. Each family has their own distinct way of passing on their traditional way of life to their children, and extended family. Some of the Yup'ik elders know people will continue to pass on their traditional way of life either through mentoring or giving traditional advice to others. The participants are taught by experiencing, for example, how to hunt walrus by observing experienced hunters at their traditional harvest sites. The responses vary on various topics, but are summarized for your information. The more detailed interview transcripts completed in both Yup'ik and English are attached in the appendices.

Traditional Walrus Conservation Uses in Ensuring the Continuity of Walrus Hunting

Conservation in the Alaska Native culture has many meanings or facets of making sure walrus will be harvestable for the present hunters, and for the future generations to come. There are many ways to conserve or *aningq* or *qaunq* (Yup'ik word to take care of or to protect) the walrus or any other traditionally harvested foods. One of the traditional *alerqurtaq* or traditional advice given by my father, the late Thomas Chythlook of Aleknagik was the following: "When a person goes out to hunt animals from the land, or the sea, or to gather edible plants, they need to be respectful of their surroundings in the environment they are planning to harvest the food resource. The land a person is walking on needs to be treated respectfully similar to a church. Because the land the person hunts on is similar to treading on holy or sacred ground." The land will provide to those who abide by this traditional advice, meaning there will always be food resources given to them when they are out hunting animals or harvesting waterfowl, edible plants and fish.

The other traditional advice was not to leave, for example, unused animal parts, such as bone, or inedible inside organs scattered on the ground. Instead, they were taught to properly dispose of the unused or inedible animal parts either to the sea or bury them underground. The animals harvested will know that the person they gave their life to will know traditional advice was adhered to, and the needs of the hunter or gatherer will continue to be provided for. Another traditional advice was to harvest only what is needed so there will not be any waste.

Today, the Togiak walrus hunters continue passing on the traditional ways of hunting walrus to ensure the continuity of population for their future food resource needs. Togiak has traditional elder advisor's who give them guidance and direction in planning a tradition walrus hunt each year at Qayassiq (Round Island). For example, Jack Gosuk, an elder goes with the annual Fall walrus hunt at Qayassiq with the Togiak walrus hunt crew as a traditional advisor. Although some of the hunt captains have several years of walrus hunting experience, they adhere to their traditional advisor's directives during the walrus hunt. Frank Logusak, Sr. of Togiak mentioned:

"Back when I became aware, our ancestors didn't conserve but focused on having that animal continue being available by not taking more than they needed and not to overkill. It was against their rules/law not to kill too many, not to kill one to leave on the ground. Also, [another traditional advice was] not to kill what one will not eat and will not use. That is how they made sure that the resources of the people will not be over hunted. This is how they took care of them and followed even though the rules/laws were not written down."

Other conservation measures practiced by the Yup'ik Eskimos of Togiak include not killing walrus during calving season; treat the walrus carefully and respectfully; hunt only the walrus needed by their village; hunt walrus once a year; take only what is needed; keep the walrus hunting site clean after butchering, properly dispose of the inedible animal parts; continue

passing traditional way of hunting walrus to the inexperienced younger hunters to ensure the continuity of the walrus population; and properly store the walrus so there will not be any waste.

Traditional and Present Walrus Hunting and Methods

Since time immemorial, the community of Togiak has traditionally hunted walrus at Qayassiq (Round Island), the other Walrus Islands (Hagemeister, Crooked Island, High Island, Summit Island, The Twins) as well as to the Cape Peirce and Cape Newenham area when the walrus were scarce in the Togiak Bay area. The traditional advice passed on orally by Yup'ik ancestors and elders is still practiced by Togiak Natives relating to walrus and other animals harvested for food. The traditional way of life or *picigyaraq* in the Yup'ik Eskimo language continues today and will continue into the future because Togiak elders and experienced walrus hunters orally pass on their knowledge about walrus. Presently, Togiak elders and experienced walrus hunters include younger Alaska Natives in their traditional Fall walrus hunt at Qayassiq. This way, the youth that participate in the walrus hunt can learn from observation. For example: where to shoot the walrus, how walrus is butchered after it is shot, and listen to traditional advice from the elder that goes with the hunt crew. Moreover, today, some women participate in the annual Fall Qayassiq walrus hunt and some of their contributions are included in this section.

Traditional Walrus Hunting Methods and Traditional Advice

Back then, the original way to hunt walrus was by *qayaq*, similar to a canoe, framed with birch or willow, but covered with walrus or seal skins. There is a round wood frame opening for the person to sit while paddling. Two types of *qayaq* paddles were used, an *anguarun*, a single bladed paddle or a *paanrun*, a *qayaq* paddle with a blade at each end. A person had to know how to maneuver the *qayaq* and keep it upright from unexpected high seawaves. A sudden wrong movement would result in the *qayaq* tipping over. If the *qayaq* wasn't overloaded, the person could roll it back to the upright position. Back then, the Yup'ik Eskimo ancestors made use of everything the land and the sea provided for them. Traditional hunting tools or implements were made from wood, animal parts including sinew, bone, ivory, and stone. For example, *panaq*, a large lance or spear was made from wood, sinew and a stone spear point. Similar to the spear was a *nuusaarpak* [three-pronged harpoon] or *cavek*. One hunter mentioned he had a harpoon made with braided tanned walrus hide. He attached a knife to spear the walrus on the rib sides. To make the spear or harpoon float, seal stomach pokes were used similar to the buoys used to make the walrus float after spearing it. Whatever resources were available for use, if the Yup'ik ancestors were out in the wilderness and didn't have a particular hunting tool, they improvised with other items found in their hunting environment.

Prior to the actual walrus hunt, the elders and walrus hunters gathered in a *qasgiq*, a men's community house where Yup'ik men resided and worked, to plan the walrus hunt. Topics discussed were: person(s) designated to be main hunt leaders (instructors), similar to a hunt captain, designated shooters, designated walrus butcherers, designated walrus meat and blubber boat loaders, type of walrus to catch, type of hunting tools, hunter safety, how to behave during the walrus hunt, how to approach the walrus, observed weather patterns, the tides, boat observer to keep walrus off shore during loading of catch, and other related traditional knowledge. For example, in choosing shooters, traditional advice was to not have hunters who have recently lost a family member, have a relative that is sick, have a family female member reaching puberty or starting menstruation, and choose a shooter who is not living their life according to the traditions. If these traditional laws weren't adhered to, for example, if a shooter who recently lost a family member, shot a walrus, it would not die but would become stronger.

Jack Gosuk, elder from Togiak mentioned what occurred in the *qasgiq* during the pre-hunt walrus planning: *"They would enter the qasgiq and held their meetings about what they should know about walrus hunting. They were told to always help and provide for those that didn't have hunters."* Some of the hunting advice included the type of walrus to harvest as indicated by Peter Tommy, Sr.: *"[T]he leaders chose the fattest walrus after observing [the] one's which had rough outer skins. The ones with smooth skin were skinnier and the fatter ones had rough [or] bulging skin."*

Some of the hunt preparation is discussed by Frank Logusak, Sr.: *"They would gather the tools they would need out there in the ocean, like their harpoons and seal pokes made from spotted seals. They skinned spotted seals starting from the mouth and skinning it from the inside until it was complete. They would work it and [turn] the skin inside out [un]til it was complete...[That] is how they made their seal pokes for floats or buoys before they go hunting out in the ocean."* Other tools such as axes, knives and some other hunting equipment were put away. Back then, the walrus hunters thoroughly planned their trip in an unrushed manner. Because the walrus harvested was not only fed to the community but the sled dogs as well.

Other hunt preparation advice included how to approach the walrus. Frank Logusak, Sr. mentioned the following: *"[T]hey didn't approach the walrus from below them but would idle past them, far from them. After they anchored out, they would go up onto the shore with a small qayaq. They would approach the walrus on foot and then after looking at them, they would kill the fattest ones."*

The main location to shoot the walrus is in the neck area behind the head where the skin is thinner. If walrus is shot in the head, the bullet will not penetrate; it will bounce off instead. The walrus can also be shot behind the tusks and ears on the neck area. Back then another part of the walrus to shoot was by the walrus heart. With a harpoon the walrus was also stabbed on the side. Then the internal organs would be taken out from the walrus. The hunt captain reinforced this traditional advice during the walrus hunt to the designated shooters.

The main hunt leader observes to make sure the traditional advice and the appointed hunt crew is abiding by their designated tasks for a successful walrus hunt. Some young men were allowed to go on a hunt to learn as observers. The number of walrus harvested depended on the number of *qayaqs* and sailboats that went on the hunt. Elders gave out traditional advice which was reiterated during the trip to the walrus hunting areas, during the hunt, as well as while the walrus was being butchered.

Current Walrus Hunting Methods

Presently, Togiak along with eight other QWC communities continue the tradition of hunting walrus at Qayassiq (Round Island) every Fall from September 10th through October 20th. Alaska Natives living along the coast are allowed to hunt walrus and marine mammals year round for their traditional use as long as no waste is involved. Since Qayassiq is part of the Alaska State Game Sanctuary, the hunting regulations are managed by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. Access to Round Island is restricted and no Alaska Natives are allowed to hunt walrus there until the annual Fall hunt. Although, the traditional walrus hunters have reiterated in past Qayassiq Walrus Commission meetings, that Qayassiq is their traditional walrus and other marine mammal hunting site, they should not be restricted to the number of walrus caught. Back then, the hunt leaders measured the amount of walrus they were going to harvest based on the size of their village, or the number of *qayaqs* that went on the hunt.

Today, there is a walrus allocation of four for the community of Togiak, but originally the walrus allocation was five. Last January 2006, Togiak gave one walrus allocation to the newly joined QWC Commission community of Ekwook. Some of the respondent's noted that the current QWC walrus allocation for Togiak is not enough to distribute to every household.

The Togiak Traditional Council selects a QWC Commissioner and a QWC Hunt Captain who attends annual QWC Pre-Hunt and QWC Post-Hunt meetings. During the QWC Pre-Hunt Meeting, QWC Hunt Permits and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game's Round Island Hunt Access Permits are issued to each hunt captain. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service also provides Round Island Hunt Data forms to be completed by the hunt captain.

For the past several years, Peter Lockuk, Sr. has been the lead QWC Hunt Captain for Togiak. The QWC Hunt Captain follows the traditional knowledge that was passed on to him by the Yup'ik ancestors and elders who taught him. For example, he mentioned the following: *"Before they go hunting they choose who the hunt captains are going to be. Most importantly, they choose who will be the designated shooters. The designated shooters are the ones that will do the shooting are the one's who had not lost a close relative to death, or one's whose relatives are not really sick. The reason is that if a walrus is shot by those men, it will not be able to die even though it is shot several times."*

The Togiak hunt crew usually has up to five different hunt captains, but they still are allowed to harvest only four walrus from Round Island. Besides the hunt captains, one or more elders from Togiak participate in the walrus hunt as traditional advisors. The lead QWC Hunt Captain plans the traditional annual Fall Qayassiq walrus hunt. For example, in 2003 Togiak hunters with five hunt captains and one traditional advisor participated in the annual Qayassiq Fall hunt, totaling eighteen people. Four walrus were harvested and butchered at the Main Beach side of Qayassiq. Jack Gosuk, traditional advisor had observed the weather conditions by looking at the sky and ocean, as well as the wind directions. He told the hunt captains, that although there was a slight easterly wind, the weather would calm down towards the end of the day. There were two designated shooters, a majority of the hunt crew assisted in butchering of the walrus, some were assigned to keep watch on the boats while walrus pieces were being loaded by others, and other related tasks were done to make the hunt a success. The only remains of the walrus were the unedible parts of some of the internal organs that were disposed of into the ocean. The high tide washed and cleansed the Main Beach area which looked like no one had hunted there. The Togiak hunters abide by the traditional way of life and advice which was evident by how they treated the land, the sea, and the animal they harvested with respect. The animals in turn gave themselves to the walrus hunters to feed their families. This is the Yup'ik way of life that has continued to this day.

Walrus Distribution

Back then, when the walrus hunters returned, the community greeted the hunters and everyone that was able to help work on the walrus, if it wasn't already completely butchered. For example, walrus meat, blubber, and delicacies, such as walrus flippers were evenly cut and shared equally to the community. Ivory tusks were given to elders who sometimes gave some to young hunters. These were also given to community members who had the skill of traditional carving for household wares, hunting tools, and other survival uses.

Traditional Walrus Uses and Preservation Methods

Back then, the community welcomed the walrus hunters and everyone worked together in preparing the walrus meat, blubber, and delicacies like the flippers, liver, and other organs. The stomach was opened and if there were clams, they would be taken out to be eaten. When the hunters arrived home the butchered walrus meat was put in elevated storage caches or on top of rack type structures where animals could not steal them. The community storage cache of walrus and other traditional foods were available for households to use. For example, they could get some walrus meat to cook without asking permission. The only time food was rationed in the community was during long term scarcity of walrus. Otherwise, if walrus was scarce, other traditional foods were harvested by the community until the walrus population was replenished.

The women assisted the hunters by preparing the walrus for preservation and for their meals. The meat was cooked and put in inflated seal poke containers and immersed in water to be eaten right away. The meat that is not cooked was buried underground in hard clay soil in the permafrost area where the raw foods stayed cool. The traditional foods stored underground were lined and covered with braided grass which was frequently changed. If the meat and other wild edible resources started to smell and spoil, they were put in seashore grass woven containers or seal pokes, and buried underground. The discarded items were never scattered to mess up the natural environment. It was part of the traditional law to keep the land, and the sea clean where traditional foods were harvested to never leaving any traces of food.

Natalia Tудay discusses the traditional ways that walrus were taken care of: *"They cooked the walrus and when it was done cooking, the walrus was stored in sealskin pokes. The cooked walrus meat was stored in sealskin pokes with the blubber. Thoroughly cooked walrus meat is very delicious... I saw more than one container [made of sealskin pokes]. The sealskin pokes were filled with many different things, with oil [or blubber rendering to become oil], and whatever they had caught. When all [the walrus meat had been put in seal pokes for later use, when it was time to go upriver after spending the summer here, they would have containers where they made oil and load the boat with the walrus. When they reach that place to make oil they would bring them up, dragging them with a rope."* During the summer season, the Togiak residents traveled up the Togiak River to harvest their traditional foods, they took the cooked walrus meat soaked in oil to their traditional summer camps. Also, the seal and walrus blubber were taken to the summer camps in the inflated seal poke containers turned inside out to eat with other traditional foods that were harvested.

Anna Alexie mentions how the traditional foods were stored in the water. *"At the end of the pond a hole was dug underwater to store the oil in seal poke containers. When it started getting cold and freezing outside, the heavy drift wood which covered the seal poke storage containers would be removed, and the containers were put in elevated food caches. They would gently stomp on them in the winter to pack the meat storage containers down. The oil was very good, kind of thickened. Back then, oil was used for oil lamp lights. Our ancestors didn't make a mess nor wasted any walrus. The unedible animal parts not eaten such as bones were discarded in the water. When they were going to move to a different site, the whole area down to the beach was left clean. The seal spine bones and other unedible animal parts were collected and thrown away in a pond."*

After the hunter's hunted walrus, the walrus skin would be scraped until it was very thin. The walrus skin and hide would continue being *uulutvviit* or scraped, flushed and stretched out to dry.

Then using your hands, the hide would be softened in circular motions. Back then, the thinned walrus hide was used for qayaq covers and *makllak* soles for the traditional footwear.

Traditional and Current Walrus Hunting Sites

The traditional walrus hunting sites were *Qayassiq*, a primary walrus hunting area (Round Island); *Nanvaq* Bay (Nanvak Bay also *Kongirnaar* (capes or points) in Cape Peirce area; North side of *Ingriqvak* (High Island); *Nunaakaq* (Twin Islands); *Qikirtarpak* (Hagemeister Island); west side of *Qilkiq* (Summit Island); Back then, the Togiak, Kulukak and Asviak residents hunted at Qayassiq and the other Walrus Islands mainly in the Fall. They also harvested a few walrus in the Spring. If there wasn't any walrus at Qayassiq, they hunted at Cape Peirce in the Nanvaq Bay area. Walrus was hunted at Cape Peirce primarily by the Goodnews and Asviak residents.

The current walrus hunting sites are: mainly at Qayassiq, in the Cape Peirce area, Nanvaq Bay, the Twin Islands, Hagemeister Island, High Island, Summit Island, and in the coastal areas where walrus can be hunted year-round.

Weather Patterns

The weather patterns are not like they used to be back then as told by the Togiak elders and experienced walrus hunters. Back then, the land, the sea, and the environment the Togiak Yup'ik Eskimos resided in was sunny and calm most of the time. But, once in a while the weather would become bad for a short time. The seasonal weather changes occurred about the same time each year. When it rained, the bad weather lasted for a couple of days. Enough rain, similar to a light morning mist would fall to feed the edible plants, the fish, waterfowl, and marine habitats, as well as to provide drinking and cleansing water for the people. The winters were longer with snow covering near the housetop windows. The snow didn't begin melting until late March. The snow cover protected the fish habitats, seasonal edible and medicinal plant foliage, allowing them to replenish themselves for new Spring growth.

Back then, the weather patterns were more consistent and easier to predict from observing the cloud formations, sky color, wind directions, color of the ocean and wave conditions. Peter Tommy, Sr. mentioned observing the ocean conditions: *"They were able to know if it is going to be windy by observing the ocean water. I don't know those, but they would watch the water to see how it looked on the surface. If it is going to be calm for a while the surface is shining, you know, smooth and looks like a mirror. Also, when the tide is coming in and they are to go hunting for sure, they would go check the beach and tide in the evening prior to hunting. They would observe how the waves are coming in from the bottom. They knew by those things."* Another way a person could tell if the weather was going to become windy, if the ocean water color started getting dark, almost black on the surface. Then a person could tell there was going to be a storm probably with strong gusty winds from the East.

Back then, the Yup'ik ancestors had some strict taboos or traditions called *yaaggyaraq*, this meant certain traditional practices had to be abided by related to birth, death, illness and puberty. For example, some foods cannot be eaten certain times of the year during the Russian Orthodox lent. In terms of the traditions back then, when a young girl was just starting her menstruation cycle, she had to follow strict rules and had to stay in her own place for one year. If the strict traditions were not followed, certain consequences, such as unexpected bad weather occurred. Annie Blue further mentioned the following:

"If they are going to be traveling out to the wilderness or yuillquq, when [the young girl] goes outside, she stands toward the wind. This is what they made me do. [Annie stood up and faced the south first, made a motion of bringing it towards herself and motioned with her hands by putting it over her body down to the feet and then step on the wind. Then she continued the same to all the four directions, south, west, north and finally east]. That is what the young women, who just started their period, were instructed to do. This tradition regarding girls that just started their menstrual periods were instructed to follow strict traditions and not to be too exposed to traditional outdoor activities for a whole year. If they needed to be outside, they had certain traditional requirements to follow to keep the weather from changing. If the girl has just started her menstrual period, travels without "gathering the winds" with hand motions of throwing the bad winds out, the winds will attack or chase the girl with fury if she travels without doing the motions follow the traditional teachings."

Today, the weather patterns have changed. Although the weather is forecasted to be a certain way, the actual weather may end with heavy storms, instead of a calm and sunny day. Even if trained weather observers have the traditional knowledge of predicting the weather, the weather conditions change in the same day. Jack Gosuk, elder and traditional advisor to the present Togiak walrus hunters mentions the following: *"[You] have to look at the clouds first and see which way they are moving... [W]hen the clouds are stretched out and dark they won't hunt. But if they are standing straight then they can hunt because it might calm down later. Just this last time they almost returned from their hunt. When I looked up the clouds were standing straight and I told them to go hunting [at Qayassiq] because it might calm down later. When we arrived at Qayassiq, little tornados like wind gusts would come up. As the walrus hunters were heading towards shore, I told the hunters, the wind direction was good to shoot the walrus right away [because the walrus can't smell the hunters]. I told them not to eat lunch but to unload their packed lunch for later. I advised the hunters to go ashore to butcher the walrus, which they did. After the weather calmed down just as I had mentioned earlier, the boats were able to return ashore to Togiak. Back then, they used to watch the skies and observed how fast the wind was blowing. Although the wind blows fast, it calms down. We have to listen to the sounds of the weather to see which way the winds are blowing. If the winds are blowing from the East, there will be bad waves on the beach. I advised the walrus hunters to listen to the weather forecast on the radio to see which way the wind will be blowing from, how many knots before traveling to hunt walrus."*

Some of the warmer weather patterns known as global warming, have affected not only the walrus hunting environment, but changes in the weather conditions as well. For example, nowadays, there are unexpected strong gusty winds that can last for several days, and there is more heavy rain. There are some changes in the environment that have been observed in the Kulukak Bay and Qayassiq area by the hunters. In the Kulukak Bay area, a whitish sheen has been observed in the water, since the herring fishery first opened up. The year after the herring fishery opened, there was hardly any herring fish for traditional harvest. On Qayassiq, since the walrus monitoring program and visitor's program has started, some of the walrus are moving elsewhere due to the smoke from the cooking and heating fumes.

It is hard to predict why some of the changes in the weather patterns and the warmer weather have an effect on the walrus, but these observations have been documented by the elders and walrus hunters.

Walrus Distribution

The walrus migrate to feed, to breed, and to haul out with the seasonal changes. In the Walrus Islands, the walrus primarily feed on clams, mussels, shrimp, and other shellfish. Sometimes, if their feeding beds or habitats have become depleted, they migrate elsewhere to feed. They return after their feeding habitats have had a chance to replenish themselves, and this may take up to a couple of years or more. The walrus know when to return.

Back then the walrus hunters didn't count the number of walrus in their traditional walrus hunting areas. The Yup'ik Eskimo walrus hunters abided by their traditional way of life, they harvested enough walrus to feed their families throughout the long, cold winter months, as well as hunted fresh walrus in the Spring. Occasionally, there were times when the walrus population was scarce, the Yup'ik ancestors accepted the time of scarcity knowing the walrus would return when it was their time to be in their area.

The concept of the walrus population being in a decline status has never been the terminology used in the Yup'ik Eskimo culture. Although there are times, as previously mentioned when for some unknown reason the walrus disappear for a time. For example, in the summer months, when there are people at the walrus monitor sites, the walrus move elsewhere to feed where they will not be disturbed by human activity. Another reason why the walrus population decrease may occur is from the seasonal commercial herring activity in the Walrus Island area. In the Fall, when the constant rain and heavy storms cause their haul out sites to become slippery and difficult to climb, the walrus move out to a sheltered area until the storm subsides. In the Walrus Islands, if ice conditions start creating barriers to their feeding and haul out sites, the walrus will haul out on the icebergs and migrate to the Northern Bering Sea including to the Russian walrus haul out areas.

Other reasons why the walrus population decreases is when they die of natural causes. For example, during the Fall of 2005, some walrus hauling out at Cape Peirce died by falling off the cliffs they climbed.

In the early Spring, the walrus population increases when walrus give birth sometimes to one or two calves. Around June, the walrus population increases when they return to Qayassiq, other Walrus Islands, and the Cape Peirce area after wintering up north. The animals live in the environment where they can survive. For the past few winters the walrus have been increasing in the Cape Peirce area. Perhaps, the walrus are feeding on clams elsewhere until the Qayassiq habitats are replenished.

Discussion

Again, *quyana caqnek* (Thank you very much) to the Togiak Traditional Council for your willingness to participate in this very important traditional ecological knowledge of walrus in Bristol Bay! I also thank the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund (PWCF) for their patience in getting this Project completed. In any project, when bilingual languages are involved, it takes up to two years or more to get a fine quality product completed.

This report is only a glimpse of the Togiak Yup'ik Eskimo people's traditional way of life in terms of the information on walrus. The traditional ecological knowledge gathered and compiled took a lot longer than anticipated. In most rural Alaska Native homes, the Yupik Eskimos do not like to be rushed when they are talking about Native traditional knowledge. Also, for an

interview transcript, if it is mainly in the Alaska Native language, several follow up meetings are involved, especially if some of the Yup'ik Eskimo language being presented is extinct and no longer being used. Sometimes, to get a complete English translation of a Yup'ik Eskimo interview, it may take up to one month to make sure the information provided is as accurate as possible. In future Alaska Native Traditional Ecological Knowledge Projects, I would like to recommend the duration of the project be for up to three years.

This Project was under funded, although the Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA) had requested more funds, and BBNA has paid for the additional expenses incurred to complete this Project. Some of the Project work time and specialized mapping technology has been donated because this project is an important one to the Togiak Traditional Council and to the Bristol Bay Native Association.

On behalf of the Togiak Traditional Council and the Bristol Bay Native Association, we ask that any nonprofit organizations, federal or state agencies work cooperatively with us in proposing any regulations that pertain to our traditional way of life including walrus harvests that are strongly practiced today.

I would like to expand this Project further to be utilized for Togiak Schools with the permission of the Togiak Traditional Council in the future. Since the Bristol Bay Native Association works directly with federally recognized tribal entities including Togiak, part of the protocol is to inform them of any proposed research projects. If the tribal entity wishes to participate in any projects, they usually notify the Bristol Bay Native Association.

Again, *quyana!* to the community of Togiak for letting us come to your homes and for sharing with us the local Yup'ik Eskimo tradition Native knowledge on walrus information in Bristol Bay. Without your local expertise and support, this project would not be a success.

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**BRISTOL BAY NATIVE ASSOCIATION**

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January 8, 2008

Charles D. N. Brower, Chairman
Eskimo Walrus Commission
P.O. Box 948
Nome, AK 99672

Dear Charles:

At the December 13, 2007, Qayassiq Walrus Commission (QWC) Post Hunt Meeting, the QWC Commissioners approved the FY2008 QWC/EWC Scope of Work & Budget in the amount of \$ 84,401. The QWC is aware of the Eskimo Walrus Commission's (EWC) budget cuts, and the FY2008 QWC/EWC Scope of Work & Budget exceeds the current EWC's annual co-management agreement funds EWC receives from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Enclosed is a reduced working document FY2008 QWC/EWC Budget in the amount of \$24,296.00 for the Eskimo Walrus Commission to take action on at the Annual EWC Meeting on January 15, 16, 2008. I have also sent the proposed reduced FY2008 QWC/EWC Budget to the Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA)'s Comptroller, Les Teterud for his files. Also, enclosed is the adopted FY2008 QWC/EWC Scope of Work & Budget in the amount of \$ 84,401.

The Round Island Cooperators consisting of the Qayassiq Walrus Commission (QWC), the Eskimo Walrus Commission (EWC), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) need to come up with annual operational funds for the Qayassiq Walrus Commission. Since the FY2006 QWC/EWC Scope of Work ended around March 31, 2007, I have been conducting QWC business activities with no salary. The Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA) Natural Resource Department has no budget funds to cover my QWC salary and fringe. Some of my salary has been covered by the Natural Resource Department, but their budget is limited and is getting drained. Realistically, to conduct daily QWC business activities, my salary and fringe should be for six months (6 month salary: \$26,460 and 6 months Fringe Benefits @43%: \$ 11,378). I have included the following budget line items in the reduced FY2008 QWC/EWC Budget: QWC Travel and Per Diem for one face-to-face meeting; QWC staff salary for two months; QWC Staff Fringe Benefits (43%); QWC staff travel (if village meeting); QWC staff per diem; Phone, Xerox, and Postage Expenses; Meeting Supply expenses, and BBNA Indirect Rate (28.66%). The important budget line items

Eskimo Walrus Commission
January 8, 2008
Page Two

not included in the reduced working document for the FY2008 QWC Budget is: Round Island Hunt Monitor activities; Bristol Bay Summer Youth Stewardship Program (BBSYSP) Intern Program coordination; QWC office activities-reports, minutes, logistics, and related time).

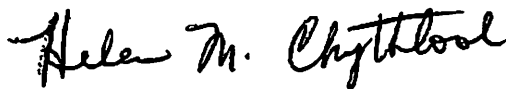
The QWC Commissioners and QWC Hunt Captain's expressed the importance of face-to-face meetings so they can plan the hunt, review hunt guidelines, provide traditional advice to inexperienced young hunters, get current walrus population and related information, resolve any walrus issues of concerns, get recommendations between the agency representatives, the Eskimo Walrus Commission for the QWC Commissioners to effectively manage the traditional annual Fall walrus hunt at Qayassiq (Round Island).

The Qayassiq Walrus Commission would like to continue working closely with the Eskimo Walrus Commission and Round Island Cooperators in future walrus hunts and related projects. We thank you for your continued support and hope some long-term permanent funding decisions will be worked out. As you are aware, the Qayassiq Walrus Commission also acts as a liason or spokesperson when conflicting traditional subsistence issues of concern arise in walrus, seals, salmon species, clams, halibut, and other marine food sources harvested by the Bristol Bay and the Alaska Peninsula residents.

Quyana!

Sincerely,

QAYASSIQ WALRUS COMMISSION



Helen M. Chythlook
QWC Executive Director

cc: Rosa Meehan, USFWS Marine Mammals Management
Joe Meehan, ADF&G- Lands & Refuge Program
Eskimo Walrus Commission
Qayassiq Walrus Commissioners
Les Teterud, BBNA Comptroller

Enclosure: FY2008 QWC/EWC Scope of Work & Budget
Reduced working document FY2008 QWC/EWC Budget

**Qayassiq Walrus Commission
Reduced FY2008 Working Budget
For the Eskimo Walrus Commission
January 9, 2008**

Budget Line Item	Expenses
QWC Travel	\$ 3,000.00
QWC Per Diem	\$ 5,000.00
QWC Staff Salary (2 months)	\$ 6,615.00
QWC Staff Fringe Benefit (43%)	\$ 2,844.00
QWC Staff Travel (if village meeting)	\$ 200.00
QWC Staff Per Diem	\$ 375.00
Phone Expenses	\$ 250.00
Xerox Expenses	\$ 50.00
Postage Expenses	\$ 200.00
Meeting Supply Expenses	\$ 250.00
Meeting Food Expenses	\$ 100.00
BBNA Total Direct Costs	\$ 18,884.00
BBNA Indirect Rate (28.66%)	\$ 5,412.00
TOTAL QWC Expenses	\$ 24,296.00

Budget Justification

QWC Travel-QWC travel is for one QWC Commissioners and QWC Hunt Captain's face-to-face meeting this includes round trip airfares and taxi cab fees.

QWC Per Diem-QWC Per diem is for one QWC Commissioners and QWC Hunt Captain's QWC meeting to pay for meals, lodging and Incidentals while attending the meeting.

QWC Staff Salary- is for QWC staff to manage QWC activities in preparation for QWC meeting, monitor QWC Fall walrus hunt.

QWC Staff Fringe- is for QWC staff fringe is computed at 43%.

QWC Staff Travel-is for staff to travel to one meeting in village

QWC Staff Per Diem – is for staff lodging, meals for two nights in village.

Phone Expenses –covers QWC Commission business for meetings, hunt and related business includes faxes to QWC Commissioners and QWC hunt communities.

Xerox Expenses-covers QWC meeting preparation packets, QWC reports, QWC correspondence and related QWC business.

Postage Expenses- includes postage for mailing QWC Commissioners/QWC Hunt Captain meeting prep; QWC Hunt information, QWC Hunt Permits and related business.

Meeting Supply Expenses-include QWC meeting supplies-packet supplies, and related items.

Meeting Food Expenses-include amenities for meeting-coffee, creamer, sugar, eatery items, pastry, soft drinks and related meeting items.

BBNA Indirect Rate-is computed at 28.66%

PROJECT: EWC 2008**Eskimo Walrus Commission****Fiscal Year 2008**

- 1.0 TITLE: Cooperative activities with the Qayassiq Walrus Commission/Bristol Bay Native Association**
- 2.0 PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES:**
- 1. Support the operation of the Qayassiq (Round Island) Walrus Commission**
 - 2. Conduct a hunter training/orientation workshop**
 - 3. Monitor the subsistence walrus hunt at Round Island**
 - 4. Monitor the walrus haulout at Round Island**
 - 5. Support the Bristol Bay Summer Youth Stewardship Program**
- 3.0 STATUS: This year's activities will build on accomplishments made in FY 1998-2007.**
- 4.0 GOALS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE QAYASSIQ WALRUS COMMISSION/BRISTOL BAY NATIVE ASSOCIATION:**
- 4.1 Arrange and conduct meetings of the Qayassiq Walrus Commission and Round Island hunt captains in coordination with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.**
 - 4.2 Conduct a hunter training/orientation session prior to the 2008 Round Island hunt.**
 - 4.3 Monitor the Round Island Subsistence walrus hunt in partnership with the USFWS.**
 - 4.4 Monitor the Round Island walrus haulout in partnership with the USFWS.**
 - 4.5 Recruit, train and hire up to 2 student interns a year to provide direct support for walrus population monitoring and research. Each intern will provide up to 4 weeks in a field camp in Bristol Bay, Alaska assisting federal and state biologists with walrus studies and field camp operations.**
 - 4.6 Provide products including:**
 - a) Quarterly reports of activities accomplished under this objective.**
 - b) Annual summary reports of activities and accomplishments conducted under this objective.**
 - c) Round Island subsistence harvest summary report.**
- 5.0 INVOLVEMENT BY THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE:**
- 5.1 Attend meetings of the Qayassiq Walrus Commission**
 - 5.2 Provide technical assistance and field equipment to the BBNA/QWC in monitoring the Round Island subsistence walrus hunt.**
 - 5.3 Provide technical assistance and supervision of Interns at field camps**
 - 5.4 Collaborate with BBNA staff with report and publication preparation and editing**

6.0 COST ESTIMATES FOR FY2008 ACTIVITIES:

Description	Budget
1. BBNA personnel (project administration)	\$ 27,500
2. QWC travel costs (pre and post hunt meetings)	\$ 16,700
3. Monitor Round Island Haulout	
Intern travel (2 x 950)	\$ 1,900
Food & supplies	\$ 1,000
4. Monitor Round Island Subsistence Hunt	
Hunt Monitor	\$ 5,000
Travel Expenses	\$ 6,000
Food & supplies	\$ 500
5. Bristol Bay Summer Youth Stewardship Program	
Intern stipends (2 x \$ 2,500)	\$ 5,000
Intern travel & per diem (training @ 2 x \$ 692)	\$ 2,000
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	\$ 65,600
TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS BBNA @ 28.66%	\$ 18,801
TOTAL	\$ 84,401

§ 679.22 *Closures.*

(a) *BSAI*

(1) Zone 1 (512) closure to trawl gear.

No fishing with trawl gear is allowed at any time in reporting Area 512 of Zone 1 in the Bering Sea subarea.

(2) Zone 1 (516) closure to trawl gear.

No fishing with trawl gear is allowed at any time in reporting Area 516 of Zone 1 in the Bering Sea Subarea during the period March 15 through June 15.

(3) Red King Crab Savings Area (RKCSA).

Directed fishing for groundfish by vessels using trawl gear other than pelagic trawl gear is prohibited at all times, except as provided at § 679.21(e)(3)(ii)(B), in that part of the Bering Sea subarea defined as RKCSA in Figure 11 to this part.

(4) Walrus protection areas.

From April 1 through September 30 of any fishing year, vessels with a Federal fisheries permit under § 679.4 are prohibited in that part of the Bering Sea subarea between 3 and 12 nm seaward of the baseline used to measure the territorial sea around islands named Round Island and The Twins, as shown on National Ocean Survey Chart 16315, and around Cape Peirce (58° 33' N. lat., 161° 43' W. long.).

(5) Catcher Vessel Operational Area (CVOA)

(i) Definition. The CVOA is defined as that part of the BSAI that is south of 56° 00' N lat. and between 163° 00' W long. and 167° 30' W long., and north of the Aleutian Islands (Figure 2 to part 679).

(ii) Catcher/processor restrictions. A catcher/processor vessel authorized to fish for BSAI pollock under § 679.4 is prohibited from conducting directed fishing for pollock in the CVOA during the B pollock season defined at § 679.23(e)(2)(ii), unless it is directed fishing for pollock CDQ.

(6) Pribilof Island Area Habitat Conservation Zone. Trawling is prohibited at all times in the area defined in Figure 10 to this part as the Pribilof Island Area Habitat Conservation Zone.

(7) Steller sea lion protection areas, Bering Sea subarea

(i) Bogoslof area

(A) Boundaries. The Bogoslof area consists of all waters of area 518 as described in Figure 1 of this part south of a straight line connecting 55° 00' N lat./170° 00' W long., and 55° 00' N lat./168° 11'4.75" W long.;

(B) Fishing prohibition. All waters within the Bogoslof area are closed to directed fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel by vessels named on a Federal Fisheries Permit under § 679.4(b), except as provided in paragraph (a)(7)(i)(C) of this section.

(C) Bogoslof Pacific cod exemption area.

(1) All catcher vessels less than 60 ft (18.3 m) LOA using jig or hook-and-line gear for directed fishing for Pacific cod are exempt from the Pacific cod fishing prohibition as described in paragraph (a)(7)(i)(B) of this section in the portion of the Bogoslof area south of a line connecting a point 3 nm north of Bishop Point (54°01'25" N lat./166° 57'00" W long.) to Cape Tanak (53°33'50" N lat./168° 00'00" W long.), not including waters of the Bishop Point Pacific cod fishing closures as described in Table 5 of this part.

(2) If the Regional Administrator determines that 113 mt of Pacific cod have been caught by catcher vessels less than 60 ft (18.3 m) LOA using jig or hook-and-line gear in the exemption area described in paragraph (a)(7)(i)(C)(1) of this section, the Regional Administrator will prohibit directed fishing for Pacific cod by catcher vessels less than 60 ft (18.3 m) LOA using jig or hook-and-line gear in the exemption area by notification published in the *Federal Register*.

(ii) Bering Sea Pollock Restriction Area.

(A) Boundaries. The Bering Sea Pollock Restriction Area consists of all waters of the Bering Sea subarea south of a line connecting the points 163° 0'00" W long./55° 46'30" N lat., 165° 08'00" W long./54° 42'9" N lat., 165° 40'00" W long./54° 26'30" N lat., 166° 12'00" W long./54° 18'40" N lat., and 167° 0'00" W long./54° 8'50" N lat.

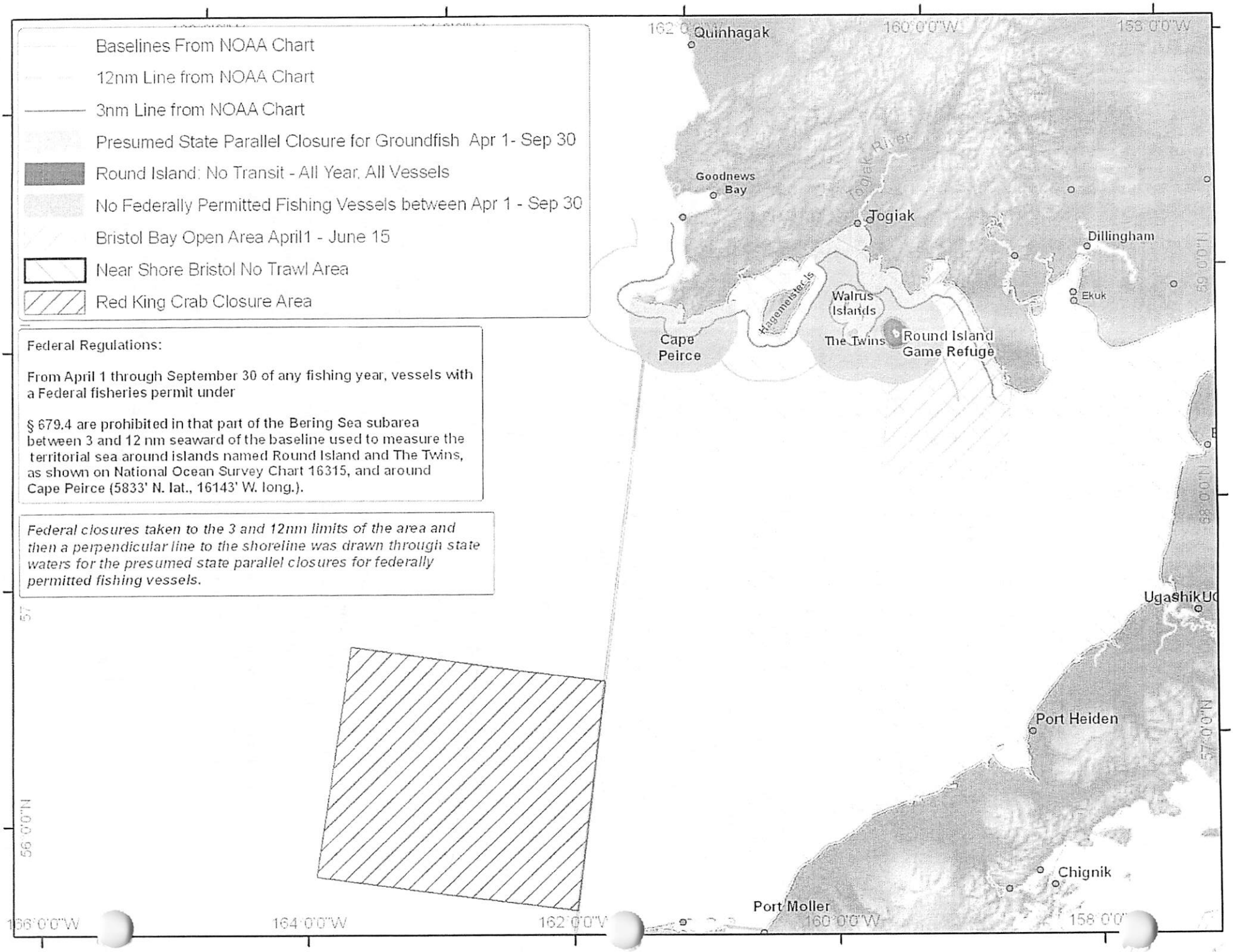
(B) Fishing prohibition. All waters within the Bering Sea Pollock Restriction Area are closed during

-  Baselines From NOAA Chart
-  12nm Line from NOAA Chart
-  3nm Line from NOAA Chart
-  Presumed State Parallel Closure for Groundfish Apr 1- Sep 30
-  Round Island: No Transit - All Year, All Vessels
-  No Federally Permitted Fishing Vessels between Apr 1 - Sep 30
-  Bristol Bay Open Area April 1 - June 15
-  Near Shore Bristol No Trawl Area
-  Red King Crab Closure Area

Federal Regulations:

From April 1 through September 30 of any fishing year, vessels with a Federal fisheries permit under § 679.4 are prohibited in that part of the Bering Sea subarea between 3 and 12 nm seaward of the baseline used to measure the territorial sea around islands named Round Island and The Twins, as shown on National Ocean Survey Chart 16315, and around Cape Peirce (5833' N. lat., 16143' W. long.).

Federal closures taken to the 3 and 12nm limits of the area and then a perpendicular line to the shoreline was drawn through state waters for the presumed state parallel closures for federally permitted fishing vessels.



-  Baselines From NOAA Chart
-  12nm Line from NOAA Chart
-  3nm Line from NOAA Chart
-  Round Island: No Transit - All Year, All Vessels
-  Presumed State Parallel Closure for Groundfish Apr 1- Sep 30
-  No Federally Permitted Fishing Vessels between Apr 1 - Sep 30
-  Bristol Bay Open Area April 1 - June 15
-  Near Shore Bristol No Trawl Area

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Federal closures taken to the 3 and 12nm limits of the area and then a perpendicular line to the shoreline was drawn through state waters for the presumed state parallel closures for federally permitted fishing vessels.

