

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Council, SSC, and AP members
FROM: Jim H. Branson *CBP*
Executive Director
DATE: May 18, 1981
SUBJECT: Status of Contracts and RFP's

ACTION REQUIRED

Mainly informational. However, some items may be ready for final approval.

BACKGROUND

Current Council contracts and RFP's are listed below with contract information on the funding amount, percent expended to date, duration, contractor, objectives, and status. Those contracts and RFP's requiring Council action at this meeting are indicated with an asterisk.

Current Council Contracts

- * 79-4: Analysis of Southeastern Alaska Troll Fisheries Data
(ADF&G, \$53,528, 52%, September 28, 1979 to March 1, 1981)

Objective: To evaluate the use of various troll data for time and area management of the Southeastern Alaska troll salmon fishery.

Status: The SSC has reviewed the final report during the past month. Given SSC approval, final Council approval could come in May.

- 80-3: Seasonal Use and Feeding Habits of Walruses in the Proposed Bristol Bay Clam Fishery Area
(IMS at UA, \$97,220, 45%, April 1, 1980 to September 1, 1981)

Objective: To assess the distribution and abundance of walruses in inner Bristol Bay monthly for one year and describe their feeding habits near and in the clam fishery area.

Status: The fourth quarterly report for January - March 1981 was received March 31, 1981 and has been distributed to the SSC.

- * Council action may be required at this meeting.

80-4: To Expand and Enhance the Domestic Commercial Fisheries Catch Data Reporting System Off Alaska.

(ADF&G, \$145,300, 42%, June 1, 1980 to December 30, 1981)

Objective: To enhance the quality and timeliness of domestic catch data required for fisheries management by developing and implementing a flexible and responsive data reporting system for catch summaries.

Status: The progress report for April 1981 has been received. The project appears to be on schedule.

81-2: Processing of Fisheries Data

(ADF&G and CFEC, \$55,000, 0%, October 1, 1980 to December 31, 1981)

Objective: To enhance capabilities of ADF&G and CFEC to provide harvest and processor data for 1977-79 to the Council.

Status: First quarterly report for January - March 1981 has been received.

Future Research

An RFP on Determinations of Stock Origins of Chinook Incidentally Caught in Foreign Trawls in the U.S. Eastern Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska FCZ has been sent out for bids which are due on June 12, 1981.

- * Proposals were due on May 8 for the RFP for research to Study the Data on Feeding Habits and Food Requirements of Marine Mammals in the Bering Sea. Four bids were received and will be evaluated by a proposal review group on May 26, 1981. The Council should be able to award the contract at this meeting.

- * Council action may be required at this meeting.

QUARTERLY REPORT

TO: North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
P.O. Box 3136DT
Anchorage, AK 99510

CONTRACT NUMBER: 80-3

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 January - 31 March 1981

SEASONAL USE AND FEEDING HABITS OF WALRUSES IN THE
PROPOSED BRISTOL BAY CLAM FISHERY AREA

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Francis H. Fay
Associate Professor of Marine Science
Institute of Marine Science
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, AK 99701

and

Lloyd F. Lowry
Game Biologist II
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
1300 College Road
Fairbanks, AK 99701

March 1981

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this project are to assess the degree to which walruses (Odobenus rosmarus) residing in Bristol Bay make use of the proposed surf clam (Spisula polynyma) fishery area between Ugashik Bay and Port Heiden, and to determine their feeding habits in and near that area. Distribution and relative numbers of walruses in Bristol Bay are being documented by means of monthly aerial surveys, and feeding habits will be determined by examination of stomach contents of collected animals. The project was begun in April 1980, and reports of the first three quarters' operations were submitted to the Council in July, September, and December 1980. Activities during the fourth quarter are reported here.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Aerial Surveys

Three aerial surveys were flown this quarter making a total of 10 surveys flown to date. Weather during the surveys was generally good, and we were able to cover most of the planned trackline on each.

During the first survey on 22 January, sea ice covered most of the northern half of the Bay and the nearshore portion of the clam fishery zone. Only four walruses were sighted: three on the ice about 20 nm SSE of Hagemeister Island and one in the water about 20 nm south of Round Island.

During the second survey on 10 February, ice was present only in the extreme northwestern part of Bristol Bay. Approximately 40 walrus were on Round Island, and one was seen in the water about 20 miles south of Hagemeister Island.

During the third survey on 10 March, ice was present only in the northern part of the Bay, extending southward about 20 nm from Hagemeister and the Walrus Islands and east to Cape Constantine. The beaches at Round Island were ice free, but there were no walrus there. Seventeen walrus were sighted on the ice about 15 nm SW of Cape Constantine, and one was sighted in the water about 10 nm NNE of Port Heiden, within the clam fishery zone.

Other Activities

From 20 February to 18 March, F. H. Fay and R. Nelson (ADF&G) participated in a Soviet-American research cruise in SE Bering Sea, with the objectives, in part, of surveying walrus distribution and examining stomach contents of walrus collected in and near the proposed clam fishery area. Because the aerial surveys in February and March indicated that few animals were present in the Bay, the major effort of the cruise was placed on the area west of Cape Newenham and south of Nunivak Island, where several thousand walrus were concentrated. Contents of stomachs from 15 animals taken in that area were composed mainly (50-60% by weight) of tellins (probably Tellins lutea) and surf clams (10-20%), Spisula polynyma, with small amounts of cockles, snails, pagurid crabs, and echuiroid worms.

Expecting that walruses will reappear in considerable numbers in the clam fishery zone in late March and April this year. we have arranged to use the ADF&G vessel R/V Resolution from 1-20 April to collect walruses in that area for stomach contents analysis. The April aerial survey will be scheduled such that current information on the whereabouts of the walruses will be available to people on board the Resolution.

PROBLEMS

No major problems were encountered in this quarter.

BUDGET ANALYSIS

Contract: 80-3 Walruses in Bristol Bay Clam Fishery Area

Date: 31 March 1981

<u>Category</u>	<u>Billed This Quarter</u>	<u>Total Billed</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Salaries	\$ 2,199.23	\$11,958.18	\$ 7,347.82
Benefits	464.04	2,523.18	1,550.82
Travel	327.90	2,944.99	502.01
Equipment	---0---	---0---	---0---
Supplies	---0---	280.32	219.68
Services			
Air Charter	6,792.85	21,684.49	-4,044.49
ADF&G Subcontract	5,725.29	9,377.00	11,772.00
Other	22.45	139.75	5,867.25
Overhead	1,719.79	9,351.30	5,745.70
Total	\$17,251.55	\$58,259.21	\$28,960.79

Amounts based on University of Alaska monthly status reports for the first 2 months of the quarter, plus estimated costs in the third month.

SUMMARY

Aerial surveys were conducted in January, February, and March. Very few walrus were seen in Bristol Bay. The winter season is the breeding time of walrus, and most of the population was in the pack ice farther west. Personnel participating in a Soviet-American research cruise located a major concentration in outer Kuskokwim Bay in February - March and found the animals there to be feeding mainly on tellins and surf clams. Plans were confirmed for use of the R/V Resolution for collection of walrus in the clam fishery zone during April.