United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
1011 E. Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

IN REPLY REFER TO:

FWS/AFES

Agenda Item B-6: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Report
December 6, 2013

**Endangered Species Act Issues:**

*Kittlitz's Murrelet:*
On October 3, 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) published its finding (Federal Register Vol. 78, No. 192) that listing the Kittlitz's murrelet as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act is not warranted. Therefore, the Kittlitz's murrelet was removed from the candidate species list.

For further information, contact Ellen Lance, Endangered Species Branch Chief at (907) 271-1467 or Ellen_Lance@fws.gov.

**Marine Mammals:**

*Pacific Walrus:*
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Mammals Management office has partnered with Dr. Lori Polasek of the Alaska Sea Life Center to expand her remote camera disturbance data collection project to the walrus haulout on Hagemeister Island. The overall project is designed to study disturbance impact and recovery on both historic (males) and emerging (primarily females and calves) walrus haulouts. The Hagemeister Island portion of the project will focus on using still images to better document haulout use and the potential for anthropogenic disturbance events related to marine vessel traffic.

Disturbance monitoring has been conducted at Round Island, Cape Peirce, Cape Newenham, and Cape Seniavin in previous years. There is a substantial amount of marine vessel traffic transiting Hagemeister Strait and managers have no information on frequency, severity, or cause of disturbance events at the Hagemeister haulout. The Service has recently issued guidelines to reduce the potential for disturbance of hauled out walrus from marine vessel traffic in Bristol Bay. Results from this investigation will help managers and mariners evaluate the effectiveness of these guidelines.

To record disturbance events, three time-lapse cameras and one acoustic monitor were deployed on the southwest coast of Hagemiester Island during 2013. On May 7, the

equipment was secured to posts at two locations. At the primary location (58°34'49.30"N 161°04'28.14"W) near the center of the beach: one camera was pointed at the beach where walrus were likely to haul out, a second camera was pointed at the water immediately in front of the beach to capture any disturbance sources, and the acoustic monitor was mounted. To achieve more complete coverage of the beach, a third camera was mounted at a second location (58°34'45.16"N 161°04'27.24"W) near the end of the beach. Cameras took images once per minute from 7am to 9pm, while the acoustic monitor continuously recorded ambient sound at the site during the same time period. Based on the projected battery life and data acquisition rates, it is estimated that the equipment monitored the haulout for 71 days. This equipment was recovered in late October. Image analysis is ongoing.

Partial funding for the Hagemeister project was provided by Alaska Seafood Cooperative, Glacier Fish Company, American Sea Foods, and the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund.

For further information, contact Jonathon Snyder, Wildlife Biologist at (907) 786-3819 or Jonathon_Snyder@fws.gov.