

NATIVE VILLAGE OF SAVOONGA

RESOLUTION NO. 11 - 13

**A RESOLUTION TO PERMANENTLY BAN THE TRAWL FLEET IN THE
NORTHERN BERING SEA RESEARCH AREA**

WHEREAS: NATIVE VILLAGE OF SAVOONGA IS A FEDERALLY
RECOGNIZED TRIBE; AND

WHEREAS: THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) IS DOING
RESEARCH IN THE NORTHER BERING SEA RESEARCH AREA TO DETERMINE
WHAT SPECIES ARE PRESENT; AND

WHEREAS: BOTTOM TRAWL FISHERIES ARE GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED AS
BEING DESTRUCTIVE TO BENTHIC (BOTTOM) HABITAT; AND

WHEREAS: MARINE ANIMALS THAT BERING STRAIT REGION RESIDENTS
DEPEND ON AS SUBSISTENCE RESOURCES ARE HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON A
HEALTHY ON A HEALTHY BENTHIC HABITAT; AND

WHEREAS: NATIVE VILLAGE OF SAVOONGA IS OPPOSED TO THE
EXPANSION OF COMMERCIAL BOTTOM TRAWL FISHERIES INTO THE AREA
KNOWN AS THE NORTHERN BERING SEA RESEARCH AREA, WHICH
ENCOMPASSES THE NORTHERN BERING SEA FROM APPROXIMATELY ST.
MATTHEW ISLAND NORTH TO THE BERING STRAIT,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: NATIVE VILLAGE OF SAVOONGA
DOES HERBY REQUEST THAT THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
BAN ALL BOTTOM TRAWL FISHING IN TE NORTHERN BERING SEA
RESEARCH AREA.

BY: Ronnie Toolie
PRESIDENT

CERTIFICATION

I, THE UNDERSIGNED SECRETARY OF THE NATIVE VILLAGE OF SAVOONGA, HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED BY MAJORITY VOTE OF THE NATIVE VILLAGE OF SAVOONGA IRA COUNCIL DURING A DULY CALLED MEETING ON THIS 6TH DAY OF MAY, 2011.

BY: *Peggy A. Hayes*
SECRETARY



Mary's Igloo Traditional Council

P.O. Box 546 Teller, AK 99778

Ph. (907) 642-3731

Email: cablowaluk@kawerak.org

Fax# (907) 642-2189

Resolution NO.11-05-11-01

A RESOLUTION TO PERMANENTLY BAN THE TRAWL FLEET IN THE NORTHERN BERING SEA RESEARCH AREA

WHEREAS: The Mary's Igloo Traditional Council is a federally recognized tribe; AND

WHEREAS: the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is doing research in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area to determine what species are present; AND

WHEREAS: Bottom trawl fisheries are going globally recognized as being destructive to benthic (bottom) habitat; AND

WHEREAS: Marine animals that the Bering Strait region residents depend on as subsistence resources are highly dependent on a healthy benthic habitat; AND

WHEREAS: The Mary's Igloo Traditional Council is opposed to the expansion of commercial bottom trawl fisheries into the area known as the Northern Bering Sea Research Area, which encompasses the Northern Bering Sea from approximately St. Matthew Island to the Bering Strait,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: The Mary's Igloo Traditional Council does hereby request that the National Marine Fisheries Service ban all bottom trawl fishing in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area.

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the following resolution was adopted at a duly convened meeting of Mary's Igloo Traditional Council at which a quorum was present by a vote of 5 in favor, ~~0~~ opposed, 2 absent.



Lucy H. Oquilluk, President



Albert W. Oquilluk, Secretary

ATTEST

5-11-11

Date

5/11/11

Date



NATIVE VILLAGE OF GAMBELL

P.O. BOX 90 • Gambell, Alaska 99742
Telephone: (907) 985-5346 • FAX: (907) 985-5014

NATIVE VILLAGE OF GAMBELL IRA COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 11-16

A RESOLUTION TO PERMANENTLY BAN THE TRAWL FLEET IN THE NORTHERN BERING SEA RESEARCH AREA

WHEREAS: Native Village of Gambell is a federally recognized tribe; AND

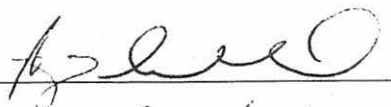
WHEREAS: the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is doing research in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area to determine what species are present; AND

WHEREAS: Bottom trawl fisheries are globally recognized as being destructive to benthic (bottom) habitat; AND

WHEREAS: Marine animals that Bering Straits region residents depend on as subsistence resources are highly dependent on a healthy benthic habitat; AND

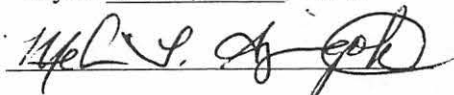
WHEREAS: Native Village of Gambell is opposed to the expansion of commercial bottom trawl fisheries into the area known as the Northern Bering Sea Research Area, which encompasses the northern Bering Sea from approximately St. Matthews Island north to the Bering Straits,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: Native Village of Gambell does hereby request that the National Marine Fisheries Service ban all bottom trawl fishing in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area.

By: 
Iver Campbell

CERTIFICATION

I, THE UNDERSIGNED Secretary of the Native Village of Gambell, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by majority vote of the IRA Council during a duly called meeting on this 11th day of MAY, 2011.

By: 
Secretary



RESOLUTION # 11-13

A RESOLUTION TO PERMANENTLY BAN THE TRAWL FLEET IN THE NORTHERN BERING SEA RESEARCH AREA

WHEREAS, The Native Village of Elim, Elim IRA, is a federally recognized tribe under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934; AND

WHEREAS, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is doing research in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area to determine what species are present; AND

WHEREAS, Bottom trawl fisheries are globally recognized as being destructive to benthic (bottom) habitat; AND

WHEREAS, Marine mammals that Bering Strait region residents depend on as subsistence resources are highly dependent on a healthy benthic habitat; AND

WHEREAS, The Native Village of Elim is opposed to the expansion of commercial bottom trawl fisheries into the area known as the Northern Bering Sea Research Area, which encompasses the Northern Bering Sea from approximately St. Matthew Island north to the Bering Strait,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: The Native Village of Elim does hereby request that the National Marine Fisheries Service ban all bottom trawl fishing in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area.

By: Robert A. Keith
Robert A. Keith/ President

Fredrick B. Murray
Fredrick B. Murray/ Vice President

CERTIFICATION,

I, the undersigned Secretary of the Native Village of Elim, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by a majority vote of the Native Village of Elim during a duly called meeting on this 18th day of May, 2011

By: Wallace Amaktoolik Jr.
Secretary Wallace Amaktoolik Jr.

**NATIVE VILLAGE OF SHISHMAREF
SHISHMAREF IRA COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 72110
SHISHMAREF, ALASKA 99772**

RESOLUTION NO. 11-06

A RESOLUTION TO PERMANENTLY BAN THE TRAWL FLEET IN THE NORTHERN BERING SEA RESEARCH AREA

WHEREAS: The Native Village of Shishmaref is a federally recognized tribe; AND

WHEREAS: the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is doing research in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area to determine what species and present; AND

WHEREAS: Bottom trawl fisheries are globally recognized as being destructive and benthic (bottom) habitat; AND

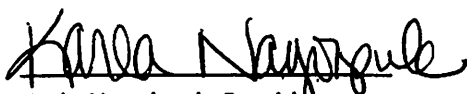
WHEREAS: Marine animals that Bering Strait region residents depend on as subsistence resources are highly dependent on a healthy benthic habitat; AND

WHEREAS: The Native Village of Shishmaref is opposed to the expansion of commercial bottom trawl fisheries into the area known as the Northern Bering Sea Research Area, which encompasses the northern Bering Sea from approximately St. Matthew Island north to the Bering Strait,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: The Native Village of Shishmaref does hereby request that the National Marine Fisheries Service ban all bottom trawl fishing in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area.

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted at a duly convened meeting of the Shishmaref IRA council at which a quorum was present, by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstain, on May 10, 2011.


Karla Nayokpuk, President

 Donna Barr
Frieda Eningowuk, Secretary vice-president

**NVT/TTC NATIVE VILLAGE OF TELLER
TELLER TRADITIONAL COUNCIL**

P.O. BOX 567
TELLER, ALASKA 99778

Resolution No. TR-05-11-11-01

**A RESOLUTION TO PERMANENTLY BAN THE TRAWL FLEET IN THE
NORTHERN BERING SEA RESEARCH AREA**

WHEREAS, the Native Village of Teller / Teller Traditional Council is a federally recognized tribe; and

WHEREAS, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is doing research in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area to determine what species are present; and

WHEREAS, Bottom trawl fisheries are globally recognized as being destructive to benthic (bottom) habitat; and

WHEREAS, marine animals that Bering Strait region residents depend on has subsistence resources are highly dependent on a healthy benthic habitat; and

WHEREAS, Teller Traditional Council is opposed to the expansion of commercial bottom trawl fisheries into the area known as the Northern Bering Sea Research Area, which encompasses the Northern Bering Sea from approximately St. Matthew Island North to the Bering Strait,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Teller Traditional Council does hereby request that the national Marine fisheries service ban all bottom trawl fishing in the northern Bering Sea Research Area.

CERTIFICATION

Passed this 11th day of May, 2011 at a duly called and convened Tribal Council meeting by a vote of 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstaining, at which a quorum was present.


Wesley Okbaok, President


Dolly Kogzruk, Secretary



May 31, 2011

Dr. James Balsiger, Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Region
709 West Ninth Street, Juneau, AK
99802-1668

Dr. Doug Demaster, Director of Science and Research; and
Dr. Russ Nelson, Director, RACE Division
Alaska Fishery Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service
7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Building 4
Seattle, Washington 98115

Re: Northern Bering Sea Research Plan

Dear Dr. Balsiger, Dr. Demaster, and Dr. Nelson:

In 2007, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) wisely recommended and the Secretary of Commerce in 2008 approved 1) closing the Northern Bering Sea to bottom trawling as a precautionary measure, and 2) establishing the Northern Bering Sea Research Area (NBSRA). The NBSRA currently is appropriately closed to bottom trawling and the issuance of Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs) until a Northern Bering Sea Research Plan (NBSRP) is developed and implemented. The NBSRP is necessary to ensure there is adequate ecological knowledge to understand the structure and function of the ecosystem in order to ensure marine mammals, crab, ESA-listed species, and subsistence are not impacted by any possible future fishing activities. Therefore, the NBSRP needs to be structured around an interdisciplinary ecosystem approach along with a long-term commitment to monitoring. We recommend that the creation of a NBSRP be a collaborative effort including expertise on the four considerations that were specified in the NPMFC motion and NMFS's rulemaking – marine mammals, crab, ESA-listed species and subsistence.

We appreciate the effort scientists at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center have made to reach out to the communities and public for input on the research plan design. Having participated in two agency-sponsored workshops, community discussions and other meetings, we offer the following recommendations for further development of the research plan.

The NBSRP should follow the example of the Bering Sea Ecosystem Study and Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (BEST-BSIERP), which is a good model integrating scientific disciplines to address overarching hypotheses that further our understanding of the ecosystem. An integrated NBSRP would help ensure that the best science informs management decisions. We realize that implementation of an integrated research program on the scale of BEST-BSIERP is an expensive commitment. However, there is still a need for integrated research planning on a reasonable scale that addresses long term monitoring needs and a means

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of predicting direct and indirect effects of potential bottom trawling on marine mammals, crab, ESA-listed species and subsistence.

The NBSRP should focus on studies that go beyond simply measuring the 'before and after' impact of bottom trawling. The direct effects of bottom trawling are already well known and considerable research has been done in a variety of habitat types. In general, relative to unfished habitat, areas fished with bottom trawls are expected to have reduced habitat complexity and species diversity, as well as changes in species composition (NRC 2002). These findings have been confirmed by studies conducted in Alaska (Brown et al. 2005, Freese et al. 1999, McConnaughey et al. 2000, NMFS 2003, NRC 2002). Trawling reduces structural complexity and diversity of habitat in the Bering Sea (McConnaughey et al. 2000). Commercial bottom trawling in sandy habitat on the inner Bering Shelf caused reduced macrofauna density, richness, and biomass with potential consequences for ecosystem functioning (Brown et al. 2005). Bottom trawling breaks up and scatters shell hash, making the habitat patchier and reducing the mean size of attached epifauna (McConnaughey et al. 2005). Empty shells, and individual and eggs of *Neptunea* sp., were all less abundant in heavily trawled areas, as were pagurid crabs that rely on empty shells for shelter (McConnaughey et al. 2000). One of the more obvious effects is that trawling reduces the biomass of stalked, encrusting, and attached organisms from the seafloor (McConnaughey et al. 2000). Heavy trawling resulted in a patchier and less structured habitat with lower diversity of sedentary taxa (McConnaughey et al. 2000). Bottom trawling also reduces the mean body size of benthic invertebrates (McConnaughey et al. 2005).

If NMFS believes 'before and after' bottom trawl studies are necessary in the type of habitat found in the northern Bering Sea, there is ample room to do so in areas now lightly fished or unfished yet open to bottom trawling. The NPFMC recently opened a previously closed "wedge" of ocean in the northern Bering Sea to trawling. This "Modified Gear Trawl Zone" is almost 11,000 square kilometers carved out of the Northern Bering Sea Research Area in which bottom trawling with modified gear is allowed. Trawling research could be conducted in untrawled locations within this zone.

There is a much greater need to study the indirect effects and ecological consequences of bottom trawling. For example, what would be the effect of reduced body size of benthic invertebrates to the northern Bering Sea food web? NMFS has the opportunity and obligation to ensure that the NBSRP is broad enough in scope to address predicted direct and indirect effects of bottom trawling on marine mammals, crabs, ESA-listed species, and subsistence, and is informed by a wide spectrum of scientific expertise and input from tribes and communities.

Changing and highly variable ocean conditions and sea ice in the northern Bering Sea region may be altering food webs, vital rates, distribution, and abundance of species (Cui et al 2009, Grebmeier et al 2006, Lovvorn et al. 2009, Mueter et al. 2010, Merrill et al. 2010, Stabeno et al. in press). During a series of extremely warm years (2000-2005), 45 fish species moved the center of their distribution northward (Mueter et al. 2010), however, an extensive cold pool during cold years could limit the northern distribution of many species (Stabeno et al. in press). Recent surveys have found Pacific halibut throughout the NBSRA, and as far north as 65°N (Lauth 2010). Halibut densities were particularly high north of Nunivak Island (Lauth 2010). Fish, including yellowfin sole, are important in the diets of marine mammals in the region, and may become an even larger component of the diets if communities change. Bearded seals in the northern Bering Sea prey extensively on fish and have a diverse diet, likely dependent on

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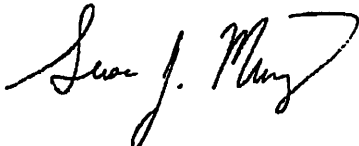
availability of prey (Antonelis et al. 1994). Further, changes in dominant bivalve communities have been observed (Grebmeier et al. 2006, Merrill et al. 2010) which has changed important habitat areas for eiders (Lovvorn 2009). Interpretation of the last 30 or so years of research has provided some description of the latitudinal differences between the northern and southern Bering Sea shelf (Stabeno et al., in press) and provided some background for broad predictions on how the region will respond to climate change (Grebmeier et al. 2006, Sigler et al. 2010, Stabeno et al., in press). In sum, however, we still know little about how these changes will affect the ecosystem, including endangered species, marine mammals, fish and shellfish species and other resources important to the tribes and communities in the region. It is crucial to first understand the ecological implications of such changes before the indirect effects of bottom trawling could reasonably be determined.

These changes in ocean conditions and a variety of other factors have impacts not just on the habitat and animal life of the northern Bering Sea, but also have impacts on the subsistence users who live in the region. Subsistence users have amassed long-term micro- and macro-level observations of the northern Bering Sea. This knowledge, as well as the concerns of subsistence communities, must be incorporated into and addressed by the NBSRP.

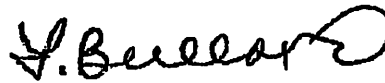
We strongly suggest that the NBSRP be developed by an interdisciplinary team. We recommend that NMFS solicit representation for a team with broad expertise to collaborate on the design of the research plan. Many scientists from other organizations and agencies have been studying the northern Bering Sea region and should be partners in a research plan. Local and traditional knowledge of residents of northern Bering Sea communities must be integrated into the NBSRP and having tribes and communities as partners would help accomplish that. A team approach can enable NMFS to present a plan to the Council that effectively addresses the issues they specified (marine mammals, ESA-listed species, crab and subsistence) and that, taken together, address ecological considerations for well-informed fishery management decisions in the northern Bering Sea.

Again, thank you for the work the agency has done towards a design for the northern Bering Sea research plan. We look forward to working with you further.

Thank you,



Susan Murray
Senior Director, Pacific
Oceana



Loretta Bullard
President
Kawerak, Inc.



Dorothy Childers
Associate Director
Alaska Marine Conservation Council

Cc: Eric Olson, Chair, North Pacific
Fishery Management Council

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PUBLIC TESTIMONY SIGN-UP SHEET

Agenda Item: C-3(a) HABITAT Conservation Area Boundary

	NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF:
1	David Bill Jason Anderson	BSEA 6 + AKSC
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NOTE to persons providing oral or written testimony to the Council: Section 307(1)(I) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act prohibits any person "to knowingly and willfully submit to a Council, the Secretary, or the Governor of a State false information (including, but not limited to, false information regarding the capacity and extent to which a United State fish processor, on an annual basis, will process a portion of the optimum yield of a fishery that will be harvested by fishing vessels of the United States) regarding any matter that the Council, Secretary, or Governor is considering in the course of carrying out this Act.