

A group of brown fur seals resting on dark rocks. The seals are the central focus, with one in the foreground looking towards the left. The background shows several other seals, some partially obscured, resting on the rocky terrain. The overall scene is a natural, outdoor setting.

# St. Paul Island co-management research and activities

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Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal Government

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# Pribilof Islands, Alaska



St. Paul



Walrus

Otter

St. George



# Aleut Community of St. Paul Island

- **Pre-contact:** Seagoing & bird culture
- **1786:** 'discovered' by Russian explorer G. Pribylov
- **1867:** U.S. Purchase of Alaska – continued forced labor
- **1952:** Tribal Government was founded
- **1984 - 85:** Emergency Rule ended commercial fur seal industry; Subsistence harvest provisions created under Federal regulations
- **2001:** Signed Co-Management Agreement with NMFS
- **2018/2019:** Revised Co-Management Agreement



# MMMPA - Co-Management

## Marine Mammal Protection Act Section 119:

- Close cooperation and communication between Federal agencies and Alaska Native Organizations, hunters and subsistence users.
- Co-Management Agreement encourages the exchange of information regarding the conservation, management, and subsistence use of marine mammals in U.S. waters in and around Alaska.



# St. Paul Island Co-Management

Laaqudan



P Melovidov

1988 - **Depleted** under  
MMPA

Qawan



J Merculief

1997 - **Endangered**  
under Endangered  
Species Act

Isuġin



B Lestenkof

**Unknown**  
population status

# ACSPI Goals - Co-Management

- Participate in equitable joint management with NMFS
- Ensure cultural continuity and sustainable connections between tribal members and marine mammals
- Contribute valuable information and data that advances research and management
- Implement management measures that recover/stabilize marine mammal populations



# ACSPI Roles in Co-Management

- Complete local research and management activities that Address Conservation/Recovery Plan needs
- Advocate for cultural continuity and sustainability of marine mammals
- Liaison between agency and community to ensure effective communication



A photograph of several brown fur seals resting on dark, jagged rocks. The seals are the central focus, with one in the foreground looking towards the left. The background is slightly blurred, showing more seals and rocks. The overall tone is natural and documentary.

St. Paul Island co-management  
research and activities

# ACSPI activities as co-managers

## 1.3.1 Monitor and manage subsistence harvests

- ECO manages n. fur seal sub-adult male harvests
- Self-monitoring in place since 2010
- Recent Action: Altered season end to minimize accidental female takes



\* Number scheme corresponds to NFS Conservation Plan Objectives

# ACSPI activities as co-managers

## 1.3.2 Develop and implement harvest sampling programs

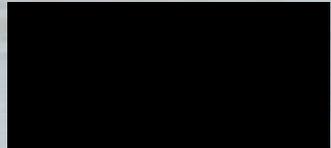
- Body Length (cm), teeth
- Blubber thickness (mm)
- Liver, Blubber, Fur, Muscle, Blood, Vibrissae, Bile



# ACSPI activities as co-managers

## 2.6 Assess and monitor pollutants

- Alaska Marine Mammal Tissue Archival Program (AMMTAP), NIST
- L. Rea, Marine Ecotoxicology and Trophic Assessment Laboratory METAL Lab, UAF
- State of Alaska Division of Public Health: consumption guidelines

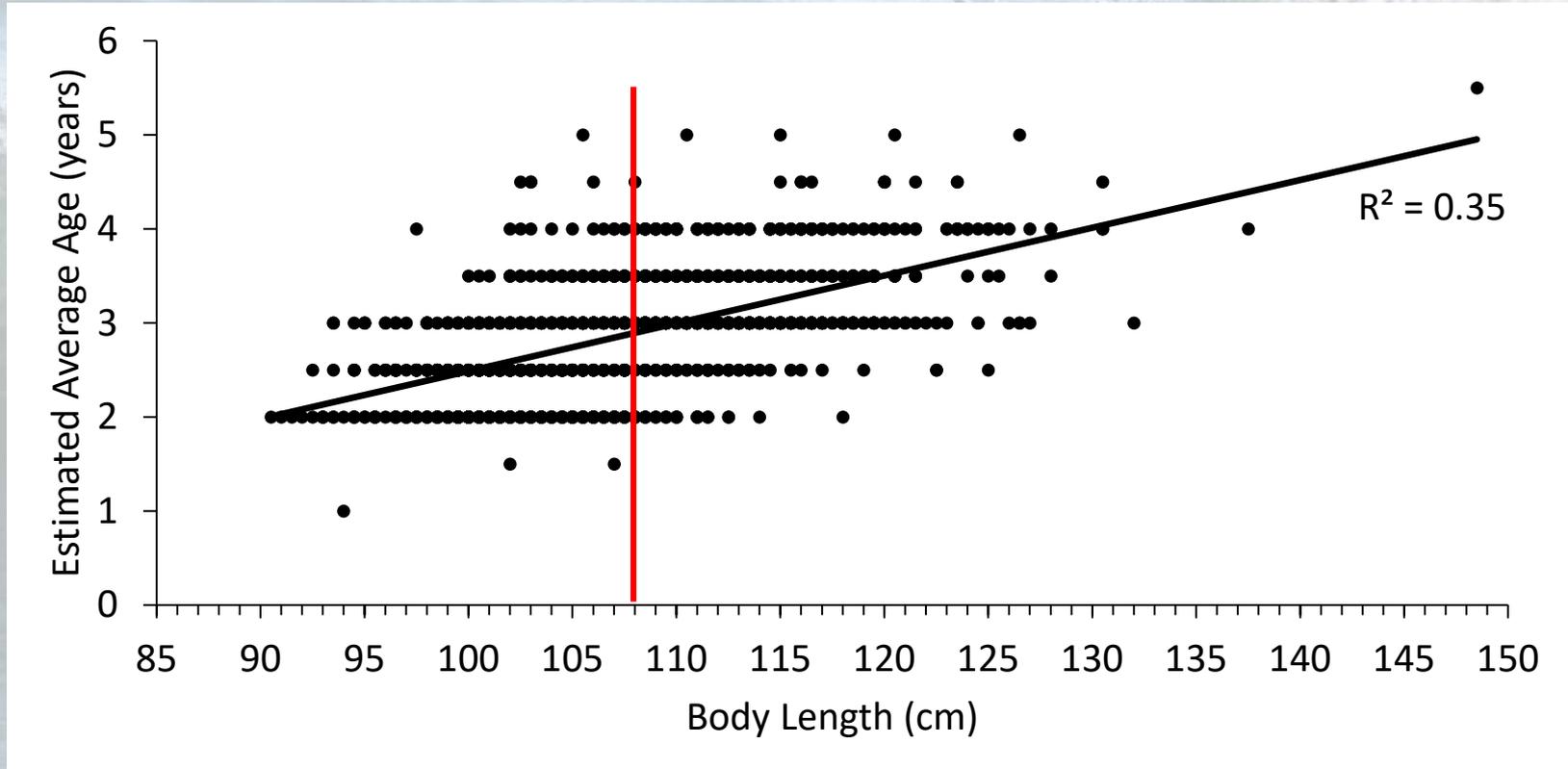


*State of Alaska  
Epidemiology*



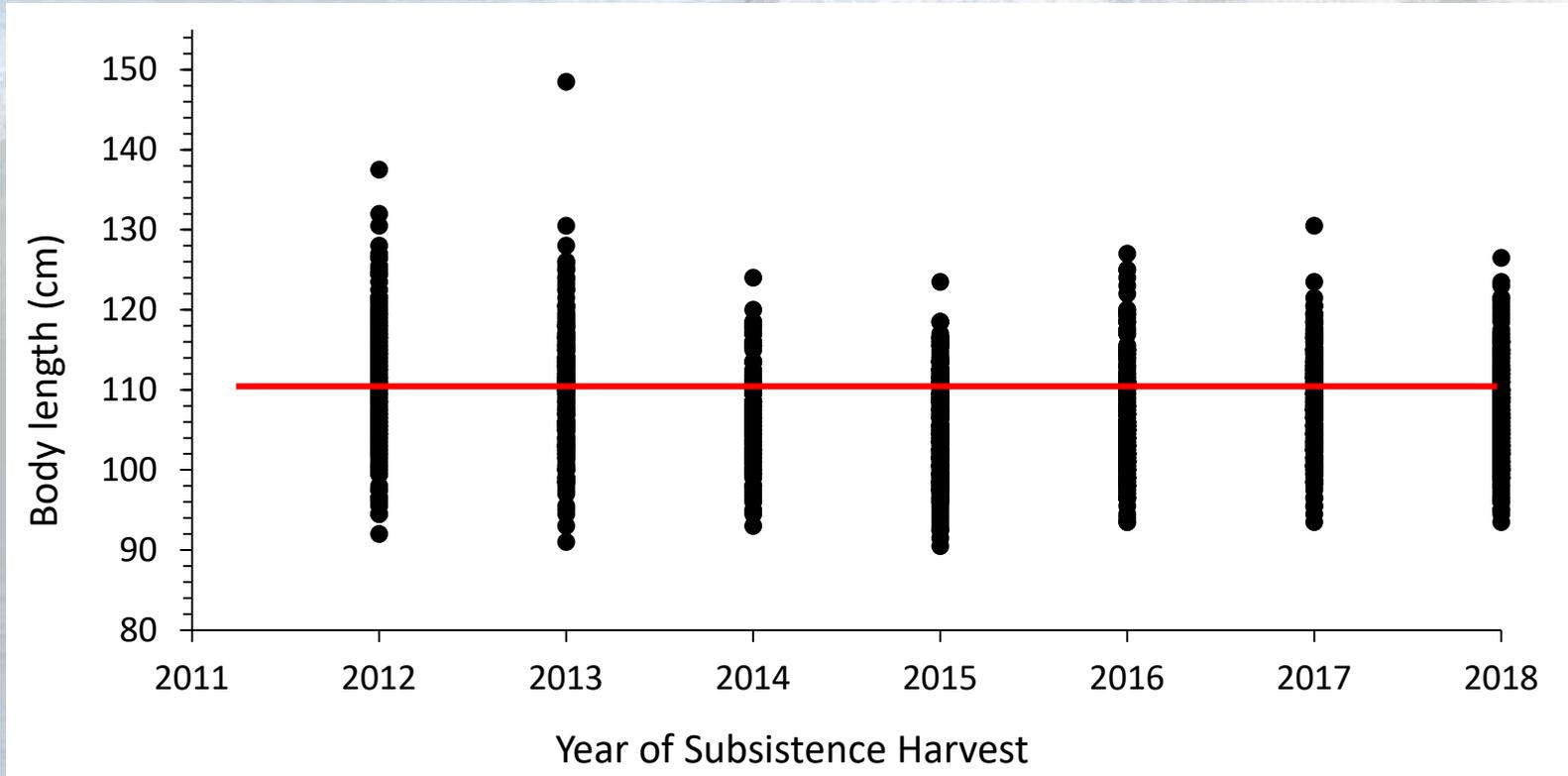
# ACSPI activities as co-managers

Length-at-age of harvested sub-adult males



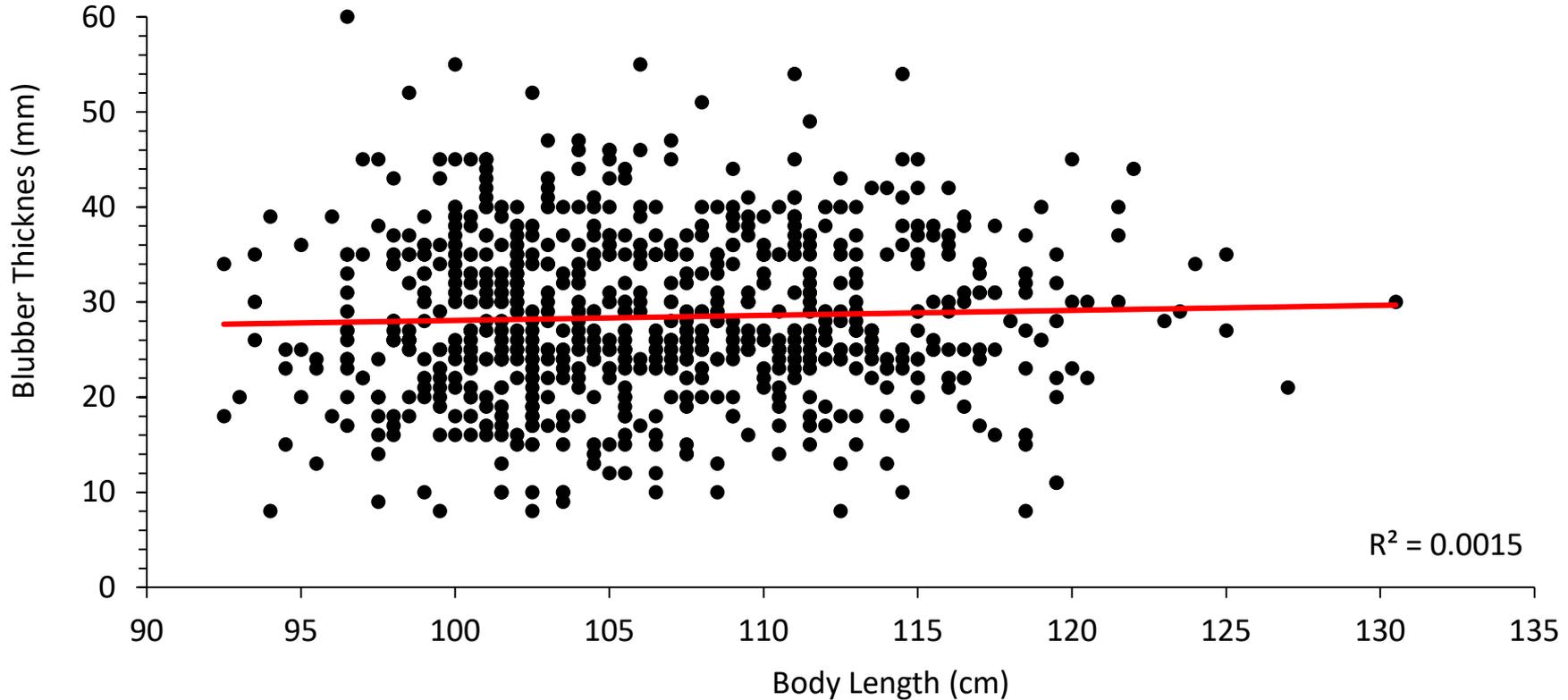
# ACSPI activities as co-managers

Length over time of harvested sub-adult males



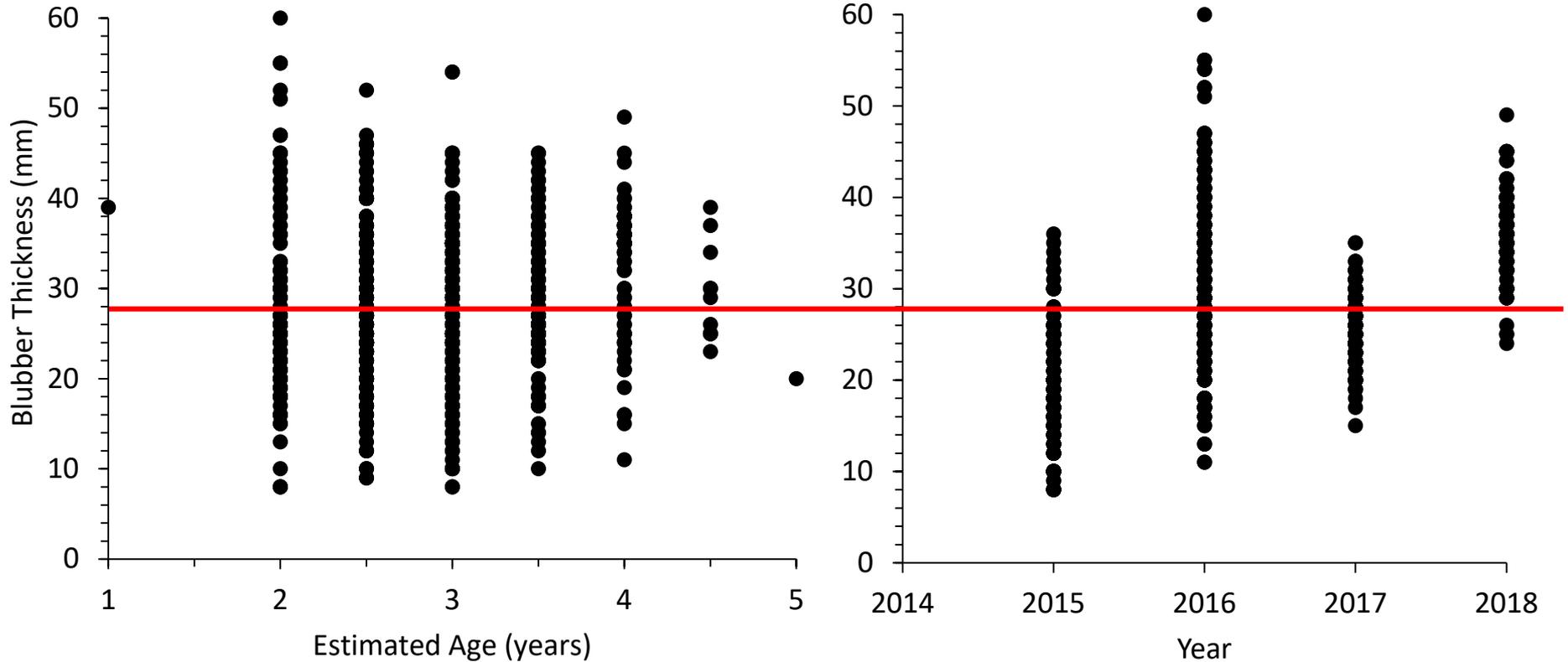
# ACSPI activities as co-managers

Body condition of harvested sub-adult males



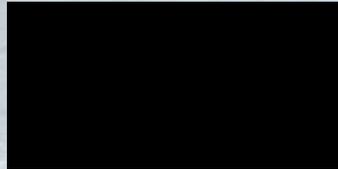
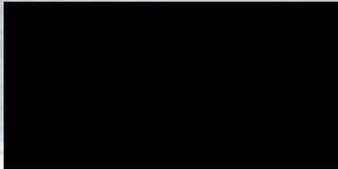
# ACSPI activities as co-managers

Body condition of harvested sub-adult males



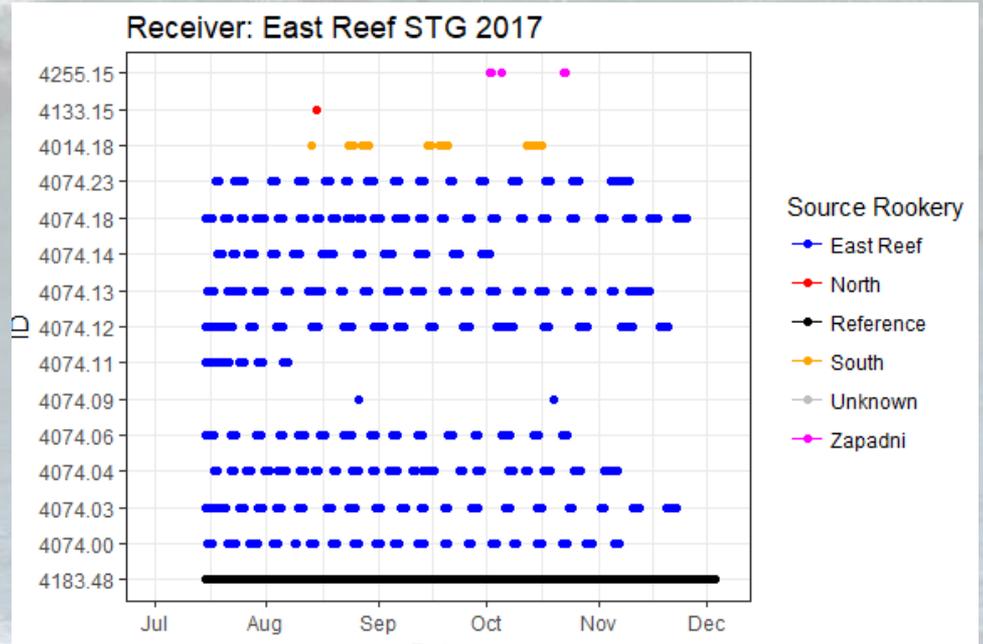
# ACSPI activities as co-managers

- 1.1 Improve understanding of the sources, fates, and effects of marine debris
  - > Local research; participation in global efforts
- 1.1.2 Remove marine debris and incorporate surveys of debris in northern fur seal habitat
  - > Regular clean-ups of critical fur seal habitat
- 1.1.3 Examine the fate of entangling debris
  - > New partnerships to address entanglement issues:



# ACSPI activities as co-managers

- 2.4 Conduct studies to quantify effects of human activities (e.g. research, hunting, tourism, vehicles, discharges, facilities) at or near breeding or resting areas



A photograph of several seals resting on a rocky shore. The seals are brown and tan in color, with some showing lighter patches. They are positioned in the foreground and background, with one seal in the center-left being the most prominent. The background is slightly blurred, showing more seals and rocks. The overall scene is a natural, outdoor setting.

Opportunities for co-management

# Immediate opportunities for co-management

2.5 Undertake conservation or management measures as necessary to eliminate or minimize deleterious impacts to fur seals

3.1.9 Promote joint research and collaborative programs

- Complete research to identify necessary management measures
- Room to improve and expand co-management research
- Tag/ resight collaboration opportunities



# Immediate opportunities for co-management

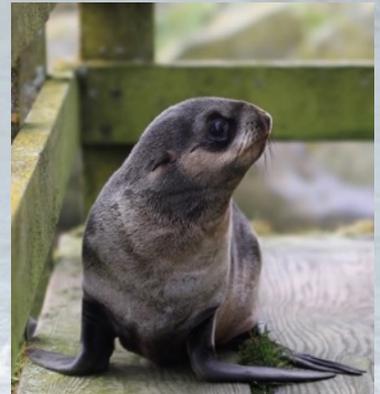
## 3.1.3 Estimate pup survival

- funded annual cohort tagging, re-sighting 2007 - 2017
- Not funded 2018 - unprecedented year in Bering Sea
- 2019 likely unfunded



## 3.1.3 Estimate stock vital rates

- Unfunded; potential in VHF collaborative project



**Loss of data impacts community and agency**

A photograph of several seals on a rocky beach. The seals are brown and tan in color, with some showing darker patches. They are resting on dark, jagged rocks. The background is slightly blurred, showing more seals and rocks. The overall scene is natural and serene.

Value of co-management data  
and participation to the NPFMC

# Co-management within NPFMC process

- Tribal Government possess unique and comprehensive body of indigenous and traditional knowledge
- ECO conducting long-term western scientific data collection
- Holistic local research and management capabilities that are sensitive to the community
- Positioned to be a valuable partner moving forward

# Txichin Qağaasakuqing

