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VOLUME I

ALASKA MIGRATORY BIRD CO-MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SPRING MEETING

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
APRIL 10, 2014

Members Present:

- Doug Vincent-Lang, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Pete Probasco, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Peter Devine, Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association
- Jack Fagerstrom, Kawerak
- Cyrus Harris, Maniilaq Association, Kotzebue
- Taqulik Hepa, North Slope Region, Barrow
- Joeneal Hicks, Copper River Native Association
- Gayla Hoseth, Bristol Bay Native Association
- Randy Mayo, Tanana Chiefs representative, Interior
- Myron Naneng, Association of Village Presidents
- George Squartsoff, Kodiak
- Jim Ujioka, Chugach Regional Resources Commission

Executive Director, Patty Brown-Schwalenberg

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Anchorage, Alaska - 4/10/2014)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I'd like to call the meeting to order. This is the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council and it's our annual spring meeting. A couple housekeeping things. First, the restrooms are down the hall to the left a little bit. Number two, when you speak, this is being recorded at this meeting, you have to hit the red button. If not, you'll see him raise his hands. You have to make sure you hit the red button and when you're done talking take the red button off.

I'd like to start the meeting with a quick moment of silence for two people that we've lost this last year, Herman Squartsoff and Joel Saccheus.

(Moment of silence)

CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: The next agenda item is seating of alternates. I don't think we have any alternates that we need to seat at this meeting. I think everybody in their chair is recognized. With that, I'm going to turn it over to Patty for a roll call and to establish quorum for the meeting.

Patty.

MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG:
Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Region.

MR. DEVINE: Here.

MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG:
Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Region.

MR. NANENG: Here.

MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Bristol Bay.

MS. HOSETH: Here.

MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Gulf of Alaska/Cook Inlet.

MR. UJIOKA: Here.

1 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Upper Copper
2 River Region.
3
4 MR. HICKS: Here.
5
6 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Bering
7 Straits/Norton Sound.
8
9 MR. FAGERSTROM: Here.
10
11 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Northwest
12 Arctic Region.
13
14 MR. HARRIS: Here.
15
16 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: North Slope
17 Region.
18
19 MS. HEPA: Here.
20
21 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Kodiak.
22
23 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Here.
24
25 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: And Interior.
26
27 MR. MAYO: Here.
28
29 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: The State of
30 Alaska.
31
32 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Present.
33
34 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: U.S. Fish and
35 Wildlife Service.
36
37 MR. PROBASCO: Good morning. Present.
38
39 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Mr. Chairman,
40 we have a quorum.
41
42 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you.
43 Thank you, everybody, for taking the time to come to
44 the meeting. I know the State really values the co-
45 management council process and looking at ways to make
46 sure that subsistence needs are being met for migratory
47 birds across Alaska. So thank you all for coming.
48
49 I think we'll do a round of
50 introductions. There's a lot of new faces and some of

1 them I don't recognize around the table. My name is
2 Doug Vincent-Lang. I'm the director for the Division
3 of Wildlife Conservation with the Alaska Department of
4 Fish and Game and within that division is the Migratory
5 Birds Program. Why don't we start down the table over
6 here.

7
8 MR. SQUARTSOFF: George Squartsoff,
9 Kodiak.

10
11 MR. DEVINE: Peter Devine,
12 Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association.

13
14 MS. HOSETH: Gayla Hoseth with Bristol
15 Bay Native Association in Dillingham.

16
17 MS. HEPA: Taqulik Hepa, North Slope
18 Region, Barrow.

19
20 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Patty
21 Schwalenberg, AMBCC.

22
23 MR. PROBASCO: Peter Probasco. I'm the
24 Assistant Regional Director for Migratory Birds, U.S.
25 Fish and Wildlife Service.

26
27 MR. NANENG: Myron Naneng, Sr. YK
28 Delta and Waterfowl Conservation Committee.

29
30 MR. HARRIS: Cyrus Harris, Maniilaq
31 Association, Kotzebue.

32
33 MR. HICKS: Joeneal Hicks, Copper
34 River, Ahtna Region.

35
36 MR. UJIOKA: Jim Ujioka, Chugach
37 Regional Resources Commission.

38
39 MR. MAYO: Randy Mayo, Tanana Chiefs
40 representative, Interior.

41
42 MR. FAGERSTROM: Jack Fagerstrom,
43 Kawerak.

44
45 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I know we're
46 not going to be able to capture this on sound here, but
47 if we could have members of the audience please quickly
48 introduce themselves so people know who they are.

49
50 DR. ROSENBERG: Good morning. I'm Dan

1 Rosenberg, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
2
3 MR. SANDERS: Todd Sanders, U.S. Fish
4 and Wildlife Service.
5
6 MR. NOEL: Good morning. I'm Ryan
7 Noel. I'm the acting special agent in charge for U.S.
8 Fish and Wildlife Service.
9
10 DR. TAYLOR: Hello, I'm Eric Taylor.
11 I'm the Migratory Bird Chief with the U.S. Fish and
12 Wildlife Service here in Anchorage.
13
14 MS. LARSON: Angie Larson with U.S.
15 Fish and Wildlife Service in Migratory Birds.
16
17 MR. DYASUK: Jon Dyasuk from Togiak
18 Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
19
20 DR. OTIS: I'm Dave Otis from Colorado
21 State University.
22
23 DR. FALL: Jim Fall, Department of Fish
24 and Game, Division of Subsistence.
25
26 MR. SCHAMBER: Jason Chamber, Alaska
27 Department of Fish and Game.
28
29 MR. PETRULA: Mike Petrula, Alaska
30 Department of Fish and Game.
31
32 MS. NAVES: Lili Naves, Division of
33 Subsistence, Department of Fish and Game.
34
35 MS. ZELLER: Tamara Zeller, U.S. Fish
36 and Wildlife Service, Migratory Birds.
37
38 MR. SFORMO: Todd Sformo, biologist,
39 North Slope Borough.
40
41 MR. AHMASUK: Brandon Ahmasuk,
42 Subsistence Director at Kawerak.
43
44 MR. MATHEWS: Vince Mathews with
45 Arctic, Kanuti and Yukon Flats Refuges.
46
47 MR. PEDERSON: Mike Pederson, North
48 Slope Borough.
49
50 MR. STEVENS: Jay Stevens, AMBCC.

1 MS. DEWHURST: Donna Dewhurst, Service
2 Rep with the Council.

3
4 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: One of the
5 things that the Migratory Bird Co-management Council
6 works closely with is the Pacific Flyway Council. I'm
7 a member of the Pacific Flyway Council for the State of
8 Alaska's representative, but also Todd is and I think
9 Todd wanted to give a few remarks about the role that
10 he plays in this meeting as well as in the Flyway
11 Council process.

12
13 MR. SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
14 My name is Todd Sanders. I'm the Pacific Flyway
15 representative for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
16 I serve as a liaison between the Fish and Wildlife
17 Service and the Pacific Flyway Council, but also the
18 Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council, for the
19 purpose of coordinating migratory bird management among
20 the 12 western states.

21
22 Many of you may know Bob Trost. He
23 retired in August and I was selected as his replacement
24 in January. I come to this position with 18 years of
25 experience working in the Pacific Flyway primarily
26 conducting biological or technical assessments for
27 migratory game birds to support the harvest management
28 process.

29
30 I've worked on several populations
31 important to both sport harvest and subsistence
32 harvest. I spent part of four summers working in
33 Alaska on Middleton Island, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and
34 also Semidi Islands. Most recently I've worked on a
35 project. I worked to help coordinate a project to
36 estimate abundance of Cackling Canada Geese using mark-
37 resight methods and I can report that that three-year
38 study is ending this month and we're in the process of
39 analyzing that data. We do expect to have an estimate
40 available and we'll provide that to you by your fall
41 meeting. We'll probably have that in a report, but we
42 can also plan to make a presentation at your meeting.

43
44 There are four flyways in the U.S.
45 Those flyways were identified based on the primary
46 flight paths of migratory birds. Each flyway has a
47 flyway representative and also a flyway council. The
48 flyway councils have traditionally served to coordinate
49 sport harvest, but more recently have expanded their
50 role to include non-game as well. The Pacific Flyway

1 is unique in that it's the only flyway that also has
2 subsistence harvest.

3

4 I don't have an official role on the
5 Co-management Council, but I think I have an important
6 role in helping to coordinate conservation efforts for
7 migratory game birds among the 12 western states for
8 both subsistence and sport harvest. It is my goal to
9 build a strong working relationship throughout the
10 Pacific Flyway to achieve our mutual objectives. I'm
11 here to listen, to learn and to work towards building a
12 strong working relationship.

13

14 Thank you.

15

16 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you very
17 much. With that, the next thing on our agenda is to
18 review and adopt the agenda that's in front of us.
19 Does anybody have any additions or deletions to the
20 agenda in front of you? Hopefully you've all had a
21 chance to look at it.

22

23 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman. I would like to move the presentation of
25 plaques to right after lunch if that would be possible.

26

27 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Certainly.
28 We're moving number 8 to after lunch. Any other
29 changes? Do we need to have a cup of coffee here to
30 get people excited?

31

32 (Laughter)

33

34 MS. HEPA: Maybe just let folks know
35 that we do a consensus. I mean, you know, it's not
36 Robert's Rules. Just for the new people.

37

38 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: We don't
39 operate under strict Robert's Rules of Order. We
40 operate under a consensus decision making. Okay. With
41 that, I think we will move into the first agenda item,
42 number 9, which is adoption of Council action items.
43 Oh, I'm sorry, 7. Invitation for public comments.
44 Does anybody wish to provide public comments at this
45 time.

46

47 (No comments)

48

49 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Since we don't
50 operate strictly by Robert's Rules of Order, if anybody

1 does walk in and wants to provide public comment,
2 please let us know and we'll give them an opportunity
3 to address the Council throughout the meeting.

4

5 With that, let's move to number 9,
6 which is adoption of Council action items September 25-
7 26, 2013 meeting. Patty, do you want to handle that
8 one.

9

10 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Sure. Under
11 tab one are the draft
12 actions of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management
13 Council. Along with the list of actions I usually give
14 a report on any directives that I have to follow
15 through on. So the first page is obviously the Council
16 members who were at the meeting and the staff and
17 guests. The only -- besides approving the agenda and
18 the minutes and committee reports and a Yellow-Billed
19 Loon report, we also were directed to draft a letter to
20 Jerome Ford or Brad Bortner expressing AMBCC's thoughts
21 on the proposed SRC meeting schedule in their
22 environmental impact statement study.

23

24 That letter was written and sent. As a
25 result, I have been in contact with the Pacific Flyway
26 Council. They're including us on their discussions on
27 how they're going to address the change in meetings,
28 going from two meetings to one, as well as with the
29 Region 7 Fish and Wildlife Service people and the
30 Alaska Department of Fish and Game. So we're trying to
31 move together in a concerted effort to come up with --
32 hopefully provide input in a cooperative way to figure
33 out how we're going to handle going to one meeting.

34

35 Thank you.

36

37 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: So do we need a
38 motion to adopt the minutes?

39

40 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Yes.

41

42 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Do we have a
43 motion to adopt the minutes?

44

45 MS. HEPA: Motion to adopt the minutes,
46 Mr. Chair.

47

48 MR. HICKS: I second.

49

50 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Any discussion.

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: All in favor.

4

5 IN UNISON: Aye.

6

7 (No opposing votes)

8

9 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Regional
10 representative reports. Why don't we start at this end
11 of the table and give us any issues or concerns you
12 have or anything you want to speak your mind on.

13

14 MR. FAGERSTROM: Thank you. At our
15 bird council meeting in Nome, some concerns were
16 brought up from St. Lawrence Island in regards to the
17 avian cholera, what's going to happen now. They've
18 expressed further desire to harvest Emperor Geese.
19 Some observations, there are less Brant and less Arctic
20 Terns. It was interesting, people from Wales to
21 Unalakleet were noticing less Arctic Terns, so it's not
22 only in one little area.

23

24 There are more Tundra Swans. The
25 timing of our spring has been -- sometimes the ice is
26 too rotten to go do our activities one year and the
27 next year it's good. There's a lot of change going on
28 now and we're noticing it.

29

30 That's it.

31

32 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you,
33 Jack. Any questions.

34

35 (No comments)

36

37 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I guess I have
38 one, Jack. So do you see the changing ice conditions
39 are going a certain direction or is it just becoming
40 more variable?

41

42 MR. FAGERSTROM: Probably more
43 variable. One time a gentleman was able to jump on a
44 snowmachine and go harvest some seagull eggs, but can't
45 do that no more, so that's a change there.

46

47 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. If we may,
48 at the end of the regional reports I may ask if it's
49 okay with you to have Eric Taylor come up and just give
50 us a quick summary of our spring plans for avian

1 cholera monitoring for St. Lawrence Island. I think
2 there's interest here amongst the group as well as the
3 audience, so I think that would be a quick summary,
4 just a couple minutes.

5
6 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Any other
7 questions.

8
9 (No comments)

10
11 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Randy.

12
13 MR. MAYO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Randy
14 Mayo, Tanana Chiefs Region. An update from our region.
15 We held out Regional Council meeting last November
16 where Patty and Jay attended and also Vince Mathews and
17 some of the staff from the refuges, Yukon Flats Refuge,
18 was in attendance. We went over the FNA proposals.
19 Also present was the Executive Director of the
20 Fairbanks Native Association and gave the update where
21 the transport issue was and also on the Invitation
22 Committee report.

23
24 At that meeting we went into a lot of
25 discussion on -- like every other hub community,
26 Fairbanks, a lot of tribal members from the surrounding
27 area live in Fairbanks for very valid reasons and that
28 they need to be afforded the right to our traditional
29 foods. One of the main things that was pointed out for
30 the tribal membership it goes far deeper than just the
31 physical activity of harvesting wild food for something
32 to eat. There's also the deep underlying inherent
33 cultural and spiritual right to access our foods, which
34 is founded in some of the international indigenous
35 rights languages. We discussed some of those
36 components as well amongst ourselves.

37
38 Also long-running concerns of a meager
39 budget that this work is afforded. One of my concerns
40 is that within the agencies it seems like across the
41 board, regardless of what species we're dealing with in
42 our traditional foods, that tribal harvest of
43 traditional foods is not a very high priority with the
44 State and Federal agencies, whether it's salmon, birds,
45 moose or caribou or anything dealing with traditional
46 foods. It doesn't seem like it, but look at the line
47 items. It just doesn't rate within the systems we feel
48 is a valid activity.

49
50 So these were just some of our

1 concerns. We're planning on bringing in the regional
2 representatives for a spring meet and to get our region
3 caught up to speed. We have six subregions in the
4 Tanana Chiefs region, 43 different tribal communities
5 and it's a pretty expansive region. Again, with budget
6 shortfall there's a lot of constraint to do the work
7 and disseminate the information.

8

9 On top of working with our tribal
10 communities, this being a public process that we have
11 to accommodate too, the general public, so off and on
12 we get requests from excluded areas like Fort Greeley,
13 Delta Junction area, which are understood was included
14 at one time, but because of valid reasons that area is
15 now excluded. I get phone calls too from the general
16 public because I guess if you live here for a year
17 you're indigenous according to the language.

18

19 So we'll continue to support the
20 Fairbanks Native Associations proposals and work
21 towards resolving those issues. That's about it.

22

23 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Any questions
24 for Randy.

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Jim.

29

30 MR. UJIOKA: Jim Ujioka, Gulf of
31 Alaska, Cook Inlet Region. I'm going to defer to Patty
32 at this point.

33

34 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Thank you,
35 Jim. The Chugach Regional Resources Commission, which
36 is the regional management body for the Cook Inlet
37 Region, held their meeting in December of 2013. They
38 got a report from the AMBCC that the invitation
39 proposal that was submitted had passed the Service Regs
40 Committee and the Eyak petition for inclusion, which is
41 one of the member tribes of the Chugach Regional
42 Resources Commission, they worked real closely with
43 Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska Department of Fish
44 and Game and the U.S. Forest Service, among others, to
45 make that proposal successful so that also passed the
46 Service Regs Committee.

47

48 So they had their first subsistence
49 harvest season, which is currently going on right now.
50 I think Donna is going to report later on how many

1 numbers of people have registered so far and I think
2 it's like 24. There will probably be more people
3 registering when the egging starts.

4
5 This is the first limited hunt there
6 and there was concern that there might be potential for
7 overharvest because of the population in Cordova is a
8 mixed population and there might be more people hunting
9 that hadn't traditionally hunted before. So the actual
10 proposal that was passed, the regulation is very
11 limited in scope as far as area and dates for hunting
12 and species. So we're anxious to see how this season
13 goes and hopefully work on another proposal for next
14 year.

15
16 We also talked about the proposals that
17 were tabled from the last AMBCC meeting, which was the
18 Kodiak Emperor Goose harvest proposal and the
19 handicrafts proposal. Then the Board also considered
20 the new proposals that were submitted in the latest
21 cycle and that was another Emperor Goose harvest, the
22 wanton waste proposal. And amending the spring and
23 summer harvest season dates and they all came from the
24 Bristol Bay area.

25
26 The Board agreed to defer to the
27 Bristol Bay Region and the Council as to how they were
28 going to handle these proposals, recognizing that the
29 Emperor Goose one probably needs additional work, the
30 wanton waste. Also we were going to try to put some
31 better definitions in that proposal and then amending
32 the spring and summer harvest dates also was
33 problematic in that it goes outside of the dates of the
34 120-day window for spring and summer harvest.

35
36 So those were under discussion. We
37 also discussed the SEIS and the change in meeting
38 dates, as I said previously, going from two meetings to
39 one and how that would affect the tribes in the Chugach
40 Region.

41
42 Thank you.

43
44 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Questions for
45 Jim or Patty.

46
47 (No comments)

48
49 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Joeneal.

50

1 MR. HICKS: Thank you and good morning,
2 everyone. We did not have our fall meeting as was
3 scheduled, but that was due to the late grant award.
4 However, we did have an early spring meeting or early
5 March. There were no burning issues except that I was
6 assigned to look into the possibility of researching
7 and maybe even submitting a proposal for the harvest of
8 swans in the Mentasta/Chistochina area. I know that's
9 a lot of work, but I was assigned to do that and
10 probably look forward to some kind of results here by
11 the fall meeting.

12
13 Like I said, there are no burning
14 issues. There's lots of snow and it's melting fast.
15 We plan on having our culture camp first or second week
16 of August and everyone is invited.

17
18 Thank you.

19
20 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Where will that
21 be?

22
23 MR. HICKS: That will be at Mile 56 on
24 the Denali Highway. Patty, you're not going this time.
25 She showed up last year and brought bad weather.

26
27 (Laughter)

28
29 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: It rained
30 sideways the whole time.

31
32 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: If you could
33 get something to Patty so she could distribute it
34 across, that would be great. Cyrus.

35
36 MR. HARRIS: Cyrus Harris, Maniilaq
37 Association. This is my first meeting here, so I'm
38 here to learn how this meeting actually progresses over
39 time. Hopefully I'll have more to report next year.

40
41 Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Myron.

44
45 MR. NANENG: Good morning. Quyana, Mr.
46 Chairman, for allowing us to have an opportunity to
47 report on some of the activities that we've had. The
48 AVCP Waterfowl Conservation Committee had a meeting two
49 weeks ago in Oregon to meet with the Oregon farmers and
50 managers of the refuges down there in Oregon as well as

1 trying to come in peace to Oregon and suggest to them
2 that if they're having so much concerns about Cackling
3 Canada Geese destroying their farmlands and their
4 plants, that we're offering our hunting skills while
5 we're down there to reduce the numbers. However, they
6 weren't even accepting that.

7
8 So we're sorry that they didn't take
9 the opportunity to have at least 10 to 12 hunters
10 reduce maybe as many as 20 birds, so we came back
11 empty-handed, but we still are working with them in
12 trying to address their farm depredation issue. I know
13 that Todd is working on the population assessment and
14 we'll have some numbers that will help us work on
15 trying to find ways to work with them to come up with
16 an acceptable number.

17
18 However, you know, after what we've
19 gone through at Y-K Delta being closed for hunting for
20 migratory birds for an extended period of time and some
21 of the goose species being low in numbers back in
22 1990s, I think in a way our success of increasing the
23 numbers is also causing an effect on the Pacific
24 Flyway, especially the farmlands.

25
26 We are also learning that the birds are
27 now starting to move up north from their previous
28 wintering grounds. The Cackling Canada Geese used to
29 winter down in California and now it's too hot for
30 them, so they moved up a little bit north. Also the
31 drought that's going on down there, so we need to
32 supply water to them too as well, I guess.

33
34 One of the other issues that was raised
35 at our meeting was a request for an opportunity to hunt
36 Emperor Geese because of the fact that population
37 counts of Emperor Geese they only use an index and the
38 counts are done during springtime while they're in
39 flight between their wintering grounds and back to
40 their nesting area. I'm not sure -- you know,
41 scientists also say we'd like to try and get a good
42 number, a good specific number, good statistics and
43 stuff like that, but since 1980s the index of
44 population for Emperor Geese have been used, so it
45 really is not a true number as far as many of us around
46 the table are concerned.

47
48 The other issue that was asked about
49 was the sports hunting that's allowed in Russia. If
50 they can do it, if they can be allowed to go sports

1 hunting and there's no efforts to try and deal with
2 that, why not just go out and hunt. What is good for
3 the goose is good for the gander, a comment that I've
4 heard before.

5
6 The other topic that was raised was the
7 reintroduction of Steller's and I know the proponents
8 of that from Fish and Wildlife Service. I've traveled
9 out to Hooper Bay and a few other villages in the Y-K
10 Delta the last couple of days, so we still have our
11 reservations about that and I think we'll be discussing
12 that a little bit further during the meeting.

13
14 AVCP submitted a proposal to the Board
15 of Game this past couple of months to request that all
16 parts of the birds are harvested and brought home when
17 the birds are harvested by hunters even during sports
18 hunting because we found last fall piles of swans and
19 other birds where only the breasts were removed.
20 That's under the sports hunting regulation and that's
21 wanton waste.

22
23 At one time our people were even scared
24 to harvest a swan because they would be fined \$500. To
25 allow that to happen today without no previous
26 knowledge of criminalizing our people that we're trying
27 to harvest swans for food is asinine. Excuse my
28 language, but that's not fair to our people. I know
29 that the Board of Game made a limited restrictions
30 where they would have to harvest swans, cranes and
31 other geese species altogether instead of just removing
32 the breast and leaving the rest of the bird.

33
34 If you can have a chicken from the
35 grocery store that's complete as well as a Cornish game
36 hen, come on. We have to buy those things, but when we
37 harvest food from the tundra, let's give it respect. I
38 think that we ought to try and go through the Pacific
39 Flyway to make further efforts to request that all of
40 the bird parts are harvested with the exceptions of the
41 insides and maybe the feathers and the heads if people
42 are not eating those and just leave them out in the
43 field if we have to or whatever.

44
45 You know, it gets kind of confusing.
46 If it's allowed to waste part of the bird, throw it
47 away in the trash can, and then you get pursued for
48 trying to make arts and crafts out of feathers. You
49 know, that's a question that we have to that. It just
50 blows my mind that whenever people are trying to eat

1 that we're making criminals out of them, yet, at the
2 same, we allow laws and regulation that only allow them
3 to harvest a certain part of the bird.

4
5 So if you get a Mallard Duck this
6 spring, you'll be allowed to harvest only the breasts,
7 but my question is are you going to be criminalized for
8 not removing just the breast and bringing the whole
9 bird home. So those are some of the issues and
10 concerns that we raised and we brought forward from
11 AVCP Waterfowl Conservation Committee.

12
13 We're also working on the Duck Stamp
14 exemption. I heard that from Senator Murkowski's staff
15 about a week ago saying that they hope to get that
16 moving in May or June. So that's an ongoing status of
17 it right now.

18
19 The other concern that we have
20 regarding what has been political here within state is
21 the Izembek Road. We don't want to take the position
22 of opposing something that may be necessary. However,
23 when you have Federal lands like in the Y-K Delta and
24 Federal lands that are in the Izembek, what's the
25 purpose of 22G? You have to use those lands compatible
26 to fish and wildlife purposes.

27
28 Our communities cannot even plan for
29 anything unless they get approved by Fish and Wildlife
30 Service for something they need in the community. If
31 it's not compatible in the eyes of Fish and Wildlife
32 Service, then we won't be able to get that community
33 project going in that village. So what's the
34 standards? Do you give more favor to one area of the
35 state at the expense of another area.

36
37 So those are some of the ongoing
38 concerns that we have in the Y-K Delta and I think we
39 need to find a way to make it more, shall we say,
40 compatible throughout the state of Alaska that if
41 you're, you know, a wildlife refuge that all those
42 requirements that we have to work with in the villages
43 have to be similarly situated and not give one favor to
44 another because of congressional action or other
45 things.

46
47 So I just wanted to share those
48 concerns and issues that we've been talking about in
49 our region at AVCP. With that, Mr. Chair, thank you.
50

1 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Questions for
2 Myron.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Myron, I'd just
7 tell you that the Board did go not all the way that the
8 AVCP proposal asked for at the last Board meeting
9 regarding salvage requirements, but did take a step at
10 least for geese, swans and cranes to salvage the breast
11 as well as the legs and thighs. I know it wasn't as
12 far as everybody wanted the AVCP proposal to go, but it
13 was a step towards that direction. I think the Board
14 did express some interest in taking a look at salvage
15 requirements depending upon what happens with the
16 Pacific Flyway and the Federal salvage requirements and
17 potentially move further down that line in the future.

18
19 Other questions. George. Oh, I'm
20 sorry. You have to come up.

21
22 MR. DYASUK: (In Yup'ik) That one
23 thing that Myron had said, you know, it comes from my
24 region too, what Myron is talking about already.

25
26 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Introduce
27 yourself for the record so that we have it on the
28 record.

29
30 MR. DYASUK: Oh, this is Jon Dyasuk
31 from Togiak Refuge. I work as a liaison interpreter for
32 the Refuge in my region. I'm bilingual and I talk two
33 languages. When I go to the villages -- you know,
34 there's six villages. My village is separate. One is
35 the Bristol Bay and one is Y-K Delta. Three villages,
36 Quinhagak, Goodnews and Platinum are on his side and
37 other villages are Togiak, Manokotak and Twin Hills on
38 Bristol Bay side.

39
40 What Myron -- you know, we tell Myron
41 what he's going to be saying most of the time.
42 Sometimes when we compare the worst that other people
43 are doing -- you know, they fancy themselves of how
44 things are, other fowl that they eat or even the
45 chicken, that chicken, they call them buffalo wings and
46 here it is, it's all right. In our region, we eat the
47 whole bird. We don't talk about buffalo wings.

48
49 That's one thing that you have to
50 remember, that all over everywhere you make things the

1 way that you think it's culturally accepted or that's
2 the way it's supposed to be. It's not that anymore.
3 It should be the same way all over. It should be
4 exactly the way that we eat. Other people should be
5 eating like that too. There are too many poor people
6 in my region, in my refuge, and we keep on mentioning
7 that. It's not like the way it was before because gas
8 prices are too expensive and you have to listen now or
9 you guys will have nothing to manage.

10

11 You have a lot of people in Aleutian
12 Chain where the duck hunters down there are able to
13 hunt from their lodges and they're doing what we're not
14 supposed to be doing and I never liked that. You just
15 type any sea bird and you'll see that part because it's
16 not hidden. They're a part of what they do and those
17 are the ones that are not monitored. The State allowed
18 that.

19

20 Oftentimes we never liked that because
21 my region is hurting, especially those people that live
22 in Cape Newenham, Cape Peirce area. They hunt there
23 and they're not getting their sea birds anymore. They
24 go a long distance for it while the rich people go to
25 the one region, fly one place and they hunt from a very
26 short distance and that's what's happening. If you
27 don't believe me, just go to the computer and you will
28 see it.

29

30 You guys are not doing anything.
31 You're not doing anything to monitor those. I'm
32 talking about the sea birds that my people depend on.
33 I'm talking from my own opinion, from my own people,
34 because when I come home one of the village member will
35 ask me that, Jon, did you bring that up. If I didn't,
36 I'll have a red face in front of him for not saying it.
37 Because there are too many people who cannot come to
38 this table and talk like that.

39

40 So if you think that I'm cruel or mad
41 about what I'm saying, don't take it from me. It's not
42 me talking, it's somebody else. I'm just a tool right
43 now because I'm an interpret. I interpret for what
44 somebody has said. So when they say have I said it and
45 I didn't say it, because most of the time I like to be
46 silent, I don't like to bring myself and make myself
47 exposed because a lot of times -- I'll tell you one
48 thing, I know where I'm at and I know who I am. So
49 when I say something, you take it in and you look at
50 it.

1 When my number of people are too poor
2 and there's no way for them to go anywhere except stay
3 home or some of them that have ability to go, go 200
4 miles out to the sea and try to get what they have.
5 Try getting to Facebook and you'll see those. They're
6 exposed. They're putting their pictures up and that's
7 what's happening. I challenge any of you guys to go to
8 the sea with them.

9
10 Myron left out a lot of things that
11 what he's supposed to be saying. I don't know whether
12 it's out of embarrassment or just that he's more
13 structured than I am. I'm not. I'm not structured
14 because I don't fear anybody. There's no word fear in
15 my language and I don't hope for anything. Those are
16 the words that are actually from me. My grandparents
17 didn't brought those up. Also there's no word for love
18 in my language, so is hate. Those are things that Myron
19 knows already.

20
21 But you guys will have nothing left if
22 you guys don't listen to the villages. That area -- my
23 area too big and those birds that come through come
24 through my refuge first before they head to other
25 refuges or other regions. That's what's happening.
26 They come to my refuge first and they continue on. All
27 right? You understand?

28
29 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Yep. Thank
30 you.

31
32 Any other questions, comments.

33
34 (No comments)

35
36 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: George.

37
38 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Yeah. What's
39 happening here and all these people and all these
40 elders here, what you're doing is taking your self-
41 respect away and your livelihood and stuff and we're
42 begging to get some of it back. It just doesn't work
43 that way. Right now I've got no confidence in the Fish
44 and Game. I think they're probably just like the
45 enemy, you know. All they're out there for is trying
46 to -- them young guys now just trying to make a couple
47 dollars and make a name for themselves.

48
49 Everything I catch is legal, but I
50 still hide it and put it away because I just don't

1 trust you guys. You make some excuse, you didn't do
2 this, didn't do that right or something, you know, you
3 get a ticket. We just have no confidence in the Fish
4 and Game. I've learned from experience.

5
6 We have self-pride and we have
7 self-respect in doing things ourselves and somebody
8 else gives it to us it's not the same. You've got to
9 get it yourself and then bring it home and pass it out
10 and give it to your friends or your family. The way I
11 look at it now it's just not happening and here it's
12 like we're begging or asking you, please, could we have
13 a couple of this, couple of that to take home.

14
15 In other words, you're going to make a
16 lot of -- in other words, probably teaching my son now
17 to be a criminal, you know, sneak it in there, you've
18 got to sneak it. I don't want to teach him that
19 because he's into everything else. He's got his own
20 life and stuff, but we hunt. I'm one of them guys that
21 will take all the younger hunting. I just bought 80,
22 90 traps. I'm going to teach them younger guys to trap
23 and stuff too. You just can't do it because there's
24 somebody looking over your shoulder.

25
26 That's all I've got to say now.

27
28 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Did you want to
29 continue on with your regional report?

30
31 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Oh, yeah. I just came
32 up in the last couple days. I didn't know nothing
33 about this. I just came up and, you know, try to help
34 get some ducks and feathers and stuff for their tribal
35 stuff that they put on their mask, but not for selling
36 and nothing like that, but just their traditional for
37 their dances and things like that.

38
39 They're not out to -- they can't even
40 -- see, my son asked -- he teaches in grade school.
41 He's only 21. He's not even a -- he didn't go to
42 college. It just came to him natural, all the Native
43 stuff. He speaks it. He's just a natural, you know, it
44 just came to him. He's into all that and he teaches at
45 the school. He even had a class at Kodiak High School.
46 They even got him to the college to teach, you know,
47 the dances and everything. They take him to Afognak
48 every year where he has all those youths.

49
50 But he needs some stuff for the

1 traditional way they have their stuff, you know,
2 feathers. And he was asking about the rattles and the
3 Puffin beaks and things they used to use in the old
4 days and things like that, but we can't get them.
5 We're trying to figure out a way to get that kind of
6 stuff. Not for selling, but just for their traditional
7 stuff when he's teaching younger generations.

8

9 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Questions,
10 comments. Taqulik.

11

12 MS. HEPA: Thank you for your report.
13 A big reason why we're around the table is to help make
14 regulations match what our customary and traditional
15 practices are and I'm glad that you're here. I
16 appreciate the comments from the young man over there
17 and the wise words.

18

19 The bottom line is, you know, our
20 people are very dependent on the nutritional values
21 that these birds bring and if we're not able to hunt
22 them, to bring them home, it could be very devastating
23 because in a lot of our smaller communities they just
24 don't have a meat department.

25

26 I was just in a community in the Brooks
27 Range and if they don't have the opportunity to harvest
28 what they need to feed their families, that's pretty
29 much a disaster and that's how important, you know, the
30 roles that we play here is to express those types of
31 concerns. We want to use these feathers to practice
32 our customary and traditional practices. It could be
33 for dances or different things. So we have a huge task
34 before us and I'm glad that you're here.

35

36 Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other comments.

39

40 Randy.

41

42 MR. MAYO: Yeah, Mr. Chair. I just
43 wanted to comment on the comments here from Jon. Some
44 comment I made earlier about underfunding the real
45 indigenous people where we fall through the cracks with
46 the State and Federal system. Up in my area we're
47 pretty cognizant of economic factors that influence
48 policy. I think that one of the things we want to work
49 on in our region is compile the economic input that,
50 you know, what the State and Federal call subsistence

1 activities.

2

3 We contribute a lot to the economy and
4 well-being of everybody else in our pursuit of our
5 traditional life and that's not even on the radar
6 screen taken into consideration when, like Jon
7 mentioned, there's a lot of people in my region too
8 that are having a hard time economically, but yet
9 somehow manage to acquire expensive equipment from
10 local vendors and business around Fairbanks. A lot of
11 those guys don't agree with our activity but want to
12 cater to the sport hunter men, military and whatnot.
13 So that really has to be taken into consideration.

14

15 Not too long ago we were pretty proud,
16 healthy people. It's like the U.S. policy years ago in
17 the Lower 48 to subdue the tribes was let's wipe out
18 their food supply, let's wipe out the buffalo, starve
19 them out. So what's the difference between that period
20 and now. We're not going away. We're not going to
21 give up or inherent cultural and spiritual right to
22 access our traditional foods, so it is a human right
23 issue here.

24

25 For the State and Feds to deal with it
26 just based solely on science and politically that we're
27 the lesser of the user group over everybody else,
28 that's my frustration and that's the frustration of --
29 you know, I believe every traditional Native household
30 across the state. So I think the Western agencies need
31 to really take a lot of these things into
32 consideration, the economic input, and this is far more
33 than just an activity to eat. That's a big part of it
34 also.

35

36 These are some of the real issues that
37 need to be dealt with and one day tribal people will
38 take their place back up there where we belong.

39

40 Thank you.

41

42 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you. Any
43 other comments.

44

45 Peter, your turn for regional update.

46

47 MR. DEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
48 did not have a spring meeting due to the fact that I
49 was out fishing. The people in our region would really
50 like to have a goose hunt. We know it doesn't fall

1 under the spring and summer harvest because we
2 traditionally don't eat them at that time. Ours is
3 more of a Thanksgiving and Christmas sort of a meal.

4
5 One of the other things is we'd really
6 like to have this handicraft thing passed because, you
7 know, I make the Aleut bentwood hats, I teach at our
8 culture camp. The kids are using baleen and stuff
9 right now, but they would like to use feathers because
10 they've seen my hats. Out in Unalaska there's people
11 making the Aleut dolls with feathers and they would
12 just like for that to become legal again. Actually, I
13 can't believe I voted on that when we said to not allow
14 it to happen because at the time I was actually using
15 them on my work and then I went and voted no.
16 Hopefully we can get this resolved.

17
18 That's about it. They just want to use
19 feathers and eat goose.

20
21 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Questions,
22 comments.

23
24 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Yeah, and that makes
25 the younger generation proud of who they are and their
26 heritage too. It really helps.

27
28 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Gayla.

29
30 MS. HOSETH: Okay. For our region, for
31 Bristol Bay, we haven't had our spring meeting yet.
32 Our spring meeting is going to be scheduled at the
33 latter end of this month when we come back. We're
34 going to find out the results of the proposals that are
35 going to be presented later on either today or
36 tomorrow.

37
38 We did have a teleconference before I
39 came out here last month or earlier this month. Last
40 month because it's just the beginning of April. One of
41 the big concerns that happened is the Duck Stamp
42 requirements and availability of the stamps. It was a
43 big concern in King Salmon last year. People were
44 going to go get the Duck Stamps and they couldn't get
45 them because they ran out. If that's going to be a
46 requirement, that Duck Stamps are available for people
47 to have access to them.

48
49 We had a very mild winter this year.
50 We had hardly any snow and a lot of the rivers didn't

1 freeze, creating a challenge for hunters to go out and
2 get moose and caribou this winter. So I'm sure that
3 everybody is looking forward to the spring bird hunting
4 season and a lot of people are depending on our
5 resources for food and everything.

6
7 Also like the availability of bullets.
8 I was at the grocery store and some family members were
9 in there and they were just finding bullets to be able
10 to go and hunt as a challenge. They were just holding
11 these bullets and they're like -- you know, they're
12 having a hard time finding them. So the availability
13 of that is challenging when people are trying to go get
14 food.

15
16 That's pretty much all I have for our
17 region and then we have the three proposals that we're
18 going to talk about later.

19
20 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Questions,
21 comments. Taqulik.

22
23 MS. HEPA: Yes, thank you, Gayla. I
24 was just going to say too in regards to Duck Stamps and
25 hunting licenses, I know in at least two of our North
26 Slope communities recently our post offices have closed
27 down and internet service in those villages is very
28 limited. So it's going to become a concern if that's
29 what is expected of our people, to have a Duck Stamp
30 and a license. In Barrow, it's just been a nightmare.
31 There are limited hours for a hub. It's been very
32 frustrating.

33
34 Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I might just
37 add the State of Alaska just put an application in
38 under the opening for the Federal to sell Duck Stamps
39 through our licensing program, so you'll be able to get
40 them hopefully if our application is accepted online,
41 which will make it a little easier. I know internet
42 access is difficult in certain areas of the state, but
43 it's at least going to make it a little bit easier at
44 least for some of the hub communities.

45
46 Jack.

47
48 MR. FAGERSTROM: Going back to the Duck
49 Stamp issue. Unfortunately we have -- my community has
50 the same zip code as Nome and we're like 80 miles away.

1 Billy mails me an envelope on the 1st of August and I
2 got it, 90 miles away, August 13th, I picked it up at
3 the post office. Dog teams used to do a quicker job
4 delivering the mail.

5
6 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other comments.

7
8
9 (No comments)

10
11 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I shared your
12 concern on the Duck Stamp because I was going to go
13 duck hunting down in Texas and I went to the post
14 office in Anchorage and they just looked at me like we
15 don't have a Duck Stamp, so I bought it online through
16 Texas. I think we're hearing that one loud and clear.

17
18 Taqulik.

19
20 MS. HEPA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
21 just want to thank Patty and her staff and Donna and
22 others. It's good to have active committee meetings.
23 I know that some of our staff have been actively
24 participating in meetings throughout the year, so
25 that's great.

26
27 For Yellow-Billed Loons we know that
28 they've been -- that they're in the process of the
29 potential listing under the ESA, so our department and
30 people of the North Slope have been actively monitoring
31 that. We provided comments with our regional tribal
32 government, ICAS and ASRC and the North Slope Borough
33 together, expressing our concerns about the potential
34 listing.

35
36 I just wanted to thank the Fish and
37 Wildlife Service for giving us the opportunity to be a
38 peer reviewer in one of their -- the status assessment
39 for the Yellow-Billed Loon. That document is supposed
40 to help the decision-makers make the decision if it
41 should be listed or not.

42
43 I do have copies of the peer review
44 from our department, but I'm not sure if we could pass
45 it out, but I'll ask before I do. I have enough copies
46 for the members around the table.

47
48 We have been actively working on the
49 entanglement Yellow-Billed Loon survey, so hopefully
50 this fall we'll have a report to share with you all.

1 This is where we go out and interview fishermen on the
2 North Slope to see if they had any entanglements of any
3 type of loon.

4
5 We haven't had a regional management
6 body meeting yet. We hope to have one later this
7 summer in one of our outlying villages. We try to use
8 the funds from the AMBCC to get out to the communities,
9 so hopefully later this summer we'll have a meeting in
10 one of our communities.

11
12 Did we pick a village, Michael?

13
14 MR. PEDERSON: Atqasuk.

15
16 MS. HEPA: Atqasuk. So Atqasuk is
17 about 65 miles south of Barrow in the heart of
18 migratory nesting environment. It's beautiful.

19
20 Just a couple things in regards to
21 weather. This mid to late winter we experienced a
22 couple of rain events. Talking to hunters that have
23 been actively hunting furbearers, they reported that
24 there was probably 20 miles south of Barrow to -- I'm
25 not sure how far it goes, but it's like sheer ice
26 because of the rain events that did happen. Very bad
27 for the caribou, but I'm not sure how this is going to
28 affect the timing of the nesting for migratory birds
29 that come. Real dangerous for people out there
30 traveling.

31
32 I think that's all that I have.

33
34 Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Questions,
37 comments for Taqulik.

38
39 (No comments)

40
41 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Hearing none.
42 I'm not sure, do we give the State and Federal
43 opportunity to talk her?

44
45 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Yes.

46
47 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Pete.

48
49 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. I don't have
50 any specific report because if you look at the agenda,

1 we're going to have a lot to say. These regional
2 reports to me are very important and particularly my
3 program's desire and priority focus on trying to start
4 attending these regional meetings. I'm happy to hear
5 that both North Slope and Bristol Bay are going to have
6 some later this year. So we like to be kept abreast so
7 that we can bring people that are knowledgeable of your
8 issues to interact and answer questions. I'll leave it
9 at that and also the same for the other Regional
10 Councils.

11
12 I know the issue of grants was
13 mentioned and the timeliness of them. It's very
14 frustrating for us, the processes that we have to go
15 through. All I can say is we're going to strive to do
16 better to get them out in a more timely manner. We
17 recognize that that's a key factor in allowing you to
18 complete your duties and travel to the areas and get
19 the information that this body needs.

20
21 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

22
23 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Questions,
24 comments for Pete. Taqulik.

25
26 MS. HEPA: Thank you. Can you just
27 remind us why there's such a delay in receiving the
28 grant awards.

29
30 MR. PROBASCO: We're actually going to
31 have a pretty good discussion in the agenda. If you
32 want I can.....

33
34 MS. HEPA: We'll wait.

35
36 MR. PROBASCO: We'll save it until
37 then. Okay, thanks.

38
39 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other
40 questions.

41
42 (No comments)

43
44 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Well, from the
45 State, I just want you to know that, again, I want to
46 echo what Pete said. This is the opportunity to say
47 what you want to both the State and Federal government
48 and talk about the things that are important to you at
49 a regional level and a local level on subsistence use.
50 I know at least my boss, the Commissioner, does feel

1 very strongly about providing for subsistence needs as
2 a priority and we're not always going to be able to
3 meet everything that you want, but we're always going
4 to listen or we're going to do our best to try to
5 attempt to meet those needs where we can legally do
6 that.

7

8 I think it is incredibly important to
9 recognize that the Department's involvement in
10 migratory birds isn't just this group here and how much
11 support we give here. It's throughout the entire
12 Flyway Council process. We have Dan Rosenberg and a
13 couple other biologists at this meeting and we have
14 Subsistence Division personnel that are intimately
15 involved in looking at subsistence needs. Although it
16 doesn't look like we contribute a lot directly to
17 AMBCC, we contribute a lot in terms of science that
18 informs the decisions that form the foundation for
19 sustained yield of resources and that goes a long ways
20 towards long-term provision of subsistence
21 opportunities.

22

23 So we stand committed to moving forward
24 and I really do appreciate that all of you take time to
25 have these regional meetings and report back on them.

26

27 Thank you.

28

29 I'd like to take a break at 10:30,
30 about every hour and a half, but we have a few more
31 minutes. So, Pete, you said you wanted to bring up
32 somebody to talk about avian flu right now?

33

34 MR. PROBASCO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
35 Thank you for pointing out that it's later in the
36 agenda, but I think it would be timely to have Eric
37 come up and make a quick comment on this whole issue.

38

39 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Eric.

40

41 DR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm
42 Eric Taylor. I'm with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
43 Service, Migratory Bird Management Office. I
44 appreciate the opportunity. I think perhaps all of you
45 are aware that we had a first event in Alaska's history
46 in the sense that in November 2013 sea birds started
47 washing up in the village of Savoonga on St. Lawrence
48 Island.

49

50 After testing by the National Health

1 Wildlife Lab by the USGS, it was determined that those
2 birds had died of avian cholera. That is a first in
3 the state of Alaska. Avian cholera is common in the
4 Lower 48 in terms of waterfowl densities and wintering
5 areas. It's been reported in Arctic Canada, but it's
6 never been reported in Alaska.

7
8 Thanks largely to the efforts of the
9 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, particularly Dr.
10 Kimberly Beckman, as well as the rural residents of
11 both Savoonga and Gambell, those individuals as well as
12 Dr. Gay Sheffield from University of Alaska at Nome
13 launched, I think, an adequate effort to survey and
14 sample and collect dead and dying birds that were later
15 sent in for health testing.

16
17 I will admit on record as far as I
18 believe Pete would say, as far as Geoff Haskett would
19 say and certainly in charge of the Migratory Bird
20 Division, the Fish and Wildlife Service dropped the
21 ball on this effort and we did so because of a number
22 of reasons. One is, as Pete has mentioned yesterday,
23 the Avian Disease Program for Fish and Wildlife Service
24 has been cut nationally.

25
26 In my particular region, we were
27 formerly funded around \$128,000 per year for an avian
28 disease specialist as well as conducting training,
29 having response kits, having response people. That
30 funding from \$128,000 was cut in the last two years
31 down to \$9,000, so that's a 93 percent cut. As a
32 result, my program was unable to maintain our avian
33 disease specialist, it was unable to maintain what I
34 would consider a reasonable response plan and if you
35 look back at our avian disease plan, it was last
36 updated in 2011.

37
38 So I think it's safe to say the Fish
39 and Wildlife Service was caught with its pants down so
40 to speak in the sense that we really had no response
41 and luckily, thanks to others, particularly people like
42 Brandon Ahmasuk, Dr. Kimberlee Beckmen, Dr. Gay
43 Sheffield, Dr. Barbara Bodenstein out of the USGS
44 office and again the residents of those two villages, a
45 response plan was enacted.

46
47 So, just as a brief history, again that
48 event happened in November/December. Birds started
49 washing up. Crested Auklets, Northern Fulmars, gulls,
50 Thick-Billed Murres, as well as some sea ducks. The

1 birds were collected by the residents, sent air freight
2 to the USGS National Health Lab. They were tested and
3 they tested positive for avian cholera.

4
5 So where are we at now. There's been
6 several reports that have been written, particularly
7 one by Dr. Gay Sheffield. Dr. Kimberlee Beckmen has
8 produced some public outreach and summary statements.

9
10 Also, to give you an estimate, I failed
11 to say that the Fish and Wildlife Service did launch,
12 thanks again to cooperation of rural residents, a field
13 effort to estimate the numbers of birds that had killed
14 and our estimate a minimum of 7,000 birds and maximum
15 of somewhere around 37,000 birds. Again, what I think
16 most would consider a large die-off for migratory birds
17 and certainly of concern because the first time this
18 event had occurred.

19
20 So where are we at. I have committed,
21 despite this 93 percent cut in funding, I have made a
22 request both to Geoff Haskett, our Regional Director.
23 Pete has made a request to our assistant director,
24 Jerome Ford, in Washington, D.C. for assistance to
25 funding to our program. To date, those considerations
26 I think are still under negotiations and we don't have
27 any funding in state.

28
29 Nonetheless, I have committed that we
30 will take funding from our current allocation and step
31 up so that we will have an updated disease response
32 plan by May 1st of this year. We will have response
33 kits and a list of contacts and training, at least a
34 plan of action for those things to occur. The estimate
35 of cost on this I'm guessing somewhere between \$50-
36 70,000 from our budget will be reallocated to that.

37
38 I guess I want to stress this is an
39 impact to my program. It's something I hadn't planned
40 for. I have a current 40 percent vacancy rate in the
41 Migratory Bird Division. I think that's being
42 reflected by things not being able to do, like the
43 Emperor Goose population assessment and finishing up
44 plans that affect Cackling Canada Geese, et cetera.
45 Nonetheless, this is a priority.

46
47 The concern is that this event happened
48 right when freeze-up occurred. As a result, we are
49 sure that we've got carcasses that are in the landfast
50 ice and that once the ice starts to thaw in May, those

1 birds could very well start to come to shore in those
2 communities and people will have concerns that they may
3 affect other birds or how do they affect their hunting
4 activities or they may wash out to sea as well.
5 Nonetheless, we had to have a plan of action in place
6 by the 1st of May and that's where we're moving to.

7

8 So, with that, I'll be happy to address
9 any questions. Brandon is here and he may be able to
10 provide additional details as well. Certainly I'll be
11 able to answer any questions.

12

13 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Questions,
14 comments. Taqulik. Go ahead, Myron.

15

16 MR. NANENG: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
17 Eric, in the past, there has been some die-off of sea
18 birds out in Western Alaska. I think the last time I
19 remember one happened was back in 2004 or something to
20 that effect. I don't think we ever got any clear
21 report back of what was causing the die-off of sea
22 birds out there back then.

23

24 DR. TAYLOR: We have reported die-offs
25 of birds, both sea birds and sea ducks, periodically,
26 particularly during the spring, fall and wintertime
27 periods. It can be any number of factors. I mean I'm
28 not going to say avian cholera wasn't involved,
29 although this is the first time it was recorded. Most
30 often, when we have looked at those birds, it's
31 starvation. Birds get caught sometimes migrating when
32 they think the weather conditions are going to be
33 better, when food availability is supposed to be high,
34 and all of a sudden they misjudge. That happened, for
35 example, in Prudhoe Bay when we had large numbers of
36 Common Eiders and King Eiders die and an analysis of
37 those birds showed that they were starving. They had
38 just migrated too early. That happens with sea birds
39 as well. I'm not going to say that's the cause, but
40 that's one of the primary factors.

41

42 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Taqulik.

43

44 MS. HEPA: Thank you, Eric, for you
45 information. Maybe just a recommendation. You know
46 about the unusual mortality even on ring seals and
47 other seals, ice seals, and the walrus. What it did
48 was it created a network and a foundation of how they
49 were going to deal with that issue.

50

1 When this bird issue was brought to the
2 attention of the people, so that network that existed
3 for the UME worked together, so Raphaela and others in
4 our department were actively involved.

5
6 But to help with the funding issue, you
7 might want to look to see if some kind of network of
8 collaboration from the different agencies worked
9 together to address things like this. Not just for
10 this bird event, but for things that have recently
11 happened in Canada. So this network of people working
12 on issues of health concern to the animals are still
13 continuing that relationship.

14
15 DR. TAYLOR: That's a really good
16 point, Taqulik. Despite the Fish and Wildlife Service
17 being the lead agency for migratory bird conservation,
18 we are absolutely dependent upon multiple agencies, the
19 State of Alaska, certainly rural residents will be a
20 key because they're the people on the ground that can
21 provide us the observations. So we will need to work
22 with and contract with Native rural residents, rural
23 villages, in order to collect the samples and see
24 what's on the ground.

25
26 The avian disease response plan did
27 have both national and international collaboration both
28 across Federal agencies, State agencies, boroughs,
29 Native villages and I think that's absolutely
30 essential.

31
32 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other
33 questions, comments.

34
35 (No comments)

36
37 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I just have
38 one. So in the Lower 48 when these cholera outbreaks
39 occur, are they one-time events or do they occur over
40 and over again year after year in a specific location?

41
42 DR. TAYLOR: It's my understanding,
43 Doug, and I will be the first one to claim I'm not an
44 avian disease response expert by any means, but in my
45 thinking about the disease it often occurs in the same
46 areas, where bird concentration occurs. Like in
47 wetland areas where large concentrations occur,
48 particularly waterfowl, people are always on the watch
49 for in those areas.

50

1 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Jack.
2
3 MR. FAGERSTROM: Yes. Did you notice
4 any Eider ducks?
5
6 DR. TAYLOR: There was one recorded
7 Common Eider that was washed ashore, but that's one of
8 our absolute serious and most substantive concerns is
9 that, as I'm sure you're aware, the world's population
10 of Spectacled Eiders winters south of St. Lawrence
11 Island and the concern is -- and I think all of you
12 have seen the picture I've often showed in my
13 presentation where hundreds of thousands of birds were
14 in these open water polynyas in the open ocean. That's
15 the Fish and Wildlife Service's -- one of our primary
16 concerns is that avian cholera could get into the
17 concentration like that and spread very quickly.
18
19 MR. FAGERSTROM: And then your numbers
20 from a low to a high, what did you base those numbers
21 on? Was that the whole island or just observed
22 portions of the island?
23
24 DR. TAYLOR: That was observed portions
25 of the island and so the estimates were conducted by
26 residents of Gambell and Savoonga with funding from
27 Fish and Wildlife Service. The low estimate was 7,000,
28 the upper estimate was 37,000, but because it was a
29 limited area, it certainly could have been higher than
30 that in areas that we did not sample. That's correct.
31
32 MR. FAGERSTROM: Were there any other
33 indications from like Wales or Diomedea?
34
35 DR. TAYLOR: Not that I'm aware of.
36
37 MR. FAGERSTROM: Okay. Thank you.
38
39 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other
40 questions, comments. George.
41
42 MR. SQUARTSOFF: A lot of those Eiders
43 are killed by crabbers too with their lights on at
44 night and they just go right into the -- just on their
45 decks. I mean not a few. Get 100 at a time in those
46 crab lights.
47
48 DR. TAYLOR: That has been actually
49 documented in terms of both Eiders and sea birds where
50 commercial fishing vessels have lights that they're

1 using at night. The lights attract birds and there's
2 actually been to the point where birds have caused
3 vessels to capsize from the numbers of birds that have
4 actually hit the lights, fallen onto the ship and
5 actually has been to the extent of overloading the ship
6 and capsizing it.

7

8 MR. SQUARTSOFF: They're blaming the
9 ducks.

10

11 DR. TAYLOR: Well, I don't know about
12 that, but in terms of what birds it was, it actually
13 did occur. So you're right, that has happened. I
14 don't know how often it happens, but it's been recorded
15 in the literature.

16

17 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other
18 questions, comments.

19

20 (No comments)

21

22 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Let's
23 take a 10-minute break, but only 10 minutes because we
24 have to be out of the room by 4:30 each day, so we have
25 to keep chugging along, but it's good to take a break
26 and let people get a cup of coffee and use the
27 restrooms. So 10 minutes.

28

29 (Off record)

30

31 (On record)

32

33 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Pete, since
34 you're the last person sitting down, we decided to fine
35 you \$100,000. That can go to use for the harvest
36 survey.

37

38 (Laughter)

39

40 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. We're
41 into old business on the agenda. The first up on the
42 old agenda is the Harvest Survey Program ongoing work
43 by Liliana. It's my intention to try to get through
44 that update on the harvest survey review process by
45 Pete and hopefully one of the tabled proposals before
46 we break for lunch about noon.

47

48 Liliana.

49

50 MS. NAVES: Thank you. So here's Lili

1 Naves from the Division of Subsistence and I'll go over
2 a bullet list of recent products and upcoming work, so
3 this bullet list is behind Tab 2 on the folder. There
4 are also copies in the back there.

5
6 So we start with the 2011-2012 St.
7 Lawrence loon dedicated study. This report was
8 released in November last year. This information was
9 provided to Fish and Wildlife Service and all the other
10 partners involved in the context of the species
11 assessment for the Yellow-Billed Loon listing process
12 under the Endangered Species Act. Following the
13 release of this report we prepared a manuscript to
14 submit for our publication as a peer-reviewed article.
15 This manuscript was submitted to Journal of Wildlife
16 Management. This work was done in very close
17 collaboration with Fish and Wildlife Service and my
18 partner on this work was Tamara Zeller that's here.

19
20 Also another product that came out of
21 this study we did an oral presentation last week at the
22 Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Conservation Society and
23 it was very interesting to show this work to a very
24 different audience there. So it was interesting to
25 reach to other people and talk a little bit about the
26 AMBCC and the kind of work that you do, the harvest
27 surveys and the region education and all that.

28
29 There's another report that goes hand
30 in hand with this one here, which is 2002-2010. It's
31 made for Gambell and Savoonga. This came as a result
32 of the work done directly with the villages during the
33 Yellow-Billed Loon dedicated studies. As you know, the
34 AMBCC doesn't release data at the village level, but in
35 the context of this work the villages agreed to release
36 the old AMBCC data at the village level. Their
37 intention was to promote a more effective data review
38 of the older data and clarify issues with the older
39 data. So this is a report that was recently released.
40 It just came out in March. I distributed hard copies
41 for you earlier today.

42
43 Now going to the regular harvest
44 reports of the AMBCC, we just finished the 2011 report,
45 which I hope you guys get this afternoon. There was a
46 glitch in the printing office yesterday. This report
47 was adopted at the last fall meeting and now this is
48 just the final report. There on the cover is Chester
49 Noongwook and Chester was a key respondent for the
50 Yellow-Billed Loon studies. He was the guy that did

1 the last mail delivered by dog team in Alaska, so this
2 is happening in Savoonga. So the 2011 report includes
3 estimates for the Y-K Delta, the Bristol Bay regions
4 and the St. Lawrence-Diomedes subregion.

5
6 Item 4 on the list is the 2012 draft
7 estimates, which is now up for adoption at this
8 meeting, so we should have a motion to adopt it. I
9 handed it earlier today. This report includes harvest
10 estimates for Kotzebue and St. Lawrence subregion and
11 the survey in Kotzebue was done in partnership with the
12 Native Village of Kotzebue. We were working closely
13 with Alex Whiting there and also with Nicole Braem from
14 the Division of Subsistence of Fish and Game in
15 Fairbanks.

16
17 Alex got really involved in the data
18 review process. It was really nice because he keeps
19 weekly diary of environmental conditions and
20 subsistence conditions and he was really able to
21 provide some context for the harvest estimates in 2012.
22 So we worked together to put the draft summary for
23 Kotzebue and recovered old data table for Kotzebue, so
24 this is presented as an appendix to the 2012 report and
25 those are the numbers that go back for Kotzebue and all
26 other surveys available going back to '86. Not that
27 many. This is a four-page summary. That will be a
28 main way of presenting the data back to the community.

29
30 Also I communicated with Cyrus to give
31 him the heads-up what was coming in this meeting, so I
32 think that the data review goals, which will be ready
33 for this report, I think all the kinks in it was
34 already worked out.

35
36 Item 5 on the list we have the 2013
37 draft estimates that I handed earlier this morning too.
38 So this is only for the Y-K Delta region and the
39 estimates are available at the subregion level, not
40 regional level this year because Bethel was not covered
41 in the 2013 survey, so Bethel was about a third of
42 households in that area and also the hubs have harvest
43 patterns that defer from the villages, so we don't feel
44 that is appropriate to expand data from the villages to
45 Bethel, so only subregion level.

46
47 It was really interesting because we're
48 six months ahead of time with this draft report. The
49 refuge staff or the RITs included Jon Dyasuk. Work on
50 data collection, they did outstanding work. The RITs

1 have played a main role in data collection in the Y-K
2 Delta, RITs from both Togiak and Yukon-Delta Refuges,
3 so they are main partners for data collection in that
4 area. So this data is now available for data review
5 and we can do questions and comments during summer,
6 maybe can adopt it in fall and you'll be six months
7 ahead of schedule with the 2013 report as a whole.

8

9 So what was provided this morning, it's
10 a simplified version of the report. The Y-K Delta
11 partners have asked in the past for tables that don't
12 show confidence intervals and that have the Native
13 names, so this is a version that was intended to
14 streamline communication with the local partners and
15 the data review process. The final report will be in
16 the usual format.

17

18 Questions so far?

19

20 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Questions for
21 Liliana so far. We could take a break here. We've got
22 a couple different things to do, I guess, before
23 Liliana goes on. I understand we have technical paper
24 NNN, which is titled Alaska Subsistence Harvest of
25 Birds and Eggs 2012, Alaska Migratory Bird Co-
26 management Council report that needs to be finalized or
27 moved for adoption. If we'd like to have some comment
28 and discussion on that or a motion to adopt this and
29 approve it. What's the Council's preference. Taqulik.

30

31 MS. HEPA: For discussion, I'd like to
32 make a motion to approve the Alaska Subsistence Harvest
33 of Birds and Eggs 2012 Alaska Migratory Bird Co-
34 management Council.

35

36 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Do we have a
37 second.

38

39 MR. PROBASCO: I'll second it.

40

41 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Pete seconds
42 it. Comments, discussion. Taqulik.

43

44 MS. HEPA: So I just want to make sure
45 that I understood you right. This has gone back to the
46 regional management bodies for approval?

47

48 MS. NAVES: The 2012?

49

50 MS. HEPA: Yes.

1 MS. NAVES: For the St. Lawrence
2 Island, we work directly with the villages that were
3 surveyed because we're working directly with them, so
4 they have already reviewed and approved this data.
5 This is the same data that appeared in this report that
6 had been already adopted at the fall meeting last year.
7 It was just now analyzed because here it's at the
8 village level in the '11-'12 report for St. Lawrence
9 and the regular '12 report of the AMBCC. It wasn't
10 analyzed at the subregional level, so we have it at the
11 standard. At subregion level, this means that the data
12 from St. Lawrence was expanded to Diomedes, which is the
13 standard subregion level for the AMBCC. So the idea
14 was to have the data reported in the regular -- in the
15 standard way that report the AMBCC data.

16
17 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I think the
18 question, Liliana, was has this been approved by the
19 regional body whose harvest is incorporated into here?

20
21 MS. NAVES: Yeah, this data was already
22 approved at the fall meeting last year. For the
23 Kotzebue area, I'm not sure the regional council had a
24 meeting this year, but we're working directly with the
25 Kotzebue Tribe and they gave the green light for
26 adoption. Would you like to offer something there,
27 Cyrus.

28
29 MR. HARRIS: Not at this time. I was
30 able to review the email and the work with Alex and get
31 more information on it. So all this took place before
32 I got involved with this Migratory Bird, so that again
33 is somewhat new, but that's where I sit. But, yeah,
34 the green light was on for it.

35
36 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other comments.
37 MS. HEPA: I was just going to say, if
38 I understand it correctly, yes, the regional bodies did
39 approve what is contained in this report, so from the
40 North Slope we will support.

41
42 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Pete.

43
44 MR. PROBASCO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
45 That same theme, Liliana, would you share with us who
46 else reviewed this report that brought it to this
47 final.....

48
49 MS. NAVES: Which one, Pete? The 2012?
50

1 MR. PROBASCO: The one that we have the
2 motion on.

3
4 MS. NAVES: Oh, okay. Well, for the
5 St. Lawrence Island it was reviewed by the villages and
6 this report in the context of the Yellow-Billed Loon
7 listing process was widely distributed by review to
8 Fish and Wildlife Service and Fish and Game partners
9 and a bunch of partners that involved in the Yellow-
10 Billed listing process. I received a series of
11 comments and addressed those comments. All those
12 comments were addressed in this other report here. So
13 this is the same data that already appeared in this
14 report and already got all kinds of reviews and
15 clearances for this other report here.

16
17 MR. PROBASCO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
18 just want to put on the record that this had gone
19 through an extensive review process that we're looking
20 at.

21
22 Thank you.

23
24 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other comments.

25
26 MS. HEPA: Just one more brief one. I
27 promised.

28
29 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay.

30
31 MS. HEPA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe
32 for something to consider that in the -- at the front
33 you've got the two authors, but it would be good to
34 also include the people that helped coordinate and
35 collect the information from the regions as co-authors.

36
37 Thank you.

38
39 MS. NAVES: They always appear in the
40 acknowledgments and in the text of the report. I take
41 your comment there.

42
43 MS. HEPA: Yeah. You might want to
44 have a discussion with others on how they feel about
45 that, but I really feel like the people in the regions
46 that collect the information, compile it and send it to
47 you should be also listed as a co-author.

48
49 Thank you.

50

1 MS. NAVES: Thank you.
2
3 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other comments.
4
5 MR. NANENG: If Taqulik is making that
6 as a motion, I second it, because it seems like
7 whatever information is gathered by people outside of
8 the region from those in the villages, the only ones
9 that get credit for any of the reports are those that
10 put this information together in a book page, but the
11 people that really compiled the information who live
12 out in the villages never get any credit.
13
14 So, if you're making that as a motion,
15 Taqulik, I'd second it.
16
17 MS. HEPA: So moved.
18
19 MR. NANENG: Second.
20
21 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: We have a
22 motion on the table to approve the report. Is that
23 conditional upon expanded authorship on the report?
24
25 MR. NANENG: Yes.
26
27 MS. HEPA: Yes.
28
29 MR. NANENG: Give credit to people that
30 helped put the report together.
31
32 MS. HEPA: That's part of the
33 discussion. We'll add that to the motion.
34
35 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I want to say
36 that when you look at this, much of this is added in
37 under the acknowledgments. It says local surveyors
38 helped in many aspects of the data collection.
39 Typically when we in Fish and Game write these reports,
40 and this is a Fish and Game report, we put most of the
41 acknowledgment. We don't put all our field staff that
42 collect data on a bunch of different projects. It's
43 really the people that did most of the work in
44 preparation of the report. I'm not opposed to
45 acknowledging their efforts, but I don't know what we
46 gain by having potentially 20 or 30 different people as
47 authors of the report.
48
49 I wouldn't necessarily be opposed to
50 having on the front of this, you know, done in close

1 consultation with X and X on the front cover if that
2 would help.

3

4 MR. NANENG: Whenever the reports are
5 done, they usually place the author or whoever put the
6 report together, but more often than not the people who
7 live in the villages that help put the report together
8 are never given any credit. More often than not, the
9 way the university system works is that whoever puts
10 the report together gets a degree or is recognized with
11 some type of -- like even a piled higher and deeper
12 degree, but the person who helped put that together
13 from the village level is never recognized for the work
14 that they do other than just an acknowledgment.

15

16 If there's such a system that can
17 recognize these people for what their contribution was,
18 I think that in the future people would say, well, they
19 are people who had a lot to do with this report instead
20 of just collecting information on someone who gets the
21 full credit and that's what I'm talking about.

22

23 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Taqulik, maybe
24 provide me a little bit of guidance here. When the
25 North Slope Borough produces a report, do you include
26 everybody that was involved in data collection in the
27 authorship of that report?

28

29 MS. HEPA: Thank you. For our
30 substance harvest documentation reports, yes, we do.
31 So it would be -- like, for example, we did a report
32 recently, it would be Michael, probably Todd and then
33 the person we have hired in the villages. We've done
34 that since 1995. It's the person that we have hired to
35 collect the information as a co-author. I know
36 Raphaela -- we do that with other -- like if it's a
37 specific project and we write a paper, as a courtesy,
38 the field people or the local people that we used to
39 help get this report in its final stage are listed.

40

41 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Where I'm just a
42 bit confused here -- if you look on page 2 of this
43 report, there's a lot of names that people actually
44 collected in the field, collection of the data, are
45 acknowledged, different anthropologists and other staff
46 that helped in the harvest data collection from various
47 different agencies. Would you envision all of those
48 people being authors of this report? We did our best
49 at least in Fish and Game to acknowledge the efforts of
50 everybody in the report.

1 MS. HEPA: Like, for example, I know
2 that Alex Whiting is like a coordinator and he helped
3 the connection between Liliana and the information she
4 did and helped coordinate the collection of the surveys
5 from the village, right, collected the environmental
6 information. At the very least, I would think that
7 he'd be listed as a co-author because he did quite a
8 bit of work. No? Maybe I'm misunderstanding.

9
10 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I'm going to
11 turn this over to Dr. Fall here.

12 DR. FALL: Mr. Chair. Maybe I could
13 just offer some clarification about the policies that
14 the Division of Subsistence follows for authorship and
15 acknowledgments and things in between.

16
17 First of all, as long as I've been with
18 the Division, which is over 30 years, there's always
19 been thorough acknowledgment and appreciation for
20 everyone who participates at various levels in data
21 collection and data analysis and in the actual writing
22 of the final report you'll find that in the
23 acknowledgment section. You'll usually find in most of
24 our reports a table that lists everybody that's
25 involved.

26
27 Involvement occurs at a number of
28 levels and usually we have anywhere between one and ten
29 local research assistants who are trained to collect
30 the information along with us as part of a study team.
31 We do not list them as co-authors of the report on the
32 title page of the report. Their work is acknowledged
33 and specifically described in the body of the text, but
34 they're not co-authors because they are focused on a
35 very specific portion -- an essential portion, but a
36 specific portion of the project.

37
38 So too with our data entry staff, some
39 of our analysts in our office who produce the tables
40 and the figures. They are acknowledged in the report,
41 but they are not co-authors. The co-authors of our
42 reports are usually the people who take all of that
43 information, organize it, describe what it is all
44 about, facilitate the review, respond to reviewers
45 comments and then complete the report in its final
46 form.

47
48 So, again, I think for most of these
49 kinds of projects there are various levels of
50 involvement that we try to acknowledge and that's how

1 we followed it with this. I hope that clarifies how
2 we've proceeded up till now.

3
4 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other
5 discussion from the table.

6
7 (No comments)

8
9 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I guess for
10 procedural things we'll take a vote on the amending
11 motion first because that's amending the primary
12 motion, which is adoption of the report. Pete.

13
14 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chairman. I think
15 it's important that we get a little more direction on
16 what we're looking at as far as those individuals to be
17 included as co-authors. I just heard one name. To me,
18 I think that's more reasonable versus trying to include
19 all the data collectors, which would be numerous and
20 trying to put as co-authors. I'm not sure, the maker
21 of the motion, how far they want to go as far as
22 listing the people that actually helped collect the
23 data. Are we looking at all of them or are we looking
24 at a specific lead to help coordinate those
25 individual's efforts. Mr. Chair.

26
27 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Taqulik.

28
29 MS. HEPA: Maybe as a way forward --
30 because, you know, when our reports come out, we do
31 list the people that actually collected the
32 information, helped review the text to make sure that
33 it's correct for their village. So just to honor their
34 contribution to a final report, we do include the
35 people or the person from Atqasuk that helped collect
36 this information to make sure that the context of the
37 language that was written in the report was accurate.
38 So that's where I'm coming from.

39
40 But maybe as a way forward through the
41 Harvest Survey Committee we could have a more in-depth
42 discussion to clarify because I think we could continue
43 this discussion for a little while and maybe not get
44 anywhere, but maybe the Harvest Survey Committee could
45 have a short discussion at their next meeting unless
46 anyone else has more input.

47
48 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Pete.

49
50 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. I appreciate

1 that comment. What I was looking at, based on your
2 comments, was that Mr. Alex Whiting played a very key
3 role in coordinating the data collection and then you
4 list a whole bunch of other people and I'm not sure to
5 what level those are in comparison. So I'm just trying
6 to -- in professional reports, it's common in the
7 acknowledgments to list those individuals that played a
8 key role in collecting the data, but then you actually
9 have the authors that did the heavy lifting, compiling
10 the data, summarizing the results, et cetera. So I'm
11 trying to get a division between those two. Mr. Chair.
12

13 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. I've
14 heard a couple different
15 things. One is we have a motion on the table to
16 include everybody that was involved in either the
17 collection of data or preparation of data to be a co-
18 author on this report as a condition of its acceptance
19 of the report and the second discussion point we have
20 around the table is to basically not do that at this
21 meeting but to have the discussion in front of the
22 Harvest Committee to have the discussion about what is
23 the right role of authorship in future reports and then
24 separate that discussion from the discussion of
25 approving this report at this meeting.
26

27 So let's have a little discussion where
28 we want to go. George, I'm sorry.
29

30 MR. SQUARTSOFF: I was brought up a
31 little bit different. I respect what you're trying to
32 do and get recognition, but my reward to helping do
33 stuff was how you felt inside after. That was your
34 reward. I bring my son up that way too, helping and
35 doing stuff. He told me one time, Dad, it does feel
36 good after he does something or do something for
37 somebody. That's your reward, is how you feel inside
38 after.
39

40 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other comments.
41 Myron.
42

43 MR. NANENG: You know, there are a lot
44 of reports that have come out from many of the rural
45 parts of Alaska and a lot of archaeological surveys. I
46 think we're the most studied people in the world in
47 rural Alaska. There's always something that comes up
48 where they say, oh, we want to do a study, we want to
49 do a study, why are these people so healthy and not
50 having diabetes, but nowadays our younger people have

1 more diabetes than ever before, but we want to find out
2 why the Native people are so healthy compared to other
3 populations of the state of Alaska or, for that matter,
4 the rest of the world.

5
6 Well, it's because of the food that
7 we've grown up with. My kids don't eat the same kind
8 of food that I've grown up with. Today I still eat the
9 same kind of food. If they want to come and ask me
10 about all these things, am I going to be given credit?
11 Nope. They're just going to ask me questions and
12 forget who they got that information from. One of the
13 requirements that has now come up from our villages is
14 that if there's going to be any research or study
15 that's going to be happening in any of our villages, it
16 has to be done with the approval of the tribal council
17 in the village.

18
19 It has to be approved by many of our
20 villages within our region because we feel that
21 sometimes some of these studies that do come about are
22 not necessarily for the benefit of our Native people,
23 but at times for some kind of study that would harm the
24 people. You know, in the past, well, let's try atomic
25 isotope study on Native people, how do they react,
26 without a person being told what harm will this cause
27 to you.

28
29 That's why I think it's important that
30 whenever studies are done and people are putting
31 information together that there's recognition of who
32 they got this information from, who was tested for
33 something, so that if something comes up in the future
34 that may be harmful that there will be a documented
35 list of why people are having certain issues. I've
36 heard that not only from people within our region, but
37 I've heard it from other parts of the state.

38
39 So that's why I feel strongly that I
40 think some of these things that we put together as
41 studies and information the people that were directly
42 involved should also be listed and recognized because
43 I'm sure that whatever information they provided is
44 going to be used by somebody else to get a degree from
45 an accredited college when our own science and well-
46 being and living through our lives have never really
47 been acknowledged for what its real value is. So
48 that's why I think that there has to be some way of
49 more recognition and not just an acknowledgment.

50

1 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Pete.

2

3 MR. PROBASCO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
4 do agree in part
5 with what Myron is saying. I think it's important that
6 we look at, if you will, local ownership in these
7 important datasets and the summary of the reports, but
8 I also recognize that there's a limit on how many of
9 the people that are involved when you do a report that
10 you could add. So I think we would have a lot to gain
11 if we put it back in the committee and have them come
12 back with a recommendation on how to deal with
13 authorships on these reports in the future, but I would
14 also recommend that we move forward with this report at
15 this time. Mr. Chair.

16

17 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Taqulik.

18

19 MS. HEPA: Thank you for your comment
20 and I agree that that's a good way forward. Just to
21 make a comment very clear and just looking in this
22 report, there's a section here talking about the
23 environmental and it was written or a lot of the
24 information was given by Alex and you mention that here
25 in the footnote, but when you look prepared by Liliana
26 and Nicole, which is fine, to me it's just a little bit
27 of disrespect on how much effort certain people put in.

28

29

30 When you look at different kinds of
31 scientific reports, I've seen some with a lot of names
32 listed, and I really feel strongly that the people that
33 help collect the information and help provide those
34 environmental details that are included in this report
35 should be co-authors. But agreeing with Pete here that
36 bringing it to the Harvest Survey Committee would be a
37 good -- a good discussion could happen and get other
38 input from other researchers as well.

39

40 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Joeneal.

41

42 MR. HICKS: I just want to say that I
43 do support the motion. I might want to suggest that
44 maybe the front page might say in collaboration with.
45 As I read this here, I see four villages that pretty
46 much come out. In other words, you've got Gambell,
47 you've got Savoonga, Kotzebue. Well, what I'm getting
48 at is say the co-authors here in collaboration with
49 these villages. Is that something that might be
50 workable?

1 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Well, I'm going
2 to put my cards on the table. I'd like to get this
3 2012 report finalized and move forward, but I do share
4 the concerns heard around this table about there should
5 be some additional recognition possibly on the cover of
6 these reports. I just don't know if we can sit here at
7 this meeting right now and decide what the appropriate
8 level of involvement is to be recognized on the front
9 page of the report to get this one report approved.

10
11 So I'm going to be voting against the
12 motion unless it's withdrawn to have greater authorship
13 of this report for 2012, but I would support a motion
14 that asks the Harvest Survey Committee to look into
15 this question and bring back some recommendations to
16 the Council to look at what the appropriate level of
17 recognition is for people involved in the preparation
18 of these survey reports.

19
20 I would support the primary motion to
21 approve the 2012 report. Jack.

22
23 MR. FAGERSTROM: I got lost for a
24 moment. Technical paper No. NNN we're talking about?

25
26 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Yeah, NNN. It
27 says 2012 in the
28 title.

29
30 MR. FAGERSTROM: Okay. I was just
31 looking at the acknowledgment for the front cover photo
32 and I think Larry has two R's. And I've never run into
33 this word before P-L-U-K-E-D. Is that another way of
34 spelling plucked?

35
36 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: What's the
37 desire of the Council. Taqulik.

38
39 MS. HEPA: I'm okay with your
40 recommendation that we do go ahead and approve, but I
41 can withdraw my motion to say that this needs to be
42 discussed at the next Harvest Survey Committee meeting
43 to see how we want to go forward.

44
45 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: With
46 concurrence of the second?

47
48 MR. NANENG: I concur as the second as
49 long as it's not going to be put under the rug.

50

1 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: It's not my
2 intent to sweep it under the rug. So the motion has
3 been withdrawn, so we have the 2012 report for adoption
4 on the table.

5
6 MR. PROBASCO: Question.

7
8 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: The question.
9 Anybody opposed.

10
11 (No opposing votes)

12
13 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. It's
14 approved.

15
16 MR. NANENG: Mr. Chair. Is the report
17 approved with the corrections that were added by Jack?

18
19 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Yes. The second
20 thing I think that Liliana has now is the 2013 report
21 and I think we need to take that one and send it to the
22 Harvest Committee so that we can have them look at it
23 and approve it by the fall meeting. Pete.

24
25 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. I agree with
26 your statement. I just wanted to, if the Council
27 agrees, have a formal action that we're going to look
28 into this authorship and move it to the committee. Mr.
29 Chair.

30
31 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Let's do
32 the 2013 report first and then we'll take that one up
33 second. Do we have a motion to put the 2013 report to
34 the Harvest Committee?

35
36 MR. HICKS: I so move, Mr. Chair.

37
38 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: It's been
39 moved. Second?

40
41 MR. DEVINE: Second.

42
43 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Any
44 discussion. Liliana.

45
46 MS. NAVES: This is a comment about the
47 review of the 2013 data, so it's really important too
48 that the Y-K Delta partners get involved in the data
49 review with your Regional Council. This report was
50 already sent to the Harvest Survey Committee late last

1 week and also to the two Refuges involved in the data
2 collection.

3

4 So I'm looking forward to hear your
5 comments there, Myron, when you get to it.

6

7 MR. NANENG: Sorry you weren't there at
8 that meeting that we had last week or a week and a half
9 ago. The Waterfowl Conservation Committee did not take
10 this agenda item up to review and approve it. The
11 other question that I have, did you ever get a response
12 from any of the villages that you had any -- like
13 Kotlik, the Lower Yukon villages, on some of the
14 reports? I think that was the 2011 report that we had
15 issues with, but I was wondering if you had the same
16 issue with 2013.

17

18 MS. NAVES: Well, this report was only
19 made available Thursday or Friday last week, so I don't
20 think that it has been discussed with any villages yet.
21 In fact, you largely rely on the Regional Councils to
22 do that communication with the villages.

23

24 MR. NANENG: When we get back, we'll
25 send it out to the villages and we'll provide copies to
26 the Waterfowl Conservation Committee members.

27

28 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Any
29 opposition to sending this to the Harvest Committee.

30

31 (No opposing votes)

32

33 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Then I
34 think the third piece of action, Pete, is yours. I
35 don't know if we need a motion to do this or not. The
36 intent is to actually ask the Harvest Committee to look
37 at the appropriate level of authorship for future
38 harvest survey reports.

39

40 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: A directive to
41 the Executive Director is sufficient, Mr. Chairman.

42

43 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. So we'd
44 ask our Executive Director to work with the Harvest
45 Committee to look at the appropriate level of
46 authorship for future harvest survey reports. Okay.
47 Liliana, anything -- I think you still have future
48 reports.

49

50 MS. NAVES: I stopped on item 5 there

1 on the recent products. There are a couple of other
2 things that I'd like to talk about. So there is the
3 book chapter that included harvest estimates for the
4 whole state on sea ducks. I think that sometimes gets
5 confusing. We talk about sea birds here and may be
6 referring to sea ducks. This was an opportunity to get
7 the AMBCC data on a different venue and what's really
8 great it had this opportunity because if we're not
9 doing it, who is going to do it, so it's interesting.

10

11 This is a big book. I think it will be
12 in two volumes. So I worked with four other authors in
13 the chapter about the harvest, so the other authors
14 were Tom Rothe, myself and Greg Robertson from Canada.
15 It included all harvest data from the sport hunt in
16 North America, in U.S. and Canada, and harvest data
17 from subsistence hunting, Alaska and in Canada.

18

19 I think the option that's being
20 considered now for publication of this book is the CRC
21 Press and we're hoping to have the book maybe in the
22 fall of this year.

23

24 So item number 7 of the list is that we
25 worked together with the Native Village of Eyak and the
26 U.S. Forest Service and SERC to design and implement a
27 registration system for the new hunt that starts this
28 year in Cordova. This will be a follow-up with a mail-
29 out survey, so the registration was open in mid-March
30 and so far the last number I heard there was 14
31 households registered altogether and the mail-out
32 survey will go out as soon as the egg harvest closes in
33 late May, I think.

34

35 Item 8, I work with Donna to update the
36 harvest survey section of the AMBCC website, so things
37 now are more a little bit up to date with the recent
38 product and a little bit more organized, so I think
39 that's easier to find materials. Also some historic
40 materials that are difficult to get a hold of, so we
41 put those reports online and I think that was a good
42 improvement in getting information out.

43

44 I added there item 9 that I'd like to
45 give the heads up with that. There is a 2012
46 subsistence update that was prepared by the Division of
47 Subsistence headed by Jim Fall and this really brings
48 numbers together for the whole state. Not only for
49 birds, but other resources. So when you want a big
50 picture of subsistence in Alaska, this is a really

1 handy document.
2
3 Now moving to upcoming work.....
4
5 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Liliana, that's
6 on our website, right?
7
8 MS. NAVES: Yes. Would you like to talk
9 about that?
10
11 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Just in case
12 you want to look for it, it's on our website, ADF&G's
13 website.
14
15 MS. NAVES: And there are hard copies
16 on the back table too. Are there questions on the last
17 bullets that I mentioned?
18
19 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Questions,
20 comments.
21
22 (No comments)
23
24 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay.
25 Continue.
26
27 MS. NAVES: So we move to upcoming
28 work. Now that you have 2012 report adopted, I will
29 put together the final report and work with the
30 partners to review the 2013 harvest estimates. We're
31 reworking the 2014 Y-K Delta data collection in
32 partnership with the Yukon Delta Refuge and the Togiak
33 Refuge. We will implement the mail-out survey for the
34 Cordova hunt.
35
36 As requested, I have been available to
37 provide information on the species assessment for the
38 Yellow-Billed Loon listing. I have provided
39 information to different people at the Fish and
40 Wildlife Service on different levels, provide
41 information and review materials, and also for other
42 contractors that are working on this process with Fish
43 and Wildlife Service.
44
45 Item 6, I look forward to provide
46 information as necessary for the survey review process
47 that we're starting up now, so it's going to be a
48 great, exciting opportunity to work with partners from
49 the Colorado State University.
50

1 The last item there is that I received
2 data requests on bird harvest from a range of different
3 interested parties and I have been receiving requests
4 on sea birds and shore birds data. Right now I'm
5 working on the statewide harvest estimates for these
6 two groups on the sea birds to address requests related
7 to harvest of terns, especially Aleutian terns,
8 although we don't break down terns by species on the
9 survey. Also on a species assessment of Red-Faced
10 Cormorants, so this is from the Maritime Refuge.

11
12 On the shorebirds, this goes to group.
13 There are many non-game species there and many
14 populations with a stiff population decline, so there's
15 lots of interest of shorebird harvest, although it's
16 not a main resource for subsistence being non-game.
17 And, in general, with a population decline, there is
18 interest in this kind of harvest. So I might just put
19 together something similar as I did for the sea ducks
20 for this.

21
22 That's the end of the list.

23
24 Thank you.

25
26 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Any questions
27 or comments.

28
29 Patty.

30
31 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: A very quick
32 comment. I just wanted to thank Liliana for all the
33 work she does for the AMBCC. I know I've called her on
34 several occasions asking for consolidated information
35 on specific species. I don't know how the data is
36 compiled, but I know it usually takes a little bit of
37 time, but she's always been able to get back to me with
38 the information that I need.

39
40 So thank you.

41
42 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: A very nice
43 comment. Thanks, Patty. Other comments.

44
45 (No comments)

46
47 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you,
48 Liliana. Next we have updating the harvest survey
49 review process by Pete.

50

1 MR. PROBASCO: Actually not by Pete,
2 but by Dr. Taylor.
3
4 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Well, it says
5 your name right here.
6
7 (Laughter)
8
9 DR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
10 Eric Taylor with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I will
11 do a check for time, Mr. Chair. Where are we at? I
12 failed to load up a presentation by Dr. Dave Otis to
13 give an update on this. It will take me about three
14 minutes to load it up. What would you prefer?
15
16 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Well, I'd like
17 to break at noon, so we have a half an hour. How long
18 will the presentation take?
19
20 DR. TAYLOR: I think Dave's
21 presentation is probably 10-15 minutes.
22
23 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: So why don't we
24 load it up and get it going and hopefully get the
25 presentation before lunch.
26
27 DR. TAYLOR: We can make it happen.
28
29 (Off record)
30
31 (On record)
32
33 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I think we're
34 ready to go back on record. Eric.
35
36 DR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
37 Eric Taylor with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Just
38 as an introduction, I think all of you are aware the
39 Fish and Wildlife Service as well as the AMBCC has had
40 an interest in looking at the subsistence harvest
41 survey for subsistence harvest of migratory birds in
42 terms of is it meeting our objective, is it meeting the
43 interest of rural residents and Native Alaskans. Is it
44 meeting the expectations of the State of Alaska as well
45 as the Fish and Wildlife Service in terms of indeed
46 providing the information we need to move forward with
47 conservation and harvest regulations and ensuring the
48 continued subsistence harvest of migratory birds.
49
50 So the Fish and Wildlife Service sent

1 out what's called a request for proposals to an
2 organization called the Cooperative Ecosystems Studies
3 Units in the United States. That's a group of
4 universities that are all associated. Asking for
5 proposals to indeed address the review and possible
6 revision of the AMBCC subsistence harvest survey for
7 migratory birds.

8
9 It's been an enduring process and I
10 appreciate certainly the patience of the Alaska
11 Migratory Bird Co-management Council, but we did
12 receive, I'm excited to report, a very excellent
13 proposal from Colorado State University. The proposal
14 went through a review process headed up by the Alaska
15 Migratory Bird Co-management Council subsistence
16 harvest review.

17
18 Mike Pederson and others on that
19 committee reviewed the proposal, came up with four or
20 five excellent questions. We called Colorado State
21 University, Dave Otis, Paul Doherty and Luke George,
22 and had a teleconference with all three individuals in
23 terms of our questions. They provided a verbal response
24 and then three days later provided a written response
25 to those questions and, indeed, the Fish and Wildlife
26 Service was pleased with the responses that they
27 provided and we are ready to move forward.

28
29 At this point we have not allotted or
30 awarded the contract to Colorado State. That's going
31 through contracts and general services. All of you, as
32 I mentioned yesterday, with your regional grants, the
33 challenges we have incurred with those, it's no
34 different when one is awarding a grant to a university
35 for a research project like this, but we are very
36 confident it will move forward later this month in
37 terms of actually approving the proposal with Colorado
38 State.

39
40 So when we had an opportunity to talk
41 to the three individuals here on the screen, I was
42 pleased to find out that Dr. Dave Otis with the
43 Colorado State University has agreed to come up and
44 indeed is here today. We'll give a brief, 10 to 15
45 minute presentation on kind of what you might expect to
46 unfold in the next few months. With that, I'll
47 introduce Dave.

48
49 DR. OTIS: Thank you, Eric. And
50 thanks, Mr. Chairman, for making time on the agenda to

1 give me a few minutes to, as Eric said, talk a little
2 bit about us and sort of what we bring to the table and
3 begin to develop some working relationships.

4
5 I have to say that I'm very pleased to
6 be here and somewhat surprised. I can tell you that
7 when we put the proposal together we purposefully sort
8 of were hopeful that the date of initiation of the
9 period of performance for the contract would coincide
10 with this meeting. We recognized this was an
11 opportunity to sort of try to get started off on a
12 strong footing with this group, the importance of it
13 and the importance of beginning to develop working
14 relationships, putting faces with names, getting
15 feedback from the committee on how we propose to move
16 forward. Anyway, I'm happy to be here to be able to do
17 that. It's a great opportunity for us as I said.

18
19 The other two folks had more to do than
20 I did, I guess, so I was fortunate enough to be able to
21 come up and tell you a little bit about the team as it
22 is at this point. There's more information about this,
23 about our backgrounds and whatnot and you can read
24 that. There's more information in the proposal about
25 us. We come with sort of different blends of field and
26 survey experience.

27
28 Perhaps the biggest variation is in our
29 experience professionally in Alaska, which has a wide
30 range, with me at the bottom and I basically have no
31 experience in Alaska. Paul is probably somewhere in
32 between and Luke probably has the greatest breadth of
33 experience, long-term connections with Alaska both as a
34 field -- working in the fields, working in remote
35 places. Personally, I think some of you know his
36 brother Craig, who is a biologist in the North Slope
37 Borough. So, again, a wide range of Alaskan
38 experience, which obviously is important. I'll say a
39 lot more about that here in a minute.

40
41 Our motivation. Why are we interested
42 in responding to this RFP and why do we think we might
43 be able to help. Although we've all worked on lots of
44 different taxa in our scientific careers, I guess, at
45 the end of the day we're pretty much all bird guys. We
46 have committed most or all of our careers to the cause
47 of migratory bird conservation and perpetuation of
48 healthy, sustainable populations of birds.

49
50 So given that commitment and given the

1 incredible migratory bird resource in Alaska, it's a
2 pretty exciting challenge for us and to expand our
3 horizons and have the opportunity at least, a little
4 bit indirectly, to maybe make some contribution to this
5 incredible resource in Alaska.

6
7 Secondly, there's no question it's a
8 challenging problem. All of us -- I can speak for
9 myself I guess a little bit that I've done a lot of
10 work on surveys of people and animals and whatnot over
11 the years. This is the most complex, challenging
12 survey I've ever encountered. This takes it up a
13 couple notches. So I guess we like a challenge. We're
14 hopeful that we can help.

15
16 Again, we wouldn't be interested in
17 this and devoting efforts to this unless we thought it
18 was an important problem as well. Clearly you all
19 think it's an important problem. You've devoted a lot
20 of time and energy and resources in times of very
21 limited resources to the problem and we recognize that.
22 We're all in in terms of trying to step up to the
23 challenge.

24
25 A couple of other things I think with
26 respect to sort of a foundational thought, I guess, in
27 how we approach the project. We believe pretty
28 strongly in the notion of making -- trying to make
29 explicit connections between survey programs and
30 monitoring programs like this and how that data is used
31 to actually make smarter management decisions.

32
33 In my experience in the last several
34 years, lots of agencies are asking themselves harder
35 questions about surveys and monitoring programs and how
36 the data are actually used to make decisions. Again,
37 we feel like we're spending taxpayers' money to conduct
38 these surveys, there ought to be some pretty
39 transparent links between obvious use of the data as I
40 said before in making smart management decisions.
41 You'll see that that sort of underlies one of our -- or
42 our approach to the problem.

43
44 Secondly, we also believe in
45 acknowledgment of the cultural and economic importance
46 of the subsistence harvest as a traditional activity.
47 We have a lot of work to do in this area and something
48 that this gentleman over here said yesterday sort of
49 resonated with me when he said we're sort of trained as
50 scientists to sort of think of everything in values and

1 metrics and in terms of sort of hard numbers. How many
2 birds are there, how many are we harvesting, other very
3 precise kinds of things.

4
5 And that training isn't adequate to
6 acknowledge this extra added dimension of this
7 subsistence harvest survey and we recognize that and
8 we're committed to improving our knowledge a lot about
9 these cultural values and this traditional activity and
10 try to do our best to find a meaningful way to
11 incorporate that dimension into any recommendations
12 that we make for survey design.

13
14 So just kind of a quick trip through
15 maybe what we see as maybe the four major steps, I
16 guess, in this project. The first of which is to --
17 which, again, gets back to my earlier comments, the
18 first of which is what do decision-makers want from the
19 survey and why; i.e., what do you want and how are you
20 going to use it to make decisions. That's going to be
21 a challenging endeavor, but we feel like that again
22 it's not -- it's a necessary preamble to actually
23 looking at the efficiency and the technical aspects of
24 the survey design. You can't really do a good job of
25 designing a survey unless you can articulate what you
26 want from the survey.

27
28 Again, that's sort of our first step is
29 to gather information from decision-makers about what
30 those objectives are and opinions about if and how they
31 used the current survey data and its strengths and
32 weaknesses. So that's the first job.

33
34 Clearly we don't expect from all the
35 stakeholders to get the same set of objectives or
36 priorities. So that's what happens next, is trying to
37 sort through and reach consensus on what these various
38 objectives and priorities might be. Again, we don't
39 expect that that's going to be a trivial process, but,
40 again, it's a necessary one to get us to the point
41 where then we can actually get down to the business of
42 looking at the survey design within that context of
43 what the specific desires are for the survey.

44
45 That's the third step then, is to --
46 given a set of objectives and there may be different --
47 we realize there could be -- what might come out of
48 that prioritization process might be a handful of
49 different sets of priorities that then we might
50 evaluate -- well, alternative strategies for which we

1 could evaluate the survey design and inform the
2 committee and decision-makers about what the tradeoffs
3 are. We all know we're not going to be able to get
4 everything for everybody, so there will have to be
5 tradeoffs made.

6
7 Those tradeoffs I think -- my sense is
8 probably that when we say survey design tradeoffs, not
9 talking so much about the nitty gritty nuts and bolts
10 of stratification and cluster sampling and all those
11 sorts of details. It's really more tradeoffs, I think,
12 in allocation of effort to specific taxas, specific
13 regions, however that might play itself out, but,
14 again, that's going to be driven by what the specifics
15 of survey objectives are.

16
17 For example, one might say, okay, given
18 this objective, if that's the one that's going to
19 primarily determine where the survey resources go to
20 answering a specific question or two, what are the
21 consequences for the lower priority desires. Hence the
22 tradeoffs. Anyway, that's sort of our vision at this
23 point for how that might -- how we might go about doing
24 that.

25
26 And then there's the data reliability
27 issue as well. Once in the field, the challenges
28 associated with data protocols, collection in the
29 field. Again, we're pretty naive about that and we're
30 going to need a lot of help from lots of folks to
31 understand better what those issues are.

32
33 Finally, if justified, and this is kind
34 of a step-wise the way the RFP was written, it's sort
35 of a step-wise process. We'll see where we are at the
36 end of the first year and go from there. It's sort of
37 one step at a time. If the consensus is that some
38 modifications in either the data protocols or the
39 design are warranted, then it's our job to suggest some
40 alternatives and field test those as necessary.

41
42 One other sort of underlying philosophy
43 is, again, we appreciate the importance of conducting
44 ourselves in sort of a deliberate, very transparent and
45 unbiased way to try to understand the perspectives of
46 all the stakeholders that are involved in this survey.
47 We think that's again critical to our credibility in
48 carrying out the process.

49
50 I think we feel pretty comfortable in

1 trying to extract objectives and priorities and whatnot
2 from decision-makers in State and Federal agencies who
3 have a lot of experience doing that, but we're
4 admittedly out of our comfort zone when it comes to
5 understanding the perspectives of the rural community
6 in terms of, again, back to the cultural values and
7 traditional ways. We are very hopeful that we can
8 collaborate with individuals with more experience and
9 expertise than we have to help us understand that and
10 sort of the whole human dimensions, the anthropological
11 aspect or context of the survey. We know there's lots
12 of folks that can help us with that from the
13 subsistence harvest folks in Alaska to some other
14 people that we might bring in with expertise in this
15 area that can help us. We certainly want to understand
16 and utilize the expertise and the process involved in
17 this committee and it's certainly our intention to
18 attend every one of these meetings as long as you'll
19 have us.

20

21 Finally, we'll be forming a technical
22 working group that will adequately represent the
23 regional interest of rural Alaskans as well as the
24 agency stakeholders. That's a process again. We're
25 looking to this group and others to give us some
26 feedback on and give us some guidance about what the
27 structure and function of that group might be. It's
28 charter, so to speak, I think, which we'll have to
29 spend some time thinking about, could range from
30 anything from facilitating field visits to regional
31 villages, which we think is a very important step in
32 our educational process, to participating in the
33 evaluation of information that we collect from
34 decision-makers.

35

36 Again, there's that process of
37 prioritization and making hard choices that this group
38 could be involved with, as well as providing sort of
39 overall counsel and direction and feedback on progress
40 as to how we're progressing and conducting our business
41 and try to keep us from going off the rails.

42

43 I think, Mr. Chairman, that's probably
44 all I'll say for now. I don't know if there's any time
45 for questions. If not, I certainly am hopeful that
46 maybe today and tomorrow, as time permits, I'm
47 certainly anxious to have discussions with any and all
48 of you and look forward to this journey in the next few
49 years.

50

1 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you very
2 much.

3
4 Any questions or comments.

5
6 (No comments)

7
8 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Well, I have
9 one. Perspective and prioritization. I think that's
10 the key to this whole thing because my understanding is
11 that a lot of this was initiated over the fact that
12 some of the Yellow-Billed Loon estimates weren't
13 precise enough to make decisions regarding listing
14 decisions. While I understand that relatively rarely
15 harvested species -- you know, estimates are going to
16 be poor under the existing survey design.

17
18 I, for one, am very nervous about
19 having the baby go out with the bath water in this case
20 and having a lot of good information for commonly
21 caught species and refocusing the entire survey to look
22 only at rarely caught species and having that become
23 the priority of the survey.

24
25 The reason I say that is that if you
26 start focusing away from commonly caught species and
27 stop that as the focus of the survey, it won't be long
28 for somebody to say that that harvest is -- it will
29 become unknown, but that harvest is large and affecting
30 stock status and that's something that could really
31 come back and harm local subsistence users.

32
33 I think the key to this whole thing
34 will be to find that right balance and mix between the
35 rarely caught species and the commonly caught species
36 and ensuring that we continue to collect information on
37 those commonly harvested species. They have a good
38 idea of how big those harvests are and how much of an
39 effect they're having on the stocks.

40
41 I guess the question I have for you is
42 how will you gain those perspectives? More
43 importantly, what process will you use to prioritize
44 those varying perspectives as you move forward?

45
46 DR. OTIS: Well, I think I probably
47 have a better answer for the first question than the
48 second one. Again, our intention is again, with the
49 help of this committee and others, to form a list, if
50 you will, of the people we need to talk to, the

1 decision-makers we want to talk to to represent all the
2 stakeholders' interest and develop -- a survey
3 instrument would be too sort of strong a word. But,
4 anyway, develop perhaps with the help of the technical
5 working group sort of the standardized kind of approach
6 to eliciting information and then actually travel and
7 sit down with folks and interview and try to draw this
8 information out from them. We think that's important
9 to do.

10

11 Sending a 10-page survey out to
12 decision-makers and ask them to fill it out is not
13 going to work. So that would be our certain approach,
14 is literally interviewing people and trying to extract
15 that information and then using the technical working
16 group to help us synthesize what we think we heard
17 obviously with the review of the decision-makers, et
18 cetera.

19

20 The process to then sort through that
21 and to actually make the hard decisions -- I'm not
22 going to be able to give you a very good answer on
23 that. There obviously has to be some structure to that
24 process. Whether or not that's the appropriate role of
25 the technical working group I think is something that
26 we probably need to discuss. We don't have any
27 preconceived notions about yes or no. I think that's
28 going to take some back and forth to figure out how we
29 want to do that. So I honestly don't have a very good
30 answer. We know it needs to be done, but it's a dicey
31 endeavor.

32

33 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Well, I trust
34 you're going to get a
35 lot of different perspectives. I'm most concerned
36 about how you prioritize them. I hope that you'll come
37 back to the AMBCC and ask us to help you in that
38 prioritization rather than just working solely with the
39 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to decide, based on what
40 you've heard, what the priorities are.

41

42 DR. OTIS: Yes, certainly we would not
43 expect to do that and I think that's maybe why perhaps
44 the technical working group, which we want to make sure
45 has adequate representation from all the stakeholders
46 is the appropriate place to do that so that we're all
47 together at the same time going through the same
48 process.

49

50 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Taqulik.

1 MS. HEPA: I was going to maybe just
2 comment on your technical working group. You know that
3 we do have a Harvest Survey Committee that has
4 representation from a lot of the participants, so that
5 might be a group that might want to play the role for
6 the technical working group. A lot of good
7 institutional knowledge from the members on that that
8 could provide you the information needed to help you
9 with the work that you set out to do.

10

11 DR. OTIS: Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Grab a
14 microphone and have a seat.

15

16 MS. BROWN: Oh, thank you. Good
17 morning. I'm Carol Brown from AVCP and I'm the co-
18 chair for the Harvest Survey Committee and I just
19 wanted to report to the Council that the Harvest Survey
20 Committee did their due diligence and looked at the
21 proposal. We had some clarifications that we had
22 wanted to have answered because the cultural and the
23 local aspect we wanted to make sure that that's
24 incorporated and that remains a focus. We didn't see a
25 lot of Alaska-based expertise in your proposal, so we
26 wanted to make sure that you collaborate with Alaska,
27 you know, the people in the group, so that's a
28 priority.

29

30 We also had a question about the
31 technical work group and we wanted to make sure that
32 that was -- the way we had envisioned it would be
33 primarily advisory and not carrying the lion share of
34 the work. So we had a couple of questions that we had
35 submitted and I think our priorities were expressed on
36 what we want to make sure stays on the forefront.

37

38 Thank you, Taqulik, for bring the
39 Harvest Survey Committee to the forefront because I
40 think that's going to play an important role as well.
41 We did ask some questions and we got them clarified and
42 I think that we have an understanding that we're
43 comfortable with.

44

45 Thank you.

46

47 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I think I had
48 Dan, George and then Joeneal.

49

50 DR. ROSENBERG: Yeah, hi. Doug

1 Rosenberg, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Doug
2 brought up one of the issues that's come up repeatedly
3 and this was the rare species, the endangered species
4 perspective.

5
6 Another thing that's come up repeatedly
7 is cost, so that it seems that there's some threshold
8 out there that the cost of this survey cannot exceed.
9 I'm not sure what it is, but apparently the cost of the
10 existing survey was too high, at least for what we were
11 getting out of it apparently, and there was lots of
12 concern about that that.

13
14 So you've got another parameter here
15 you've got to deal with, which is some not to exceed
16 amount to implement this thing. Can you give me your
17 thoughts on how you're going to do that?

18
19 DR. OTIS: Well, yeah, I think it is
20 our assumption that there is a fixed amount. Again, I
21 think that's part of the cost dimension of this. I
22 mean there are people that have lots of experience
23 obviously in conducting this survey and can perhaps
24 inform us at least about the relative cost perhaps of
25 collecting data on this species in this region versus
26 doing something else so that we can -- and there are
27 ways that we can incorporate that into again sort of
28 this resource allocation exercise that we go through.
29 There's only so many resources.

30
31 Between the sample sizes themselves and
32 the cost per unit so to speak, you put those two
33 together and I think, given a fixed amount of money,
34 you can come up with an evaluation of different
35 scenarios. If you wanted to put all your eggs in this
36 basket so to speak, here's how many -- here's the
37 sample sizes you might expect for the given amount of
38 dollars you have.

39
40 So it's sort of an optimization problem
41 so to speak, but certainly cost is going to have to be
42 -- yeah, I mean it's certainly critical to that
43 process. Again, we're hopeful that subsistence folks
44 and folks like you can help educate us on how to model
45 that so to speak.

46
47 DR. ROSENBERG: Okay. Yeah, thanks. I
48 mean I was just looking at it in terms of, you know,
49 there could be multiple objectives obviously and cost
50 is going to factor into which objectives you may be

1 able to meet or not meet outside of just prioritizing
2 objectives based strictly on the objectives themselves
3 and inherent qualities. Thanks.

4

5 DR. OTIS: And I think, again, you
6 know, if you have an objective and then you have sort
7 of this cost analysis, I mean, you know, a potential
8 result is that there isn't enough money to satisfy the
9 objective as stated. That's not necessarily a good
10 outcome, but it's an informative one.

11

12 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: My intent is to
13 take two more questions and then break for lunch and
14 come back and decide the next course. George, you're
15 next and then I'm going to have Joeneal go and then
16 we'll break for lunch and come back and take this up
17 further.

18

19 MR. SQUARTSOFF: You know, on the ducks
20 and stuff, the duck problem is not here as much in
21 Alaska as it is after they leave the state, you know.
22 I don't see why we're limited and can't get them
23 because the problem is not really here. Like these
24 guys' surveys do, I would rather get a survey from a 70
25 to 80 year old guy that's watching the weather and
26 knows how they feed and what's out there for the birds
27 and how much it's going to survive than you guys flying
28 over and just looking, you know. I think they have
29 more knowledge than you guys on that stuff.

30

31 Why not open it for three years, you
32 know, but limited and regulations, but open it and then
33 check your surveys after. If they change or what and
34 just give it a try. Instead of going by all this other
35 stuff and then just see if it's right.

36

37 DR. OTIS: Thank you.

38

39 MR. UMPHENOUR: Joe.

40

41 MR. HICKS: Mine is just a short
42 comment, question, however you want to take it. On
43 your slide presentation you talked about your
44 motivation and you talked about your project role
45 review, your data collection. As you've probably been
46 here, what, maybe one day now, you've heard that
47 there's issues that's before us. It's a lot. It's not
48 just a few.

49

50 Like, for instance, the term

1 indigenous. That includes both Native and non-Native
2 in the village. That's a big issue we're also
3 pursuing. Each village is different. I mean they have
4 different value systems, they have a different way of
5 handling or talking. I mean there's different clans,
6 stuff like that. Again, each region is different.
7 They have a different system as to how they work with
8 each other, you know.

9
10 What I'm getting at is that I
11 understand your statement that you put up there, but
12 after doing your survey, after talking to people that --
13 I guess you could call it a question. How much will
14 that statement change to you? You know what I'm
15 saying? I mean you're talking about TEK, you're
16 talking about -- I mean there's a lot of issues
17 involved.

18
19 Sure, I understand your statement
20 acknowledgment of the cultural economic importance of
21 subsistence harvest as a traditional activity. I mean
22 that doesn't sound like a very well thought out
23 statement. I think after a period of time that
24 statement is going to be more of a well defined that
25 includes, like I said, the indigenous part, the TEK,
26 stuff like that.

27
28 DR. OTIS: Yes, thank you. When I said
29 this was probably the most -- without a doubt the most
30 complex survey I'd ever run into, and that's just given
31 the little I know about it, I've just seen the tip of
32 the iceberg. I'm sure it's, on order of magnitude,
33 more complex than I even think it is. I think the
34 purpose of that statement is that, again, it was just
35 to sort of acknowledge to this group and to all the
36 stakeholders that we realize how naive we are and that
37 we're counting on and we're going to have to rely on
38 folks like you and the technical working group to help
39 us and the review re-emphasized that. All I can say to
40 you is that we're sincere in our desire to understand
41 as much as we can that's relevant to this so at the end
42 of the day that you all feel like we've done our best,
43 as I say, to incorporate that dimension into any
44 recommendations we make.

45
46 MR. HICKS: I want to say good luck in
47 your endeavors and I look forward to working with you.
48 I'd like to see what the end product looks like.

49
50 DR. OTIS: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I'd like to
2 break for lunch now. My goal is to get any -- after
3 you guys go to lunch and come back, I'd like to break
4 for an hour and 15 minutes, but come back with any more
5 thoughts and considerations you'd like to pass on to
6 this gentleman for conducting the survey, but I'd like
7 to also conclude this with how best the AMBCC can
8 interact with them as they proceed with the survey and
9 what motion we'd like to figure out that interaction's
10 mechanism so that we feel that we're part of the
11 decision process as this goes forward.

12

13 So let's come back at about 1:25.

14

15 (Off record)

16

17 (On record)

18

19 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: We're going to
20 get started again. Dave, do you want to come back up
21 and be available for questions. I guess the intent here
22 is to kind of finish off the round of questions on the
23 survey and then figure out how AMBCC would like to
24 interact with the group here as they proceed with the
25 survey.

26

27 Any other questions for Dave, comments.
28 Todd, okay, come on up.

29

30 Mr. SFORMO: This is mainly just a
31 comment. This is Todd from the North Slope Borough.
32 In one of your slides you mentioned trying to
33 understand and utilize the AMBCC co-management process,
34 but I think a number of people within the Native caucus
35 would disagree that it's really co-management, so I
36 think that's something that you should really look at
37 very early on, is what is co-management and is it
38 really part of this group.

39

40 The second is more of a kind of a, I
41 guess, perception of bias. If you're having meetings
42 and it's exclusively with one group or another, how are
43 you going to ensure -- reassure everyone else that
44 you're really taking into account a larger picture and
45 not just the people who have hired you?

46

47 Those are just comments.

48

49 DR. OTIS: Well, in response to that
50 second question, I guess the answer would be not to

1 have meetings with only one group. I don't know if
2 you're referring to maybe the activity of interviewing
3 decision-makers to try to understand their objectives
4 and priorities. Certainly we would do that sort of
5 one-on-one. I don't see any real potential problem
6 with that because, again, on that list will be all the
7 stakeholders that have a stake in this survey.

8
9 So, yeah, it would not be our
10 intention, I think -- again, that one slide that said
11 our philosophy is to try to do our business in a very
12 transparent and unbiased way, so we understand
13 perception can be a reality, so I think we'd avoid
14 that.

15
16 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Any other
17 comments. Go ahead.

18
19 MR. AHMASUK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
20 Brandon Ahmasuk, subsistence director at Kawerak. My
21 question kind of goes along with what Todd was asking
22 about bias. Are any of these harvest surveys going to
23 include Canada, Russia, Japan? To me, in essence, if
24 you don't include those, then it is bias. I mean it's
25 a survey to point the finger at a particular user
26 group.

27
28 Thank you.

29
30 DR. OTIS: I don't think I can provide
31 an informed response to that, I guess. I guess I'd
32 like to talk to you more about that and understand what
33 the interaction is between the subsistence harvest
34 survey -- I don't know if you're suggesting the harvest
35 that goes on in those other places.

36
37 Again, I think ultimately that gets
38 back to what the objectives of the survey and
39 priorities of the survey are. If one of them is to
40 put, say, the hardest of a given species within the
41 context of all the other harvest that occurs of that
42 species, then perhaps then we'll begin to pay more
43 attention to that.

44
45 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Go ahead.

46
47 MR. FAGERSTROM: Maybe a simpler way to
48 do that would be to look at the harvest of Brant. Our
49 numbers in our area have gone down. Realizing that
50 they're hunted in Mexico, perhaps that should be

1 explored also.

2

3 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I think it's
4 probably beyond the scope of what the Fish and Wildlife
5 Service sent out in its proposal, to look at the
6 international harvest of birds. I understand the
7 importance of it, but I think that's probably beyond
8 the scope of what we're asking this group to do. I
9 think the information from this survey will definitely
10 help inform the discussions that the Fish and Wildlife
11 Service has a lead on with respect to international
12 migratory bird treaties.

13

14 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Sonny, did you
15 have something?

16

17 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Yeah. That's what I
18 was saying a while ago. It's not the problem in
19 Alaska, but they're punishing us what's happening other
20 places, you know. They're here and they go by and they
21 kill them all down there and they don't come back, but
22 why don't we get our share before they leave. The
23 problem is not Alaska.

24

25 DR. OTIS: I think -- I guess my only
26 thought about that potentially -- you're talking about
27 more common species perhaps that are harvested -- sport
28 harvest later in the year in the Lower 48 or.....

29

30 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Yeah, whoever travels
31 through.

32

33 DR. OTIS: Yeah, I think one of the --
34 correct me if I'm wrong. One of the objectives of the
35 subsistence harvest was also to provide data to the
36 Fish and Wildlife Service migratory game bird folks to
37 complement their harvest strategies for these abundant
38 species. I don't know yet how well, if at all, the
39 survey is satisfying that objective. Whether the folks
40 back in Laurel receiving the data want that data, what
41 they might want from the survey. Again, because
42 they're going to be looking at the bigger picture, not
43 just what happens in Alaska, but what happens in
44 general to the harvest of these more common species.

45

46 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other comments.
47 Pete.

48

49 MR. PROBASCO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
50 I appreciate the comments and questions that have come

1 out here briefly as we look at the survey and where
2 we'll go down the road. I think it's important for me,
3 representing the service, to put to rest that -- and I
4 think Frank said it very well, that this is a
5 co-management process. The Service does not have the
6 veto power on this survey. We're going to work
7 together on it. I think Doug's comments and others I
8 need to put those to rest. Both Eric and I are
9 committed to make this a collaborative process working
10 with the AMBCC and the company, the contractors, that
11 are doing the work.

12

13 I look forward as we move down. I
14 think Dave said it very well. This is a very complex
15 survey and the goal is to get, as we work through the
16 various communities through the future years, is to get
17 an assessment of what that subsistence harvest is
18 because that's part of our mandate, is to monitor the
19 take of these species and report them accordingly. I
20 just wanted to make that comment.

21

22 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Any other
23 comments.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. That
28 leaves us with how we would like to interact with them
29 as they proceed forward. A couple things I heard
30 before the lunch break was to potentially have the
31 Harvest Survey Committee potentially serve as that
32 interactive tool with this group, but it could be other
33 mechanisms or we could choose one or two of the Council
34 members that would like to serve or it could be a
35 combination of those. What's the wishes here?

36

37 Pete.

38

39 MR. PROBASCO: Doug, I think that would
40 be a good starting point. I think the key, as we work
41 through the initial steps of the review of the survey,
42 it's going to identify and I think this harvest
43 Committee is a great place to start, but I don't think
44 we want to sideboard and say there may be other
45 entities that we want to bring into it, but I think
46 that's a good start.

47

48 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Any other
49 suggestions.

50

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Hearing none.
4 We'll ask our Executive Director to have the Harvest
5 Committee work with you as you proceed forward with the
6 issues regarding the perspectives and prioritization as
7 you move forward. I presume you'll be available to
8 either be teleconferenced in or have somebody come up
9 at the fall meetings and give us kind of an update on
10 where you are.

11

12 DR. OTIS: Yes, certainly, that's our
13 intention. We also, at some point, depending how
14 things proceed, is to actually have a person-to-person
15 meeting with all the members of the technical working
16 group in a reasonably timely manner.

17

18 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you.

19

20 DR. OTIS: Yeah, thank you.

21

22 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Next
23 thing on the agenda is tabled proposals. The first one
24 is Fairbanks Native -- oh, I'm sorry.

25

26 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: The awards.

27

28 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Oh, I'm sorry.
29 I stand corrected. We're going to do some awards
30 first. I'm going to turn it over to Patty here.

31

32 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Thank you, Mr.
33 Chairman. As you all know, we did suffer a couple of
34 losses of members of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-
35 management Council this past winter. After speaking
36 with the Native Caucus, we felt it appropriate to
37 recognize some of the people that have served on the
38 Council, that have worked for the Council.

39

40 The first person that we would like to
41 recognize is Joel Saccheus. He was not on the Council
42 very long, but as a long time subsistence hunter and
43 fisher and gatherer, that was the focus of his life.
44 When he did speak at the Council level and during the
45 Council meetings, he didn't speak very often. He was
46 very soft-spoken, but what he had to say, to me, was
47 very wise and he had a lot of information and knowledge
48 that came from his traditional background. So it is a
49 great loss to have lost him on the Council and I would
50 like to ask Brandon to come up and accept the

1 recognition.

2

3 The plaque says, "In memoriam,
4 presented to the family of Joel Saccheus in
5 appreciation for his dedication and commitment to the
6 conservation of migratory birds and protection of the
7 subsistence way of life. Alaska Migratory Bird Co-
8 management Council, April 10, 2014."

9

10 Did you want to say a few words.

11

12 MR. AHMASUK: The plaque pretty much
13 says it all. I didn't know Joel that long, but the
14 time I knew him, just like the plaque says, he was a
15 subsistence user day in and day out. Pretty much 24
16 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year that's
17 what he was doing. Whether it be marine mammals,
18 migratory birds, fishing, what have you, that's the
19 lifestyle that he led. At the local level, his own
20 village, he passed his information on to other people
21 that he knew. Again, the plaque pretty much says it
22 all.

23

24 Thank you.

25

26 Jack, did you want to say anything or
27 pretty much says it all?

28

29 MR. FAGERSTROM: No, you said it all,
30 but like you said, he was involved in everything;
31 birds, fish, squirrels and everything.

32

33 Thank you.

34

35 (Applause)

36

37 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: The second
38 recognition that we want to present is to a long-time
39 member, actually one of the founding members of the
40 AMBCC, and that's Herman Squartsoff from Ouzinkie. Boy,
41 Joel didn't say much. Herman pretty much said it all.

42

43 (Laughter)

44

45 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: He kept the
46 meetings going and he always had a smile on his face
47 and he was always willing to help. I never saw him once
48 doing nothing. Matter of fact, we were at a meeting in
49 Fairbanks and it was cold. It must have been a fall
50 meeting, but it was really, really cold. It was early

1 in the morning and I jumped in the car to go get coffee
2 or something and there he is walking down the road. He
3 goes, yep, I take a walk every day at 6:00 o'clock or
4 whatever. So he was always busy and he was always
5 doing something. He loved working for the Migratory
6 Bird Co-management Council. He was one of the flyway
7 reps, so he would come to the Pacific Flyway Council
8 meetings and the Service Regulations Committee in D.C.
9 He's just very dear to us.

10

11 So we'd like to recognize Herman, a/k/a
12 The Hermanator. So we've got a plaque for his family as
13 well and I'd like to ask his brother Sonny to come up
14 and accept that.

15

16 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: So, was he The
17 Hermanator to you also?

18

19 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Oh, I'm older than
20 him, so he had to listen to me.

21

22 (Laughter)

23

24 MR. SQUARTSOFF: He dedicated his whole
25 life to the church and helping people. He was on all
26 those -- anything to do with the Native people stuff
27 and their heritage and teaching them how to do stuff
28 the old ways and that's all he ever did. Summer,
29 winter and summer, that's it.

30

31 Thank you.

32

33 (Applause)

34

35 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: We have one
36 last person to recognize. This person has been working
37 with the AMBCC almost since day one, endlessly,
38 tirelessly putting up with all of us, especially maybe
39 Pete and Doug.

40

41 (Laughter)

42

43 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: But this
44 person has the institutional memory of the AMBCC and if
45 you ever have any questions, Donna Dewhurst is the
46 person to go to. So, Donna, can you please come up.

47

48 (Applause)

49

50 MS. DEWHURST: Yeah, but I haven't

1 retired, not that I know of.

2

3 (Laughter)

4

5 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Well, we
6 decided we better do it before you go.

7

8 MS. DEWHURST: Oh, okay.

9

10 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: So this says
11 in grateful appreciation, Donna Dewhurst, for
12 dedicating years of service as an essential part of the
13 AMBCC. Your support over the AMBCC is greatly
14 appreciated.

15

16 MS. DEWHURST: Thank you. Thank you
17 very much.

18

19 (Applause)

20

21 MR. PROBASCO: Oh, and I forgot to
22 mention all the baked goods she brings to every
23 meeting. That's always special.

24

25 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

26

27 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you.
28 Pete.

29

30 MR. PROBASCO: I just want to say thank
31 you, Patty, for taking the lead and making these
32 recognitions. We did lose two very special people that
33 I've been involved with in my career and particularly
34 the Squartsoff family. Not only are they great
35 contributors to subsistence and Native issues for
36 Kodiak and that area, but they're also very involved in
37 the community. Herman was especially important there.

38

39 Sonny said when we saw each other, he
40 said I don't recognize you anymore, you don't have the
41 hair you used to have, but it's always good to get back
42 together.

43

44 (Laughter)

45

46 MR. PROBASCO: And, you're right, Donna
47 has been a very important part of the AMBCC process and
48 maybe a lot of you don't realize that even prior to
49 that she was one of our key wildlife biologists for the
50 Office of Subsistence Management. So she's dedicated a

1 lot of her career to subsistence issues. Donna, I
2 thank you as well.

3

4 Thank you, Patty.

5

6 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thanks, Patty.

7 Okay. Tabled proposals. The first one is the
8 Fairbanks Native Association request to amend
9 eligibility standards for invitation harvesting. My
10 understanding is that this issue has been dealt with,
11 but what we need to do at this meeting is take this off
12 the table and then decide if we want to take no action
13 or move forward from there.

14

15 Patty.

16

17 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Yeah, that's
18 right. The invitation proposal was worked on between
19 the spring meeting and the July SRC meeting and it was,
20 indeed, passed, so it is now in regulation. The only
21 other issue related to the invitation proposal is
22 transportation, which we're currently working on.
23 However, as the Chairman mentioned, we need to take
24 this off the table and dispense with it. So one
25 victory.

26

27 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. I'll follow
28 both yours and Patty's lead and I move that we take the
29 Fairbanks Native Association request to amend
30 eligibility standards from the table and recommend
31 taking no action as described by Patty.

32

33 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Is there a
34 second.

35

36 MR. HICKS: I second, Mr. Chair.

37

38 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Any discussion.

39

40 (No comments)

41

42 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Anybody

43 opposed.

44

45 (No opposing votes)

46

47 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: So moved. The
48 second tabled proposal is Kodiak/Aleutians Regional
49 Association Emperor Goose harvest. I know we had some
50 discussions about that yesterday in our work session.

1 There's a lot of work going on with respect to that
2 proposal. I think there was at least some discussion
3 as a starting point to leave this one tabled pending
4 some of that additional work that's going on, but I'd
5 like to entertain some discussion around the table
6 here.

7

8 Sonny.

9

10 MR. SQUARTSOFF: What's the reasons for
11 waiting and stuff? Why not consider it and go ahead
12 instead of just putting it aside all the time?

13

14 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: From my
15 perspective -- and maybe we should invite a couple
16 people up to the table. I heard a lot about the need
17 to have some additional work done on what the
18 harvestable surplus is, what the stock status was, so
19 that we could make a better case to say that the
20 current level of harvest is not affecting the yield of
21 Emperor Goose or the recovery of Emperor Goose, so that
22 we would have a better biological basis for that
23 decision.

24

25 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Why don't you give it
26 a trial run and stuff before you -- and if it doesn't
27 work, then stop it and then you've proved that you're
28 right, but you could be wrong.

29

30 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other comments.
31 Pete.

32

33 MR. PROBASCO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 Mr. Squartsoff, I think your comments are on the right
35 track. From my perspective, we still have some
36 additional data that needs to be -- some of it re-
37 analyzed. Both the State and the Service are working
38 on that data as well as rewriting the management plan.

39

40 So, for me, as a decision-maker, I need
41 to see that information before we can have enough
42 information to justify a decision. I think we're
43 getting close, but I don't think we're ready yet at
44 this meeting.

45

46 Mr. Chair.

47

48 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Taqulik.

49

50 MS. HEPA: Thank you. Just to ask

1 Pete, maybe do you have like an estimated time, how
2 much more time you will need or the Service employees
3 will need to pull this information together?

4

5 MR. PROBASCO: We have the two
6 individuals here that are working on it, so I'm not
7 going to commit a time on their behalf. You have both
8 Dr. Rosenberg and Dr. Taylor here that are the leads on
9 this, so I'd ask them to answer that question.

10

11 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Could you
12 gentlemen please come to the front table.

13

14 DR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
15 Eric Taylor with Fish and Wildlife Service. The reason
16 that this proposal was tabled is that the current
17 three-year average, which is the index used by the
18 Pacific Flyway, as well as the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta
19 Good Management Plan, the three-year average is under
20 80,000. It's approximately 68,000 birds right now.
21 The management plans that were adopted by this group as
22 well as the Pacific Flyway Council state that the
23 population must meet 80,000 before a harvest could be
24 considered again and that's what we're waiting for.

25

26 As Pete mentioned, both thanks to Dan's
27 efforts, he held an AMBCC Emperor Goose Subcommittee
28 meeting in November -- is that right, November?

29

30 DR. ROSENBERG: September.

31

32 DR. TAYLOR: September 2013. So
33 members of the AMBCC subcommittee for Emperor Geese as
34 well as the USGS, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the
35 Alaska Department of Fish and Game met to discuss
36 current knowledge of harvest of Emperor Geese, how we
37 do our survey of Emperor Geese, potential harvest of
38 Emperor Geese in Russia and other factors that may be
39 limiting this population. Right now the population has
40 been relatively stable for the last 10 years, so
41 everyone is anxious.

42

43 Clearly four AMBCC regions have
44 submitted proposals requesting the Fish and Wildlife
45 Service open up subsistence harvest of Emperor Geese
46 because we're right below that level of 80,000 and have
47 been and the population is not creeping up like we
48 would like. So Dan took the leadership role for that
49 subcommittee, held a subcommittee meeting and we tried
50 to discuss all those factors.

1 The factors that could be limiting this
2 population and we really don't know, but the factors
3 that the agencies are looking at is, one, disease and
4 contaminants possibly, wintering habitat conditions.
5 This is one species that winters, as opposed to other
6 species that are smart and winter in much warmer
7 climes, like California and Oregon, Emperors for some
8 reason decide to stay out in the Aleutian Islands and
9 overwinter, so they're in much harsher conditions.

10
11 So, again, they could be possibly more
12 susceptible if they're in weaker condition for some
13 reason. They could incur a higher mortality rate than,
14 say, Cacklers that overwinter in Oregon or Brant that
15 winter in Mexico.

16
17 The second factor that has been
18 mentioned a couple of times is recruitment. That is
19 what's the percentage of young, the percentage of
20 goslings that actually hatch on the Yukon-Kuskokwim
21 Delta that actually make it to adult status, actually
22 become breeding adults. It is felt that because
23 Emperors don't defend very well against predators like
24 gulls or foxes they could be susceptible.

25
26 Several of you had mentioned the
27 increase of gulls in certain areas, for example the
28 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, and we don't really know what
29 effect that might be having on Emperors, the increased
30 number of gulls or foxes.

31
32 Finally, as has been mentioned,
33 subsistence harvest, even though the species is closed
34 and has been closed to subsistence harvest, it's still
35 occurring primarily in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and
36 Bering Strait Region. Approximately, according to our
37 survey estimates, about 3,000 to 3,500 birds are still
38 being harvested. What effect that may have on
39 population growth we really don't know.

40
41 Right now that population is relatively
42 stable, but, for example, if we could decrease that
43 subsistence harvest of those birds, what would be the
44 response to that population, we really don't know.

45
46 So those three factors are what's being
47 looked at by all the concerned parties. I think what
48 Taqulik is requesting is for Dan and I to kind of look
49 at our workload and say given day-to-day activities,
50 our current efforts on the Cackling Canada Goose Plan,

1 the Brant Plan and the Dusky Plan, when can we fit in
2 that revision of the Emperor Goose Plan.

3
4 Dan and I have kind of compared our
5 workloads and we think starting next year we can look
6 at that. We have two statisticians, one from Fish and
7 Game and one from my shop, Bob Stehn, they're trying to
8 look at these. We do four surveys on Emperor Geese and
9 try to decide do the numbers work.

10
11 Sonny is shaking his head no, but what
12 I'm trying to assure him is that it's in his interest,
13 it's in the Fish and Game's interest, it's in the Fish
14 and Wildlife Service interest that indeed we understand
15 this population as best we can so that when we do
16 finally approve subsistence harvest that we have a good
17 idea of what its effects could possibly be.

18
19 I'll turn it over to Dan here so he can
20 add comments.

21
22 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: And, Dan, as
23 you're explaining to it, explain what you're currently
24 working on in the context of AMBCC because I think it's
25 very important to understand that there is a finite
26 universe of issues we can work on, but where you are in
27 completing some of the existing priorities that we've
28 given you.

29
30 DR. ROSENBERG: I've got several
31 questions I'll try to work through here, I guess.
32 Starting out, I appreciate everything that Eric said
33 and he did a good job of giving you the background. As
34 for when, we'll have this -- you know, I'm going to
35 defer that while I say that these proposals, the three
36 Emperor Goose proposals, have served a valuable
37 purpose. They have jump-started this process. They
38 have got the ball rolling. Without them I don't think
39 we'd even be having this discussion, which I think is
40 probably way past due.

41
42 So they have achieved, at least in
43 part, some of what I think they're intended to do, just
44 not in the timeframe that people would like to see.
45 That timeframe is obviously the problem, as Eric
46 explained. We've got lots going -- and we're trying to
47 get this Emperor Goose Plan underway.

48
49 Already what we've established is that
50 there's lots of uncertainty in how many birds are out

1 there. I think we all agree with that. The first step
2 before we can sit down and discuss where we're going
3 with this and how we're going to plan for these birds
4 is to figure out how many there really are and that's
5 what we're trying to do. We're trying to do it in a
6 scientific process as we can, given the information
7 that we have. That is going to take a little bit of
8 time.

9
10 I think once we get it going, but it's
11 finding the right people to do it, the people that have
12 the time to do it, and that's what we're working on
13 right now. When we'll get that answer, I don't know
14 because, as I said yesterday, a lot of it is dependent
15 upon people that already have very busy schedules.
16 They have the expertise, are willing to work on it, but
17 they have to find the time.

18
19 So I don't have a date for you. My
20 goal is to certainly have a lot more information and
21 hopefully have this thing done certainly by this time
22 next year. Not necessarily have the plan done, but at
23 least have a lot more information on what we're working
24 with here. Our best estimate of how many birds we may
25 have out there. Reviewing the current state of
26 knowledge and seeing if it's correct as best we can
27 tell or if we need to revise how we look at this.

28
29 So that's the best I can give you. As
30 Doug, I think, was alluding to, yeah, we are juggling a
31 lot of other tasks and a lot of those are certainly
32 things that at the moment maybe don't appear to be
33 pertinent to the AMBCC, but I think they really are.
34 Working on a Brant Management Plan, working on trying
35 to get the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Goose Management Plan
36 revised, we're trying to update information on Cackling
37 Canada Geese and come up with -- which would feed into
38 the Yukon Delta Goose Management Plan. We're working
39 on Dusky Canada Geese, which are not as big of an AMBCC
40 issue, but certainly affect a lot of people up and down
41 the Pacific Coast. Then the Emperor Goose Plan, of
42 course, is going on right now too, as well as
43 endangered species issues and these other things that
44 all affect AMBCC stuff.

45
46 So it's not that we don't recognize and
47 appreciate the fact that we're talking about people's
48 food here and people's cultural and traditional use of
49 that food and there's a whole generation, I recognize,
50 that has practically missed out on hunting Emperor

1 Geese. It's been since 1987. So if you're 25 years
2 old or so, you haven't been allowed to hunt Emperor
3 Geese in your lifetime. I think that's pretty
4 important to a lot of communities to keep those
5 traditions going and we understand that.

6
7 So we're trying to get this thing going
8 as quickly as we can and our goal, of course, is that
9 once we do have a hunt, we want it to be sustainable,
10 right. We want it to be sustainable, so we want to be
11 sure that we're going to implement it and we're going
12 to implement it fairly to all regions. It's not just
13 the Aleutian/Pribilofs and Kodiak that are interested
14 in hunting Emperor Geese legally, it's also everyone
15 from Kawerak south along the coast down to Kodiak and
16 the Aleutians.

17
18 That's all I can say.

19
20 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you, Dan.
21 Sonny.

22
23 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Okay. Another 10, 15
24 years you don't have to worry about it anymore. All
25 the elders are going to be dead and the younger
26 generation never had them, so they're not going to
27 fight for it no more. They don't care. It wasn't in
28 their diet growing up. It's going to be too late.
29 You're taking it away. It's not going to ever come
30 back.

31
32 DR. ROSENBERG: I completely understand
33 your sentiments. Believe me, I do. I think we could
34 have this discussion and hopefully we'll have a lot
35 more information a year from now and maybe be able to
36 make more -- if there's nothing -- let me get back to
37 one thing. The technical committee -- which is what
38 I'm here as part of really. The technical committee
39 does not make yea or nay recommendations on these
40 proposals. We just state what we think is the best
41 available information, the best available background
42 for these proposals.

43
44 Council is free to make a policy
45 decision that agrees with or conflicts with the
46 technical position, I think. Then that goes back --
47 and from here that goes to the Service Regulations
48 Committee in Washington, D.C. So I'm just telling you
49 from a technical standpoint what Eric and I feel is the
50 best route.

1 Now a technical standpoint doesn't
2 include people's sentiments, okay. I understand that
3 completely. I just want you to know that that's what
4 I'm -- go ahead.

5
6 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Where do you get the
7 people that do the surveys from? Right from college
8 you hire people or you get somebody that knows what
9 they're doing? I've seen you guys hire a lot of people
10 out there, just young kids doing surveys and stuff and
11 they just put anything they want on paper just to do
12 the job.

13
14 DR. ROSENBERG: Yeah, let me just say
15 this. I understand what you're trying to say, but the
16 people that are doing these surveys know what they're
17 doing, okay. I mean I would challenge anyone to try to
18 do a better job, you know. There's no question that
19 they know what they're doing, as best anybody can.
20 They're trying to count a moving object that doesn't
21 want to be counted in areas where the weather is not
22 always so favorable. It's a moving target and they're
23 doing the best that they possibly can and they're
24 probably doing the best that anybody can. Are there
25 going to be variations because of these other factors?
26 Of course there are. Can anybody do it better? Well,
27 if they can come up with a better way, you're free to
28 go out there and do it, but I don't know what that
29 better way is.

30
31 What we're trying to do is not come up
32 with a better -- what we're trying to find out if the
33 ways that we are using are accurately reflecting the
34 population, okay, and that's what we're trying to
35 assess. As I said yesterday, the numbers that they
36 count on those surveys may represent half the
37 population or they may represent 90 percent of the
38 population. No doubt they're missing some birds and
39 this is what we're trying to work on and try to assess.

40
41 Your question about the elders, I
42 understand that and appreciate that, don't get me
43 wrong, but that's just an entirely different
44 discussion.

45
46 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Peter.

47
48 MR. DEVINE: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.
49 One of the things I didn't hear mentioned was that one
50 proposal took it beyond the spring and summer hunt, you

1 know, which therefore falls into our 2010 letter for
2 fall and winter hunt. One of the proposals went 20
3 days into the sport hunt, so therefore that proposal
4 would not be allowed because of overlapping. We've
5 been traditionally doing this 4,000 years with no
6 overlap. That's another thing.

7
8 These goose proposals are going to lead
9 into a fall and winter hunt if you want to go
10 traditional harvest. I mean summertime, springtime, you
11 know, they've got pin feathers and stuff and they're a
12 lot fatter in the winter, so that will lead to more
13 proposals once this hunt is allowed, which I hope it is
14 before I go away. I know Joel and Herman have both
15 been pretty active on this since we started three, four
16 years ago talking about a goose hunt.

17
18 DR. ROSENBERG: Mr. Chair. I just want
19 to respond. As you said, the traditional time that
20 you'd like to hunt these birds is in the fall and early
21 winter, right? The proposal that's on the table is for
22 the spring. The Kodiak/Aleutian RAC proposal is for a
23 hunt beginning on March 2nd, so pushing the subsistence
24 season up to the limit of March 2nd. It's not for a
25 fall and winter hunt. Some of the other proposals
26 were, but this one was not. I think the Bristol Bay
27 one was for a fall hunt. But we're talking about the
28 Kodiak RAC proposal.

29
30 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Myron.

31
32 MR. NANENG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It
33 seems kind of ironic that the Russians can go hunting
34 for migratory birds and we're supposed to have an
35 international treaty. Yet our Alaska Native people
36 that have lived off these birds are being told that you
37 can't. Not only on the migratory birds, but today,
38 this morning, I heard on the Yukon River they're going
39 to have a moratorium on chinook salmon.

40
41 It seems like all our food security is
42 being dwindled down, decreased for migratory birds to
43 salmon and eventually it will eventually come to marine
44 mammals with the pending concern about some of the
45 population of bearded seals and stuff like that.

46
47 One of the things that's going to
48 happen regardless of whether we tried to make
49 regulations to say you shouldn't hunt now, people are
50 going to go out and hunt for something to eat and

1 you're not going to be able to stop them. You might as
2 well put some money aside to build up the law
3 enforcement budget because that's exactly what our
4 people are going to do out there is to go and find
5 food. They won't care what type of bird is passing by.
6 They're going to hunt for something like that. They're
7 going to have to gather to put food on the table.

8
9 I think it's imperative that the
10 Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, if
11 they're very concerned about the population status of
12 Emperor Geese, doing something more quicker than the
13 time and process it takes for something to come up and
14 say, okay, now we've reviewed and taken an opportunity
15 and looked at all these factors and stuff like that and
16 now you can go hunting. We need to do that quicker
17 than that. The first time we started talking about
18 closures of Emperor Geese was in 1986 and today it's
19 2014. That's a long time.

20
21 Sometimes I wonder how the population
22 numbers seem to be decreasing every year when people in
23 the villages are saying there's more young birds that I
24 see of Emperor Geese this fall than I ever did before,
25 there seem to be more Emperor Geese flying by our
26 villages during springtime, but those are never taken
27 into account. I think my request is that there be
28 something done sooner than later.

29
30 Thank you.

31
32 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I'm going to
33 say something real quick first. I think what you're
34 hearing the Department and the Service say is that the
35 best bet to get this approved at the SRC level is to
36 get the biology addressed firsthand and I know that's
37 frustrating because it takes some time to do that, but
38 it gives the best chance to ultimately win approval for
39 what your endpoint here is, which is to have a legal
40 harvest of the animals that's done on a sustainable
41 basis.

42
43 That said, I know yesterday I posed to
44 both of you that short of having a complete management
45 plan that has every I and T dotted is there a way to do
46 a risk assessment that looks at the current level of
47 harvest that's occurring illegally and determine how
48 much risk that harvest, if it was legalized, would pose
49 to the stock overall and its recovery, short of having,
50 you know, a complete management plan that builds that

1 harvest indefinitely? Is that an option short of having
2 a complete rewrite of the management plan?

3

4 DR. ROSENBERG: Yes -- no.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 DR. ROSENBERG: I can't speak for the
9 SRC. So the SRC may not see that as an option. Can we
10 do that exercise? Of course we can.

11

12 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Is it any less
13 work?

14

15 DR. ROSENBERG: Hopefully in the next
16 year and well before that we hope we'll have an idea of
17 what numbers of birds we're talking about, then we can
18 compare that harvest as a percentage of the total
19 population. We have some productivity information. We
20 can put all this together. Yes, we can certainly do
21 that. What we're trying to do is -- I mean we're
22 working in that direction. That's all part of what
23 we're doing, is being able to look at all these
24 different parameters so we can compare them and see
25 what that is. It shouldn't be anything that -- once we
26 have a number, we have a harvest number already, and
27 once we have a number of birds that's an easy exercise.
28 Now there's other mortality factors that we can't
29 control and we're not aware of.

30

31 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Sonny.

32

33 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Yeah, to you guys it
34 might be a laughing matter, but to us it's not and not
35 the elders, you know, to make a little this and that
36 and just let it go to your mind. All I'm asking for is
37 just, you know, for our holidays, just a couple a year,
38 so that's it. Just so we keep our self-respect and
39 stuff alive, you know.

40

41 DR. ROSENBERG: Yeah, I don't know
42 what gave you the impression that we think it's a
43 laughing matter, okay, but it's not. We recognize that
44 it's not a laughing matter, all right.

45

46 As for whether you can do that, that's
47 a Council decision. Council can take that
48 recommendation. As Doug just explained, you can beat
49 your head against the wall and take it to the SRC and I
50 cannot tell you what they're going to do. Maybe they'll

1 approve it and maybe they won't. You're free to do
2 that as this Council, as this body, okay.

3

4 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Yeah, I can't believe
5 how much control they've got over the villages. They
6 don't even live there. They don't know what's going
7 on. They're here up in Anchorage, big city, go to
8 restaurants and all that stuff. It's altogether a
9 different life. You've never been, you've never had
10 it, so you don't know. You weren't brought up that
11 way. All you guys are probably brought up on
12 McDonald's or something, you know, where it's easy to
13 get something, but our lives are a little harder.

14

15 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I can tell you
16 we share sometimes the same belief and wondering why
17 D.C. is controlling much of Alaska at a national level
18 also, but it is what it is and you've got to bring your
19 best case forward. I think in this case you're going
20 to strengthen the argument at the end of the day if we
21 have this assessment done.

22

23 I'm left as a manager of wildlife
24 conservation with a limited pot of money in there.
25 Like Dan said, they're working on Cackling Geese,
26 they're working on Brant, all priorities that we've
27 given them and this is next in the cue and we're going
28 to get to it.

29

30 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Yeah, I'm thinking I'm
31 going to go down there and tell my kids just go and
32 take what they want because they're not going to help
33 you up here. All this paperwork and whatever you guys
34 do and all your surveys, your supposed surveys are
35 accurate. They're not even close because down in
36 Kodiak there's a lot more geese than there was before.
37 There wasn't any and now there's flocks everywhere all
38 over. They winter right there by us and you guys never
39 check them. You never count everything. That's why I
40 don't like you guys' surveys.

41

42 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Eric.

43

44 DR. TAYLOR: I think the Fish and
45 Wildlife Service certainly hears, Sonny, your concerns.
46 I certainly hear Myron's in terms of let's do
47 something. As Dan mentioned, the four proposals
48 represent interest of four different regions to open
49 this bird up to subsistence hunt.

50

1 You know, I was raised on a farm in
2 Missouri and you could call that a subsistence
3 lifestyle because we butchered our own hogs, I shot
4 squirrels that my grandma cleaned for me, I trout lined
5 the river. Now I can't hunt Bobwhite Quail. They're
6 gone. So that's a resource that much in my lifetime
7 like your lifetime has been taken away. Was that under
8 my control? Maybe as a farmer I should have encouraged
9 my grandfather and his neighbors to conserve habitat,
10 but for whatever reason that resource is gone. So I
11 kind of have, at least from my upbringing, kind of know
12 what this means not to have a resource to hunt anymore
13 because I miss the call in the morning and I miss
14 running behind my dog and the few birds that I shot.

15
16 I want to assure this group the Fish
17 and Wildlife Service wants this hunt to occur. We want
18 all resources for all Americans, whether you're a
19 Missouri farmer or a person from Kodiak, to have
20 healthy populations and we're striving to do that. I
21 have a pilot and an observer that's going to risk their
22 life flying at 150 feet off the ground two weeks from
23 now and you're going to see the map on the survey from
24 King Salmon all the way to Wide Bay, the area that
25 they're going to survey. They don't take that job
26 lightly. I do a flight safety plan and I sit at home
27 with my cell phone every night making sure that they
28 get back to where they're supposed to be. These
29 surveys are not a hobby. They're not taken lightly.

30
31 As Dan mentioned, I'll put up our folks
32 against anyone. The individual that sat across the
33 room from you, Sonny, yesterday has 30 years
34 experience. He lived at Izembek for 20 years, he
35 started his career on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. I'm
36 sure very well Myron's family knows Chris Dau very
37 well. These are dedicated, professional people that
38 want this resource to succeed.

39
40 That said, I hear your frustration.
41 One of the best ways to move forward to ensure that
42 your concerns, Myron's concerns and others are on this
43 AMBCC Emperor Goose Subcommittee, it's comprised of
44 Fish and Game, it's comprised of Fish and Wildlife
45 Service, and it's comprised of people like Tim Andrew,
46 Peter Devine and others that all came to that meeting
47 and participate on it to hear the concerns from Native
48 villages, whether it's birds are bigger this year,
49 there are more birds this year, how come you don't
50 count in this area, whatever.

1 I think that committee that Dan is
2 chairperson of is a great way to put pressure on Fish
3 and Wildlife Service and the Fish and Game to say move
4 this into a priority. We understand you have avian
5 disease to work with at St. Lawrence Island, we
6 understand you have the spring and summer subsistence
7 harvest to deal with, we understand you've got surveys
8 and other management plans, but make this a priority,
9 tell us what you're going to do.

10
11 I think that's an avenue, whether it's
12 perhaps start a predator control program on Yukon-
13 Kuskokwim Delta Refuge, whether it's look at survival
14 rates, whether it's for me to allocate additional
15 funding, take funding away from something and move this
16 into this population assessment to get it done sooner,
17 I'm willing to do all those things. But that's a good
18 way that all of your concerns are met.

19
20 So that's what I would recommend, Mr.
21 Chair, is that we ask the subcommittee to meet again as
22 soon as possible, that people like Myron say yes,
23 either he will be there or Tim will be there, Peter
24 will be there and others will be there to make sure
25 rural residents are represented and then we move
26 forward with a plan of action. I agree with Dan. I
27 think progress can be made, but, again, it comes --
28 there are many things that we're trying to do. So we
29 will be cognizant of this group and hearing you.

30
31 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Sonny.

32
33 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Go ahead.

34
35 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Well, that's a
36 path forward that was just outlined by Staff, so I
37 wanted to get what your impressions are as we move
38 forward. That would leave this tabled and ask that the
39 Emperor Goose Committee meet soon and give us a report
40 on expected timelines by the next fall meeting. Myron.

41
42 MR. NANENG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
43 just want to make a comment or repeat a comment that
44 was made by one of the elders at our last WCC meeting.
45 We don't go to your places, your country, your
46 farmlands, wherever you live at to tell you how to live
47 and we want that same respect from you. Please don't
48 tell us when to hunt, when not to fish or when to do
49 all this stuff because we don't do that. I'm sure
50 there's some community rules that come up for the

1 betterment of communities like curfews that originally
2 happened, but some communities say they're unlawful,
3 but ultimately in terms of food security the elders
4 stated. Please be respectful of the way that we live.

5
6 As I stated before and I stated to the
7 governor before when we talked about salmon fisheries,
8 we're not going to stop people from harvesting birds,
9 fish or game when they need the food on the table. His
10 reaction was -- he really got mad at me for saying that
11 because I said that's how our people live in the
12 villages.

13
14 So I think it's very imperative that
15 something be done about this sooner than later and I
16 hope that is heeded as something because of the fact
17 that our people in the villages -- and even our young
18 people, you know, they don't get the opportunity to go
19 to McDonald's, Taco Bell or Subway as often as the
20 people in the urban centers. If they're going to go to
21 a grocery store, the taco they get from the store is
22 probably \$10, a small bag, which they can't really
23 afford to eat and it's not as nutritious as the birds,
24 the bees -- I just say the bees, but the birds, the
25 fish and others provide for many in our villages.

26
27 So that's my urgent request that we
28 hope this be taken very seriously because it's been
29 going on for so long. I still like to eat Emperor
30 Geese every once in a while when it's given to me. I'd
31 like to be able to hunt on my own. Maybe I'll feel
32 better about myself if I hunt on my own. I'm sure my
33 kids will be. They'll know how hard it is to gather
34 food and they'll appreciate it.

35
36 Mr. Chair, I hope that this message is
37 strong and to the point that it be considered sooner
38 than later.

39
40 Thank you very much.

41
42 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you,
43 Myron.

44
45 Sonny.

46
47 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Yeah, that's exactly
48 what I'm talking about right there. What am I going to
49 go back and tell my kids now? There's a couple guys in
50 Anchorage that are deciding your livelihoods up there

1 because they think they're a couple geese short
2 someplace there or whatever, you can't get them. If
3 you get one, it's against the law, you're breaking the
4 law. I'm going to tell them to get it anyway. I'm
5 teaching them to be a criminal all because of a couple
6 people in Anchorage that doesn't understand. They
7 think they do, but they don't. They really don't
8 understand the village life.

9
10 All they're looking at is their count,
11 what somebody else told them or some college kid was
12 out there surveying. They went to college, so they're
13 smart and these guys are just from the village, they
14 don't know nothing, they'll listen to you. You know,
15 whatever you say they're going to believe. That's what
16 you're trying to tell us. I don't believe all these
17 Fish and Game reports, but you expect everybody to
18 believe it because you say it.

19
20 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Pete.

21
22 MR. PROBASCO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
23 Obviously there's a lot of emotions around this issue
24 and I think you've heard Dan and Eric loud and clear
25 that they're asking that they get the sufficient time
26 and their goal is to report back in a timely manner
27 based on what they have on their plate to provide
28 information that we can act on.

29
30 Sonny, I'd sort of ask you to step back
31 in time. One of your favorite places, Barabara Cove,
32 and what we had to do there to bring the salmon back.
33 It took time. We once had tremendous fish there.
34 Whatever happened, we lost them, but now they're back.

35
36 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Yeah.

37
38 MR. PROBASCO: The same with Emperors.
39 We've got to work that way.

40
41 MR. SQUARTSOFF: That's because we're
42 there taking care of them. The outsiders don't come
43 take them.

44
45 MR. PROBASCO: Well, we still had to do
46 some.....

47
48 MR. SQUARTSOFF: They can't come and
49 take them. Just like all these village guys will
50 protect their own stuff.

1 MR. PROBASCO: But I think if you give
2 us the time and I think.....

3
4 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Time is what I don't
5 agree with.

6
7 MR. PROBASCO: And we're not saying a
8 lot of time. We're saying we just need this.....

9
10 MR. SQUARTSOFF: It's been years
11 already and every time a little more time, a little
12 more time. The time is running out. We're getting
13 older and we're going to be gone soon and the next
14 generation is not going to know nothing about it. It's
15 going to be gone soon just because a couple people
16 making a decision. So you're taking some of our
17 livelihood away from us just because of a couple
18 people.

19
20 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay, we need
21 to wrap this up. We need a motion on the table either
22 to leave this tabled with the expectation that the
23 Emperor Goose Committee will meet in the near future
24 and report back in the fall meeting or to take these
25 off the table and take action on them. What's the
26 wishes of the Council?

27
28 Pete.

29
30 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. With all due
31 respect, I ask that the Council consider what we have
32 before us and the information that we need to have to
33 make a final decision that has a high probability of
34 going through the process and making it through the
35 SRC. So I would like to make a motion that these
36 proposals stay before the Emperor Goose Committee and
37 that they report back to us in the fall of 2014.

38
39 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Is there a
40 second.

41
42 MS. HEPA: Second.

43
44 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Discussion.

45
46 (No comments)

47
48 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Anybody
49 opposed to this.

50

1 (No opposing votes)

2

3 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. We will
4 leave this tabled for now. I guess the parting message
5 back to Eric and Dan is to form that committee between
6 now and the next two months and let's get a plan of
7 action to try to figure out how to do that. I know
8 from Fish and Game's perspective we're trying to hire
9 another statistician to work specifically on migratory
10 birds and in our Wildlife Diversity Program, so that
11 will add some analytic capability hopefully to these
12 kinds of issues.

13

14 MR. SQUARTSOFF: One more question
15 here.

16

17 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Go ahead.

18

19 MR. SQUARTSOFF: The way it looks to me
20 right now is what we're saying here is going in one ear
21 and out the other ear. You guys probably got their
22 minds -- you've talked about it before. It's probably
23 all done already. That's sort of the impression I'm
24 getting.

25

26 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I don't think
27 that's true. I think.....

28

29 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Did you listen to us
30 because it's still next year, next year. Maybe it will
31 be some other time. It doesn't go ahead.

32

33 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I'll respond to
34 that. Unfortunately there are limited resources and
35 agencies to get things done. In this case, I think
36 we've heard you loud and clear. We're dedicating time
37 at the Staff level to address these issues. Again, I
38 think -- I'm looking for something that doesn't maybe
39 get you all the way to the end of the road, which is a
40 complete rewrite of the management plan, and look more
41 specifically at this risk assessment because currently
42 that level of harvest is occurring in the background,
43 whether it's legal or illegal.

44

45 To me, I don't think -- I think you
46 could probably legalize that to a certain extent, but
47 I'm not so sure that we could convince the SRC to do
48 that right now at this current level. So I would like
49 to improve the odds of getting it through the SRC and I
50 think we can get there. I truly believe that, Sonny.

1 MR. SQUARTSOFF: There will be ways to
2 do it. Like it could go to like a permit even for a
3 family, you know. Get them through tribal. The people
4 that do use it for their home use and not outsiders
5 coming just to kill them. Let the tribal have a permit
6 for the people they know are Native and they use them
7 for their diets and have a couple a year for them or
8 something. It's not going to kill all your birds off.
9 Something like that just to have a compromise, do
10 something.

11
12 You just go ahead and that's just going
13 to keep every year back up or whatever, I'll see you
14 guys next year. I've never been here. I didn't even
15 know I was coming until two days ago. I never been to
16 a meeting. I can see that a lot of your stuff is
17 wrong.

18
19 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thanks, Sonny.
20 We heard you. The intent here is I'm going to take up
21 the next tabled proposal on the Kodiak Island village
22 tribes request to legalize migratory bird parts for use
23 in handicrafts, then take a short break and then I
24 guess we have the Eider reintroduction project and the
25 Yellow-Billed Loon discussion that needs to occur today
26 before tomorrow because those people are leaving to go
27 back to Fairbanks.

28
29 So what we'll do is take up the tabled
30 proposal and then break for an afternoon break and come
31 back and deal with the Yellow-Billed Loon and the Eider
32 one.

33
34 The next proposal is the Kodiak Island
35 village tribes request to legalize the use of migratory
36 bird parts for use in handicrafts. This was tabled
37 last year or two years ago -- last year. I guess the
38 question is do we want to leave that tabled and, if so,
39 how do we want to address the issues either through the
40 Enforcement Committee or a new committee to
41 specifically look at handicraft issues.

42
43 Sonny.

44
45 MR. SQUARTSOFF: I think it should go
46 through tribal and tribal give them a permit or
47 something to get what they need so everybody isn't just
48 wanting to shoot them. The tribal knows because
49 they're the village and your own tribal. Have permits
50 for the birds they want and give them a permit to get

1 one or two just for their feathers and whatever they
2 need at the time so they know how much they catch and
3 all that stuff and have a little report on all their
4 stuff they catch.

5

6 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Patty.

7

8 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Thank you, Mr.
9 Chairman. Yeah, there's been several different kinds
10 of ideas tossed around using the Native hand symbol and
11 some other things, but that's what we've been working
12 on just basically between the Staff and the Fish and
13 Wildlife Service and Alaska Department of Fish and
14 Game.

15

16 So in order to I think move this
17 forward in a more expedient manner is to refer it to,
18 like Doug said, either the Enforcement Committee or to
19 establish a new committee handicrafts so that we can
20 get input from the communities and the regional
21 management bodies as we work through this issue because
22 there's also the legislative fix that's currently at
23 the congressional level, so there's a lot of different
24 nuances to this proposal that we would really like to
25 get resolved so that we can -- I mean it would be
26 really good if we could get something to the SRC this
27 year is what we really want to try to do.

28

29 I would respectfully request that the
30 Council consider either referring this to the
31 Enforcement Committee or establishing a handicrafts
32 subcommittee.

33

34 Thank you.

35

36 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Sonny.

37

38 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Yeah, the feathers and
39 stuff, just have them for a certain reason, just for
40 your home use, for your own personal stuff. It doesn't
41 have to be sold. So the other people won't go out and
42 try to catch them and try to make a profit off of them.
43 You know, just as some people do want to have them in
44 their own households and their dance -- you know, their
45 things for their dances and stuff and tribal and stuff
46 like that.

47

48 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Pete.

49

50 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. I think

1 Sonny's question could be answered here as far as using
2 migratory bird feathers, parts, for traditional
3 regalia, not for sale, and I'd like to ask Ryan to come
4 up with our enforcement.

5

6 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Ryan, just
7 introduce yourself for the record.

8

9 MR. NOEL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ryan
10 Noel, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law
11 Enforcement. Sir, I think what you just described is
12 currently legal. The use of migratory bird parts,
13 feathers, is permitted to be used by Alaska Natives and
14 Native Americans in the Lower 48 for ceremonial
15 purposes or religious purposes, so I think we're
16 covered there.

17

18 I guess the proposal will take it to
19 the next step. I believe that was derived from the
20 treaty with Canada where it allowed for -- once the
21 regulations were created by this body here through the
22 SRC, there would be an opportunity for a limited sale
23 of migratory bird parts that were left over from the
24 take for nutritional purposes of the bird itself. So I
25 think that was the intent of this proposal, was to
26 actually implement the provision of the treaty.

27

28 MR. SQUARTSOFF: That's the intent of
29 all -- not to waste. That's what all these Natives are
30 all about. We get what we need just for our own
31 personal use. We're not out there trying to make a
32 profit and sell it and stuff like that. Just to have
33 it in the home. You guys don't understand that. You
34 think everybody is greedy and all we think is money,
35 but they want to just feed their families and the
36 elders have to have it. That's in their diet and
37 you're taking it away from them just for a couple
38 people, you know, saying there's not enough.

39

40 MR. NOEL: Well, like I said, I don't
41 think that there is -- certainly on the federal level
42 anyway, there's no prohibition at all. There's no law
43 you're violating if you use those bird feathers to make
44 regalia of any kind for religious purposes.

45

46 MR. SQUARTSOFF: How about State?

47

48 MR. NOEL: I can't really speak to
49 that. I don't know.

50

1 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. If I may.
2 These regulations allowing for the use for religious
3 purposes or traditional cultural purposes, as Ryan
4 said, you currently can do. What we're wrestling with
5 is that next step where the proponent, the person that
6 made the proposal, wants to sell them commercially. So
7 we're not there yet. So right now.....

8
9 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Yeah, I understand
10 that.

11
12 MR. PROBASCO: So your first question
13 is can I do that for my own personal use without
14 selling. The answer is yes.

15
16 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Okay.

17
18 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: So the question
19 that we're struggling with yet as a Council is what to
20 do with this tabled proposal and the recommendation
21 that Patty made to us was to either assign this to the
22 Enforcement Committee to look at the next question that
23 Pete raised, which is how you can do a limited sale of
24 some of these parts or do we want to form a separate
25 committee, a handicrafts committee, to tackle that.

26
27 Peter.

28
29 MR. DEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
30 Just listening to this, I mean, you know, it's okay for
31 us to use migratory bird parts for personal use, but
32 the guy in Southeast Alaska who was cited and taken to
33 jail and everything, I mean that wasn't even a
34 migratory bird, you know, on the feathers that he was
35 using, so what jurisdiction does that fall under?

36
37 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I'm sorry, I
38 don't even know which case that was. I'll ask Ryan to
39 speak to that.

40
41 MR. NOEL: Mr. Chairman, I can address
42 that. If you're referring to the case that I believe
43 you are, there's a gentleman in the Southeast who
44 offered a traditional mask that had migratory bird
45 feathers attached to it. There was a couple different
46 varieties of migratory birds. One was a Northern Raven
47 and another one was -- I believe it was a Red-Shafted
48 Flicker or a Yellow-Shafted Flicker. In either case,
49 those are both migratory birds that are protected by
50 the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. I could give a further

1 explanation if it would help the Council at all.

2

3 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: But he tried to
4 sell the mask.

5

6 MR. NOEL: He offered it for sale
7 numerous times. We actually contacted him and said we
8 are U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, you cannot sell
9 these bird parts, it's a violation of the Migratory
10 Bird Treaty Act. After the third time we purchased
11 them covertly after the third time of notifying him
12 that those bird parts were not allowed to be sold and
13 the individual was cited. Even though it was a felony
14 violation, just a ticket was written and he paid the
15 fine and he wrote us a letter of apology stating that
16 he was sorry for his actions.

17

18 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: But I think the
19 key to this one was it wasn't for personal use, it was
20 for sale, and that's the issue that's being addressed
21 by this tabled proposal. Peter.

22

23 MR. DEVINE: I'm still confused because
24 -- I mean can I see the migratory bird route for
25 ravens? As far as my understanding, I mean, our ravens
26 don't leave. I mean they're there all winter long, so
27 I don't know when they start migrating.

28

29 MR. NOEL: Well, what we refer to was
30 Part 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, 50 CFR.
31 Part 10 has a list of all the migratory birds and those
32 two birds are listed in Part 10.

33

34 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Yeah, but who listed
35 them?

36

37 MR. NOEL: It was listed under the
38 international treaty.

39

40 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: The treaty. So
41 what's the wishes of the Committee in terms of how to
42 address the commercial sale aspects? Do you want to
43 put it to the Enforcement Committee or would you like
44 to form a handicrafts committee?

45

46 Peter.

47

48 MR. DEVINE: Mr. Chair. I'll volunteer
49 to be on this handicraft committee or art committee or
50 whatever we want to call it.

1 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: So it's your
2 preference to form a specific handicraft committee
3 rather than put it to the Enforcement Committee.

4
5 MR. DEVINE: Well, I think we are
6 beyond the enforcement part. I mean we're already
7 pushing it through AFN. I think, you know, a committee
8 from this body would help that process.

9
10 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: If that's what
11 your wishes are, I would recommend you make a motion to
12 form a handicraft committee and see if you get a second
13 and then we could form that committee.

14
15 MR. DEVINE: Okay. I'll make a motion
16 to form a handicraft committee.

17
18 MR. SQUARTSOFF: Second.

19
20 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Any
21 opposition or discussion about this forming a
22 handicraft committee. Myron.

23
24 MR. NANENG: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
25 Just a comment. I wish that the ravens would start
26 migrating.

27
28 (Laughter)

29
30 MR. NANENG: There's so many of them
31 around the dump or in Bethel that every evening in the
32 wintertime it reminds me of all those crows that are
33 flying around Disneyland when they start converging in
34 the evening to Disneyland and the surrounding areas. I
35 think I'd go with the committee.

36
37 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: We have a
38 motion for a committee. Any opposition to that.

39
40 (No opposing votes)

41
42 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Do we
43 need to form members of the committee right now or do
44 we do that later?

45
46 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Whatever the
47 Council wants to do.

48
49 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Any
50 volunteers to serve on the committee. We've got two,

1 Sonny and Peter. Anybody else like to serve?
2
3 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Who, Randy?
4 Oh, Dan?
5
6 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Dan. Do you
7 want to put somebody from enforcement on it?
8
9 MR. PROBASCO: We definitely would want
10 law enforcement on it as well as Service. One person
11 from the Service.
12
13 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Ryan and who?
14
15 MR. PROBASCO: I'll get back to you on
16 the name.
17
18 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Okay.
19
20 MS. HOSETH: Was Todd wanting to serve
21 on that committee?
22
23 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Oh, I'm sorry.
24
25 MS. HOSETH: Todd and Carol.
26
27 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Jim, you want
28 anybody on that committee or not? Okay, Jim Fall.
29 Okay, we have a committee formed. Why don't we take a
30 10-minute break and come back. We're going to do Eider
31 reintroduction project and potential listing of Yellow-
32 Billed Loon.
33
34 (Off record)
35
36 (On record)
37
38 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. We're
39 going to get started. The next thing we're going to
40 take up is the Steller's Eider reintroduction project.
41 If we could have Kate Martin come join us. Kate, I
42 don't know if you plan to walk us through kind of a --
43 and I apologize. I know that you're talking the talk
44 on the Yellow-Billed Loon, we're going to be prefaced
45 by Eric Taylor giving some biology.
46
47 MS. MARTIN: Right.
48
49 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: We realize that
50 both of you have to leave tonight and not be able to

1 stay until tomorrow, so we're trying to accommodate the
2 schedule.

3

4 MS. MARTIN: Yeah, and I appreciate
5 that. What I was planning on doing, because I gave a
6 presentation last April here, was just giving an update
7 on where we're at on the project. So I don't have a
8 presentation scheduled or set up for that.

9

10 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Can you speak
11 closer to the mic so they can hear you in the back.

12

13 MS. MARTIN: Sure. How's that?
14 Better?

15

16 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Yes.

17

18 MS. MARTIN: So I mean I can answer
19 questions and we can talk through it too. That's fine.

20

21 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: No, a short
22 presentation would be great. Thank you.

23

24 MS. MARTIN: Okay. So my name is Kate
25 Martin. I'm the Eider Recovery Coordinator with Fish
26 and Wildlife Service out of the Fairbanks office. Last
27 April I presented information on the Service's proposed
28 reintroduction of Steller's Eiders to the Y-K Delta to
29 this group. I'm here today to give you an update of
30 what we've done since then.

31

32 Sort of as a reminder the Alaska
33 breeding population of Steller's Eiders was listed
34 under the ESA as threatened largely due to a
35 contraction of their range in Alaska and their near
36 disappearance from the Y-K Delta. We think it's
37 important to reestablish that population and that is
38 unlikely to occur without reintroduction.

39

40 After several years of analysis about
41 the feasibility and need of this project from the Eider
42 Recovery Team and Service staff, in 2013 we decided --
43 well, including input from stakeholders as well. In
44 2013, we decided to formally propose the project and
45 start moving forward. So that's when I came and gave
46 the presentation about the proposed project here.

47

48 Since then we've been developing more
49 detailed implementation proposal because at that time
50 when I came before it was more of a concept level, so

1 we're trying to figure out what our more detailed plans
2 will be over the next several years. At the same time,
3 we began a more formal public involvement process.
4 Specifically this spring we've included village visits,
5 tribal government consultation. We actually just got
6 back from a visit to Newtok, Hooper Bay and Chevak on
7 the Y-K Delta. These are all villages that are near
8 potential release areas that we think are good
9 candidate sites for release of Steller's Eiders.

10

11 We're currently in the middle of an
12 initial scoping period for the NEPA process and we're
13 looking for comments, suggestions, input on the general
14 idea of reintroducing Steller's Eiders to the Y-K
15 Delta. That period ends on April 15th and we'll
16 develop an environmental assessment based on the input
17 that we gather. Our goal is to have that available for
18 public review in mid summer and that will have more
19 details on the project and information about the input
20 that we did get from different stakeholders.

21

22 After considering comments on the
23 draft, because that will be available for public
24 review, we'll consider those comments and then at that
25 point we'll make a decision on whether or not to
26 release birds. If everything goes as planned, we could
27 do this as early as summer of 2015, but a lot of pieces
28 have to fall in line and we have to hear from people
29 and know what the comments and input are about that
30 particular project before we make a final decision.

31

32 So that's actually all I have as an
33 update.

34

35 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: So you'd like
36 to hear from the Council about their opinions on it?

37

38 MS. MARTIN: We're willing to hear any
39 comments.

40

41 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Council
42 members, any comments on this proposal. Peter.

43

44 MR. DEVINE: Yes, I'm curious how many
45 Steller's Eiders in North America?

46

47 MS. MARTIN: In Alaska they breed -- in
48 North America, they breed solely in Alaska and we think
49 there are a few hundred birds that breed intermittently
50 on the North Slope, mostly concentrated near Barrow.

1 Over the last couple of decades we've only found a
2 handful of nests on the Y-K Delta. So there's only a
3 few hundred that we know of that nest in Alaska
4 currently.

5
6 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Gayla.

7
8 MS. HOSETH: Yes. My question was --
9 so you have a deadline for a comment period. Is there
10 a website that has that information or where would we
11 comment at?

12
13 MS. MARTIN: Yes. It's actually linked
14 to our regional Fish and Wildlife Service website, so I
15 can get you that actual link, but I don't have it right
16 here in front of me. I can send that to Patty.

17
18 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Myron.

19
20 MR. NANENG: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
21 Kate, I think you know what my position is.

22
23 MS. MARTIN: I do.

24
25 MR. NANENG: And I've spoken to you
26 about it a couple of times. I do have reservations
27 about reintroducing Steller's Eiders in the Y-K Delta
28 because it seems like every time there's a
29 reintroduction or introduction of game or animals that
30 our people -- especially in the Y-K Delta, our people
31 are the ones to lose the opportunity to hunt or fish.
32 It always seems like we're reintroducing or introducing
33 this game for your use in the future when they increase
34 in numbers.

35
36 We've seen that with muskox. Muskoxen
37 was introduced in Y-K Delta back in 1980s. A few that
38 were harvested by our people, even one or two, have
39 ended up having to go through citations and told that
40 you can't hunt these animals. If they're finally open
41 to hunt and whatnot after being told that you will use
42 these animals for food source at some point in future,
43 you will have to get permits, hunting license, in order
44 to get these animals. It just becomes a nuisance.

45
46 If the animal is introduced or
47 reintroduced for the purpose at some point of becoming
48 a food source for the people, then the people not
49 having access to it. But it seems like it's very easy
50 for Fish and Wildlife Service or whoever is manager of

1 that area to issue permits to guides, to have them pay
2 big dollars for them to be able to hunt those animals.
3 There's a few guides that I know that on Nelson Island
4 and Mekoryuk. Those people benefit every once in a
5 while when they are allowed to have them hunt for
6 muskox.

7
8 Going back to the Steller's Eiders, I
9 don't want any of our people to be pursued for
10 accidentally shooting any of these birds that are
11 reintroduced into areas that are close to our village.
12 Hooper Bay for one, Chevak, potentially Scammon Bay and
13 Newtok, because that's the area that they're talking
14 about reintroducing, and that's the same area where we
15 have a lot of fish and wildlife presence because of the
16 various bird colonies, like the Black Brant, Cackling
17 Canada Geese nesting in the area, Emperor Geese nesting
18 in the area, as well as Spectacled Eiders in studies
19 that have been done regarding lead shot impacts of
20 Spectacled Eiders and other ducks.

21
22 So after all that stuff I kind of feel
23 that if you're going to be reintroducing the bird that
24 may not necessarily want to be reintroduced to the
25 region because of change of the environment or the
26 atmosphere, that whoever, the powers that be, recognize
27 subsistence in perpetuity regardless.

28
29 Because, you know, here's one of the
30 things that I know from my own personal experience when
31 we worked with the Nature Conservancy on a potential
32 easement, conservation easement, on our lands at Hooper
33 Bay that produces the highest number of migratory birds
34 because of the prime nesting area at Kokechik Bay.
35 They wanted that land. They wanted only to pay us a
36 million dollars to have a conservation easement in
37 perpetuity.

38
39 About the same time down in Lower 48
40 around Virginia for the same amount of acreage of land
41 they paid 20 million dollars for 20 years of
42 conservation easement. So what's wrong with that
43 picture. It seems like our Native lands are not as
44 valuable to anybody else in the world, yet they say
45 that they want to use these lands because we're within
46 the wildlife refuge that these lands should be open to
47 all people across the country. As one of our elders
48 said, those lands are our plate of food. That's where
49 we get our food source.

50

1 So if there's a reintroduction, I don't
2 want to see any of our people become criminals for
3 accidentally shooting a reintroduced bird because we've
4 already gone through many restrictions for the last 20-
5 plus years in trying to rebuild waterfowl, the Arctic
6 nesting geese, now we're dealing with Spectacled Eiders
7 and with Common Eiders and with Steller's Eiders as
8 being in restricted status.

9

10 So I would say that I'm not necessarily
11 supporting the reintroduction because I'm sure that one
12 of these days one of you will probably have to fly a
13 glider with an engine to help these birds migrate north
14 or probably back to the nesting ground at some point in
15 the future. That's ultimately my position, is that I'm
16 not necessarily in support of the reintroduction if
17 it's going to create conditions that will cause our
18 people in the villages to become criminals for
19 accidentally shooting or harvesting these birds.

20

21 MS. MARTIN: May I respond?

22

23 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Yes.

24

25 MS. MARTIN: So one of our main
26 objectives of this project is to make sure that we're
27 working with the local hunters and the local elders on
28 identifying their concerns, such as yours, Myron, and
29 working on how they think we could work through those.
30 We don't claim to know the best ways to work through
31 how to develop an outreach plan to identify Steller's
32 Eiders and make sure that people know what they look
33 like because they haven't seen them for a while. What
34 we want to do is to work with the local people on
35 avoiding any accidental harvest of the species and
36 working through those concerns.

37

38 We know we can't be successful at this
39 project without working with the local people. So I
40 appreciate your comments. I'd like to work through
41 those with you and with the people that live in these
42 areas that we might be reintroducing the birds. So if
43 we can work through ways of compromising and coming up
44 with good solutions together, that's the only way that
45 we think we can do this project and we appreciate your
46 comments.

47

48 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other comments.

49 Randy.

50

1 MR. MAYO: Yeah, Randy Mayo, Tanana
2 Chiefs Region. I share the same concerns with Myron in
3 instances of reintroduction efforts of species that
4 once inhabited an area. We had the same discussions
5 with another species and that was woodland bison in our
6 area.

7
8 You know, a lot of tribes don't have
9 tribal technical programs on the ground. I noticed the
10 only recourse agency people have to work with is
11 through a local political scenario, which isn't really
12 a good interface. That was one thing that was lacking
13 in our area was a true tribal technical program that
14 could interface with people such as yourself to come up
15 with something in the middle to where our people -- in
16 the long run benefit our people, you know, but only
17 working in coming to some agreements with having the
18 tribal technical program being a real part of
19 developing anything.

20
21 So I just wanted to make mention of
22 that. That's what we're building in our area is a
23 traditionally-based true tribal technical program with
24 the traditional foundation but also utilizing Western
25 scientific data collection methods to make the best of
26 both worlds.

27
28 Ultimately, that's what we have to do
29 on the tribal side. Again, we had real reservations
30 because we weren't -- the management plan and that
31 species reintroduction effort, we didn't have a part in
32 developing it. It was developed outside the community,
33 then introduced and that's where we ran into problems.
34 So those are some of my observations.

35
36 MS. MARTIN: Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Peter, I have
39 you next.

40
41 MR. DEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My
42 question is where are these birds going to come from?
43 Are they going to come from the region to be
44 reintroduced back into the region or are they going to
45 be raised in the Interior and then put out on the
46 coast? Are you going to build a facility up north and
47 breed them there and release them there? Where are
48 these birds coming from?

49
50 MS. MARTIN: We currently have a

1 captive population of Steller's Eiders that were
2 originally from the North Slope, so they're Alaska
3 origin birds and they're housed at the Alaska SeaLife
4 Center in Seward. Those birds are the founder flock.
5 They're the ones that will produce ducklings that we
6 can release if we move forward with this.

7
8 We have talked about the idea of -- as
9 we build the program, the idea of building and
10 developing a facility in Bethel in order to be the go-
11 between and that would mostly be a holding facility and
12 not necessarily a place where we would produce
13 ducklings, at least in the beginning. Then the
14 ducklings would be transferred to a field site, so
15 directly to the area that they would be released at.

16
17 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Gayla, do you
18 want to speak, and then Taqulik next.

19
20 MS. HOSETH: Okay. The question that I
21 have is is there any information that you could give us
22 that we could read up on about the project because
23 there's nothing in our packet. Just from what you've
24 told us.

25
26 MS. MARTIN: I can give you a few
27 things and I can send those to Patty. We have a few
28 things on our website, links. The next thing that
29 we'll have is this environmental assessment and we hope
30 to have that within the next couple of months and that
31 will have more information for you to consider.
32 There's going to be another public comment period as
33 well. So this isn't the last time that we're going to
34 be asking for comments and you'll have more information
35 before that period.

36
37 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Taqulik.

38
39 MS. HEPA: Thank you. Maybe 10 or so
40 years ago, maybe even a little bit longer, our Fish and
41 Game Management Committee had passed a resolution in
42 opposition for any reintroduction of species on the
43 North Slope and that has been the case since then.
44 Several years ago we received a call from BP saying
45 that they were re-releasing a ringed seal that -- I
46 believe it was a ringed seal -- that was found on North
47 Stir Island and rehabilitated because it was weak and
48 whatnot. So they rehabilitated the seal, I think at
49 the Alaska SeaLife Center, but they called us kind of a
50 little bit after the fact to let us know that they re-

1 released it in the same place.

2

3 The big concern that came from our
4 people is that there's always the potential for
5 disease. The following summer or year and a half later
6 there was this unusual mortality that happened on the
7 North Slope. When it did happen, we did reference that
8 there was a seal that was brought back into the wild.
9 Now we don't know what's going on with the seal. Our
10 people feel really strong that there is always the
11 potential for disease to come from animals that have
12 been in facilities like this.

13

14 Hearing and respecting what the
15 opinions are of local communities is so important and I
16 just hope that you take that into consideration. If
17 the region does not want it, then it shouldn't happen
18 in the region.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 MS. MARTIN: Thanks. Maybe I should
23 just address the disease comment quickly. That was a
24 very critical factor that the Eider Recovery Team
25 expressed being extremely important prior to even
26 considering reintroducing the birds, making sure that
27 we're minimizing any disease to a point where everyone
28 felt like it was extremely low.

29

30 The Alaska SeaLife Center has done an
31 amazing job at using things like quarantine and testing
32 throughout their whole program to make sure that the
33 birds that we would release are as disease-free as
34 possible. So we agree, that is a very important factor
35 that needs to be considered and we'll continue to test
36 the birds throughout -- the captive birds that we have
37 now, but prior to any release and make sure that
38 there's nothing that they could bring to the wild
39 populations that might compromise those.

40

41 MS. HEPA: And then the second part,
42 you know, if the region doesn't want it, how much does
43 that -- would you respect that?

44

45 MS. MARTIN: I think that we would.
46 Ultimately, I don't personally make the call, but I've
47 heard from everyone in the Service that I've talked to
48 that that is extremely important and that there's no
49 way we can be successful without that. It's an
50 essential part of the program, is working with the

1 communities.

2

3 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I'm going to
4 provide a few comments myself and then I'll get to you,
5 Myron. As you know, the State is not very supportive
6 of this process at this point. We think there's a lot
7 of unanswered questions regarding why Eiders are not
8 currently establishing themselves naturally on the
9 Delta area where you plan to reintroduce them. Until
10 we figure out why they're not there and what's the
11 cause of them not staying there, we think it's vastly
12 premature to spend millions of dollars to try to
13 reintroduce a species that the reasons for which it's
14 not there aren't completely understood.

15

16 I do understand that it's a different
17 pot of money and everything else, but it is still
18 Federal taxpayer dollars on the order of millions of
19 dollars that this is going to go into. I'm going to
20 invite Dan to speak more specifically about a lot of
21 our concerns, but I am deeply concerned now that I
22 heard you say that you're going to potentially release
23 these birds as early as 2015.

24

25 Before the State would anywhere get
26 near supportive of a release we'd want to see some type
27 of 4(d) rule, non-essential experimental population,
28 established that would protect users from incidental
29 takes, protect other associated activities from takes
30 associated with these birds. I can tell you it has not
31 been an easy road to hoe a 4(d) rule for wood bison.
32 That has taken us four to five years.

33

34 The State will not support the
35 reintroduction of those birds without that kind of
36 upper level of protection, especially given the
37 uncertainty associated with some of the biology with
38 the release. With that, Dan, would you mind.....

39

40 MR. PROBASCO: Would you tell them what
41 a 4(d) rule is.

42

43 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: A 4(d) rule
44 basically is it allows the Service to reintroduce a
45 threatened or endangered species, a species covered
46 under the Endangered Species Act, as a non-essential
47 experimental population. That definition means that
48 they reintroduce birds in this case are considered to
49 be non-essential to the recovery of the population and
50 that it's an experimental effort.

1 That means that take that is normally
2 restricted because it's an endangered species is now
3 allowed through a special 4(d) rule. So, for instance,
4 wood bison, they're listed as a threatened species in
5 Canada. You really couldn't result in a take of them,
6 but since they're non-essential experimental, what the
7 State is doing is reintroducing them under that NEP
8 designation and that allows takes that would normally
9 not be allowed.

10

11 Dan, do you want to speak real quickly
12 to some of our biological concerns.

13

14 MS. MARTIN: May I speak first to the
15 10(j) and 4(d) rule?

16

17 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Yes.

18

19 MS. MARTIN: So I understand the
20 situation with wood bison, but actually the ESA doesn't
21 prohibit the taking of threatened and endangered
22 species outright or by Alaska Native or non-Native
23 permanent residents of Alaska Native villages. So
24 actually the 10(j) rule in this case wouldn't actually
25 could not be used to allow that incidental take.

26

27 Currently Steller's Eiders are closed
28 under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, not under the ESA,
29 so that actually isn't a tool that we have at our
30 disposal to use for that particular concern that you
31 have.

32

33 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I think that's
34 true for the concerns associated with hunting, but not
35 concerns associated with other types of activities that
36 may be occurring in the Bristol Bay Region that's
37 important to the State. We would want that level of
38 protection before we would move forward on that.

39

40 Dan. After Dan, Sonny.

41

42 MS. MARTIN: Well, sure. Go for it.
43 Well, actually, just let me respond to that if you
44 don't mind. The other thing with a 10(j) designation
45 in a non-essential experimental population is that that
46 population has to be wholly geographically separate
47 from individuals of the same species. In this case,
48 Steller's Eiders that would be reintroduced to the Y-K
49 Delta would not be wholly geographically separate
50 because they migrate. Well, if we are successful, we

1 hope that those birds will be migrating to the same
2 areas that Steller's Eiders currently use for molting
3 and wintering, and that includes the Bristol Bay Region
4 and the Alaska Peninsula, Cook Inlet, Lower Cook Inlet
5 and Kodiak.

6
7 So currently that population is not
8 wholly geographically separate, so legally we could not
9 designate them as a 10(j) non-essential experimental
10 population. Not only that, if they are -- if those
11 birds are using the same areas that Steller's Eiders
12 are currently using, we already are required to consult
13 on any actions that occur in that area. So the
14 addition of any listed birds that we reintroduce will
15 not increase the consultation load. There will already
16 be a nexus in that whole area for anything that occurs.
17 It's already happening.

18
19 Additionally, if there are more listed
20 birds as a result of this project, we would be less
21 concerned about any one particular project affecting
22 the listed population. So it could be even a benefit
23 in terms of consultation. Does that make sense?

24
25 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I don't buy
26 that argument, but that's okay. We can talk about
27 that.....

28
29 MS. MARTIN: We can talk about it more.
30 Okay.

31
32 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Dan.

33
34 DR. ROSENBERG: Thanks. Dan Rosenberg.
35 This is the perfect segue into this discussion because
36 essentially what it highlights is that there is a legal
37 basis to reintroduce Steller's Eiders into the Y-K
38 Delta, but there's no biological basis. Essentially
39 the legal basis in this case is really trumping the
40 biology of this whole discussion. We've been asked to
41 comment on this before, so what I'm going to -- all I'm
42 doing is reading comments that we've already solicited
43 or that we've already given that we've been solicited
44 for from the Fish and Wildlife Service on this.

45
46 Just a little background here just so
47 you are all aware. At one time in the 1960s there were
48 probably 400,000 Steller's Eiders in the Pacific
49 population, 2-400,000, right. It really has never been
50 that well documented, but those are some of the best

1 guesses that people had given back then. It appears
2 that the Pacific population, which 99.5 percent or more
3 nest in the Russian Arctic and 95 percent or more
4 winter in Alaska.

5
6 So Peter's question as to how many
7 Steller's Eiders are there in Alaska, that depends upon
8 what month of the year you're talking about, right. So
9 from July through May there could be as many as
10 100,000. Again, that number is pretty fuzzy too, but
11 say 50-100,000 Steller's Eiders in Alaska, which may
12 represent the large bulk of the Pacific population.

13
14 Most of those birds go to Russia to
15 nest, all but a few, a handful. Some come to Alaska to
16 nest. Do we know that the ones that come to Alaska in
17 one year nest in Alaska in another year or do they nest
18 in Russia in another year. By all evidence that we
19 have, it's not a closed population. The Service is
20 still trying to get a more definitive analysis of that,
21 but every back of the envelope calculation will tell
22 you that it's not a closed population, that it's just
23 impossible, based on how few birds show up in Alaska
24 and how infrequently they breed if they still are here
25 every year.

26
27 And there's no clear biological
28 information that delineates the Pacific population from
29 any Alaska breeding birds, all right. You take a
30 breeding female from Russia and you look at its DNA,
31 you look at its genetics, you take a breeding female
32 from Barrow and you look at its genetics, they are one
33 in the same. Unlike Spec Eiders, which are actually
34 different. You can find different nesting areas and
35 you can find birds that nest on the Y-K Delta are
36 genetically different than some of the Russian birds,
37 okay. Spec Eiders, there's no evidence for that
38 whatsoever.

39
40 So there's no evidence that this
41 population is -- I'm sorry, go ahead.

42
43 MS. HEPA: What about Russian, have
44 they checked for genetics?

45
46 DR. ROSENBERG: Yes. No difference,
47 males or females. Males that go to Barrow one year
48 through studies that the Fish and Wildlife Service did,
49 go to Russia in other years. There's only a very small
50 sample size and it's not definitive, but if you compare

1 it to other information that we know, it supports what
2 we think happens and that's for males. But for
3 females, which generally may have more fidelity than
4 others, there's no information to support that there's
5 any genetic differentiation among females between the
6 Russian breeding birds and the Alaskan breeding birds.

7
8 So there's also a lack of realistic
9 recovery criteria for the Alaska breeding population
10 and there's no separate criteria really for Y-K Delta
11 birds and Arctic Coastal Plain birds. So you're sort
12 of -- as I said before, I've said many times, on the
13 Arctic Coastal Plain in Barrow you're held hostage to
14 increasing the birds on the Y-K Delta if you ever want
15 to see them recover. Okay.

16
17 Again, this is based on a range
18 contraction, but there's no evidence -- some of that
19 range, when a large population declines from 400,000,
20 200,000, maybe down to 100,000 and these are all very
21 loose numbers admittedly, when it declines, where would
22 you expect most of that decline to occur. You'd expect
23 it to occur at the periphery because the periphery, in
24 general, are the more marginal habitats.

25
26 So what's happened is you have a
27 decline on the periphery perhaps and the Y-K Delta -- I
28 mean Steller's Eiders are an Arctic nesting species and
29 what's the furthest south in that range, is the Y-K
30 Delta, where maybe you'd expect to see a decline first.
31 Yet we have no idea how many birds are ever on the Y-K
32 Delta. It's guesswork based on anecdotal information
33 from a couple of -- not even surveys, which is visits
34 by naturalists back in the '20s. So no idea how many
35 there were.

36
37 So there was a back of the envelope
38 exercise by a gentleman named Ken Kertell who took a
39 plot, a 92 hectare plot, that was surveyed something
40 like six times in the 1960s and varied from 0 to 6
41 nests. From that he took a back of the envelope
42 calculation on how many acres of that habitat could be
43 on the Y-K Delta and he extrapolated that out and he
44 came up with at most it could have been 6,000 breeding
45 pairs. That's what we know. Yet we do not know why
46 those birds are no longer there. No idea. We have all
47 the usual suspects. We can line up all the usual
48 suspects, but we don't know why they're not there.

49
50 So we're questioning why would you

1 release birds in the area where they've declined. You
2 don't know why they've declined and you're going to
3 spend a lot of money doing it. I mean I'd love to see
4 birds all over the Y-K Delta, but it's not my money. I
5 think everybody would love to see birds on the Y-K
6 Delta, but there's just a lot of unanswered questions.

7
8 The other factor, of course, is how
9 will it affect -- well, another factor is climate
10 change, right. The Service is a little bit bipolar in
11 its use of climate change to argue for and against
12 things. So, on the Y-K Delta, that's sort of one of
13 the focuses of the impacts of climate change. Eiders
14 are a coastal nesting species in areas that all their
15 models predict will be inundated perhaps by more tidal
16 surges, more coastal flooding in the future. So that's
17 just another thing that comes into the equation.

18
19 Then finally, of course, and you,
20 Taqulik, can talk about this better than I can, but
21 what happened in Barrow when some Eiders were shot.
22 There was a threat to close the subsistence season.
23 Why would that not occur on the Y-K Delta. I don't
24 know. That's a question for you. It's not a question
25 for me. But someone accidentally shoots an Eider,
26 there was some Eiders shot in Barrow, probably a
27 political statement perhaps, maybe some accidental, but
28 the threat was to close the subsistence season in 2010.

29
30
31 So if someone accidentally shoots a
32 Steller's Eider on the Y-K Delta, where's the -- how is
33 the Fish and Wildlife Service going to deal with that?
34 I can't tell you. Even if this Regional Director says
35 one thing, I don't know what the next Regional Director
36 will say.

37
38 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Kate.

39
40 MS. MARTIN: Actually I'm not going to
41 go point/counterpoint here with Dan on all these
42 things. I have obviously seen these letters and we've
43 talked a lot about this. Dan is a former Recovery Team
44 member and he knows that we have spent several years,
45 many years talking about these uncertainties regarding
46 Steller's Eiders, their biology and whether or not this
47 project will work.

48
49 We acknowledge that uncertainty and
50 realize that there's some risk here that we don't know

1 if it's going to work, but we do want to continue to
2 see Steller's Eiders breeding in Alaska. Based on the
3 information that we have, historical observations,
4 which is not complete by any means, it's not what we
5 would love to see, which is understanding the abundance
6 and the distribution of Steller's Eiders over time and
7 the reasons why they declined, but based on that we
8 think that they were there on the Y-K Delta and that we
9 would like to continue to see them nesting there.
10 We're willing to take that risk and see if we can make
11 this work.

12
13 I guess one other point I think I
14 should make is that I think this project, even if we
15 aren't successful at re-establishing Steller's Eiders
16 on the Y-K Delta, we can incorporate other objectives
17 into the project that benefit conservation and benefit
18 our relationships with people on the Y-K Delta. I
19 think we can go away from this project and still feel
20 as though we were making some progress.

21
22 I'm just going to leave it at that and
23 we'll continue to have these discussions, I'm sure.

24
25 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I'm going to
26 say one last thing and I'm going to turn it over to
27 Myron. I suspect that predation is a major factor
28 that's affecting them. If you do go down the road over
29 our objection and release these birds, we will work
30 with you on predation control because we suspect that
31 that is one of the limiting factors affecting that and
32 you'll probably need predation control permits from the
33 State.

34
35 MS. MARTIN: Did I hear you say we will
36 work with you?

37
38 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: If you end up
39 going down that
40 road.

41
42 MS. MARTIN: Okay. And, you know, we
43 aren't there yet obviously on discussions regarding
44 what that might mean, but, yes, it's something we've
45 been considering and thinking about.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Myron.
50

1 MR. NANENG: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
2 There's a couple of issues I'd like to raise. If it's
3 introduced, is that area where they're introduced going
4 to be quarantined and off limits to people that live
5 there that hunt in that area?

6
7 MS. MARTIN: Absolutely not.

8
9 MR. NANENG: That's what I heard before
10 from previous biological studies that had been done on
11 some of our lands even that are owned by Sea/Land
12 Corporation. And the other question that I have, will
13 there be more Fish and Wildlife Service personnel
14 monitoring in person on the sites around that area
15 while they're nesting and while they're flightless?

16
17 MS. MARTIN: Actually, honestly, yes.
18 There would be people monitoring and we would be --
19 especially prior to actually releasing the birds, we
20 would be needing to be there to continue protecting
21 them during kind of a soft release. So, yes, there
22 would be more Fish and Wildlife Service folks there
23 doing that and I actually hope that alongside those
24 Fish and Wildlife Service folks there are people from
25 those villages working and kids -- internships working
26 with us, alongside us.

27
28 MR. NANENG: One of the things that we
29 have been working for many years under the Y-K Delta
30 Goose Management Plan is to continually remind those
31 people that have studied nesting colonies and nesting
32 birds in our region is that presence of people causes
33 predatory birds, like seagulls and others, to prey on
34 other birds that are of conservation concern. If
35 there's more of a presence of people in that area, it's
36 going to create that again.

37
38 How many times do we have to say that
39 over and over to people that come to our region and
40 say, when we tell them please don't go in that area
41 because it's a prime nesting area for Black Brant
42 colonies. There's not as many birds that I know of
43 like there used to be.

44
45 When I was probably about 10 years old
46 I got off the boat with my dad to go in to check on his
47 Native allotment and we were able to pick up at least
48 one goose egg out of 25 nests that probably weren't no
49 more than 10 to 15 feet away from each other back then.
50 There's been a lot of presence of Fish and Wildlife

1 Service and people over there to study population
2 trends and stuff like that and the populations have
3 declined since then.

4

5 If there's going to be more of a
6 presence of people because of Steller's Eiders, deja vu
7 is going to happen. We're going to get back to having
8 more restrictions on the ability of our people to hunt
9 migratory birds. That's why I have big reservations
10 about this project going forward at all.

11

12 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Taqulik and
13 then Patty.

14

15 MS. HEPA: So my question is, this is
16 obviously a priority and how did this -- who makes it a
17 priority?

18

19 MS. MARTIN: I think the ultimate
20 decision on making that a priority would be our
21 Regional Director.

22

23 MS. HEPA: And then Dan mentioned
24 something that raised a question. So what has been and
25 what will be the overall cost for this to happen?

26

27 MS. MARTIN: We don't have an overall
28 cost because we don't
29 know exactly how many years this is going to take.
30 We're going to begin sort of a pilot few years because
31 we don't want to -- we want to learn as we're going.
32 So the cost estimates are a little bit soft, but in
33 general the project will probably cost about a million
34 a year.

35

36 MS. HEPA: Where does this money come
37 from? Just curious.

38

39 MS. MARTIN: It's going to probably
40 come from -- we don't have it all secured at this
41 point, so it's probably going to be a combination of
42 both public and private funding sources.

43

44 MS. HEPA: Thank you for that. Then my
45 last question is, and I think this is real important
46 for the people that live in that region to get a clear
47 answer, what happens when a hunter accidentally
48 harvests one? What will happen?

49

50 MS. MARTIN: You know, the species is

1 currently closed, so I actually don't think I am the
2 person that's qualified to answer that question. I do
3 think that there will be a lot of discussion and there
4 will be a lot of consideration into how that occurred
5 and what the next steps will be.

6

7 What I can do is talk to other folks at
8 the Service and try to come up with a clear answer for
9 you or actually for Myron and the local people there.
10 So I apologize, but I'm not the.....

11

12 MS. HEPA: And then I just want to end
13 with, you know, at least recently that hunters that
14 accidentally or unknowingly took two species that were
15 listed as threatened or endangered did report it and
16 they both ended in citations even though they
17 voluntarily reported these. At the end of the day, one
18 was over \$2,000 and the other was just a couple hundred
19 dollars. But when people voluntarily reported this in
20 good faith, at the end of the day I think our hunters
21 will be given citations.

22

23 Thank you.

24

25 MS. MARTIN: I would actually like to
26 ask someone to respond to that because I think I just
27 want to make sure that we're communicating about those
28 incidents. I'm not sure if -- sorry to deflect.

29

30 MR. NOEL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
31 Ryan Noel, Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law
32 Enforcement. Hello, Taqulik. Nice to finally get to
33 meet you.

34

35 MS. HEPA: Nice to see you.

36

37 MR. NOEL: Nice to see you too. To
38 answer your question, I think I have both of the
39 scenarios in my mind straight that you just described.
40 One was a Spectacled Eider and one was a polar bear
41 with cub, right?

42

43 MS. HEPA: And I'm not trying to get
44 into those details. I'm just saying at the end of the
45 day, when a hunter accidentally takes something and
46 reported it, there is a pattern showing that citations
47 will be written. I'm not asking about those specific
48 cases. I think we've moved on from those, but just
49 from our experience this is what has happened.

50

1 MR. NOEL: That's correct. And, you
2 know, I think that in the past the Service has probably
3 not -- has done itself a discredit by answering that
4 question with the response that, well, we'll work with
5 the hunter because that question has come up many times
6 in many meetings. What happens if I accidentally shoot
7 a Steller's or Spectacled Eider and I report it. We've
8 always answered, well, we'll work with you.

9
10 What we should have said is, well, it's
11 still a violation under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act
12 and although we appreciate and value the self-report,
13 that certainly is helpful both statistically and also
14 builds trust between us and the community, we would go
15 to the U.S. Attorney's Office, which is what we did in
16 these instances, and ask for them to reduce the fine
17 from what it was set by the judge to a much lower
18 amount.

19
20 In those instances -- the one
21 specifically -- only one of those was self-reported.
22 In that case, it was reduced by 500 percent.

23
24 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: It's still a
25 violation.

26
27 MR. NOEL: It's still a violation and
28 we still treat it as such.

29
30 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Next I have
31 Patty and then Dan.

32
33 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: A lot of the
34 concerns that we had discussed at the Native Caucus
35 have already been raised, but I just wanted to mention
36 that the Native Caucus is opposing the reintroduction
37 of the Steller's Eider, so we will be submitting
38 comments by the deadline.

39
40 Then I just had another question.
41 Taqulik asked about funding and you said a combination
42 of public and private funding. So as far as the public
43 funding, are you talking like Fish and Wildlife Service
44 funding? Is that ESA money or.....

45
46 MS. MARTIN: Currently the project --
47 you know, we have a captive population, so we're
48 maintaining that population and we're currently using
49 endangered species funds from the Washington office and
50 from the regional office to do that.

1 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Then
2 just one other question. Has the Service ever
3 reintroduced any other bird species in Alaska and, if
4 they have, what's the success of those reintroduction
5 efforts?
6

7 MS. MARTIN: Yes, I think the only
8 other example is the Aleutian Cackling Goose, which is
9 very successful. I actually don't have a lot of
10 details, but other people here probably have a lot more
11 information about that. But it was a successful
12 reintroduction and they were taken off the ESA.
13

14 DR. ROSENBERG: Another perfect segue.
15 Having been on the Aleutian, at that time Canada Goose
16 Recovery Team, before it became the Cackling Goose,
17 there was a very clear nexus with that population as to
18 why it crashed. Fox introduction into the Aleutian
19 Islands, in a place where there were no mammalian
20 predators before. Get rid of foxes, problem solved.
21

22 In this case, why did Eiders -- how
23 many Eiders were even on the Delta and why are they no
24 longer there. Your guess is as good as mine.
25

26 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: My
27 understanding is that Eiders still fly over. They just
28 choose not to nest there for unexplained reasons.
29

30 DR. ROSENBERG: Well, fly by. Let's
31 put it that way. How many fly over that don't nest
32 there, I couldn't tell you. Every Eider for the most
33 part, and that's sort of a general statement, that
34 migrates from the Kodiak, Cook Inlet, Alaska Peninsula
35 to Russia and a few that stay on the Y-K Delta and a
36 few that go to Barrow migrate by the Straits and pass
37 the Y-K Delta in the springtime.
38

39 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: We've got to
40 close this up because we've got to get to Yellow-Billed
41 Loon yet. Peter and then Gayla.
42

43 MR. DEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
44 Another question I have is once these -- you know, if
45 they are introduced, how will they be identified? Are
46 they going to be tagged, branded, put radio
47 transmitters in so you can see their success rate?
48

49 Actually two questions. You say it's
50 going to take a million dollars for this program, but

1 we had another program that was needed a year ago that
2 had to be done and that went from 128,000 down to
3 9,000. So how can you realistically say that you're
4 going to get a million dollars to introduce these birds
5 over the next five years?
6

7 MS. MARTIN: So I can address the -- I
8 guess I'll start with the second question and I can
9 address your specific example. As I think I said to
10 Patty, the funding that we're using currently for this
11 project is endangered species funding, so it's slated
12 for one specific group of projects in recovery of
13 endangered species. And we don't have all of our
14 funding secured for this project. We're still at the
15 beginning stages of that. We've had promising
16 conversations, but we don't have it secured, so I can't
17 tell you that we have it the next five years.
18

19 Is that it? I'm sorry.
20

21 MR. DEVINE: Now back to the first
22 question. Will they be outfitted with radio
23 transmitters or banded or what? Actually you're in the
24 planning process, so I guess that would be a question
25 to bring to your team as to how they're going to be
26 identified and can we, as hunters, access the website
27 to see where they are so that the hunters aren't
28 actively going there and shooting amongst the group
29 when we want to try and save them.
30

31 MS. MARTIN: We'll be considering all
32 viable options for monitoring and identifying them, so
33 thank you for that. I think I'll leave it at that.
34

35 Thank you.
36

37 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Gayla.
38

39 MS. HOSETH: The question that I had
40 was what's the percentage of support and/or opposition
41 you have received during your community meetings in
42 public comments so far?
43

44 MS. MARTIN: I think we've heard from
45 the State. We just got back from a visit to Hooper Bay
46 and Chevak and Newtok and we had really productive and
47 supportive conversations there. I can't speak for
48 those tribal councils myself or for those individuals,
49 but we spoke with local elders and with each tribal
50 council and just had really supportive comments. We

1 tried to lay everything out on the table about the
2 uncertainties and not knowing whether or not this would
3 work and explaining what we know. It seemed really
4 positive, so this is.....

5
6 MS. HOSETH: So they supported of the
7 project?

8
9 MS. MARTIN: They did, yeah.

10
11 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay, Myron,
12 and then we're going to have to close this down because
13 we have the Yellow-Billed Loons.

14
15 MR. NANENG: If this project went
16 forward, how long do you think it's going to go, until
17 you run out of endangered species money or until it
18 becomes endangered, which it's already listed?

19
20 One of the things is that if it
21 becomes to the point where we're getting further
22 restricted by the fact of the reintroduction, I think
23 our effort will be to eliminate them so that they
24 wouldn't be around so we wouldn't be restricted
25 anymore. I mean that thought crosses our minds. We've
26 been restricted on many of the opportunities to go
27 hunting. Our people don't gather eggs anymore of
28 migratory birds. Our people don't drive birds like
29 they used to and that's taking a culture away.

30
31 To try and introduce a species that may
32 not necessarily want to come back to an area and then
33 you start forcing all these restrictions on other
34 species and stuff like that just to protect that
35 species, it's not fair to the people that live there.
36 Like I stated before, our people don't have access to
37 the grocery stores. Their grocery stores are out there
38 in the field. If it gets to the point of making
39 criminals of our people, which we don't want to see,
40 and we've been told the people are not going to become
41 criminals because they accidentally shoot or run over a
42 duckling or even the bird itself.

43
44 You know, who is more of a criminal
45 under that aspect? Is it our people that are trying to
46 gather food for their table or someone that doesn't
47 live there and doesn't even have to live off these
48 resources and lives in an urban center and has good
49 access to other food sources from the grocery store? I
50 think that has to be weighed heavily when you make this

1 consideration that you don't put any restrictions on
2 those people that have to live off these resources.

3

4 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Any last
5 remarks. Dan.

6

7 DR. ROSENBERG: In addressing one of
8 Myron's concerns, let me just read a line from a letter
9 from Tim Jennings, Assistant Regional Director of the
10 Fish and Wildlife Service, to Doug. This was in a
11 letter to Doug in response to one of our letters. It
12 says in his letter -- and I'm taking this a little bit
13 out of context, but really not much. You're welcome to
14 read it yourself. The Endangered Species Act calls us
15 to use all means necessary to bring Steller's Eiders to
16 the point at which their protection under the Act is
17 no longer required.

18

19 You're welcome to read this and he then
20 goes on and talks about their objectives of minimizing
21 interference with subsistence hunting practices on the
22 Y-K Delta and that sort of thing. And with regard to
23 subsistence activity, specifically through stakeholder
24 meetings with the Alaska Native communities and
25 presentation to the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management
26 Council, we have committed to working closely with the
27 people of the Y-K Delta to maximize community benefits
28 and minimize effects to their subsistence way of life.
29 We acknowledge that success depends on their support.
30 But he does still go on to say that, you know, all
31 means necessary.

32

33 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: We'll make
34 copies of our letter that we wrote to the Service on
35 this as well as Tim's response back to us as part of
36 the record here for you guys. I'll give you a chance,
37 come up, and then we've got to close this out because
38 we've got to get the Yellow-Billed loons before we
39 close today.

40

41 MS. MARTIN: So I do think that Dan may
42 have taken that a little bit out of context. That
43 particular statement is in reference to -- it's
44 basically referring to that we want to try everything
45 that we can to bring Steller's Eiders back and it
46 doesn't necessarily refer to law enforcement.

47

48 So I just wanted to say that, but
49 actually I'm hoping that maybe I can actually leave us
50 at maybe a good note. It's just two statements.

1 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: You're
2 reconsidering the 4(j) rule?
3
4 (Laughter)
5
6 MS. MARTIN: No, sir. No, sir. If you
7 don't mind, could I say something about Spectacled
8 Eiders for a second?
9
10 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Certainly.
11
12 MS. MARTIN: Thank you.
13
14 MR. SFORMO: Hold on.
15
16 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Before you do,
17 I think we need to have this gentleman.....
18
19 MS. MARTIN: Oh, I'm sorry. Okay.
20
21 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG:give a
22 quick thing.
23
24 MR. SFORMO: This is Todd Sformo, North
25 Slope Borough. Kate and I have known each other for a
26 number of years. We're both on the Eider Recovery
27 Team. I do think the Council should be kind of
28 disappointed in this update because it's not much of an
29 update at all. There are no dates, there's no budget.
30 And, with the idea of an ideal release of summer 2015,
31 I think this is kind of inadequate for this Council.
32
33 Second, I think the Eider Recovery Team
34 also has a number of high priority points and one was
35 that if this implementation goes through, that this
36 work would not get in the way of the rest of the Eider
37 Recovery Team high priority issues and it already has.
38 I mean the meeting last year has been cancelled,
39 there's no necessarily any date for a meeting this
40 year. So I think it has gotten in the way.
41
42 Even though Tuula, at the SeaLife
43 Center, I mean very respected scientist, has attempted
44 to minimize the disease potential, even members of the
45 Fish and Wildlife Service on the Eider Recovery Team,
46 we're still -- some members, we're still unwilling to
47 release these birds in other locations because of the
48 disease concern. So it may have been minimized, but I
49 don't think it's necessarily fair to say that it's
50 zero. You didn't say that, but the implication was

1 that things are looking good, but I don't know if
2 necessarily that's the case.

3

4 Finally, you've had more than a year to
5 discuss the accidental shooting of these birds and I
6 think the response that you would like to increase
7 outreach so that members of the community can better
8 identify these birds in an attempt to avoid shooting
9 them isn't really much of an answer. In fact, it's not
10 the answer. The question was what happens if the
11 accidental shooting takes place. From Barrow
12 perspective, people are going to be cited. It's going
13 to be a violation whether the cost has been reduced or
14 not. It's still going to be an imposition and a record
15 for someone in the community.

16

17 Now you can leave with a good note.

18

19 (Laughter)

20

21 MS. MARTIN: Oh, thank you, Todd. And
22 we can talk a little bit about those few things, but,
23 again, I'm not going to do a point/counterpoint on this
24 stuff right now.

25

26 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Quickly on
27 Spectacled Eiders.

28

29 MS. MARTIN: Quickly on Spectacled
30 Eiders. I just want to mention that Spectacled Eider
31 numbers have been increasing over -- on the Y-K Delta
32 since the mid-1990s and I don't have the numbers.
33 Obviously that's something that Eric tends to bring
34 here. That increase has been sustained and we're
35 encouraged by that and we are currently reassessing
36 their status relative to the recovery criteria setting
37 a plan.

38

39 It's preliminary, but the results are
40 very encouraging at this point. We're still working on
41 kind of going through the steps and making sure that
42 we're using the best possible information and the most
43 defensible interpretations of the data that we have
44 available. I think things are looking better and we
45 are going to continue to work on that.

46

47 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: What's your
48 timeline?

49

50 MS. MARTIN: You know, that's a good

1 question. We're just at the point right now where
2 we're kind of going through the datasets and making
3 sure that we're using the right ones, but that is
4 something that we're working on is trying to come up
5 with a timeline for this. We'll share that when we
6 have it.

7

8 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I encourage you
9 to use all your efforts on this rather than Steller's
10 Eiders.

11

12 MS. MARTIN: Thank you. I imagined
13 that you might have said that. Thanks.

14

15 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Peter.

16

17 MR. DEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
18 just had one other question. You said the recovery
19 team. What is the number going to be set at, you know,
20 to where it's de-listed? I mean is it going to be
21 10,000, 100,000, are you going to go with the
22 historical level of 2-400,000? I mean if this level is
23 set too high, I mean it will never be reached. I mean
24 are we just going to shoot for 10,000 birds or 100
25 birds?

26

27 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Which species
28 are you talking about here?

29

30 MR. DEVINE: The one that they're going
31 to reintroduce.

32

33 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Oh, Steller,
34 okay.

35

36 MS. MARTIN: I don't have a number for
37 you, but we are working with an expert on the recovery
38 team to use the current recovery criteria, which are
39 based on a population viability analysis to try and
40 come up with a number. When the species was listed, we
41 did not know much about them. We're learning more and
42 we have better estimates of vital rates and we're using
43 that to try and come up with a number to be able to
44 share. So, I apologize I don't have that for you, but
45 we are working on it.

46

47 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: One last
48 comment.

49

50 MR. FAGERSTROM: This has to do with

1 the molting areas. Have you identified all of them and
2 are there protections in place? I come from Norton
3 Sound and we have to have our fuel delivered. It's my
4 understanding that fuel companies have to get transit
5 permits. Looking at the projected increase in traffic
6 in the Bering Straits, I think some things ought to be
7 put in place to protect those molting areas.

8
9 MS. MARTIN: We do have critical
10 habitat designated for the majority of the molting
11 areas that we know of for Steller's Eiders. So,
12 therefore, consultation would be triggered and we would
13 be working with those companies to make sure that any
14 effects would be minimized.

15
16 MR. FAGERSTROM: That would be kind of
17 hard to do though, wouldn't it?

18
19 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you,
20 Kate, very much. I appreciate you coming and I think
21 you got a lot of insights.

22
23 MS. MARTIN: Well, thank you very much.

24
25 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Okay. Neesha,
26 can we talk about Yellow-Billed Loons real quick. Safe
27 travels back to Fairbanks.

28
29 MS. STELLRECHT: Good afternoon. My
30 name is Neesha Stellrecht and I work in the Endangered
31 Species Program as well out of the Fairbanks office and
32 I spend most of my time doing work on the North Slope.
33 I also manage the Barrow satellite field office that we
34 have.

35
36 I was asked to provide an update on
37 kind of where we are in the process for the Yellow-
38 Billed Loon listing decision that we have to make. I
39 thought I would provide a little bit of background just
40 to set the foundation on why we're doing this to begin
41 with. In 2004, we were petitioned to list the Yellow-
42 Billed Loon by the Center for Biological Diversity as
43 well as I believe about 10 other organizations. So we
44 go through a process.

45
46 In 2009, we made a warranted but
47 precluded finding based on kind of what came in at the
48 11th hour, which were some alarming harvest numbers
49 from St. Lawrence Island. They seemed curious. It was
50 hard to believe the numbers, but because of our

1 court-ordered deadlines we didn't have much time to
2 try to verify or discount those numbers. At that point
3 we decided to do a warranted but precluded finding,
4 which means that the animal is a candidate species.
5 That occurred in 2009, so they've been a candidate
6 since then. Because of another multi-district
7 litigation settlement we are now going through the
8 Yellow-Billed Loon listing process to make a decision
9 that we have to do by September 30th of 2014.

10

11 So that's where we are with Yellow-
12 Billed Loons. We started the process back in I believe
13 September. We began external communications, so we had
14 meetings with Fish and Game. We had stakeholder
15 meetings, tribal consultation, emails went out to all
16 the tribal groups. We had a conference call. I
17 believe Patty was on that call.

18

19 Currently what we're doing, so we have
20 a couple documents that we have to write. We're doing
21 a species status assessment, which is a biological
22 document. That we completed at the end of January and
23 that went out for peer review. It went to the North
24 Slope Borough, it went to Fish and Game, and then we
25 had a couple of loon experts that we sent the document
26 to for peer review.

27

28 We recently received comments back. We
29 received a lot of comments, a lot of very helpful,
30 valuable comments. The majority of the comments added
31 details, additional references, asked for
32 clarification. So where we are in the process right
33 now is we're incorporating those comments into the
34 species status assessment. At that point we will begin
35 writing a decision document. When those are finalized,
36 we will send those to the regional office at the higher
37 level. They will go through a name process and then be
38 published in the Federal Register.

39

40 Probably worth noting is when you have
41 a decision like this there's not a lot of information
42 that you can send out to the public. It's not a public
43 process, but if the decision is to list the Yellow-
44 Billed Loon, there will be a public comment period, a
45 lot of time for people to review the documents that
46 have been written and it will get published in the
47 Federal Register and then there will be a public review
48 process.

49

50 If it's a not warranted finding, it

1 will go to the Federal Register. There's not a public
2 review process at that point, but anybody and everybody
3 can sue us. So if you don't agree with the not
4 warranted decision, your ability to comment on that is
5 to basically sue us with information and basically tell
6 us that we made the wrong decision and get your
7 information together and petition us, just like we were
8 petitioned in 2004.

9

10 If it's a warranted finding, then it
11 goes to the Federal Register with a lot of opportunity
12 for public review, comment, meetings, tribal
13 consultation, all of the above. So that's all I had
14 for the Yellow-Billed Loon listing update if you guys
15 have questions.

16

17 I will say I'm not -- we kind of have a
18 listing team. Well, we do have a listing team, not
19 kind of and I'm not the primary author on the
20 documents. I'm not the one doing the analysis, so if
21 we have technical questions, I can definitely take
22 notes and try to get back to you on that. My role in
23 this process is basically coordinating this team and
24 keeping things moving along and providing updates for
25 the Council.

26

27 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: We certainly
28 appreciate, from the Department's perspective, the
29 opportunity to be a peer reviewer on the document and
30 to be involved in the preparation of the status review.
31 I think it's a good way as a model to move forward with
32 a lot of these status reviews as a more open process
33 where there's more involvement by your partners,
34 especially partners who have a lot of invested interest
35 in it.

36

37 Second of all, I promise you we won't
38 sue you if you come up with a not warranted decision.

39

40 MS. STELLRECHT: I was pretty sure of
41 that. I will say that the comments that we have
42 received have been extremely helpful. They were
43 valuable comments and we received a lot of them and
44 we're taking all of them into account and it's been
45 helpful. So I'm glad that there were people that
46 agreed to review it and provided comments by the
47 deadline and it's been very helpful for the process.

48

49 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: As a matter of
50 fact, we might even help you defend yourself if you do

1 that.

2

3 MS. STELLRECHT: Thank you. I will
4 make note of that. I appreciate it.

5

6 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I think I had
7 Taqulik and then I had Patty.

8

9 MS. HEPA: Again, just as Doug had
10 mentioned, the North Slope Borough appreciated the
11 opportunity to be a peer reviewer. I just wanted to
12 make a comment just in general, Neesha. I know that
13 working for Endangered Species you're well aware of
14 this, but many of our species that we depend on or that
15 we live with are being either listed or proposed for
16 listed or are already listed and it just takes so much
17 time. I

18

19 know Eric was talking about how busy
20 he is and so much on his plate. There's got to be a
21 point in time when things really need to slow down
22 because it's very important for us to be at the table
23 when things are being proposed or currently listed. A
24 good example is with the Polar Bear Recovery Plan or
25 the conservation plan that we're trying to be involved
26 with, but the timeline is so short, there's weekly
27 meetings, there's a lot that's expected from members
28 and it's getting very overwhelming.

29

30 Just for people that aren't aware,
31 Yellow-Billed Loon is a potential to be listed. Polar
32 bears are currently listed. Ice seals, Steller's
33 Eiders, Spectacled Eiders, bowhead whales, so there's
34 all of that. It's almost like we need to have a full-
35 time person or maybe two just to deal with these types
36 of issues. If we're not at the table, then there's
37 always the potential opportunity that we could lose our
38 ability to continue to harvest.

39

40 As Doug and I spoke of earlier, there
41 is seriously that risk with our opportunity to continue
42 to hunt polar bear. Like, for example, there's these
43 weekly meetings and I've missed the last two because of
44 being at meetings like this. And I'm going to miss
45 next week's one as well. I just don't know how they're
46 progressing and it is very overwhelming and I just
47 wanted to express that concern.

48

49 Thank you.

50

1 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Patty.
2
3 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Thank you, Mr.
4 Chairman. Just a comment on the surveys. The
5 Subsistence Division of Alaska Department of Fish and
6 Game did some extensive surveys and provided that
7 information to your shop up there, Neesha, and then we
8 had that teleconference earlier this year. So I was
9 just wondering how much weight that data has when
10 you're considering your listing process or where does
11 that fall into all the other comments that you receive
12 and et cetera.
13
14 MS. STELLRECHT: Thank you, Patty.
15 Yeah, that's a great question. Like I said when we
16 listed the bird or did a warranted but precluded
17 finding in 2009 based on those alarming numbers, there
18 was no doubt, question about those numbers. Actually
19 it was kind of a strategic move and I think what turned
20 out to be a good one. So, by getting them on the
21 candidate list we were able to get money, do more work,
22 do more research and that's exactly what we did.
23
24 After the 2009 listing -- actually,
25 Tamara, feel free to come up and speak if you want.
26 These two gals here went out and spent a bunch of time
27 on St. Lawrence Island came back with some very good,
28 reliable data and that's what we have now. So we have
29 the information we need to say that we don't believe
30 subsistence harvest is a concern for Yellow-Billed
31 Loons at this point.
32
33 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Thank you. I
34 just wanted to make sure that that was public record.
35
36 MS. STELLRECHT: Yep.
37
38 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other comments.
39 Pete.
40
41 MR. PROBASCO: Just to help the Council
42 members here, you said a decision has to be made by
43 September 30, 2014. Put that in context as far as
44 depending upon the decision and if it's a warranted
45 decision, does the public comment period occur after
46 that date or before that date?
47
48 MS. STELLRECHT: The public comment
49 period will occur after that date. So it will get
50 published in the Federal Register and then I believe

1 it's a 60-day, 90-day, I'm not for sure, but there's a
2 comment period after that.

3

4 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Dan.

5

6 DR. ROSENBERG: I have a question on
7 that, Neesha, if I may. I just wanted to clarify this
8 for my own sake and for everybody's sake. It has to be
9 published by September 30th. That publication process
10 is a fairly lengthy process to get it into press and
11 get it published. So a decision will presumably be
12 made before long. I mean, I don't know, at some point
13 before September 30th. Will that decision be announced
14 before it's published?

15

16 MS. STELLRECHT: No, that decision will
17 not be announced before it is published. By policy,
18 we're not able to do that.

19

20 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Other comments.

21

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you,
26 Neesha. I look forward to a not warranted decision.
27 You know our recommendation. Wait. Taqulik.

28

29 MS. HEPA: Neesha, let's say the
30 Service says it's not warranted and then is there the
31 potential that you'll get more lawsuits? I'm just
32 curious.

33

34 MS. STELLRECHT: That's a great
35 question and, yes, there is a potential. It's pretty
36 tough in this world. Typically we get sued either way
37 is kind of how it goes, but if we do a really good job
38 with the analysis, the justification, the document
39 writing, our job is to be able to justify the decision
40 that we made to where people that would normally sue us
41 won't sue us. So having a defensible argument is a
42 very important component of this process.

43

44 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Any other
45 questions.

46

47 (No comments)

48

49 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Thank you,
50 Neesha. Safe travels back to Fairbanks and thanks for

1 coming, both you and Kate. We have to be out of the
2 room by 4:30. I was going to suggest that we take up
3 the Council committee reports. They're all in Tab 6. I
4 don't know if we need to go through each report unless
5 the Council members want to.

6

7

Pete.

8

9

MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. To help out,
10 as far as the budget, I think we have a specific item,
11 agenda item 13, so I don't think we need -- we can
12 dispense with the committee report and hold it till 13.

13

14

Mr. Chair.

15

16

CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: The other one
17 is the Emperor Goose Technical Subcommittee. I think
18 we've heard some on that. Unless people would like to
19 have these committees report, their reports are in Tab
20 6 and you can look at them overnight. If you have
21 specific questions regarding them, we can take them up
22 first thing in the morning. Otherwise I suggest that
23 we just accept them as they're prepared in Tab 6 as
24 informational.

25

26

MR. DEVINE: Do you need a motion for
27 that?

28

29

CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: I don't think
30 so. Patty, if you could walk us through the 15th
31 anniversary of the AMBCC, that would be great.

32

33

MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Thank you.
34 Next year will mark the 15th anniversary of the AMBCC,
35 so we're going to start planning some type of
36 recognition of the longevity of the organization and
37 celebrate the successes we've had. So what that's
38 going to look like, I'm not quite sure yet, but I
39 wanted to put that on everyone's radar so that if
40 anyone is interested in helping put something together
41 for next spring, I'd be more than happy to have your
42 participation and we'll probably have more information,
43 more details at the fall meeting. So I just wanted to
44 give everyone a heads-up on that.

45

46

Thank you.

47

48

CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: Anybody in the
49 audience that would like to provide public testimony.

50

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN VINCENT-LANG: No. Okay. I
4 think we'll close for the day. Tomorrow we will take
5 up, Eric, first thing in the morning the migratory bird
6 population status and trends and then get into the
7 three proposals, the consent agenda and then deal with
8 the budget. Nine o'clock tomorrow morning.

9

10 Thank you very much.

11

12 (Off record)

13

14 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

