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ALASKA MIGRATORY BIRD CO-MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FALL MEETING - ZOOM

SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

Members Present:

Ryan Scott, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Eric Taylor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Gloria Stickwan, Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission
Brandon Ahmasuk, Kawerak
Priscilla Evans, Chugach Regional Resources Commission
Taqluk Hepa, North Slope Region, Barrow
Coral Chernoff, Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak
Gayla Hoseth, Bristol Bay Native Association
Peter Devine, Aleutian/Pribilof Island Association
Randy Mayo, Tanana Chiefs

Executive Director, Patty Schwalenberg

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(ZOOM - 9/21/2021)

(This portion not recorded)

(On record)

MS. ZELLER: Did everybody get that? Recording in progress. Anyway. So, yeah, I mean I just want to put that out there for folks and if you have ideas. It's something that the subcommittee is exploring and would really like to make happen. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Tamara. So if you have ideas of individuals in your area that would be willing to be interviewed, that would be great. And then the last thing is Tamara will work with -- you know, the question of can the materials be presented or be included with non-resident permits or fall/winter hunters, my suggestion would be get together with Jason and Ryan and figure out a way of -- you know, if a permit gets mailed, perhaps infographics could be mailed along with that permit to send the same messages to non-resident hunters relative to the importance of Emperor geese to Alaska, methods of harvest that prevent injury to birds, the difference between an adult and juvenile bird. Things of that nature I think would be helpful. Those points have been made in previous meetings I think by Coral and Karen in the past. So let's see if we can work with Ryan and Jason and make that happen.

MS. ZELLER: Yeah. Absolutely. Great ideas. A hundred percent.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Great. Thanks again.

MS. ZELLER: I'll get in touch with them.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Great presentation. I've got 12:25 and I'd like to hear from folks about maybe taking a half hour lunch break or so or if that's enough time. What are people's thoughts?

MR. AHMASUK: This is Brandon. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for that. I'm just going to mention I'm starting to get hangry. I might have to take a

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1 bite out of the laptop or something here. Maybe 45
2 minutes.

3
4 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. We can do
5 that. Any other suggestions? If we go 45 minutes, if
6 my clock skills are correct, it would be about 1:15
7 that we would reconvene. Does that sound enough time
8 to make your peanut butter and jelly sandwich or
9 whatever else you're going to have for lunch?

10
11 MS. CHERNOFF: Yes.

12
13 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Excellent. All
14 right. So we will pick it back up at 1:15. Enjoy your
15 lunch.

16
17 WILL: Eric, this is Will. Can you
18 hear me?

19
20 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I can, Will, loud and
21 clear.

22
23 WILL: Okay. Just want to get a mic
24 check in before, you know, my time to speak.

25
26 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Yeah, you're at the
27 opposite end of North America, you're in Florida.
28 We'll pick it up at 1:15. Thanks for checking in.

29
30 (Off record)

31
32 (On record)

33
34 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: 1:15 on September
35 21st we're reconvening the fall 2021 Alaska Migratory
36 Bird Co-Management Council meeting. I'm Eric Taylor
37 and we are on agenda item number 12 old business on the
38 agenda and on item number Roman numeral IV, action
39 requested AMBCC committees. Patty, you're fast. We
40 must have a mind meld. I was just going to ask you to
41 pull that up, so thank you very much.

42
43 So Patty has done a significant amount
44 of work and has sent out the committees to the Council
45 with recommended changes. Patty, I'm going to turn this
46 over to you. Being this is important and it's been one
47 of those nagging tasks that seems to be carried over
48 meeting after meeting, I think it's probably good that
49 we spend a little bit of time and that Council members
50

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1 take a look at what you're volunteering to do.

2

3 My recommendation is -- you know, it's
4 easy to be on a committee. It's a little bit harder
5 then to make the commitment to make the time and adjust
6 your schedule accordingly to contribute. So please be
7 honest if you don't feel like you can contribute or you
8 don't have the time or you think there's a better
9 person out there that might serve in your place. No
10 harm done. Please speak up and we will make the
11 recommended changes. Or if you're serving as the Chair
12 and you feel like you've done due diligence and you
13 would like another person to step up, we would like to
14 hear that as well.

15

16 So, Patty, I'll turn it over to you if
17 you don't mind and work through these committees and
18 the recommended changes.

19

20 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yeah, I'll just go
21 through them committee by committee. I did receive
22 some input from some of the members and made those
23 changes, but you're also welcome to make changes while
24 we're going through this discussion.

25

26 So the first one is the Technical
27 Committee. The committee members we have listed are
28 Julian Fischer, Todd Sformo, Cyrus Harris, Jim Simon,
29 Kelly Krueger, Jason Schamber, Melissa Berns, Gayla
30 Hoseth, Patty Schwalenberg and Coral Chernoff. The
31 changes that I had made at the request of the Council
32 members is Jim Simon has been added and Jim Fall has
33 been removed since he retired from Fish and Game.

34

35 Are there any comments or additions to
36 the Technical Committee?

37

38 (No comments)

39

40 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. If none, I
41 will go on to the Emperor Goose Management Committee.
42 That one consists of Jason Schamber as the chair,
43 Julian Fischer, Jack Fagerstrom, Eric Osnas, Peter
44 Devine, Brandon Ahmasuk, Cyrus Harris, Gayla Hoseth,
45 Melissa Berns, Jennifer Hooper, Brian Daniels, Dave
46 Safine, Coral Chernoff, Tamara Zeller and Chuck Frost.
47 The changes that we made to this committee or proposing
48 to this committee are Tamara Zeller and Chuck Frost
49 have been added and Jim Fall has been removed due to

50

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1 his retirement.

2

3 Are there any other changes we'd like
4 to make to the Emperor Goose Management Committee?
5 Brandon.

6

7 MR. AHMASUK: Thank you. Not that I
8 don't absolutely love being on the Emperor Goose
9 Committee, but I'm going to have to step down. I just
10 don't have the time. However, I am a little bit closer
11 to hiring for the Subsistence Director, so I would like
12 to reserve that spot for whoever that is when they come
13 on. That they take my place whenever that comes.

14

15 Jack Fagerstrom, he still hasn't shown
16 up. I don't know if he made the airplane, the flight
17 to Nome. I can't speak for him, but I know when we
18 meet in person he does attend the meeting, so maybe
19 I'll just leave it at that for now. Anyway, thank you.

20

21 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Thanks,
22 Brandon.

23

24 MR. AHMASUK: Thank you, Patty.

25

26 MS. CHERNOFF: Patty, this is Coral.

27

28 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Hi, Coral.

29

30 MS. CHERNOFF: Hi. I'm not -- I just
31 want to say I'll get back to you, I guess, on Melissa
32 Berns' name both on the Emperor Goose Committee and the
33 Technical Committee. I believe her name was on there
34 when she was Chair. But I will -- since she doesn't
35 ordinarily call in to meetings and stuff, I don't know.
36 I'll check with her on that to see if she wants to
37 continue being on there and then I'll let you know.
38 But I believe her name is just kind of left over from
39 when she was Chair.

40

41 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yeah. Okay. I'll
42 make a note of that.

43

44 MR. MAYO: Patty.

45

46 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yeah, Randy.

47

48 MR. MAYO: At one of our meetings that
49 Alfred Dementieff from the Lower Yukon Subregion

50

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1 they're the only region in the area that gets Emperor
2 goose. He was named for this committee.

3

4 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. I will add
5 him to that. I should have done it. I remember we
6 discussed it at your last meeting. Are there any
7 others?

8

9 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Patty, just as you
10 move through the committees, I don't know if it's
11 necessary -- it will save a bit of time -- to read all
12 the members. You might want to concentrate on what
13 changes are being proposed.

14

15 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Sounds good.

16

17 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Save your vocal
18 chords.

19

20 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Anything to save
21 some time.

22

23 MR. SCOTT: Patty, before we move on
24 from the Emperor goose one, I'd just like to suggest
25 that we get a rotating Chair scheduled for that.
26 Starting next year Jason will be chairing the Study
27 Committee with the Flyway Council, I'll be chairing the
28 Flyway Council and not only is there going to be a lot
29 of workload coming up, you know, there actually
30 potentially is a little bit of conflict there too. You
31 know, if you've got a Chair that's running the show and
32 then Jason will be working on the other end of it.

33

34 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. I'll make a
35 note of that. For the Exclusion Committee we removed
36 Anna Crary, the legal support. My recommendation for
37 this committee is to disband it. We met pretty
38 regularly early on when the AMBCC first started to
39 discuss excluded areas, but we really haven't met since
40 then. I think that if we ever got any exclusion
41 proposal we can just refer that to the Technical
42 Committee in the future. So that's my recommendation.

43

44 Next is the Invitation Committee.

45

46 MS. STICKWAN: I have something to say.

47

48 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Oh, go ahead.

49 Sorry, Gloria.

50

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1 MS. STICKWAN: I guess I am concerned
2 about that because the Exclusion Committee -- I just
3 wonder about the future, like 20 years from now, if we
4 disband it I suppose we can always add it back in
5 there. I'm just wondering about areas like Glennallen,
6 Copper Basin that might become -- I know they tried to
7 make this a nonrural area at one time. It was close to
8 a vote. I believe they were trying to make this a
9 nonrural area. It was proposed by the Board of Game, I
10 believe, or somebody.

11
12 That concerns me if we get rid of the
13 committee. How are we going to protect areas like
14 Glennallen or other areas that may become nonrural 20
15 years from now. If we get rid of this committee, how
16 are we going to protect that?

17
18 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Gloria, I'll take a
19 stab at that. You know, it would be my recommendation
20 that if a proposal came forward for a community to be
21 excluded, a committee could be formed like you
22 mentioned.

23
24 I think part of going through these
25 committees is kind of looking at them and seeing when
26 the last time they have met. The committees that I
27 think Patty has recommended be disbanded haven't met in
28 quite some time. I do share your concern, but I do
29 think a committee could be formed to look at a
30 proposal.

31
32 MS. STICKWAN: Okay. I think somebody
33 should be on the Technical Committee that's on the
34 Exclusion Committee then just so we aren't forgotten.
35 I guess I'll just leave that alone for now. I think
36 they will look out for us. As long as we can form a
37 committee again if that happens, that's okay.

38
39 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. Any other
40 thoughts on disbanding the Exclusion Committee? Is
41 there any other concerns or is it okay to move forward?

42
43 (No comments)

44
45 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay.

46
47 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Oh, sorry,
48 Eric.

49
50

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1 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I was just going to
2 recommend you move on, but before we do -- Coral,
3 something happened to your camera. You're now vertical
4 instead of horizontal and we're all going to get a
5 stiff neck trying to turn our head like this to see
6 you.

7
8 MS. CHERNOFF: Oh, interesting. I'm
9 the same. I haven't even touched it.

10

11 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: There you go. You
12 did it. All right. Thanks. That will save our neck
13 muscles. Go ahead, Patty.

14

15 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. The next one
16 is the Invitation Committee. The only change we have
17 there was to remove Anna Crary and replace Rory Stark
18 with Jim Ashburner for law enforcement. Any questions
19 on that one?

20

21 (No comments)

22

23 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Kodiak Road
24 Committee. I did not note any changes to this one and
25 I did not receive any word from anyone to add or take
26 anybody off. Any comments on the Kodiak Road
27 Committee?

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Harvest
32 Survey Committee, Liliana Naves has requested to step
33 down as chair, so this committee will need a chair the
34 next time they meet. Jim Fall has been removed and I
35 think that's the only changes for this committee unless
36 there are any others.

37

38 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: There aren't, Patty.
39 My question to -- I hope Lili's on the phone. Lili, in
40 terms of identifying a new chairperson for the Harvest
41 Survey Committee, would you like to take that on the
42 next time the Survey Committee meets? One of your
43 first action items then would just be to identify a new
44 chairperson. I'm not for sure if there's any
45 volunteers right now on the phone that would like to
46 step up. Does that sound like a reasonable approach
47 the next time the Harvest Survey Committee meets that
48 the first action item is to identify a new chairperson?

49

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1 MS. NAVES: Yeah, I think that what
2 happened there I have been acting as temporary chair
3 since Mike Peterson from the North Slope left a couple
4 years ago. As I already serve as the Statewide Harvest
5 Survey Committee, with the intent of supporting each
6 other and more diverse participation on harvest survey
7 topics, I'd like to suggest for the committee and/or
8 the AMBCC to consider appointing another person to
9 serve as a known temporary chair. I think that person
10 in one of the five surveyed regions, like Delta,
11 Bristol Bay, Interior, Bering Strait, North Slope could
12 be a practical option.

13
14 We have not been meeting often. We
15 could set a meeting for that. I think that there's the
16 option for the AMBCC more broadly, not only the people
17 that already sit at the committee, to be considered for
18 that position.

19
20 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. Your
21 recommendation, Lili, is a representative from one of
22 the five regions that are currently surveyed for the
23 harvest step up and be the chairperson for that
24 committee. All right. So how would you like to
25 proceed? Do you want to wait until you call a meeting
26 and then ask for one of those five individuals to step
27 up to be the chair?

28
29 MS. NAVES: That's fine unless someone
30 has other recommendations.

31
32 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: We can always twist
33 arms, but it's better to actually ask for a person to
34 volunteer if possible. It may help that, you know,
35 when the committee meets that you provide a little bit
36 of an idea the responsibilities and the time that you
37 would expect the person to be invested. That way they
38 know a little bit what they're getting into and that
39 may help.

40
41 MS. NAVES: Okay. Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you.

44
45 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Next is.....

46
47 MS. NAVES: Umm.....

48
49 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Sorry.

50

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1 MS. NAVES: Another change to the
2 Harvest Survey Committee is that we asked on that one
3 to replace Jim Fall with Lara Mengak.
4

5 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Oh, that's right.
6 We did add Lara. Sorry about that.
7

8 MR. AHMASUK: Mr. Chair, this is
9 Brandon. I just sent Patty a message. At the previous
10 face-to-face meeting I was so involved in just the
11 Emperor Goose Committee I forgot that I was on several
12 other committees. I'm going to have to step down from
13 those ones as well.
14

15 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right, Brandon.
16 So you'd like your name removed from all committees?
17

18 MR. AHMASUK: Yes.
19

20 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. So noted.
21

22
23 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. The next two
24 committees I'm recommending that they be disbanded.
25 The first one is the Standard Operating Procedures
26 Committee and that one was put in place by the Council
27 very, very early on. In Eric's defense, he wasn't even
28 on the Staff at that time. It has never met and it's
29 just my opinion that I think this can be done between
30 the Executive Director and the Executive Committee
31 and/or other AMBCC members as they see fit.
32

33 This is more of an administrative -- I
34 don't know -- administrative kind of thing that we can
35 present to the Council in a more formalized fashion
36 than not meeting at all for one thing and I don't think
37 we need a committee for it. And the same thing with
38 Long-Term Goals and Objectives Committee. I feel like
39 this one should be done during some kind of a planning
40 process with the Executive Director and the Board.
41

42 I'd like to -- again, neither one of
43 these committees have met ever, so I would like to
44 disband these two. Any comments on that?
45

46 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: It sounds reasonable
47 to me, Patty.
48

49 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. The Flyway
50

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1 Council, I don't think we need to take action on that
2 unless there are changes to people. The Flyway Council
3 Service Regulations Committee representatives. This is
4 the committee where when we don't have Covid we have
5 two people that have the ability to attend the Pacific
6 Flyway Council and the Service Regulations Committee
7 with the Executive Director. Right now the primary is
8 rotating between the Council members and the other
9 primary is Jennifer Hooper and the two alternates are
10 Gayla and Taqulik.

11

12 Are there any changes to that one?

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. The Law
17 Enforcement Committee, Jim Ashburner has replaced Rory
18 Stark, Anna Crary has been removed and Aaron Frenzel
19 has also been added with the Alaska Wildlife Troopers.
20 Any other changes besides Brandon who is the chair?

21

22 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Yeah, you caught it.
23 So Brandon has recommended he be removed and then a new
24 chair will have to be identified for that committee.

25

26 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Right. Okay. The
27 Budget Committee. I've just removed Anna Crary. Are
28 the rest of the members staying the same? Are there
29 any changes to that one?

30

31 (No comments)

32

33 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Handicrafts
34 Committee is next on the list. That's chaired by Todd
35 Sformo. Jim Ashburner is replacing Rory Stark and we
36 are removing Anna Crary for that committee. Are there
37 any other changes?

38

39 MS. STICKWAN: Jim Fall still on there?

40

41 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Who?

42

43 MS. STICKWAN: Jim Fall.

44

45 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Oh, I should take
46 him off too. I don't know how I missed that. Next we
47 have the Outreach and Communication Committee. Liliana
48 has been removed from this committee at her request.
49 Are there any other changes?

50

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1 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Patty, is there a
2 chair for the Outreach and Communication Committee?

3
4 MS. SCHWALENBERG: No.

5
6 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. So that's
7 one thing we need to request is a chair is identified.
8 It's unlikely the committee will meet. I will ask
9 Tamara to send a note out to Outreach Committee members
10 and see if we can identify a person who'd like to take
11 charge of that.

12
13 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Then there's
14 the Emperor Goose Outreach and Education Committee.
15 That one is chaired by Tamara. I did not have any
16 changes to that committee unless anyone else has other
17 changes they'd like to share.

18
19 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: So again Brandon will
20 have to be taken off of that committee.

21
22 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yes. Next is the
23 Spring Gathering Planning Committee. We have not met
24 yet. I am the chair for now and there are no other
25 people on the committee except as noted. Does anybody
26 else want to be added to that committee?

27
28 (No comments)

29
30 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Patty, I'll make a
31 recommendation and since Tamara's name appears to be on
32 so many committees I'll replace myself with Tamara on
33 that Spring Gathering Planning Committee.

34
35 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay.

36
37 MS. CHERNOFF: Patty, you can put my
38 name on there.

39
40 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Oh, thanks.

41
42 MS. CHERNOFF: This is Coral.

43
44 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Next we have
45 Government-to-Government Consultation Committee.
46 There were no changes to this one and although this
47 committee has not ever met I would like to retain it.
48 We can start meeting and develop a better way to
49 conduct tribal consultation. That's always kind of
50

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1 been a tough thing to do during when we get our
2 proposals out. We have not really identified a very
3 effective way to consult with the tribes on our
4 regulations. So I think that we should retain that
5 committee.

6
7 Are there any comments on that one or
8 is anyone interested in being added to that committee
9 or getting off the committee?

10
11 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Patty, Priscilla has
12 sent a chat in. She would like to serve on that
13 committee.

14
15 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Thank you,
16 Priscilla.

17
18 MS. EVANS: Yeah.

19
20 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Patty, please add my
21 name on that committee as well. Since I deal with the
22 regulations I should be on that as well.

23
24 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Anyone else?

25
26 (No comments)

27
28 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Co-Management
29 Principles Committee. I think that we should keep this
30 committee until the work is done. We just need a small
31 window to work together to develop principles for
32 co-management. I think that would be helpful for us
33 since we're already a co-management group. So take a
34 look at the names of the people that have volunteered
35 for this committee and let me know if there's any
36 changes on the Co-Management Principles Committee.

37
38 (No comments)

39
40 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Indigenous
41 Inhabitant Definition. Anna Crary has been removed.
42 Although this committee has not been active it's still
43 an issue that needs to be addressed. Staff, time
44 constraints and a clear path forward have been factors
45 in delaying progress, but I think we still need this
46 committee. Is there anyone else who would like to join
47 this committee or no longer be on it?

48
49 MS. CHERNOFF: This is Coral. I'd like
50

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1 to join on that committee.

2

3

MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. And then
4 Fall/Winter Subsistence Harvest Season. This is
5 another one that met early on, but this one has complex
6 legal issues so it requires more staff time than our
7 current budget allows to work on it. Jim Ashburner has
8 replaced Rory Stark. Jim Simon has been added. Jim
9 Fall and Anna Crary have been removed.

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Are there any other changes to this
committee? This one is to look at formalizing a
fall/winter subsistence harvest season.

MS. HOSETH: Mr. Chair. This is Gayla.
I didn't realize I was the chair of this, so I don't
mind being the chair. This is something that we should
definitely try to at least touch base on annually to
figure out how we can move forward with the fall/winter
harvest season.

MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. That's a good
idea.

MS. STICKWAN: Patty, can you go back
to the other one that was on top of it.

MS. SCHWALENBERG: The Inhabitant?

MS. STICKWAN: Inhabitant. I was
wondering could we add Jim Fall -- I mean Jim Simon if
he'd be willing to?

MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Any other
changes to the Fall/Winter Subsistence or comments?

(No comments)

MS. SCHWALENBERG: Finally there's the
PL 93-638 Compacting/Contracting Committee. I'm
recommending that we disband this committee. I have
been working on this individually as the staff over the
past probably six or seven years. This issue is
ongoing and in my opinion it's only going to be
resolved with upper level agency support and maybe
congressional representative intervention. So I don't
think that the committee level is where this work is
going to get done, so I'm recommending that this
committee be disbanded.

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1 MS. HOSETH: This is Gayla, Mr. Chair.
2 I just had a question. I mean this is really important
3 to us for that compacting/contracting because the funds
4 that we do receive with all of our organizations are so
5 minimal. I really don't want to see this disbanded, I
6 guess.

7
8 Maybe we need to work with the agencies
9 of why this isn't supported because it's an important
10 issue for us to do our programs, to be quite honest
11 with you. I mean if you look at what we do get
12 budgetary-wise for each individual person that sits on
13 this Council, it's very minimal of what we get in terms
14 of funding to do this work.

15
16 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Gayla, do you think
17 the concern about funding, would that be under this
18 committee or would it be better under the Budget
19 Committee?

20
21 MS. HOSETH: We could do the budgeting,
22 but I mean really this was for our own line item to get
23 direct funding to AMBCC, where the funding comes
24 directly to AMBCC. We might have a chance getting
25 somewhere now with the change with the Department of
26 Interior. I mean we've had so many years of Patty
27 working on this I just really would hate to see this --
28 if we disband this, is the work going to stop?

29
30 MS. SCHWALENBERG: No. I mean at least
31 I'm not going to stop working on it.

32
33 MS. HOSETH: Okay.

34
35 MS. SCHWALENBERG: I guess I'm just --
36 what would a committee do? I don't know how else to
37 say it. I mean I guess I feel like I've done
38 everything I can to set the stage to get ready to do a
39 638 contract, but the politics and the -- the only way
40 I can say this -- hesitancy, I guess, from the Fish and
41 Wildlife Service upper management that I don't know
42 what a committee would additionally add to that effort.

43
44 MS. PLETNIKOFF: Patty, this is Karen
45 Pletnikoff. Just a clarifying question. Is that
46 hesitancy or resistance at the bureaucratic level or at
47 the appointee level because we are under a new regime
48 relative to maybe when you last reached out?

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1 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Well, when I met
2 with the directors of the Fish and Wildlife Service
3 over the past couple times. They were very supportive,
4 but then when you get to the staff level, I guess, then
5 it's like where is the money going to come from and we
6 don't feel comfortable signing a contract that has to
7 provide money every year when we don't know if we're
8 going to have the money every year. Those are the two
9 biggest reasons that I've heard.

10

11 MS. PLETNIKOFF: Thank you.

12

13 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yeah, the funding
14 for the AMBCC continues to be an issue not just for the
15 Native Caucus partner but for the State and Federal
16 partners as well. I did meet with Raina Thiele, the
17 Alaska liaison, I guess, to the Congressional
18 Delegation, and shared with her the issues of our
19 funding going down. So she's aware of it, but I have
20 not heard back from her yet as to if she's made any
21 progress on that.

22

23 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Raina is the Special
24 Assistant to the Secretary of Interior for Alaska
25 issues. You know, to help out with the discussion --
26 my hands are a bit tied in the sense of recommending
27 funding to any specific entity, whether it be a
28 contractor to build a sidewalk on a refuge or another
29 entity. So I think what Patty is saying, and I would
30 support this, that this is really best brought forward
31 by the Native Caucus in terms of leadership both within
32 Fish and Wildlife Service and also within the
33 Department of Interior.

34

35 As Patty has indicated, she's started
36 that process in speaking with Raina. So I do think
37 that's probably the most effective avenue when it comes
38 to trying to obtain funding from the United States
39 government for a particular contract.

40

41 MS. SCHWALENBERG: If you think this
42 would be appropriate, Gayla, we could have just a
43 committee of Native Caucus members to strategize and
44 continue to work on it from that angle.

45

46 MS. HOSETH: Mr. Chair. I think that
47 would be good. I guess, you know, to answer your
48 question what would this committee do, I guess it would
49 be a committee that we don't forget about it and it
50

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1 would report to the AMBCC of the work that is being
2 done within this committee. So I'm fine with it being
3 Native Caucus members. I think it's a really important
4 issue. It's kind of a reminder when we see it on there
5 that this is something that we're working towards.

6

7 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yeah. Okay.

8

9 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: So Patty, to that
10 effect, just go ahead and remove my name and then that
11 way it gives you guidance to go ahead and get together
12 Alaska Native Caucus members.

13

14 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yeah. Okay. Are
15 there any other Native Caucus members who would like to
16 be on this committee?

17

18 MS. HOSETH: You've got my name.

19

20 MS. CHERNOFF: I would be, Patty.

21

22 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Thank you, Coral.

23

24 MS. CHERNOFF: I might even just
25 suggest put everyone's name on there. Put a meeting
26 out and then let everyone who can make the meetings,
27 you know, just make it open to all the Native Caucus.

28

29 MS. HEPA: I think that would be a good
30 idea.

31

32 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Let's do it
33 that way then. Okay. That is the entire list and you
34 will notice -- maybe you noticed.....

35

36 MS. STICKWAN: Patty, I have a
37 question.

38

39 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Go ahead.

40

41 MS. STICKWAN: When you said add the
42 Caucus, did you take of Karen Linnell's name then?

43

44 MS. SCHWALENBERG: No, I'll still keep
45 her on there.

46

47 MS. STICKWAN: Okay. That was my
48 question.

49

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1 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay.

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CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Patty, there was one committee that somehow slipped my attention and that is at the last meeting. If you look at our action items, number 9, from our Spring 2020 meeting, we were going to establish a Regulations Booklet Committee. Several folks stepped up for that. I volunteered to be the chair and Gayla, Coral, Karen, Todd Sformo and Jim Simon also volunteered to be on that committee.

We left it at Fish and Wildlife Service and Fish and Game would identify members. I've done so. I'm kind of springing this on Ryan, but the two Fish and Wildlife Service members in addition to myself would be Julian Fischer and Dave Safine because of their work to revise the 2021 regulations booklet.

Ryan, any recommendations in terms of a Department of Fish and Game employee that could serve on that Regulations Booklet Committee? The reason I ask is obviously your agency is an expert at producing regulation booklets, be it for fishing or hunting, but could you recommend someone from your department?

MR. SCOTT: I think right now you should put me down and then, you know, spend a little time working with particular education staff and see if I can -- you know, as soon as you said it a lightbulb went off in my head that I was supposed to do that. I imagine that I'll be able to find somebody to help there, but for now just put me on there as a placeholder.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right.

MR. SCOTT: I'm really terrible with graphics though, so you really don't want me.....

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Well, you're okay. We have a pretty good GIS person that certainly significantly improved the maps from previous years of the 2021. Nonetheless, I'm really interested to get the users' perspective. People that have to open up the book and say where can I go, when can I hunt, when is the closed season, what species are open, what species are closed, what are my means and methods. I'm really hoping that we can get some good feedback to make this thing as user friendly as possible. I think

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1 we made some significant strides in 2021.

2

3 Patty, could you please add that
4 committee to your list.

5

6 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yeah. I was just
7 looking for that other file that I had it on, but I do
8 have that on my list of committees. I don't know why
9 it didn't end up in this document.

10

11 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: No big deal. I can
12 send it to you again. I put it in my version of the
13 action items from last spring meeting.

14

15 Okay. With that, any other comments,
16 changes to the AMBCC committees?

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Hearing
21 none. I think this action probably would -- if I
22 remember the agenda correctly -- Patty, correct me if
23 I'm wrong, but you're looking for a vote on this for
24 official acceptance, am I right?

25

26 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yeah, to approve the
27 changes to the committee membership and then also to
28 disband the committees that I had recommended except
29 the 638 compacting/contracting one.

30

31 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. All right.
32 Can I have a motion to accept the changes that have
33 been proposed and discussed today on the Alaska
34 Migratory Bird Co-Management Council committees.

35

36 MR. DEVINE: So moved.

37

38 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Was that
39 Randy?

40

41 MR. DEVINE: It's Peter.

42

43 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Peter,
44 thank you. Is there a second.

45

46 MS. HEPA: Seconded by Taqulik.

47

48 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Taqulik. Any
49 further discussion.

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1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Call for
4 question for all in favor please say aye.

5

6 IN UNISON: Aye.

7

8 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Any opposed.

9

10 (No opposing votes)

11

12 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. The
13 motion carries. Thank you, Patty, for your work on
14 this.

15

16 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Uh-huh.

17

18 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Let's
19 see, that brings us to Tab 9(a) Harvest Survey Program
20 update.

21

22 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Mr. Chairman.
23 Julian has his hand raised.

24

25 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Oh, I'm sorry.
26 Julian, go ahead.

27

28 MR. FISCHER: Hi. Thanks. Patty,
29 could you please send out the finalized copy of the new
30 committee membership when it's complete. Thanks.

31

32 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yes.

33

34 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Good request. We'll
35 make sure everybody has that so we know what our
36 responsibilities are.

37

38 All right, Lili, the floor is yours.

39

40 MS. NAVES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
41 will give a number of updates related to projects by
42 the Division of Subsistence on bird harvest and also
43 updates on the Harvest Assessment Program on behalf of
44 the AMBCC.

45

46 We provided a series of materials that
47 both gathers with this update and the respective agenda
48 items. So in the meeting package that Patty provided
49 those materials start on page 80 of that PDF file. So
50

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1 that starts with the -- I usually provide a one-pager
2 of updates and that starts on page 80 and 81. This
3 time around it spilled into two pages. I go over those
4 topics and I refer to the other materials that are tied
5 together there.

6
7 So I'd like to start with updates on
8 the Staff of the ADF&G Division of Subsistence.
9 Caroline Brown at the Fairbanks office is now the
10 Statewide Research Director for the Division of
11 Subsistence. This is the position that Jim Fall
12 occupied for the last 30 or 40 years. Jim retired in
13 about November 2020. Now we firmly have a person in
14 that position.

15
16 Refreshing on previous updates, Lara
17 Mengak was hired in June 2020 and is the staff support
18 for the Subsistence Bird Research Program. Lara is in
19 the position previously occupied by Jackie Keating.

20
21 With the last change in the state
22 administration, the Commissioner Vincent Lang has
23 assumed the duties of the Director of the Division of
24 Subsistence and Lisa Olson as the Division Operations
25 Manager reports directly to the Commissioner.

26
27 Moving to item 2 of this list unless
28 there are any comments on the previous item or
29 questions.

30
31 (No comments)

32
33 MS. NAVES: Hearing none I'll move on
34 to the second item. That is an update on the budget
35 for the Division of Subsistence. A large portion of the
36 subsistence staff salaries relies on staff obtaining
37 grants for specific projects. This is maybe not what
38 people in general expect or think of a state agency,
39 but they're largely functioning on grants, including
40 myself and Lara.

41
42 So funding for the Division of
43 Subsistence staff to work on AMBCC topics was cut by 25
44 percent in 2014. It has been flat since. In this
45 year, 2021, it got further cut by 50 percent, by half.
46 So out of concern for sustainability of the AMBCC
47 Harvest Assessment Program the Division of Subsistence
48 conducted a budget study to assess and prioritize the
49 services that can continue providing at the current
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1 funding level.

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We have been communicating with a partner to clarify the challenges and try to find the solutions, but the budget situation now defines that the staff from the Division of Subsistence must further focus on grants and funded projects and tasks. So this is a major change this year. We're still trying to fill the gaps and move forward under different circumstance.

Moving to item number 3 on the list it's an update on the 2019 harvest survey. So the preliminary harvest estimates are available since Fall 2020. There has been challenges to coordinate data review and adoption by the regional bird councils. We are still pending adoption, a final word from the Bristol Bay region.

The preliminary harvest tables, and that's a simplified report than when you first release these tables, start on Page 82 of the meeting package. That is just a simplified report to facilitate data review. We already have a draft of the final report. It's mostly ready to go. Just pending the final green light there from Bristol Bay at this point.

We have been rolling funding on printing and distribution of this report. We start to arrive to a point where I think it's difficult to keep rolling. I would like to ask guidance from the Council. If we cannot move forward, how should we move forward with the report. At this point it's largely delayed and at some point I'm afraid that this will fall in the crack and never get out from there anymore.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Gayla, do you have a question? Go ahead.

MS. HOSETH: Are you calling on me?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Yeah, if your hand is up.

MS. HOSETH: Oh, yeah. I just wanted to say I was able to talk with Liliana last week and I was going to forward an email to her. Since we weren't able to have a council meeting and we have tried twice, as Mia's the representative for the Bristol Bay Region,

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1 to go ahead and approve those harvest data numbers. If
2 that would be acceptable to do that since we aren't
3 able to meet. They look good to me. I just wanted to
4 get clarification to make sure that if that was okay
5 from the Bristol Bay Region since we aren't able to
6 establish a quorum to approve those numbers.

7

8 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Lili, does that sound
9 reasonable to you?

10

11 MS. NAVES: Oh, yes. I didn't
12 understand the question from you.

13

14 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Sorry.

15

16 MS. NAVES: That's good for me. As
17 time keeps passing and the years accumulate, I don't
18 think that it gets in a better position for data
19 review. I mean this is two years ago now, so I think
20 that our chances of getting a good data review they go
21 down as time passes. So I think it will not get better
22 by postponing further.

23

24 MS. HOSETH: Okay. With that being
25 said, Mr. Chair, those numbers look good for the
26 Bristol Bay Region if I have the authority to approve
27 those numbers based on not able to have a quorum for
28 our region so Liliana can move forward with her work.

29

30 MS. NAVES: Thank you, Gayla. That's
31 helpful. I think we have to adapt. We will be ready
32 to submit the printing order for the report and send in
33 the mail. Thank you for helping with that.

34

35 Let's see. We move to the 2020 Harvest
36 Survey going in the order there of the years. So this
37 survey was cancelled due to public health concerns
38 related to Covid. A mail survey was conducted as usual
39 for the Cordova harvest. The data review and adoption
40 of the Cordova harvest estimates already happened and
41 the results will be published with the 2019 five-region
42 survey. So you have a 2019, 2020 report. We produced
43 a summary for the Cordova harvest and that is Page 113
44 on the meeting package. That is communications
45 material where we summarize results of the mail survey
46 and distribute for our local partners.

47

48 I'd like to thank our local partners
49 for the Cordova survey. That being the Eyak Tribe in

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1 Cordova, the Forest Service and the tribal councils for
2 the communities of Chenega and Tatitlek that helped
3 distributing survey, the permits for the Cordova
4 harvest.

5
6 About the 2021 Harvest Survey, that's
7 Item 5 on this list, preparations to deploy an annual
8 survey must start around August/September. There's
9 lots of work that goes in the coordination with the
10 partners before you can start a survey.

11
12 So due to the increasing Covid cases as
13 in 2020 the division staff has coordinated with the
14 partners to gather their input and guidance on if and
15 how to do a data collection in 2021. A decision is
16 needed by this fall AMBCC meeting. So it would be
17 helpful to have an action, a decision or a motion by
18 the AMBCC as a whole to get goals together with the
19 other communication that we have done on this topic.

20
21 So based on the discussion from last
22 year and from what we learned on doing surveys with
23 remote technologists in the last year, the Division of
24 Subsistence first put forth three draft alternatives to
25 communicate with the partners that evolved into four
26 options. As discussions evolved, the Covid situation
27 evolved too, so those options are on Page 114 of the
28 meeting package.

29
30 We have a meeting of the Harvest Survey
31 Committee on 17 September to discuss the options of if
32 and how to conduct the survey in 2021. Voting and
33 discussion by email were also available for committee
34 members that were unable to attend the 17 September
35 meeting.

36
37 So here I think I'm moving into the
38 report from the Harvest Survey Committee, which is part
39 of this discussion. So the committee considered four
40 options. No survey in 2021. A survey delivered by
41 mail; households complete survey on their own and
42 return by mail. Another option, option number three,
43 would be a survey delivered by a local surveyor;
44 households complete the survey on their own and return
45 by mail. Option number four was a regular survey with
46 in-person interviews conducted by local surveyors.

47
48 A quorum was met for decision-making
49 and by motion the committee approved a recommendation
50

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1 to cancel the 2021 AMBCC Harvest Survey. That's option
2 one. There was some support for option two. That's a
3 survey delivered by mail. Households complete the
4 survey on their own and return by mail. Considering
5 the challenges to implement a mail survey right now and
6 in support of partners who preferred no survey this
7 year, the Committee recommends option number one, no
8 survey in 2021.

9

10 So this is the recommendation from the
11 Harvest Survey Committee. I'd like to open the
12 discussion to the AMBCC as a whole and maybe that you
13 have a motion for a final decision there.

14

15 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Thanks,
16 Lili. Any comments or questions relative to the
17 Subsistence Harvest Survey Committee recommendation
18 that no survey be conducted in 2021. Any Council
19 members have thoughts on that or questions for Lili or
20 the committee.

21

22 MS. CHERNOFF: I think if.....

23

24 MR. SCOTT: Eric, this is Ryan. Go
25 ahead, Coral.

26

27 MS. CHERNOFF: This is Coral. I think
28 if the committee has met and discussed it, they
29 probably are more informed and I support the decision
30 that they make.

31

32 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Coral. Ryan,
33 go ahead.

34

35 MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
36 agree with Coral's statement that the committee brought
37 a recommendation to us. Once again we find ourselves
38 in extraordinary times where we thought things were
39 getting better and now just everywhere across the state
40 we're up against the Covid challenges once again. So I
41 would support that as well.

42

43 I guess in a bigger context though I've
44 been having some conversations with Council members
45 about a legal requirement to conduct a harvest survey
46 annually. You know, frankly, even in the treaty
47 amendments, and that's where I've been looking and
48 Jason helped me out with some of it, I just have I
49 guess a very general question. Is there a requirement
50

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1 for an annual survey somewhere?

2

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CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Ryan, I don't have
4 the exact language of the protocol amendment in front
5 of me. There is a statement in there that when the
6 spring/summer subsistence was made legal in the 1997
7 amendment that there's a statement that says that
8 harvest -- and I'm not for sure of the exact term, but
9 either it's appreciably or significantly or some other
10 kind of qualitative term increased as a result of that
11 amendment.

12

13

The way it was thought about measuring
14 that was through a harvest survey. As you know, we
15 have gone through a long process of looking at the
16 harvest survey and right now the harvest survey goes
17 across five regions. It's a statewide estimate for all
18 species together as one number. If we ask did harvest
19 of Cackling geese increase over time, we really can't
20 address that question for any particular species.

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So I can't -- it's a long narrative to
say I don't have a definitive answer for you. I think
in these times, as you said, are extraordinary and I
don't think a legal challenge would suffice when it
comes to cancelling the survey as a result of health of
our human population, which is what we're facing
ourselves right now. So I'm not concerned with
cancelling the survey either in 2020 or in 2021 from a
legal aspect.

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1 MR. SCOTT: Thanks, Eric. I appreciate
2 that. I guess I want to be clear. I'm not saying that
3 we should abandon surveys. We've talked about a lot of
4 different factors. Obviously we have health concerns
5 this year. We're also talking about budget concerns.
6 So I'm starting to look downrange a little bit and how
7 we could accomplish some of that and make sure we stay
8 on the right side of a legal opinion if we ever do.

9
10 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Right. Go ahead.

11
12 MS. HEPA: Mr. Chair. This is Taqulik.

13
14 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead, Taqulik.

15
16 MS. HEPA: You know, just reflecting on
17 Lili's number two item about regarding her budget and
18 the decrease in the budget to continue the work that
19 the Division of Subsistence is doing for us. I think
20 that that's a really good question that Ryan posed.

21
22 I know that Colorado State has spent a
23 lot of time thinking about, you know, how do we make
24 the most of the funding that's available because I do
25 believe that harvest information is important. But
26 with the amount of money and the declining budget I
27 feel like that we really need to ask ourselves some
28 serious questions on do we need to take a break and
29 think about how do you make the most of the money that
30 is available where it's actually useful.

31
32 I know that the people that attended
33 our meeting in June, our regional management body
34 meeting, did hear again that year after year concerned
35 about the usefulness of the outcome of the
36 region-specific information. It's really hard for them
37 to see that when you see the confidence intervals and
38 when you're looking at it and approving it from a
39 regional management point of view.

40
41 So I just wanted to say that I think
42 the budgets, the declining budgets, you know, what are
43 we really doing here and is the information actually
44 useful, but answering that question about, you know,
45 what is the obligation that we're trying to fulfill.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Taqulik.

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1 Lili.

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MS. NAVES: Do you have a motion on this topic, on the 2021 survey?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. Before we do that I want to make sure if there are any additional questions or comments relative to Lili's presentation so far? In particular, the recommendation not to conduct the harvest survey in 2021.

MS. NAVES: I think I just wanted to wrap up this 2021 survey because it seems that you are diving more into budget and other topics so we can wrap that one up.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. All right. So I would entertain a motion.....

MS. STICKWAN: (Indiscernible).

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I'm sorry. Go ahead.

MS. STICKWAN: I had a question.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I'm sorry I didn't catch that whoever was trying to speak.

MS. STICKWAN: I had a question.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead, Gloria. Sorry.

MS. STICKWAN: I was just wondering about when you meet with the SRC if that would be a good place to bring up this topic and ask for an exemption. I just wonder what your response would be to that and other people.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Good question, Gloria. You know, when I have given presentations to the SRC in the past relative to proposals, most of the questions surround the population status of a species. The last presentation I gave was back in I think 2016 or '15 relative to Emperor geese.

The questions centered around our population, the abundance estimates, the trend estimates and our expectation of potential impacts of

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1 harvest. The SRC accepted that our harvest estimates
2 were not good enough to really track harvest and that
3 we would rely on the breeding pair survey to monitor
4 the health of that population. So I don't think it's
5 going to be an issue with the SRC, but good question.
6

7 All right. Any other comments or
8 questions relative to the proposal not to conduct a
9 harvest survey in 2021.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: If not, I would
14 entertain a proposal to support the Harvest Survey
15 Committee's recommendation to not conduct a 2021
16 harvest survey.

17

18 MR. HARRIS: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

19

20 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Cyrus. Is
21 there a second?

22

23 MR. AHMASUK: Second. This is Brandon.

24

25 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Brandon.
26 Any discussion on the proposal.

27

28 MR. HARRIS: Question.

29

30 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Called
31 the question. All those in favor please say aye.

32

33 IN UNISON: Aye.

34

35 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Any
36 opposed.

37

38 (No opposing votes)

39

40 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Hearing none. The
41 motion carries. The AMBCC Council approves a
42 recommendation of the Harvest Survey Committee not to
43 conduct a 2021 harvest survey. Thank you, Lili.

44

45 MS. NAVES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
46 think the funding for the survey is a topic more
47 complex than we can fully address and resolve at this
48 meeting. But I think connecting with Ryan's question
49 about how often you can do the survey, I think Ryan is
50

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1 familiar with the budget study that we did earlier this
2 year. As part of that budget study we put forth that
3 the current funding level is not sufficient to do an
4 annual survey anymore.

5

6 The alternative we proposed on that
7 budget study is that we collect the data one year and
8 do the analysis the other year. So this is the current
9 situation. So I think that as we move forward a better
10 understanding what's the budget situation and what that
11 means, this is something to keep in mind that you don't
12 have money currently to do an annual survey.

13

14 Should I move to item number 6?

15

16 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yes.

17

18 MS. NAVES: Thank you. So this is
19 about the 2021 Cordova harvest. Due to Covid this year
20 as in 2020 ADF&G sent permits in advance to all
21 households that obtained a permit in both 2020 and
22 2019. So we start carrying permit holders over two
23 years now. Besides sending those permits in advance
24 the local partners also were available to issue permits
25 on demand.

26

27 I really hope that next year the
28 situation is such that you can go back to a regular
29 system where permits are only issued on demand because
30 we start carrying over households now at this point two
31 years and at some point addresses don't match anymore,
32 people move and such, and it becomes more complicated.
33 So we're hoping that next year we'll go back to a
34 system where permits are only issued based on a request
35 for a permit.

36

37 The mail survey happened as usual with
38 the first mailing soon after the season was closed, so
39 the first mailing go out in early June and there are
40 two additional mailings as reminders that are spaced at
41 about a month each. So for 2021 we had a total of 63
42 permits issued for the Cordova harvest.

43

44 We received 40 completed surveys for a
45 response rate of 63 percent. This is below that we
46 have had in previous years when you have 75 and plus
47 percent as a response rate. It's real possible that
48 this is a consequence of us mailing permits to people
49 that are not really interested in getting a permit. So

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1 we're looking forward to a more normal situation next
2 year.

3

4

5 Moving to item number 7. That is the
6 Kodiak Road harvest. So we worked with the Sun'aq
7 Tribe of Kodiak and other local partners to complete
8 the technical aspects of the permit and the harvest
9 monitoring system including the distribution of
10 permits. We tried different things in the final
11 moments there and it was really great that Kelly from
12 the Sun'aq Tribe was able to come with the online
13 system to distribute the permits given the challenges
14 with closures during Covid.

15

16 So the Sun'aq Tribe issued a total of
17 46 permits for this harvest monitoring system. We have
18 both in-season permit reporting. That is a form that
19 permit holders get together with the permit. As a
20 B-plan we have a post-season survey that's mailed to
21 permit holders, much as a similar system as for the
22 Cordova harvest monitoring.

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So we got four permit holders
responded, reported harvest using the in-season survey.
That's a response rate of one percent. So Fish and
Game sent the first mailing at the very beginning of
September and we'll follow up with two more waves of
reminders.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Lili. Can I
ask a quick question. I can't remember who covered the
Cordova harvest. Is there a similar sort of reporting
process for the Cordova harvest in the sense that they
can report immediately after they hunt and submit their
harvest report or is it at the end of the season?

MS. NAVES: It's at the end of the
season only.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. So did
the one percent, the four out of the 46 or whatever,
did that surprise you or would you have expected a more
greater percentage of people doing that in-season
reporting?

MS. NAVES: Well, no, sincerely we
didn't have high hopes with the in-season survey and
it's for that that we sent the post-season survey. So
hopefully we'll get a better response rate on that. It

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1 will be really great to work together with Coral and
2 the Sun'aq Tribe and other partners in Kodiak to help
3 ensure an adequate response rate there. People get
4 things in the mail, but it's good if they can get the
5 word somewhere else too so they -- when they see it in
6 the mail, they kind of can connect the dots and that
7 just goes in their junk mail.

8
9 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Is my memory right,
10 the response rate for the Cordova hunt is around 60
11 percent of the response rate or what exactly is it?

12
13 MS. NAVES: In previous years -- Patty
14 has the summary there on the screen in previous years.
15 It's a little small for me to read.

16
17 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Oh, I got it.

18
19 MS. NAVES: But I think the highest
20 we've had for the Cordova harvest so far was 73 percent
21 in 2020 and 64 percent this year, but I think it's that
22 because we are carrying over -- sending permits to
23 people in advance of them asking. So I think that when
24 you go back to the previous system I hope that we'll go
25 back to around 70 percent again.

26
27 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. Are you hoping
28 for a similar sort of response rate for the Kodiak?

29
30 MS. NAVES: The Cordova is the closest
31 example we have and I think that it's a new system in
32 Kodiak, so we don't know very much what to expect. But
33 based on Cordova, I think that is a reasonable hope. I
34 think it would be important to work closely with Coral
35 and the local partners in Kodiak to maybe just kind of
36 help people -- reminding a little more actively than
37 just receiving a survey in the mail with flyers, maybe
38 -- I don't know.

39
40 We can work with Coral and see what she
41 thinks can be better to reach out to people. It's not
42 many permits. It's only 46. On the permit
43 information, if I correctly remember -- Coral and Lara
44 please help me -- I think that you ask phone numbers
45 when the permit is issued.

46
47 So one option is even to call people
48 for a response rate, to call because it's not many
49 people. It's 46 people only. Besides the ones that
50

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1 already returned it because we are getting some
2 returned. So that's an option too. We can talk with
3 Coral and see how to better reach out to local people.

4

5 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Thank
6 you. Ryan, you've been patient. Go ahead.

7

8 MR. SCOTT: Just a quick question
9 probably for Coral and I should have asked it when we
10 were going around getting the regional updates. Was
11 there any negative feedback with the road system hunt?
12 Did we hear from folks that weren't happy?

13

14 MS. CHERNOFF: I had only heard one
15 comment and it was from somebody who has a boat, has
16 guide friends, has other access that, you know, we
17 shouldn't open the hunt. So I don't know if it was a
18 competitive thing because they had access and lots of
19 other people didn't. But I haven't heard anything
20 negative.

21

22 I know I've also heard -- so this is
23 kind of interesting that I knew of some people that
24 went out and they were young kids that went out to hunt
25 because now there were swans available. So they went
26 out to look for swans. They went and shot one and
27 there was a group of them and then they were -- one was
28 wounded, but then they were kind of distraught because
29 the swan came back like to come back to its friend or
30 whatever and they were kind of disturbed by that, so
31 they said they were never hunting swans again.

32

33 So I think that really is a great story
34 of, you know, like everybody doesn't just get a permit
35 and go out and hunt and kill things and then go out
36 again the next year and go out the next year. So had
37 they never had this opportunity to, they would have
38 never had the opportunity to perhaps be touched by that
39 situation and maybe carry it over into now their duck
40 and goose hunting.

41

42 So I think those are the things that I
43 think when we don't have opportunities, we don't have
44 these lessons that people get to learn, especially our
45 young people. They don't get these opportunities to
46 learn these things and now they have just become
47 lifelong non-swan hunters. Hunting can lead to a lot
48 of conservation. I thought that was a great story that
49 came home that I heard and heard from the people

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1 themselves and a great story I think to share.

2

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MR. SCOTT: Thank you very much.

4

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MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah. And I have a question for Lili. I'm sorry. Are you done with your question?

7

8

9

MR. SCOTT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

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MS. CHERNOFF: So I can't remember and I was just trying to look through my emails here. We put a return date on that permit. Can you recall what that return date was? We asked them to return their harvest reports by a certain date. Was it September 30th or 11th? I can't remember.

18

19

20

MS. NAVES: I don't know. Do you remember, Lara?

21

22

23

24

MS. MENGAK: I am looking right now. I cannot immediately find it. I can keep searching though.

25

26

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MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I was searching mine too. It was lost there. So I guess I just wanted to mention that it hasn't been that long. Like the return date wasn't immediately after the hunt. I believe we put a return date on there.

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Also, you know, we've just had -- I know personally two people that got permits, my friend and then one of his helpers. They were at a remote camp and they just returned two days ago. Somebody brought in Covid. They had some fishing groups at a cabin. So they were stuck for another 14 days out there for quarantine time. One actually is still out there.

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So I know there's two out of the 47 that because of Covid have not been able to return theirs yet. So because we're seeing such an increase in people getting sick -- we had one person die here recently. You know, people are kind of getting -- you know, school just started, so we've had a couple of quarantine situations with schools. So that might be definitely contributing to this issue right now. There's a lot of quarantining going on.

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1 MS. NAVES: This is just up to now. So
2 the first wave of the post-season survey went in early
3 September. So there is going to be one in early
4 October and one in early November and during this
5 period people may return their surveys using the
6 in-season form or the post-season form. So this is
7 just what we have to this point now, which is, as Coral
8 pointed out, kind of early in the game as the harvest
9 monitoring goal. I believe you will definitely get
10 better than that.

11
12 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah.

13
14 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Lili. You've
15 had your hand up for a while. Julian, go ahead.

16
17 MR. FISCHER: Yeah, thanks. I agree.
18 I think, Lili, you're going to find that there's a lot
19 of people that do send in responses especially after
20 reminders. I can't remember though, is the response to
21 the survey voluntary or is it a condition of the permit
22 and does it say that on the permit? If it is required,
23 are there repercussions for issuance of the permit to
24 that hunter the following year or does it specify that?
25 Maybe Coral can answer that too.

26
27 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, so I just want to
28 make a clarification. We keep using survey and harvest
29 report back and forth. What they get with the permit
30 is a harvest report. So they write down the date and
31 what they got or the date, what birds they got, the
32 date, what eggs they got. So it's logged right there.
33 So it's essentially a log. It's not a survey.

34
35 We did talk about what if they don't
36 return it and we just kind of left it open. We're just
37 crossing our fingers, seeing what happens, sending out
38 reminders and that's how we go. There will be no
39 repercussions at this point for not returning. They
40 will just be highly encouraged.

41
42 Oh, no. Well, I think when you sign up
43 you agree -- it says you must turn -- well, so it makes
44 it seem like -- yes, that is a requirement. They have
45 agreed this is a requirement of getting this permit.
46 They must fill this out, they must return it, they must
47 be of age and have a license. Those kinds of things.
48 I can't remember exactly what we worded it. But, no,
49 there are no repercussions and it is a harvest report,
50

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1 not a survey.

2

3 I don't know if Lili has anything to
4 add to that.

5

6 MS. NAVES: I think I agree with Coral.
7 The conditions of the permit say that the harvest
8 reporting is a requirement. I don't think as far as I
9 recall that repercussions were specified if people
10 don't send their harvest report.

11

12 MR. FISCHER: Okay, thanks.

13

14 MS. NAVES: This is the same situation
15 with Cordova too. I think that their
16 understanding.....

17

18 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Sorry, Lili, I didn't
19 mean to interrupt you. I wanted to jump in here to get
20 a pulse check on how everybody is doing. I have a
21 request from one person to take a quick break. Would a
22 five or ten-minute break be appropriate for folks at
23 this point?

24

25 MS. CHERNOFF: Sure.

26

27 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Seeing a
28 few heads nod and a thumbs up. Let's take a
29 five-minute break. Is that going to be sufficient for
30 folks?

31

32 MS. CHERNOFF: Yes.

33

34 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Sounds
35 good. So we'll see you -- it's about 2:40. We'll
36 start again at 2:45.

37

38 (Off record)

39

40 (On record)

41

42 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. Good
43 afternoon. We're back. Liliana, if you would like to
44 continue your report, that would be great.

45

46 MS. NAVES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
47 will skip number eight. This is a brief update on the
48 AMBCC goals project and the book chapter that was
49 drafted recently. Patty already covered that in her
50

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1 report.

2

3

4 I'll go to number 9. That is an update
5 on the project on shorebird outreach in the Y-K Delta.
6 I would like to thank Patty, I think, who has -- thank
7 you who put that on the screen there that's sharing.
8 So you may recall that at this point in 2017 we had a
9 project that we worked on shorebird local and
10 traditional knowledge and harvest estimates at the
11 Alaska-wide level. We worked on ethnotaxonomy to
12 better understand the Yup'ik names for shorebirds. The
13 key respondent interviews and local and traditional
14 knowledge part of this project focused on the Y-K
15 Delta.

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So building up on that project we
sought and obtained funding for our outreach project
that is place and culture based. There on the screen
is one of the materials and activities of this outreach
project to work with local schools and communities in
the Y-K Delta. This is a six-page pamphlet and we
produced it in both English and Central Yup'ik.

Our partners for this project include
Rick Lanctot, the shorebird coordinator for Fish and
Wildlife Service in Alaska, Brenda Bowers and Heather
Jamison that are education specialists for Fish and
Game, and the media department of the Cornell Lab of
Ornithology. We partnered together to put the movie
first of all on shorebird documentaries that have been
produced that are more specific to the Y-K Delta.

We were ready to launch activities in
the schools in 2019 and then Covid became a big
monkeywrench on this project. Now I think that the
situation lingers. We are working with the school
district and with the local schools and communities to
invest more in transition in the collaboration with
local teachers and more (indiscernible) learning. So
hopefully in the next spring we can have the teachers
having a -- the teachers are already a main part of the
project, but they're even playing a larger role in this
project.

So it's great to get this off the shelf
again and you'll be looking forward to continue working
with our Yukon Delta partners and the school district
and the schools in the communities. I'm not sure we'll
be able to have the staff visits to the schools, but

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1 we're working on making it -- getting it on the ground.

2

3 If there are no questions or
4 comments.....

5

6 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Lili, were the
7 objectives of this study really to try to increase
8 understanding and awareness of shorebirds and the
9 decline overall for this group of birds or to get
10 greater appreciation? Can you go over the primary
11 objectives.

12

13 MS. NAVES: Shorebirds are one of the
14 groups of birds that are seeing the steepest declines
15 in North America and worldwide. Alaska is a main
16 hotspot for breeding shorebirds and migrating,
17 migration seasons too at the worldwide level. So
18 working with the local communities we learn that small
19 birds, including shorebirds, are important in the
20 Yup'ik culture. Hunters start learning how to hunt
21 with small birds, including shorebirds, and it's a big
22 part of a hunter's education.

23

24 There has been lots of discussion about
25 shorebird concerns, conservation concerns, and at some
26 point just felt that the right thing to include the
27 Alaska Native partners in this discussion and
28 understand how shorebirds are important to them and
29 understand how they may engage in shorebird
30 conservation and how that engagement may look like for
31 them.

32

33 So this project is to work with
34 children because thinking about the concept that it's
35 kind of children start learning something with the
36 small birds and from there to increase awareness about
37 this group of birds.

38

39 We learned from the ethnotaxonomy study
40 that people are forgetting the names for shorebirds and
41 other birds. So I think that the language component is
42 an important part of this project too. So we are
43 seeking ways of engaging Native people in this larger
44 movement that is seeking to ensure that we have
45 shorebirds in the future.

46

47 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Great. Thank you.

48

49 MS. NAVES: So moving on to the Emperor

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1 goose harvest management projects. This larger project
2 includes four or five or half a dozen components that
3 each component is a project of its own with it's own
4 objective, audience and methods.

5

6 So with the information gaps that we
7 knew existed in Emperor goose harvest management, we
8 sought a PR grant and we obtained this grant with a
9 match from funds of the Division of Subsistence, the
10 Pittman-Robertson Funding worked with 75 percent, 25
11 percent matching funds. So different components of
12 this program are now at different levels along their
13 history. We are mostly done with data collection for
14 most of them. Some of them are mostly completed.
15 Others are data analysis stage.

16

17 So we start with Item A there. That's
18 an expert opinion. It's a process that we conducted
19 online. Data collection happened in July to December
20 last year. We identified a list of 115 individuals
21 that have been or likely been directly involved in
22 research, conservation and management related to
23 Emperor goose. This was an online survey.

24

25 We had 70 participants in the first
26 round of those 115 people that reached out, 55 in round
27 two and 54 in round three. So in each round we built
28 up on what we learned from the previous rounds from
29 questions and for rankings and try to identify
30 information gaps, priorities, priority management tools
31 and such.

32

33 So after the third round we have 10
34 individuals that we called Native representation in
35 management. Five individuals from non-governmental
36 conservation, nine from state management research and
37 10 individuals from research B, USGS and university,
38 and 20 people from Federal management and research.

39

40 I'd like to thank everyone, including
41 our partners at the AMBCC who participated in this
42 process. We provided a summary along with the process
43 and now we're working on final analysis and writing the
44 report for this project.

45

46 The next Emperor goose project that I'd
47 like to give an update is another component that
48 focused on gathering perspectives and knowledge of
49 subsistence users. We first planned this information

50

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1 gathering as group interviews tied to AMBCC Regional
2 Bird Councils. With Covid that went down the pipe.

3
4 So we shifted it to key respondent
5 interviews that we conducted over the phone. So it's a
6 really novel approach for us. I don't think that the
7 Division of Subsistence has ever done key respondent
8 interviews over the phone before, but that was one of
9 the new things that we tried to do and learn how to do
10 during Covid.

11
12 So we identified a list of 117
13 potential respondents across five or six regions within
14 the Emperor goose distribution range. I'd like to
15 thank the regional and the local partners who helped to
16 identify interview candidates and also the individuals
17 who participated in an interview. Out of these 117
18 potential interview candidates we were able to contact
19 51 people and completed 37 phone interviews. The
20 interviews were conducted in April/May this year and
21 they are now transcribing interviews and will move into
22 the data analysis process.

23
24 Item C is another component of this
25 larger project. We conducted in 2020 bird harvest
26 surveys in the Aleutian and Kodiak communities. Those
27 are regions that are not included in the regular AMBCC
28 survey. We understand those regions are information
29 gaps where it comes to Emperor goose harvest. The
30 survey included all bird species and eggs. It was a
31 regular bird survey. It had a few extra questions that
32 asked specifically about Emperor goose.

33
34 We worked with the local tribal
35 councils to obtain community consent to conduct the
36 survey and also we asked local tribal councils guidance
37 on recruiting local research assistants. So I'd like
38 to thank the tribal councils for their assistance on
39 that and for our RAs as they're called usually at the
40 Division of Subsistence, the local research assistants.

41
42 So Mick Duvall was the research
43 assistant at Adak, Carmen Bereskin at Akutan, Michelle
44 Gronholdt at Sand Point, Aaron Lestenkof at the Aleut
45 Community of St. Paul. We worked with their
46 (indiscernible) program. Marilyn Arneson was the local
47 research assistant for Larsen Bay. Renee Kiehl for
48 Port Lions. Danielle Butts, Danielle Hernandez and
49 Dahlia Burness for Kodiak. Amelia Hackenson for the
50

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1 Kodiak Road connected. Alicia Short-McEwan for Womens
2 Bay.

3
4 So we prepared a survey that the
5 households complete on their own. We have experience
6 with, for instance, the Cordova Harvest Survey. The
7 survey is very simple to complete. We have had good
8 experience with households completing the survey on
9 their own. So we prepared a package that there was a
10 survey form, a return envelope, a pen and a raffle
11 ticket.

12
13 The local research assistant
14 distributed one survey package to each doorknob except
15 on the Kodiak Road connected area where we do a random
16 sample of addresses and the tribal councils and the
17 local research assistants also helped with outreach
18 about the survey posting on social media, posting
19 flyers, spreading the word out.

20
21 We delivered surveys to about 2,600
22 households. We complemented sample sizes with phone
23 surveys. The Division of Subsistence has access to
24 contact information from the State system for State
25 services. So between the mail surveys and the phone
26 interviews we obtained a total of 565 surveys
27 completed, about 75 percent returned by mail and 25
28 percent by phone interviews.

29
30 We are pretty confident that we can
31 produce regional level estimates from the surveys and
32 it's very likely that we will be able to also produce
33 community level harvest estimates for most of those
34 communities. This project is in data analysis phase
35 right now. So again I'd like to thank our local and
36 regional partners for this project.

37
38 The last but not the least, yet another
39 component for this larger project included mail survey
40 for fall/winter permit holders the Emperor goose permit
41 for the fall/winter hunt. We distributed the draft
42 report for this project in the spring meeting, but
43 would like now to share a brief presentation about
44 results of this project and Lara will do that
45 presentation for us.

46
47 MS. MENGAK: Thanks, everybody, for
48 giving me a chance to present on this. I know Lili
49 mentioned that we've kind of given a brief presentation
50

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1 already during the spring meeting, but thanks for
2 hearing from us again. So this presentation is going
3 to be pretty similar also to one that we're planning on
4 giving at the upcoming Wildlife Society Conference.
5 That conference is an international society annual
6 meeting of wildlife biologists. We're giving this
7 talk.

8
9 Like I said, it will be pretty similar.
10 I think there's value for folks seeing how we present
11 the information to outside audiences as well. So
12 because of that there will be some material given in
13 this presentation that some of you already know, but I
14 think that a little review is always helpful.

15
16 So again, as I think we all know,
17 Emperor geese are a maritime bird that are endemic, or
18 found nowhere else, to Bering Sea coastal habitats in
19 Alaska and Russia. They breed primarily in the Y-K
20 Delta although some breed on the Seward Peninsula and
21 in Russia. They winter in the Aleutian Islands, Alaska
22 Peninsula and Kodiak here in Alaska and on the
23 Commander Islands in Russia. Again, as we all know,
24 they're an important food and cultural resource for
25 many Alaska indigenous peoples and many Alaskans, both
26 indigenous and non-indigenous value the opportunities
27 to hunt for this iconic species.

28
29 We include this slide here because,
30 like I said, the audience for this other presentation
31 is outside of Alaska and they are not familiar with
32 some of the history of migratory bird harvest and bird
33 harvest regulations that are here. Again, we all know
34 there are two seasons. There's a spring/summer
35 subsistence season and a fall/winter season.

36
37 The fall/winter season is sometimes
38 called the sport hunting season; though, as we discuss
39 in this project, that can be a bit of a misnomer
40 particularly for folks that are harvesting in rural
41 communities. Even though we have these two seasons set
42 up here for migratory bird harvest there still remains
43 some mismatches between the fall/winter bird harvest
44 regulations and harvest practices in rural Alaska.
45 This project looks specifically at Emperor goose
46 harvest management and conservation in the context of
47 this fall/winter season.

48
49 So I know that we've all seen this
50

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1 graph probably five times today during our meeting, but
2 again in the late '80s Emperor goose harvest was closed
3 due to reduced numbers. The population grew slowly and
4 in 2015 Emperor goose population index reached minimum
5 threshold for the re-authorization of harvest. Harvest
6 was reopened in 2017. The first three years of
7 harvest, so about 2017 to 2019, were considered
8 experimental. This particular study, like we said,
9 looks at fall/winter hunting and hunters during those
10 three years, so 2017 to 2019.

11

12 So again during this time period, that
13 three-year experimental period, the fall/winter hunt
14 had a harvest quota of 1,000 birds divided among seven
15 hunt areas. To participate in this hunt hunters were
16 required to obtain a permit. Permits were available
17 online and local offices in about 40 rural communities.
18 You couldn't obtain a permit for more than one hunt
19 area and permitted hunters were allowed to take one
20 Emperor goose.

21

22 Again in 2018 25 drawing permits or
23 lottery permits were available to non-Alaska residents
24 and nonresident permits are allowed to take Emperor
25 geese in GMUs 8, 9 and 10 and within Izembek State Game
26 Refuge.

27

28 For this particular study, as I said,
29 our main objective was to evaluate all winter Emperor
30 goose harvest management in the first three years, then
31 it was open. And to provide some fine-tuning
32 recommendations to do this we have these three
33 objectives up here.

34

35 The first is to assess whether
36 participation in the fall/winter permit harvest
37 reporting system varied among certain demographic
38 components. The second objective is to compare results
39 from the permit harvest reporting to harvest surveys,
40 namely the AMBCC Harvest Survey. Finally, to document
41 hunters' perspectives about Emperor goose harvest
42 management.

43

44 To achieve those three different
45 objectives, first to look at participation in the
46 permit, we analyze those demographic characteristics of
47 permit holders like age, gender, community residents
48 and their hunting activity. So again permit holders
49 were required to report on whether they hunted and if
50

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1 they were successful. In this case, non-reported
2 permits refer to cases where permit holders did not
3 provide the required information.

4
5 Harvest reporting to assess the
6 effectiveness of the permit reporting requirement. For
7 quantifying harvest we compared harvest reported by
8 permit holders to again AMBCC harvest survey data.
9 Lastly, this image here is a picture of the survey that
10 we sent fall/winter hunters. We mailed surveys to 712
11 permit holders, a number that includes nonresidents,
12 and we received 397 completed surveys for an adjusted
13 response rate of about 61 percent to that hunter
14 survey.

15
16 So looking specifically at
17 participation in the permit system, 90 percent of
18 permit holders are males, most between the ages of 31
19 and 60 years old. For the study years about half of
20 the permits were issued to urban Alaskan residents,
21 about a quarter to residents of Kodiak, 21 percent to
22 residents of other Alaska rural areas and 4 percent to
23 nonresidents. As a note, we've defined rural Alaska as
24 communities and regions that are eligible to
25 participate in the spring/summer subsistence harvest of
26 migratory birds and urban Alaska as non-eligible
27 communities.

28
29 So among residents the highest
30 proportions of reported hunted permits were for the
31 Aleutian/Pribilof Islands, urban residents and Kodiak
32 residents. The highest proportion of non-hunted were
33 for Bristol Bay, the Y-K Delta and Northwest Arctic
34 residents. The Y-K Delta and Northwest Arctic regions
35 also had the highest proportions of non-reported
36 permits.

37
38 To move on and look at the harvest
39 numbers that were reported by the permit. So from 2017
40 to 2019 permit holders reported 422 harvested Emperor
41 geese. Urban hunters accounted for just over half of
42 this harvest and of those urban hunters who were
43 successful 68 percent of their geese were taken in the
44 eastern Aleutian Islands, Bristol Bay region and the
45 Izembek State Game Refuge. A quarter of those geese
46 were taken in the Kodiak Archipelago Region -- sorry,
47 not a quarter, excuse me, 16 percent and 16 percent in
48 the western Aleutian Islands. Harvest reported by
49 rural permit holders occurred mostly in Kodiak, but
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1 eastern Aleutian Islands and the western Aleutian
2 Islands.

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So when we compare the fall/winter Emperor goose permit reporting numbers to the AMBCC reporting numbers, we can see that data from the AMBCC harvest survey indicated a higher fall/winter Emperor goose harvest than the numbers that are provided via the permit. Specifically, for example, we have three of the regions up here on this table.

So in the Y-K Delta and the Bering Strait/Norton Sound regions the fall/winter permit documented an average harvest of less than one Emperor goose a year, while the AMBCC survey shows an average of 27 birds a year and that is the non-extrapolated number. When we look at the extrapolated number generated by the AMBCC survey, we see an estimated take of over 1,000 birds a year.

For the Bristol Bay region here the fall/winter harvest estimates generated by the AMBCC survey the extrapolate numbers were also higher than the numbers that are obtained by the permit reporting. However for Bristol Bay the difference between the AMBCC harvest estimates and permit reporting were smaller than for the Y-K Delta and Norton Sound, Bering Strait/Norton Sound regions.

To look specifically at the hunters themselves, most nonresidents and Alaska urban residents identified sport hunting as their primary motivation for obtaining a permit and also more than half of rural residents or rural respondents, excuse me, also identified sport hunting as their primary motivation for getting a permit.

Thirty-five percent of respondents that identified sport hunting as their primary motivation mentioned a taxidermy knowledge as a reason for obtaining a permit and just over half of respondents that are motivated by subsistence or traditional hunting listed food as their main reason for obtaining a permit.

Overall, most Alaskan residents, about three-quarters of Alaska residents indicated being likely or very likely to obtain a fall/winter Emperor goose permit in the future. Half of nonresidents,

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1 non-Alaska residents, reported being unlikely or very
2 unlikely to obtain a permit in the future. This is
3 likely due to the low likelihood of obtaining a lottery
4 permit in the future.

5

6 So we asked a number of questions
7 including looking at hunter satisfaction with various
8 aspects of the hunt, but for this presentation I'm just
9 going to zoom in here on asking our survey respondents
10 their thoughts on different management tools. So we
11 asked respondents to consider their preference for four
12 harvest management tools, they're up here at the top of
13 that table, or to come up with their own to write in
14 other conservation measures and these were in the
15 context of if additional measures become necessary to
16 support Emperor goose populations.

17

18 So among the four presented options 32
19 percent of respondents indicated a preference for
20 reducing the harvest quota for areas, while a drawing
21 or lottery permit for all hunters was the least
22 preferred option at about 18 percent. About half of
23 the write-in responses referred to the curtailment of
24 spring/summer harvest of birds and eggs and those are
25 the themes two through four there on the table. About
26 a quarter of the write-in responses referred to the
27 elimination or further restriction of nonresident
28 harvest.

29

30 So to wrap this up, overall both rural
31 and urban hunters shared a high appreciation for the
32 opportunity to hunt for Emperor gees and for accessing
33 species as a food resource. However, our results
34 indicate that the permit harvest reporting on its own
35 is insufficient to gauge take during the fall/winter
36 season. We saw a relatively low participation in the
37 permit and harvest reporting in rural areas.

38

39 Reasons for this low participation may
40 vary regionally and locally. For example, the
41 Northwest Arctic Region is at the edge of the Emperor
42 goose range where hunters may rarely encounter the
43 species and may not feel the need to get a permit to
44 hunt for it if they rarely see it anyway.

45

46 As another example of the Bering Strait
47 and Norton Sound Region Emperor goose abundance is
48 unevenly distributed, so similar reasons for not
49 obtaining a permit may apply. We also know that the

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1 fall/winter Emperor goose harvest requirements may
2 contrast with subsistence hunting tradition.

3

4

5 Lastly, again, as I'm sure folks on
6 this call already know, starting in 2019 the Emperor
7 goose population index fell below a threshold that
8 prescribed additional conservation measures as
9 identified in both management plans. Again in 2020 the
10 fall/winter harvest quota was reduced from 1,000 to 500
11 birds. Egg harvest was closed this past spring/summer
12 subsistence season. As we've seen, ARG has been
13 further prioritized to communicate with harvesters.
14 These actions that have already been taken we see are
15 aligned with the preferences for the harvest management
16 tools that were reported by the survey respondents that
17 we just showed.

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 Lastly, again, I'm sure everyone here
knows that effective harvest management is based on the
continuing collaboration among researchers, users and
managers and it needs to include harvesters as part of
conservation efforts. So based on this study we made
several recommendations all of which are included in
the report, but for this presentation I'll only mention
just a few.

 We proposed devising more ways to
increase participation of rural hunters in the
fall/winter permit and harvest reporting. In doing so,
it needs to consider Emperor goose ethnology as well as
the socio-cultural context of the local communities.
We proposed prioritizing outreach and communication,
which is already being done.

 And in terms of other recommendations,
we propose conducting additional harvest surveys in
rural regions that are not included in the AMBCC
survey, like in Kodiak and the Aleutian/Pribilof
Islands, like what we did -- Lili just discussed, that
survey we did this past spring. Finally, ensuring the
sustainability of Emperor goose populations will
continue to depend on our increased collaboration to
achieve these objectives.

 With that I can take questions.

 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Lara. Are
there questions for Lara on her report?

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1 (No comments)

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(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Lara, if I heard you correctly -- sorry, I was having a little difficult time. I think one of the management implications or summaries is that the permit system that is used for the fall/winter harvest does not adequately estimate the true harvest. Did I hear that correct?

MS. MENGAK: Yes, that's what we've found and it could be based on low participation and lower permit system, but it appears again in the comparison to the AMBCC survey that the fall/winter permit harvest reporting is not capturing all of the harvest that is occurring at this time.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: And that is due to people not getting permits or harvesting without a permit or people not reporting their take with a permit or is it both?

MS. MENGAK: It's likely both, but I don't -- if I say anything that's wrong, Lili, please chime in, but my understanding is that it's likely both.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. And recommendations to try to correct that, to try to get a better estimate of true harvest during fall and winter, what is your recommendation for that?

MS. MENGAK: I think to get a true number there would need to be dedicated harvest surveys that look specifically at Emperor goose harvest. The AMBCC harvest survey is not designed to accurately capture species that are harvested in low numbers like the Emperor goose. Additionally, AMBCC survey is most accurate at the statewide level.

So to accurately capture Emperor goose harvest I think an increase in the number of harvest surveys that are specifically dedicated to doing so would be helpful. Again, including areas that are typically undersurveyed like Kodiak and the Aleutians. They're not included in the AMBCC Harvest Survey, annual survey. Again, as Lili presented, we did do a harvest survey in that area this past spring, though several years of data collection would make sure that those are most accurate.

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1 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. Thank you.
2 Any questions for Lara. Go ahead, Lili.

3
4 MS. NAVES: I think one of the main
5 things that you found on this study looking at harvest
6 data is that we looked at numbers reported at the
7 permit itself, so the permit was designed to capture
8 100 percent of the harvest and then for three regions
9 we have an overlap of permit data and AMBCC survey
10 data.

11
12 If you look at the reported numbers at
13 the AMBCC survey, just the raw numbers, for a couple
14 regions you're getting -- you're detecting
15 substantially more birds with the raw numbers of the
16 AMBCC survey which is not designed to capture Emperor
17 goose harvest with narrow precision. So if you're
18 getting -- and this is not rocket science. There is no
19 expansions involved. It's just looking at raw numbers
20 reported.

21
22 If we (indiscernible) survey, we're
23 getting more birds reported than with the permit
24 survey, that for me indicates that the permit numbers
25 are likely grossly underestimated. So that's a very
26 simple way of looking at the numbers there. There is
27 no complex calculation involved.

28
29 So I think that the one issue that you
30 are facing is that people are not participating in the
31 permit program. So when people look at the permit
32 numbers, people may think that, yeah, we are well below
33 our quota, the quota for the fall/winter harvest, so
34 there is the opportunity -- the resource is
35 underutilized.

36
37 We can request more non-resident
38 permits and we can -- if you cut the harvest quota from
39 the fall/winter from 1,000 to 500 birds, that doesn't
40 make much difference because the reported numbers on
41 the permit is about 150 birds per year. So really not
42 much changed. We're well below our quota.

43
44 But I think that we really need to take
45 a look more in depth at the data that you have at hand
46 and which information the permit is really providing.
47 It seems there is a substantial gap with the actual
48 harvest in fall/winter and what the permit is showing.

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1 Thank you.

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3 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Lili. Any
4 additional questions for Lara?

5

6 (No comments)

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8 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Hearing
9 none. Thank you for the report and the presentation.
10 Patty, could you jump back to the agenda to see where
11 we're at.

12

13 MR. ASHBURNER: Mr. Chairman. I'm
14 sorry. I have a question for Lili.

15

16 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead, Jim.

17

18 MR. ASHBURNER: Thank you. Lili, I was
19 just curious, given
20 that with respect to some other species when new permit
21 requirements are put into place, that it takes a while
22 for people to get accustomed to it, do you think that
23 some of the perhaps poor reporting in these Emperor
24 geese permits could be associated with that or do you
25 think something else might be going on?

26

27 MS. NAVES: Thanks for the question,
28 Jim. It's interesting that with the fall/winter
29 Emperor goose permit survey we have another one very
30 similar, a very similar story, a parallel survey, the
31 Tundra swan fall/winter permit that's going on since
32 about 20 years in some regions.

33

34 This study we make it parallel. We look
35 at the Tundra swan permit results, the harvest report
36 and then the permit and the harvest report on the AMBCC
37 survey with a much longer timeframe and a much larger
38 body of data than for the AMBCC and the pattern is the
39 same. It has not ameliorated over the years in the
40 Tundra swan permit.

41

42 So I think that there is certainly an
43 effect that happens on the beginning of a permit system
44 that people are getting used to it. They are getting
45 to learn about it. What the Tundra swan permit tells
46 us is that there has been not a dramatic amelioration
47 over the years in terms of participation in the survey
48 -- or the permit, sorry.

49

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1 MR. ASHBURNER: Through the Chair.
2 Thank you very much, Lili.

3
4 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Lili.
5 Lili, where are you at in your presentation?

6
7 MS. NAVES: We're done.

8
9 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right.

10
11 MS. NAVES: Thank you. Thank you very
12 much for your time.

13
14 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I was just double
15 checking. So that brings us to new business, Tab 9 in
16 your handout, and that brings us to Mr. Safine who I
17 think has joined us. Dave is sitting in for Todd
18 Sanders. I think all of you know Todd. He's the
19 Pacific Flyway representative for the U.S. Fish and
20 Wildlife Service based out of Vancouver, Washington.
21 Todd represents the Pacific Flyway Council for the Fish
22 and Wildlife Service and he's a representative. He is
23 unavailable today, so Dave has graciously agreed to
24 provide a briefing for what Todd would have presented.

25
26 Dave, the floor is yours.

27
28 MR. SAFINE: I'm going to go ahead and
29 share my screen with you. Give me one second here.
30 Thank you, Mr. Chair and the AMBCC. I appreciate you
31 guys letting me present today on behalf of Todd Sanders
32 who could not be here. So I will go through the
33 briefing that he would normally be providing at this
34 meeting, which is essentially from the Headquarters
35 Region in the Pacific Flyway Representative's office.
36 Myself, I work for the Migratory Bird Program, but for
37 the Alaska Region.

38
39 Today I'll go through a couple things,
40 a couple announcements and updates from the
41 Headquarters Region. Secondly, I'll talk about game
42 bird and habitat conditions from 2021 surveys.
43 Thirdly, proposed changes to the hunting regulations
44 for the 2022 and 2022-2023, both spring/summer and
45 fall/winter seasons.

46
47 Quickly getting back to incidental
48 take, which has been a hot topic over the last several
49 years. Most recently the new administration issued a
50

1 proposed rule on May 7th to revoke the previous final
2 rule. So the previous final rule did not prohibit
3 incidental take underneath the Migratory Bird Treaty
4 Act. The new proposed rule does prohibit incidental
5 take, which was the previous interpretation.

6
7 So we are expecting a final rule coming
8 out this September, sometime this month, which if it is
9 as the proposed rule was, it would again be prohibiting
10 incidental take. So the next steps would be some
11 guidance from the Fish and Wildlife Service and a
12 potential process to permit incidental take or other
13 things like that. Anyway, just a heads up that there's
14 been sort of a bit of a change in interpretation of the
15 MBTA with the latest rule that incidental take is
16 prohibited.

17
18 Secondly, on ravens. Just touching
19 base on Common ravens. This update is really geared
20 toward the western part of the Lower 48. Really
21 dealing with raven depredation on threatened species.
22 Things like the desert tortoise and things like
23 sage-grouse. So this isn't really very applicable to
24 Alaska, however the Fish and Wildlife Service is
25 working on a national program to look at raven
26 depredation and ways to deal with that.

27
28 The long story short is they've been
29 working on this for a while. They've been soliciting
30 and gathering a lot of input from stakeholders, tribes,
31 agencies, et cetera. Most recently they're working on
32 a technical review document. It's expected to come out
33 this fall and then management options would be
34 developed from there.

35
36 The general idea is like three steps.
37 One being let's reduce the sources of food that we as
38 humans are providing to these ravens, which could be
39 artificially boosting their populations. Two,
40 improving the habitat condition for these species like
41 the desert tortoise and sage-grouse so they are doing
42 better so that the effect of depredation by ravens is
43 less of an issue. Three, if we can't make enough
44 progress on those fronts, to then consider lethal and
45 non-lethal take of ravens to deal with these
46 depredation issues.

47
48 So that's kind of where we stand with
49 the raven thing. Like I said there's not a huge
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1 connection with issues in Alaska. We have had issues
2 where we've issued depredation permits for ravens in
3 Alaska to protect in particular Stellar's eiders on the
4 North Slope, but other than that I'm not aware of a lot
5 of issues that we have with ravens here, but there are
6 a lot more issues in the Lower 48. So just a quick
7 update on that.

8
9 Okay. So touching base again on game
10 bird and habitat status for this year in 2021. One of
11 the big pieces of news is that we're having huge
12 drought conditions in the western United States. Also
13 the southern part of the Canadian prairies and down
14 into Mexico.

15
16 So this is an image from this past
17 spring, so April, when birds would be either migrating
18 north or starting to settle in for breeding and you see
19 in sort of the heart of some production areas here in
20 the northern U.S. prairies and southern Canadian
21 prairies really dry conditions. Western U.S. very dry.
22 Continues to be dry up through now. So that's
23 certainly not good for both duck productivity and then
24 overwintering of our ducks from Alaska.

25
26 In addition to what we saw this year in
27 2021, we have had drought conditions in many of the
28 past five to ten years. So there were drought
29 conditions in 2020, in '18, also '16, '15, '14. So
30 we've had a lot of drought conditions recently. Then
31 the question is on a large scale, on a continental
32 scale, how is that affecting duck and goose
33 populations.

34
35 So at the moment duck populations are
36 doing okay. So on a large scale continentally this
37 figure is total ducks in what we call -- so that would
38 be on the Y axis here, duck population -- what we call
39 a traditional survey area. So that would be when Fish
40 and Wildlife Service goes out and surveys areas of
41 Canada, Alaska and the northern part of the Continental
42 U.S.

43
44 The last time we were able to do that
45 survey was 2019. At that time in 2019 we were still 10
46 percent above the long-term average. So things were
47 okay. It had been declining in the previous few years.
48 We were unable to collect data in most locations in
49 2020 and 2021, so we really need some -- hopefully
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1 getting survey data in 2022 to revisit how the
2 populations are doing.

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Given that we were unable to do surveys in most locations, the Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters staff basically relied on predictive models to predict where these populations would be in 2021 to set the hunting regulations for 2022. So normally we would use survey data. In this case we had to use predictions.

So this here shows you observed data the last time we actually did surveys, which was 2019. So these are populations in thousands, so 886,361, etcetera. Then the predicted value that the statisticians generated for this year to throw in the adaptive harvest management model.

You'll notice that for the Alaska Yukon Region this one is bolded because this is actual real data. This is the only area where the Fish and Wildlife Service, so that would be our region here in Alaska, the program that Julian supervises, was able to conduct surveys. So we did have a number to fill in here. The number of birds that was observed, this is mallards, in Alaska this year was quite a bit higher than it was a couple years ago. So we had a really good number of ducks up here this year and everywhere else relied on predictions.

So then we're going to take the little bit of data that we had and then the predictions and that goes into the models to help set the regulations for ducks in the southern part of the Pacific Flyway. So places like Oregon, Washington, California. So when we look at that that information is used to set next fall's hunting season, so the 2022-23 fall/winter general seasons.

What you see here is these seasons for general ducks, pintail, scaup, canvasback. These are the various regulatory packages or alternatives. They are the same as we had in previous years. So what we're going to be hunting right now in the 2021-22 season same regulation set, so no change to those regulations.

Again, we really hope that we're able to collect the rest of the survey data in summer of

0055

1 2022. The main holdup was being able to get into
2 Canada to do our survey work, which we were unable to
3 do this year, but hopefully we can do that next year.

4
5 If people want additional information
6 on these various pieces of information, Headquarters
7 Region has a lot of different reports out that you can
8 get on their website including the Adaptive Harvest
9 Management Report, migratory bird status, waterfowl
10 status reports. Then harvest information, what we call
11 HIP data, is in this Migratory Bird Hunter Activity and
12 Harvest Report. So those are all currently available.
13 Those are typically released in August of each year.

14
15 So moving on. Then we take all that
16 data that we have and we use that to set hunting
17 regulations like I said for the next season. So not
18 while we're hunting right now, but what we will be
19 hunting next fall. 2022 spring/summer and 2022-23
20 fall/winter regulations.

21
22 So the Pacific Flyway Council just met
23 about a month ago. Patty was there in person
24 attending. The purpose of that meeting is to set those
25 regulations and for the Pacific Flyway Council to
26 endorse the regulations that the AMBCC proposed this
27 past April. So those two things come together at this
28 meeting.

29
30 There was a few different regulatory
31 changes proposed in the Pacific Flyway, several of
32 which don't really affect us in Alaska, but I did list
33 a couple that did. One being adding some flexibility
34 for -- so they're adding what's called a new segment,
35 meaning they can bump out their hunting season a tiny
36 bit later by spreading out their season in California.
37 They're doing that mainly to allow them flexibility in
38 hunting Canada Cackling geese, but primarily increasing
39 the opportunity to hunt Aleutian Cackling geese, which
40 winter primarily in California.

41
42 Right now their populations are quite
43 high and well above objective. Aleutian Cackling geese
44 when they're in Alaska are nesting in very remote areas
45 in the Aleutians and there's very little harvest
46 opportunity in Alaska. However, down in California
47 there is.

48
49 Secondly, there was a proposal to
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1 reduce the bag limit for Canada Cackling geese in three
2 states; Alaska, Oregon and Washington. So in the areas
3 where what we call Minima Cackling geese, or people
4 refer to as Cacklers, where they pass through in Alaska
5 or breed or winter down in Oregon and Washington, we
6 are reducing -- proposing to reduce those daily bag
7 limits from six to four in Alaska and four to three in
8 Oregon and Washington. We're doing that because --
9 Julian will show you later -- the status of that
10 subspecies those numbers have declined very recently.

11
12 The Service Regulations Committee,
13 which then takes these recommendations from the Flyway
14 and either approves them or does not approve them, they
15 will be meeting next week to review recommendations
16 from all four Flyways and the AMBCC. So generally that
17 would be a time that Patty typically attends and also I
18 believe it's Jennifer Hooper and one other individual
19 that could attend from AMBCC.

20
21 So if folks need information, Patty,
22 Jennifer, etcetera, I'll make sure once I get the Zoom
23 links to pass those along to you guys if you want to
24 attend. So it will be next Tuesday, I believe, at 8:00
25 in the morning Alaska time.

26
27 From there those are approved by the
28 Director of the Service, Secretary of the Interior and
29 then they come out in the form of proposed final rules,
30 etcetera. So I think as you guys remember the AMBCC
31 passed three regulatory proposals this past April and
32 they were all what we kind of call cleanup or
33 administrative cleanup of the regulations.

34
35 Lastly, just touching base again on
36 what I was talking about previously about Minima
37 Cackling geese or Cacklers which breed on the
38 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and winter in primarily Northwest
39 Oregon and Washington. I apologize by the way if
40 anyone is raising their hand or anything like that.
41 The way my screen is set up right now I can't see
42 everybody. So just holler if you need to say
43 something. Otherwise I'll take all the questions at
44 the end.

45
46 So as folks know, back in the early
47 '80s a lot of people got together and were working on
48 some of the challenging issues of the declines in many
49 of the goose and eider species and the Yukon Delta
50

0057

1 Goose Management Plan was created in 1984. After that
2 time the seasons were closed for a period of time for a
3 lot of goose hunting, both up in Alaska and down south
4 in Oregon and Washington. Then the populations
5 responded well to that.

6
7 For a period of time bag limits were
8 increasing, sometimes decreasing, and I'll show you
9 details on that in a second. Most recently the bag
10 limit had gone from three to four in Oregon and
11 Washington. I'm talking about the fall/winter hunting
12 in 2014. Then, like I said, this year is a proposal to
13 decrease that back down to three because the population
14 is a little bit lower.

15
16 On the spring/summer side of things
17 most recent changes were back in 2017 where the
18 previous closure of egging was removed and so then
19 folks did have the opportunity to collect eggs. Also
20 the closure period for Cacklers used to be 45 days.
21 That was then reduced to 30 days. That all happened
22 about four years ago. Most recently we've been
23 liberalizing hunting opportunity for the subspecies.

24
25 There was a meeting back in 2016 where
26 a lot of the stakeholders got together both from where
27 these birds breed on the Yukon Delta. So the AVCP,
28 WCC, the Yukon Delta Refuge, Fish and Wildlife Service,
29 Alaska Department of Fish and Game all got together and
30 they were working on revising the management plan for
31 this subspecies setting population levels which was
32 worked out to be 250,000 birds.

33
34 I'm just putting a note out there that
35 this population now appears to be down a little bit,
36 which I'll show you in a second here. So we probably
37 need to have those conversations again and be thinking
38 about what can we do both in the fall/winter hunt and
39 the spring/summer hunt to help get these birds back to
40 objective.

41
42 This particular figure here on the
43 Y-axis you have bird abundance and then X-axis is time.
44 What you see here, this is the index for Minima
45 Cackling geese or Cacklers. This is kind of the
46 hunting regulatory packages down in Oregon and
47 Washington during those years. This was when the
48 season was closed in the 1980s and into the mid 1990s.

49
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1 During that closure period the
2 population grew rapidly. Then we began opening up
3 hunting opportunity. Very limited at the beginning of
4 one bird bag, two birds, then bumping that up to four.
5 Then the population started to come down a little bit.
6 Harvest was reduced for a number of years. Things kind
7 of recovered nicely and then we liberalized it again.

8
9 So over time we've seen this changing
10 of the hunting regulations from more liberal to more
11 conservative bag limits. Most recently, because the
12 last few years have been lower, the states Oregon,
13 Washington and Alaska have proposed to reduce that bag
14 limit back down to three. In Alaska it will be four.

15
16 These lines here are the levels at
17 which we want to think about taking action. The
18 objective is 250,000, which is in the middle here.
19 This upper dash line is 275,000. That's 10 percent
20 above that. The lower line is 225,000. That's 10
21 percent below that. So once we're above or below the
22 10 percent mark we want to consider taking action to
23 regain that objective.

24
25 So that's where we're at right now.
26 That's why the Pacific Flyway has proposed to reduce
27 daily bag limit and I think that's why the AMBCC should
28 at least be thinking about this and thinking about how
29 they want to consider working with the other
30 stakeholders at this time.

31
32 So with that if there are further
33 questions about some of these things, you could contact
34 myself, but obviously Todd Sanders is the Pacific
35 Flyway representative and he serves as the liaison
36 between this group and the Pacific Flyway in addition
37 Jason Schamber and Ryan Scott work on the Council
38 representing the State of Alaska.

39
40 Do folks have any questions?

41
42 MR. HARRIS: Yeah, Dave.

43
44 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead, Cyrus.

45
46 MR. HARRIS: Aren't these the same
47 birds not very long ago that they were the same birds
48 in the Oregon area that they were having problems with
49 in the farming area that they were getting hunters from
50

0059

1 the Alaska area to go down and slaughter some of those?
2 Is that the same bird? Could you explain that.

3

4 MR. SAFINE: That's a good question,
5 Cyrus. Yes, the population was -- you know, just a few
6 years ago we were way above objectives so you can see
7 here. I want to say it was 2016 or '15 that we were
8 something on the order of 320,000 was the index at that
9 time. So very high levels, lots of complaints from the
10 wintering areas where there's agricultural producers,
11 in particular folks growing grass seed farms down in
12 Oregon and Washington. So a lot of issues and
13 conflicts between the abundance of this goose species
14 at that time and those agricultural producers.

15

16 Now we're kind of flip-flopped. So we
17 did liberalize harvest. This species, based on what
18 we've seen since the 1980s, seems to be very sensitive
19 to harvest levels. Apparently -- and this isn't the
20 cause of it, but we had liberalized regulations, we
21 issued depredation permits and now the population has
22 apparently responded. We can't say that for sure, but
23 they're at a point now where those should be less of an
24 issue and what we're more interested now is getting
25 that population back up to increase opportunity for
26 subsistence hunters and fall/winter hunters as well.

27

28 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Any other questions
29 for Dave.

30

31 MS. HOOPER: Yeah. Hi, Eric. This is
32 Jennifer.

33

34 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead, Jennifer.

35

36 MS. HOOPER: I don't know if I missed
37 something somewhere, but this is all news to me. I
38 guess I'm a little concerned that it seems to be quite
39 a large issue and like I said I could have missed
40 something somewhere, but I'm not quite sure where that
41 could have happened.

42

43 I guess a couple of things. First, if
44 I'm supposed to be an effective representative to the
45 Pacific Flyway and to the SRC, I need to know when
46 these meetings are happening and what's on the table.
47 I've never gotten that, so I don't know if there's a
48 mail list or a meeting invitation list that comes out.
49 I would love to get on those notices.

50

0060

1 I guess bigger than that this situation
2 directly affects our region and I guess I'm a little
3 caught off guard. So hoping maybe there's more
4 followup or something to bring the WCC and our region
5 up to speed with issues like this.

6
7 MR. SAFINE: Jennifer, I appreciate
8 your comment. Yeah, this is pretty new information.
9 As you know, we did surveys in 2019. We did not do
10 surveys in 2020 and we surveyed again this year. This
11 population is managed with a three-year average of the
12 index. So what happened was we had the previous three
13 years before this year. I don't know if you can see my
14 cursor, but we had a pretty high count and then two
15 lower counts. So that three-year average was still in
16 the range where we didn't really need to do a whole lot
17 just yet.

18
19 But then with this year's data point we
20 now have three years that are below objective. So what
21 happened was once we did our surveys, Julian's program
22 did the surveys, data came out in July, we realized
23 that the new three-year average actually dropped
24 significantly. It was previously, I believe, something
25 like 235,000, which is pretty close to that objective.
26 I then dropped to about 206,000 or so. So it was a big
27 drop because we lost that high year.

28
29 I guess I'm just saying that it is new
30 information and I think part of the goal this meeting
31 is to start that dialogue and that communication. So I
32 apologize if you feel like you were caught off guard.
33 It is new and I think all of us really just started
34 talking about this stuff in the last -- you know,
35 probably starting back in August.

36
37 When that information came out, then
38 the states of Oregon, Washington and Alaska were trying
39 to decide what to do with that from the fall/winter
40 perspective and I think now is the opportunity for
41 folks like the WCC and the AMBCC in general just to
42 think about what we want to do for the spring/summer
43 hunt.

44
45 And your point about being kept in the
46 loop is important. I'll make sure to relay to Todd to
47 get you on the list for those various meetings.

48
49 MS. HOOPER: Okay. That makes a lot of
50

0061

1 sense, Dave. Thanks for that explanation. I guess I
2 kind of focused in on the reduction in bag limit for
3 Unit 18 for next summer. But I appreciate the
4 explanation about the three-year average and that makes
5 complete sense. Yeah, just a little more communication
6 I think, but I also look forward to continued
7 communication with the region and these units that are
8 going to be affected.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 MR. SAFINE: Jennifer, I just want to
13 add one thing real quick for the units you were talking
14 about in Alaska. So that would be for the fall/winter
15 hunt 2022-2023. That would not affect spring/summer
16 hunting, just fall/winter hunting in those regions. So
17 if that helps at all.

18

19 MS. HOOPER: Yeah, that does. I guess
20 maybe the heading on the slide makes it hard to
21 distinguish what would be spring/summer and what would
22 be fall/winter. Thanks, Dave.

23

24 MR. SAFINE: Yeah. Sorry about that
25 confusion.

26

27 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Ryan, go ahead.

28

29 MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
30 Dave, thanks for the report. Just to echo the
31 conversation between Dave and Jennifer. This is a bag
32 limit reduction with zero impact to the spring/summer
33 hunting opportunity as well. But it is a point given
34 that this is about 30 days old, the information coming
35 out, it is a point that I think the AMBCC has to be
36 aware that we have another population that potentially
37 is showing some fluctuation and we need to at least
38 keep it on our minds and be prepared to discuss it as
39 we go a little bit further.

40

41 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead, Julian.

42

43 MR. FISCHER: Yeah, I just want to give
44 Jennifer some reassurance here. At the WCC meeting I
45 did present this information and I made it clear during
46 that presentation that Cackling goose changes that were
47 proposed at that time were for the fall/winter hunt.
48 At the time of that meeting it was only Oregon was
49 going to make some changes. Alaska hadn't officially
50

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1 made an announcement nor Washington.

2

3

4 But again I did emphasize this was a
5 fall/winter change, but at that time I also gave some
6 thought from the WCC to consider if they thought it was
7 appropriate to put in a proposal potentially for this
8 fall if the WCC felt that they wanted to make a change
9 to the spring/summer regulations, which (cut out) 2023.
10 So this was brought up and obviously not emphasized
11 enough and I apologize for that. (Cut out) shared.

11

12 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Julian.

13 Jennifer, any additional comments?

14

15 (No comments)

16

17 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I want to add that
18 Cyrus brought up a good point. They took the slide off
19 already, but Cacklers have long been a species of
20 controversy and a lot of attention in the Pacific
21 Flyway because of the issue that Cyrus raised. I don't
22 know if you remember Dave's slide and he pointed to
23 back in 2014 or '15, somewhere in there, the population
24 was increasing and I want to say it was
25 300-and-some-thousand at some point.

26

27 There was a significant effort by the
28 agricultural community in Oregon to decrease the
29 population objective. There was a special committee
30 formed and from the WCC Myron Naneng was representing
31 the committee. I was also on the committee along with
32 Dan Rosenberg from the Fish and Game.

33

34 It was a year-long process with many
35 contentious meetings with many farmers in the Oregon
36 Farm Bureau and some other agricultural organizations
37 to lower the population objective significantly. Well
38 below 200,000 in fact was one proposal. The Alaska
39 Department of Fish and Game and the Fish and Wildlife
40 Service along with the WCC argued effectively to
41 maintain the population objective at 250,000. It was a
42 long, I'd have to say, contentious meeting. Several
43 meetings over a year.

44

45 I do think the recommendations -- and
46 I'm not a population ecologist, but following Cacklers
47 over time and in talking to Robert Trost, who was the
48 Pacific Flyway Council representative before Todd
49 Sanders, it appears that Cacklers are pretty sensitive

50

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1 to harvest, as Dave mentioned in his presentation.

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So I would expect that the proposals both by the State of Alaska and the states of Oregon and Washington to decrease their bag limits should have a positive effect on this population. I don't know, Dave, if you want to venture to say when you think that population may respond. I would expect in the next few years.

Anyway, the point I want to make is, Jennifer, I would encourage you -- given this issue right now and we'll make sure it happens. Ryan and Dave have assured you that you'll stay in the loop on this.

I think it's very important for a representative from your region to ensure that the Pacific Flyway Council understands the importance of Cacklers as a subsistence food resource to rural residents on the Y-K Delta because there's a lot of pressure, for example, from the agricultural community to decrease this population. So I think it's germane that indeed you make your presence known. Thank you for expressing your interest because I think it's most appropriate.

Any other questions for Dave.

MR. HARRIS: Yeah, I've got another one here.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right, Cyrus, go ahead.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you. In the beginning part of your presentation you mentioned that drought is affecting a lot of the duck and geese. Is there any considerations about it also affecting the shorebirds in their declining stages? I guess with that said I'm trying to work around -- I'm trying to reverse Liliana's statement about the cultural beginners hunts that the fingers were pointed at. You know, I mean they do have wintering grounds that we should be looking into.

Am I making any sense?

MR. SAFINE: Yeah, absolutely. I would think that you are correct then. It should have quite

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1 a bit of effect on them. Shorebirds are wintering in a
2 lot of the same areas, sometimes going even quite a bit
3 further south into South America and so forth. But,
4 yeah, I mean those same areas, Oregon, Washington,
5 etcetera where shoring birds are passing through during
6 migration would likely be affected as well.

7

8 I am not a shorebird expert and
9 obviously we have challenges gathering population level
10 data on shorebirds, but I suspect all wetland birds are
11 going to be affected by this. So, yeah, that's a good
12 point.

13

14 I think it's just really important that
15 I hope we're able to get survey data in 2022 and get a
16 handle on where we are at continentally with at least
17 waterfowl populations. Yeah, I think you're correct
18 that it's going to affect shorebirds as well and other
19 water birds, marsh birds, etcetera.

20

21 MR. HARRIS: Thank you.

22

23 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Dave, just out of
24 curiosity, you showed drought conditions I think from
25 2014 to 2021, so basically a long trend. This severe
26 drought on that slide that you're showing right now.
27 Do wintering conditions feed into any population
28 estimates for migratory waterfowl?

29

30 I mean the reason I bring it in because
31 let's just say that we are not able to do a survey,
32 that Canada once again closes its borders to prevent us
33 from doing aerial surveys in Canada and we know that
34 wintering conditions that are extremely important to
35 the condition of waterfowl for when they come back to
36 breeding areas would have an impact.

37

38 Do you know is anyone using wintering
39 data, habitat data as a modeling to try to predict the
40 impact on breeding populations?

41

42 MR. SAFINE: I know they're definitely
43 using some of that spring/summer data, but as far as
44 the winter data I don't believe so. There are some
45 surveys done in the winter as you know. Things like
46 Snow geese and brant. I don't think we focus on
47 habitat likely as much as we should. So I don't think
48 they're incorporating that into predictive models I
49 guess because they probably didn't need it in the past
50

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1 because we had the survey data.

2

3 As you point out, if we don't have the
4 survey data, then that type of information I think is
5 going to become a lot more important, but our current
6 HM models, for instance, I don't think -- they do
7 incorporate that breeding pond data, but they don't
8 have wintering data as far as I know.

9

10 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Thank
11 you. Dave, thank you very much for your presentation.
12 Thanks again for sitting in for Todd Sanders. I think
13 we're sitting at 4:05. Julian, I believe you're next
14 with the status and trends of species for migratory
15 birds. Thirty minutes. Will you be able to fit your
16 presentation in at that time?

17

18 MR. FISCHER: I think so, Mr. Chair.
19 The presentation will take roughly 10, 12 minutes or so
20 and then if there's questions. We should be able to
21 wrap up by 4:30.

22

23 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Thanks.
24 Go ahead.

25

26 MR. FISCHER: Can you see the
27 presentation view?

28

29 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Not yet. Oh,
30 something is happening. We see your desktop.

31

32 MR. FISCHER: Try this again.

33

34 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: There you go. You're
35 there.

36

37 MR. FISCHER: We'll give this a go. Is
38 my voice coming through clear?

39

40 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Yes, it is.

41

42 MR. FISCHER: Thanks. Thanks for the
43 opportunity to speak to you today about the results of
44 our aerial waterfowl surveys that the Migratory Bird
45 Management Office in Alaska completed this year.

46

47 Within Migratory Birds we have two
48 biologists that are pilots and trained in low level
49 survey operations and we have several trained aerial
50

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1 observers with years of experience counting and
2 identifying waterfowl from aircraft. These individuals
3 are also supported by several statisticians who help
4 design and analyze data from our aerial waterfowl
5 surveys.

6
7 The objective of our survey program is
8 to collect information about distribution, abundance
9 and trends of harvested birds to help the AMBCC and the
10 Pacific Flyway Council make decisions about management
11 of hunting and conservation of bird habitats.

12
13 The annual work plans for our aerial
14 survey crews were dramatically altered by the Covid
15 pandemic in both 2020 and 2021. However, this year we
16 were able to complete five surveys that provide
17 information about the status and trends of birds that
18 are important to subsistence hunters in Alaska.

19
20 First I'm going to briefly describe
21 those five surveys that we did complete and then after
22 that I'll provide some results. So the first survey of
23 the year that we completed was the Alaska portion of
24 the midwinter brant survey which we conduct at Izembek
25 Lagoon.

26
27 As many of you know, in fall virtually
28 the entire Pacific brant population stages at Izembek
29 Lagoon before migrating further south to their
30 wintering sites, to locations with eel grass habitat
31 and those are located in British Columbia, Washington,
32 Oregon, California and northwestern Mexico.

33
34 Up to one-third of those brant,
35 however, remain here in Alaska at the Izembek Refuge
36 area throughout winter. By January brant are situated
37 in their respective wintering sites and it's at that
38 time that our office conducts the Alaska portion of the
39 midwinter survey. While we're doing that State
40 agencies, NGOs, are completing counts at the other
41 sites further south.

42
43 So the total count of brant from all
44 those sites combined from Alaska to Mexico is compared
45 to a population objective each year. Based on those
46 counts changes in regulations are proposed for fall and
47 winter harvest in each state and province. Those
48 proposed regulation changes affect the fall/winter
49 harvest.

50

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1 The second survey that we completed
2 this year was the Alaska portion of the North American
3 Waterfowl Breeding and Population and Habitat Survey.
4 A big mouthful of a survey name. This survey has been
5 completed every year across the U.S. and Canada since
6 the 1950s except for 2020 and 2021.

7
8 Survey results are used to develop
9 recommendations for fall and winter hunting of ducks.
10 Our office is responsible for completing survey
11 transect lines within the major duck production areas
12 of Alaska. The survey was cancelled entirely in 2020,
13 but this year the Alaska portion was completed.
14 Because Canada did not grant access to aerial survey
15 crews the survey was cancelled east of the state of
16 Alaska.

17
18 Next we completed the Copper River
19 Delta Breeding Pair Survey. This one is specifically
20 designed to monitor the size of the Dusky Canada goose
21 population. Dusksies are a subspecies of Canada goose
22 that breed exclusively in Southcentral Alaska and have
23 a restricted winter range. The size of this Dusky
24 population is among the smallest of all hunted goose
25 populations in North America. This takes about two
26 days. It's conducted in mid May and we're based out of
27 Cordova during that time.

28
29 Following that we completed the
30 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Coastal Zone Survey. This survey
31 is specifically designed for monitoring White-fronted
32 geese, Cackling geese, Emperor geese and Spectacled
33 eiders. That survey is conducted on the Yukon Delta
34 breeding grounds.

35
36 Immediately after completing that we
37 conducted our annual photographic survey of five major
38 brant colonies on the Yukon Delta. There we fly higher
39 and we let the cameras do the counting. This technique
40 is useful for species that are highly concentrated
41 during summer within breeding colonies.

42
43 Okay, so for some results. First the
44 Midwinter Brant Survey. Numbers of brant counted
45 during the midwinter survey from Alaska to Mexico are
46 varied each year, but generally have remained above
47 122,000. According to the Brant Management Plan this
48 population level is sufficient to allow moderate to
49 liberal hunting regulations in fall and winter each
50

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1 year. However, the coastal states for brant overwinter
2 generally allow few brant to be harvested. Currently,
3 the largest harvest of brant occurs in Alaska during
4 spring and summer.

5

6 So the midwinter counts are looking
7 pretty good. While that overall Pacific population has
8 remained fairly consistent, our photographic survey of
9 brant nests within the five major colonies on the Yukon
10 Delta, which is this figure on the right here, that
11 certainly suggests the nesting distribution is changing
12 and the surveys in northern Alaska indicate more brant
13 actually occur there than previously.

14

15 So it's possible that the nesting
16 population of brant are also increasing in Arctic
17 Russia and in Canada though we don't have good survey
18 information from those areas. So it's kind of a mixed
19 bag. Numbers of brant on the Yukon Delta appear to be
20 declining in those major colonies, but overall the
21 whole Pacific population is relatively stable and above
22 objective.

23

24 Now back in Southcentral Alaska on the
25 Copper River Delta the estimate of Dusky Canada geese
26 in 2021 was close to the long-term average. The
27 Pacific Flyway Management Plan for Dusky Canada geese
28 calls for restrictive regulations in fall and winter in
29 the event that the population index drops below 7,500
30 geese.

31

32 Currently harvest is closed for Duskie
33 in their primary wintering areas in southwest
34 Washington and northwest Oregon. Concern for this
35 species has really ramped up following the 1964
36 earthquake when their primary breeding grounds were
37 uplifted, which resulted in water bodies draining and
38 increases in shrubby vegetation and trees.

39

40 A decrease in population size was seen
41 in the mid 1980s when the survey was started through
42 roughly 2010, after which time harvest restrictions
43 were instituted on the wintering grounds including that
44 total closure of Duskie in their primary winter
45 habitat.

46

47 Dave presented some of this information
48 already. So these figures show the estimates of
49 Dabbling ducks, three species of Dabbling ducks, just
50

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1 in the Alaska strata of the North American breeding
2 survey. Pintails and mallards and widgeon are
3 presented here.

4
5 Counts of pintail are highly variable
6 among years because in Alaska we see more pintails in
7 years when there's dry conditions in the Prairie
8 Pothole Region of Canada. In those years pintails
9 often overfly the prairies and they come straight to
10 Alaska when nesting conditions are excellent in that
11 portion of Canada pintails often stay there and breed
12 there. So numbers can be quite variable from year to
13 year in Alaska.

14
15 Overall though the counts are
16 relatively close to their long-term mean. Mallards
17 too. We saw over the long term from the '60s through
18 the mid-2000's numbers were fairly high, followed by
19 some declines, but recent numbers have been encouraging
20 in 2021 and 2020. The numbers appear to be increasing
21 again.

22
23 Similarly with widgeon we saw long-term
24 increase from the '60s through the 2000's and now
25 numbers have dropped a bit, but still above the
26 long-term mean.

27
28 Okay. Now back out west to the Yukon
29 Delta breeding areas. Pacific White-fronted goose
30 estimates come from surveys both in Bristol Bay and the
31 Yukon Delta. Their numbers of White-fronts increased
32 dramatically from their lows in the mid-1980s. The
33 growth level has kind of leveled off in the last 10
34 years. Most recently some signs of a drop off.

35
36 However, this population really remains
37 well above the population objective. The success of
38 this goose is due to the combination of the harvest
39 restrictions that went into place in the 1980s, but
40 also an increase in wintering habitat for them, namely
41 agricultural lands where these geese take advantage of
42 rice fields specifically.

43
44 Now we were just talking quite a bit
45 about Minima Cackling geese or Cacklers. The
46 population increased from the 1980s through the 2000s
47 similar to White-fronts, but around 2000 population
48 stabilized and it's kind of hovered around that
49 population objective of 250,000.
50

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1 The last three years in a row the
2 counts have been below objective and it's prompted the
3 states of Alaska, Washington and Oregon to propose
4 reduced bag limits to the fall/winter hunt starting
5 next year. So while the actions of the flyway don't
6 affect the spring/summer harvest, the AMBCC might
7 consider whether conservation measures are needed now
8 to bolster the size of the Cackler population. We were
9 just talking about that a little bit.

10
11 As Dave pointed out, in 2016 the AMBCC
12 removed the restriction of Cackler egg harvest and also
13 reduced the mid-season closure from 45 days to 30 days.
14 One possibility would be to reconsider that.

15
16 The actions of the states may be
17 sufficient to bring this population right back up into
18 the 250,000 population objective and that would be
19 great. Most of the harvest of Cacklers is in the
20 winter, but eggging occurs here in Alaska and a fair
21 amount of harvest does as well.

22
23 Okay. Moving on. Emperor geese.
24 We've talked about Emperor geese quite a bit today.
25 Like Cacklers, the estimate of Emperors comes from
26 surveys of breeding birds on the Yukon Delta. The
27 survey is conducted there in late May after Emperors
28 have completed their northern migration through the
29 Aleutians and Bristol Bay.

30
31 So the good news on Emperors is that
32 over the long term the population has increased slowly
33 and it ultimately allowed for an opening of harvest in
34 2017. I don't want to belabor this, but there's three
35 different harvest strategies here. When the population
36 is above 28,000, there's a customary and traditional
37 harvest.

38
39 That customary and traditional harvest
40 can continue through this yellow zone, but during that
41 time the AMBCC can consider conservation measures that
42 are not specified, but are crafted by the partners that
43 would be effective for specific regions. If the
44 population enters into that red zone, which is below
45 23,000, then all harvest, both winter and spring and
46 summer, is closed.

47
48 So in 2019 the regions worked with
49 ADF&G and Fish and Wildlife to increase outreach
50

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1 education efforts. We saw a lot of -- the outcome of
2 that in Tamara's presentation which really reflects the
3 efforts of many partners that are on the call today and
4 it really paid off I think.

5

6 In 2020 the AMBCC also voted to
7 institute a closure of Emperor goose egg harvest. So
8 now we're in 2021. As you can see, the count this year
9 was still in the yellow zone. It's getting quite close
10 to the closure threshold, but we're not there yet.

11

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The western population of Tundra swan.
Tundra swans are doing quite well. This population is
monitored with a combination of counts from Bristol
Bay, Yukon Delta, Seward Peninsula and Kotzebue Sound.
The western population of Tundra swans has remained
consistently above the objective of 60,000 birds.

Lastly, I just wanted to touch briefly
on Spectacled eiders. This is a figure showing the
annual estimates of Spectacled eiders on the
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Coastal Zone. It's right on the
coast where the western population of Spectacled eiders
breeds.

So Spectacled eiders have been listed
under the Endangered Species Act as threatened since
1993. They were originally proposed for listing
following an estimated 90 percent decline from the '70s
to the '90s. So we've counted Spectacled eiders on the
coast since 1988. The good news is that on average
eiders have increased substantially since that time.
Growth slowed about a decade ago.

In 2021 we had the lowest count in
nearly three decades and we really have no clear
explanation for this result. We were unable to verify
our aerial estimate with our traditional ground-based
nesting Spectacled eider survey. Because of Covid it

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1 was cancelled. That ground survey was cancelled last
2 year and this year.

3
4 However, this low count was
5 corroborated by crews on the Yukon Delta National
6 Wildlife Refuge that had a ground-based crew at Kigigak
7 Island. It also reported very low numbers of
8 Spectacled eider sightings this summer. So we'll be
9 watching this population very closely.

10
11 If funding is available next year,
12 we'll implement a revised ground-based nest survey on
13 the Yukon Delta using a distant sampling method. This
14 method would provide a detection corrected estimate of
15 eider nests on the Yukon Delta. It would really help us
16 understand these changes that we see in the aerial
17 estimate.

18
19 Okay. So just wrapping up here. After
20 two field seasons of a pandemic we're eager to return
21 to a more predictable schedule next year. The exact
22 projects we do will depend on funding to our office,
23 regional and national priorities and of course the
24 status of the pandemic.

25
26 Next year we hope to reinstitute our
27 breeding pair surveys on the Arctic Coastal Plain after
28 two years of cancellations. We hope to implement a new
29 ground-based method of measuring density of geese and
30 eiders on the Yukon Delta.

31
32 Third, we plan to continue to develop
33 methods to estimate aerial detection rates using
34 photography in order to increase accuracy and precision
35 over estimates.

36
37 So that's all I've got for today. I'd
38 be happy to take any questions about anything I've
39 presented today.

40
41 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Julian.
42 Brandon, you've had your hand up. Go ahead.

43
44 MR. AHMASUK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
45 Julian, I'm just wondering on the Spectacled eider
46 there's these years where -- so this year and a few
47 years ago the extremely low counts. I'm wondering if
48 there's any relation to the ice extent. For our
49 region, I think for this last winter I think we did
50

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1 have a little bit larger sea ice extent. The ice
2 reports I think, especially like from St. Lawrence
3 Island, they were getting ice earlier than what was the
4 norm, the new norm I guess. Anyway, that's just the
5 question, I guess. I'm wondering if it's weather
6 related, snow related, climate related, the reason for
7 these lower than normal counts.

8

9 MR. FISCHER: That's an excellent
10 question, Brandon. So as you know the entire world
11 population of Spectacled eiders spends its winter in
12 your neighborhood in openings in the sea ice off of St.
13 Lawrence. So the question is great because there have
14 been studies on the survival rate of Spectacled eiders
15 and the survival rate appears to be linked to sea ice
16 extent, but the relationship is complex.

17

18 In years where there's extremely thick
19 ice and very few openings, the survival rate appears to
20 be lower from year to year. We don't have enough
21 information about the survival rates in years where
22 there's very, very little ice, but it is possible that
23 these birds experience a completely different winter
24 habitat when there's no ice to rest on. There's no
25 staging platform for them to feed from.

26

27 So there were aerial surveys done in
28 winter a year ago just prior to the pandemic hitting
29 where our traditional method of doing that winter
30 survey, that aerial survey was compromised because the
31 birds were not concentrated. So in such years the
32 birds may be spending their winter in entirely new
33 places. Dan Rizzolo has presented on this before to
34 the Council.

35

36 So after last year I was pretty
37 concerned when I saw that low count on the Yukon Delta
38 and I heard that the Yukon Delta Refuge was seeing a
39 few Spectacled eiders because we just don't know what
40 the impacts could be of that ice extent. In a changing
41 environment out there we might see more and more of
42 these radically different counts from one year to the
43 next.

44

45 There's not a very clear signal from
46 the Yukon Delta Breeding Pair Survey counts and ice
47 extent from year to year, but I think it definitely
48 calls for a greater look.

49

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1 MR. AHMASUK: If you could back up to
2 that Spectacled eider, the population estimate. I'd
3 have to check with the National Weather Service, maybe
4 even Austin might have that information. This year the
5 sea ice extent was a little farther south than it was
6 up until like 2016. I seem to recall that number.

7
8 In between the 2016 and 2021 the sea
9 ice extent was farther north. Then we had that long
10 period -- I mean I just seem to remember this is kind
11 of how it played out for our region. What is this 2003
12 or something. In between 2003 or whatever that is to
13 2016 sea ice extent going farther north. It just seems
14 related to me. Anyway, I just thought I'd ask.
15 Thanks.

16
17 MR. FISCHER: Sure. Yeah.

18
19 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Other questions for
20 Julian.

21
22 (No comments)

23
24 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Hearing
25 none. Julian, thank you for your presentation. Patty,
26 could you throw the agenda up for everyone so we could
27 look at where we're at. I think we have three
28 significant topics to address, so I don't think we can
29 squeeze them in even if we were willing to stay a
30 little bit later today.

31
32 We have Rob Calor from the Seabird
33 Program in my office that has a seabird die-off update
34 and then the AMBCC budget by Will Lacy and then other
35 business. So my recommendation would be to call it a
36 day and pick it up tomorrow morning at 8:30 because I
37 would like plenty of time for folks to interact with
38 Rob and Liz and Cathy over the seabird die-off.

39
40 There's been lots of information coming
41 rapidly and some pretty important information came out
42 very recently, so I don't want to rush through that. I
43 think there's always questions for Will relative to the
44 budget. Then we're going to five-year contract plenty
45 of time for that. Does that sound reasonable to call
46 it a day and then pick it up again at 8:30?

47
48 MR. HARRIS: Yes.

49
50

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1 MR. AHMASUK: Sounds good to me.

2

3

4 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Thanks,
5 Brandon. Thanks, Cyrus. Thanks, everyone. It's been
6 a great day. It's been a very productive meeting. We
7 will see you tomorrow. We got a note from Jennifer.
8 Sorry, Jennifer, that you won't be here, but we'll make
9 sure the meeting is recorded and that you get the
10 information.

10

11

12 Again, thanks everyone for a great day.
13 Have a good evening. Be safe. We'll see you in the
14 morning.

14

15

(Off record)

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(PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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STATE OF ALASKA)

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