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ALASKA MIGRATORY BIRD CO-MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FALL MEETING - ZOOM

SEPTEMBER 22, 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
Priscilla Evans, Chugach Regional Resources Commission
Brandon Ahmasuk, Kawerak
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 - 9/22/2021)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Good morning, everyone. It's 8:33. I'm Eric Taylor with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It's the second day of the meeting of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council. Good morning and welcome.

Patty, if we could do a roll call this morning to make sure we have a quorum, that would be great.

MS. SCHWALENBERG: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Here.

MS. SCHWALENBERG: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

MR. SCOTT: Here.

MS. SCHWALENBERG: Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association. I don't think they're online yet.

Association of Village Council Presidents. I don't think Jennifer will be able to join us today due to their convention.

Bristol Bay Native Association.

MS. HOSETH: Here.

MS. SCHWALENBERG: Chugach Regional Resources Commission.

MS. EVANS: Good morning. Here.

MS. SCHWALENBERG: Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission.

MS. STICKWAN: Here.

MS. SCHWALENBERG: Kawerak. Is Brandon

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1 or Jack on?

2

3 MR. AHMASUK: Here, Patty. This is
4 Brandon and Jack is here in my office as well.

5

6 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Oh, yeah. Hi, Jack.

7

8 MR. FAGERSTROM: Good morning.

9

10 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Maniilaq.

11

12 MR. HARRIS: Here.

13

14 MS. SCHWALENBERG: North Slope Borough.
15 I don't think Taqulik is on yet.

16

17 Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak.

18

19 MS. SCHWALENBERG: I'm here.

20

21 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Hi, Coral. And the
22 Tanana Chiefs Conference. Randy.

23

24 MR. MAYO: Here.

25

26 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Oh, there you are.
27 Okay, Mr. Chairman, we do continue to have a quorum.

28

29 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Patty.
30 Welcome everyone. Patty, if we could jump to our
31 agenda, I think our first item is new business and I
32 believe it's on the seabird die-off. We can kind of go
33 through the agenda and see what we have today.

34

35 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Then we have John
36 Pierce after the die-off that we don't have written on
37 the agenda.

38

39 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. All right. I
40 think Julian is checking in to see if John can make it
41 or not.

42

43 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yeah, I sent him an
44 email, but I haven't heard back yet.

45

46 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: So let's see. Under
47 item number 13, item C, the 2020-2021 seabird die-off,
48 Robb Kaler from the Fish and Wildlife Service,
49 Migratory Bird Management Program. I believe Liz

50

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1 Labunski, also a biologist at our Migratory Bird
2 Seabird Program, will give that presentation.

3
4 Next, item B, will be an update on the
5 AMBCC budget process, the statement of work and the
6 five-year grant that will be coming up. Status of
7 funds, Will Lacy from Fish and Wildlife Service MBM
8 office will provide that.

9
10 We'll jump to other business if there
11 is any. Invitation for public comments. Council and
12 Staff comments. Then I will transfer the gavel to
13 Gayla at the end of the meeting.

14
15 So next is Robb Kaler and Liz Labunski.
16 Robb.

17
18 MR. KALER: Good morning, everybody. I
19 am going to work on my -- it's here, okay. Yeah, good
20 morning, everybody. Thank you so much for providing an
21 opportunity for the mig birds seabirds section to
22 provide an update. I'll focus on seabird die-offs, but
23 we'll also just provide kind of a broad overview of
24 some of the work we've been doing this past year.

25
26 This slide has all the co-authors and I
27 am missing a few people from USGS Alaska Science
28 Center. Caroline Van Hemert, Matt Smith and Sarah
29 Schoen have been working on harmful algal bloom
30 biotoxins, food webs. I've invited Sarah in case there
31 are any questions on the harmful algal bloom piece.

32
33 As you see on this slide there's a lot
34 of names and there's a lot of logos. This is really an
35 effort that requires everybody to help out. Me and Liz
36 and Kathy really just kind of serve as a go-between
37 getting information especially during the Covid period
38 where travel is locked down. So we really rely on all
39 our partners. As we mentioned yesterday, Brandon and
40 Austin and Gay have just been outstanding partners for
41 us getting reports from the Bering Strait Region, but
42 it really requires everybody to help. So thanks.

43
44 This is a summary slide. I think
45 you've seen this before. It's provided by COASST.
46 They summarize all the reports of carcasses, birds that
47 get beached and washed up on shore. Somebody, either
48 an agency person or a community member, counts that
49 bird and sends that report either to a local hub, which
50

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1 we're using some of the AMBCC regional reps as points
2 of contact. Then it's kind of a small miracle whenever
3 they make it to us in Anchorage.

4

5 So working with COASST the size of the
6 circles here indicates the size or the number of
7 carcasses that were counted. They're color-coded to
8 show you that beginning in May we got four counts of
9 murrets from Austin up in the Bering Strait region and
10 then the color is going down June, July, August and
11 September. Then that N to the side of the month that's
12 the number of carcasses or approximate number of
13 carcasses.

14

15 The National Park Service has also been
16 contributing doing aerial surveys for their Bering Land
17 Bridge and Cape Krusenstern Monuments. So you'll see
18 one of the circles up in the Bering has dashed lines
19 around it and that's indicating -- it's a big circle,
20 so it suggests that there was a major die-off up there,
21 but also be aware that it's largely effort has
22 increased why we see such a large dot there. Not to
23 say that there'd be those size dots everywhere, but
24 that's one reason why that dot is big. We've tried to
25 indicate that using that dashed line.

26

27 As you see the die-off itself, the
28 magnitude, we're about 2,200 carcasses that have been
29 counted and reported. Well, 2,100, almost 2,200. Then
30 I've broken down on the side there about 1,750 are from
31 the Bering Strait, 270 from the Aleutians and then 60
32 from the Gulf of Alaska. I'll talk a little bit more
33 specifically about the Gulf of Alaska at Middleton
34 Island.

35

36 As we were talking yesterday, we used
37 the terms water birds and marine birds and seabirds. I
38 guess I just generally think of them as water birds.
39 Anything that's living within the near coast or
40 offshore, you know, that's what we're trying to keep
41 track of in the seabird section. That includes loons.
42 The shearwaters actually breed in Australia. They come
43 up to our waters during the summer because of the great
44 production of our waters. Cormorants, gulls and
45 kittiwakes. A lot of the larger dots that you see on
46 the map are shearwaters and they are one of our most
47 abundant birds during summer in Alaska.

48

49 So working with partners like Gay,

50

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1 Austin and Brandon and others getting carcasses that
2 are relatively fresh submitted to the USGS National
3 Wildlife Health Center in Madison requires quite a bit
4 of logistical work and we're really grateful to
5 everybody who worked so hard. We want to make sure
6 that if you do collect carcasses that you're putting
7 those in a biological freezer and not in with your food
8 freezer. That's an added logistical twist.

9
10 Currently from the Bering Strait we've
11 been able to get 12 carcasses submitted to the USGS
12 National Wildlife Health Center. Cause of death based
13 on their gross necropsy where they examine the body is
14 emaciation due to starvation. So they're in poor
15 physical condition, very little body fat on them. They
16 also test all the birds for avian influenza because, of
17 course, we want to ensure this is not a disease event.
18 If it is a disease event that we can respond quickly
19 and accordingly. Then right now biotoxins.

20
21 So the carcass is sent to Madison.
22 They do the necropsy and disease testing and then they
23 collect tissues from the gastrointestinal tract, the
24 stomach and any contents in the stomach, then they send
25 that back to Anchorage. So folks at the USGS Alaska
26 Science Center are looking at presence of saxitoxin and
27 domoic acid, the two main biotoxins associated with
28 harmful algal blooms in Alaska.

29
30 So those results from the Bering Strait
31 are pending. We're getting those tissues sent back to
32 Anchorage. Caroline Van Hemert and Matt Smith are
33 working those up in their lab here in Anchorage.

34
35 Additionally in late July we had a
36 die-off of what has been estimated to be about 400
37 kittiwakes and gulls. We were able to get those
38 carcasses quickly. Many thanks to partners of the
39 university which includes McGill University out of
40 Canada as well as University of Alaska Fairbanks and
41 University of Alaska Anchorage.

42
43 Those birds were in poor nutritional
44 condition, poor to fair. They were tested for avian
45 influenza because of the behavior of the birds. They
46 had drooping heads and basically lost complete
47 respiratory abilities 24 to 48 hours after they had
48 been seen acting sick. So we knew something was askew,
49 not right, something was off. So testing for avian
50

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1 influenza proved to be negative.

2

3

4 After other possibilities cause of
5 death had been eliminated or reduced, they looked at
6 avian botulism. To do an avian botulism test the
7 carcass has to be very, very fresh. It requires some
8 blood. I won't go into too much of the details of how
9 you do a botulism test, but it requires live mice, a
10 laboratory setting and an Animal Carrying Use Committee
11 approval process. So it's not easy. They were able to
12 take two of the kittiwake carcasses and they did test
13 positive for avian botulism type C, which represents
14 the first case of avian botulism in Alaska.

14

15 Just to emphasize avian botulism type C
16 does not affect humans. All the same, and I'm sure
17 everybody on this meeting knows to be sure to cook your
18 wild game to 165 degrees Fahrenheit internal
19 temperature. That will kill botulism. Again, this
20 avian type C botulism is not known to affect humans.

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1 So again this was a lot of work from a
2 lot of researchers at University of Alaska Fairbanks,
3 University of Alaska Anchorage and McGill. So we're
4 grateful to them. Then USGS also providing great
5 support.

6
7 The avian botulism type C requires very
8 specific environmental conditions to become toxic and
9 get into the food web. The figure on the right shows
10 kind of what they're calling a carcass mega cycle. You
11 see that ideally the temperatures -- and I think that's
12 one reason why we haven't seen it in Alaska -- ideal
13 temperatures for avian botulism type C is around 60 to
14 92 degrees Fahrenheit. Generally we don't sustain
15 those temperatures for very long in Alaska, so that
16 might be one climate change factor influencing why
17 we're now having our first case of avian botulism.

18
19 You see that the maggots are part of
20 this feeding web. So if the maggots are feeding on a
21 decaying bird and then another bird comes and eats
22 those maggots, you'll see -- and so it's kind of this
23 positive feedback loop. So this cycle kind of feeds on
24 itself and at a certain point there's non more birds to
25 be affected so the event typically dies.

26
27 In the Lower 48 waterfowl die-offs are
28 very common due to avian botulism type C. So a lot of
29 management is done on water levels as well as when they
30 do see an event and start disposing of the carcasses
31 immediately.

32
33 At the bottom of this slide Alaska
34 Department of Fish and Game have provided some
35 additional frequently asked questions and answers as
36 well as kind of a very quick summary of avian botulism.
37 So if people are interested in learning more, that's
38 also a great resource.

39
40 So outside of actually the die-offs
41 something more fun to talk about are live birds. We've
42 been working with many partners on Aleutian terns,
43 which I know is a relevant topic to this group.
44 Aleutian terns we've gotten some funds from the
45 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and then working
46 with our partners at Fish and Game, the USDA Forest
47 Service we were able to do an aerial survey on the
48 Bristol Bay.

49
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1 We had great partnership from our
2 Refuge partners at Alaska Peninsula Becharof as well as
3 Cold Bay and also with our Mig Birds staff, Heather
4 Wilson, Michael Swaim, Erik Osnas helped kind of review
5 our aerial survey protocol. The idea is to locate the
6 tern colonies from the air and then actually get on the
7 ground and do a ground count. So there's a lot of
8 thought that's been put into this over the last couple
9 of years.

10

11 Unfortunately getting on the ground in
12 some of these areas is not easy because, for example,
13 there might be -- it's only 10-foot-wide slough, but
14 you still need some kind of watercraft to get up the
15 slough to where the terns are.

16

17 This slide shows the number of Aleutian
18 terns, Arctic terns, which are difficult to distinguish
19 between Aleutians and Arctics very easily and then are
20 unknown. We're going to hopefully get another
21 additional year of funding from the National Fish and
22 Wildlife Foundation and may go back to Bristol Bay.
23 This was a pilot study this year, so this coming year
24 2022 in June do another survey of terns and then expand
25 that out to a statewide colony census.

26

27 More live birds on the right side.
28 This is with funding from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill
29 Trustees Council. In the early 2010s, around 2014 to
30 2018, mink were removed from the Naked Island group in
31 the center of Prince William Sound.

32

33 Naked Island used to be the core of the
34 population of Pigeon guillemots in Prince William
35 Sound, but over the years following the oil spill and
36 then the introduction of non-native mink the
37 populations, both Pigeon guillemots as well as Parakeet
38 auklets, Tufted puffins and even Arctic terns, the mink
39 just annihilated the populations.

40

41 The figure on the right shows -- and
42 the gray is showing you the number of minks, so we
43 worked with the USDA APHIS Office to trap and remove
44 mink from breeding areas. Then you see the count in
45 blue showing the population increase, the total number
46 of guillemots increasing over the years from 2012 to
47 2021 continues an upward increase.

48

49 Then we also look at the Control

50

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1 Islands. So these are islands in Prince William Sound
2 that never had mink present and that's kind of a way to
3 show population changes compared to our management of
4 removal of mink from Naked Island group. The orange
5 represents five islands that never had mink that we go
6 and count at the same time we count the Naked Island
7 group.

8
9 So all in all a great recovery story
10 there. Liz, do you want to take the offshore surveys?

11
12 MS. LABUNSKI: Sure. Thanks, Robb. I
13 just want to talk about the figure we have here on the
14 left. This figure shows the red track lines on the map
15 show where all the offshore surveys were conducted this
16 year starting -- I believe our first survey was end of
17 April and we actually have somebody out on the water
18 right now in the Gulf of Alaska. So in 2021 we were
19 able to conduct seven offshore surveys on a variety of
20 oceanographic research vessels. The U.S. Fish and
21 Wildlife boat the Tiglax and also some NOAA fishery
22 cruises.

23
24 During that time we were able to survey
25 offshore approximately 14,100 kilometers during the
26 field season. During that time our observers are
27 collecting data on all marine birds and also marine
28 mammals that we encounter while we're at sea. During
29 this time period relative to the bird die-off we did
30 record seven dead birds that we observed floating on
31 the ocean. The species that we encountered were mostly
32 shearwaters. We had an unidentified gull and many
33 unidentified birds because it is very challenging to
34 detect like a football-sized bird on the ocean from a
35 great distance.

36
37 But I wanted to show you the amount of
38 effort that we had -- we conducted surveys from the far
39 Aleutians, from Buldir, all the way to Southeast Alaska
40 to St. Lazaria and all the way up to Utqiagvik.

41
42 I just want to mention last year in
43 2020 Covid really limited many of the field operations
44 that Fish and Wildlife Service was able to conduct, but
45 this year Alaska Maritime Refuge was able to
46 successfully put out field camps in the Aleutians,
47 Southeast Alaska and other parts of the Gulf of Alaska
48 to do seabird monitoring. My understanding is many of
49 those field crews have just recently returned, so we're
50

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1 compiling the data just to gauge the productivity of
2 the birds at the seabird colonies.

3

4 Next slide, please. We also wanted to
5 let people know about this new project the Fish and
6 Wildlife Service is working with in cooperation with
7 Alaska Conservation Foundation and other folks like
8 NOAA who are looking at offshore vessel traffic using
9 AIS, which is Automatic Identification System
10 Information. So when vessels are at sea they broadcast
11 a signal identifying who they are, what type of vessel
12 class they are and how fast they're traveling. So we
13 were able to purchase information relative to vessel
14 traffic in this area that you can see on the map
15 highlighted by the polygon.

16

17 So we're in the initial phases looking
18 to map out vessel traffic, seeing what areas, where
19 ships are coming potentially close to shore, close to
20 important national resources. Our ultimate goal is to
21 be able to mitigate vessel traffic relative to
22 important natural resources. We're in the initial
23 phases of that right now.

24

25 The Bering Strait Region is an area
26 that we're very interested in. As folks know, this
27 area has seen a lot of increase of shipping traffic in
28 recent years. In addition, fisheries are moving
29 further north as the ice recedes and fish stocks are
30 traveling north. So this is an ongoing project that
31 we're going to be working with and we can keep folks
32 updated.

33

34 I think that might be the last slide,
35 Robb, is that right? Thank you.

36

37 MR. KALER: Yeah, maybe I'll just add
38 two more comments. I was going to see if Sarah Schoen
39 from the USGS Alaska Science Center is able to join. I
40 don't see her on the participant list. For harmful
41 algal blooms USGS is investigating many different
42 angles of harmful algal blooms. What we don't know is
43 how harmful algal bloom, the biotoxin, saxitoxin,
44 domoic acid, actually affect the bird. So we have a
45 better idea of shellfish, exposure to humans, but not
46 so much how biotoxins affect the birds.

47

48 They do appear to be -- if they do have
49 biotoxins, saxitoxins specifically, it is a very low
50

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1 level, but that might even be enough to make that bird
2 very sick for 24 hours, get dehydrated and then if they
3 have another tainted meal, another exposure to
4 saxitoxin, and then of course a storm comes in, that's
5 what really pushes them over the edge. So those are
6 some of the things that the USGS Alaska Science Center
7 are looking into now. Kind of the research angle.

8
9 Then we've also reached out to our
10 colleagues in Russia inquiring about what types of
11 die-offs or what they're seeing in the marine
12 environment. We haven't gotten a lot of information
13 back, but we continue to ask. There is a sensitivity
14 about making your country look bad, so we're being
15 aware of that and just trying to have general
16 information. So if anybody on this call has contacts
17 in Russia that might be able to provide just general
18 information on whether they're seeing die-offs of
19 marine birds or marine mammals or red tides, that type
20 of thing, that would be very helpful.

21
22 Thanks. I see Brandon has his hand up.

23
24 MR. AHMASUK: Thanks, Robb and Liz for
25 the presentation. The question I had, Liz, you
26 mentioned that they were doing the colony surveys. I
27 think that was Kathy, I believe. Maybe I'm incorrect.
28 I think I heard they're still collaborating or still
29 collecting the information on the colonies themselves.

30
31 MS. LABUNSKI: Right. My understanding
32 is they had -- so this is the colony work that is being
33 conducted by Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
34 based in Homer. So they have long-term monitoring
35 sites that they've been looking at. The site
36 specifically I think that went out this year were out
37 in Buldir out in the Aleutians. I think they also had
38 a group of folks in the Gulf of Alaska and also St.
39 Lazaria in Southeast Alaska.

40
41 I just wanted to mention that last year
42 all the field work was cancelled because of Covid and
43 this year they were able to put out a few camps, but my
44 understanding is the amount of camps that went out this
45 year was still smaller than they had last summer. Oh,
46 I'm sorry. They also did have a short-term camp out at
47 St. Matthew Island in the Bering Sea.

48
49 MR. AHMASUK: Okay. It will be
50

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1 interesting to see that report when it comes out.
2 Earlier this spring I did report to Gay, I though I
3 included Eric. I can't remember if I included Robb or
4 Kathy.

5

6 MR. KALER: You did.

7

8 MR. AHMASUK: But just my observation
9 of Sledge Island just west of Nome here, just my guess,
10 but it was about 80-90 percent of the murrees were gone.
11 It was so obvious. The cliffs just looked like a
12 seagull colony. It was that bad. Obviously it was a
13 little too early. We didn't get any eggs. There
14 wasn't enough murrees out there to want to try and get
15 any murre eggs anyway. I haven't heard any other
16 reports about egg harvest in our region. I'm assuming
17 it's the same. They're reporting across the board
18 seabird die-off.

19

20 This year in particular Savoonga,
21 Gambell, they're talking about the auklets dying off
22 now. The young auklets very skinny, hardly any energy.
23 They harvest them for food so they cut them open and
24 just do a quick visual inspection, but several of the
25 auklets that he opened up he reported that they were
26 eating the wrong kind of krill.

27

28 Anyway, I just wanted to relay that
29 report from Sledge Island this spring, but also the
30 report from St. Lawrence Island. Thank you.

31

32 MR. KALER: Brandon, if I can just
33 respond. I see Kathy too. Yeah, we got that report
34 and thank you. I think that's the second or third year
35 that you and Austin have reported that kind of
36 observation from Sledge Island. Yeah, we should put
37 one of the Fish and Wildlife Service tribal grants
38 together and maybe get some monitoring out there as
39 well as Little Diomedetoo. Yeah, very much appreciate
40 those reports, Brandon.

41

42 MS. LABUNSKI: I just want to follow
43 up, Brandon, and just to let you know also some of
44 these oceanographic research cruises that we go out on
45 they're also collecting prey data. So they're looking
46 at the zooplankton, they're looking at the fish. So as
47 this field season winds down and get some preliminary
48 data in from our colleagues that are on these cruises
49 we should have an idea as to the food distribution and
50

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1 to see perhaps there's more dominant zooplankton
2 species that the auklets might be feeding on. As we
3 find that out we'll be happy to share that information
4 as we go along.

5
6 MS. KULETZ: I just wanted to add also,
7 Brandon, the kind of reports that you gave, which are
8 valuable for instance the Sledge Island observations of
9 Auklets on St. Lawrence and the Diomedes and such.
10 Those are the kinds of observations that could also be
11 added into the NOAH ecosystem report, status report,
12 which they put together. They have a whole section on
13 the Bering Sea and often they have included
14 information. Sometimes they have a special section
15 just for the Arctic/Bering Strait region in the
16 Chukchi.

17
18 So we'd like to be sure those
19 observations get included and that ecosystem status
20 report they do now try to integrate information from
21 areas that are not regularly monitored but come from
22 local observations. So I could help put you in contact
23 with -- you know, they need to have specific people
24 that provide these kinds of observations. They need
25 the name, exactly what they saw. They don't want to
26 hear it from me necessarily, but I could certainly help
27 facilitate that report together.

28
29 MR. AHMASUK: Okay. I'm trying to
30 remember this last spring the seabird die-off flyer
31 that Robb sent out. Kawerak does have
32 representative on the Ecosystem Committee. I did share
33 that flyer with her. Hopefully she's able to share the
34 information at the Ecosystem Committee level. However,
35 I didn't share my observation of Sledge Island with
36 that individual. I could and I will after this meeting
37 to at least get it shared at that level. Thank you.

38
39 MS. KULETZ: Yeah, that would be great.
40 Thanks, Brandon.

41
42 MR. KALER: One quick question,
43 Brandon. Does anybody go to Bluff, the colonies at
44 Bluff?

45
46 MR. AHMASUK: Okay, hold on. I'm going
47 to turn my laptop to the gentleman that goes there.
48 He's right there.

49
50

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1 MR. KALER: All right. We're curious
2 to hear what's going on there. It used to be a
3 monitoring site. Not every year like the ones that
4 Alaska Maritime does, but we're not getting much
5 information from Bluff either. So input on Bluff would
6 be really helpful as well as Sledge.

7
8 MR. FAGERSTROM: Bluff, there were some
9 people from Elim that went over there. Also some
10 people from Shaktoolik. The Shaktoolik people hardly
11 got any. As far as the numbers go, they said there was
12 less, a whole bunch less or just less. There was
13 fewer.

14
15 Something to me that was pretty
16 interesting. I live in Golovin. We have a bay and a
17 lagoon and we get cormorants that are out by Rocky
18 Point and Cape Darby and they would only come into the
19 bay and lagoon during really high storm surges or fall
20 storms, but they've been in the bay all summer. I mean
21 like flocks of them. We'd never seen that before, so
22 what's going on in the ocean. They're probably eating
23 tom cods. They've got to come in the bay to find
24 something to eat and they've been there all summer.

25
26 But people got enough eggs from Bluff.
27 That's a pretty important resource for us and it would
28 be good to get that monitored also.

29
30 MR. KALER: Thank you.

31
32 MS. KULETZ: Anyway, I would just add
33 thanks, it was interesting because we do see in the
34 Gulf of Alaska when we've had some long-term data the
35 more near-shore birds, like cormorants and murre, do
36 tend to move even further inshore during times of
37 stress. It seems like just before they have a die-off
38 often. They're not able to find food or perhaps they
39 can't forage in stormy conditions, but there's a
40 general shift inshore during periods preceding die-offs
41 often.

42
43 MR. AHMASUK: One thing I wanted to add
44 to Jack's, he was talking about some of those seabirds
45 are in the bay, this last summer also on our trip out
46 to Sledge Island on our way back we were within 100-ish
47 yards of the shore, the mainland murre were swimming
48 where the waves break. Normally we don't see that
49 here. Usually they're about a mile out from the
50

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1 mainland if not more. I didn't quite catch who was
2 talking, if it was Kathy or Liz, but they're trying to
3 find food. They're trying to go to other places to
4 find food, right next to the shore, very shallow.

5
6 Anyway, just something that we've never
7 noticed before. Anyway, thanks.

8
9 MS. KULETZ: Brandon, that is
10 consistent with what we see in the Gulf of Alaska
11 during periods of apparent stress on the birds and
12 often preceding a die-off event.

13
14 Also at this time the murrelets they have
15 the young with them. They have the one chick that
16 fledges very early, only a couple weeks old, and it's
17 the father that raises the bird at sea and these young
18 birds are flightless and weak. They're a little bit
19 smaller. They're weak divers so if there's a shortage
20 of food those are often the first to be under the most
21 stress.

22
23 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Robb and Liz.
24 Are there any other questions? I saw a few lights come
25 on for questions. Anything else for Robb or Liz?

26
27 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, this is Coral. I
28 have a question.

29
30 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead, Coral.

31
32 MS. CHERNOFF: Hi. So I'm just
33 thinking about I don't know how many years it's been
34 now, but it's been four or five years since we've had
35 major die-offs, maybe more. So these are pretty major
36 die-offs and there's been year after year word of
37 they're emaciated and I don't know if this is the
38 proper organization to form maybe a committee.

39
40 It seems like we need to move from
41 collecting birds and testing them for PSP or Avian Flu.
42 It seems like we've done a lot of that. Like when are
43 we going to move from collecting dead birds and
44 reporting to maybe a more aggressive plan to find out
45 what's going on. I don't know what that plan could be.

46
47
48 I'm sure lots of people have lots of
49 good ideas, but it seems like we need to step to the
50

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1 next level of finding out or maybe someone is already
2 doing that. But I don't know if anyone has any ideas.
3 Is anyone working on that? Like working at a different
4 plan rather than collecting dead birds and reporting
5 them?

6
7 MS. KULETZ: I guess I'll step in here.
8 There has been -- there are ongoing ecosystem studies
9 that are looking at what are going on with the changes
10 in general. Many of the speakers have given talks or
11 for instance at the Straight Science venue, but it's
12 involved NOAA and various university researchers. We're
13 just one component of that. We're looking at the
14 seabird part. But there are people looking at things
15 that are happening with respect to the zooplankton.
16 You know, how with warm water you get smaller
17 zooplankton, less nutrient value. The fish changes in
18 fish species.

19
20 It's hard to make a direct link to the
21 seabird die-offs that have been noted here, but I would
22 say it's certainly beyond our purview in terms of
23 what's happening with the ecosystem, but there are
24 people looking at that and we're part of that
25 investigation. There's multiple reports and
26 publications coming out and you often see the
27 preliminary results of those and the ecosystem status
28 reports that go to the North Pacific Fisheries
29 Management Council. They do include what's going on in
30 the Bering Strait and Chukchi Sea region.

31
32 In terms of what we can do about it,
33 you know, that's an even bigger question and something
34 that people make recommendations about and influence,
35 hopefully, management of the fisheries and can make
36 adjustments based on that information. It's a large,
37 slow-moving process. That's for sure.

38
39 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I think Coral raises
40 a good point, Kathy. I was going to ask a similar
41 question. The seabird die-offs they started in Prince
42 William Sound four or five years ago and now they're in
43 regions that we haven't seen before up in the Bering
44 Strait, Chukchi Sea region.

45
46 I'm wondering if the information we're
47 collecting has reached levels in the Department of
48 Interior such that -- you know, we're seeing events
49 that have never occurred before and we're seeing events
50

0094

1 that are affecting rural residents and people that are
2 dependent upon either murre eggs on Sludge Island or
3 seabird resources in Prince William Sound.

4

5 We've done flyers and information that
6 we've given at a local basis, but I was wondering has
7 that information -- and similar what Coral's, I think,
8 implying -- has that been reaching levels of leadership
9 in both the Department of Interior and other
10 departments such that when policies on climate change
11 or other major decisions are being discussed that the
12 information you and Brandon and Austin and Gay and
13 others have collected and documented, whether that
14 information is at that level to influence those
15 policies?

16

17 Do you know if the Department or if the
18 National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, or
19 other agencies are bringing it to that level?

20

21 MR. KULETZ: They're certainly aware of
22 it at the level I work at. It is highlighted in the
23 ecosystem report. They have a little highlight section
24 that this has been an ongoing issue.

25

26 First of all I want to highlight -- I
27 want to clarify that this is not unprecedented. We
28 have had enormous seabird die-offs in the past, but it
29 would be like once every 10 years or more. What's
30 happened is that they're not quite as large as some of
31 those real spectacular die-offs that we've had in the
32 past, but they're consistent. It's like a low level
33 but higher occurrence that we see every year now. So
34 that's what we're trying to stress and that's what's
35 been highlighted to NOAA and others.

36

37 In terms of going up, say the
38 Department of Interior, I would hope that they're aware
39 of it if they read some of the briefings and fact
40 sheets that we send up the line. If there's a way to
41 highlight that better, we would be glad to do that. In
42 fact, we've had briefings with the Regional Director
43 about the die-offs in the last couple years anyway. So
44 we'll do that again. That's hopefully something if we
45 can convince people in the upper levels of how
46 different this is and how important it could be, what
47 it could indicate for the ecosystem, I'm for that.

48

49 MR. KALER: If I could just briefly add

50

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1 in, you know, there's multiple factors, but I think
2 Coral's idea of like a working group -- and, of course,
3 as Coral already pointed out, this may not be the --
4 you know. Anyways, input from this group, especially
5 folks in the Bering Strait where this has been the
6 fifth year in a row, you know, getting that engagement
7 and getting that voice at the table would be really
8 valuable.

9
10 It's really not until it hits the media
11 -- I mean the Nome Nugget is on the cutting edge of
12 changes in the fishery up in the north, so those are
13 really resources. But it does take a partnership and
14 so I see Caroline Van Hemert is on the call right now
15 too.

16
17 Looking at the harmful algal bloom
18 component, you know, that's one piece of these
19 die-offs. Why are they dying? We know they're dying
20 because they're emaciated, but why are they emaciated
21 is because they're exposed to biotoxin, they're
22 competing for food with cod and pollock that are
23 migrating further north, lack of sea ice and the
24 changes of that.

25
26 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Robb. Gayla,
27 you've had your hand up. Go ahead.

28
29 MS. HOSETH: Yeah, I just wanted to --
30 I mean, you know, climate change is definitely here and
31 upon us. It was two years ago that we had the major
32 salmon die-offs here in the Bristol Bay region in our
33 rivers with the water temperatures. I'm just curious.
34 As the sea ice is melting, water temperatures are
35 becoming warmer. I don't know what the causes of the
36 bird die-offs, but I think that this is something that
37 we definitely should be connected on in the work that
38 we do.

39
40 I'm not a scientist. I'm not a
41 biologist. I just know, you know, in connecting with
42 people on the land, when we had the major fish die-off
43 here it was really scary and our salmon run was really
44 late because the fish stayed out in the ocean longer
45 because the water was too warm for them to come into --
46 to go and spawn.

47
48 So that just concerns me. There's a
49 lot of different working groups that are working on
50

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1 climate change. I guess would I be able to get
2 information or did you share the packet, Robb, of the
3 seabird die-off information?

4

5 Because I also serve on different
6 groups along with EPA, RTOC, for Region 10 and climate
7 change is something that we're really focusing on and
8 especially within the Biden Administration climate
9 change is being looked on and we're talking about it,
10 but the more that I know about things that are
11 happening within Alaska with climate change, with all
12 these die-offs, with the low salmon returns coming in
13 different areas, everything kind of comes together and
14 we don't always just talk about birds here because
15 everything is connected. So I just wanted to bring
16 that bad issue up.

17

18 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Gayla.
19 Brandon, go ahead.

20

21 MR. AHMASUK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
22 Thank you, Coral, for that suggestion. Several more
23 heads on this is better than the few that we have
24 trying to brainstorm and come up with more ideas,
25 suggestions, you know, the seabird die-off, what's
26 causing it, whatever.

27

28 I forget who mentioned it, it might
29 have been Kathy or Eric, wondering if the Department of
30 Interior has been informed about this and possibly so.
31 What I heard, and maybe I misunderstood, the way it was
32 presented was just kind of biological, I guess. The
33 seabird die-off occurring, approximate numbers.

34

35 But what I'm wondering is if it's been
36 shared. Maybe it has. But also the food security
37 issue. We rely on these birds. They're part of our
38 culture. They're part of who we are. I'm wondering if
39 that aspect of the seabird die-off is being shared with
40 Department of Interior or even other agencies.

41

42 Why I do bring that up is that several
43 years ago when this first started happening in our
44 region we had several reports coming in to me and Gay
45 and we're trying to get them sent out for testing.
46 Eventually we did get them sent out and just like now
47 they were shown to be starving. I think there might
48 have been the saxitoxin testing or something really low
49 just like now.

50

0097

1 It was Wisconsin, I think, where the
2 birds were sent to. This is Lower 48 and they have no
3 idea what's going on up here. The response we got back
4 was actually, to us being in Alaska, kind of appalling,
5 I guess, but they said, oh, thank God, nobody eats
6 these birds. But up here we do.

7
8 Anyway, I was just wondering if that
9 food security, the cultural aspect is also being shared
10 with the other agencies. Thank you.

11
12 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Kathy, go ahead.

13
14 MS. KULETZ: Yeah, that's a good point.
15 We certainly always include that information in our
16 briefings and I think the National Wildlife Health
17 Center is now much more aware of that aspect that the
18 birds are used for subsistence up here and their eggs.
19 We always add that in, but I don't know that they fully
20 understand what that means.

21
22 So maybe more can be done to help them
23 understand what food security means. This is a concern
24 because of food security issues or because these are
25 subsistence foods. So we do include that information.
26 Slowly people are becoming more educated back at
27 headquarters and south, but perhaps in upper levels
28 they may not be quite as aware. I'm not sure about
29 that.

30
31 MR. AHMASUK: So just a suggestion or
32 offering. I don't know if these meetings are taking
33 place like face to face, but if you need me or Jack or
34 Coral to attend these meetings with you to try to drive
35 that point home with them, I'd be more than willing to
36 do that. You know, fly wherever, go wherever, be
37 included in these meetings to give our perspective of
38 what's going on out here.

39
40 So anyway just a suggestion. Thank
41 you.

42
43 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Brandon.
44 Let's see. We've got Julian, John and Caroline. I
45 think Julian you were first and then we'll jump to
46 John.

47
48 MR. FISCHER: Real briefly. Coral,
49 thanks for bringing that up. I know it must be
50

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1 frustrating to hear year after year these reports of
2 these major die-offs and then it's kind of like, okay,
3 what next.

4

5 We talked a minute ago about raising
6 the elevation of this or elevating this to higher in
7 the Department of Interior, but I'm wondering, Kathy,
8 Liz, Robb, have any of these reports to your knowledge
9 been shared with IPCC scientists international level,
10 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. They have a
11 pretty broad reach and international in scope. I
12 believe they do have panels on food security and
13 effects on human. I'm just wondering if you're aware
14 if some of these reports have made it to that
15 international level.

16

17 MS. KULETZ: I hate to cut in front of
18 others, but just to answer Julian directly on that.
19 Yes, they are aware of it. We've given presentations
20 at those groups at various different venues and it's in
21 many of the CAFF reports and the Circumpolar Seabird
22 Group reports.

23

24 Again, it's just a matter of reporting
25 and recognizing that something is going on with the
26 environment because often it's an increase in some of
27 the diseases and toxins that we haven't seen in the
28 past, like botulism showing up and avian influenza,
29 cholera.

30

31 So they're aware of it, but, as Coral
32 brought up, what do we do next, what do we do about it.
33 That's a step where it involves the ecosystem level
34 response almost and management of fisheries and such.
35 But, yes, they're aware of it. We could keep stressing
36 it, especially as we rack up another year of die-off
37 incidents. They're not one-offs obviously.

38

39 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Julian,
40 Kathy. John and Caroline, if you guys could introduce
41 yourself that would be helpful since you just joined
42 today. Go ahead.

43

44 MR. PEARCE: Good morning. I'm sorry
45 I'm late. This is John Pearce with USGS Alaska Science
46 Center in Anchorage. I invited Caroline Van Hemert,
47 who is a research scientist here at our center as well
48 to quickly join in and maybe answer some questions and
49 give an update on the research. I think it gets at
50

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1 Coral's question as well. Coral, thanks so much for
2 that comment.

3

4

5 I also see it as frustrating, but the
6 sampling does help inform kind of next steps, but it
7 would really be nice to sit down with you and others,
8 either this group or elsewhere, to talk about what you
9 would like to see as next steps because that kind of
10 participatory research is what we want to do more of
11 with AMBCC and its members.

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Brandon, thanks so much for your offer. I do think it's so important to bring all of these perspectives to DOI and elsewhere so that folks know about the issues that we face in Alaska and especially folks that are relying on these food resources and food security topics like you mentioned. So, yeah, let's do that.

So I just really want to turn this over to Caroline. She has some other meetings this morning, but I think, Caroline, if you can give an update on some of the studies that you're doing, especially the one at the Sealife Center, I think that might help address some of the concerns that Coral mentioned and anything else you want to offer just based on the conversations you've heard so far.

MS. VAN HEMERT: Yeah, sure. John kind of introduced me, but I'm Caroline Van Hemert and I've been working on a variety of avian health and disease related issues. So the harmful algal bloom component is something that we've been doing a lot of recently.

We've worked with I know a lot of folks probably on the call either receiving samples or working with the National Wildlife Health Center to hopefully provide the information that we can give that it's often challenging to diagnose what killed a bird specifically and sometimes those signs of emaciation or other things that indicate the bird is unhealthy and maybe starving.

We don't know what led up to that, so hopefully with some of our harmful algal bloom work that we're doing now we'll be able to get at those underlying causes a bit better. There's obviously some really large-scale changes to the ecosystem that I don't need to tell you all about because I'm sure many

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1 people are experiencing them firsthand.

2

3

4 But in that process changes to the
5 algal communities can have really big impacts in terms
6 of toxin exposure and cause acute death, but what we
7 don't know for birds as well is if birds are being
8 exposed to these toxins at lower levels may that then
9 lead to something like starvation. By the time we
10 receive carcasses and are testing those tissues, it can
11 be really hard to determine whether or not that was a
12 contributing factor.

12

13

14 So we're doing a variety of field
15 projects and continuing to work closely with Fish and
16 Wildlife and the National Wildlife Health Center and
17 other entities, individuals, organizations to try to
18 respond to these bird die-offs by testing specifically
19 for harmful algal blooms and that's just one component
20 of the research of course. We'll try to provide that
21 information as quickly and as thoroughly as we can.

21

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The captive study that we're doing
right now in collaboration with the Alaska Sealife
Center will give us an opportunity to more specifically
address how birds are responding to exposure to these
toxins. So if they consume saxitoxin, which seems to
be the largest problem for seabirds right now -- I'm
sorry, I think maybe somebody is getting a little
feedback who might be unmuted.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Patty, could you mute
her phone. I think that will help.

MS. VAN HEMERT: I'll just keep going,
but let me know if you can't hear me. So the captive
study will allow us to look at things like foraging
ability, so we're working with the Sealife Center and
they have really wonderful facilities.

This is a study of hand-reared common
murrelets and we'll be doing some experimental trials to
determine hopefully whether exposure to saxitoxin will
impact things like energetic demands, ability to catch
fish and then other sort of behavioral changes that
could contribute to things like starvation or inability
to conduct their normal functions. So by doing that
we're hoping to get a better understanding of how
critical these harmful algal blooms may be to seabird
populations.

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1 So that's a big piece of what we're
2 doing. I guess I'll stop talking now and I'll be happy
3 to answer questions. There's also collaborative
4 studies with Sarah Schoen, John Piatt and other folks
5 at the Alaska Sealife Center to look at food web
6 dynamics, so where in the food web are these toxins
7 occurring and where potential sources of exposure and
8 kind of where in Alaska are we seeing these toxins in
9 birds.

10

11 So those are the main components of the
12 work that we're doing. I'm sorry I just got
13 last-minute notice of the meeting or I would have
14 reserved time to be here the whole time, but I have
15 another meeting I have to jump onto. So I'd be happy
16 to answer any questions in the meantime or follow up
17 later.

18

19 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Caroline.
20 Any questions regarding Carline's studies of the Alaska
21 Sealife Center and biotoxins.

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Caroline, how long
26 are your -- your studies are just getting underway or
27 how long have you been working on this and when do you
28 think you'll have results or at least some preliminary
29 findings?

30

31 MS. VAN HEMERT: Yeah, so the field
32 studies have been going on for several years, so we've
33 had a couple of papers come out and shared the findings
34 more broadly, particularly that 2017 die-off in the
35 Chukchi/Bering Region that we think may have been
36 linked to harmful algal toxins, but it's very
37 difficult, like I said, to assign causality.

38

39 The captive study we just were able to
40 collect eggs. We had a Covid delay this summer and we
41 hope to start trials in November. So hopefully by
42 spring we'll know a lot more.

43

44 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. John, any
45 other updates from the Science Center that you'd like
46 to share?

47

48 MR. PEARCE: Thanks, Eric. I sent
49 Patty a document yesterday. Yesterday and today have

50

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1 been really busy for me and I just sent her a word
2 document update on a number of different projects. I
3 don't know if that was shared with all the members.

4

5 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I'll double check
6 with Patty. Let's follow up, John, on your suggestion
7 and Coral's idea and put together a group of
8 individuals from your shop, the Fish and Wildlife
9 Service and the Alaska Native Caucus to see where we're
10 at with the seabird die-off. What information is being
11 distributed, what we can do better to not only inform
12 rural residents, but also inform leadership at various
13 levels in the government.

14

15 MR. PEARCE: Yeah, great idea.

16

17 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. As I
18 predicted, Robb's 10-minute presentation went into an
19 hour. It gives you an indication of the interest in
20 the seabird die-off. So thank you, Robb and Liz, and
21 thanks, Caroline and John for joining and providing us
22 with additional information.

23

24 I don't see any other hands up. Any
25 last minute questions for Liz or Robb? Coral, go
26 ahead.

27

28 MS. CHERNOFF: I have a question. So I
29 don't know if it can or will be answered here, but I
30 was just wondering about the saxitoxin or the other
31 one, the PSPs in birds. Perhaps in the future we could
32 maybe get a presentation on it. Like how often are
33 they affected. Are they affected? I know lots of
34 creatures in the sea the toxins don't have as much of
35 the affect as they do in humans. I know there's lots
36 of studies on them.

37

38 I don't know if that can be answered
39 now or if we could get a presentation about saxitoxins
40 in birds or do we actually find birds dead from those?

41

42 MS. VAN HEMERT: Can I answer quickly
43 before I have to jump off?

44

45 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead.

46

47 MS. VAN HEMERT: I guess the short
48 answer is I'd be glad to give a presentation if that
49 would be helpful and sort of summarize what we know and
50

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1 what we don't know because I think that's really
2 important too to understand why are there all these
3 questions that we can't address right now and how do we
4 best get at those.

5

6 So I guess the other piece of it is
7 that saxitoxin definitely does impact birds. There's
8 been just a recent study on captive mallards. We don't
9 know how clearly this translates to seabirds. We do
10 know that saxitoxin can be acutely toxic and it can
11 also, we think, cause longer term effects, but those
12 are the pieces that are a little hard to sort out.

13

14 Thanks for that question, Coral. If
15 there's a time in the future that you'd like me to put
16 together a 20-minute presentation or whatever works, we
17 can do that.

18

19 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Caroline. I
20 look forward to that presentation. Gayla, go ahead.

21

22 MS. HOSETH: Hi. Sorry. I know that
23 we were going to be done with this topic, but I think
24 that we can do something here with the AMBCC. Maybe if
25 we do a press release or something to have attention to
26 the seabird die-off and then maybe that would start
27 something to where we get the attention of the people
28 that we need to get the attention of.

29

30 I think that we should be able to put
31 something out from the AMBCC. I mean we spent an hour
32 talking about it. I'm sure that we could talk even
33 longer about this subject and how these die-offs are
34 impacting everything.

35

36 So that would be my recommendation.
37 Can we do some sort of press release with any of this?
38 I guess I can make a motion that AMBCC comes out with a
39 press release of the concern that we have with the
40 seabird die-offs in the state of Alaska.

41

42 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. Coral. We
43 have a motion on the table for the AMBCC to produce a
44 press release relative to the importance of the seabird
45 die-off on food resources for rural residents. Is
46 there a second?

47

48 MS. CHERNOFF: I'll second that.

49

50

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1 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Seconded
2 by Coral. Let's open it up for discussion. Gayla,
3 we've thought about producing a -- or having a
4 committee established with USGS, Fish and Wildlife
5 Service and the Alaska Native Caucus to discuss I guess
6 alternatives, including press releases, but as Coral
7 mentioned I think many of us would like to see this
8 issue raised to levels where leadership is aware of the
9 importance of the seabird die-offs and food security.

10

11 My suggestion might be this would be
12 one way. Also briefing statements that leadership --
13 Brandon has offered and I'm sure there may be other
14 interested people actually joining in on calls or
15 briefings with Fish and Wildlife Service or Department
16 of Interior leadership or international meetings to
17 ensure that rural residents with concerns like you have
18 raised are meeting at the right level.

19

20 So I think there are several
21 alternatives that might be effective. What would be
22 your view or perspective on that? Perhaps use the
23 press release as one alternative and bring that forward
24 to the group that we're going to establish.

25

26 MS. HOSETH: I guess maybe the working
27 group we could -- I'd be happy to be on that working
28 group as well, but just the working group can maybe put
29 together what our press release would be saying with
30 the information with Robb and Kathy and Brandon and
31 Coral and maybe you or Julian. Whoever wants to be a
32 part of this group with the seabird die-off.

33

34 I think that it would -- you know,
35 coming here to AMBCC with this report and how it
36 concerns a lot of us, especially people in Brandon's
37 region. And when we look at the map of the different
38 seabird die-offs in the other areas, just connecting it
39 kind of to the other die-offs that we've been seeing as
40 well. So I think that we should put out some kind of a
41 press release.

42

43 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Kathy, you had your
44 hand up next, I think. Go ahead.

45

46 MS. KULETZ: In addition to that I
47 guess I would recommend signing up for a presentation
48 in front of the North Pacific Fisheries Management
49 Council. You can do that, whether a tribal

50

0105

1 representative or from AMBCC. I think it will carry
2 weight coming directly from someone in AMBCC to discuss
3 this as an issue to be considered especially in the
4 management.

5

6 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Thanks,
7 Kathy. Hi, Andrea. Good morning.

8

9 MS. MEDEIROS: Sorry. I'm not used to
10 working in Zoom. I was on a call with Grace Rogers.
11 She joined the call while Robb was giving his
12 presentation and she's actually working with us now on
13 climate-related stories. There she is. Grace. I was
14 just going to mention, and you could certainly speak to
15 this, she was interested in doing a story about the
16 seabird die-off.

17

18 I shared with her the idea of maybe
19 doing that in a story map that people could explore,
20 you know, going back to when the first seabird die-off
21 was. I think was like 2016 where birds were flying --
22 documented to fly all the way into Fairbanks in search
23 of food. I think it would be really interesting to
24 tell that story in a story map allowing people to
25 explore it.

26

27 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Andrea. I
28 didn't get a chance to ask you to introduce yourself
29 since you're new to the meeting. Could you go ahead
30 and do that.

31

32 MS. MEDEIROS: Yes, absolutely. Sorry.
33 I'm Andrea Medeiros and I'm the public affairs
34 specialist for the Alaska Region of the U.S. Fish and
35 Wildlife Service.

36

37 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Andrea.

38

39 MS. MEDEIROS: Yeah.

40

41 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Good morning, Grace.
42 Glad to see you again. Grace, could you update
43 everyone what you're doing with the Fish and Wildlife
44 Service. I think it's germane to this conversation.

45

46 MS. RODGERS: Sure, sure. Good
47 morning, Eric. Hi, everyone. I'm Grace Rodgers. I
48 joined Fish and Wildlife Service about two months ago
49 as a climate communications fellow with the Alaska

50

0106

1 Region through the Great Basin Institute.

2

3

4 So I'm working on telling some
5 climate-related stories for the Alaska Region. I've
6 been working on several already, but joining here this
7 morning and hearing the presentation on seabird die-off
8 I definitely think that this is a story that needs to
9 be told and can tie really well into some of the
10 research and work that I've been doing so far related
11 to migratory bird loss.

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I'm kind of just echoing what Andrea mentioned, doing a potential story map on seabird die-off and sharing some of the stories and research that you guys have been talking about this morning in the story as well is something that I think would make a really strong story over the next like month or so.

Is that something -- what are any of your thoughts on that, tying into kind of amplifying this research and getting the story out there. What are your thoughts on that?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Grace. I think we have a motion on the table and a second relative to a press release from the AMBCC on the seabird die-off. Gayla, we were talking about that would be one option that this group could discuss as well as what Grace mentioned, some additional materials that she has expertise in, either storyboards or other website notices working with you and Brandon and others to make sure we get the story right.

Gayla, would you entertain amending your motion that we form a group that a press release is one option or how would you like to go about it? Would you like to go ahead and push forward with a vote on your press release?

MS. HOSETH: I'm all in favor for the press release and then I think that, you know, if you wanted me to amend my motion if the second agrees that we can form the working group on the seabird die-off and the outcome of this working group will be to do a press release and any media coverage on this issue to be published.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. I think that would be my recommendation because we haven't had a

0107

1 chance to talk to Grace. Kathy has brought up an
2 excellent idea in terms of the North Pacific Research
3 Board and other international -- so I think there's
4 lots of alternatives here.

5

6 Kathy, you have your hand up. Go
7 ahead.

8

9 MS KULETZ: Yeah, just as Robb's
10 pointed out or someone, Jim Simon, in the chat, you can
11 still sign up to give a presentation to the Fisheries
12 Management Council, which is meeting the first week of
13 October. The deadline to sign up for a slot is
14 September 29th coming up soon. So I'd recommend
15 someone from this working group perhaps, AMBCC. We've
16 given presentations to them already in the past. We
17 could do so again, but I think it would be more
18 important for the AMBCC to state why this is important
19 to them.

20

21 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Thanks,
22 Kathy. I agree. Andrea, your hand is up. I don't
23 know if you have a new question, comment. All right.

24

25 MS. MEDEIROS: Sorry.

26

27 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: That's not a problem.
28 Gayla, would you like to amend your motion -- or let's
29 see.

30

31 MS. HOSETH: I did. The second would
32 have to agree with that.

33

34 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay.

35

36 MS. CHERNOFF: I agree. I second the
37 amendment.

38

39 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: So we have an amended
40 motion to form a committee to look at the seabird
41 die-off in interest of getting greater exposure at
42 various levels, including the press and leadership in
43 various agencies. We've got a second. So I'm going to
44 call for question and ask for a vote by the Council so
45 we can move forward with this.

46

47 All in favor please say aye.

48

49 IN UNISON: Aye.

50

0108

1 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Opposed.

2

3 (No opposing votes)

4

5 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: The motion carries.

6 So next what I'd like to do is ask to form this
7 committee since we have a quorum right now. I'd like
8 to see a show of hands if you're interested in serving
9 on this committee. We haven't described it yet in
10 writing, but I'll try to do my best here.

11

12 MS. HOSETH: Before we start. We've
13 voted on the amendment of the motion. Now we need to
14 vote on the motion, Eric.

15

16 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I'm sorry, Gayla.

17

18 MS. HOSETH: If we voted on the
19 amendment of the motion, now we need to vote on the
20 motion that was on the floor. We voted on the
21 amendment.

22

23 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. Thank you for
24 correcting my failure of Roberts Rules. So we approved
25 the amendment to the motion. Now the motion just to do
26 a press release and that was seconded and is now on the
27 floor. So those in favor say aye.

28

29 IN UNISON: Aye.

30

31 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I'm sorry, Gayla. Go
32 ahead.

33

34 MS. HOSETH: It was for clarification
35 that we're voting on the amended motion that included
36 the working group. I think we all got it, but just for
37 the minute-taker it's really challenging. We did it
38 right that we voted on the amendment. Now we voted on
39 the motion with the amendment, so I think we're good.

40

41 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: So you think we're
42 good at this point. All right. Thanks. Now what I'd
43 like to do is see a show of hands of individuals that
44 would like to serve on this committee.

45

46 MR. AHMASUK: Eric, this is Brandon.
47 Jack would like to be on this committee. I wanted to
48 make that clarification instead of just putting up my
49 hand. Thank you.

50

0109

1 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. All right.
2 Jack Fagerstrom, Gayla Hoseth, John Pearce, Coral, Robb
3 Kaler, Liz Labunski, Andrea Medeiros. Anyone else that
4 would like to serve on this committee? Grace Rodgers.
5 Thanks, Grace. I was just about ready to call on you.
6 Patty. I'm trying to flip through my screen to make
7 sure I catch everyone. All right. So Jack, Gayla,
8 John, Coral, Robb, Liz, Grace and Patty. Did I miss
9 anyone?

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. So in the
14 action items we will form a committee. Do I have
15 anyone who's interested in serving as the chair of that
16 committee?

17

18 MR. KALER: I can do that, Eric, if
19 it's outside of Council regional reps.

20

21 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. What I
22 would like, Robb, at least for the first duty you can
23 volunteer as an interim perhaps and call the first
24 meeting and then at that first meeting members can
25 decide to vote on the chair. So what I would like to
26 do is not form a committee and then not have anyone
27 actually call for the first meeting, so thank you for
28 doing that. So we'll put Robb as the interim chair and
29 then we can meet the first time and decide a permanent
30 chair for that committee.

31

32 Any other discussion?

33

34 MS. CHERNOFF: Eric, this is Coral.

35

36 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead, Coral.

37

38 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I'd like to also
39 see or call for maybe a meeting before the end of the
40 year.

41

42 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Yes, I would agree.

43

44 MS. CHERNOFF: Just make a note of
45 that.

46

47 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Robb, is that doable?

48

49 MR. KALER: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

50

0110

1 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Sounds
2 good. You might want to just send out a Doodle poll
3 and figure out when people are available here in the
4 next week and make that happen.

5

6 MS. KULETZ: I would remind you also
7 that perhaps even before the press release something
8 with time sensitive deadline would be any comment to
9 the Fisheries Management Council and perhaps seeing if
10 it can be -- written comments will definitely be
11 included in their material, which is available on the
12 website, but you might be able to also get a slot for
13 giving a statement in front of the Council.

14

15 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Kathy, that meeting
16 is September 29th, is that right?

17

18 MS. KULETZ: That's the deadline to
19 submit your comments and make the request, the first
20 week of October.

21

22 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. So that's a
23 week away. That's next Wednesday. Robb, you've got a
24 week to pull together your committee to see if comments
25 would like to be drafted to that.

26

27 Gayla was first and then Jim. Gayla,
28 go ahead.

29

30 MS. HOSETH: I was just wanting to know
31 if we would be able to pull something together. Is
32 that like the on-time public? I'm not familiar with
33 the North Pacific Fishery Management Council timeframe.
34 Is that for online public comments or would we be able
35 to have something in time for their October meeting as
36 a regular comment? I'm not sure of their structure.
37 I'm just used to the Board of Fish and Federal
38 Subsistence Board process.

39

40 I would be happy to meet. I'm only
41 available this week. I'm tapped out all next week.
42 The committee could go on without me. I think it would
43 be important at least to get something in that North
44 Pacific Fisheries Management Council pocket just to
45 bring attention to it.

46

47 MR. KALER: Just as a quick point. So
48 Fish and Wildlife Mike Byrd did submit what we call a B
49 report and we've been doing this annually or even

50

0111

1 quarterly. So that is our agency abilities to provide
2 information to the Council. So in that report we've
3 been touching on this important topic. I can share
4 that. It goes through a review process internally for
5 Fish and Wildlife, but that would be a good starting
6 point for this subcommittee.

7
8 MS. HOSETH: Maybe that could be a
9 start where we could get together and review that
10 information and then AMBCC supports your comments that
11 you submitted.

12
13 MR. KALER: Yeah.

14
15 MS. HOSETH: From this management
16 council body.

17
18 MR. KALER: Yeah. And I think
19 emphasizing from the local community subsistence
20 importance that we don't lay in too heavily as a
21 Department of Interior agency, but that would be the
22 angle from the AMBCC.

23
24 MS. HOSETH: Okay.

25
26 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Jim, go ahead.

27
28 MR. ASHBURNER: Thank you very much,
29 Kathy, for all your suggestions. I just wanted to add
30 on that if there is a desire of the Seabird Committee
31 to actually give an oral presentation at the October
32 North Pacific meeting. I would recommend that you have
33 that presentation be by the committee representative
34 because a committee from the AMBCC would get more time
35 than just an individual who would sign up to speak to
36 it. So I think that's an important consideration.
37 Thanks.

38
39 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: That's a good point.
40 All right. Any other discussion.

41
42 (No comments)

43
44 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: So, Robb, if you
45 could, please get together with your committee and send
46 out a note for Doodle poll, figure out when folks can
47 meet. Knowing that the North Pacific Fisheries
48 Management Council meets the 29th. Thank you all for a
49 very good discussion. Next on the agenda is Will Lacey
50

0112

1 who will provide a budget update. Will, are you ready?

2

3

MR. LACEY: Yes, I am.

4

5

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. Go ahead.

6

7

MR. LACEY: Good morning, everyone.

8

I'm Will Lacey, budget analyst with Fish and Wildlife

9

Service. Hold on while I share my screen. I don't see

10

it.

11

12

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: It's up there, Will.

13

Go ahead.

14

15

MR. LACEY: Okay. I'm only going to be

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talking on two topics today, but I'll take my time as

17

we go through them. First off it's going to be the

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status of funds and then we'll talk about the next five

19

year grant agreement.

20

21

The first thing I'd like to do is

22

review the FY-22 budget for AMBCC. I'd like to point

23

out that this is a very rough draft and it's subject to

24

change. The budget is divided into three sections.

25

The first is administrative costs. Here you see for

26

U.S. Fish and Wildlife personnel is vacant. So I do

27

not have a dollar amount there. The duties are being

28

shared among migratory bird staff to make the program

29

work.

30

31

I'd like to say if anybody has any

32

questions, I'll pause the presentation to answer them.

33

Here is something that changed. I made this draft

34

before the meeting yesterday and it was voted during

35

yesterday that harvest surveys would not be done. So

36

these are funds that will not be used or will be zeroed

37

out for the budget.

38

39

Grants. This is something else that's

40

going to change. This is based on making everyone

41

whole. The next thing I'll be talking about is the

42

status of funds for the grants. What I did when

43

drafting this budget is I looked at the balances that

44

were unhand in each region as of the beginning of this

45

week. I entered the amount that would be needed to

46

make them whole.

47

48

However, with the pandemic and the

49

variant, decisions are going to be made and it's

50

0113

1 possible these amounts will change because if your
2 budget is whole, the expectation is it's set because
3 it's accounting for travel cost. If there is no travel
4 costs, then I would suspect that these amounts would be
5 reduced.

6

7

Any questions on the budget?

8

9

(No comments)

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MR. LACEY: Next I'm going to talk about the FY-22 grant amendments. I'm going to look at the current balance as of September 21st on each grant. Here we go. I'm going to walk through this because there's some things I want to point out as we review this. First up you see the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I do want to point out what you have in your handout there was an error with Kawerak, but I corrected it on this slide and I did send Patty the corrected slide or handout.

As you look at this report, I have here this column. This is the funded year. You'll see that some of these funds were issued as early as 2018. When this grant was written, this five-year grant, the terms were changed, the verbiage was changed and it allowed us to -- I'm going to use this term carry over. No, let me amend that. Carry forward funds without any type of request. Now no one would have anticipated the pandemic, but as a result of the pandemic we're sort of in a situation where the Federal government is going to lose a lot of funds as a result of the pandemic and I'll explain that before I'm through here.

These are your balances. So there's about 300,000 or there is \$300,546 out on grants. Now I'd like to touch on the problem that we have as a result of the pandemic. Here is a table where I sorted the grants that have 2018 and 2019 funds on it. If no travel is done in FY-22 and everyone uses about 20 percent -- only uses 20 percent of their current allocation, then we, the Federal Service, is probably going to lose up to \$62,950 in funding because we carried forward this cost and the monies weren't used. Of course we know why this occurred. It's because of the pandemic.

In 2020 funds there's \$71,494 out there. Using the same scenario of only using 20

0114

1 percent of that cost if we were to go through the end
2 of September. I should have noted this at the
3 beginning. This is our last year -- FY-22 is the last
4 funding period for the current five-year grant. So if
5 we go through the end of September, there's a
6 potential, if travel isn't done because of the
7 pandemic, that we will lose \$57,000 of FY-20 funds.

8
9 This Monday I sent out an email to each
10 of the representatives of these grants for these
11 regions asking them to confirm that I can pool these
12 amounts off of their grants. The reason why is this.
13 In FY-22, next year, I can give you FY-22 funds if
14 needed, but if I don't pull these funds, if I don't get
15 a confirmation from these villages -- from these
16 regions this week in time for us to do an
17 administrative change to these grants, these funds will
18 definitely be lost and they'll be good to no one at
19 that point. Not to the regions and not to the Service.

20
21 So I'm asking if you all could please
22 look at my email, get with your representatives under
23 these grants and send me the confirmation that will
24 allow me to release these grants so we can save these
25 dollars. If I get that confirmation, I'll be able to
26 save \$71,000 going forward. Again, you will be made
27 whole because we will be able to use FY-22 funds.

28
29 Is there any question about this
30 request?

31
32 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: So, Will, if I
33 understand this correctly, you're waiting to hear back
34 -- from the Association of Village Council Presidents,
35 Jennifer; Kawerak, either Brandon or Jack; North Slope
36 Borough, Taqulik; Coral from the Sun'aq Tribe -- giving
37 you permission to pull these funds to save them from
38 being lost and you need that by when?

39
40 MR. LACEY: If I can get that back
41 today. Definitely no later than tomorrow so that the
42 Risk Management Office can have time to do the
43 amendment. That's all I require is just the email
44 confirmation because it is an administrative change and
45 they said they could do it pretty quick. No other
46 document required, just the email.

47
48 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Then by releasing
49 these funds these regions have the assurance that in
50

0115

1 FY-22 they will be made whole relative to their needs
2 to carry forward with meetings, is that correct?

3

4 MR. LACEY: Yes.

5

6 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: All right. I don't
7 think Jennifer is on. Brandon and Jack are on.
8 Taqulik, I think, just joined. Coral is on. Any
9 questions from you folks to Will on this?

10

11 MR. AHMASUK: This is Brandon. I don't
12 have any questions. I do apologize to Will not
13 responding. Like I keep mentioning, I'm just busy with
14 everything else. I'm not sure what time we're getting
15 out of the meeting today, but I just had some
16 clarification, but I can call Will after this meeting.
17 I don't think it's necessary for the purposes right
18 here, but I'll try to give Will a call after this
19 meeting for that discussion. It seems pretty
20 straightforward, but there was just a little
21 clarification I needed from Will and hopefully after
22 this meeting. Thanks.

23

24 MR. LACEY: I was hoping to be able to
25 talk to this yesterday, but we ran out of time. I
26 tried to make calls to everyone as I was able because I
27 knew there would be questions but I wasn't able to make
28 those calls. I apologize. I'm glad for the
29 opportunity to present it this morning.

30

31 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Brandon.

32

33 MR. LACEY: So the next thing I want to
34 mention is some things -- oh, is there any other
35 questions before I move on?

36

37 MS. HEPA: Mr. Chair, this is Taqulik.

38

39 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead, Taqulik.

40

41 MS. HEPA: Hi. Thank you, Will, for
42 that information. I'll have our grant administrator
43 reach out to you because the numbers that we have here
44 with the North Slope Borough and what you have on your
45 screen are different. Maybe we didn't upload them, but
46 I'll have our grant administrator contact you today.

47

48 MR. LACEY: Thank you. That's exactly
49 why the grants management office said I needed to get a
50

0116

1 confirmation before they would do the amendments
2 because depending on if you're doing cash accounting or
3 accrual accounting what we have in our system may not
4 necessarily be what's available to decrease. So I
5 appreciate it. I'll be standing by.

6

7 MS. HEPA: Great. Thank you. Thank
8 you, Mr. Chair.

9

10 MR. LACEY: Okay. So one of the things
11 that we are requesting before providing additional
12 funds in FY-22 is for each region to submit a budget
13 proposal. Like I showed on the previous slide as we
14 went over the budget, there are a lot of funds out. So
15 we need that budget estimate so we can make sure that
16 the amount of funds that we give out are what's
17 necessary based on your projected expenses for this
18 last funding period. The sooner we get those estimates
19 the quicker we can do those amendments for FY-22.

20

21 Last year not everyone received or did
22 amendments to their grant, so I just want to briefly
23 explain how that works. In Grant Solutions we will
24 send what's called a directed announcement to each
25 region. It will come through a notification via Grant
26 Solutions and part of that notification when you sign
27 into Grant Solutions it will show what documents are
28 required. I think there's only maybe three or four.
29 They're very simple documents to prepare.

30

31 From there we'll take it from there. I
32 can't send out that announcement until I get your
33 budget estimate. I'm asking for these budget estimates
34 as soon as possible, but no later than 20 January
35 because we really want to get you -- if you need funds,
36 we want to get those funds to you as soon as possible.
37 So I'm asking everyone no later than 20 January, but as
38 soon as possible.

39

40 Last, when drawing down funds, the
41 person who goes into ASAP has the ability to use those
42 older awarded funds, so please do that so we can get
43 the 2018 funds off and as much of the 2019 as possible
44 for those that have multiple years.

45

46 Any questions?

47

48 (No comments)

49

50

0117

1 MR. LACEY: All right. The last thing
2 I want to talk about is stipends. The reason why I'm
3 going to bring this up is a question was asked to me
4 from Gayla concerning stipends and then I learned that
5 CRRC may have paid us stipends using grant funds.

6
7 The current verbiage in terms of our
8 current grant agreement does not allow for payment of
9 stipends. However, I want to explain what's required
10 in order to pay stipends. What would have been
11 required is that the statement of work and the budget
12 proposals authorize the stipend. Then before the
13 stipend could be paid there had to be written approval
14 from the Service before you can pay the stipend. So
15 that does not exist in the current grant. So that
16 would have to be in place before stipends can be paid.

17
18
19 I think that makes for a good segue
20 into my next topic and that is the next five-year
21 agreement. When we go to do the five-year agreement,
22 we'll use Grant Solutions and just like with an
23 amendment each region will get a notification from
24 Grant Solutions so they can apply for the next grant.
25 One of the things that are going to be required is that
26 all annual reports must be current. So the reports
27 aren't due until the end of this year, but you want to
28 have those in before we can start the next five-year
29 agreement.

30
31 The reason why I mentioned stipends as
32 a good segue into this slide is because what I
33 recommend to the Council was that the current statement
34 of work be reviewed and that discussions about stipends
35 would need to be had before we award this new five-year
36 agreement.

37
38 Also, I think it's a good time to talk
39 about the lessons learned as a result of the pandemic
40 and how those lessons could affect how the statement of
41 work is written. Also, as has been discussed
42 yesterday, a lot of agencies, the Federal Service and I
43 believe even the Alaska Department of Fish and Game are
44 undergoing budget constraints.

45
46 So how does that look in our next
47 five-year agreement. We saw the suggestion by Liliana
48 about is it necessary to do a harvest survey every
49 year. So I think definitely a discussion needs to be
50

0118

1 had concerning the content of the statement of work
2 prior to us issuing the next five-year agreement. A
3 discussion should occur before April. That way we can
4 collect all the applications, we can get them in the
5 system and the grant can be awarded on time, before 1
6 October 2022.

7

8 Are there any questions?

9

10 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead.

11

12 MS. LEONETTI: Thanks. Hi, Will. Just
13 introduction, Crystal Leonetti. I'm the Alaska Native
14 Affairs Specialist for Fish and Wildlife Service. I
15 was curious for the regions. How flexible is the
16 funding if it can't be spent for travel due to the
17 pandemic? I'm just curious how flexible. Can they
18 hire somebody to do some planning for migratory birds?
19 What's the flexibility?

20

21 MR. LACEY: In a sense I'll let you
22 decide if it's flexible or not, but within the
23 agreement terms the funds are authorized for the
24 purpose of executing their program. I don't have the
25 verbiage in front of me or I would read it directly to
26 you. Basically if they're doing something that
27 furthers the purpose of the agreement, they can use the
28 grant funds.

29

30 At the beginning of each funding period
31 there's a budget submitted. So if they're going to
32 deviate from what they put in that budget, they just
33 need to shoot that past the Service for approval before
34 doing it. That's all. I believe that's a lot of
35 flexibility, but there is a procedure. You have to get
36 written approval before you deviate from that budget
37 that was submitted.

38

39 MS. LEONETTI: Okay. I was just
40 thinking about the conversation that we just had on
41 seabird die-offs and climate change and then learning
42 about some indigenous lead research initiatives and
43 traditional conservation planning, multi-species
44 conservation planning. Just thinking about other ways
45 if travel can't be done things that can advance the
46 AMBCC purposes.

47

48 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Crystal. Go
49 ahead, Gayla.

50

0119

1 MS. HOSETH: Yeah, I mean that brings
2 up a good point because with those leftover funds you
3 would hate to have those funds go back and that's a
4 project that we're working on in the Bristol Bay
5 Region, is that we're doing a Multi-species
6 Conservation Plan that we receive funding through the
7 BIA regarding our marine mammals. This is a plan
8 that's going to grow to encompass all of our different
9 species that we have here within the Bristol Bay
10 Region.

11
12 Instead of sending money back can we
13 reallocate those funds to do like a Migratory Bird
14 Conservation Plan throughout the state of Alaska to
15 show traditional names? It's a really good plan that
16 we're doing here. Darlene does excellent work and has
17 been working with us and we would hate to have to send
18 money back.

19
20 MR. LACEY: I just have two comments
21 and then I'll allow Eric to chime in if he feels it's
22 necessary. Just a caution. Like I said, you'd have to
23 get written approval from us and what would be
24 incumbent on us to do is make sure it's not deviating
25 from what the scope of the grant and intent of the
26 grant is. So we're going to look at it and make sure
27 that again we're not deviating from that scope.

28
29 Also I cannot think of the document
30 right now. I'm unable to get to the drive. But when
31 we do a grant, there's one statement that is provided
32 that talks about if this is dual funded. Like if
33 you're receiving funds from other Federal sources for
34 the same purpose. A duplication statement is something
35 that would have to be reviewed to make sure that -- or
36 at least it's acknowledged that you are receiving funds
37 from a different source.

38
39 So those two things. We have to make
40 sure it's within scope and that the proper statements
41 accompany the request. Anything to add, Eric? Any
42 concerns?

43
44 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: No, I think you
45 captured it correctly. Gayla, I don't have the
46 statement of work in front of me either, but as Will
47 mentioned there's quite a bit of flexibility in that
48 statement in the sense that the statement of worth
49 states that regions will use the funding from the Fish
50

0120

1 and Wildlife Service to basically implement the process
2 of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council.

3
4 That includes obviously reaching out
5 and communicating with rural villages and your
6 residents about conservation and management of
7 migratory birds in the AMBCC process. If that involves
8 a conservation plan that talks about co-management, we
9 just need to see a proposal and need to see a
10 description of that. So there's quite a bit of
11 flexibility in it. We just need to be careful to
12 document it and make sure it's tied to the AMBCC.

13
14 MR. HARRIS: Mr. Chairman.

15
16 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead, Cyrus.

17
18 MR. HARRIS: Thanks, Crystal. That was
19 a great question you brought up. Great discussion
20 here. I'm not an accountant or a mathematician. Due
21 to the pandemic I haven't been able to have my regional
22 meetings in person, so last spring and -- well, a
23 couple weeks ago I did connect with the regional folks
24 and we had teleconference meetings.

25
26 It didn't cost AMBCC anything according
27 to my budget. Yet, on top of it, it cost my regional
28 reps to use their personal phone, their wi-fi system
29 and so forth. I did pay a meeting fee to cover that
30 cost. It would come under the travel cost. It's very
31 little compared to what it would cost if we did have a
32 meeting here in Kotzebue.

33
34 So those are the questions that I've
35 got and how would I best put it in on the annual report
36 and what it's going to show on the draw-downs.

37
38 MR. LACEY: I'm not sure of the budget
39 lines, what you all submitted. If that's normally a
40 fee, it normally can be construed as a travel related
41 cost, but if you didn't travel, I think it should go
42 more under an other category. Maybe administrative
43 costs if you have an administrative cost category in
44 your budget. If there wasn't, then what we want to do
45 is get that budget amended.

46
47 MR. HARRIS: Yeah, thanks for that.
48 Under Maniilaq's system we do have like a travel
49 account and it covers for meeting fees, stipends and so
50

0121

1 forth. That's the purpose. I've decided I'll use that
2 same account number under the travel.

3

4

5 MR. LACEY: Yeah, that would be fine
6 then. When you put in your travel line, if that's the
7 type of cost that you all include in it, then that's
8 where it would go.

8

9

10 MR. HARRIS: Thanks for that
11 clarification. Once you do email me, it would help to
12 -- you probably got -- it kind of skipped my mind right
13 now. But, yeah, I'll forward this information to the
14 accountant and the folks over there to help resolve
15 some of these issues that we face here regarding
16 bringing in the budgets in a timely manner or reports.

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MR. LACEY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Cyrus. One important point that I want to make is Will is, without a doubt, my best budget analyst I've had since I've been with the Migratory Bird Program. He's very user friendly and he's very willing to work with all of you. So I think if you have a question regarding can we use funds for this or if we do use funds for this, what do I need to do, Will is pretty creative and I think he is very customer-oriented.

Will, I assume you've got your contact information maybe on a slide hopefully. If not, you could maybe put that in the chat. There it is. So I do encourage all of you -- and if you don't have the expertise, I know things have gotten more complicated with Grant Solutions and the various lines you have to fill, Will has educated our entire program because we too have struggled internally. So I can imagine it's a challenge for all of you out in rural villages.

Anyway, I just want to encourage you to contact Will. Go ahead, Gayla.

MS. HOSETH: Thanks. I think it would be great for the Budget Committee to get together to review as we do go into next year with the new five-year cycle to kind of review what's in there. Also to make sure that it is within the scope that we do have stipends that are in everybody's budget or an option for that to happen so that we can pay stipends for our Council members.

0122

1 It's been a while since we've been
2 doing -- like you said, we had four virtual sessions
3 and we really haven't had a Budget Committee. Looking
4 at the amount of funds that are dispersed to the
5 various different agencies, it's very minimal on
6 important work that we can do. I guess what other
7 options do we have. What other options can we do
8 because there's so much more that we could do within
9 this program.

10

11 Even if we look for different granting
12 opportunities for different projects, I think it would
13 be really good for us to do a conservation plan for
14 migratory birds as a whole within AMBCC with all the
15 different regions. So like expanding and looking at
16 different options that we have on this important issue
17 for our subsistence hunting and also for everything
18 that we do here.

19

20 So we should have a Budget Committee
21 meeting before the next proposals are due. I think
22 that that would be good to kind of go through the whole
23 overview and it might be good for everybody who is
24 applying for the five-year cycle. I think that that
25 would be good.

26

27 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I agree, Gayla. I
28 was going to make that recommendation. Between the
29 Fish and Wildlife Service's Migratory Bird budget
30 decline, 50 percent decline of the Subsistence budget
31 of the Department of Fish and Game the new statement of
32 work requirements associated with that. I think it's
33 time that we have a discussion of the overall aims of
34 the budget. Good suggestions. We'll make it happen.

35

36 Jim, go ahead.

37

38 MR. ASHBURNER: Thank you for that. As
39 a relatively new member of the Budget Committee, it
40 would be great to have a Budget Committee meeting so
41 that I can help get up to speed. Help me get up to
42 speed to try to address the issues that Gayla and
43 others have outlined here. Thank you so much.

44

45 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Any other
46 questions for Will at this point?

47

48 MR. ASHBURNER: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair.
49 I did have a question for Will.

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CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead.

MR. ASHBURNER: Thank you, Will, for your presentation. I was wondering is there any risk in additional loss of monies from the vacant Fish and Wildlife Service position? Is there any risk of losing that portion of the budget as well if that position isn't filled timely? Thank you.

MR. LACEY: Well, I'd like to explain a little about that if I can. I noticed yesterday in the meeting one of the committees you all were talking about is a committee to try to get funding from Congress specifically for AMBCC or whatever that committee's purpose was. AMBCC is authorized by legislation but it was not appropriated. It is not funded through legislation. Internally we make the program happen within the Fish and Wildlife Service, cooperation between Migratory Birds and Refuges.

The reason why I bring that up is you asked a question about will the funding be lost. The answer is AMBCC is not appropriated. It doesn't have a line. So it's not a matter of funding being lost. It's just internally that's a cost that currently we're not paying a full-time equivalent, we're not paying salary on it, but that doesn't mean that we're not paying salary. We're not paying a salary person. But for everyone that has to chip in to make the program work that's a salary cost. Hopefully that answers your question.

MR. ASHBURNER: Through the Chair. Thank you, Will. So does that mean that without a direct appropriation the money is being lost from the regional budgets? Those funds will just get reprogrammed within Fish and Wildlife Service? Is that what I understand?

MR. LACEY: No, it's not a matter of the funds being lost. We already operate at a deficit. In order for us to make the AMBCC program work and fund it, we have to take away from programs that are funded for other purposes. So we make cuts to line items within our budget in order to fund AMBCC. So, no, the funds aren't lost. They're just now being used for their original purpose.

MR. ASHBURNER: Thank you, Will.

0124

1 That's very critical information I think for the Alaska
2 Native Caucus to understand. Thank you.

3

4 MR. LACEY: You're welcome. Mr. Chair,
5 if there are no other questions.

6

7 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Any other questions
8 for Will? Again, Will's contact information.....

9

10 MS. HEPA: Can I ask a question?

11

12 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Go ahead, Taqulik.

13

14 MS. HEPA: You were talking about
15 stipends earlier and I did take a note that we have to
16 have written approval from the Fish and Wildlife
17 Service. Did I understand you correctly on that? If
18 we include that in the next five-year agreement.

19

20 MR. LACEY: Yeah. I'd have to get
21 clarification from the Grants Management Office. He
22 sent me all the 2 CFR 200 references and that's one of
23 the things he mentioned. You'd need the written
24 approval. I don't know if that approval can be part,
25 you know, of the terms, written into the terms. I
26 think if you meet this requirement, that requirement,
27 then you're okay to go forward. I also had a verbal
28 conversation with him.

29

30 I think the way it works is that it's
31 entered into the terms, but whenever somebody wants to
32 pay the stipend -- say you're authorized to pay the
33 stipend, but before you pay it you need to contact the
34 Fish and Wildlife Service who will say, yes, it's good
35 to pay maybe via email. But don't quote me on that.
36 I'll have to get the answer from the Grants Management
37 Office.

38

39 In a way I see why -- if it is a
40 situation where you have to talk to us first, I can see
41 why they would do that. They just want to confirm what
42 the purpose of it is before they authorize it. Also
43 there's a limited budget. You're still only going to
44 have the amount of award that we give you.

45

46 So it may be -- I can see how they
47 would have that in place so that nothing is overlooked
48 when you go to make a stipend. But I can also see that
49 that authorization can be done in writing via the terms

50

0125

1 of the agreement, but I can't give you a definitive
2 answer without talking to the Grants Management Office
3 and that's something I can get back to you and the
4 Council on.

5

6 MS. HEPA: Okay. That might be a good
7 discussion point for the Budget Committee meeting as
8 well. Thank you so much, Will.

9

10 MR. LACEY: You're welcome.

11

12 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Those sorts of
13 details, Taqulik, I agree, they should be ironed out
14 with the Budget Committee so that when we develop the
15 statement of work that everyone has a clear idea of
16 what the funds can be used for and then the process to
17 use the funds so that if there is one extra step
18 relative to stipends, for example, that everyone knows
19 what that step is. I agree, that should be worked out
20 with them.

21

22 MS. HEPA: Maybe my last point too.
23 Yeah, it is a bit overwhelming when Grants Solutions is
24 continuing to progress and there's a lot of little
25 changes here and there, and maybe it was mentioned just
26 a bit ago, but I think it would be good even if we
27 could offer a virtual training or a refresher for our
28 administrators or PIs to sit in on how to make sure
29 that we're up to date with the Grant Solutions process.

30

31 Thank you.

32

33 MR. LACEY: Can I talk to that? I work
34 real well with each region and the only reason why I
35 would prefer to just work one on one is I've sat in
36 some of the group training and because everybody's
37 familiarization levels are different I think if I could
38 work one on one with each region I think it would be
39 better.

40

41 When I send out emails, I sent out
42 links to training sites and even videos and then I work
43 one on one and normally that's enough. I take up
44 minimal time. I only take up the time that's necessary
45 with each region. You know, I'd hate to have somebody
46 sit through an eight-hour course or a four-hour block
47 of training and all they really needed was, hey, I only
48 had a question about how to submit the annual report,
49 you know. So I would like to work one on one with each
50

0126

1 region as needed if that's acceptable.

2

3 MS. HEPA: Yes, that is appreciated.

4 Thank you.

5

6 MR. LACEY: You're welcome.

7

8 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Any other questions

9 for Will.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Will, thank you very
14 much. We'll look at the Budget Committee and get that
15 underway. I'm looking at the agenda. I've got a
16 request for a 10-minute break. We've been at this for
17 two hours. How does everybody feel about a 10-minute
18 break? Coming back and then picking up with other
19 business.

20

21 A couple thumbs up. A 10-minute break.
22 Grab some coffee or get rid of some coffee and we'll
23 check back with you in 10 minutes. Thanks.

24

25 (Pause for break)

26

27 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: It's 10:50 and we'll
28 reconvene here. This brings us to item 13 on our
29 agenda, new business -- I'm sorry, item 14, other
30 business. It brings us to 15, invitation for public
31 comments. Do we have any public comments that people
32 would like to weigh in on?

33

34 MR. AHMASUK: Mr. Chair. Yesterday
35 during our regional reports Jack wasn't here but he's
36 here now. I'm just wondering if it would be
37 appropriate if he wanted to add anything to the
38 regional report for Kawerak could we do that now?

39

40 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Yes, absolutely,
41 Brandon. Go ahead, Jack. Welcome. Good to see you.

42

43 MR. FAGERSTROM: This year, like in
44 other years, I spoke out earlier we had a freeze up.
45 One thing we noticed was a large number of cormorants
46 in our bay and it's pretty shallow there. Normally
47 they're out at the cape, but they were coming around
48 all summer.

49

50

0127

1 Kittiwakes probably found 12, I think.
2 There were five shearwaters. One day they'd be pretty
3 weak and a few hours later they'd be dead. I heard
4 some shearwaters in Koyuk washed up on the beach. One
5 of them was like six miles inland. Right now our crane
6 are going through and it's been kind of a long
7 migration as far as timing goes. We didn't get our
8 normal -- they didn't get their normal tail winds
9 coming from Russia.

10

11 White geese last spring there were a
12 little more. Getting more and more it seems like.
13 When I was a little kid they were all in Stebbins and
14 St. Michaels, but now they're starting to show up in
15 Koyuk, Shaktoolik in that area in increasing numbers.

16

17 As far as the summer went, we had like
18 10 days of sunshine. That was a bummer. But other
19 than that just the same downward trend it seemed like.
20 There was more swans. That's about all that I could
21 think we had on there.

22

23 Thanks.

24

25 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Jack. Julian
26 is on the phone, so I was wondering, Julian, could you
27 comment on Jack's observation for increased numbers of
28 white geese or snow geese and also Tundra swans.

29

30 MR. FISCHER: Okay. Hi, Jack. Julian
31 here. So snow geese have been increasing in Alaska.
32 That's clear. On the North Slope we're seeing
33 increasing populations of colonies of Snow geese and
34 also the numbers of geese within those colonies.

35

36 We actually don't do any survey work in
37 areas south of there during spring when birds are on
38 the move. We do -- some of our breeding pair transect
39 lines on the Seward Peninsula and the Kotzebue Sound
40 area have detected Snow goose in low numbers, but it
41 doesn't surprise me that we're just simply missing
42 them.

43

44 So these kinds of observations are
45 really important to us. They're consistent with what
46 we believe is happening on the breeding grounds further
47 to the north. If you're seeing colonies of breeding
48 Snow geese on the Seward Peninsula, we would certainly
49 like to know about those.

50

0128

1 As for Tundra swans, the numbers are
2 above objective as we count them during the breeding
3 season. I'm curious, Jack, if you are seeing Tundra
4 swans now in your area or if they have already started
5 their migration out of your area.

6
7 MR. FAGERSTROM: They're starting to
8 gather up in Golovin Bay and also in Safety Sound.
9 There's quite a bit. I sometimes wonder if the
10 increasing number of swans is going to be affecting
11 food for Brandt. Golovin is a staging area in spring
12 and there's getting to be more and more swans. A swan
13 is a bully. They'll chase a whole flock of other birds
14 off a breeding spot. But they're piling up now.

15
16 MR. FISCHER: So through the month of
17 September you're seeing Tundra swans in Golovin Bay and
18 in the area around there?

19
20 MR. FAGERSTROM: Yes. They'll stick
21 around until the ice shows up. They're one of the last
22 birds to leave.

23
24 MR. FISCHER: I know the date that the
25 ice shows up is changing all the time but generally
26 when does that occur in Golovin Bay?

27
28 MR. FAGERSTROM: Freeze up?

29
30 MR. FISCHER: Yes.

31
32 MR. FAGERSTROM: It used to be in
33 October, but over the last five years it's anywhere
34 from October to December pretty much.

35
36 MR. FISCHER: When would you say the
37 highest concentrations of Tundra swans occur in Safety
38 Sound and Golovin Bay, what time of year?

39
40 MR. FAGERSTROM: Right about now.
41 Within the next two weeks though would be almost at
42 their peak numbers.

43
44 MR. FISCHER: Okay. That might explain
45 why we're not detecting a large increase in swans on
46 our surveys which are done in the spring. We don't do
47 fall surveys up in your neck of the woods. These are
48 important. I was thinking that many of the swans
49 probably had left your area by the time the fall/winter
50

0129

1 hunt starts, but this is good to hear. Thank you.

2

3 MR. FAGERSTROM: You're welcome.

4

5 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Jack.

6 Thanks, Julian. Any other public comments.

7

8 MR. AHMASUK: Mr. Chair. This is
9 Brandon again. I asked Patty to remind me before the
10 meeting was done. I had a special announcement that I
11 wanted to make. I apologize I forgot to mention it at
12 the beginning of the meeting yesterday.

13

14 Anyway, my longtime assistant, Eric,
15 Bill Trig he passed away just recently. He worked at
16 Kawerak here 20 years almost. He was my right-hand man
17 especially for our regional bird meeting. He put the
18 binders together when we'd have Fish and Wildlife
19 Service staff or whoever would come up. We got
20 numerous comments how well run our meeting was. Bill
21 took care of a lot of the travel. Made sure our
22 constituents or village reps were taken care of. All
23 throughout the year. I mean it's one of the times that
24 he really shined.

25

26 I know when he was first hired on he
27 was hired on for data entry I believe. When we had the
28 harvest surveys that came through, he was a big part of
29 that doing the data collection. I know he worked with
30 Liliana Naves quite a bit getting that submitted to the
31 Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The bird
32 information he really enjoyed doing that.

33

34 When it first happened, again I
35 apologize I didn't let the group know, but he really
36 has been missed here in the office. I don't know that
37 I could put the meeting on quite like he did. I mean
38 I'll try or whoever the subsistence director is when
39 they come on, but again he will surely be missed. I
40 just wanted to let this group know that my assistant
41 passed away about a month and a half ago. It has been
42 difficult. The office has been really quiet.

43

44 Anyway, again I apologize. I should
45 have mentioned that at the beginning of the meeting. I
46 didn't. Anyway, thank you.

47

48 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Brandon. No
49 apology needed. I'm sorry to hear that. It is always

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0130

1 very tough to lose a colleague and a friend. I assume
2 you had many cups of coffee with Bill over the years
3 and shared many observations and thoughts about
4 co-management of migratory birds. So thank you for
5 sharing that with me. I'm very sorry to hear that.

6
7 MR. AHMASUK: Thank you, Eric. I'm
8 trying to push through. Whoever the subsistence
9 director is, the new one is, I'll be stepping in to
10 help them with the bird meetings and whatever else they
11 need help with. Anyway, thank you for those kind
12 words. Thanks.

13
14 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: If there's anything we
15 can do or my office can do since you are doing extra
16 duty, please let us know. No need to -- we can help
17 you meet deadlines or answer any questions. Please
18 don't hesitate to contact me or Will.

19
20 Crystal, you have your hand up. Go
21 ahead.

22
23 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Eric. Thank
24 you, Brandon. I was reminded -- I wonder if you were
25 able to do a moment of silence yesterday for Roy
26 Nageak, Sr. Did that happen? I missed part of the
27 meeting.

28
29 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Crystal, was your
30 question for Brandon? We did not do a moment of
31 silence.

32
33 MS. LEONETTI: Okay. I was asking you.
34 Thanks, Eric. I wanted to do that for the group here.
35 Roy Nageak, Sr. from Utqiagvik passed away last week at
36 the Mat-Su Regional Hospital. He passed away with
37 Covid. So the community of Utqiagvik is mourning that
38 loss.

39
40 Roy was an elder in our Alaska Native
41 Relations classes for Fish and Wildlife Service. He
42 shared Inupiaq ancestral knowledge with us at our
43 trainings with our colleagues very generously. He was
44 always there with a smile and a hug. He shared his
45 foods with us. I know he participated on the Regional
46 Advisory Council there on the North Slope.

47
48 He's going to be greatly missed by a
49 lot of people. So I was hoping we could do just a
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0131

1 quick moment of silence for Roy.

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CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Yes, we can. Let's take a minute and think about Roy and his contributions to the North Slope Borough. Thank you, Crystal, for bringing that up. A moment of silence, please.

MR. LEONETTI: Thank you.

(Moment of silence)

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Crystal, for asking. Council and Staff comments. That brings us to agenda item number 16. Is Patty on? I don't know if I saw her or if she had to step off or not.

I can go around and ask for Council comments like we've done in the past. I see Gayla at the top of my screen. Gayla, I hate to put you on the first spot, but would you please go ahead.

MS. HOSETH: Oh, it's okay. I think it was a good meeting. I'm looking forward to the committees that we have established and working on some of the committee issues that we need to discuss before our spring meeting. I hope that we're going to be able to get a quorum for our regional body meeting.

After this meeting that's our goal for the Bristol Bay Region. Anything that I can help do to get the education outreach out there working on that Emperor Goose Outreach Committee we will definitely do that.

We've been working on a lot of these issues for many years and I think, you know, as we work together and we get to know each other over all of these years AMBCC becomes somewhat of like a family environment as we work together on these important issues that impact rural residents.

As we go into the winter, I just hope that everybody stays safe and well and I look forward to working with people throughout this winter. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Gayla.
Gloria.

0132

1 MS. STICKWAN: It was a good meeting.
2 I'm looking forward to seeing people again. I too hope
3 everybody will stay safe and have a good winter. Hope
4 to see you next year. I just want to tell Brandon
5 sorry to hear the news about the person in Barrow. I
6 don't know how to say the word for the loss.

7
8 That's all I have to say. Bye.

9
10 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Gloria.
11 Cyrus, I see you next on my screen.

12
13 MR. HARRIS: Good morning. Thank you,
14 Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Council members and State and
15 Federal agencies and everybody involved with this
16 meeting. Great meeting although we were not able to
17 meet in person. Thanks to technology we've got Zoom.

18
19 A lot of great information share. I
20 guess this is the first time I've met Will. I guess
21 sometime we will meet in person. It's always good to
22 talk about our budgets because in a situation such as
23 me, being alone and trying to run this whole operation,
24 can become quite confusing once reporting time comes.
25 Thanks for Will and his dedication to work with us one
26 on one.

27
28 Good to see everybody. Good to hear
29 everybody. You all have a safe fall. I forgot to
30 mention on my regional reports is that come springtime
31 I talked about a lot of wind, a lot of rain. Right
32 from spring, as soon as spring was open, we had three
33 days of summer and it becomes fall time. So we were
34 able to have three good days for summer.

35
36 Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Cyrus.
39 Between you and Jack I think we've had a total of six
40 days of summer or something like that. Yeah, it was
41 similar here in Eagle River as well. Let's see.
42 Taqulik, you're next on the squares here.

43
44 MS. HEPA: Just in case I get cut off
45 because I've been in and out because technology is not
46 working very well for me up here with the snow, but one
47 thing that I did forget to mention in our regional
48 report was as I was driving to work yesterday, you know
49 that we've had these west winds, but I did see a family
50

0133

1 group of Yellow-billed loons fledging and they were
2 headed to the ocean and they were spaced beautifully
3 and looked very healthy. It was amazing.

4
5 I love watching Yellow-billed loons
6 when they arrive. They're very different from other
7 birds when they're migrating and it was the same
8 fashion when they were leaving. So I just wanted to
9 share that on a bright note.

10
11 The other thing is I just want to thank
12 Crystal and Brandon for recognizing our recently lost
13 loved ones and friends. Both Billy and Roy were great,
14 great people that had a lot of passion for the people
15 that they represent. Good interactors with the
16 agencies and different groups that we work with. So
17 our condolences to the family and to the regions.

18
19 Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Taqulik,
22 and thanks for the observation of Yellow-billed loons.
23 One of my favorite birds as well. Coral.

24
25 MS. CHERNOFF: Hi, everyone. Yeah, I'd
26 just like to thank everyone for a great meeting and
27 express my condolences to communities and people who
28 are having to deal with Covid and Covid deaths and
29 Covid issues. I think we've done a great job in these
30 meetings and not being able to gather. We still
31 managed to be very productive in our meetings here and
32 have a pretty good membership.

33
34 I just want to say thank you to
35 everyone. These are I think my favorite meetings. I
36 think there's a lot of information. I think everyone
37 is very hard working and expressive in their thoughts
38 and ideas and their willingness to really move forward.
39 I think it's a productive group and I always walk away
40 just impressed and inspired to do work here. I just
41 want to thank everyone for that.

42
43 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Coral.
44 Those are kind words. Randy, Tanana Chiefs Conference.

45
46 MR. MAYO: Hello.

47
48 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Hi, Randy.

49
50

0134

1 MR. MAYO: Yeah, very good meeting. I
2 always enjoy the meeting and get to -- it would be
3 better if it's in person, but get to learn from the
4 different regions of the state. It's always good to
5 learn. It's an important meeting for us. I mentioned
6 something to Patty the other day about up in our
7 region, up in our area that fall time is when we can
8 start telling the creation stories.

9
10 Part of that is there's a sacred place
11 in our region called Dits inyee, Geese House or Geese
12 Camp. This is where back in creation time all the
13 birds gathered in that spot and this is where all the
14 birds, including waterfowl, got all their colors. Also
15 at this time that's how the trickster, the Raven,
16 received his all black color. The other birds got
17 tired of his trickery and conniving, so they just
18 dumped the black paint on him. So that spot is a
19 sacred spot. It's reported when you go there it's
20 really red, the rock is colored up in the mountains,
21 but it's a pretty powerful place. You could feel that
22 energy there if you go there. Everything is just
23 quiet.

24
25 But I just wanted to mention that
26 that's our account and our creation of how these things
27 happen. We say (in Native), back in the creation times
28 when everything was just a fog. But I just wanted to
29 mention that because it's the appropriate time for us
30 is when you can say these things and teach the kids,
31 the young ones, about creation.

32
33 So thank you.

34
35 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Randy.
36 And thank you and Deborah for sitting in on the entire
37 meeting and for sharing your observations. Let's see.
38 Brandon or Jack or both of you.

39
40 MR. FAGERSTROM: Thank you. I think
41 one thing I have to mention and try to emphasize is the
42 importance of the population in particular our island,
43 St. Lawrence and Diomedes. We haven't seen no ducks or
44 geese. A lot of the birds they traditionally harvest
45 are having quite a hard time and I don't think we can
46 picture how actually bad it is. I just figured I'd try
47 to emphasize that.

48
49 Good meeting. Thank you.

50

0135

1 MR. AHMASUK: Brandon here. Thanks
2 everybody. Good meeting. Again, lots of good
3 information. The seabird die-off for our region has
4 been the main topic, but trying to get answers working
5 with Robb, working with Kathy, others, even getting
6 COASST involved to try to get numbers reported. A big
7 thank you going out to everybody that's helped out.
8 Without everybody's help we wouldn't be where we are
9 now.

10

11 Another big thank you to the people of
12 the region. Without their help getting carcasses sent
13 to us, getting them sent off to Robb and Kathy,
14 whoever, also without their help we wouldn't be here.
15 Thank you to everybody in the site chat, the
16 condolences.

17

18 Again, much appreciated. Always good
19 information. It would be better to be in person, but
20 given the circumstances we have to do what we have to
21 do. It is good to see everybody. I know we have
22 heated discussions quite often in this group, but
23 regardless I miss you guys, actually seeing you guys in
24 person.

25

26 The AMBCC meetings has always been one
27 of my favorite meetings, but the way I take the -- even
28 though we may have differences of opinion at times,
29 we're all here because we love the resource. We
30 wouldn't be here otherwise.

31

32 Anyway, thank you.

33

34 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Brandon.
35 Let's see. I don't think Peter or Karen are on. Am I
36 mistaken?

37

38 MR. DEVINE: You are mistaken, sir.

39

40 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Oh, there you are.
41 You're hidden by a phone number. Go ahead, Peter.

42

43 MR. DEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
44 Fellow board members. Everybody. Good meeting. Good
45 information. I forgot to mention earlier that we did
46 get to have our culture camp this year and we do
47 appreciate the contribution that Fish and Wildlife
48 Service has been giving us for the last 20 years or
49 whatever we've been doing this. We've been lucky on
50

0136

1 our Covid numbers. I think we're still under 50 for
2 our town. Our school is wide open, so everything has
3 gone good here.

4
5 Everybody have a safe winter and
6 hopefully see you all next spring.

7
8 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Peter.
9 Let's see. Ryan, I think it brings to you for the
10 Department of Fish and Game.

11
12 MR. SCOTT: Thanks, Eric. Boy, where
13 to start. I mean so many things have been said and I
14 agree with all of them. So I'll just hit a couple
15 highlights.

16
17 First, I certainly want to recognize
18 Brandon's loss and the folks in Utqiagvik their loss as
19 well. Trying times. I mean every one of us have had
20 families touched by Covid and it's a difficult time.

21
22 Being able to participate in a group
23 like this reminds me that there's life out there and we
24 do do this because we're into it. We love it. We care
25 about the resource and we care about our friends and
26 our family and the people that we represent. I really
27 have always appreciated -- I'm pretty young today in
28 AMBCC still and have always appreciated the opportunity
29 to come together with you guys.

30
31 I think it was Brandon touched on,
32 yeah, we get into some difficult discussions at times.
33 Along those lines for this meeting I just want to
34 recognize all the work that's been done on Emperor
35 outreach, consideration for all the regulatory avenues
36 that we've talked about several times.

37
38 I think it's important that we
39 recognize that Cacklers are hanging out there and this
40 is a good place for us to introduce it and there's been
41 some fall/winter season regulatory changes made.
42 That's great. Hopefully that will bump us back up into
43 where we want to be.

44
45 I guess lastly I just -- specifically
46 to Taqulik and Todd. I was able to spend some time
47 with them a couple weeks ago up on the Slope. It's
48 actually my first trip ever up there. They were very
49 gracious hosts. It was wonderful to spend time in the
50

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1 community. Lots of birds around still. It was really
2 great.

3
4 Anyway, I appreciate all the input, the
5 information and the efforts of the Council, guests and
6 everybody who participated. I very much wish you well
7 this winter, all of us. Even in Southeast we woke up
8 and there's new snow on the mountains. So things are
9 actually changing I guess at this time.

10

11 Best wishes for the fall/winter. I'm
12 looking forward to seeing you guys in the spring.
13 Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Ryan.
16 Patty, I'll call on you for your thoughts about the
17 meeting. You're back. It's good to see you.

18

19 MS. SCHWALENBERG: I'm back. Thank
20 you. Yeah, I think also I echo everyone's comments.
21 It was a great meeting and obviously we wanted to be in
22 person, but I'm really glad that everyone is willing to
23 put all of our communities and our family's health
24 first and agreed to a virtual meeting this fall. So I
25 thank you for that.

26

27 It seems like every time we have a
28 meeting it gets exciting and then there's more work to
29 do. So I guess that's a good thing. I also wanted to
30 say that I am truly blessed to work with so many
31 talented people. The different ways of knowing and the
32 agency partners that have stepped up and just willing
33 to work on behalf of the AMBCC, including USGS and
34 obviously Fish and Wildlife Service and Fish and Game
35 and NOAA. So I really appreciate all of the agency
36 folks that have been willing to just jump into this and
37 help us answer some of the difficult questions that
38 we've been grappling with over the past few years.
39 Hopefully next year we will be able to meet in person.

40

41 I also wanted to echo the condolences
42 for Billy's family and Roy's family. Billy was just
43 such a joy to work with. Any time I needed anything if
44 Brandon wasn't there he'd jump in and happily. He
45 always had a smile on his face, so it was really great
46 working with him. Roy, we had him in our Alaska Native
47 Relations Training, I'm sure Crystal mentioned, and
48 just a wealth of knowledge. So a big loss there to
49 both of the communities. I really was sorry to hear of

50

0138

1 their loss.

2

3

4 So other than that, thank you all again
5 for participating and participating actively so we
6 didn't have to wait for a second or a motion like the
7 last meeting Eric was worried about. Thank you all and
8 I look forward to our next meeting and all the
9 committee meetings we'll be having in between.

9

10 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Patty. So

11 I'll try not to repeat what has been stated before.

12 Ryan, I agree with all of the statements that were
13 made. Thank you first for enduring another virtual
14 meeting. Like I said in the beginning of this, my
15 introductory comments, we'd much rather be around
16 having a cup of coffee and eating snacks and chatting,
17 but I'm hopeful in the future.

18

19 I also want to thank the presentations
20 by Lili, Jason, Julian, Tamara, Robb and Liz and Will.
21 If I missed somebody, I apologize. It takes a lot of
22 effort to prepare presentations. I appreciate the
23 extra effort that the presenters did in their
24 PowerPoint presentations and answering questions. We
25 had some great discussions, particularly with Tamara
26 and Emperor geese outreach and education and then with
27 Robb, Liz and Kathy on the seabird die-offs. Thank you
28 for those presenters for your efforts and investing
29 into the AMBCC.

30

31 I want to acknowledge Patty. She's
32 always the person behind the curtain putting together
33 the packets, reducing the size of the packets to get
34 them to people that don't have computer facilities good
35 enough, big enough or fast enough to take them,
36 coordinate them with people and in doing so often under
37 challenges. Anyway, thank you, Patty. Your role is
38 invaluable to this Council.

39

40 Thank you for your endurance in my lack
41 of knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order. I should have
42 brushed up on that. Gayla was kind enough to be
43 patient with me. I think we were able to get what we
44 wanted to to accomplish.

45

46 A reminder that if you did sit in and
47 agree to be on a committee, please make every effort to
48 participate and be actively engaged. If there's
49 documents to be reviewed, please do so. I think we

50

0139

1 made some pretty important decisions on committees.
2 The Budget Committee that's going to meet, the Seabird
3 Die-Off Committee, I think those are both very
4 important topics and I ask for your participation to
5 move those forward.

6
7 I think that is all I have to say. Any
8 last minute comments or questions for the good of the
9 order. Will, I see your hand. Go ahead.

10

11 MR. LACEY: I don't know how to use the
12 hand function. I just wanted to draw everyone's
13 attention to an entry I made in the chat. I did get an
14 answer concerning the stipend. That is done when the
15 notice of award is completed. So it's entered as part
16 of the terms of the agreement. Thanks.

17

18 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thanks, Will. We
19 will work on -- the Budget Committee will work on that
20 and make sure that all the regions understand what
21 specific language has to be written in. The statement
22 of work as we move forward.

23

24 All right. I think that is the end of
25 my responsibilities and I think my next -- Robb, I see
26 your hand up. Go ahead.

27

28 MR. KALER: Sorry. I was just going to
29 quickly -- I was looking for subsistence pictures of
30 harvest of eggs so folks can share those. I'll follow
31 up with Brandon. I think he might have some. I had
32 some good five-gallon buckets showing a successful
33 murre egg harvest. Anyway, I think we should get some
34 slides together and show what a successful harvest
35 looks like. Maybe AMBCC already has a site where we're
36 sharing those types of pictures.

37

38 Anyway, great meeting and I just wanted
39 to follow up on that.

40

41 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Okay. We'll do a
42 query. Liliana would probably be the best or Brandon
43 or Jack, but I think Liliana also has some images. If
44 I remember correctly, there's a great image of Herman
45 Squartsoff from Kodiak. I'll see if I can find that
46 image for you. I think that was on a report actually
47 that Lili produced, so I'm guessing she has a copy of
48 that.

49

50

0140

1 Seeing no other virtual or real hands,
2 Gayla, I'm going to hand the virtual gavel over to you.

3
4 CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: I got it. Thank
5 you, Eric, and thank you everybody for a nice meeting.
6 I'm looking forward to next year's meeting and
7 hopefully we'll be in person. As stated, I know that
8 we have a lot of committee work that we will be working
9 on. I know that sometimes we get really busy and just
10 reply to those Doodle polls to make sure that when we
11 have availability for that.

12
13 Don't forget, everybody, that we have
14 the December proposal deadline coming up. That's
15 usually December 15th, so if you guys have any regional
16 proposals that need to be submitted, make sure that we
17 work on those.

18
19 One of the things that always is in the
20 back of my mind is our past proposals that we've
21 submitted in the past and we don't want to forget about
22 those that are in committee. When we get to our
23 Technical Committee, if we could revisit those
24 proposals that have been sitting in there for years to
25 try to make some changes that we need to have done.

26
27 Board of Game meeting coming up January
28 2022. I really emphasize our AMBCC proposal at that
29 Board of Game meeting. That's pretty much what I just
30 kind of wanted to re-highlight in addition to what Eric
31 closed the meeting out on.

32
33 I guess we have next on the agenda is
34 date and place of next meeting. Did we want to go
35 ahead and put in the week of April 4th, 2022. We
36 usually traditionally have our meeting that first week
37 of April. Do we want to put that on our calendars? I
38 got a thumbs up from Eric. Does that look good, Patty?
39 Patty is showing her screen.

40
41 MS. SCHWALENBERG: There's the April
42 calendar.

43
44 CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: I'm good with that.
45 Traditionally that's kind of like what we usually have
46 blocked off for AMBCC for our meeting. Does that work
47 with everybody for that week that we could put that
48 date down?

49
50

0141

1 (No comments)

2

3

CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: Okay. I would think that we would want to plan for a full week and really have those in-person committee meetings for any follow up on the committee meetings that we've had over the winter that hopefully will be in person, face to face and really be able to go over those topics to get the things that need to get done. Does that sound good?

10

11

12

MR. TAYLOR: Looks good to me.

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CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: Okay. Let's block off that week in April 4th to the 8th of 2022. Hopefully we'll be in person and won't have to do virtual again. I think that we're going to be also planning to do -- it would be really good if we are in person that we do a traditional foods potluck like we did in the past. I think that would be really good for us to sit down and share traditional foods from all of our areas.

MR. HARRIS: Great. That would be good, Gayla.

CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: Coral.

MS. CHERNOFF: And that meeting is going to be in Hawaii, right?

(Laughter)

CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: I hope so. We have lots of travel money, so maybe we could put our travel funds.

MS. CHERNOFF: I think for Kodiak it's cheaper to get to Hawaii than it is to get to Anchorage half the time.

CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: It is. I actually looked that up yesterday and it was \$197 one way from Dillingham to Honolulu.

MS. CHERNOFF: Yes, we could be saving money.

(Laughter)

0142

1 MR. TAYLOR: I'm trying to figure out
2 what Will's blood pressure is doing right now, but I'm
3 guessing it's elevating.

4
5 CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: Cyrus, did you have
6 anything.

7
8 MR. HARRIS: No, the schedule you've
9 got is going to work for me and I do support the
10 traditional foods gathering after being not together
11 for a while. That was very well done the last time we
12 had it.

13
14 CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: That was really
15 good. That was actually the first time I tried
16 sheefish from your region and really enjoyed that. We
17 can all gather and harvest and everybody stay safe and
18 be well.

19
20 If you guys need anything, you can
21 always reach out to me. I know I've talked to some of
22 you in the past as we go through our grants and our
23 budgets and all these different questions. I'm also
24 available just an email and a phone call away.

25
26 Does anybody have anything else?

27
28 (No comments)

29
30 CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: Okay. You guys
31 stay safe. I'll call for a motion to adjourn.

32
33 MS. HEPA: Make a motion to adjourn the
34 meeting.

35
36 MR. HARRIS: Second.

37
38 CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: It's been first and
39 seconded. Any discussion.

40
41 (No comments)

42
43 CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: All those in favor
44 signify by saying aye.

45
46 IN UNISON: Aye.

47
48 CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: All those opposed
49 same sign.
50

0143

1

(No opposing votes)

2

3

CHAIRWOMAN HOSETH: Bye.

4

5

(Off record)

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(END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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