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VOLUME I

ALASKA MIGRATORY BIRD CO-MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SPRING MEETING

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
September 25, 2013

Members Present:

- Doug Vincent-Lang, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Pete Probasco, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Peter Devine - Aleutian/Pribilof Island Association.
- Frank Woods, Bristol Bay Native Association
- Mike Pederson, North Slope
- Joeneal Hicks, Copper River Native Association
- Myron Naneng; Timothy Andrew, Association of Village Presidents
- Joel Saccheus, Kawerak
- Rick Rowland, Sun'aq Tribal

Executive Director, Patty Brown-Schwalenberg

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2
3 (Anchorage, Alaska - 9/25/13)

4
5 (On record)

6
7 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Good morning. My
8 name is Timothy Andrew. As you can see, I'm not Myron
9 Naneng, who's supposed to be the Chair of the AMBCC
10 meeting, but I'm sitting in as his alternate. We will
11 call the meeting to order. If we can all rise for the
12 moment of silence, please.

13
14 (Moment of silence)

15
16 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Next on the agenda is
17 the seating of the alternates. There's two alternates
18 here. Myself, Timothy Andrew, alternate for the
19 Association of Village Council Presidents.

20
21 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Doug Vincent-Lang
22 for -- I'm the director of the Wildlife Conservation
23 Division, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

24
25 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Any other alternates.
26 We're the only two. I'm not sure how to go about the
27 process of seating the alternates.

28
29 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Call for a motion.

30
31 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Okay.

32
33 MR. VINCENT-LANG: I don't think I can
34 call for a motion since I'm an alternate.

35
36 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. I would ask
37 unanimous consent of seating of the alternates.

38
39 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Is there a second.

40
41 MR. WOODS: Second.

42
43 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Any objections.

44
45 (No comments)

46
47 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Motion passes. We'll
48 go into the roll call.

49
50 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Association of

1 Village Council Presidents.
2
3 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Here.
4
5 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Bristol Bay
6 Native Association.
7
8 MR. WOODS: Here.
9
10 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Chugach
11 Regional Resources Commission.
12
13 (No response)
14
15 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Absent, Mr.
16 Chairman. Copper River Native Association.
17
18 MR. HICKS: Here.
19
20 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Kawerak.
21
22 MR. SACCHEUS: Here.
23
24 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Aleutian/Pribilof
25 Islands Association.
26
27 MR. DEVINE: Here.
28
29 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Sun'aq Tribe
30 of Kodiak.
31
32 MR. ROWLAND: Here.
33
34 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Maniilaq
35 Association.
36
37 (No response)
38
39 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Absent, Mr.
40 Chairman. North Slope Borough.
41
42 (No response)
43
44 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Mike is here,
45 but not here, so I'm sure he'll be coming soon. Tanana
46 Chiefs Conference.
47
48 (No response)
49
50 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Is absent, Mr.

1 Chairman. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
2
3 MR. PROBASCO: Present.
4
5 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Alaska
6 Department of Fish and Game.
7
8 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Present.
9
10 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Mr. Chairman,
11 we have a quorum.
12
13 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you very much.
14 We'll go into the introductions of Council members and
15 Staff. We'll start with Mr. Frank Woods.
16
17 MR. WOODS: Frank Woods, Bristol Bay
18 Native Association.
19
20 MR. SACCHEUS: Joel Saccheus, Kawerak.
21
22 MR. DEVINE: Peter Devine, Jr.,
23 Aleutian/Pribilof Island Association.
24
25 MR. PROBASCO: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
26 Pete Probasco, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
27
28 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Good morning.
29 Timothy Andrew with AVCP.
30
31 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Good morning. Doug
32 Vincent-Lang, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
33
34 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Patty
35 Schwalenberg, executive director of AMBCC.
36
37 MR. ROWLAND: Rick Rowland, Sun'aq
38 Tribe of Kodiak.
39
40 MR. HICKS: Joeneal Hicks, Copper
41 River.
42
43 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: If we could have the
44 Staff introduce themselves, please.
45
46 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
47 and good morning. Dan Rosenberg with the Alaska
48 Department of Fish and Game.
49
50 MR. FISCHER: Good morning. Julian

1 Fisher with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
2
3 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: If we could have the
4 introduction of the public, we'll start with Carol.
5
6 MS. BROWN: Good morning. Carol Brown,
7 AVCP.
8
9 MR. REISHUS: Good morning. Brandon
10 Reishus, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.
11
12 MR. STEHN: Bob Stehn, U.S. Fish and
13 Wildlife Service.
14
15 MR. FALL: Jim Fall, Division of
16 Subsistence, Fish and Game.
17
18 MS. NAVES: Liliana Naves, Division of
19 Subsistence, Fish and Game.
20
21 MR. NOEL: Good morning. Ryan Noel,
22 Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement.
23
24 MR. PETRULA: Mike Petrula, Alaska
25 Department of Fish and Game.
26
27 MS. BEHE: My name is Carolina Behe,
28 Inuit Circumpolar Council.
29
30 MS. WOODS: Gayla Woods, BBNA.
31
32 MR. SCHAMBER: Jason Chamber, Alaska
33 Fish and Game.
34
35 MR. WILSON: I'm Kenny Wilson from -- I
36 used to live in Dillingham. I just moved to Anchorage.
37 I represent myself. I used to hold the position of
38 Frank's in Bristol Bay for a few years.
39
40 MS. KANAYURAK: Nicole Kanayurak, North
41 Slope Borough.
42
43 MR. AHMASUK: Brandon Ahmasuk,
44 subsistence director, Kawerak.
45
46 MR. SFORMO: Todd Sformo, North Slope
47 Borough.
48
49 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you very much
50 and good morning and welcome. We'll go on to the

1 review and the adoption of the agenda. Is there a
2 motion to adopt.

3
4 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Motion to adopt the
5 agenda.

6
7 MR. PROBASCO: Second.

8
9 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Seconded by Pete.
10 Any further discussion. Patty.

11
12 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Yeah, under
13 the Service Regulations Committee report I will be
14 inviting Dan Rosenberg to discuss the changing of the
15 meeting schedule under that agenda item.

16
17 Thank you.

18
19 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Any others. Pete.

20
21 MR. PROBASCO: On that same item, as
22 requested by Carol, I did call Mr. Brad Bortner this
23 morning in D.C. and have additional information to
24 provide.

25
26 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you. Any
27 others.

28
29 Rick.

30
31 MR. ROWLAND: At what point is Pete
32 going to provide that additional information on the
33 agenda?

34
35 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. Mr. Rowland.
36 I would provide that along with Mr. Rosenberg when we
37 do item 10(a).

38
39 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Any other action for
40 the review and adoption of the agenda.

41
42 (No comments)

43
44 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: The Chair will
45 entertain a call for questions.

46
47 MR. PROBASCO: Question.

48
49 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: The question has been
50 called. All in favor say aye.

1 IN UNISON: Aye.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: All opposed.

4

5 (No opposing votes)

6

7 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Motion carries.

8 We'll go on to item number 7. We have an invitation
9 for public comments. Is there anyone that wishes to
10 make any comments to the Council. It's an opportunity
11 for the public to make comments about migratory birds
12 and the regulations perhaps that are being considered
13 or any issues that you may want to bring to the Co-
14 management Council. Kenny. Come to a mic. If you can
15 introduce yourself for the record, please.

16

17 MR. WILSON: For the record, my name is
18 Kenny Wilson. I'm a long time resident of Bristol Bay.
19 I just moved to Anchorage this past July. I'm a
20 commercial fisherman and I've worked in the realty
21 department for the last 10 years.

22

23 My concern is the transportation of
24 geese here to Anchorage. You know, as a subsistence
25 hunter, my uncle and my mother, when they were elderly,
26 they moved over here to Anchorage for better care and
27 my uncle, he grew up around Goodnews and Aniak. He
28 lived on ducks and geese. I mean that was just
29 Thanksgiving dinner. Every time I came to town I
30 brought him something.

31

32 If you guys change that regulation,
33 that's going to -- you know what's going to happen,
34 it's going to make criminals out of us, you know, when
35 we transport our -- you know, bring our ducks and geese
36 here to Anchorage for our winter subsistence. It would
37 be just like you guys going to Carrs and there's no
38 chicken or they couldn't transport the -- couldn't
39 bring chicken up from down south. That's the same
40 thing.

41

42 So don't put that into regulation. You
43 know, allow us to bring our subsistence foods here to
44 Anchorage. There's 40,000 Natives here in Anchorage
45 and there's a lot of people that like their subsistence
46 foods, especially the elders. You know, that's what
47 they grew up on. A lot of people don't -- you know, if
48 that regulation was passed where we couldn't bring our
49 subsistence foods, all it's going to do is just make
50 criminals out of us.

1 Also the Duck Stamp. I'd like to do
2 away with that. That's all I have, Mr. Chairman.

3
4 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you.

5
6 Any questions for Kenny.

7
8 (No comments)

9
10 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Mr.
11 Wilson.

12
13 Anyone else.

14
15 MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair. I'd like to
16 just thank Kenny for showing up and testifying. I met
17 him when I first got in early this week, but it was
18 good to see him this morning. I honestly believe -- is
19 he the only -- other than the Department of Wildlife in
20 Oregon, is he the only public member in the audience?
21 So we do have one public. It's just a point of
22 interest, Mr. Chair.

23
24 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Mr. Woods.

25
26 Rick.

27
28 MR. ROWLAND: Mr. Chair. I've got a
29 question. Kenny, thanks for coming. One of my
30 questions is, for as far back as you can remember, how
31 long has your people in the Bristol Bay area been
32 sharing migratory birds with family members that are
33 not in the community?

34
35 MR. WILSON: Gee, whiz, as long as I
36 can remember. You know, we've been -- for many, many
37 years -- you know, I'm 57 years old and I've been
38 hunting all my life. The people always brought food
39 here to Anchorage to people that lived in Anchorage. I
40 mean when I came over here to visit my mother and my
41 uncle, there was other people from Dillingham that were
42 here. When I brought foods, I shared among those
43 people that were there at the facility out in Muldoon.

44
45
46 I'll never forget this one old lady.
47 She couldn't see. Her name was Lukeli Petla (ph) and
48 she was -- she used to push away her food, you know.
49 Every time she smelled a fish and she smelled, you
50 know, the subsistence foods, all she would do is open

1 up her mouth. That's a real -- you know, that right
2 there is something that -- you know, that's what they
3 like, you know, and we've been bringing our subsistence
4 foods to this town for many, many years.

5
6 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you. I have a
7 question, Kenny. I guess Alaska Natives have been
8 moving into Anchorage for quite a number of years, even
9 probably prior to Statehood. Is there anybody from
10 Bristol Bay that you know of that have made the move
11 this way and has a history of transporting migratory
12 birds and other subsistence food?

13
14 MR. WILSON: Actually there's a number
15 of people from Togiak, you know, that have moved over
16 here. You know, they actually go to Togiak and, you
17 know, they get their subsistence foods. They even --
18 there's a couple that even work for the government that
19 do that, you know. People have been doing it for a
20 long time. You know, there's a lot of local Natives
21 here that I know and there's a lot of -- you know,
22 that's what we need.

23
24 That's a real important issue you guys
25 are going to be bringing to the table. I think that
26 really needs to be looked at. That, to me, would be
27 almost criminal to not let us do that, you know.
28 There's so many regulations that always try to -- you
29 know, that aren't good that shouldn't even be in the
30 book as far as I'm concerned, you know. I've been
31 commercial fishing for 50-some years, you know, and I
32 still do. So we bring the fish, we bring the ducks, we
33 bring the geese, we bring the ptarmigan, we bring the
34 beluga, you know, all the subsistence foods that we
35 catch out there we bring it in.

36
37 You open up my freezer right now, it's
38 all fish and caribou and stuff like that that I brought
39 in from the wildlife refuge off the peninsula when I
40 was out there last year. There's no chicken in my
41 freezer. There's no -- you know, I'll go to the store
42 and eat, you know, and buy a little bit of this and a
43 little bit of that, but my main source of my food is
44 subsistence. That's what we live off. That's what
45 we're used to eating.

46
47 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: You also made a
48 reference to Duck Stamps is an issue to you. Would you
49 further elaborate on that, please.

50

1 MR. WILSON: Yeah, the Duck Stamp
2 issue, you know, I remember when that -- you know, I've
3 always -- you know, that's always been a thorn in my
4 side, I think. You know, a lot of the villagers, you
5 know, they're -- they hate that regulation. You know,
6 why do you have to have a Duck Stamp, you know. To me,
7 it should be -- you know, we've only got just a small
8 opportunity when the birds come through and they go
9 back out and some of these people they don't even --
10 and these villagers, you know, they don't quite
11 understand that regulation. They never did and I don't
12 think they ever will. They don't like that at all.

13

14 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Frank.

15

16 MR. WOODS: Kenny, I think there's
17 legislation that we just got handed during the last
18 couple days that there's legislation before the Senate
19 and it's attached to the Sportsman Bill that eliminates
20 the need for Duck Stamps. We've got a bunch of issues
21 here that hopefully that Duck Stamp issue gets taken
22 care of, but the transportation issue is really really
23 important for the people living here. I have family
24 here. I have extended family here. My dad lives here,
25 you know, and all my friends and family. If I go out
26 hunting, I'm going to traditionally share. So your
27 points are well taken and they're well meaning.

28

29 Right now we're under dual management.
30 The State allows transportation of sports caught birds
31 with one wing attached or the head and then the Feds,
32 under the subsistence rule, it's pretty vague and I
33 appreciate you coming and testifying and how important
34 it is, because it is. There's more than 40,000 people
35 here from the rural areas that are Native that live
36 here and actually depend upon.

37

38 Kenny had a good point. When my great
39 aunt was living in a health care facility and I brought
40 her subsistence food. Not just birds, but ptarmigan
41 and geese and gave to the facility to cook and I
42 brought her clams. Literally started screaming and
43 crying. When you see that happen, it not only lifts
44 the spirit of the person you're bringing it to, but it
45 also lifts -- it's a way of living that I think is
46 really hard to identify on paper without you
47 experiencing that feeling. So thanks, Kenny.

48

49 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Rick.

50

1 MR. ROWLAND: Thanks, Kenny. I'd like
2 to echo what Frank said and add to it and say what
3 you're talking about is similar to what a lot of
4 Natives throughout Alaska feel in relation to migratory
5 birds as a customary and traditional food for
6 nutritional purposes and it's important to share in our
7 communities.

8
9 What I wanted to ask you is, in your
10 recollection of sharing, is there an emotional as well
11 as psychological change in the people when you share
12 with them and in some cases is it spiritually
13 uplifting?

14
15 MR. WILSON: Oh, yeah. To see the
16 faces on those people when they know they got something
17 from what they traditionally ate, you know, for their
18 life. It's unbelievable how they react. You know,
19 it's just like they're having -- you know, it's just
20 like Christmas all over again. You know, those people
21 that grew up on non-subsistence foods, they wouldn't
22 eat my food, you know. They'd say, oh, yeah, I like it,
23 but they would just have a little bit.

24
25 This is how the Native's grew up.
26 This is, you know, this is what we eat. It's real hard
27 to adjust to someone -- it's real hard to adjust to
28 certain types of food if you never really grew up on
29 it. Everybody knows that. That's only common sense
30 for Christ sake.

31
32 So this is very important that we're
33 able to transport -- you know, that we could bring our
34 subsistence foods to Anchorage. I mean I probably
35 speak for a lot of people even though I represent
36 myself, you know. It is something that should always
37 be allowed, to bring our food into Anchorage.

38
39 I'll never forget this one guy from
40 Toksook Bay he came to the Board of Fish and he says
41 you know what, I brought my traditional foods from
42 Toksook to eat and we were cooking it in our room. He
43 said we don't go to the restaurants. This was, gee
44 whiz, 20 years ago when he said that. That always
45 stuck in my mind about that old man. He's still living
46 today, you know. God, he's almost 90 and he still
47 comes to meetings. So, you know, those guys, they
48 really -- you know, that's their life.

49
50 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Any other questions

1 for Kenny.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Mr.

6 Wilson.

7

8 Any others that would like to make any

9 public comments.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: If not, we'll close

14 the opportunity for public comments. Next on the

15 agenda is the adoption of the Council action items,

16 April 3-4, 2013 meeting and Staff report on action

17 items by our executive director, Patty.

18

19 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: I really don't

20 have a verbal report on the action items. There is a

21 page after the action items that indicates the action

22 that we had taken on the directives of the Council.

23 The only comments I have is that the work on the flow

24 chart with the proposal review process has been ongoing

25 and the Council member training has been deferred to

26 the spring meeting because of time constraints and we

27 are still working on the training manual. But we do

28 have an outline for the training manual under tab 2.

29

30 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: My apologies. I kind

31 of went out of order here. Is there a motion to adopt

32 the minutes.

33

34 MR. DEVINE: I'll make a motion, Mr.

35 Chair.

36

37 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Motion made by Peter.

38 Is there a second.

39

40 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Second.

41

42 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Discussion on the

43 minutes.

44

45 (No comments)

46

47 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Any further

48 discussion.

49

50 (No comments)

1 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Question.
2
3 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: The question has been
4 called. All in favor say aye.
5
6 IN UNISON: Aye.
7
8 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: All opposed.
9
10 (No opposing votes)
11
12 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Motion carries. Next
13 on the agenda we have regional representative reports,
14 regional meetings, issues, concerns, et cetera. We'll
15 start with the other side of the table. We'll go to
16 Joeneal.
17
18 MR. HICKS: Sorry. I was just trying
19 to write down the report as I remember it. Anyway,
20 because of the late grant award that we got that was
21 our -- well, anyway, our regional meeting was not held
22 until late August. Anyway, CRNA had decided not to
23 fund any kind of meetings whatsoever or even to send me
24 to the committee meetings until the grant award was
25 actually approved, so that is why it happened.
26
27 Anyhow, the purpose of that particular
28 meeting was to bring the regional committee of the
29 Copper River region up to date on issues related to the
30 AMBCC, what we have been talking about over the past
31 year. It also was held to approve a budget for the
32 next five years. As you know, the budget is now five
33 years, so we went over the budget and approved the
34 budget for the next five years.
35
36 We also approved the migratory bird
37 camp that is held every year and has been held every
38 year since about five years now, I think, six years.
39 Anyhow, the migratory bird camp was held August 15th
40 through the 20th. A total of 31 people, adults, youth
41 and elders showed up, including Patty and Jay.
42 Activities included hunting, berry picking,
43 storytelling. We talked about the AMBCC to those
44 present, what we do and what our meaningful role is and
45 stuff like that. We had a gun safety class and did
46 some duck hunting. Other activities was put on hold
47 because of the arrival of Patty, who brought bad
48 weather, wind and rain.
49
50 (Laughter)

1 No moose was taken although we had a
2 ticket. There was just nothing available in that
3 particular area. Why, I don't know, but no moose was
4 taken. Anyway, we scheduled another one for our fall
5 meeting. It will probably be held in about two to
6 three weeks.

7
8 Other than that there's really not much
9 more I can report on.

10
11 Thank you.

12
13 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Any questions for
14 Joeneal.

15
16 Frank.

17
18 MR. WOODS: How was your migratory
19 bird camp funded? Was it through the tribe or did you
20 actually utilize part of educational reach through the
21 grant maybe?

22
23 MR. HICKS: It is through the grant
24 that we receive. We allocate \$5,000 a year from that
25 grant and we utilize most of it. Gas is the most
26 expensive.

27
28 MR. WOODS: That's good to know.
29 That's a good idea, especially the education outreach
30 especially in migratory birds. Pretty awesome.
31 Thanks.

32
33 MR. HICKS: As you might remember, we
34 talked about the AMBCC possibly funding the education
35 outreach of these particular programs that we held,
36 including that with North Slope.

37
38 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Any other questions.

39
40 (No comments)

41
42 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: I have a question
43 about the migratory bird camp. How many villages and
44 how many -- these 31 people were from the Copper River
45 villages?

46
47 MR. HICKS: What we try to require is
48 to get two elders from each village. In other words,
49 there are eight villages in the AHTNA region. Two
50 elders and whatever other youths are wanting to go to

1 it. The youths have to be between 13 and 21. Any
2 younger than that they have to be accompanied by their
3 parent or guardian. So there's eight villages. Most
4 of those that attended were from Copper Center,
5 Cantwell. There were three elders from Cantwell that
6 showed up. Anyway, to make 31, there were some
7 presenters there also. Did that answer your question?
8

9 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you.

10
11 Any other questions for Joeneal?
12

13 (No comments)

14
15 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: If not, thank you
16 very much. We'll move on to Rick.
17

18 MR. ROWLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
19 Rick Rowland from Sun'ag Tribe of Kodiak. We haven't
20 had our fall meeting. Usually it will be after the
21 meeting to explain the things that occurred at the
22 meeting. This spring, after the spring meeting, we had
23 our spring meeting and the group of individuals that
24 came in from all the villages on Kodiak were pleased
25 for a couple things, about the progress that's being
26 made on the Emperor Goose discussions and they're
27 hoping that there will be more detailed surveys done
28 that will lead to eventual harvest.
29

30 They're pleased that the handicraft
31 proposal was moving forward positively. They were
32 really happy to see that it was drafted into some sort
33 of a bill. Now we find out we don't know when it's
34 going to pass, if it will pass, but we'll have to
35 explain that to them.
36

37 There's still a little bit of surprise
38 about the difference between Duck Stamps being not used
39 up on the North Slope or western Alaska and then for
40 years everybody on the island has been told that they
41 have to use them or they'll get in trouble. So that
42 led to community members saying that there needs to be
43 a way to encourage youth to start hunting migratory
44 birds more and the elders that participated suggested
45 that one of the reasons why they don't hunt is because
46 they're afraid of getting in trouble from the
47 regulations and they don't want to end up losing their
48 freedom or guns or skiffs or whatnot and getting a
49 fine. So there really is a need to find some way to
50 get the kids off the computer and behind a wheel of a

1 skiff or out hunting for migratory birds to share with
2 the community.

3

4 Again, one other concern was that we're
5 really interested in finding out something about these
6 Emperor Geese on making them legal. That way we could
7 start managing them appropriately. That way the ducks
8 that are in their areas aren't getting pushed out
9 because a lot of their people in the communities are
10 saying they're pushing a lot of those ducks away.

11

12 That's pretty much it.

13

14 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Rick.

15

16 Are there any questions.

17

18 Frank.

19

20 MR. WOODS: I think you have the same
21 concerns we have in our area. People are reluctant to
22 hunt when they're getting -- how do you explain it.
23 Let me put it in an analogy. How it was explained to
24 me from one of the villagers that called me said that
25 it's like the Holy Spirit -- for God-fearing people,
26 that the Holy Spirit of law is hanging over his head.
27 Made him feel like he was -- it's intimidating, number
28 one. Number two, it puts people in kind of a fear mode
29 and then it puts people on the defensive of having to
30 try to keep defending what they're doing to help feed
31 their families. In some instances, it actually
32 discourages hunting.

33

34 This individual called me because he
35 was getting questioned and it was -- you know, when
36 you're questioned on all the different aspects of this
37 hunt, when people -- we've worked really hard with the
38 RITs on a Refuge level and the State level, Jim Boynton
39 for years has been really good at gun safety classes,
40 educating on lead shot. When I got on board at BBNA --
41 like Kenny said, we don't agree with the Duck Stamp
42 issue, but we're asking people to comply so that they
43 don't put people in that position to have to defend
44 themselves. Not only in court, but also on the hunting
45 grounds.

46

47 When you go back, I'd really encourage
48 you to help coach them people that are under that fear
49 that you're going to help them walk through this
50 process and maybe help explain. Number one, there are

1 people like you trying to help eliminate all them fears
2 that we have to abide by. I think it's -- you know,
3 it's really sad to see we're in a day and age people
4 are still under that umbrella. I'd like to thank you
5 for addressing that issue. Thanks.

6

7

CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Rick.

8

9

MR. ROWLAND: Yeah, thanks, Frank.
10 That's correct, they do have that fear in them and it's
11 a big question about the Duck Stamps. If they don't
12 use them, why do we have to use them. That's pretty
13 much the question. Then they start talking about
14 sports hunting and then they start saying that -- there
15 was quite a discussion at the last meeting about
16 creating an area around the villages that doesn't allow
17 sports hunting so that subsistence hunting would be
18 available to the community members closer.

19

20

They said that there's lodge members
21 that are coming into the villages and the weather is
22 too and they can't head out on the skiff, so they just
23 go down to the local head of the bay and set up blinds
24 there. So it's increasing the competition from sports
25 hunters to subsistence hunters. There's a whole lot of
26 things that are really frustrating and we're working
27 towards finding ways to be able to continue the
28 subsistence customary and traditional uses.

29

30

MR. WOODS: You brought up a good
31 point, competition for resource. We had one of the
32 Refuge managers come in to our annual meeting -- maybe
33 just a note for you, Rick, to look at the competition
34 for resource because this lodge owner came in and
35 bought up the whole lot. Bought up the 40 -- whatever
36 book they had at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge,
37 either for Becharof or the Peninsula. The lodge owner
38 came and bought up the whole book, whatever they had,
39 for Duck Stamps, anticipating clientele that came in
40 and they were going to start utilizing the Duck Stamps
41 and offset because the locals could not access them.
42 The post office was out, the Refuges were out and the
43 only other option was to order one online, which it's
44 now hunting season.

45

46

So in the next year or so, if you could
47 go home and do some research, I'm going to do the same,
48 is look at the increase of competition for not only the
49 sports licenses being issued, but the increase of
50 residents versus non-residents participation. The

1 competition for resource is getting huge. If you look
2 at the -- if you watch the TV, there are so many
3 outdoor channels, outdoor shows, the natural -- that we
4 are getting in our area, it's only going to get worse.
5 I don't see it slowing down, the lodge business and the
6 guide industry and the tourism industry is huge. A
7 huge economic engine that really drives this force and
8 then you attach a sports to that.

9

10 I thank you for bringing that forward
11 too because it isn't in my report, but I will address
12 it when I do that. You hit it right on the head. When
13 the lodge industry and the tourism industry gets
14 involved, there are huge numbers included and without
15 any impact. I think we need to address that impact at
16 some point. Thanks.

17

18 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Frank.

19

20 Is there any other questions.

21

22 (No comments)

23

24 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: No further questions.

25

26 Thank you, Rick.

27

28 Mr. Doug.

29

30 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Well, I really don't
31 know what kind of report to give here because this is
32 my first meeting. I chose to come sit at this meeting
33 because, as you know, Dale Rabe was my deputy and he
34 filled this seat and I thought it was important to come
35 to a meeting to understand what it is you do, what
36 issues are facing you and how the State can help you
37 walk through those issues. I don't know whether I'll
38 fill the seat in the long term or whether I'll have the
39 deputy that I hire fill the seat, but either way I
40 thought it was critically important that I attend this
41 meeting for two days and sit and listen and understand
42 the issues you're facing and what kind of expertise you
43 need in this chair.

44

45 So you've got my commitment to listen
46 and try to understand the issues you're facing and work
47 with you as we move forward. We'll get a long-term
48 replacement, whether that will be me or somebody else
49 from my staff, but you have our commitment from the
50 State to listen and try to work through the issues.

1 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Doug.

2

3 Are there any questions for Doug.

4

5 (No comments)

6

7 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Hearing none. Thank
8 you, Doug. For the AVCP area we held a migratory bird
9 AVCP Waterfowl Conservation Committee meeting last
10 April. We did not hold one this fall. We normally
11 hold it right about this time of the year, but I guess
12 things didn't quite work out.

13

14 One of the issues that were brought up
15 during the spring meeting last April was the
16 utilization of migratory birds. You've seen people
17 take migratory birds and just harvest the breast. This
18 is during the spring migratory bird hunt. We've seen
19 it again this fall. I have drafted up a regulation for
20 the AMBCC to consider for the spring and summer
21 migratory bird hunt to disallow that type of practice
22 in areas that, you know, is not culturally appropriate.

23

24 In our area, when people waste a huge
25 portion of the bird in that manner, it's very much
26 frowned upon by the community and by people in the
27 villages. The backlash of that, what people are afraid
28 of, is that when people just harvest small amounts of
29 an animal that our Creator sees that as being
30 ungrateful, disrespectful and that the Creator will not
31 provide you as much because you don't need that much if
32 those portions aren't being utilized.

33

34 So I do have the proposal made. It's
35 just a matter of getting it submitted for the Council
36 to consider. We also have a proposal in to the Board
37 of Game for consideration of Unit 18 for the full
38 salvage and utilization of the migratory birds. You
39 know, it's the classic cultures, traditions and
40 beliefs, but it is the values and what people consider
41 waste in our region.

42

43 I was also directed at the spring
44 migratory bird meeting to contact a number of villages
45 in our north coast area of our survey area to make sure
46 the villages fully agree with the migratory bird survey
47 results for 2010. That was toward the end of April and
48 May and throughout the summer months. It's been
49 definitely a challenge and working with Liliana and
50 trying to get into contact with about five villages or

1 five tribes in the area to try to get -- no, six tribes
2 -- trying to get their approval. It turns out to be an
3 incredible challenge when people are busy migratory
4 bird hunting and commercial fishing, subsistence
5 fishing. We finally gained their approval, so it looks
6 like things are going to move forward.

7

8 Myron would probably give you a more
9 comprehensive report since he had the share of the
10 Waterfowl Conservation Committee. That's about it.
11 Any questions.

12

13 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Could you tell me a
14 little bit more about the proposal you have in front of
15 the Board of Game dealing with parts of migratory
16 birds.

17

18 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Yeah. I believe it
19 was 2012, spring of 2012, there was an incident where
20 somebody harvested about 10 Tundra Swans during the
21 spring migratory bird hunt and somebody saw them in the
22 dumpster, took a picture of it, posted it on Facebook
23 and also through various media network that we have
24 there in the community. It outraged a whole bunch of
25 people. I showed it to Myron.

26

27 Myron said, yeah, this is way too much
28 waste, so he showed it to the Waterfowl Conservation
29 Committee. They objected and then drafted a proposal
30 for the AMBCC's consideration and also one to the Board
31 of Game for the fall migratory bird hunt as well
32 because we're starting to see people come in and just
33 utilizing the breasts of the birds, whether it be
34 swans, ducks or geese, and their remainder being thrown
35 into the dumpster.

36

37 To try and encourage people that want
38 to just keep the breast part to encourage them to
39 perhaps give to somebody to give to the people that
40 need it. People would utilize the remainder of the
41 migratory bird for, you know, to feed themselves and
42 also feed others as well because there are people that
43 are less fortunate. There are widows in the community.
44 There are people that are disabled, they can't hunt and
45 they would appreciate any portion of the migratory
46 birds when they arrive and also when they're leaving in
47 the fall.

48

49 MR. VINCENT-LANG: (Microphone off)

50

1 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: No, the Board of Game
2 is going to be considering it this January, I believe.
3 Any other questions.

4
5 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Thank you.

6
7 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: You're welcome. If
8 not, we'll move on to Pete.

9
10 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. Our reports
11 will be contained in the agenda items. I just want to
12 note that I am glad to see Doug here and I'm also glad
13 to hear that we're moving forward with either Doug at
14 the table or his new deputy. So welcome, Doug.

15
16 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Thank you.

17
18 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Any questions for
19 Pete.

20
21 (No comments)

22
23 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Got away pretty
24 light.

25
26 (Laughter)

27
28 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Okay. We'll go on to
29 Peter.

30
31 MR. DEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Due
32 to unusual fishing season this year we did not get a
33 fall meeting together. We kept getting extension after
34 extension and actually fished through almost all of
35 August.

36
37 One of the things that's happening in
38 Sand Point is we've got a new -- well, not a new boat
39 harbor, but they're redoing the old boat harbor. It's
40 a \$5 million project. They just started September
41 15th, but they have people hired on as observers. What
42 they're watching for is the Steller's Eiders and the
43 sea lions. If any of those come into the boat harbor,
44 it will stop work for the day until whatever effected
45 the stop leaves the area.

46
47 They expect to be done January 15th.
48 They're doing pretty good. They took out all the old
49 slips in quite a hurry, so we're pretty excited about
50 this. It's going to take our floats, you know, from

1 like that far off the water to damn near three feet up.
2 So I mean barely have to jump off the boat anymore to
3 get a line. You know, just reach over with a hook and
4 tie up. They were hiring the people the day I left or
5 doing interviews, so I don't know who they got on
6 board. Hopefully somebody that recognizes them things.

7
8

9 That's all I have.

10

11 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Peter.

12

13 Any questions for Peter.

14

15 (No comments)

16

17 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Seeing none, we'll go
18 on to Joel.

19

20 MR. SACCHEUS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 We didn't have our regional fall meeting yet, but we're
22 having it next month on the 12th. I have a few things
23 to mention today. One of them was Brandon Ahmasuk, he
24 told me about over in Gambell they seen Emperor Geese
25 nesting in that area. Our area would like to hunt
26 Emperor Geese very much and that's what they always
27 mostly get out in St. Lawrence Island.

28

29 One thing about transporting the ducks
30 and geese to a nonrural area like here, Fairbanks, I
31 think it's very important to us Natives that like to
32 hunt and bring food to your relatives or cousins and
33 this here. I like to do that and it would be kind of
34 hard to explain to the local people, Natives in the
35 area for leaving the head and the wing on their ducks
36 or geese. I guess they don't really understand doing
37 that because I know it's mentioned in one of these
38 books, but some of these guys they don't read some of
39 these. I try to bring it up to the hunters and they
40 always say really. And like what the guy was saying to
41 make criminals out of us by making -- by enforcing that
42 rule, that law if it comes.

43

44 Another thing is about the sport
45 hunters. I see it in the regulations about sport
46 hunters and non-Natives taking only the breast meat and
47 the Natives think it's a waste of a lot of meat. They
48 don't take the head, wings, legs. We take almost
49 everything except the feathers in our area. I take
50 pretty much everything except the guts and the

1 feathers. Not all the hunters, but I like to pluck my
2 ducks and geese what I get, but I have to remember to
3 try to leave a wing or head to have it showing anyway
4 because I like to hunt ducks and geese spring and fall.

5
6 In my observation about the fall
7 migration this year, my own observation in my area,
8 there was a lot of crane, a lot of Canadian Geese I
9 noticed when I was out there.

10
11 The other thing is the Duck Stamp. A
12 lot of the people don't understand they need the --
13 they know, but why they need it. Like one of my
14 buddies -- I always mention to some of the hunters
15 about Duck Stamps and they say they don't need it and
16 what for. I told them I buy one -- I buy some pretty
17 much every year because I'm working for the State and I
18 make sure I have those so I can hunt while I'm working
19 on my time off.

20
21 I noticed there was a lot of White
22 Geese in the springtime this last spring. There was
23 quite a bit of Eiders.

24
25 That's all.

26
27 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

28
29 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Joel. Any
30 questions for Joel.

31
32 MR. PROBASCO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
33 Joel, for my education, what's a polar goose? Is that
34 a snow goose?

35
36 MR. SACCHEUS: What was that, about the
37 lots?

38
39 MR. PROBASCO: You said in Gambell
40 there was a report of a lot.....

41
42 MR. SACCHEUS: Oh, Emperor Geese.

43
44 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Emperor.

45
46 MR. PROBASCO: Oh, Emperor.

47
48 MR. SACCHEUS: And one more thing I
49 forgot to bring up was we had Mark Nowapuk (ph), the
50 Gambell representative, told Brandon about the geese

1 nesting in St. Lawrence. I guess they were kind of
2 curious why they never go check up there in the spring
3 counts.

4

5 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6

7 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Joel.

8

9 Doug.

10

11 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So the Eiders you
12 saw were they pretty much nesting or were they moving
13 through the area?

14

15 MR. SACCHEUS: In our area over in
16 Norton Sound, when they migrate, like April, May, there
17 will always be lots on the ice edge if the breakup is
18 late. The ice stays a long time and they were out
19 there along the edge. In my observation, I always see
20 different kinds like over toward Norton Sound or over
21 toward Norton, but we always get those Common Eiders
22 and every year they always lay eggs there. The Eiders
23 you were talking about. I guess we mostly get the
24 Common Eiders there. We have seen different kinds of
25 Eiders along the edge.

26

27 One way we do that is April, May,
28 that's when the male and female hang out and we can
29 tell the difference between them. Later on in the
30 summer after they get done mating, the males leave and
31 we only see the females. The middle of the summer or
32 so after the eggs hatch, those Common Eiders, there
33 will be a whole bunch together.

34

35 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Thank you. Rick.

36

37 MR. ROWLAND: Joel, you mentioned
38 something about Emperors nesting on St. Lawrence Island
39 during your meeting. I was wondering if anyone in your
40 group is from Point Hope and if anybody from up there
41 mentioned about nesting. The reason why I'm asking is
42 because in the Emperor Goose Subcommittee meeting we
43 talked about where the birds are nesting in the Yukon
44 Delta and then I asked about whether or not they
45 checked out up towards the Northwest, up towards Point
46 Hope, and they said they hadn't been there in 10 years,
47 so it's good to hear that those people are asking why
48 they aren't checking up there. I'm wondering if you
49 know about anybody from Point Hope as well.

50

1 MR. SACCHEUS: No. North Slope.
2 Taqulik, I think she mentioned it before, but I don't
3 remember. I think they do go up there and nesting. I
4 think they might nest over towards Shishmaref, but not
5 recently, Rick.

6
7 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Any other questions
8 for Joel.

9
10 (No comments)

11
12 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: If not, we'll move on
13 to Frank.

14
15 MR. WOODS: After the last couple of
16 years trying to fill Molly's shoes on her seat here and
17 to do our area justice, I wrote up a report or just a
18 summary. We held our fall meeting on the 19th of
19 September in Naknek. In Bristol Bay, we have 31
20 villages and we have six representatives. I listed
21 them. We have the Chairman Peter Gumlickpuk from
22 Nushagak River, then we have Sam Stepanoff from Alaska
23 Peninsula, Harry Wassily from Nushagak Bay, Rick
24 Delkittie from Lake subregion and Paul Hanson from the
25 Naknek/Kvichak area and, lastly, Frank Logusik from the
26 Togiak area.

27
28 It's a small, six-member board that
29 represents all of Bristol Bay. We try to meet in the
30 eastern side of Bristol Bay and get their perspective
31 and include the managers because the area is huge down
32 there. It extends all the way down into the peninsula
33 where -- in fact, part of our area is Chignik,
34 Perryville and Port Heiden in the lower Bristol Bay.
35 It borders right along Peter's area.

36
37 Things that they came up with, we
38 discussed a fall meeting schedule here at AMBCC. We
39 discussed AMBCC proposals that they submitted in the
40 last couple years. We invited all the agencies and the
41 two entities that showed up was Alaska Peninsula and
42 the Becharof Refuge, new managers down there along the
43 Peninsula. A whole educational curve. She's from the
44 Lower 48 and it was really interesting to get a
45 perspective on what she's faced with up in Alaska.
46 Then we had the Park Service, the Katmai National Park
47 director there and her staff.

48
49 ADF&G, there was no -- Meg, what's her
50 name, Lem Butler's replacement is now absent on the

1 eastern side of Kvichak and Naknek, Kvichak Peninsula
2 representative for ADF&G is gone. Jim Woolington
3 retired and we have Ted Krieg and Sara Evans in the
4 Dillingham Office of Subsistence. Really in the last
5 few years we're really working hard at working
6 cooperatively with all agencies. We passed on the past
7 struggles that this Board has had on outlining the
8 proposal process and working through on how to fix the
9 problems.

10
11 The thing I had is it's hard for me to
12 pass on information as the coordinator of this project
13 -- or sitting on this board. So I asked the chairman
14 if he would be willing to come to a meeting. When he's
15 asked to represent his region in the Bristol Bay as a
16 chairman, I want him to be fully vested and
17 understanding what he's faced with when he puts in a
18 proposal and how it gets -- under dual management and
19 Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the treaties that we have
20 in place, I want him to fully understand what he's
21 faced with.

22
23 It's kind of hard when you're remotely
24 out in the villages and remotely doing it from a
25 perspective of the culture that we come from. It's a
26 clash of values. When I sit and listen to people talk,
27 at least from our region, they're holistic, everything
28 is connected, that they have a real tie to what they're
29 doing. Every meeting that I attend is a valuable
30 lesson on not only what we're faced with in the meeting
31 packet, but also it's a real valuable lesson on how
32 everything is connected in living in rural Alaska.

33
34 I talked about AMBCC and its working
35 better relationships on all partners. We have AFN
36 subsistence board bringing the Duck Stamp issue forward
37 on a legislative level. So there's multi layers that
38 I'm trying to pass on to this board. It gets really
39 diluted by the time I bring it home, so I asked the
40 chairman if he would attend and I think in our next
41 meeting if our budget stays the same and on a regular
42 basis I'd like to bring him at least once a year, maybe
43 in the spring, to help him be more effective.

44
45 We give our board a little bit of a
46 worksheet and some homework when we meet. We ask them
47 an observation -- I should have included the
48 questionnaire that I have. We ask them what their
49 physical environment might look like, how late was the
50 spring, how early was it. We have like, since I've

1 been on board, probably at least five or six years of
2 data that they've turned in and I've brought some of
3 their observations and summary of what they came up
4 with.

5
6 This last spring was really late
7 compared to the year before was really early. It was a
8 lot later than usual, the ice breakup. It was colder
9 longer. We had less resting spots in our area. The
10 birds in the spring didn't rest over as long. There
11 were shorter seasons so people really didn't have --
12 they hunted and they were successful, but they were
13 less successful.

14
15 We talk about physical environment,
16 that there's longer, more frequent storm surges,
17 there's very strong winds. They're not only more
18 frequent, but they last longer. One of the questions
19 is anything notable in your area. Basically that's
20 kind of like an environmental question. Spring was
21 unusually warm and we had two months of straight
22 sunshine with no rain. Unusual. That was statewide, I
23 think.

24
25 It changed how the animals -- you know,
26 the migratory patterns, the different -- it changed how
27 people had related to hunting. Birds were real late.
28 Like I said, they didn't rest as long for some reason.
29 You would think with a late winter they would stay
30 longer, at least in our area. Because they were
31 migrating north, you'd think there would have been a
32 longer rest period within our area, but for some reason
33 the migratory patterns changed. Maybe they're down
34 south in Peter's area.

35
36 I think it's something to keep an eye
37 on, the weather changing. Last fall they referenced --
38 you know, it was an early winter and it was colder,
39 faster and longer. Like this year I think we're going
40 to have a real early winter. Last year was early. As
41 soon as October and the freeze, it stayed frozen.

42
43 We talked about Emperors because
44 there's a proposal request from Togiak, our subregion,
45 and that area asked for why aren't we able to hunt
46 Emperors. They're seeing more and more of them and
47 they actually put in a request to put in a proposal to
48 allow a limited harvest of some sort. I mentioned that
49 we have an Emperor Committee and we're working on that
50 issue right here and I left it at that.

1 Emperors are spotted on the Nushagak
2 River, which is uncommon for the Emperors to rest and
3 be up the Nushagak River. We have two Nushagak
4 representatives because the Nushagak is 130 miles long
5 and then we have a Nushagak Bay representative for the
6 villages along Nushagak Bay. The chairman is Peter
7 Gumlickpuk and he reported Emperors up on the Nushagak,
8 which is uncommon, which is a change in patterns, and
9 that was just last week. So I'm bringing this forward
10 now and I'll bring that to the Emperor Goose Committee
11 when we meet.

12
13 There are a lot of different birds in
14 all different areas of Bristol Bay. Not just migratory
15 birds, but songbirds. They're seeing all kind of
16 different on the Peninsula. Different colored birds
17 they'd never seen before. We addressed that with the
18 regional rep from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We
19 put in a request to her to do like a miniature report
20 and study for the spring meeting. We need to start
21 identifying these birds and how they're affecting
22 different areas.

23
24 Human disturbance is a huge factor in
25 Bristol Bay. We have the trawl industry right in our
26 front door, the yellow-fin sole. We have a huge
27 commercial herring fishery right in our front door in
28 Togiak. So the Togiak representative pointed out that
29 the impacts of human activity in that region has caused
30 a huge influx of not only walrus, seals, feed
31 conditions for the migratory birds. He thinks that
32 there's less -- I don't know what Emperors eat, the eel
33 grass it sounds like, but there's shorebirds that
34 depend on spawn and kelp. The reason he brought this
35 forward is that there's an impact on the environment
36 that we're not paying attention to.

37
38 Human activity has caused a lot of
39 different changes and it was brought up that even the
40 people are migratory and the villages kind of went from
41 season to season. They didn't have permanent
42 residency. Like in Stuyahok, they put their village up
43 on a hill and on the Nushagak River the flyway patterns
44 have changed because the geese kind of move away from
45 the permanent residents. People upriver notice that
46 the more and more -- GCI came in and did that high-
47 speed networking with that big \$90 million contract
48 with the Feds and the State -- or the Feds, I guess.
49 But with all that helicopter activity and airplane
50 traffic it caused a huge kind of disturbance I think in

1 the populations that we're talking about, be it
2 migratory birds or fish and game.

3
4 In the last few years there have been
5 less rest-over stops. Our regional rep said that
6 there's less fat in the spring. The spring bird hunt,
7 people are kind of moving away from that because
8 there's less fat in the spring, but they still get
9 their birds for traditional purposes.

10
11 We didn't mention the tourism industry
12 because I didn't put it in my report, but when we were
13 in Naknek, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
14 representative from -- the Regional Director was there
15 or the manager I guess her name is. I forget her name
16 already. The people there were complaining that there
17 were no more Duck Stamps and one of the lodges came in
18 and bought the whole book that they had to satisfy the
19 client needs.

20
21 I think the competition for resources
22 increased not only in migratory birds but all different
23 aspects. I'd ask ADF&G to keep an eye on that and
24 maybe the next spring meeting we could have a history
25 of increase of use of sport licenses, not just
26 statewide but for Bristol Bay in each region, but ask
27 for maybe an increase in Duck Stamp issuing, residents
28 vs. non-residents. The tourism industry is huge. We
29 come out here -- they come out here for a purpose and
30 that is to enjoy what we live in. We live in the
31 biggest playground in the United States and that's what
32 attracts a lot of people.

33
34 The burden is put upon the user when
35 like a whole book of numerous stamps are available. The
36 burden is put upon the user and those are the people
37 that have to get faced with getting fined, ticketed or
38 threatened with that fine or ticketing. When it goes
39 from August 31st to a subsistence harvest in September
40 1st -- case in point. I went out moose hunting with
41 Ted Krieg and we were out for -- it was during the
42 Labor Day holiday. When we went out hunting it was
43 August and we didn't bring our State stamps and when
44 September 1st came around we realized we couldn't hunt
45 ducks to cook camp meat or have a meal that night
46 because if he got a duck without a State stamp, he was
47 telling me he could lose his job. I'm like, no, I
48 don't want to threaten your job. And if I got a duck
49 without a State stamp, I sit on the Nushagak Advisory
50 for God's sake. I could imagine having to explain to

1 the group why I got cited for a technicality of not
2 having my ducks in a row. So we went without duck soup
3 that night until we got home and I got my license and
4 tags.

5
6 The other issue that came up is there's
7 a conflict in timing. I think the State Duck Stamp
8 ends on January -- December 31st, January 31st.

9
10 MR. ROSENBERG: Yeah, the State Duck
11 Stamp expires January 31st, correct.

12
13 MR. WOODS: And then the Feds expire
14 June 31st.

15
16 MR. ROSENBERG: Correct. June 30th,
17 correct.

18
19 MR. WOODS: June 30th. So there's --
20 if we could align them two Duck Stamps somehow, even if
21 we just end up buying one or hopefully emulate the
22 Federal stamp. The issues in our region is that
23 people, when they get classified as -- they compare
24 themselves to a sports hunter, it's real embarrassing.
25 It's not only embarrassing, it's hard to swallow for
26 people that subsist to be put in the same category as a
27 sports hunter.

28
29 The same issue came up in other
30 regions. Our Togiak representative has seen the same
31 things. The people that really don't depend upon the
32 resource are utilizing the spring and summer hunt for
33 sports hunting and following the same sport rules;
34 breasting the meat, taking just -- that's why I say
35 there's a conflict in values.

36
37 People that are used to that -- you
38 know, I have a buddy that goes down south in North and
39 South Dakota and unlimited harvest for Snow Geese. He
40 may take 200 birds down there and just breast them,
41 smoke them and -- because he ain't got enough room for
42 the carcasses. They don't care about the carcass.
43 They just want the breast and then take them home.
44 That's a common practice in the Lower 48. It isn't
45 common for this hunt.

46
47 The other issue that came up was wanton
48 waste. That I just mentioned. They asked about our
49 proposals from the beginning. The proposals that they
50 had was extension of the subsistence hunt into October.

1 I explained to them that not only this board is working
2 on it hard, the Federal system and the State system.
3 We fall under the Pacific Flyway Treaty, the Mexican,
4 Canadian and Japanese Treaties, so we have to -- that's
5 why I said it's real important for this board maybe to
6 be educated.

7
8 They also have environmental concerns
9 in Bristol Bay. Not only the human activity and the
10 log business, the tourism industry, we still have
11 offshore oil development. It's under -- I don't know
12 what you call it. It's taken off the table right now.
13 But also we have the huge impact of mining and being
14 classified as under EPA for -- we passed a resolution
15 for Clean Water Protection Act for EPA to enforce
16 404(c). That is a huge issue in Bristol Bay because,
17 number one, we're not only getting impacted, we have a
18 commercial fishery in our front door, we have a huge
19 tourism industry and we have a huge competition for
20 resource.

21
22 The reason I asked the State to come
23 and bring up-to-date numbers for issuing those sport
24 licenses to non-resident vs. resident is that case in
25 point 20 years ago there was only 400 and some moose
26 permits being issued in Bristol Bay. Ten years ago
27 there was 630-some. Today there's damn near 1,300
28 moose permits being issued in Bristol Bay. You add
29 that increase in a 10-year increment, that is doubling
30 every 10 years. So 10 years from now there could be
31 2,600 permits for moose. That's almost unheard of. I
32 can't imagine the day when it becomes even worse than
33 it is now.

34
35 Competition for resource in Bristol Bay
36 is huge. It's real important that we continue
37 gathering the most up-to-date information to help
38 protect people that live there that heavily depend on
39 the resource because not only is there a huge economic
40 impact, but with the cost of energy it is huge to have
41 to sit there and listen about every meeting I go to in
42 every area of the state that people are crying,
43 literally, in tears on having to figure out how to feed
44 their family.

45
46 In this day and age -- the people in
47 the hub communities, we don't see that. We have jobs
48 to go to. There's services out there to help feed
49 people, but when you're in a small village of 100 and
50 there is no food bank, there is no cars, there is no

1 store to go back on, you don't have the resources that
2 we have in urban Alaska, but people that depend on the
3 resources that we're helping manage both on the State
4 and the Federal side, it's real important that they sit
5 down and listen.

6
7 We are here to help them. We live
8 here. But also Native people are real accommodating and
9 real sharing. They will share that resource, but they
10 have the burden of proof. Like the Duck Stamp issue,
11 they got cited and fined for the tourism industry
12 coming in and buying up all the stamps, so they get in
13 a position of having to defend themselves. That's
14 different. That's our job to help manage and regulate.

15
16 People in rural Alaska are real adamant
17 about abiding by the law because they don't want to
18 have their livelihood threatened. If I don't have a
19 job, I will live off the land. People will do that.
20 They will do anything to survive. When you threaten
21 that, I think it's a shame in this day and age that we
22 actually -- we're in a position that we put people in
23 that position to have to defend that part of their
24 life. That's a sad day.

25
26 We asked about the proposal process. I
27 explained that. One thing that came up last year is
28 there were bag limits and I think Dan was really
29 helpful in trying to increase the bag limits. When
30 people, subsistence users -- I go out and I subsistence
31 hunt and I get 40 birds, I take them birds and put them
32 in my freezer. August 31st I'm legal and September 1st
33 it puts people in an awkward position to have to defend
34 that part of their livelihood. I think that needs to
35 be addressed and changed at some point. I think the
36 Board of Game is a good avenue to help change that.
37 Maybe the bag limit, possession limit somehow.

38
39 We're talking about budgets later.
40 Outlining a process that includes all users. Not just
41 -- we don't have a -- you know, I hate to say it, but
42 we need cooperative agreements between Ducks Unlimited,
43 Audubon Society, not only to help fund educational
44 programs like they do -- we talked about this on -- we
45 have a lady that works on the -- I think it's on the
46 Alaska Peninsula Refuge, Susan Savage. One of the
47 things that she brought up in a few of our meetings is
48 that there are bird watchers in Naknek and along the
49 Naknek River. One of the proposals she brought forward
50 was to stop hunting along the Naknek River. That came

1 from the bird watchers from Audubon. So we had to
2 educate her on how important it is for people to
3 subsist and harvest in the spring.

4
5 I've had calls in my office in the last
6 few years about early hunting for spring birds, swans
7 in particular, that people are shooting right in front
8 of villages in Aleknagik and along the Nushagak and
9 Wood River systems. Well, I know people that are doing
10 this. See, people depend on the resource and because
11 someone has a problem seeing people shoot birds, I have
12 to explain to them and educate and educate and educate
13 constantly.

14
15 So I still believe in this process and
16 I'm still here to actively engage with all the users.
17 We're not here to try to separate and disseminate
18 anybody, but it's harder as a subsistence user to come
19 up with all the different regulations. I'm supposed to
20 be the expert and up until last year I didn't know that
21 Duck Stamps overlap, so I was buying the Federal stamp
22 like twice a year because I thought it ended. When I
23 buy mine in the fall, it's good until June, so I can
24 still hunt in the spring. Correct? I didn't know
25 that. I don't think the average user knows that until
26 they actually read the stamps.

27
28 So that's the report from Bristol Bay,
29 you know, and I'm here to help our area as much as I
30 can. Thanks.

31
32 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Frank.

33
34 Any questions for Frank.

35
36 Rick.

37
38 MR. ROWLAND: I'd like to say thanks,
39 Frank, for putting that hard effort into it for all
40 your people up there.

41
42 It shows. Thanks.

43
44 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Any other questions.
45 Dan.

46
47 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
48 Thank you, Frank, for presenting that. There was a lot
49 in there. I think probably what we can do sometime is
50 sit down and talk about some of it to really kind of

1 figure out where we can help out in some of this stuff.
2 I would be more than happy to come out to Dillingham or
3 wherever for a meeting, so that would be a good thing.
4 Just let me know.

5
6 So I need to know -- obviously, if
7 people can't get Duck Stamps, we can send more out. I
8 just don't know exactly where to send them yet, that
9 sort of thing. We need to talk about that. As you may
10 recall -- I mean if someone is not confused about the
11 difference between the Federal Duck Stamp and the State
12 Duck Stamp and all that, then there's something wrong
13 with them because it is a very confusing process.

14
15 You may not remember, but a couple
16 years ago Molly asked us to produce a flyer on that for
17 the Bristol Bay Native Association and we mailed it out
18 to every resident in Bristol Bay just explaining who
19 needs to buy the State Duck Stamp, the dates that it's
20 valid for, who needs to buy a Federal Duck Stamp, the
21 dates that it's valid for. So that's something that
22 we've got and we can do that again, you know. That's
23 something that we can do again. It's probably one of
24 those things that you have to do repeatedly to try to
25 help people out in that endeavor.

26
27 We also send them to all the vendors so
28 the vendors have those things so they can look at it
29 and hopefully help someone navigate through that
30 system. You know, you can take a horse to water, but
31 you can't necessarily make it drink. So I don't really
32 know how effective that really has been, but I
33 understand the problem.

34
35 We have -- the valid dates for our Duck
36 Stamp are so that you buy it once and it goes through
37 the subsistence season, it goes through the fall season
38 and then it expires and you can buy another one that
39 gets you through the next year. Unfortunately, the
40 Federal one, which predates the State one and is
41 obviously established for a nationwide audience, ends
42 in the middle of the subsistence season, which I can
43 see would be very inconvenient for a lot of people. I
44 have no idea what it would take to change that, so
45 there's no point in me discussing it right now, but I
46 understand the problem.

47
48 Then on the changes in the distribution
49 and abundance of birds, if that's documented somewhere,
50 you can tell me who's documenting it, it would be nice

1 to know. At least try to track some of that stuff over
2 time if that's becoming more and more of an issue.

3

4 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Can I say something
5 regarding the State Duck Stamp. I think Dan pointed
6 out that we arranged our timing to accommodate kind of
7 the subsistence and general hunt. Would you like to
8 see ours change to align to the Federal one or vice
9 versa?

10

11 MR. WOODS: I don't know. The lesser
12 of the two would be easier for you to do it, but I
13 think it would be -- I think we'll wait and see if this
14 passes, the elimination of the Duck Stamp for Federal
15 season. That would be a lot more effective. We'll
16 wait and see. The wait and see approach is probably
17 the best right now. I think it would be an act of
18 Congress or God you could say to change that Federal
19 stamp date season.

20

21 MR. ROSENBERG: Yeah, it's kind of up
22 in the air right now and Frank's right, if Federal
23 legislation eliminates the need to buy a Federal Duck
24 Stamp. It's not going to eliminate the need to buy a
25 State Duck Stamp. So then we're back into that
26 discussion as well. So if we're ever going to modify
27 the dates of the Duck Stamp and whether you need one or
28 not, we should probably do it at one time and hold off
29 for now.

30

31 And then, again, I don't know what else
32 I can touch on the whole wanton waste issue. Tim
33 brought that up. Again, wanton waste is both the
34 Federal and State regulations that are somewhat in
35 sync. The Federal government is changing -- is in the
36 process right now of revisiting their wanton waste
37 regulations. The State has -- this may not be the news
38 you want to hear, but they were going to model it on
39 State's regulations. So whether that comes to pass or
40 not, I don't know, but I think we'll have more of a
41 discussion if Tim submits a proposal and there's
42 another woman in Homer that's submitting a proposal to
43 change the wanton waste regulations. So be prepared
44 for that discussion I think at the Board of Game
45 meeting, which is in January or whenever that next
46 statewide meeting is, yeah. But they're all good
47 points, so thanks. But it's best if we can get
48 together and talk about some of this stuff.

49

50 MR. VINCENT-LANG: I don't think the

1 statewide meeting is January. The January meeting is
2 Kotzebue. I think the statewide meeting is in March.

3
4 MR. WOODS: What I was asked to do is
5 put in proposals both to Board of Game and this board
6 to address that issue, so I can do that on a -- from
7 our region is to include a Board of Game proposal that
8 would ask for that wanton waste to be addressed.

9
10 MR. ROSENBERG: That would be fine, but
11 I think you missed the deadline for this next go round
12 for the next meeting, so you'd have to -- I don't know.
13 You might know better than me how that would be
14 addressed, but I believe you missed the deadline. The
15 deadline was last April or May for the next statewide
16 meeting, which is coming up in 2014.

17
18 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: The proposal was
19 already submitted under what we submitted in Unit 18.
20 You can also amend that as well to include your units.

21
22 MR. WOODS: So maybe we'll put in an
23 amendment. Nushagak Advisory, the statewide process,
24 we just met on the statewide proposals and we addressed
25 that and we'll include maybe an amendment to the --
26 we're going to be attending the statewide meeting of
27 joint Boards in October, so thanks.

28
29 MR. VINCENT-LANG: The October meeting
30 is a work session of the Joint Board meeting. I don't
31 think they're going to take that up at that Joint Board
32 meeting. The meeting I think you're talking about is
33 the March meeting. Our statewide regulatory structure
34 is divided between two statewide meetings and I've just
35 got to look at the reg book to find out where the
36 waterfowl regulations fall under, this March or the
37 following March. I'll get back to you though.

38
39 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Any other questions
40 for Frank. Dan, I have Joeneal in front of you and
41 then I'll recognize you, Mr. Chair.

42
43 MR. HICKS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
44 just wanted to add another dilemma to the Federal and
45 State Duck Stamp issue. For instance, I know that
46 vendors who sell fishing and hunting licenses that when
47 you go to them you can get the State Duck Stamp at the
48 same time you get your license. The other thing is
49 that you have to go to the Department of Fish and Game
50 office to get the Federal Duck Stamp.

1 In some cases, and I believe it's
2 probably statewide, let's say for instance in my region
3 there's Mentasta, Chistochina and Chitina. You have to
4 travel nearly 100 miles, let's say if it's Mentasta, to
5 get to the Fish and Game office to get your Federal
6 Duck Stamp. I mean that's like -- how come the vendor,
7 when they sell the State Duck Stamp, cannot sell the
8 Federal Duck Stamp at the same time rather than make
9 you travel 100 miles to get that Federal Duck Stamp?
10 That's another problem anyway.

11

12 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Dan.

13

14 MR. ROSENBERG: Yeah, to clarify, to
15 the best of my knowledge, the Federal Duck Stamps are
16 generally sold through the post office.

17

18 MR. ROWLAND: They're supposed to have
19 them.

20

21 MR. ROSENBERG: Yeah, and I'm not sure
22 this -- the State Duck Stamps are not sold through the
23 post office. They're sold through either licensed
24 vendors, retail outlets, stores and some Fish and Game
25 offices often have them as well. And you can get them
26 online. Yes, you can definitely get them online and
27 they will mail them to you. You can order them online
28 and they'll mail you a stamp and you can start doing
29 that this fall.

30

31 What we've talked about in the past and
32 we have talked about this in AMBCC is getting the IRA,
33 the council offices to be vendors of stamps and
34 licenses and that might make it more convenient for
35 people to buy them, but that's something that is a
36 pretty difficult task for the State to contact every
37 council office, but if someone knows an area where
38 there's a problem and you can contact your council
39 office and your council office is willing to be a
40 vendor, we can arrange that.

41

42 Thank you.

43

44 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Myron, can you come
45 up to the mic, please, or take one of these mics.

46

47 MR. NANENG: Good morning, everyone.
48 Sorry for being late. I had to attend a meeting where
49 another part of Federal legislation impacts our Native
50 lands out there where we have to deal with 22(g), where

1 we have to deal with fish and wildlife issues for
2 everything that we do in our villages that are within
3 National Wildlife Refuges. They have to be compatible
4 with the fish and wildlife purposes.

5
6 I just wanted to make a comment. You
7 know, I hope that this discussion about Duck Stamps
8 does not imply that we are not supporting the
9 legislation that is currently being proposed in
10 Congress. It does not imply that we are against that
11 legislation that exempts the Native subsistence hunter.

12
13 The other comment that I have, we said
14 if we're going to be buying State Duck Stamps, how much
15 of that money is going to come to the areas or even
16 fund some of the projects when we talk about some of
17 the budgets that we talk about here within AMBCC. How
18 much of that money is being allocated by the State of
19 Alaska for the resource issues that we're talking about
20 here.

21
22 I sit on the Yukon panel where we talk
23 about chinook salmon. Every time we talk about
24 restoration of chinook salmon where State of Alaska is
25 the manager of the fisheries within the three mile
26 limit and in the river systems, who do they go to to
27 ask for money to do research? I know there's a Pacific
28 Salmon Treaty that incorporates the Yukon River system
29 and we're having issues on the Yukon River with chinook
30 salmon. Most of that money goes to Southeast or even
31 down to Kenai instead of addressing an area that really
32 needs to be addressed.

33
34 How much of that money, if we decide to
35 buy Duck Stamps, will help a Native corporation or the
36 migratory birds nest if there's an issue that needs to
37 be addressed? How much? Show me the numbers. Because
38 I'm not going to buy a Duck Stamp, as I stated before,
39 unless it's going to be beneficial to the lands and the
40 resources that we survive off from.

41
42 There is a big difference between
43 subsistence and sports hunting. In sports hunting,
44 most people that have been hunting for land mammals,
45 like moose and caribou, they hunt for animals that have
46 the biggest racks and they hang behind their desk and
47 say, oh, I went to a certain area of state of Alaska
48 and see the rack that I got, isn't it big. But what
49 happened to the rest of the meat? What happened to the
50 rest of the meat of that animal that was harvested by a

1 sports hunter?

2

3 The same thing with the State
4 regulations on migratory birds. Breast only. You
5 know, a chicken can be sold as whole, but a migratory
6 bird that's bigger, maybe bigger than a turkey if
7 you're talking about swans or just as big as a turkey
8 when you're talking about cranes, the only requirement
9 that the State of Alaska has is that you take only the
10 breasts. But when you go to a grocery store, if you
11 want to buy chicken legs, you can buy chicken legs,
12 chicken breasts, chicken wings. Even the back of a
13 chicken when you buy it as a whole.

14

15 Recently on Facebook in Bethel swans,
16 not just one swan but a number of swans where only the
17 breasts were removed were thrown away in the garbage
18 dump. That's wanton waste. Wanton waste. A
19 subsistence hunter does not hunt animals for the racks
20 only. They hunt for the animal for the meat so that
21 they can eat the meat because you can't get any
22 nutrition from the racks of an animal. A subsistence
23 migratory bird hunter harvests the whole bird. The
24 best choice of the bird that I like is the back,
25 including the tail. They're delicious and those
26 shouldn't be wasted. There may not be much meat on
27 them, but they have a lot of nutritional value.

28

29 So I hope that this discussion
30 regarding Duck Stamps does not imply that AMBCC is
31 against the legislation that would require Duck Stamps
32 for Native subsistence hunters. We gave up a lot of
33 our lands under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
34 and we only got a limited number of acres and we did
35 not receive or we're not allowed to select all the
36 lands that we've been able to use in the past for
37 subsistence purposes.

38

39 The other thing too. We entered into
40 what Fish and Wildlife calls, and which State of Alaska
41 calls, cooperative agreements. Y-K Delta Goose
42 Management Plan, which was the Hooper Bay agreement.
43 You know, when you take a look at the history of the
44 number of harvest of birds, there was a large harvest
45 of birds down on the wintering grounds and there's
46 74,000, 75,000 White Fronts, a large number of Cacklers
47 on the wintering grounds in Oregon or Washington or
48 California, yet the people that -- we're bearing the
49 burden.

50

1 The plan initially of that conservation
2 were Native subsistence users because they had to give
3 up egg gathering, bird drives of flightless geese
4 during the summertime. So I don't think that we should
5 lose sight of those things as we work as the Alaska
6 Migratory Bird Co-management Council. The reason why
7 we pursued the Migratory Bird Treaty Protocol Amendment
8 was because we needed to have our subsistence harvest
9 recognized, not to be limited by the fact that we
10 needed to buy Duck Stamps or State Stamps, but I surely
11 would like to see how much money State of Alaska
12 contributes towards rural Alaska where many of the
13 birds nest or migrate through and to have the
14 protections they say they're going to be providing.

15
16 So, with that, thank you very much.

17
18 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Mr.
19 Chairman. Before we continue, I'd like to acknowledge
20 a couple people that came in. Crystal Leonetti.
21 Crystal, if you can stand, please. Crystal is the
22 Native liaison with the Fish and Wildlife Service. And
23 Stan Pruzzenski in the back there.

24
25 Thanks for joining us.

26
27 Doug.

28
29 MR. VINCENT-LANG: I'll commit to
30 getting kind of an accounting of what we collect in
31 terms of the State Duck Stamp and how that money is
32 spent in terms of our waterfowl program to you.

33
34 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Peter.

35
36 MR. DEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
37 just wanted to make comments to point out -- well, when
38 you were talking about the wanton waste, I don't know
39 why it's not in our regulation book, but that is
40 addressed in the Code of Federal Regulations. So if we
41 could get that portion brought back and put in our
42 regulation book for next year, maybe you guys wouldn't
43 have to make proposals to address it.

44
45 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Peter.
46 Dan.

47
48 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
49 Just to clarify the dates for those Board of Game
50 meetings. While Myron was speaking I looked those up.

1 I'm not sure where your proposal may go. If it
2 definitely goes statewide, which presumably maybe it
3 does, or if it goes into the Western Alaska regional
4 meeting, which is going to be in Kotzebue, we need to
5 clarify that. But the first meeting, the Arctic
6 Western Region, is January 10-13 in Kotzebue, but if
7 it's statewide, it's March 14-18 in Anchorage.

8

9 We'll figure that out, I'm sure.

10

11 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Okay. Thank you,
12 Dan. One more and then we'll take a break.

13

14 MR. WOODS: I'd like to clarify that
15 Bristol Bay is not in favor of the Duck Stamp. We just
16 asked that people help, I guess, comply so that they
17 don't get threatened with their harvest and their
18 families getting -- being put in a position to have to
19 defend themselves in court.

20

21 The second thing is that, you know, the
22 spring hunt was pointed out in our regional meeting
23 that this has become a hunt that the non-subsistence
24 user has capitalized on and I think maybe Peter in your
25 Federal regulation and code book and the opinion in the
26 last meeting that this hunt was designed with a
27 definite subsistence need provision and that needs to
28 be addressed I think at some point in time when we go
29 into deliberations in the next day or throughout the
30 day.

31

32 So, Myron, I don't think that -- our
33 position is not to support the Duck Stamp, but it's to
34 help people comply so they don't defend themselves in
35 court like in the past have been. Thanks.

36

37 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Frank.
38 Before we take a break, I'd just like to announce that
39 Myron is going to be taking over the Chair here. Thank
40 you for your patience.

41

42 We'll take a 15-minute break and come
43 back to order about 11:05.

44

45 (Off record)

46

47 (On record)

48

49 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Good morning. We had
50 a face-off during the break, so I don't look like Tim

1 anymore. We'll go ahead and get started. Patty, who
2 is the next one on?

3

4 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Mr. Chairman.
5 Mike Pederson from the North Slope Borough is going to
6 be here after lunch, so he would like to -- if the
7 Council will consider deferring his report until after
8 lunch. Before you came, the other Chairman that
9 doesn't look like you asked me to give an Executive
10 Director report, which I can do if that's the wish of
11 the Council.

12

13 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Go ahead, Carol --
14 not Carol. What's her face.

15

16 (Laughter)

17

18 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Patty, go ahead.

19

20 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: The younger
21 but wiser sister.

22

23 (Laughter)

24

25 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: I have a
26 written report under Tab 2, so I'm not going to take a
27 lot of the Council's time. A lot of the things that
28 we've already been discussing, such as the Emperor
29 Goose Subcommittee meeting that was held and we have
30 been participating in the harvest survey review on a
31 personal level with Eric and Donna and Terry when he
32 was working and providing input into that process. The
33 Invitation Subcommittee met three times this summer to
34 discuss some of those proposals as well as working with
35 Sky and Congressman Young's office on the Handicraft
36 Bill.

37

38 We also attended.....

39

40 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Excuse me, Patty.
41 Before you go on, some of our seated members up here
42 don't have a copy of your report in their packets.

43

44 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Under Tab 2.
45 Oh, I know why, because you took your book with you. I
46 inserted them this morning. Hold on.

47

48 MR. PROBASCO: Rick and I did our
49 homework.

50

1 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: I apologize
2 for that. Continuing, we also -- Mike Pederson from
3 the North Slope Borough and I attended the Pacific
4 Flyway Council in the Service Regulations Committee
5 meeting, but we'll give a report on that later on in
6 the meeting.

7
8 The AMBCC Staff attended the Copper
9 River Native Association Youth and Elders Migratory
10 Bird Camp in August, as Joeneal discussed earlier, and
11 we also participated in the meeting between the Fish
12 and Wildlife Service and the Alaska Department of Fish
13 and Game in an effort to develop a closer working
14 relationship on the harvest survey program, so we did
15 agree to meet on a quarterly basis at the end of that
16 meeting, so our next meeting is going to be in January.

17
18 We had a meeting of the Native Caucus
19 on Monday, so we reviewed some of the items on the
20 agenda today as well as the Sportsman's Act Bill. We
21 had a list of strategies that we developed at the
22 January meeting, so we reviewed those and updated that
23 list of activities and directives for the Native
24 Caucus.

25
26 The final thing was that the Native
27 Caucus had asked me earlier this year to write a letter
28 to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game regarding
29 filling the position of Dale Rabe, who was the State
30 representative, as well as asking for the participation
31 of the non-game person to attend our meeting so that
32 they're better represented -- they're more
33 knowledgeable at the Pacific Flyway Council. So I
34 would like to thank Doug for responding in a very quick
35 fashion to our letter and he's committed to working
36 with us and that's why he also agreed to come to the
37 meeting so he'd learn more about the AMBCC.

38
39 While finding someone that can fill
40 both this role at the AMBCC level, understanding Alaska
41 Native subsistence issues, migratory birds, as well as
42 the Pacific Flyway Council process is going to be a
43 challenge, so we did request that whomever is selected
44 participate in our training that we're going to be
45 having in the spring and Doug did agree to that. So
46 I'd like to thank him for his cooperation and
47 understanding.

48
49 So, like I said, the report is in
50 written format, so you can review it at your leisure

1 and if you have any questions, you can just come and
2 talk to me.

3

4 The other thing that we did this past
5 summer was review the subsistence section of the
6 Environmental Impact Statement, so that's also included
7 as part of my report. Basically the EIS supported no
8 change in the subsistence hunting regulations, which is
9 what we expected, but it was -- I thought it was really
10 good that they recognize the importance of the
11 subsistence hunt, but they also had a section there
12 recognizing the importance of sharing in the cultural,
13 traditional practices that are utilized by the
14 subsistence hunters and this kind of gets back to the
15 transportation issue and the issue of sharing, so it
16 was -- I was glad to see that it was recognized in the
17 EIS.

18

19 The final thing under the Tab 2 is the
20 draft of the training outline that we're working on.
21 We're currently working on the training manual, so
22 these are the types of things that we're looking at
23 providing in the annual training. Based on time
24 constraints or interest of the people that are
25 participating in the training, we can pull out any of
26 these sections and just train on one section or another
27 or the entire thing.

28

29 So that's my report. Like I said, if
30 anybody has any questions, I'll be here for the
31 duration of the meeting.

32

33 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

34

35 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thanks, Patty. If
36 anybody has any questions, she's walking away from
37 answering them right now.

38

39 (Laughter)

40

41 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Anybody has any
42 questions for Patty before we continue on to the next
43 item. Go ahead, Joe.

44

45 MR. HICKS: I just wanted to make a
46 comment here that the AHTNA -- in other words, we have
47 a committee in the AHTNA region that represents the
48 AHTNA region Native people. Several years ago when the
49 subsistence issue or the McDowell decision and stuff
50 like that all came up, the term subsistence was

1 discussed. Instead of calling it the AHTNA Subsistence
2 Committee, we changed it to the AHTNA Customary and
3 Traditional Committee or C&T in other words. The
4 reason for that was because of the dilemma or the
5 issues related to the term subsistence. I'd like to
6 get feedback from what you might think about that.
7 Just for discussion is what I wanted to just throw that
8 out and see what that means.

9
10 The other thing too is that I know
11 there was some discussion on wanton waste. I failed to
12 mention that at our camp there were several kids who
13 went down to the Clearwater Creek Campground, our camp
14 being like maybe a quarter mile away. Anyhow, they
15 went down there to big some berries and they found a
16 moose head that someone several hours earlier had
17 thrown into the brush probably because it was sublegal
18 or not a legal moose. Anyway, they threw the moose
19 head into the brush and it was several hours old.

20
21 They reported it to the adults who were
22 in the area who went to look at it and there was
23 nothing wrong with that particular moose head, so we
24 took it back to camp and pretty much praised the Lord
25 for providing that to us. Anyhow, you know, moose head
26 is one of our foods that we eat. When I wrote the
27 report to the Juneau office -- in other words, I had to
28 report on the moose permit our harvest and camp
29 activities. I put that in that report. I just wanted
30 to bring that up also.

31
32 Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Any other comments.

35
36 (No comments)

37
38 CHAIRMAN NANENG: If there's no other
39 comments, we'll go on to the next agenda item. Patty.

40
41 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: The next
42 agenda item, Mr. Chairman, is the Service Regulations
43 Committee report and the Flyway/Service Regulations
44 Committee -- or, yeah, Pacific Flyway Council and
45 Service Regulations Committee. Mike Pederson and I
46 attended both of those meetings.

47
48 First the Pacific Flyway Council
49 meeting where we presented both the Invitation proposal
50 and the Eyak Inclusion proposal. Both of those

1 proposals as well as the consent agenda there were no
2 comments or concerns about those issues; however, we
3 did present the proposals to the Non-game Technical
4 Committee.

5
6 We did have a discussion at that
7 committee level about the inconsistent communications
8 between AMBCC and what they call the NTC. They
9 sometimes want us there and want a presentation,
10 sometimes they don't. Sometimes they don't understand
11 why we're there and sometimes they want more
12 information. So we actually had a more open discussion
13 about that and I drafted a communications strategy for
14 them to consider and it's just a one-page document that
15 lays out sharing meeting notices, sharing the copies of
16 the proposals once we get them and for them to provide
17 someone to attend our meetings and put us on their
18 agenda when they have meetings.

19
20 They seemed very open to that and
21 wanted to interact more with the AMBCC, so that's where
22 we got the direction from the Native Caucus to ask the
23 State to also have the non-game person attend our
24 meeting from the State of Alaska because the previous
25 person, which was Mary Rabe, was not able to attend our
26 meeting, so when she would represent the State at the
27 non-game Technical Committee meetings at the Pacific
28 Flyway Council, she wouldn't really know anything about
29 our proposals or about the reasons behind them. So it
30 just seems like it would be better to have someone that
31 was a little bit better educated. Like I said, Doug
32 has agreed to consider that when that person or that
33 position is filled.

34
35 After that we went to Service
36 Regulations Committee in Washington, D.C. and they
37 passed the consent agenda items, the Eyak Inclusion
38 proposal and the Invitation proposal, but they also
39 discussed the draft Environmental Impact Statement,
40 which included an alternative to go to one SRC meeting
41 per year, which is what we discussed a little bit about
42 yesterday. This would address both the late and early
43 season regulations. So once this decision is made, the
44 AMBCC will probably have to discuss amending our
45 meeting schedule as well as our proposal submission
46 period to accommodate the SRC schedule.

47
48 What the SRC is thinking is that
49 they're going to move their meeting from July to --
50 well, they have two meetings, but the one we always go

1 to is the one in July and they'll either move that to
2 April or May.

3
4 So, as I mentioned earlier this
5 morning, I would like to invite Dan Rosenberg to
6 discuss the change of the meeting schedule.

7
8 MR. ROSENBERG: Mr. Chair, may I?
9 Okay. Thank you, Patty. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Pete,
10 unless maybe in your conversation with Brad things went
11 completely -- things changed completed 180 degrees for
12 all I know. So, if they did, stop me right away.

13
14 So what Patty's talking about, of
15 course, is the schedule and time of the general
16 regulatory process. Normally, to formulate
17 regulations, the Fish and Wildlife Service, through
18 their Service Regulations Committee, meets twice a
19 year; once towards the end of June and once towards the
20 end of July. In June, they essentially address, among
21 many other things, the Alaska sport hunting
22 regulations, but at the end of July, again, among many
23 other things, they address the Alaska subsistence
24 regulations.

25
26 Now what the Service wants to do
27 primarily for financial reasons and administrative
28 reasons, they want to combine those two meetings into
29 one regulatory meeting that covers everything. What
30 they have proposed is that meeting occurs sometime
31 between January and the end of April, preferably in
32 March or April. They have gotten pushed back from the
33 flyways on those dates, so nothing has been formalized
34 as to when it's going to be. They have requested
35 comments from the flyways by next March, which would
36 include comments from the AMBCC. I don't think that's
37 an absolute, drop-dead deadline in March, but they just
38 know that councils meet at that time of the year.

39
40 Go ahead, Pete. Pete has something to
41 interject.

42
43 MR. PROBASCO: Yeah, Dan. What Brad
44 informed me is actually they're going to have final
45 discussion and comment for January with a goal of
46 finalizing it in March.

47
48 MR. ROSENBERG: Okay. Thanks. Which
49 is different than what was at the July SRC meeting and
50 what they presented to the Councils in March. So they

1 want our comments presumably by January, sometime
2 during January, and they're going to finalize it in
3 March.

4

5 MR. PROBASCO: At the March meeting.

6

7 MR. ROSENBERG: But there's no SRC
8 meeting in March.

9

10 MR. PROBASCO: Well, that's what he
11 provided for me. He said January SRC meeting, final
12 discussion, with the goal of completing it in March of
13 2014.

14

15 MR. ROSENBERG: Oh, okay. Well, you
16 still might be able to complete it. So that January
17 SRC meeting is generally towards the end of January,
18 first few days in February.

19

20 So, what I've done is just sort of put
21 together a timeline here of how that would affect us if
22 the meeting was held at their preferred -- which I
23 think is their preferred time at the end of April. So
24 if the SRC meets at, say the end of April -- backing up
25 a minute, the earliest this would be implemented would
26 be 2015.

27

28 So if the SRC meets at the end of April
29 in 2015 and under the current timeline that would mean
30 that we, the AMBCC, would have to submit proposals to
31 the flyways and the SRC by March 15th of 2015. That
32 means we would have to meet to vote on proposals by
33 January 15th of 2015 for the 2017 regulations, which
34 means that proposals would need to be submitted August
35 1st to September 15th. So that's using the current
36 timeframe that we have now and then backing it all up,
37 keeping the periods between all these actions similar
38 to what we have now. So that is how we would have to
39 adjust.

40

41 Again, if we want to comment on that,
42 because we don't think that can work or we don't think
43 we can adjust some other way, we have to do that by
44 January.

45

46 MR. PROBASCO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
47 Dan, you mentioned that some of the flyways have
48 already raised concerns on the April date. What are
49 they pushing for?

50

1 MR. ROSENBERG: Well, the flyways want
2 a later date in the year. You know, this thing -- it's
3 a rather complex regulatory setting process as you can
4 imagine, but a lot of it is -- but the flyways' biggest
5 concern is the loss of hunting opportunity. The
6 flyways feel that they want the most current data to be
7 used to set regulations for each season rather than
8 historical data having to go back a year.

9
10 What the Service has done is the
11 Service has a lot of -- through their adaptive harvest
12 management program has a lot of harvest strategies that
13 they develop -- very complex models that they develop
14 based on habitat conditions, bird populations and so
15 forth and harvest. Previous year harvests and current
16 year habitat conditions and population status from
17 spring surveys. It all goes into the model. So
18 there's concern that the models will end up being more
19 conservative if they use historical data and not
20 current data. I'm trying to be as concise as I can
21 here.

22
23 The Service has not gone through all
24 these models that they have out there to evaluate them
25 and fully understand what the ramifications will be.
26 The flyway is pushing for the Service to go through all
27 these models before they come to a final conclusion on
28 when this meeting is going to be. Whether they'll get
29 traction with that, I don't know. Whether the Service
30 will be responsive, I really don't know. That
31 discussion is going on on a continual basis.

32
33 The flyways were told at the SRC
34 meeting in July to have their comments in to the
35 Service in March, so that's why the January surprised
36 me.

37
38 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So, Dan, why is the
39 Service proposing the dates they have? Is that the
40 timeframes they need to get them published before a
41 certain date?

42
43 MR. ROSENBERG: That's a big part of
44 it. The first thing, of course, is to have one meeting
45 rather than two for expense purposes. The second is, I
46 think primarily for administrative purposes of the time
47 it take to go through the whole Federal Register
48 process. Put out the proposed rule, get public
49 comments, put out the final rule and get comments on
50 that before they can promulgate regulations, so it's a

1 lengthy process. A couple years ago they almost missed
2 getting those out in time to open up the hunting
3 season, the late season. So that's their concern that
4 that's such an onerous process. They want to be able
5 to have more time to work through it.

6
7 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Anymore questions for
8 Dan. Go ahead, Rick.

9
10 MR. ROWLAND: Dan, where do we find
11 that information at to make the comments?

12
13 MR. ROSENBERG: I'm thinking. I'm
14 trying to think where you find that information. I
15 don't know if I know the answer to that. I'll have to
16 think about that. I can get you the information, but I
17 really don't know where you can go to actually find any
18 kind of request that's been directed to the AMBCC or
19 the public to comment on the timing.

20
21 Now when the SEIS came out, the
22 Environmental Impact Statement, that addressed this, it
23 had seven elements in it and the first element -- and
24 it was the schedule and timing of this process, of the
25 regulatory process. So that solicited public comments
26 and agency comments and they got a lot of comments from
27 the Flyway. I don't know if the AMBCC ever commented
28 on that directly on the timing. The Flyways commented
29 on the timing and did not like what the Service was
30 proposing, but the Service, in spite of those comments,
31 chose their preferred alternative, which was going to
32 the single meeting.

33
34 So the SIS has been signed, the Record
35 of Decision has been signed, and the SEIS has been
36 finalized, so there's no way to comment on that per se.
37 So essentially I think it's -- I don't know how
38 formalized the process it really is. The Service has
39 made their decision more or less and now I think
40 they're giving people the opportunity to sway that
41 decision, but I don't really know how formalized that
42 process is. I mean in the Flyways, of course, it's
43 been presented to the Flyways that they will take our
44 comments on it. Some Flyways have already commented on
45 it.

46
47 So I don't know. I don't really know
48 other than we know that they need to be addressed to
49 Jerome Ford or Brad Bortner in Washington, D.C. and we
50 can look at the EIS for what it states about the timing

1 of the meetings and based on what the Service has told
2 us what their preference is, we know we can address it
3 accordingly, but I don't have an actual formal document
4 that I can tell you to respond to at this time.

5
6 MR. ROWLAND: So that was Jerome Ford
7 and then who else?

8
9 MR. ROSENBERG: Brad Bortner. They
10 are, I think, chief of migratory birds. What's
11 Jerome's title? Assistant director of migratory birds.

12
13 MR. ROWLAND: Okay. Did they forget
14 about consultation with tribes?

15
16 MR. ROSENBERG: I can't answer that,
17 Rick.

18
19 MR. VINCENT-LANG: When is the Pacific
20 Flyway Council going to comment or have they?

21
22 MR. ROSENBERG: I'm sorry, Doug. What?

23
24 MR. VINCENT-LANG: When is the Pacific
25 Flyway Council going to comment or have they already?

26
27 MR. ROSENBERG: Well, we have commented
28 on the SEIS initially, right, and we have deferred an
29 additional round of comments until March because we
30 were told by Bob Trost, and this was in the -- he
31 actually brought it up at the July Flyway meeting, but
32 he didn't give us a date, but in the SRC minutes from
33 the July SRC meeting in those minutes I believe it
34 specifically says, and I think I have them with me,
35 that they want the comments by next March. So
36 presumably that was chosen because that's the council
37 process and the Flyway Councils meet in March and that
38 would give them the opportunity to get their comments
39 in at that time.

40
41 As for the AMBCC being informed, I
42 guess that was more or less Patty and Mike attended the
43 Flyway meeting and Patty and Mike attend the SRC
44 meetings, so that, you know, is something that they're
45 aware of, I think. We really weren't thinking about
46 the ramifications of all that to the AMBCC I don't
47 think. It hasn't been -- you know, no real decision
48 has been made yet, so there's still time to get
49 comments in.

50

1 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: When we were
2 reviewing the SEIS, we were only focusing on the
3 subsistence section, so it was not until the Pacific
4 Flyway Council meeting that we learned about this
5 switch to one meeting, so we immediately recognized it
6 was going to affect the AMBCC, but the comment period
7 was closed for the EIS. So, yeah, I think our option
8 would be to write a letter to Jerome Ford and/or Brad.

9
10 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Rick.

11
12 MR. ROWLAND: Yeah, so I'm not an
13 elected representative of Sun'aq Tribe, but the council
14 members will be a little bit frustrated about these
15 kind of things related to migratory birds and then
16 they'll want to communicate with these individuals
17 about this Environmental Impact Statement that's going
18 to affect migratory birds.

19
20 One other quick thing is that, you
21 know, you were talking about all these deadlines and a
22 push for putting everything into a certain time. One
23 thing I think that those people forget about down there
24 is that Alaska is as big as the Lower 48. They set one
25 date for a certain bird, but that bird takes maybe a
26 month to travel within Alaska from one area to another
27 area, so those kind of things need to be considered as
28 well or they need to be educated about how vast Alaska
29 is because sometimes they don't realize it in their
30 thinking process.

31
32 MR. VINCENT-LANG: I understand the
33 budget pressures being faced by the Fish and Wildlife
34 Service. So to the extent that they have to go to a
35 single meeting, I guess I understand that. I
36 understand that there will be implications to migratory
37 bird management across the state and across the nation,
38 but budget situations are a reality that we all face.

39
40 That said, I think we should probably
41 focus our comments on when -- if they have a single
42 meeting, recognizing that they are facing those budget
43 issues, when is the best timing for that meeting in
44 terms of how we can provide input both from the Pacific
45 Flyway Council and from the AMBCC point of view. So
46 that's what we'll all be mostly concentrating our
47 efforts and trying to decide what that best timing is
48 so that it accommodates us getting information without
49 unnecessarily compromising or increasing the cost of
50 our program here in terms of providing comments into

1 that process.

2

3 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Pete.

4

5 MR. PROBASCO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6 You know, listening to Dan and your timeline if it
7 hypothetically went to April, my first reaction was,
8 well, we can adjust, but then I realized that the call
9 for proposals and you just listened to all the regional
10 reports and how involved they are in the summer,
11 particularly in subsistence and fishing activities. I
12 think that would be pretty problematic.

13

14 Mr. Chair.

15

16 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thank you, Pete. I
17 agree with you. It's going to be problematic for us to
18 try and keep on top of what's going on and coming up
19 with proposals that will impact our ability to go
20 subsistence hunting and preparing for any regulations
21 that may impact us, so it's going to be an issue.

22

23 Any more on the schedule or proposed
24 schedule. It seems like we wouldn't have any other
25 choice based on the fact that there's sequestration
26 going on and all the Federal agencies and programs are
27 going to be impacted. Maybe we'll have to make an
28 adjustment for that purpose.

29

30 MR. ROSENBERG: Mr. Chair. I just
31 wanted to say one more thing. Those dates, just so you
32 know, when the proposals are to be submitted are in the
33 Federal Register. So all this stuff has to be
34 formalized.

35

36 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. Before we
37 move off this item, I think there's an action item that
38 we may want to consider and Patty suggested drafting
39 the letter outlining our concerns, AMBCC's concerns and
40 whatever else is appropriate for this issue so that at
41 a minimum it will get there to January. If Dan proves
42 to be correct, which, if the minutes reflect that as
43 far as the SRC meeting, then maybe we have a little
44 more time, but I think we need to focus on January to
45 safeguard our comments.

46

47 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Okay. I think that
48 based on that comment I entertain a motion that we do
49 write a letter to Brad or to Jerome and direct Patty to
50 write that letter on behalf of AMBCC.

1 MR. WOODS: So moved, Mr. Chair.
2
3 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Frank moved. Is
4 there a second.
5
6 MR. HICKS: Second.
7
8 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Second by Joeneal.
9 Any discussion. I think that we have no other choice
10 but to go forward. Go ahead, Frank.
11
12 MR. WOODS: So that puts us out a year,
13 so on our planning schedule for like if we put in a
14 proposal for the spring meeting, it wouldn't be brought
15 up till 2016 in a Pacific Flyway Commission.
16
17 Maybe in the next meeting we can
18 outline the SRC process, how that becomes an indicator
19 of where that whole proposal gets -- maybe an outline.
20 I've got an idea mentally.....
21
22 MR. PROBASCO: Timeline.
23
24 MR. WOODS: Timeline. I'm sorry.
25 Timeline. That we just have a cheat sheet that we can
26 follow for the spring meeting that we can -- you know,
27 we're going to abide by. Like Myron said, we might not
28 have a choice.
29
30 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Donna, did you raise
31 your hand?
32
33 MS. DEWHURST: No, I thought that she
34 could clarify that for Frank.
35
36 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Do you want to
37 clarify that or do you have any input regarding that?
38
39 MS. DEWHURST: So, if we had to do a
40 transition, like Dan says, the transition -- if the
41 first SRC meeting is 2015 April, we would have to call
42 for proposals August of 2014 for the 2016 season and
43 then they would be decided on in April of 2015. It
44 would give us more time to public our regulations, but
45 we've been getting ours done on time lately anyway, so
46 it really isn't any big benefit for us, but it would
47 put a crunch on that 2014-15 period. It would compress
48 it. After that I think we'd get used to it, but that
49 one year is going to be problematic.
50

1 MR. VINCENT-LANG: But I think our
2 meeting schedule needs to change too because we would
3 have to move up into January for that spring meeting to
4 have any significant influence on how we would vote on
5 those proposals to move them forward.

6
7 MS. DEWHURST: Yeah, so we might have
8 to figure out if we're going to continue to do two
9 meetings a year, we would have to figure out what our
10 timing would be and I agree, the decision-making
11 meeting would have to be January and then we'd have to
12 decide when we want to continue to have the
13 quote/unquote fall meeting.

14
15 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Any more discussion.
16 Any more questions.

17
18 (No comments)

19
20 CHAIRMAN NANENG: If not, all in favor
21 say aye.

22
23 IN UNISON: Aye.

24
25 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Those opposed say no.

26
27 (No opposing votes)

28
29 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Motion carried. Any
30 more on the schedules. If not, we'll go on to the next
31 item. Council committee reports. Patty.

32
33 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Thank you, Mr.
34 Chairman. We have several committees that have met
35 since April, with the exception of the Technical
36 Committee, I had them on the list, but they did not
37 meet, but the subcommittees did, so I would request
38 that the chairman of those committees provide the
39 reports unless they want to defer to me.

40
41 Frank is the chairman of the Budget
42 Committee.

43
44 MR. WOODS: I'm the chairman of the
45 Budget Committee too?

46
47 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Excuse me.
48 Joeneal. Sorry.

49
50 MR. HICKS: I don't have a written

1 report. Our meeting was just yesterday. We did update
2 some of the budget. Donna is passing out forms. Patty
3 took the notes, so I would have to defer to her.

4
5 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: Thank you. I
6 did type up the minutes. They still need to be printed
7 and copied. Although they're in draft form and have
8 not been reviewed by the Budget Committee, they can be
9 used for the Council's information, so I will have
10 those available after the lunch break.

11
12 Thank you.

13
14 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thank you. Any
15 questions for the budget report. It sounds like she'll
16 have it after the lunch break.

17
18 MR. WOODS: Can we defer it till after
19 the lunch break after we get those?

20
21 CHAIRMAN NANENG: We can do that. We
22 can defer the discussion on those until after lunch
23 break.

24
25 MR. WOODS: Thanks.

26
27 CHAIRMAN NANENG: We'll go on to the
28 next item, Invitation Committee report. Who is the
29 chair?

30
31 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: The Invitation
32 Committee met three times and that was in an effort to
33 develop a proposal that was initially -- or further
34 amended proposal that was initially submitted by the
35 Fairbanks Native Association allowing an individual
36 living in an excluded area to be invited to participate
37 in the subsistence hunt in their home communities to
38 assist immediate family members in their harvest of
39 migratory birds and their eggs.

40
41 So law enforcement and the Migratory
42 Bird Division of Fish and Game and AMBCC
43 representatives met three times, including members as
44 well, to formulate a proposal that would be acceptable
45 for submission to the Service Regulations Committee.
46 The draft minutes are included in the packet. As I
47 reported earlier, the proposal was ultimately approved
48 by the Service Regulations Committee.

49
50 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thank you, Patty.
2 Any questions on Patty's report.
3
4 MR. WOODS: Under Tab 5, 50 CFR part
5 92, that's where the regulation change is being
6 presented or did it get passed? I'm not clear.
7
8 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: It passed.
9
10 MR. WOODS: It passed.
11
12 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Rick, you had a
13 question.
14
15 MR. ROWLAND: Yes. Just a couple
16 comments about that. We had a couple meetings, but I
17 attended one earlier in the spring and then one
18 occurred that I wasn't able to attend. In having this
19 meeting, there was a discussion about invitation
20 proposal that was involved and in that proposal there
21 were a lot of things that were attached to it that
22 related to transportation as well. So during that
23 discussion we also talked about the transportation of
24 migratory birds from communities does not fit under the
25 Invitation Subcommittee meeting, so that issue needs to
26 be taken up in some other form or not. So I wanted to
27 point that out.
28
29 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thanks, Rick. Any
30 comments from the AMBCC members. Patty, you've got
31 your mic on.
32
33 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: I didn't mean
34 to have it on. However, the reason that issue is under
35 the Invitation Committee, while it doesn't fit within
36 the parameters of the Invitation Subcommittee, since
37 the Fairbanks Native Association proposal included both
38 invitation and transportation issues, the full council
39 deferred the transportation issue to the Invitation
40 Subcommittee, so that's how that occurred.
41
42 Thank you.
43
44 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thanks, Patty.
45
46 Any other comments.
47
48 (No comments)
49
50 CHAIRMAN NANENG: If there are no other

1 comments for the Invitation Committee, we'll go on to
2 the next committee report. Emperor Goose or the beach
3 bird.

4

5 MR. ROSENBERG: Mr. Chair, that would
6 be me. Beach geese. The Emperor Goose Committee met
7 on September 13th and I think, as a lot of you if not
8 everyone is aware, there's been a lot of interest, of
9 course, in legalizing the subsistence harvest of
10 Emperor geese, which was closed in 1987 and hasn't
11 reopened since. There have been some proposals that
12 were submitted to the AMBCC and along with one of those
13 proposals or following one of those proposals was a
14 letter from the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional
15 Advisory Council that I think probably summed up the
16 sentiment of a lot of people in terms of the
17 frustrations, the concerns and the questioning of why
18 there's not a legal harvest for Emperor Geese.

19

20 The concerns the Regional Advisory
21 Council brought up was that they feel that the
22 population threshold where harvest may be considered to
23 resume never seems to be reached. They wanted us to
24 consider establishing a step-wise threshold that would
25 allow for a population threshold of perhaps 70,000
26 birds for a small subsistence harvest and a threshold
27 remaining at 80,000 for the general hunt. So they
28 wanted us to revisit the opening and closure thresholds
29 for Emperor Geese. I'll address the origins of all
30 that in a minute.

31

32 Then they were concerned that the
33 survey estimates may be understating the size of the
34 Emperor Goose population. Then the third concern was
35 that the subsistence harvest surveys have documented
36 illegal harvest of Emperor Geese and this may be a
37 contributing factor that keeps the population
38 suppressed, so they wanted us to consider outreach and
39 education programs to try to reduce or minimize or
40 completely eliminate some of that harvest until the
41 population could grow.

42

43 So that was sort of the impetus for
44 having the subcommittee meeting to address these valid
45 issues that people are bringing up. As a reminder
46 though, the management for Emperor Geese and where all
47 these thresholds come from as to the opening and
48 closing and the population objectives, they are in the
49 Pacific Flyway Management Plan for Emperor Geese and
50 they're also mirrored in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta

1 Goose Management Plan. So the Emperor Goose Management
2 Plan was last revised in 2006. The AMBCC was part of
3 that revision. So that's sort of the background.

4
5 There were several big topics here that
6 we discussed at the meeting. One, the first thing is
7 do the surveys reflect what's out there and are we
8 using the right survey to measure the number of Emperor
9 Geese. So we discussed that quite a bit. As you know,
10 the reopening threshold that will allow for a
11 subsistence hunt of 80,000 birds, which is in the
12 Management Plan, is based on a spring population survey
13 conducted every year in early April -- and Julian is
14 here, he'll correct me if I say something wrong, so
15 please do.

16
17 MR. FISCHER: Late April

18
19 MR. ROSENBERG: Late April. Mid to
20 late April. So in the same time and place essentially
21 every year the Alaska Peninsula in mid to late April
22 every year. What it is, it's an index of the number of
23 birds. It's just a relative measure. It's a minimum
24 count of the number of birds that are in that area at
25 that time and it's compared to what is counted every
26 year in the spring since 1981, I believe, or '82 and we
27 use that as an index to the population.

28
29 There are also other surveys out there
30 that the Fish and Wildlife Service conducts, so we
31 discussed those too. All in the name of what's the
32 best way to measure this population and also what does
33 that index represent perhaps in terms of actual number
34 of birds. Are we capturing a big portion of the
35 population or not. I think that's a discussion that
36 was led by Bob Stehn, who I believe is still here, so
37 if Bob wants to add anything, feel free, please.
38 Essentially we left that at the point of we need to
39 continue that discussion and come up with the best way
40 to measure this population.

41
42 So we really need to go through -- Bob
43 presented a lot of information and I think we all need
44 to go through and further vet all that information and
45 see if we can come up with a recommendation that we all
46 can endorse and support for a better way to measure
47 Emperor Goose populations or we may find out that the
48 current method is still the best way. So we're in the
49 process of doing that and we're going to meet again on
50 that.

1 As far as the subsist -- so there's
2 several options here, right. One option is if that's
3 the case and we feel like we need to, we can revise the
4 Management Plan to reflect better survey information
5 and scale it to the survey information, but we're not
6 quite there yet.

7
8 The other option, of course, is to make
9 more birds, right. I mean we have two choices here.
10 We can sort of change the Management Plan or make more
11 birds so we can meet the Management Plan. That means
12 either higher production or increasing adult survival.
13 So we discussed that as well. Again, these are complex
14 issues that are all addressed in the existing
15 Management Plan. It's just that in theory they're much
16 easier to do than practice sometimes, so we're working
17 towards that.

18
19 As far as the subsistence harvest goes,
20 I think the general consensus was that -- from what Bob
21 had presented, that we have a stable population of
22 Emperor Geese out there with the ongoing subsistence
23 harvest, so the subsistence harvest is not -- the
24 current harvest at the rate that it currently occurs is
25 not leading to a population decline per se by itself,
26 all else being equal.

27
28 The question is if we want to get the
29 population to increase at a greater rate, do we want to
30 work on reducing the current subsistence harvest or the
31 various other issues that were discussed along with
32 that, reallocating the current subsistence harvest,
33 going through more outreach and education to try to
34 reduce the harvest.

35
36 Again, all of these things are, I
37 think, to be continued, but out of this came a few
38 recommendations. One of those recommendations was made
39 by Tim Andrew and that was to establish an
40 international work group to coordinate Russian and U.S.
41 research and management activities, which we discussed
42 briefly yesterday.

43
44 Another recommendation that I believe
45 Tim also made was to develop an Emperor Goose Regional
46 Management Plan for Alaska, which I think presumably
47 would discuss things like village harvest quotas,
48 outreach and education, an AMBCC coordinator for the
49 RIT programs perhaps, and then also improved harvest
50 surveys. We're all sort of components of an Alaska

1 Regional Management Plan that would presumably be in
2 concern with the existing management plans, but be more
3 formulated towards Alaskan regional concerns.

4
5 Another thing that was brought up was
6 for the Fish and Wildlife Service to develop an
7 adaptive harvest management strategy for Emperor Geese
8 based on their current adaptive harvest management
9 models and also experiment with extended openings or
10 extended closings and see what the role of harvest is
11 in population regulation.

12
13 Anyway, that's kind of where we're at
14 right now. So we have a lot more things I think we
15 need to consider and work out before we launch into a
16 full-scale management plan revision. We agreed to have
17 another meeting in January with the date to be
18 determined.

19
20 That's my report, Mr. Chair.

21
22 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thank you, Dan.

23
24 Any questions for Dan on the report.

25
26 Patty.

27
28 MS. BROWN-SCHWALENBERG: I just want to
29 comment that there are draft minutes included in the
30 packet, but they have not been reviewed by all the
31 committee members and I apologize for not getting that
32 out to everyone. I don't have everyone's email address
33 and we still are looking for the sign-in sheet. So
34 those will not be approved until the committee meets
35 again.

36
37 Thank you.

38
39 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Rick.

40
41 MR. ROWLAND: Okay. Thanks for that
42 information, Dan. I too sat at that -- I've got some
43 comments. I too sat at that meeting and took some
44 notes. I guess a few of the things that really stood
45 out in my mind was at the end of the meeting both Dan
46 and Eric said it will be a long time until there's a
47 hunt for Emperor Geese and that was kind of frustrating
48 to hear.

49
50 Also Eric mentioned that there are four

1 proposals statewide to make this a legal hunt for
2 Emperor Geese. Another thing that was talked about
3 too, and I don't know if you have these graphs and
4 stuff that we got, but one thing that was pointed out
5 was that there was a time in the early or late '60s
6 somebody said they saw close to 160,000 birds for the
7 population. We had discussions about whether it was
8 true or not. Whether there were really 160,000 birds
9 and setting that population objective at that level
10 might have been somebody's fantasy of saying, well, we
11 can set it that high and never hunt. So a discussion
12 needs to occur related to whether or not the population
13 amounts for resume hunting and hunting closed are
14 realistic.

15

16 We had a number of graphs that showed
17 the aerial survey showing that the population of the
18 Emperor Geese are increasing by 3 percent annually. We
19 had about four other presentations of information. So
20 there are areas that are being surveyed visually that
21 don't incorporate all the areas like Kodiak area or
22 Aleutian/Pribilof Islands area, so those areas need to
23 be considered along with the reality of whether or not
24 that population will ever reach 150.

25

26 It was kind of disheartening to hear
27 that both the State of Alaska and the Fish and Wildlife
28 representative said it will be a long time before
29 there's an Emperor Goose hunt because people in our
30 communities are saying they're pushing those ducks out
31 and ducks are a staple during the winter for Alaska
32 Natives.

33

34 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Dan.

35

36 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
37 Thank you, Rick. The meeting was obviously a whole day
38 meeting. There was a lot in that meeting, but let me
39 just address -- so I obviously didn't want to get into
40 all the details, but first just to address a couple
41 points. The long time before hunting will resume was
42 taken a little bit, I believe, out of context. What we
43 said was that in order for hunting to resume, we would
44 have to revise the Management Plan or create more birds
45 under the current guise, under the current guidance in
46 the Management Plan.

47

48 To revise the Management Plan will take
49 probably a year or two to do that at least. First we
50 have to, you know, even agree upon our indexing

1 methodology and all that. Then we have to go through
2 all the revisions and get it approved by the Pacific
3 Flyway Council. If I had a Management Plan completed
4 today, it would go to the Flyway Council next March and
5 would not be approved until next July. I don't have
6 one. We just met. So you can see just
7 administratively there will be long delays potentially
8 and there's lots to be discussed.

9
10 So it wasn't said in any kind of
11 context that we were not trying to work to get to yes,
12 to get to a way that we could do this if we could do
13 it, but it was just that in fact the reality is it
14 could take some time because Eric and I are essentially
15 the two people that would be responsible for redoing
16 the plan along with working with everybody and getting
17 it all drafted up. We have a lot of other flyway plans
18 right now that we're working on already, in the process
19 of working on and just knowing how long it takes to get
20 some of those, you know, through everybody, get them
21 amended, get them reviewed, updated, reviewed, all that
22 sort of stuff.

23
24 So that was the impetus for why it
25 could take a few years, a year or two or three or four,
26 to get this thing going. Now if there's another way to
27 do it -- I'm not saying the SRC can't do it
28 administratively if you can work through them, but as
29 far as the current process that we work through, it
30 will take a while. And if we're going to try to make
31 more birds, we can get that going too, but I have no
32 idea how long that will take.

33
34 Then as far as the survey goes --
35 again, we have an index, right, and I think we
36 recognized -- and Bob brought it up and Bob is very
37 clear on it, is that the index that we're currently
38 using, the spring index, only accounts for about 46
39 percent of the birds. The fall index accounts for
40 about 48 percent of the birds. So it's clear that
41 birds are missing. It's not necessarily that we're not
42 surveying every area that Emperor Geese are.

43
44 It's a question of knowing what that
45 survey represents, what that index, which is a relative
46 measure of abundance, represents if we want to get some
47 indication of how many birds are really out there or if
48 we want to just go with a trend type of approach as to
49 whether we have harvest openings and closing. So these
50 are all things that we need to discuss.

1 I think Bob made it pretty clear that,
2 yes, we're missing birds, we know we're missing birds.
3 Rather than take an airplane and fly all over that
4 area, which costs time, money and safety concerns, it
5 was maybe best to try to mathematically figure out how
6 many birds were really missing. As long as our index
7 can be scaled to that or we know what our index
8 represents, then we're okay.

9
10 As for Jim King's initial survey, Bob
11 also made it clear -- you know, Bob reviewed a lot of
12 that data and the timing of Jim King's survey is not
13 consistent with the latter surveys and Jim King's
14 survey was done in 1964, I think. He counted a lot
15 more birds, 139,000 birds at that time, but that may
16 not be comparable to what we've done since 1981. So
17 you're absolutely right, it may be that the population
18 was never that high since that time period, in that
19 time period from 1964 to 2012, and that we may very
20 well need to revisit.

21
22 Again, what that index represents in
23 terms of how many birds there are or whether we just
24 use the straight index and scale it to that, scale our
25 population objective to the index. So, yeah, these are
26 things that we need to work out and we're all well
27 aware that there's some problems there.

28
29 Thank you.

30
31 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Frank, do you have
32 any comments.

33
34 MR. WOODS: I'd like to first of all
35 thank Dan for taking the charge on this subject and I
36 sympathize with your charge. Number one, you're
37 dealing with a system that is pretty well not only
38 under-funded but kind of hands-off approach management
39 of a species that's real -- our area we have I would
40 say harvesters that would like to have the opportunity
41 at some point. The majority, I'd say 99.9 percent of
42 the harvesters realize that Emperors are off the list
43 because look at the books.

44
45 In the survey process, I think there's
46 misidentification. Some of our hunters are
47 misidentifying their actual harvest. Our Togiak
48 representative pointed out that just like any other
49 region that we know that these are off the list and
50 we'd like to eventually harvest them, but I think a

1 majority of the hunters -- like I said, 99.9 percent of
2 the harvesters are abiding by that. There's an over
3 count, I think, in our survey process that way. In
4 lieu of yesterday's Harvest Committee recommendations,
5 that we continue in Y-K Delta, that we continue in
6 outreach and education, but start getting a little more
7 fine tuned on our identification process and actual
8 harvest of the birds. That way we have, like you said,
9 up-to-date, accurate science.

10

11 I read your report and I appreciate
12 your input, Bob, that you had a well put together
13 analysis. When we sit here and we listen for the last
14 three years, we've had this before us going on two or
15 three years now, Peter Devine, you put in a proposal to
16 start harvesting when?

17

18 MR. DEVINE: Tomorrow.

19

20 (Laughter)

21

22 MR. WOODS: I know. So I think that
23 maybe the direction I would like to see this kind of on
24 the committee is to actually solidify a more accurate
25 count, increase education on harvesting level and add
26 accurate identification of birds in the outreach
27 between the RITs and the ANSEP program. That way I
28 think is the most effective way.

29

30 I think Kodiak has been really left out
31 of the picture in this whole -- the Kodiak Archipelago,
32 in their not only spring but the fall counts, whatever
33 it may be; you know, misidentification, miscount of the
34 birds. When you eliminate an area where they are being
35 fully watched and realizing there's an increase in
36 maybe bird populations that have an effect, that
37 traditionally people had to harvest, I would move and
38 then, when we meet again, let's come up with a solid
39 plan that would include a clear direction for us. I
40 think if we clear up all of our studies and all of our
41 counting, there will be an increase beyond 80 and it
42 allows for a harvest.

43

44 That said, I think that we can include,
45 when it hits the threshold with accurate counts, that
46 we include accurate surveys, the adaptive management
47 harvest strategy you talked about, that needs to be
48 included in that plan too. That can be done tomorrow.

49

50 MR. ROSENBERG: By you?

1 MR. WOODS: Yeah. I understand what
2 you're faced with and if it needs to go -- all this has
3 to go before the Pacific Flyway Commission, am I
4 correct?

5
6 MR. ROSENBERG: Yes, correct. That's
7 the way it historically has worked. As you know, the
8 Service Regulations Committee of the Fish and Wildlife
9 Service are the ones that ultimately set the
10 regulations or actually it's beyond that even and then
11 it goes to the Director and up to the Department of
12 Interior, but essentially they're the ones that will
13 adopt these regulations.

14
15 What they historically have done is the
16 first thing that they'll ask is, is it in the Plan, and
17 that's this Management Plan that's been approved by the
18 Pacific Flyway Council. So, if it's in the Plan,
19 they'll generally, I think, generally approve things,
20 you know, barring other unforeseen circumstances or
21 conditions. If it's not in the Plan, their tendency is
22 to say amend the Plan. If you can amend the Plan, then
23 we'll consider it, but if it's not in the Plan, we're
24 not going to approve it. Right now it's not in the
25 Plan.

26
27 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Are you done, Frank?
28 Pete.

29
30 MR. WOODS: I'm done. Thanks.

31
32 MR. DEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
33 just want to state again that I have a problem with
34 this going to the Pacific Flyway Council when this is a
35 bird that does not migrate down there. That would be
36 just like me telling Joeneal what he can or cannot do.
37 I think, you know, with all the other groups that are
38 out there we should be able to make our own Emperor
39 Goose Management Committee and deal with the Russian
40 counterparts and not Pacific Flyway.

41
42 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Peter. Short
43 and sweet.

44
45 MR. ROSENBERG: I'll do my best. Yeah,
46 I mean it is a Pacific Flyway Council product, okay,
47 but the Pacific Flyway Council recognizes that this is
48 an all-Alaskan issue more or less, so the Council
49 defers, will defer to Alaska on this issue, okay. So
50 it will become an Alaska Plan. The AMBCC is part of

1 this Plan. We're part of this Plan. The Fish and
2 Wildlife Service in Alaska is part of this Plan and the
3 Council member is the Alaska representative. If the
4 Alaska representative moves it forward through the
5 Council, the Council is most likely going to approve
6 this Plan. So, in that regard, you know, for all
7 intents and purposes.

8

9 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Do you have a
10 comment?

11

12 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Yeah, I do. One of
13 the recommendations from the group is to have an
14 international body formed. I serve on a couple
15 international bodies and I know they're long and
16 arduous processes that are fairly costly at times. I
17 suggest at least initially that we focus most of our
18 efforts on getting the Management Plan revised so that
19 we can move this forward and get our stuff done before
20 we try to reach out to our Russian compatriots because
21 I sense we could spend a lot of time, you know, and
22 money to try to get a significant movement there
23 without a lot of progress when that money could be more
24 well spent internally to try to get this hunt opened in
25 Alaska. Not that I'm opposed to it over the long term
26 because I think we have to talk to our neighbors on the
27 issues, but I think initially we would be better off
28 focusing internally.

29

30 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Okay, quyana. I just
31 have a comment. I know that AVCP Waterfowl
32 Conservation Committee signs onto the Goose Management
33 Plan and first signed onto it back in 1986. The index
34 survey is just an estimate that doesn't really count
35 all the birds.

36

37 There's aerial surveys that are done in
38 the nesting areas of Black Brant in Kokechik Bay and
39 geese are done with photographs. I wonder if the Fish
40 and Wildlife Service has photographs of those birds
41 that they do of the Black Brant nesting in Kokechik Bay
42 and if those photographs also pick up the Emperor Geese
43 as well as the Cacklers that nest in that area. I
44 think that that could also provide a better number.

45

46 One of the other things that happened
47 is that when we have late snow melt, the birds don't
48 necessarily nest in their traditional areas. They go
49 to higher grounds where there's no more snow. I've
50 seen it happen before. It happened a couple of years

1 ago when we had a late melt of the snow. I think a
2 year and a half ago or something like that where the
3 birds pretty much relocated to the higher ground where
4 most of the snow is gone. People thought that there
5 were no more birds, but there were plenty of them.

6
7 So if there's going to be aerial
8 surveys that are being done with photographs and that
9 seems to have provided a better number for the other
10 species like Black Brant, Cacklers and maybe even
11 seagulls for that matter, I'm sure that that strategy
12 can be used to get a better estimate of the nesting
13 pairs. But we also know that some of these birds don't
14 nest until they're three years old, according to the
15 reports that we've heard. Some of these Emperor Geese
16 have arrived in some of our areas like even the middle
17 of June, early July. I'm sure that those birds are not
18 counted.

19
20 I think that there should be a better
21 system of doing the survey by involving people in the
22 villages and the areas where the birds nest or even
23 winter in. I know that we have a working relationship
24 with the state of Oregon, California and Washington
25 where they also do their counts with the number of
26 birds that are causing havoc to their farms in the
27 Lower 48.

28
29 I would request that both State of
30 Alaska as well as Fish and Wildlife Service, especially
31 Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Division, work
32 with the local people in trying to get these surveys
33 done and that can provide you with a better number that
34 we're looking at. So I think that really should be a
35 consideration and that can be the start of our own
36 instate management program before, like as stated, go
37 to an international arena.

38
39 Do you have a comment response to that?

40
41 MR. FISCHER: Yes, Mr. Chair. Thank
42 you for bringing up the option of looking at the Brant
43 colony surveys for monitoring Emperor Geese. You're
44 correct, we do Brant surveys in the colonies with
45 photographs and those are reported on an annual basis.

46
47 Dan pointed out earlier that a
48 discussion and a decision needs to be made within the
49 subcommittee, the Emperor Goose Subcommittee, about
50 what is the best measure for monitoring the Emperor

1 Goose population size. Whether we should continue with
2 the spring survey or we should combine it with other
3 measures. The photographic colony survey for Brant is
4 one that we should consider. Within those colonies,
5 however, it's a very small portion of breeding
6 territory for Emperor Geese relative to their overall
7 nesting habitat. So it could provide one piece of
8 evidence about increasing or decreasing trend.

9
10 I would be reluctant to count entirely
11 on an index of that type only because there could be a
12 shift in breeding away from those colonies for Emperor
13 Geese or into those colonies by Emperor Geese. And, as
14 you pointed out, it could be something as simple as the
15 snowfall patterns for that particular year. Again,
16 that's one measure that we should consider within the
17 subcommittee about how best to monitor this population.

18
19 The spring survey along the Alaska
20 Peninsula was chosen, I understand, because it was the
21 one location where all the Emperor Geese passed through
22 en route to the breeding grounds, so they're
23 concentrated for a relatively long period of time in
24 that area, so there's some flexibility in terms of --
25 if you have a storm that comes in and you can't get an
26 airplane up in the air, it's okay, you've got a few
27 more days to get it done. They all funnel through that
28 area, so when you conduct that survey during that
29 window, you're going to get the best chance of getting
30 a reliable index from year to year. But I appreciate
31 the suggestion for the colony photographic surveys.

32
33 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thank you.

34
35 Dan.

36
37 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
38 I just wanted to say one more thing briefly. I wanted
39 to thank Bob Stehn of the Fish and Wildlife Service, as
40 Frank acknowledged. Bob put a lot of work into looking
41 at all the historical data and how we go about
42 inventorying this population, assessing this
43 population, and he provided a lot of food for thought,
44 I think, that could really be a game-changer. So it's
45 going to lead to a lot of discussion. I see it as a
46 very positive thing no matter which direction we go,
47 but I just wanted to bring that up.

48
49 So we do have -- Bob did provide a lot
50 of food for thought. He took a fresh, new perspective

1 and I think that that's what we're going to continue
2 with looking at things now from the basis that Bob
3 provided. Thanks.

4
5 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thank you. Rick,
6 make it short. I hear growling stomachs.

7
8 MR. ROWLAND: Thank you. One quick
9 thing is that the Committee said that we need to have
10 some more meetings, but I'm not one to extend committee
11 meetings on and on and on. They have to be product-
12 oriented with an accomplishment of something. So I
13 think it's important for the Council to recommend what
14 it is that they want to get out of this committee so
15 that we're just not meeting and sitting down there
16 honking about geese all day.

17
18 So, for further discussion probably.

19
20 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana. I'll tell
21 you a story about one of the guys that worked as a
22 surveyor for one of our villages. They were doing a
23 survey of the Emperor Geese. If you don't want to hear
24 it, close your ears. I'll give you an advanced
25 warning. But you know they have telescopes where they
26 look at the birds in their nesting areas and this was
27 out right behind the village of Hooper Bay, so they
28 were doing an all summer survey of these migratory
29 birds or these Emperor Geese. It happened to be one of
30 my relatives from the village of Hooper Bay. They'd
31 focus in on the birds in their nesting areas and see
32 how many -- you know, they'd walk over to where the
33 nests are at, kind of mark it, put a stick to locate
34 where they're at, so they'd watch them come back to the
35 nest or when they're departing and also observe other
36 birds that may be predated on the eggs. One day as he
37 was watching he saw people coming out of a boat in one
38 of the sloughs. As he was observing, he put the focus
39 on the person that was coming out of the boat and
40 apparently this person wanted to go to the rest -- to
41 do human nature, went to the restroom and all he saw
42 was a big butt of the person when he was supposed to be
43 watching Emperor Geese. That's the extent of the story
44 and it's a true one.

45
46 (Laughter)

47
48 Thank you and let's break for lunch.

49
50 (Off record)

1 (On record)

2

3 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Okay. We'll
4 continue on with the Committee reports. I think there
5 was one issue in the Technical Committee report that
6 was not raised this morning. So, Carol, do you want to
7 comment on that and then we'll go on to the Harvest
8 Committee report and after the Harvest Committee report
9 is all done, after the committee reports are all done
10 we'll have to adopt the reports and then we'll go on to
11 Mike to give a regional report if there's no objection
12 from the members.

13

14 Go ahead, Carol.

15

16 MS. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
17 the record, an earlier comment that was made this
18 morning, Patty lies. I'm not the older and dumber
19 sister. I'm going to tell Mom you said that too.

20

21 (Laughter)

22

23 MS. BROWN: So there was two open items
24 out of the five proposals that were submitted to the
25 Technical Committee. One was the Eyak proposal for
26 inclusion and I guess you've been told that that's been
27 resolved through SRC, so they're going to be getting a
28 limited harvest for 2014.

29

30 Then the other one was the Native
31 handicraft proposal. Obviously that resulted in a bill
32 that was submitted by Congressman Young I think
33 September 17 and you have a copy of that, so that issue
34 has been referred to legislation.

35

36 There was one proposal submitted by
37 Fairbanks Native Association. If you remember, they
38 were looking for changing the definition of family to
39 include extended family members. I just wanted to
40 remind the Committee that that was referred to the
41 Invitation Committee and they should probably put that
42 on their agenda for the next meeting.

43

44 That's it. Thank you.

45

46 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Carol. Any
47 questions.

48

49 (No comments)

50

1 CHAIRMAN NANENG: It's well stated by
2 an elder, I guess. No questions asked. Okay. We'll
3 go on to the next committee, the Harvest Survey
4 Committee. Who is the chair of that?

5
6 MR. WOODS: Mr. Chair. Me and Mr.
7 Pederson co-chair the committee. We covered the option
8 of 2011 report. There was no action needed. It was
9 already presented at the last meeting. We talked
10 exclusively about data review and we had
11 recommendations from the State. Liliana Naves and Jim
12 Fall gave good input and insight on how to streamline
13 the data review.

14
15 As a chairman, I asked for a summary
16 sheet or summarize some of the -- first of all, we
17 talked about the survey itself and how the data was
18 presented, then how it was assimilated in the process
19 and how to train the surveyors. Out of that discussion
20 came the survey process. Basically it's pretty vague
21 in the letter of transmittal from the Pacific Flyway
22 Commission. All they're requiring us to do is not
23 increase harvest and that's pretty vague language in
24 those documents. So we asked to clarify for our
25 regional purposes.

26
27 Like when we have a survey in a region
28 like Y-K Delta, Bristol Bay or Arctic/North Slope, that
29 the surveys have a summary sheet just pertaining to
30 that area and specifically to the birds that are
31 harvested, not the non-harvested birds. Then came in
32 2013 the work that Liliana and Jim are doing right now.
33 It's pretty extensive. Is that going to be included in
34 your report today, Liliana and Jim?

35
36 MS. NAVES: Yes.

37
38 MR. WOODS: Okay. I'll shut up then.
39 I won't have to go into detail. In 2014 Pete addressed
40 part of the plan was to -- on a limited basis since
41 2012, our request was for continued limited surveys.
42 That worked out great. If the committee agreed to
43 focus that recommendation, it would be to include Y-K's
44 continuance of a survey that would be more conclusive
45 to finish out the Y-K Delta on a second year round and
46 it was agreed upon by the region. Myron came in just
47 in perfect time and that wouldn't be a problem for his
48 region.

49
50 We went on to summary briefing. We

1 talked about the Yellow-Billed Loon listing process.
2 That was a really important topic because of the issues
3 we've had in the past. The Yellow-Billed Loon study
4 that was done by subsistence ADF&G up in the -- there's
5 two islands. Isn't there Savoonga? Two communities,
6 Savoonga and Gambell, that those documents needed to
7 reference some of the survey processes that were in
8 place before this study came out. I think we got that
9 clarified. We're well aware of what the problems are.
10 We're way beyond that now. We're moving forward.

11
12 Then we talked about streamlining data
13 review process. It's just a matter of delays and the
14 meeting schedules to when the survey processes come
15 out, when the State is done with their actual report,
16 how those get approved, because this body agreed not to
17 approve a regional report without the regional's
18 blessing, I guess, and I think that's pretty fair. How
19 to streamline that process. I think Patty kind of
20 touched on it with the Pacific Flyway Commission, the
21 communications protocol that she would adopt. I think
22 we ought to develop some sort of protocol on how the
23 survey processes statewide get presented and approved
24 here at the AMBCC.

25
26 Go ahead.

27
28 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So have you guys
29 started entertaining the discussion of how the survey
30 will -- timing will be affected by the move to a single
31 meeting?

32
33 MR. WOODS: That's a good point.
34 That's new to us. We didn't have that in front of us.
35 In that realm, we're going to have to rethink the whole
36 process. We stopped at that point. I don't think
37 we're going to have -- I think that's pretty much the
38 summary of our report. We covered the survey process
39 and our continuing resolution with ADF&G survey team
40 and existing work at the same level. Included in that
41 was the full recommendation that we continue those
42 survey processes in Y-K Delta and then how to implement
43 all the -- other discussions that will be in the report
44 Liliana and Jim give. One a year meetings is going to
45 throw a wrench in the whole thing and I don't think
46 we're even able to address that until we get these
47 processes we have in place solidified.

48
49 Right now the data collection is two
50 years out if everything goes well at a minimum. All

1 the data gets collected in the spring, it gets
2 disseminated and it's supposed to be presented in the
3 fall. The fall regional approves it, it comes back
4 hopefully before the spring meeting and if it doesn't
5 happen then, then it becomes an issue for another
6 scheduling round. I think part of the information last
7 round was -- Bristol Bay approved it, but it wasn't
8 adopted here at the Council until two years later.
9 Last year. Last week? Okay. So that's even -- yeah,
10 I'll shut up there.

11

12 Any questions on the Harvest Committee?

13

14 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Dan.

15

16 MR. ROSENBERG: Yeah, please. Thanks,
17 Frank. I just wanted to add a couple of points. The
18 Harvest Survey Committee passed two motions. Do you
19 want me to continue or do you want to?

20

21 MR. WOODS: Yeah, go ahead.

22

23 MR. ROSENBERG: And those two motions
24 were -- the first one was a recommendation to continue
25 with the cooperative agreement with the Alaska
26 Department of Fish and Game for the Harvest Survey
27 implementation and management. The second one was that
28 the Harvest Survey Committee recommended that the
29 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta be the focus for surveys in 2014.
30 In continuing with the Bristol Bay Native Association
31 proposal to continue surveys during the revision
32 process, the recommendation was made to do a survey on
33 the Y-K Delta in 2014.

34

35 Thank you.

36

37 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Any more questions or
38 comments. Rick.

39

40 MR. ROWLAND: It just so happened I was
41 able to sit in on the tail end of that Harvest
42 Committee meeting. It made me wonder about whether or
43 not it makes sense for people that are doing the
44 surveys in the region that the surveys are being done
45 to be making the decisions about how much is going to
46 be spent in that area and what kind of survey is going
47 to be done. So it seemed like it may have been a bit
48 of a conflict to where people were deciding how much
49 money they get and what kind of survey they get to do
50 in their area. That's just my opinion when I sat

1 there, so I figured I'd ask about that.

2

3 MR. WOODS: Are you specifically
4 talking about the Bristol Bay proposal or are you
5 talking about maybe the State's continued contract?

6

7 MR. ROWLAND: Well, in your meeting,
8 you're having the meeting with the -- representing the
9 Alaska Migratory Bird Committee, having the discussion
10 with the State of Alaska who is going to be doing the
11 survey and you guys were talking about the amounts of
12 money that's going to be spent and the types of surveys
13 that are going to be done and in my mind it seemed like
14 it was an issue. So I just wanted to say that that's
15 what I recognized, is that there should be more checks
16 and balances about who's making the decisions of what
17 survey goes where and how much money it is and who's
18 going to be getting the money.

19

20 MR. WOODS: I agree to some extent. In
21 every other business that we're in as far as State and
22 Federal government business contract -- and I guess the
23 State has kind of adopted -- they've been in partner
24 with us since we started -- that there would be a big
25 process for the work being presented. But there's
26 nobody else to replace -- who was telling me yesterday
27 there was no other -- there was a very limited amount
28 -- the guy that was doing the survey revision
29 presentation.

30

31 I think, you know, you've touched on a
32 good point, but they're cooperators. I know that
33 you're talking about the State is sitting at the table
34 and they're, to be blunt, just writing their own
35 checkbook. That doesn't happen. I think they've been
36 cooperators in this process since we started and I
37 think with the co-chair's recommendation for
38 consistency and the work that they do -- maybe,
39 Liliana, when you do your presentation, show your
40 worksheet that shows the budget and that would help, I
41 think -- did you get that worksheet on the existing
42 work and the contracting you're doing right now?

43

44 CHAIRMAN NANENG: No.

45

46 MS. NAVES: (Indiscernible).

47

48 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Can you come up to
49 the mic, please. Frank, you can turn your mic off.

50

1 MS. NAVES: Liliana Naves, State of
2 Alaska. So the implementation of data collection, how
3 the surveys get done in the field, is a procedure to
4 set up a patchwork of agreements, contracts and things
5 across the state. So in each region is different
6 depending on the resources that is in that region.

7
8 So, for instance, when there is a
9 refuge with a body of RITs, so the RITs, as a main
10 front of communication between the refuges and the
11 villages, have traditionally organized the surveys in
12 that area. So, for instance, this happens in the Y-K
13 Delta. So the RITs train and look and hire and train
14 local surveyors in each village so people from the
15 people do the survey. I just coordinate everything to
16 come together in this patchwork. When we don't get to
17 set a partner in a specific area, sometimes I have to
18 jump in and help do the survey in that area, but it's
19 -- every time that they're doing a survey in an area,
20 we work with the local partners and then they provide
21 cost estimates and you work under those cost estimates.
22 So it's like what happens in the Y-K Delta.

23
24 So, for instance, yesterday at the
25 meeting we set it at 6,000 for the Y-K Delta, but this
26 was based on the last cost estimate that they provided
27 us, so we're not making decisions out of nowhere. So
28 we're working with people directly in the villages with
29 their local representatives, with local surveyors, and
30 it's a different arrangement in each region.

31
32 CHAIRMAN NANENG: For your information,
33 the Y-K Delta is the most surveyed and researched area
34 in the state of Alaska.

35
36 MR. WOODS: We're second.

37
38 CHAIRMAN NANENG: And the way the
39 surveys are done is that they send out harvest
40 calendars with pictures of the birds that are harvested
41 by people and who put numbers in there and those are
42 collected by an individual that the tribal council has
43 identified within the village and they provide that
44 information to the RITs, which in turn provide them to
45 the work that's being done by State of Alaska's harvest
46 survey. It's done in each of the villages. At some
47 time in the past what they've done is random surveys
48 and they did not go to each and every village to get a
49 number. So I think that these surveys nowadays are
50 pretty much a little more informative than they have

1 been before.

2

3 MR. WOODS: To add on to your comments,
4 I'd like that -- can we get a sample of your survey to
5 the Harvest Committee. I like the calendar idea a lot
6 better than the recall survey real time and then in
7 season because right now -- and we talked about this
8 methodology at the State level and we talked about how,
9 what, why and who approves that.

10

11 As a Harvest Committee, we need to
12 review all information that's pertinent to the
13 revamping of this process. It would be good to look at
14 how that calendar survey compares to the recall survey
15 with inseason real time instead of recall surveys at
16 the end. We talked about what's been ongoing practice,
17 what's the ideal practice, what's the accepted practice
18 and what the protocol amendment basically asks us to do
19 is to document all -- the document says is we're not to
20 increase harvest.

21

22 What I see happening is there's another
23 level of involvement and I agree with the co-chair that
24 we need to be consistent in this and we need to be real
25 clear on what we're going to be doing. So I'll shut up
26 there.

27

28 I think, Lili, your question is a
29 legitimate one. I think we're already engaged in a
30 relationship that's been ongoing since it started, but,
31 you're right, there's a process that should be
32 addressed and that will be addressed at the Budget
33 Committee.

34

35 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Pete, go ahead.

36

37 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair and Frank and
38 Rick. Maybe I'm misinterpreting, but listening to both
39 of you talk, I think we're forgetting the elaborate
40 process both the -- particularly the Department of Fish
41 and Game as well as the Service that goes into
42 developing these surveys. It's done with the
43 communities involved and it's also done with this
44 Harvest Subcommittee as well as the AMBCC.

45

46 So it's not done in a vacuum and we all
47 have our input on how to make this survey as effective
48 as possible. I think -- I don't think. I know we're
49 going through the proper process in making a survey
50 that's unique and specific to each of your areas. So I

1 think we're sort of getting down into the -- well, we
2 are getting down to the weeds as far as this report,
3 but I just want to respond to both of your comments. I
4 think we're going through that process very well.

5
6 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Any more questions or
7 comments regarding the survey or Harvest Committee
8 report.

9
10 (No comments)

11
12 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Okay. If there's
13 none, we've gone through all the committee reports and
14 I'd like to take this time to adopt all the reports
15 that have been given by the committees. So entertain a
16 motion to accept the committee reports.

17
18 MR. DEVINE: So move.

19
20 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Motion by Peter. Is
21 there a second.

22
23 MR. WOODS: Second, Mr. Chair.

24
25 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Seconded by Frank.
26 All in favor say aye.

27
28 IN UNISON: Aye.

29
30 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Those opposed say no.

31
32 (No opposing votes)

33
34 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Motion carried. At
35 this time I'd like to ask Mike to do a North Slope
36 Borough report.

37
38 MR. PEDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
39 Taqulik is currently on foreign travel, however she'll
40 be able to participate in the meeting tomorrow. Since
41 our last meeting we've had a migratory bird fair in
42 Atqasuk. It's one of our smaller communities. It's
43 about 50 air miles south of Barrow and it was real
44 successful. We did not have the participation of the
45 Service at that bird fair due to the limited amount of
46 seats on our chartered aircraft. So we spent six hours
47 in the community talking about migratory birds and
48 stuff like that. We had door prizes and stuff like
49 that and talked a little bit about how the AMBCC
50 functions and how people can be involved in the

1 regulatory process.

2

3

4 Our spring and summer harvest of
5 migratory birds and egg gathering was real successful.
6 There were no real issues that came up until the end of
7 July and Taqulik wanted me to put this on the record.
8 At the Native Caucus, Todd had talked briefly about
9 this to the Native Caucus members. At the request of
10 the hunter, we decided to go ahead and bring this for
11 your information.

12

13 A hunter at the end of July there were
14 flocks of King Eiders flying. The hunter had mentioned
15 that the first group of Eiders that flew by he noticed
16 that they were King Eiders. The next flock flew by and
17 the hunter shot at it. Only when did the duck he shot
18 was on the ground did he recognize that it was a
19 Spectacled Eider. This hunter is a Fish and Wildlife
20 Service employee and a subsistence hunter. He notified
21 the Fish and Wildlife Service that he accidentally shot
22 it. He did not intentionally take this bird.

23

24 At the end of July, the local hunter
25 was cited by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for
26 taking a Spectacled Eider, which is a closed species
27 for subsistence harvest. The hunter could not believe
28 that he was cited for reporting it. He thought he was
29 doing the right thing. He doesn't feel comfortable
30 being a Service employee and telling hunters to notify
31 the Service when they accidentally shoot a species that
32 is closed to subsistence harvesting. He feels like he
33 is caught in the middle because of the hunters he talks
34 to and if they do the same thing, they might get cited
35 as well. He feels very strongly about not paying the
36 citation.

37

38 The Migratory Bird Task Force met in
39 Barrow and we listened to his concerns and decided that
40 we would write a letter to the Regional Director and
41 the Office of Law Enforcement. That letter was sent
42 from the North Slope Borough on August 27 requesting
43 that the citation be quashed and a meeting with them to
44 discuss this issue. No response has been received as
45 of this date.

46

47 In 2008, we had issues with law
48 enforcement and since then we have worked with them to
49 co-exist in a productive manner. We feel that we made
50 progress with outreach and we have come a long way. We
51 don't want to take steps going backwards. We

1 encouraged them to meet with us to discuss this
2 situation and to deal with this and maybe even
3 discussing a policy on how to deal with this issue if
4 it happens again in the future.

5
6 The hunter has a court hearing on
7 October 3 and he's asked us to participate with him to
8 support him throughout this process. It is his belief
9 and stand that he didn't do anything wrong by reporting
10 this incident.

11
12 We are concerned about the way law
13 enforcement has handled it and how it will affect our
14 working relationship with the agency, not just with law
15 enforcement but with the Fish and Wildlife Service
16 overall, especially dealing with migratory birds. For
17 example, our hunters may not want to participate in the
18 migratory bird harvest survey and our department may
19 not want to participate in other migratory bird matters
20 with the Fish and Wildlife Service. There is a
21 disconnect between the Division of Migratory Bird
22 Management and the Office of Law Enforcement.

23
24 Eric Taylor was at our regional
25 management body on September 10th and he gave a report
26 on population trends and status like he usually does at
27 this meeting, so he didn't know about this issue at all
28 until we brought it up and it was talked about at our
29 regional management body. He was going to talk to the
30 regional director and the Office of Law Enforcement to
31 get back to us and to date we haven't heard any
32 response.

33
34 The Office of Law Enforcement has been
35 inconsistent with issuing citations. They did not cite
36 a researcher who ran over a Spectacled Eider with a
37 four-wheeler in Barrow. A North Slope Borough employee
38 shot an injured Stellar's Eider to put it out of its
39 misery and he brought it to our office. We reported
40 this incident to the Service and that person was not
41 cited.

42
43 If our hunters are doing illegal
44 things, like wanton waste or purposely shooting species
45 of concern or being reckless, we would report it and
46 they should get cited for that, but our hunters are
47 getting cited by doing the right thing, reporting an
48 incidental take of a closed species. The Fish and
49 Wildlife Service has asked us to help them and by doing
50 the right thing our people are getting cited in the

1 end.

2

3 I have a copy of the letter here for
4 those that did not receive it at the Native Caucus. So
5 that's the end of this. I just want to bring up that
6 we had our regional management body meeting on the 10th
7 and 11th of September. Like I mentioned, Eric Taylor
8 participated in that meeting. We also had Jim Lovvorn
9 or something like that. He came up and mentioned a
10 study on Eiders and their feeding habitats along the
11 coast in the Arctic that he'll be working on. So he
12 gave a real detailed presentation on that. You know
13 where all the clam beds that the Eiders go diving for
14 are and stuff like that.

15

16 Our second day of our regional
17 management body was held in Point Lay where we talked
18 about the citation letter. There were no real issues
19 relating to migratory birds that was raised at our
20 regional management body besides the citation that I
21 just mentioned.

22

23 Todd, do you recall if there were any
24 other migratory bird issues we talked about at the
25 meeting?

26

27 MR. SFORMA: No, just finishing up the
28 last year of the Yellow-Billed Loons.

29

30 MR. PEDERSON: Oh, okay. We're
31 starting the last year of our scientifically defensible
32 Yellow-Billed Loon harvest survey on incidental take,
33 which is part of the consent agenda regulations now. I
34 mean the past we always had to come forward and present
35 a different proposal, but last year the SRC made it
36 part of the consent agenda. We're still doing the
37 reports and that was submitted at our last meeting for
38 2012. We're just now waiting for our rainy season to
39 end before we start our survey for the Yellow-Billed
40 Loon incidental take in Barrow, Atqasuk and Nuiqsut.
41 This is going to be the third and final year based on
42 the SRC's request of us doing that survey.

43

44 I don't have anything else. Nicole or
45 Todd, do you guys want to add anything?

46

(No comments)

47

48 MR. PEDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

49

50

1 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Mike.
2
3 Questions. Go ahead.
4
5 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Mike, you have
6 another year on the survey in Yellow-Billed Loons. Are
7 you going to have any preliminary report out? Because
8 the Service is now calling for information to make
9 their -- to start a status review and that call from
10 the Federal Register is out. So if we wait a year,
11 that information will not be able to get incorporated
12 in their status review and into their decision on
13 whether to list the Yellow-Billed Loon or not.
14
15 MR. PEDERSON: We've provided the ESA,
16 the Endangered Species Office in Fairbanks with our
17 2011 and '12 reports and we're hoping to get this
18 report done for them to include in their review.
19
20 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Could I obtain a
21 copy of those two reports.
22
23 MR. PEDERSON: Yeah. I don't have them
24 with me. I'll PDF them to you.
25
26 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Thank you.
27
28 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Any more questions
29 for Mike.
30
31 Rick.
32
33 MR. ROWLAND: Mike, we had the Emperor
34 Goose Committee meeting and then they were talking
35 about nesting on the Y-K Delta of Emperor Geese and
36 then I looked at some stuff and research where birds
37 nest traditionally over history and one of the places
38 that they mentioned was Point Hope. So I asked Staff
39 if they'd done any surveys up there to see if they'd
40 been nesting up there. They said they hadn't done it
41 in 10 years. So I'm wondering if any of your people at
42 Point Hope have seen any Emperor Geese nesting lately.
43
44 MR. PEDERSON: When I brought this
45 issue up at our regional management body meeting,
46 because right now that is a migratory bird that doesn't
47 occur in our area, and they did not -- in my report of
48 the PFC meeting, they did not mention anything relating
49 to Emperor Goose.
50

1 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Frank.

2

3 MR. WOODS: So your regional body kind
4 of took this issue on and then they -- my understanding
5 -- maybe you could explain to me what they did with it
6 because I have some concern that we don't have a
7 process in place for incidental take of species of
8 concern or endangered species listings. I have some
9 ideas. Maybe I'll listen to you first.

10

11 MR. PEDERSON: It was discussed at our
12 regional management body level as an issue that we were
13 bringing forward to this body at this time, but the
14 local migratory bird task force, which is made up of
15 the landowner, our department and then the tribal
16 council and the regional IRA government, we got
17 together and talked about this issue with the hunter
18 and he asked us to write a letter to the Service on his
19 behalf, so that's how we dealt with that. It went from
20 the local migratory bird task force and then to the
21 regional management body level.

22

23 MR. WOODS: My suggestion is we turn
24 this incidental take over to the Harvest Committee to
25 come up with an educational permit to law enforcement
26 that they include that in a ceremonial or a sacrificial
27 take. I'm just being sarcastic. In all seriousness,
28 we need to bring this to the Harvest Committee to come
29 up with an incidental take permit or incidental take
30 provision of some sort in the harvest of migratory
31 birds that aren't -- similar to the Yellow-Billed Loon
32 problem, similar to the Emperor Goose if somebody does
33 that, that there's an incidental take that isn't
34 intentional, that isn't unlawful.

35

36 What I'm trying to stop is it makes us
37 criminals to the point where people aren't going to
38 report and self-report any mistakes that are made. In
39 that process, I'd like to come up with at least a
40 policy for this board how to address that and how do we
41 make it that we're not going to condone any illegal
42 activity, but also be an incidental provision that
43 would also encourage reporting.

44

45 If we discourage it and we cite people,
46 the opposite is going to actually affect. At least in
47 our area too, is that people aren't going to want to do
48 the survey, number one. Number two, they're going to
49 have -- it's going to create more heartburn than good.
50 It becomes -- word spreads fast. As soon as something

1 like that happens, it becomes -- like I said, there's
2 that fear factor involved when they're dealing with
3 regulatory bodies. There's that fear factor that has a
4 huge impact on how people deal with resource.

5
6 I'll shut up from there, but I'd like
7 to have this body take a stance and figure out a policy
8 at some time and take a real hard look at how we're
9 going to deal with this because it's only, like I said,
10 it's probably going to only get worse.

11
12 MR. PEDERSON: Mr. Chair. The intent
13 of this was to just bring it to the attention of the
14 Council and what we were dealing with with the Service
15 and law enforcement. We are not requesting any
16 specific action from the Council and I'll leave it up
17 to you guys how you guys want to proceed, but this was
18 for your information only on what we are dealing with
19 in our part of Alaska.

20
21 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thank you, Mike.
22 Since I've been working with the Waterfowl Conservation
23 Committee in the Y-K Delta, one of the things that I've
24 noticed and I've found out in the past, like we've had
25 some of these goose species on, what do you call it, a
26 need for conservation status, like Cacklers, Emperor
27 Geese and others. I know we've had a lot of law
28 enforcement presence in the Y-K Delta, especially in
29 the three villages of Kwigillingok, Kipnuk and
30 Kongiganak.

31
32 You know, when law enforcement starts
33 coming around with a heavy hand, the villages tend to
34 -- you know, if you start beating up a person, they
35 tend to curl up. So those villages have stated, well,
36 if they're going to have that heavy hand, why
37 participate in the surveys. Why participate in
38 reporting any of the harvests that we have made of any
39 species of birds.

40
41 So I think that -- you know, I think
42 there has to be a way and a policy that has to be
43 developed of how we can work together with all the
44 agencies regarding this that make everybody in the
45 villages feel comfortable about their hunt. If a
46 person self-reports, does it make them a criminal? But
47 there's going to be a tendency of people saying, well,
48 I'm not going to report what I shot down because of
49 what has just happened to an individual up in Barrow
50 and that's going to spread around to all the other

1 villages in the rest of the state.

2

3 I'm sure that if we have any of these
4 birds on closed status there's people that are going to
5 go hunting and just shoot whatever they want to shoot,
6 yet they're not going to report them and they're going
7 to say, well, we don't want to have any surveys done
8 within our village because of what we fear will happen
9 to us if we happen to say that we harvested one or two
10 Spectacled Eiders. We do have an agreement in Y-K
11 Delta on Spectacled Eiders as well as Common Eiders and
12 we haven't heard any of our people in the villages
13 report that they've gotten any of those because they're
14 afraid that they will be cited.

15

16 So I just wanted to share that. We've
17 gone through the same situation with Cacklers in the
18 past. So I believe this body needs to come up with
19 some type of a protocol to be worked out in dealing
20 with this where, if you self-report and do what you
21 think is right, you know, does that make you a
22 criminal. I know there's laws that are written, but
23 there needs to be a way where we can bend the rules and
24 try and prevent additional harvest of birds without
25 people not reporting what they're harvesting. So
26 that's my comment.

27

28 Any more discussion on this issue and
29 then we'll go on to the next item. Frank.

30

31 MR. WOODS: My suggestion is turn it
32 over to the Harvest Committee, that they come up with
33 some sort of a protocol. You know, if it's a State
34 regulation and State citation, I think that's a
35 different problem. I'm not familiar with the Federal
36 process and citation process, but I think, you know,
37 I'd advocate education. First citation or warning, I
38 guess you would call it. The first warning and then
39 there should be some sort of system of reporting this
40 process because I think it's real important to, second,
41 educate and then the third -- there's a saying, first
42 time shame on you, second time shame on me and third
43 time shame on us. Isn't that how it goes?

44

45 About the third time I've heard this
46 process, you know, not being addressed -- maybe the co-
47 chair, would you agree to take this on to come up with
48 protocol on how to deal with incidental catch for all
49 species?

50

1 MR. PEDERSON: Yeah.

2

3 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Peter.

4

5 MR. DEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6 The only question I have is where did the dollar amount
7 come up with because \$500 for a bird -- you know,
8 salmon only costs \$250.

9

10 MR. PEDERSON: According to the hunter
11 and in his discussions with law enforcement, he told us
12 that because he was a Service employee they were going
13 to lower the fine to \$125 instead of the normal \$500
14 fine that we were told it was.

15

16 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Sounds like the price
17 of a swan once upon a time when swans were listed as
18 being low in numbers when they were doing law
19 enforcement back in the 1960s. Our people in the Y-K
20 Delta used to say, oh, I just got a \$500 bird and we'd
21 know what they were talking about. They were talking
22 about swans. So it seems like the value, if you include
23 inflation of what's going on, the value of birds is
24 going up and up. Maybe they're more priceless than
25 gold.

26

27 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Any more comments
28 regarding this. If not, I think we'll ask Mike to help
29 chair Protocol Committee regarding some of these
30 issues. We've dealt with some of these issues on the
31 Y-K Delta Goose Management Plan of how to work with
32 Fish and Wildlife Service on some of these things that
33 have happened in the past and I'm sure Stan knows about
34 how we tried to work out those protocols.

35

36 You got any comments, Stan?

37

38 MR. PRUSZENSKI: Good afternoon, Mr.
39 Chair. Thanks for addressing me. If you have an
40 opportunity or a few minutes at the end of your session
41 here today or possibly tomorrow, we might be able to
42 put maybe this item on the agenda. I'd just as soon
43 not specifically address the issue right now. In
44 Mike's presentation, he mentioned a few things about
45 working with law enforcement and working with the
46 Service and all the progress we've done. I definitely
47 agree that that's true and we certainly want that to
48 continue.

49

50 There are a lot of issues with this

1 situation that I can't necessarily talk about as it is
2 an ongoing process. He mentioned there's an upcoming
3 court date, so there's a lot of things that shouldn't
4 necessarily be talked about in a public forum such as
5 this, but the generalities and law enforcement's
6 intent, law enforcement's protocol are a process that
7 we go through the three strikes you're out sort of deal
8 or whatever you want to call it. We can certainly talk
9 about that and we would be more than happy to work with
10 Mike in the future.

11
12 There are some issues with the letter
13 and with this situation that I would like to address,
14 so if you can have an opportunity to put us on the
15 agenda either later on today or tomorrow, that would be
16 appreciated.

17
18 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Okay. We'll go ahead
19 and put them on the agenda if there's no objections
20 from the AMBCC members. Go ahead, Mike.

21
22 MR. PEDERSON: If we're going to do
23 that, can I request that it be done tomorrow when
24 Taqulik is here also because she signed the letter.

25
26 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Okay. Very well.
27 Very good way of escaping the responsibility.

28
29 (Laughter)

30
31 Rick.

32
33 MR. ROWLAND: I don't think that they
34 should come up and discuss the letter if they've got
35 court related to it. We've approved the agenda and
36 didn't leave it open. If they want to schedule
37 something some other time, then I think it would make
38 sense.

39
40 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Okay. I think we
41 need to discuss this as it goes along because it's not
42 the first time it's going to happen. Maybe there will
43 be a mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. More to
44 happen in the future. So we put this on as an agenda
45 item either within the next day or so or after what
46 happens with the court date because of the fact that
47 there's some issues related to it from the law
48 enforcement side.

49
50 MR. PRUSZENSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1
2 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Any more comments
3 regarding this.
4
5 (No comments)
6
7 CHAIRMAN NANENG: If not, I'd like to
8 thank Mike for the report. It's just like deja vu of
9 all the things we've had to deal with in the Y-K Delta.
10 So, with that I'd like to ask Donna to make a report on
11 the rule-making process or updates.
12
13 MS. DEWHURST: There really isn't
14 anything to update. The proposed rule is in D.C. and,
15 as far as I know, it's at the solicitor's office, so
16 that's really the only update. So that's about midway
17 in the process of getting the proposed rule out for
18 public comment.
19
20 CHAIRMAN NANENG: So the proposed rule
21 process will be impacted by the new schedule that may
22 be coming up in a couple years or we think the next
23 year or so.
24
25 MR. ROWLAND: Well, one question I was
26 thinking about when I saw that on the agenda was we
27 previously had discussions about format of the proposal
28 because a couple times we came up with some issues
29 related to how the proposals were written and having a
30 more clear proposal made. We had that discussion
31 before. I was wondering if anything was made on that
32 and I figured I'd ask it right there.
33
34 MS. DEWHURST: As far as I'm aware,
35 there hasn't been any progress on that. It's still an
36 open topic, open for discussion, and it might be good
37 when we have to revisit the whole calendar. That might
38 be a good time to bring that back up.
39
40 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Any more questions
41 for Donna.
42
43 (No comments)
44
45 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Jeez, these women,
46 they make reports and they make the meeting shorter.
47 We always end up with no questions for them.
48
49 We'll take a 10-minute break.
50

1 (Off record)

2

3 (On record)

4

5 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Call the meeting back
6 to order. The Eric Taylor report on migratory bird
7 population status and trends. Do you want the lights
8 dimmed or it's good enough?

9

10 MR. FISCHER: Yeah, let's dim those, at
11 least in the front.

12

13 CHAIRMAN NANENG: And then after the
14 report we'll go into population trends Alaska, Oregon,
15 Northwest representing Brant to make a report on status
16 of some birds that winter down there and their impacts
17 on the farmlands.

18

19 MR. FISCHER: Good afternoon, folks.
20 My name is Julian Fischer. I work in the Division of
21 Migratory Birds. I work for Eric Taylor. Eric is out
22 this week, so he asked me to deliver this presentation.
23 I just want to say, first off, I want you to all
24 interrupt me as I go along if you have any questions
25 whatsoever rather than sit and listen to me drone on.
26 If there's anything that's unclear, please speak up and
27 let me know.

28

29 So the objective of this talk today is
30 to describe distribution, abundance and population
31 trends of several species that are important to
32 subsistence hunters in Alaska. I've got them broken up
33 here into -- on the top, the Brant, White-Fronted
34 Geese, among two populations, Cackling Canada Geese
35 that are heavily harvested, and also in the lower
36 section there several that are closed to harvest
37 currently, including Emperor Geese, Spectacled and
38 Steller's Eiders and Yellow-Billed Loon.

39

40 The information presented here today is
41 brought to you by a team of folks in the waterfowl
42 group within migratory birds. We have pilots, we have
43 aerial observers, quantitative biologists that are
44 responsible for developing survey designs and
45 reporting, so it's a group of people that are working
46 together and here are some of those faces. Some of
47 those are in the room right now. Together this
48 represents about 150 years of collective experience
49 working with waterfowl and these folks enjoy their jobs
50 immensely and understand the importance of the work

1 they do towards management of waterfowl for subsistence
2 hunters and other users.

3
4 Okay. I'm going to start off with
5 Brant. I've got a little laser pointer here, but I
6 don't think that's going to work on the screen at all.
7 It looks like it works great on the ceiling, but it's
8 too bright. I'll just try to use my words to describe
9 what we're looking at here.

10
11 So this figure shows the range of
12 Pacific Brant. Pacific Brant are both the Black Brant
13 that breed on Yukon Delta. Most of them breed on the
14 Yukon Delta, about 60-70 percent of them.
15 Additionally, Brant nest on the North Slope of Alaska
16 and to the east along the northern coast of Canada
17 where they then split off into a separate subspecies
18 known as Canadian High Arctic Brant, also known as Gray
19 Belly Brant that nest up in those northern islands
20 there. There's some that nest over in Russia.
21 Collectively, they are known as Pacific Brant and
22 they're managed under a common plan.

23
24 Those birds, after breeding, they'll
25 move down to the Alaska Peninsula where they stage at
26 Izembek Lagoon on the Alaska Peninsula before migrating
27 further south down along the coastal states and
28 provinces and into Mexico, with a portion of them
29 remaining in Alaska at Izembek Lagoon.

30
31 So the next slide here has got a lot of
32 information in it and I'm going to spend a little bit
33 of time on this one because there's other figures that
34 look similar to this. So each of those white vertical
35 bars represents a population count for an individual
36 year. In this case, this is starting in 1960 and going
37 up to 2013.

38
39 On that left axis, the Y axis there, it
40 shows the population count, so most of those bars are
41 occurring in the 100 to 160-170,000 range. There's a
42 black dark line that intersects the tops of those bars.
43 That's what's called a three-year running average and
44 that is a way of smoothing out the population estimates
45 where you take the average of the most recent
46 three-year counts. That three-year average is what's
47 used in the Yukon Delta Goose Management Plan to
48 determine where the population is relative to its
49 population objective and the harvest strategy.

50

1 So on the very top you see a horizontal
2 dash line which shows the population objective.
3 Population objective for Pacific Brant is 162,000 as
4 counted during the winter survey. Closure of Brant
5 would occur down at 102,000. Currently, the three-year
6 running average for Pacific Brant is 160,000, so we're
7 just below the population objective for Pacific Brant.

8
9 There's a yellow line that connects the
10 most recent 10 years of data that shows a growth rate
11 of about 3.5 percent per year over the last 10 years.
12 As you can see over the long haul since the early '60s
13 the population has been relatively stable showing at
14 first somewhat of a downturn and then relatively stable
15 numbers for quite a period of time and a recent upwards
16 growth in the last 10 years.

17
18 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So what is the
19 population objective based on? It seems like it's
20 rarely ever achieved and is it based on some carrying
21 capacity of habitat or is it based on those early years
22 when you had a high abundance of birds and since then
23 you've never achieved that?

24
25 MR. FISCHER: Right. So the objective
26 is -- the point at which you want to aim for
27 maintaining a stable population. So that objective was
28 identified in the -- I don't know when that objective
29 was first identified as the objective. It was probably
30 in the late '80s, mid '80s, and it went and looked at
31 historical numbers and the Pacific Flyway Council
32 states got together and decided what they wanted, what
33 their objective was for what they wanted to achieve.
34 So they wanted to manage harvest and growth of the
35 population to get to that 162,000 and then, at that
36 point, manage for a stable population.

37
38 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So how often are
39 those management objectives looked at because if your
40 management objective is 162,000, you could argue that
41 you've largely failed in management of this population
42 when one could argue quite oppositely that you've been
43 able to maintain a population between 120 and 160,000
44 for almost 30 years and largely a success story versus
45 the way you look at that in other ways that because you
46 haven't met your population objective this has been a
47 failure.

48
49 MR. FISCHER: Sure. So those
50 objectives are visited every time the management plan

1 is reviewed and renewed, which theoretically would
2 happen on a five-year schedule. Often it ends up
3 taking a little longer than that. You can see in those
4 early years between the '60s and the '80s there was a
5 downturn in the population that basically bottomed out
6 in the early '80s. That coincided with a population
7 decline in all goose species that nested on the Yukon
8 Delta and at that time Brant upwards of 80 percent or
9 more were nesting on the Yukon Delta.

10

11 By the early '80s there had been a
12 large widespread decline in populations of geese. So,
13 collectively, there was concern that all geese needed
14 to be returned to what was formerly their historical
15 numbers.

16

17 MR. VINCENT-LANG: I'm sorry I'm asking
18 questions on this graph. I just need to understand the
19 process. One could easily come to the conclusion that
20 in the early '80s and mid '80s that you had a high
21 population and you might have caused damage to the
22 wintering grounds or something else that caused a
23 population crash to go down. Has any of those factors
24 been looked at or is the population objective really
25 just based on the fact that at some point in history
26 160,000 birds was out there and that's what we want to
27 try to get back to?

28

29 MR. FISCHER: Well, I can't address the
30 question of exactly how that population objective was
31 arrived at originally, but my understanding was that it
32 was a compromise between the State, the subsistence
33 hunters and the Federal government at what they wanted
34 collectively to see for the goose population.

35

36 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Thank you.

37

38 MR. FISCHER: Okay. So just to
39 summarize a little bit on the Pacific Black Brant.
40 Population objective 162,000. We currently stand at
41 160,000, just shy of 161. There's a growth rate of 3.7
42 percent per year over the last 10 years. I didn't
43 mention this yet, but there has been a demonstrated
44 decline in several of the nesting colonies out on the
45 Yukon Delta and Mr. Naneng was mentioning earlier that
46 there's a photograph survey that occurs at those
47 colonies and that's where we picked up on that decline
48 in colony size.

49

50 We've also seen from other aerial

1 surveys over a wider area that the population is being
2 regulated outside of those colonies where there's
3 smaller colonies that are now growing in size, but
4 overall the Yukon Delta population specifically is a
5 little bit lower than it had been in the past, but we
6 do see a shift in the Brant population in Alaska
7 further north, so there's more birds on the North Slope
8 that might be making up for those that are absent on
9 the Yukon Delta.

10

11 We also see a shift in distribution in
12 the wintering grounds. More and more birds are
13 remaining in Alaska over winter. We had almost 42,000
14 in 2013 in Alaska during the winter. That varies quite
15 a bit from year to year.

16

17 There's also a greater proportion of
18 Brant occurring in northern portions of Mexico rather
19 than southern Mexico through time. As I mentioned,
20 there's more on the North Slope than there had been
21 previously.

22

23 I also should say, you know, I've just
24 got a few species here that I'm going to be presenting,
25 although this might take a while. Obviously there's
26 many more species that are out there that you may have
27 interest in and if you have any questions about those,
28 certainly ask questions. If I can't answer them right
29 now, then I'll certainly get the information to you.

30

31 MR. ANDREW: This is Timothy Andrew. I
32 have a question before you leave the Pacific Black
33 Brant. You were indicating that there was a 3.7
34 percent annual growth that was occurring and the
35 population objective is 150, you have 160,000 birds,
36 and declining in their five historic nesting colonies
37 within the Y-K Delta. Any idea where these birds are
38 going to to produce that 3.7 percent?

39

40 MR. FISCHER: Okay, the 3.7 percent
41 growth rate per year has occurred over the last 10
42 years. You do see some variability between years in
43 that last 10 years. If this is reflecting reality and
44 there's more birds over the last 10 years and there's
45 fewer in those particular colonies, they're balancing
46 out somewhere else. We believe more of them are now
47 nesting on the North Slope relative to the Yukon Delta,
48 so a smaller fraction of the overall Pacific Brant
49 population is returning to the Yukon Delta, but there's
50 more being produced on the North Slope. We're also

1 seeing more birds, more Pacific Brant nesting outside
2 of those traditional colonies that we've seen them in
3 in the past. In the peripheries or in small colonies
4 that are growing in size.

5
6 MR. ANDREW: A follow-up question if I
7 may. At the Pacific Flyway one of the years and then
8 on another occasion Dr. Jim Sedinger was doing a
9 presentation on what's happening in the Y-K Delta
10 nesting colonies with some specific grass that was
11 growing above a certain degree and the goslings weren't
12 able to peck at them. Do you think that's the reason
13 why there's a redistribution of their nesting colonies?

14
15 MR. FISCHER: That's a very good
16 question. The particular grass you're talking about is
17 known as subspath (subspathacea). It has very high
18 nutrient quality for Brant. The goslings love it. To
19 maintain that type of grass, you basically need to have
20 consistent foraging over it year after year.
21 Interestingly, colleagues with the USGS Alaska Science
22 Center are doing a lot of studies on Brant on the North
23 Slope currently. They're finding huge expanses of this
24 subspath that Brant are feeding on, but it's not being
25 maintained by Brant, so there's not enough Brant there
26 to keep it in that form, but yet it's still persisting
27 there.

28
29 So there's a whole different thing
30 going on on the North Slope than on the Yukon Delta, so
31 that might just be a more attractive habitat now for
32 Brant relative to the Yukon Delta. Jim Sedinger's
33 hypothesis is that basically you need to have a certain
34 number of geese consistently in high densities on the
35 Yukon Delta to maintain that high quality forage. If
36 you have too few geese, then basically that grass will
37 grow up to a poorly digestible form of forage for the
38 geese.

39
40 I'm going to move on to Greater White-
41 Fronted Geese. White-Fronted Geese are a widespread
42 species across North America nesting from Alaska across
43 Canada to the western coast of Hudson Bay. These are
44 managed in two different populations. The Pacific
45 population breeds predominantly on the Yukon Delta with
46 additional birds breeding also in the Bristol Bay
47 lowlands. The Pacific population migrates down
48 primarily to California where they winter. Also we see
49 some down in the western coast of Mexico.

50

1 That population is monitored with an
2 aerial survey that the Migratory Bird Division conducts
3 on the Yukon Delta every year. It's the Yukon Delta
4 Coastal Zone Breeding Waterfowl Survey. It's basically
5 a transect survey that occurs in early June every year
6 and ranges from the mouth of the Yukon down to the
7 mouth of the Kuskokwim.

8
9 These are the survey results for
10 Pacific Greater White-Fronted Geese from that survey.
11 Again you see those horizontal white bars indicate the
12 estimated population of Pacific White-Fronted Geese
13 from this survey. Similar to Brant, there was a
14 decline from the '60s down to the '80s followed by a
15 very extreme reversal in that trend after the passage
16 of the Yukon Delta Goose Management Plan. Steady and
17 consistent growth occurred and it's continuing to occur
18 even now. The population objective was surpassed a
19 while ago and now we're over two times the population
20 objective for Pacific Greater White-Fronted Geese.

21
22 The current growth rate over the last
23 10 years matches what was going on earlier, but it's
24 about 5 percent a year currently.

25
26 MR. WOODS: What kind of problems does
27 that cause with that big of a population? I can only
28 imagine. Do they feed off the same as the Black Brant?

29
30 MR. FISCHER: These birds occur in the
31 Central Valley of California predominantly, in the San
32 Joachim Valley of California. The Brant are coastal,
33 so they're not competing for food. Perhaps Dan can
34 comment on some of the concerns that your California
35 colleagues in the Flyway are expressing about some crop
36 depredation. It's a little bit different than say
37 Cackler Geese that are causing a great deal of concern.
38 Pacific Greater White-Fronted Geese might be competing
39 somewhat with the rice farmers down in California.

40
41 MR. ROSENBERG: I can comment, but I
42 think Brandon is on the agenda to talk about those
43 agricultural issues down in California. Just while I'm
44 here, so you know, we are working on plans to increase
45 at least the sport harvest in Western Alaska on White-
46 Fronts and they already have implemented regulations to
47 increase it in place down in the Lower 48 because of
48 the abundance of those geese.

49
50 MR. ROWLAND: So, Julian and Dan, one

1 of the things that I know of is that those rice farmers
2 down in California they started flooding their paddies
3 and creating manmade lakes and those birds found
4 another spot to hole up and increased the population
5 size, so that could be adding to the increased
6 population that's ending up up here. Is there any way
7 that they could be stopping those rice farmers from
8 flooding? They used to do the burning. If they
9 stopped the flooding, then those birds would have to
10 come all the way forward to the north.

11
12 MR. FISCHER: I don't have an answer
13 for that. Sorry. Brandon might be able to address
14 that during his presentation unless you can answer it
15 right now.

16
17 MR. REISHUS: I can do it right now.
18 Rick, you're right. California, over time, the
19 agricultural system, it's been predominantly a rice
20 system there in the northern Sacramento Valley. At one
21 time, most of those fields they burned at the end of
22 the season to get rid of the trash, the leftover straw.
23 For the last better part of 30 years that has really
24 turned into using flooding those leftover harvested
25 fields to decompose the straw.

26
27 That flooding has been an incredible,
28 incredible wetland resource not just for the geese but
29 for the ducks, shorebirds. Just a whole host. It's
30 just been an incredible boon for wildlife. Certainly,
31 as people who are interested in waterfowl and duck
32 numbers returning north in the spring, you would not
33 want to see that go away. It probably has had some
34 effect on keeping White-Fronted Geese very healthy over
35 the winter and sending them back north in very good
36 body condition, able to reproduce successfully, maybe
37 more than a goose who couldn't find enough to eat in
38 the winter.

39
40 As people who care about the waterfowl
41 resource, that's certainly one thing we would want to
42 see continue, is the continued flooding of those rice
43 fields because it's a tremendous waterfowl food
44 resource for everybody. It might be -- one way, if we
45 wanted to look at reducing White-Fronted populations,
46 would be to see if the farmers wanted to move away from
47 that, but it would have much larger impacts just beyond
48 White-Fronts. You'd see duck numbers decrease, you'd
49 see shorebird numbers decrease.

50

1 CHAIRMAN NANENG: I've seen those
2 fields. You wouldn't want to do anything to reduce the
3 waterfowl population of any species, otherwise you'll
4 go into restrictions, restrictions, restrictions and
5 we'll become more criminals.

6
7 MR. FISCHER: If only we could see
8 graphs like this for every population, we'd be very
9 happy. Okay. Population objective 300,000. We're
10 currently at 616,000 with an annual growth rate of 5
11 percent per year.

12
13 Let's see. Moving on. Midcontinent
14 White-Fronted Geese, this covers pretty much the rest
15 of the White-Fronts in the state. Midcontinents are
16 named Midcontinent White-Fronted Geese because they
17 migrate through the middle of the continent through
18 both the Central Flyway and the Mississippi Flyways.
19 They nest across most of northern Alaska all the way to
20 central Canada.

21
22 With the state of Alaska about 80
23 percent of them are on the North Slope. They're
24 monitored with the Arctic Coastal Plain Aerial Survey.
25 This is a similar type of survey as we do on the Yukon
26 Delta. It's a transect survey that covers the wetland
27 habitats across the North Slope.

28
29 This is what the population trend looks
30 like with the Midcontinents on the Arctic Coastal
31 Plain. This survey is not -- we don't have as many
32 years under our belt on this one, but you can see the
33 population has experienced a large increase over the
34 last 10 years. Actually even before 10 years, but
35 within the last 10 years in particular we have a growth
36 rate of currently 10 percent per year. It's pretty
37 high. It's possible that that's going to flatten out a
38 little bit. The current three-year index up there is
39 almost 260,000 birds.

40
41 Now Midcontinent White-Fronted Geese
42 are managed with the Canadian birds that breed further
43 to the east. Their population objective collectively
44 is 650,000 birds. So the exact composition of the
45 Alaska birds versus Canada birds, it looks like we
46 probably have a good third of them. The overall
47 Midcontinent population is monitored with a fall
48 population survey that happens in Canada by the
49 Canadian Wildlife Service and Fish and Wildlife. The
50 most recent three-year average had them at 723,000

1 birds.

2

3 We also have White-Fronts breeding in
4 Interior and Northwest Alaska, probably in the range of
5 about 30,000. They're a stable population. We're not
6 seeing much growth or decline there.

7

8 I'm going to move on to Cacklers.

9

10 MR. DEVINE: Julian.

11

12 MR. FISCHER: Yes.

13

14 MR. DEVINE: I just had a question on
15 the last one, the White-Fronts. I know two years ago --
16 I think it was two years ago we had Oregon come in and
17 ask for a special permit to take up to 500 birds. At
18 that time I was unclear whether it was one farm who
19 wanted to kill 500 birds or was it every farmer wanted
20 to kill 500?

21

22 MR. FISCHER: Just to make it clear,
23 and Brandon can talk about it more later in detail, but
24 it was just a total of 500 birds for all farmers. So
25 one farmer could only take up to five birds and maybe
26 renew their permit for five more depending upon
27 circumstances. I think Brandon can address it more
28 later.

29

30 Cacklers nest on the Yukon Delta in the
31 coastal zone and they winter currently in northwestern
32 Oregon primarily, also up into Washington. Before the
33 '80s they were nesting almost exclusively in
34 California, so there was a rapid northward shift in
35 their winter distribution.

36

37 Like other species that nest on the
38 Yukon Delta, we see this pattern where there was a
39 steady decline through the years up into the mid '80s
40 until passage of the Yukon Delta Goose Management Plan,
41 after which time we saw a rapid growth.

42

43 Population objective was set at 250,000
44 Cacklers and we're currently at almost 232,000, so
45 we're right around that population objective as
46 measured by the three-year average. As with other
47 species, there's a closure threshold and a resumption
48 of harvest threshold, both of which we're well above at
49 this point.

50

1 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So when you get to a
2 population objective -- I'm just new to this game, so
3 you have to help me through it -- does that
4 automatically then become more liberal harvest
5 opportunities above that number? Is that like an
6 on/off switch for an increase in bag limit and
7 possession limits?
8

9 MR. FISCHER: So each goose species has
10 a different management plan that is developed by a
11 different host of characters and a different host of
12 partners. Some species have very specific harvest
13 strategies associated with certain population limits.
14 Others, the wording is a little bit more general, so it
15 might say basically resumption of harvest or closure of
16 harvest and the objective.
17

18 The objective is the point at which you
19 want to adjust your harvest strategy to allow for
20 basically a stable population. So, if it's going up
21 rapidly, you're going to want to liberalize and
22 maintain -- you're going to focus your harvest strategy
23 on that which had got you to that point and leveled
24 off. For other species it might say restrictive,
25 moderate, liberal and the tools that you have to
26 manipulate are bag limits, season dates and opening and
27 total closure of a population.
28

29 MR. ANDREW: Before you move on,
30 between the current populations of the Pacific White-
31 Front, Pacific Flyway and the Cackling Canadian Geese,
32 is there a lot of interaction between them and Pacific
33 Black Brant and the feed in the Y-K Delta?
34

35 MR. FISCHER: Okay. So these birds all
36 occupy slightly different habitats. The White-Fronts
37 are nesting in dryer habitats, which are generally
38 opened up from -- snow usually melts from those areas a
39 little bit earlier than Cacklers, where the Cacklers
40 and the Brant nest. The Brant are generally very close
41 to the coast. Cacklers a little bit in from there and
42 then White-Fronts on elevated habitats.
43

44 So during the breeding period they're
45 not competing. They're competing to some degree, but
46 they have their own preferences. During the brood
47 rearing phase, Brant are really looking for that
48 subpath specifically and Cacklers share that but also
49 feed on other things as well. The White-Fronts are
50 kind of their own. Those broods are not directly

1 competing with the others.

2

3 MR. ANDREW: I guess the reason why I
4 was asking is because earlier you were indicating that
5 there needs a certain level of population of geese and
6 whether those geese are Pacific Black Brant or
7 Cacklers, that it kind of intermixes within the habitat
8 for brood rearing habitat. In order to keep the plants
9 cropped enough so the goslings have access to it, any
10 idea what the numbers of geese that needs to be
11 occupying that area in order to continue the growth?

12

13 MR. FISCHER: If you ask Jim Sedinger,
14 he'll say more. We don't know the exact density that
15 is required. The whole concept of requiring -- it's a
16 density dependence question and there's two different
17 things at play there. You need enough geese to
18 maintain that growth pattern of forage, but if you have
19 too many on top of that, then there's going to be
20 competition between individuals. There is likely some
21 magic number right in the middle that would be
22 beneficial. We don't know what that number is.

23

24 Jim's work at the Tutakoke River Brant
25 Colony, he's been trying to get that for a long time.
26 He's doing a lot of different types of research out
27 there, but that's one of his main interests. How that
28 interacts with Cackling Canada Geese numbers is -- that
29 only complicates it further. I don't think
30 White-Fronts are really playing into that in a
31 significant way.

32

33 MR. ANDREW: Thank you.

34

35 MR. FISCHER: Okay. I mentioned
36 earlier that there has been a movement of Cacklers.
37 Their wintering range has shifted northward. Since the
38 late '80s, early '90s, almost all of the Cackling
39 Canada Geese are now wintering in northwest Oregon.
40 I'll let Brandon talk about this more, but basically
41 the point is there's not enough public land to support
42 all these Cacklers, so the birds are using public lands
43 -- I mean are using private lands and there have been
44 ongoing complaints by the agricultural community to
45 lower the population objective that would presumably
46 result in less crop damage.

47

48 A quick summary here. Population
49 objective 250,000. We're at about 232,000. There's an
50 ongoing study that's concluding this year, which is a

1 mark recapture method to determine the population size
2 and it's being used as an independent measure for our
3 population indexing procedures just to give us further
4 confidence that what we're doing is working.

5
6 Growth rate, we're seeing about 2
7 percent per year. As I mentioned, the wintering area
8 has shifted north from California to Oregon. While the
9 Oregon Farm Bureau is interested in lowering the
10 population objective on the Yukon Delta, Cackling Geese
11 are an important species for subsistence hunters. With
12 greater numbers of Cacklers out there, they do provide
13 an alternative prey source for arctic foxes and gulls,
14 which thereby reduces the predation on other species
15 that are important to hunters, including Brant, Emperor
16 Geese and Spectacles Eiders, all of which we're hoping
17 to continue to grow. With more Cacklers, they help
18 maintain those grazing lawns that you had asked about,
19 Tim, for brook rearing Brant habitat.

20
21 Emperor Geese. So much to say about
22 Emperor Geese. A lot of it was discussed in Dan's
23 committee report. Okay. Here's a figure showing the
24 distribution of Emperor Geese. The primary nesting
25 area is the Yukon Delta, but, as we heard earlier,
26 there are occasional reports of nesting on St. Lawrence
27 Island and some nesting that occurs out in Russia.
28 Russia also provides important molting habitat for
29 Emperor Geese. Those birds that fail to breed in a
30 given year are known to migrate in relatively large
31 numbers over St. Lawrence Island up into the bays and
32 estuaries on the northern part of the Chukotka
33 Peninsula of Russia. Estimates of 20,000-plus birds
34 have been reported there from Russian aerial surveys
35 during the July molting period.

36
37 After molt is complete and nesting is
38 complete, the Emperor Geese start migrating back south
39 down to the Alaska Peninsula, northern side of the
40 Alaska Peninsula where they stage and then ultimately
41 distribute out to their wintering grounds, which range
42 from Kodiak Island all the way out to the Aleutian
43 Islands.

44
45 In spring, these birds start moving
46 back towards their breeding areas, staging on the
47 estuaries and bays on the northern side of the Alaska
48 Peninsula, which is the site where we do our spring
49 aerial survey. Because the birds are staging along the
50 Alaska Peninsula in spring, the population index

1 objective is based on that survey and that's what was
2 decided on in the current Emperor Goose Management Plan
3 and the Y-K Delta Goose Management Plan.

4
5 Yes.

6
7 MR. ROWLAND: Can you go back a slide
8 to that Emperor Geese habitat.

9
10 MR. FISCHER: I can. There we go.

11
12 MR. ROWLAND: So when we had the
13 Emperor Goose meeting, they showed that map on the wall
14 and they also showed a map of where they do the survey
15 and it looks like most of that survey is done right
16 there in Bristol Bay where there's no geese. Now my
17 question is, in order to get that aerial survey changed
18 to the area where the geese are at, what do have to do?
19 Get in on that Goose Management Plan or what do we got
20 to do to get them to fly the area where the geese are
21 at?

22
23 MR. FISCHER: I think the problem with
24 this image here is the color scheme. In the legend
25 there you can see the primary spring and autumn staging
26 areas. It's gray as it's coming out on the screen
27 here, but it's basically that the northern side of the
28 Alaska Peninsula, that's where the primary staging
29 grounds are in spring. So the birds are migrating up
30 from throughout the Aleutian Islands, Kodiak and the
31 south side of the Alaska Peninsula and in April they
32 are staging in flocks distributed along that southern
33 side of Bristol Bay on the estuaries on the northern
34 side of the Alaska Peninsula, so that's where the
35 survey occurs. That's kind of a focus for the birds
36 during that time period. That's when they're most
37 concentrated of any place in their whole range with the
38 exception of perhaps the breeding area.

39
40 We also do a survey on the breeding
41 areas, but, as you know, there's other sites outside of
42 the Yukon Delta where some of these birds are nesting.
43 We wouldn't want to put all our eggs in the Yukon Delta
44 basket if we thought they were expanding their breeding
45 range to different locations. So the survey is focused
46 on an area where all the birds pass through.

47
48 MR. ROWLAND: But what I'm wondering is
49 what do we got to do to change that area because on
50 that north side of Bristol Bay there there's no color.

1 I can see that gray color right there, but on that
2 north side from Jakolof Bay all the way down around the
3 Peninsula to Wide Bay is where they fly. So what I'm
4 asking is what has to be done to request a different
5 route for the aerial survey.

6
7 MR. FISCHER: Okay. I'm going to show
8 an image of the actual route in just a sec here and
9 then I'll describe that, okay.

10
11 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Go ahead, Doug.

12
13 MR. VINCENT-LANG: How certain are you
14 of these numbers? I notice there's 80,000. Is that
15 80,000 plus or minus 5,000, 80,000 plus or minus
16 10,000?

17
18 MR. FISCHER: Which number are you
19 referring to?

20
21 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Like the running
22 average. Right now your running average is 68,772.

23
24 MR. FISCHER: Yeah.

25
26 MR. VINCENT-LANG: How certain is that
27 number?

28
29 MR. FISCHER: Let's go to that.

30
31 MR. VINCENT-LANG: How are the error
32 bars on those white things? Are they.....

33
34 MR. FISCHER: Yeah. Okay. This survey
35 is different than say one of those transect surveys
36 which is divided up into different strata and you can
37 actually come up with an error bar for the whole
38 region. This survey -- why don't I do this. Why don't
39 I go and describe the survey a little bit and it might
40 help answer this question, so I'm going to go back
41 here.

42
43 This summary slide is actually before a
44 lot of the information, but I'll just mention it here
45 first. The population is monitored with this Spring
46 Emperor Goose Survey. Highlighted in those two
47 management plans, hunting would be considered when the
48 three-year population index of that survey surpasses
49 80,000. The three-year average for that index is
50 currently just under 70,000.

1 So that spring survey is conducted in
2 late April every year. It covers coastal waters,
3 estuaries and lagoons basically surrounding Bristol Bay
4 starting on the northwestern area in Jack Smith Bay,
5 following the coast down to King Salmon and southwest
6 along the north side of the Alaska Peninsula and then
7 returning up north and east along the southern side of
8 the Alaska Peninsula to Wide Bay.

9
10 It's been conducted with basically the
11 same type of aircraft every year with almost always at
12 least one of the same observers as the previous year.
13 It's probably one of the most consistent surveys we
14 have with regards to timing and observers and coverage.
15 This is a closeup of the survey route. The blue line
16 indicates approximate location of the aircraft each
17 year.

18
19 What's important to note here is that
20 this aerial survey is not counting every bird in the
21 population. This is an index to the population. So
22 the aerial survey crew is likely missing birds as it
23 flies over and we know that not every single Emperor
24 Goose in the entire population is within the survey
25 area at the time the survey is done.

26
27 When we met a couple weeks ago with the
28 subcommittee, Rick mentioned that in late April he has
29 observed Emperor Geese still on Kodiak and it's
30 possible that there's already birds that have slipped
31 through and gone up to the Yukon Delta by the time the
32 crew arrives on the scene. However, the survey has
33 been done consistently over the last 30 years and we
34 don't have reason to believe that there's a greater
35 proportion or a lesser proportion of the birds being
36 seen during the survey now than there has been in the
37 past.

38
39 MR. DEVINE: Julian.

40
41 MR. FISCHER: Yes.

42
43 MR. DEVINE: What Rick is trying to say
44 is you have a big population right here in the Semidi
45 Islands, you know, that's not being counted. Right
46 here in Ivanof Bay we have estuaries. There's seven
47 river systems in there with lots of eel grass anywhere
48 from 2-5,000 that's not being counted. Then, when you
49 do your survey, can we go back to the map, the one with
50 the Peninsula. One more.

1 MR. FISCHER: This one here?
2
3 MR. DEVINE: This one. Then, when the
4 survey is done, you're down -- okay, I think right here
5 is Unimak. As far as there and excluding 800 miles of
6 coastline. So that is our frustration.
7
8 MR. FISCHER: Again, I'm just going to
9 point out that we know that not all of the birds are
10 present within the survey area at the time the survey
11 is done. We think that there's maybe 50 percent of the
12 birds present within that survey area at the time the
13 survey is done and that proportion is the same each
14 year.
15
16 MR. ANDREW: So if there is a change or
17 variation either in timing or migratory routes of the
18 Emperor Geese, the index could be wrong and providing
19 an index that's in error.
20
21 MR. FISCHER: Yes. If the birds no
22 longer stage along the Alaska Peninsula, bypass the
23 Alaska Peninsula or start migrating much earlier than
24 the survey crew is out there or much later, then the
25 estimate for that year is going to be biased high or
26 low.
27
28 There's two things on that. The way
29 the management index is set up it uses a three year
30 running average. So, if there's one year that the
31 survey is done it just misses it, no decision is going
32 to be made on that one outlier. It gets smoothed out
33 over the accompanying survey years. That's a method
34 that's been used for many species and other flyways and
35 for other species and other index surveys.
36
37 The other thing I'd like to point out
38 about that, Emperor Geese are probably -- I think we
39 spend more money and effort on Emperor Geese than any
40 other species in the waterfowl group. So we have an
41 aerial survey in the fall, we have an aerial survey in
42 spring, we have a breeding pair survey, we have an age
43 ratio survey. All of those surveys are basically
44 showing the same thing. We saw a decline up into the
45 mid-'80s. We also have a nesting survey on the Yukon
46 Delta and then a slow and steady recovery through
47 current day.
48
49 I don't have all those figures here.
50 Bob Stehn presented them a couple weeks ago when we met

1 and I'd be happy to share those with you. If we were
2 totally blowing it on the spring survey or if the
3 migratory pattern was changing, we would have a much
4 different trend in that survey than we would for all
5 those others, so it's a way of kind of double checking
6 how we're doing.

7
8 MR. ANDREW: So you have a pretty good
9 database of various projects to give you enough
10 confidence that this is a good index.

11
12 MR. FISCHER: We do.

13
14 MR. WOODS: My question is the
15 correction factor. When I listened to Bob's
16 presentation, there was about a 50 percent error
17 factor. A confidence level. Let's put it that way.

18
19 MR. STEHN: Yeah, there's no question
20 that we are missing birds. You know, it's an index.
21 We see maybe half of them. The ones we do see maybe we
22 don't count them very accurately and maybe some of them
23 aren't there, maybe some of them get away from the
24 airplane before we can even see them. There's lots of
25 reasons not to see birds. The problem is if you have
26 an index that's a procedure, a survey procedure, and
27 it's done in a repeated manner by the same people, same
28 kind of conditions, the same timing, the same aircraft,
29 it's like there's no reason to think that you're doing
30 it differently. So why would the population change, so
31 we consider it a valid index. Any given count could be
32 20,000 birds off. We know it varies from one year to
33 the next, but the long-term trend of that index shows
34 that it's fairly stable. The trend of the fall index
35 also says it's fairly stable. The trend of the
36 breeding pair index also says that it's just about
37 stable.

38
39 MR. WOODS: I guess, to make it
40 correct, the correct question would be the confidence
41 level in this is pretty accurate then and in all the
42 different surveys. The other factor I'd ask is in our
43 region up until about two years ago there was a cooling
44 trend in the Bering Sea. That cooling trend caused a
45 lot of different ecosystems not only in the fisheries
46 but also in the ecosystem that I think the Emperors
47 really depend on. I don't know if that has been put
48 into factor because now we're on a warming trend. In
49 this process of warming, they actually have longer
50 cooling periods. Like I say, like this spring was

1 really a long, cold spring breakup.

2

3 MR. STEHN: Right.

4

5 MR. WOODS: But then we had a long
6 section of hot summer and basically -- so there's
7 longer durations and I think things are changing to the
8 point where -- is your survey adjustable to those
9 changes? Two years ago the ice pack was all the way
10 down past Port Heiden in April and all the way till May
11 where the barge couldn't even come in until the middle
12 of May. Them factors create a whole different shift.
13 If the ice is all the way to the beach and there's
14 nowhere else where the geese can go and they're all
15 down south, like Peter was saying, then your survey
16 process might miss that population. I've seen the
17 opposite that year. There was actually an increase in
18 your surveys in that year.

19

20 MR. STEHN: I think there's a lot of
21 local fairly specific factors that affect the count.
22 You know, any given count from one day to the next
23 could be 20,000 birds different and those are the types
24 of things that affect it. It doesn't affect the
25 10-year trend of that information. The average over a
26 10-year period you'd think would have good years, bad
27 years. One of the things that definitely affects it is
28 the wind, you know. If you do a survey at 10 mile knot
29 wind compared to 20 knot wind, it's a lot different.

30

31 MR. WOODS: The second question, is the
32 correction factors included in this? I'm not the
33 surveyor, so I don't have the correction factors.
34 Those correction factors would include those areas
35 we're missing or they're not?

36

37 MR. STEHN: They do not. They
38 consistently do not include other areas, so that's the
39 consistency part that is the important part. It's like
40 we know there's birds on Kodiak. We know there's birds
41 outside. In fact, if my calculations were right, we
42 think now maybe about half the birds are not counted in
43 that survey. That doesn't mean that they weren't there
44 before either. As long as it's being done in a
45 consistent manner.

46

47 That's why that one really high count I
48 kind of threw out as like, oh, well, this one is kind
49 of different. It was done a whole month later in
50 timing and it was done in the very latest spring

1 breakup here in the Yukon Delta and that got a high
2 count of 139,000 birds. The very same spring there was
3 a count of 70,000 birds. When the survey is done in a
4 repeated fashion, you know, you've got 70,000 and
5 that's what we're getting now.

6
7 So my whole contention or theory or
8 whatever you want to call it is that the population has
9 really been fairly stable for a very long period of
10 time. It might have declined a little bit to the mid
11 '80s and then it came up for a while and now it seems
12 to be stable or maybe going down again, but it hasn't
13 changed much.

14
15 MR. WOODS: Okay.

16
17 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So, given that, why
18 is our objective higher than that? It seems like
19 nature is providing for a certain amount and we're
20 having an inability to get to the population objective,
21 which may be higher. If it's stable and possibly
22 declining, it seems like you could never get to the
23 objective where you could have a harvest.

24
25 MR. STEHN: Again, that's part of the
26 history of it all. At the time that that was set up
27 was a time when that 139,000 count was out there. We
28 knew the population could be at least 139,000 birds.
29 There's no reason to think that that was a complete
30 count. So it's like, oh, well, maybe 150, maybe
31 200,000 is the actual population, so 150,000 didn't
32 seem like a particularly really high estimate.

33
34 That thinking was, I think as we learn
35 now, it's like, well, that wasn't really a comparable
36 index figure. That was more closer towards maybe the
37 total population. Right now we're basing it on this
38 index. The population objective and the thresholds
39 have been set on this index value. I think only now
40 we're learning -- it's like, oh, well, that 139 wasn't
41 really a comparable index to the 70,000, 80,000 index.
42 So I think we might be below the average index, but
43 just barely.

44
45 The other thing though is that if you
46 say, well, okay, what's the population, the real
47 population now, you know, my hypothesis is that it's
48 about 140,000 in the springtime, 160,000 birds in the
49 fall now, the real birds, the real population, but
50 that's not the index. So the question then becomes,

1 you know, if the population is stable based on an index
2 or based on a total estimate or based on breeding
3 pairs, do you want to increase harvest on a stable
4 population, it's going to go down. So then we're
5 talking about the right issue. We're talking about
6 what is harvest going to do to that population. Can we
7 measure the harvest accurately enough to be able to
8 tease that out from a possible environmental change,
9 possible other things.

10

11 So in order to manage it wisely, I
12 think we need better, more rigorous harvest
13 information. We already have four population surveys.
14 I don't know how much better we can get on those. But,
15 if we're going to understand it, we're going to have to
16 have more reliance on harvest information. The thing
17 that's hard about the harvest is when you mix it with
18 outreach efforts and law enforcement efforts, the
19 amount of unreported harvest might change.

20

21 So we could say, oh, let's legalize
22 harvest, you know. Then everybody would be glad to
23 report it because they won't have a fear of reporting
24 it, but maybe the harvest didn't change at all. Maybe
25 they'll take the same number of birds as they always
26 did, but it will look like a big increase. So how do
27 we separate that out.

28

29 So, from a management point of view, I
30 think we have some issues that we've got to deal with
31 in terms of how are we going to understand the effect
32 that we want to make in maybe making the harvest legal,
33 but not increasing it. See, that's what I think. It's
34 like, well, let's have a legal harvest, but let's not
35 have it any bigger than it is now because the
36 population is stable now, so we could withstand that,
37 but if you call it legal and the harvest doubles or
38 triples, you know, then the population ought to go
39 down.

40

41 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Well, I guess a
42 couple things I heard you say is, one, that the current
43 population objective is based on something other than
44 how we're currently counting the geese.....

45

46 MR. STEHN: Yes.

47

48 MR. VINCENT-LANG:which tells me
49 it's time to revisit the population objective. Then
50 number two point I'd like to make is at some point in

1 time -- I agree with you that if you start harvesting
2 birds, you could potentially drop your population down,
3 but you don't know what's driving that population,
4 whether it's habitat limitation or harvest.

5
6 MR. STEHN: Right.

7
8 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So I guess I
9 encourage at least a bit of an adaptive management
10 strategy and, you know, kind of test to see what
11 happens when you harvest some animals and some of these
12 birds and find out what it does rather than being
13 precautionary and never learning about whether harvest
14 is the driving factor in the population of the birds.

15
16 MR. STEHN: Yeah, I think that's a very
17 good analogy. It's an adaptive harvest management that
18 I use for Mallards continent wide. It's like, well,
19 let's learn something. If we have liberalized seasons,
20 you know, and the population goes down, then we know
21 we've done too much. We could do that with Emperors
22 too if we're really careful.

23
24 MR. ANDREW: How much time would you
25 need for something like that to prove itself?

26
27 MR. STEHN: I think about a five-year
28 period would be the minimum.

29
30 MR. ANDREW: And if the presumptions
31 were off, then you could have a detrimental effect on
32 populations.

33
34 MR. STEHN: Absolutely. It might mean
35 that it would take longer for them to come back because
36 you drove them down, but at least we'd learn that and
37 then we'd learn that, oh, yeah, okay, harvest really
38 maybe is controlling these birds or maybe we were
39 unlucky and it was a combination of factors. You know,
40 we'd have a stronger inference that harvest really is
41 important.

42
43 I think that's one of the things that's
44 hardest to get across with the outreach and education
45 efforts is that the harvest level of subsistence
46 hunters may really make a difference to the population
47 size. The birds have always been kind of stable.
48 People seize the same fraction every year, maybe the
49 same birds are available, you know, but the populations
50 have changed. We know for sure Cacklers went way down

1 and White-Fronts went way down. I think it was
2 overharvest in California. They were harvesting them
3 faster than they could produce for 20 years, so of
4 course they went down.

5
6 MR. ROWLAND: So you were talking about
7 the 50 percent error.

8
9 MR. STEHN: Well, it's not really
10 error. Error is like.....

11
12 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Indiscernible).

13
14 MR. STEHN: Yeah. Well, in that case,
15 it would be biased. You could say, oh, yeah, this
16 survey is biased, it's 50 percent low. So they might
17 be really, really consistent and the error reflects how
18 inconsistent it is.

19
20 MR. ROWLAND: So you're picking a word
21 to say what your number is indexing at basically in my
22 mind and it could be higher. It could be 60, 75
23 percent, and the outcome of that is that there's more
24 Emperor Geese.....

25
26 MR. STEHN: No.

27
28 MR. ROWLAND:and then the outcome
29 of that is that they're coming to our area and they're
30 pushing all the ducks out. We used to have thousands
31 of Mallards that came in. We have very few Mallards
32 that come back now. So if we can't hunt the Emperors,
33 but our ducks are gone because the Emperors are there,
34 so it's two things that are happening here.

35
36 Then one more thing is that if you guys
37 are doing this social experiment on time to build up
38 the Emperor Geese population and then there's some sort
39 of huge die-off because of overpopulation because of
40 some sort of disease, then it's really going to cause a
41 lot of issues because not only are they going to croak
42 off, but then there's going to be no ducks for a long
43 time. What I'm wondering is.....

44
45 MR. STEHN: Well, let's not base too
46 much of the thinking about what ifs. I mean had we had
47 50 years of consistent survey data from Kodiak Island,
48 we would know that Emperors have either increased in
49 that area specifically or have not, but we don't have
50 50 years of data on Kodiak Island. We have 50 years of

1 data where we're pretty sure 90 percent of the Emperors
2 spring stage and fall stage. You know, 90-94 percent
3 of them we think are in that area when we do the
4 counts.

5
6 So, yeah, we're off some and we don't
7 see them all. You know, we only see half of them, but
8 they're probably there during that time period. So
9 it's hard to count flocks of birds. Flocks of birds
10 move. They get away from the aircraft. You undercount
11 them. You always miss some. You usually don't make up
12 birds when you're doing a survey, I mean that's harder
13 to do, but you miss them. So we know we're
14 undercounting, but if we do it consistently, we have an
15 index.

16
17 To assume that now all the Emperor
18 Geese are going to Kodiak and they're not in our survey
19 area, you know, there's no evidence for that. I mean
20 if we could find some evidence, boy, we'd sure consider
21 it, but we haven't found any yet, so why should we base
22 hypothesis testing and management on something that we
23 have no evidence for. We're trying to base it on at
24 least what we do have evidence. The strongest evidence
25 we have is that all our surveys say that the population
26 is relatively stable for the last 40 years.

27
28 MR. ROWLAND: So it's important for the
29 Kodiak groups to hunt ducks. Is there a way to find so
30 you could continue on your path with the Emperor Geese?
31 How are we going to increase the ducks on Kodiak
32 Island?

33
34 MR. STEHN: Well, again, if we had
35 surveys for ducks specific to Kodiak, then we would
36 know the answer. I mean it's nice to have data to
37 answer these questions, you know, data collected in a
38 certain way in a consistent fashion. We just can't --
39 you know, I don't think it's valid to say that. We
40 could look at some data like Christmas count data for
41 birds. I know the Kodiak Refuge has done counts of
42 birds. I'm not real familiar with some of that data,
43 but those people that work in that area maybe could
44 come up with some data that would say, oh, yeah,
45 there's a lot less ducks now or there's a lot more
46 ducks now. I mean I just -- you know, I'm not going to
47 say that there are or not because I haven't seen the
48 data. But that's kind of what I do, is I try to base my
49 thinking on the data that I'm able to find.

50

1 MR. WOODS: Rick, can you maybe from
2 your region -- like we worked with the Alaska Peninsula
3 Refuge biologist there and asked for information
4 pertaining to the bird populations that we're
5 addressing. Maybe in your regional meeting can you
6 bring that to your regional to have the Refuge come up
7 with accurate information that you could bring forward?
8

9 MR. ROWLAND: Well, I have to remind
10 myself that this is strictly advisory, Alaska Migratory
11 Bird Co-management Council, and I have to remind the
12 people on the island that it's advisory. So there's
13 different methods of approaching different types of
14 rights that Natives have. So we're participating in
15 this as an advisory capacity. So it's really more of a
16 headache trying to request something to be done for the
17 people to hunt migratory birds, like ducks, than it is
18 to actually request somewhere else.
19

20 MR. WOODS: I'd like to thank Bob for
21 his information. You know, like the North Slope
22 Borough, when they need accurate surveys and science,
23 they go out and get the accurate survey and science,
24 and that's the positive of this, is that we're sitting
25 on a board. I realized how important it is to be
26 engaged in the process. So I'll leave it at that.
27 Thanks.
28

29 MR. FISCHER: That's a good point and
30 that's I think why there's an Emperor Goose
31 Subcommittee and we'll continue to work together on
32 these issues.
33

34 Okay. I think I covered all this stuff
35 on this slide.
36

37 MS. WOODS: Hi. My name is Gayla
38 Woods. It's all confusing sitting here, but I guess a
39 question that I have is you stated that when you're
40 doing the aerial survey, that only 50 percent of the
41 birds are counted. Is that 50 percent then included in
42 the estimated population on your graph or not?
43

44 MR. FISCHER: No. It's what's called
45 an index.
46

47 MS. WOODS: So nobody really knows how
48 many birds there are.
49

50 MR. FISCHER: We can come up with an

1 estimate. Actually Bob just came up with an estimate
2 based on a modeling approach that he presented at the
3 subcommittee meeting two weeks ago in which he came up
4 with an estimate of approximately twice that amount.
5 Again, the management threshold is based on the index
6 estimate.

7

8 I can totally understand the confusion
9 on this. We run into this all the time trying to
10 distinguish what an index is versus a population
11 estimate. Unless we have an accurate correction
12 factor, then we can't tell you exactly how many birds
13 there are, but we can follow the trend in the
14 population. So we know if there's more or less, if
15 they're going up or down, and we know the relative
16 amount compared to what the people that we're involved
17 in in developing the objective wanted at that time. So
18 they said, okay, we want twice as many birds as we have
19 right now, what's the population index, okay, we're
20 going to double it or we have exactly how many birds we
21 want now, we want to maintain it at this, let's use
22 this particular survey as our index and so let's make
23 sure that index stays at that level.

24

25 MS. WOODS: I guess that follows up to
26 my next question. I don't understand why there's a lot
27 of money spent on Emperor Geese counting, but you guys
28 aren't counting where the birds are according to the
29 maps.

30

31 MR. FISCHER: Okay. On the map you
32 saw, the Emperor Geese can occur anywhere from the
33 Chukotka Peninsula in Russia through the entire chain
34 of Aleutian Islands, the Yukon Delta and down to Kodiak
35 Island. That's a vast region. As one of the smallest
36 divisions in the Fish and Wildlife Service that charged
37 with monitoring all populations of migratory birds, we
38 cannot do that at all times of the year. Those birds
39 are distributed in those different areas at different
40 times of the year, so we simply can't do it. We can't
41 do it all. I guess that's my response to that.

42

43 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Okay. I guess we
44 need to move on the agenda or keep going with your
45 presentation, please.

46

47 MR. WOODS: You're back to being
48 Chairman again?

49

50 MR. FISCHER: Okay. I'm going to move

1 on to Spectacled Eiders. Spectacled Eiders were listed
2 in '93, resulting primarily -- the listing decision was
3 based on a decline of about 96 percent on the Yukon
4 Delta. There's a number of factors that have been
5 identified that may have been related to this decline
6 ranging from major changes in food availability on the
7 wintering grounds, to predation on the breeding
8 grounds, to harvest, to lead poisoning from lead shot.

9
10 There's a range map here. Red shows
11 the current breeding range of Spectacled Eiders. You
12 can see there's three primary breeding populations; one
13 in northern Russia, one in the North Slope and then one
14 down in the Yukon Delta. That big yellow oval
15 indicates their wintering area, which is south of St.
16 Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea. These birds
17 basically spend their entire winter out on leads in the
18 ice, in the pack ice out there. The green shapes show
19 some of their preferred staging and molting areas.

20
21 So there's two primary surveys that we
22 use to monitor this population in Alaska. One is on
23 the Yukon Delta breeding area, and I described that
24 aerial survey a little bit before, and a similar survey
25 on the Arctic Coastal Plain. You've seen this figure.
26 So the next one shows a population -- what's happening
27 with the populations in those two areas combined into
28 one graph. Those blue bars show the population of
29 Spectacled Eiders. This is a population index on the
30 Yukon Delta and the white bars show the index for the
31 North Slope.

32
33 Over the last 10 years on the Yukon
34 Delta we've seen consistent growth upwards at a very
35 high rate, almost 8 percent per year. The North Slope
36 numbers have been quite variable and are basically
37 stable since the survey started up there.

38
39 Eric Taylor went up to the North Slope
40 to present a similar presentation up there a few weeks
41 ago or a month ago and was asked to address where the
42 populations are relative to recovery criteria. I'm
43 going to attempt to do that here. After listing the
44 Spectacled Eider, a Spectacled Eider Recovery Team was
45 formed and their first task was to develop a recovery
46 plan. Similar to a goose management plan, this
47 recovery plan developed recovery criteria. What the
48 team decided at that time was for each of three
49 populations, the Russian population, the North Slope
50 population and the Yukon Delta population, the Eiders

1 had to meet one of the following criteria for
2 Spectacled Eiders to be removed from the Endangered
3 Species list.

4
5 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So even if the U.S.
6 populations recover you couldn't de-list these if the
7 Russian population didn't recover.

8
9 MR. FISCHER: That's correct. That's
10 the way the population was listed.

11
12 MR. VINCENT-LANG: That's just wrong.

13
14 MR. FISCHER: That's how the population
15 was listed under the ESA. Okay. And those are an
16 increasing trend.....

17
18 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Correct that.
19 That's not how it was listed. It was a decision on
20 recovery that was set by the U.S. government.

21
22 MR. FISCHER: My understanding was.....

23
24 MR. VINCENT-LANG: (Indiscernible) say
25 that they had to be recovered in Russia to be de-
26 listed.

27
28 MR. FISCHER: My understanding was that
29 the species was listed, not a population of the
30 species.

31
32 MR. VINCENT-LANG: That's correct, the
33 species was listed; however, the recovery objectives
34 for recovery was set by the U.S. and included a
35 criteria that a Russian population beyond our
36 jurisdiction had to be recovered for de-listing to
37 occur in the U.S.

38
39 MR. FISCHER: And I'd like to point out
40 the recovery team is comprised of State
41 representatives, Fish and Wildlife representatives,
42 Native representatives and others.

43
44 MR. ROSENBERG: At the time of listing,
45 it wasn't really recognized that genetically we had
46 three distinct populations, but that came about soon
47 after or not that long after. Don't ask me on the
48 chronology right now. So now we have the three
49 populations. The Russian population is probably around
50 300,000 birds, so it's not really an issue. The

1 Service has been requested by members of the recovery
2 team to at least de-list the Russian population.

3

4 MR. WOODS: They have that many birds
5 over on that side?

6

7 MR. ROSENBERG: Correct. And that was
8 back during the second Bush admin -- the second, George
9 Bush, Jr., whatever his administration, so quite a
10 while ago they requested to de-list it and the Service
11 has not wanted to go through that administrative
12 process, so that's why the Russian population is even
13 still on here period. So we're really just dealing
14 with the two U.S. populations, the Y-K Delta population
15 and the North Slope population.

16

17 The problem with the North Slope
18 population is that -- it numbers, what, around 2,000
19 birds or so, I forget the number, and it's been stable,
20 but we really don't know if it's ever even been as high
21 as the recovery objective period. So that presents
22 another host of problems there too.

23

24 Anyway, thank you for letting me get
25 that in.

26

27 MR. FISCHER: Okay. Let's see if we
28 can get through this. One of the three criteria:
29 Either an increasing trend and a minimum estimated
30 population size of 6,000 pairs or at least 10,000 pairs
31 over three years or 25,000 pairs in any one year.

32

33 So, in terms of Russia, yes. Criteria
34 have been met and they were probably met prior to
35 listing. We didn't know how many birds were over
36 there. There's a lot of birds in Russia. Yukon Delta.
37 Okay. Certainly the Yukon Delta population has been
38 increasing for over 10 years. Is the minimum estimated
39 population size over 6,000 breeding pairs? No, but
40 it's getting very close.

41

42 The way the recovery criteria are
43 written, it references 95 percent confidence intervals
44 around the point estimate. While the actual point
45 estimate is over 6,000 pairs, the confidence level dips
46 below that, so we know that there's at least -- we
47 estimate there's at least 4,866 pairs on the Yukon
48 Delta and rising. So I expect that we're going to --
49 even with that range of precision, we're going to be
50 hitting the 6,000 mark soon. Doug.

1 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So I just need to
2 understand this. So you use the lower confidence
3 interval to determine whether you achieve this metric?

4
5 MR. FISCHER: Yeah, again, that's
6 what's specified in the recovery plan.

7
8 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Wow. But we don't
9 have confidence intervals for any other population of
10 species.

11
12 MR. FISCHER: The way this number is
13 calculated is with a whole different procedure. It's
14 not an aerial survey. This is a breeding pair estimate
15 from ground-based nesting surveys. So it's a random
16 selected plot survey in the core of the nesting area.
17 So, because there's repeated measures throughout that
18 breeding range we're able to come up with an error
19 term.

20
21 MR. WOODS: It's a 95 percent
22 correction? What is it?

23
24 MR. FISCHER: It's a confidence
25 interval. So our best estimate is there's 6,474 nests.
26 You can think of it as we're 95 percent confident that
27 the numbers are within 4,866 to 82.

28
29 Okay, North Slope. This is a really
30 good point that Dan brought up. I don't know if I want
31 to get into all the details on this, but if you want me
32 to, I'll certainly go through it. Are we above 6,000
33 breeding pairs? You can make a number of assumptions
34 regarding the detection rate for the aerial survey. If
35 you had the same detection rate for Spectacled Eiders
36 on the Yukon Delta as you do on the North Slope, then
37 we would estimate there would be approximately 7,542
38 nests and the confidence interval would be -- the lower
39 bound would be 5,786. That's assuming we have a
40 similar detection rate, which has not been tested on
41 the North Slope. It's a different situation up there.
42 But if you did, then we'd be very close to that de-
43 listing mark.

44
45 The crux here is what about that
46 increasing trend over 10 years or more. Dan pointed
47 out that we are not sure what the population of
48 Spectacled Eiders was prior to listing. There was not
49 standardized methods for surveying Spectacled Eiders
50 prior to listing. There were some surveys that did go

1 back into the '80s and other surveys, but not directly
2 comparable. So, whether that increasing trend could or
3 should be met is going to need to be revisited.

4

5 I was just in touch with recovery
6 coordinator Kate Martin yesterday talking about
7 Spectacled Eider recovery criteria. I've started
8 discussions with her about how we can start addressing
9 some of these questions with a revision of the recovery
10 criteria for Spectacled Eiders.

11

12 So that's what I have to say about
13 those guys. Questions.

14

15 MR. ROWLAND: Yeah, I have a question.
16 Previously, a couple meetings ago, we had somebody come
17 in and say that they were going to plant Eider eggs on
18 the Yukon Delta. Was that the Spectacled they were
19 talking about?

20

21 MR. FISCHER: No, that's Steller's
22 Eiders.

23

24 MR. ROWLAND: Oh, okay.

25

26 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Let me try to
27 summarize what I've heard. In essence, we have point
28 estimates for all three populations that are above the
29 6,000 breeding pair for Russia, the Yukon-Kuskokwim
30 Delta and the North Slope. We don't have lower
31 confidence intervals, but we're close. And we have
32 increasing trends in all three areas except we don't
33 know in the North Slope because we don't have a point
34 estimate. What would the Service.....

35

36 MR. FISCHER: That's not what I said.

37

38 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Okay. That's why
39 I'm asking.

40

41 MR. FISCHER: Okay. So we have an
42 estimate for breeding pairs on the Yukon Delta based on
43 the number of nests and we have an aerial survey that
44 showed overwhelmingly above the 25,000 breeding pairs
45 in Russia. For the North Slope, we don't have numbers
46 of nests to base a number of breeding pairs estimate
47 on, but if you assumed a similar detection rate for an
48 aerial survey crew on the North Slope as you did on the
49 Yukon Delta, then we would be above 6,000 pairs on the
50 North Slope. So I just wanted to clarify that.

1 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So my understanding
2 of recovery plans is their guidance documents and at
3 any given time an individual could submit a de-listing
4 petition, for instance, on a species and this plan
5 would guide the decision the Service had to do. When
6 is your next opportunity to reopen this recovery plan
7 and potentially do a status review and take a look at
8 whether or not, you know, these are valid criteria and
9 whether or not they're still at risk of extinction?
10 Because I could easily make a case that the species
11 that's listed, which is the worldwide population, given
12 the size of the population now in Russia, is no longer
13 at risk of extinction.

14
15 MR. FISCHER: There's a five-year
16 review process for endangered species and I.....

17
18 MR. VINCENT-LANG: And when is that
19 going to occur?

20
21 MR. FISCHER: Dan, do you remember when
22 that -- you were on the team when the last one went
23 around.

24
25 MR. ROSENBERG: I can't remember.

26
27 MR. FISCHER: I'll let you know.

28
29 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: I was just wondering
30 why the Yukon Delta method is not being utilized in the
31 North Slope. Is that because there is no concentrated
32 nesting areas?

33
34 MR. FISCHER: Yes.

35
36 CHAIRMAN NANENG: Joel.

37
38 MR. SACCHEUS: On this Emperor Geese, I
39 was an alternate for the meeting a couple weeks ago and
40 during a slide presentation about Emperor Geese they
41 were showing they were catching them and banding them.
42 I just have a quick question now. How do they get
43 banded geese back, the Emperor Geese and the Cackling
44 Canada Geese and do they help you count them and where
45 they get them from?

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 MR. FISCHER: So the question is what's
50 the purpose of banding of Emperors?

1 MR. SACCHEUS: Those and the Brants.
2 Do they help you with counts and do you get them back
3 from the hunters in different areas in Oregon or
4 anywhere else?

5
6 MR. FISCHER: Okay. Banding and
7 marking birds is a method that's used for many
8 different purposes. One use of banding birds is to
9 determine where they migrate. The information is
10 obtained from hunters who shoot and report their bands
11 or birds that are found or birds that are recaptured in
12 the areas that they were originally captured.

13
14 Collars are often used as a method to
15 determine where birds migrate and stage and can be --
16 you can determine those things without actually having
17 to harvest the bird because you can see the collar from
18 a distance. Collars are often used as a method to --
19 there's a mathematical method that you can go through
20 to -- by putting a certain number of collars on and
21 resighting them in different locations over a different
22 period of time to come up with a population estimate,
23 but you need to put a lot of collars on to do that.

24
25 Collars are also a platform for
26 attaching radio transmitters for radio telemetry
27 studies, as are leg bands. So there's a number of
28 different purposes and methods that have been used in
29 the past that deal with banding and collaring birds.
30 Is there one in particular that you're wondering about
31 that I might be able to address or did you just want to
32 know in general what some of those uses might be?

33
34 MR. SACCHEUS: Well, mostly about
35 Emperor and Brants because I heard some of the hunters
36 getting quite a few banded Brant lately. I was just
37 curious. I was an alternate on this Emperor
38 Subcommittee meeting a few weeks back and you were
39 showing slides about your capturing and putting these
40 collars and bands. I was just curious.

41
42 Thank you.

43
44 MR. FISCHER: Okay. Yeah, Joel Schmutz
45 from USGS Alaska Science Center came and presented work
46 that he's done with Emperor Geese and some of that
47 involved banding and collaring birds. I'm going to try
48 to remember exactly all the things that he's done over
49 the years. One of the things that he did was estimated
50 annual survival for Emperors using collaring. He's

1 also looked at annual survival by recapturing leg
2 banded birds year after year in the breeding area.

3
4 He and colleagues were involved in a
5 radio telemetry study that -- in which they banded
6 birds as well and they put radio collars on Emperors to
7 better understand their staging -- how long they were
8 spending in staging areas on the Alaska Peninsula and
9 how they were distributing themselves out through the
10 wintering range. They also learned more about that
11 molt migration over to Russia using that technique.

12
13 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Frank.

14
15 MR. WOODS: I guess I'll add to Joel's
16 comments about a holistic approach. The criteria for
17 the Steller's Eiders in that.....

18
19 MR. FISCHER: Spectacles or Steller's?

20
21 MR. WOODS: I'm sorry. Spectacled.
22 The confidence intervals that are developed through
23 that endangered species listing, we talked a little bit
24 about this during our Harvest Committee, that it would
25 be real beneficial I think that we have -- I know Dan
26 and probably Julian and more so the Federal system has
27 more training on the endangered species listing and the
28 Act and how it affects populations, how they get
29 evaluated. The processes are a lot different than
30 we're used to.

31
32 Joel's comments concerning the
33 Emperors, since there's no confidence intervals for
34 that 68,000 that you could almost say that it would be
35 time to basically -- almost pertinent that this board
36 adopts a request for a revisit of that Goose Management
37 Plan. The Emperor Goose Management Plan that's in
38 place doesn't include any of that stuff and that's, I
39 think, what your presentation was referring to, is that
40 we don't have a way of accurately looking at it. Since
41 we don't have an accurate way of looking at it, we put
42 in a formal request to revisit that plan because we're
43 going to have to do it anyway.

44
45 Then the other factor is -- what was I
46 going to say about Spectacled Eiders here. I'll think
47 of it in a little bit before the end of the day.
48 Thanks.

49
50 MR. FISCHER: All right.

1 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Joeneal.

2

3 MR. HICKS: Just looking at your graphs
4 here, with any and all certainty, I don't know if you
5 can answer this question, but according to the graphs,
6 give or take a couple of them, but it looks like there
7 was a population decline that begins about the middle
8 '70s. I guess my question is why.

9

10 Then, to continue with that, it looks
11 like then there's also a rise in the '80s, early '80s,
12 somewhere in that area. Again, the question is why.
13 Is that because of new laws passed, like in ANILCA,
14 ANCSA, land status, stuff like that, or just new laws
15 and regulations that help to manage migratory birds,
16 you know. How do I word this here. But you know what
17 I'm saying.

18

19 MR. FISCHER: Yes.

20

21 MR. HICKS: In the '70s you see a
22 decline and it stays I guess you can say in a bad way
23 and then all of a sudden there's a rise in it and the
24 rise is what I'm saying. Is it because of new laws,
25 new regulations that set in motion that you have to
26 manage these migratory birds or whatever. I guess
27 that's what I'm trying to say.

28

29 MR. FISCHER: Yeah. I think the
30 primary -- I believe the Goose Management Plan on the
31 Yukon Delta was pivotal. I think understanding that
32 birds were being overharvested in the wintering areas
33 was pivotal. In the '80s, it was widely recognized
34 that there was a waterfowl crisis going on and there
35 was a consolidated comprehensive effort to make a
36 change throughout the flyway. It required input and
37 effort from multiple states and the Native villages and
38 Fish and Wildlife Service, State of Alaska working
39 together to say let's turn this around.

40

41 A number of species were closed for a
42 period of time. Then there was also changes in the way
43 farmers were managing their land in the Lower 48 states
44 and Brandon mentioned earlier the switch from the
45 burning to flooding habitat, so better habitat in the
46 winter. So I think there was a very rapid response to
47 that change in harvest. Also, more attention was paid
48 to use of lead shot and its consequences for waterfowl
49 at that time as well. So I think those are a number of
50 things that all contributed to that big switch.

1 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Do you have
2 Spectacled Eiders remaining?
3
4 MR. FISCHER: Excuse me?
5
6 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Spectacled Eiders --
7 I mean Steller's Eiders remaining on your presentation?
8
9 MR. FISCHER: No.
10
11 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Are you done?
12
13 MR. FISCHER: No. I've got more.
14
15 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Oh, okay. We have a
16 4:30.....
17
18 MR. FISCHER: I've got Steller's and
19 I've got Yellow-Billed Loons and then I'm done. It
20 will be pretty quick here.
21
22 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Yeah, we have a 4:30
23 threshold here that we need to be out of here by.
24
25 MR. FISCHER: Okay. Depending on how
26 many questions you've got.....
27
28 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Perhaps what you can
29 do is go through your presentations and if you have any
30 questions, write them down and then we'll go with as
31 many questions as we can up until 4:30 and then in the
32 morning if we can.....
33
34 MR. FISCHER: Sure. I'll be here
35 tomorrow. Okay. Let's get to the interesting species.
36 Steller's Eiders, closed in '97, listed as threatened.
37 Sparsely distributed across the Arctic Coastal Plain,
38 the highest densities are near Barrow. Different than
39 the Spectacled Eider, Steller's Eiders were listed in
40 Alaska only. So they're similar to Spectacled Eiders
41 in that most of them are nesting in Russia, but they're
42 also nesting in Alaska, but only the Alaska breeding
43 population was listed.
44
45 Because they're sparse and there's few
46 of them in Alaska, the ability to monitor them is
47 difficult using aerial survey methods. Here's a quick
48 map of their distribution. You can see the blue shows
49 where they're breeding, Russia and Alaska. Orange or
50 red is their winter habitat. Within Alaska, Kodiak out

1 through the Aleutian Islands.

2

3 I should also mention that formerly
4 they were a common nesting species on the Yukon Delta
5 and they're virtually not there anymore although I did
6 see a nesting pair there this summer, which was
7 extremely exciting.

8

9 The North Slope population is monitored
10 with this Arctic Coastal Plain Aerial Survey and this
11 is what we see. We see a highly variable count from
12 year to year. The Steller's Eiders are a unique
13 species in that they are not a regular nester. A
14 number of years most of the pairs just choose to not
15 breed. That is reflected in our aerial survey counts.
16 In those years where they show up and decide this is
17 not the year to breed, they're likely not present even
18 to be counted, so thus the variability in our counts.
19 But, again, with a survey that's designed specifically
20 to monitor waterfowl across the entire North Slope when
21 you have a single species that's low in numbers and
22 concentrated in one region, you're going to have
23 relatively variable counts.

24

25 What we do see here though is that over
26 the course of this dataset the population is relatively
27 stable. I mean that is we're not seeing any specific
28 trend downwards or upwards. Rather we see these spikes
29 and drops, but we kind of keep continuing back to the
30 same relative level over the course of several years.

31

32 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Are any of those
33 numbers different from a statistical point of view?

34

35 MR. FISCHER: Are they different from
36 one another? So we have -- I think I've got a positive
37 2 percent growth rate per year in green. That's not
38 statistically significant. In fact, because of the
39 variability in these numbers the growth rate could be
40 anywhere from .7 to 1.5. Statistically it's stable in
41 other words.

42

43 Yes.

44

45 MR. ROWLAND: So I noticed that you
46 didn't put the Russian population on there. Is it
47 because it's too high, like 400,000?

48

49 MR. FISCHER: No, I didn't put the
50 Russian population on there because it's not listed, so

1 that wasn't really -- it's not relevant for what I was
2 talking about here. It's the Alaska breeding Steller's
3 Eiders that were listed under the Endangered Species
4 Act, not the worldwide population of Steller's Eiders,
5 which is different from Spectacled Eiders. They were
6 listed in very different ways back in the '90s.

7
8 MR. ROWLAND: Yeah, I understand that,
9 but what is the population of that Russian group?

10
11 MR. FISCHER: Okay. There was an
12 aerial survey in the Steller's Eider breeding area in
13 Russia in the mid-1990s and the population estimate was
14 125,000 or so.

15
16 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So has any work been
17 done to determine whether our birds on the North Slope
18 are part of a larger population of Russian birds and,
19 in fact, maybe some of these birds go to Russia for
20 certain years to nest versus being in Alaska? What's
21 being done in terms of assessing the discreteness of
22 this population from the larger population?

23
24 MR. FISCHER: That's a great question.
25 I'll address that with this slide here. If I fail to
26 address it, remind me of it. Regarding criteria for
27 Steller's Eider de-listing, the way the recovery plan
28 was written for this species you had to have a less
29 than 1 percent probability of extinction in 100 years
30 and you needed to have two sub-populations each with a
31 less than 10 percent probability of extinction in 100
32 years. Those two populations being the Yukon Delta and
33 the North Slope.

34
35 So how is that measured. Is it a
36 number, is it a trend, what is it. The way these
37 extinction probabilities are calculated is with a
38 modeling approach called a population viability
39 analysis. There was a population viability analysis
40 constructed and recorded in 2004 for the Alaska
41 breeding population and it used data on annual
42 survival, productivity, population trend and other data
43 to come up with a probability that this species would
44 just blink out of existence just due to variability or
45 because it was going down.

46
47 It came up with a really high
48 likelihood of extinction. However, the author and
49 creator of that model basically said, you know what,
50 the data going into this is not the best that we could

1 do and it also doesn't include the possibility that the
2 population might be opened between Russia and Alaska.
3 It was only considering it to be a closed population.
4 Since that time there's been a lot of new data
5 collected on the North Slope specifically in the Barrow
6 region on breeding probability, breeding success and
7 other factors that are now going to be put into an
8 entirely new population viability analysis.

9
10 Fish and Wildlife Service just received
11 funding for a revised population viability analysis
12 that will be conducted by Auburn University in Barry
13 Grand's population modeling shop and the objectives of
14 that modeling approach are to specifically address that
15 open population question, so this new modeling approach
16 will consider the probability and likelihood of regular
17 interchange between the Russian and the Alaskan
18 population.

19
20 The objectives are also to determine
21 the current likelihood of extinction, determine the
22 likelihood that, like I said, there's movement between
23 those two breeding areas, and to determine the actual
24 population count from these aerial survey data that
25 would be needed to achieve de-listing. So we're trying
26 to move away from something as fuzzy as this to a
27 population count and that we can say, you know, if we
28 reach this number, we have X amount of confidence that
29 we are not going to have this population blink out.

30
31 So the work is starting on that now.
32 Barry's got a couple graduate students working on it
33 and he's expecting a final product by 2015 but with
34 interim reports in the meantime.

35
36 MR. VINCENT-LANG: So will the recovery
37 team be consulted in terms of assumptions that this
38 contractor is going to use to run these models? For
39 instance, you can have a wide variety of assumptions on
40 nesting success, on degree of openness, female harvest.

41
42 MR. FISCHER: Yes, absolutely, as well
43 as external input as well. The recovery team will
44 certainly have -- this would be of great interest to
45 the recovery team as it deals with potential
46 de-listing.

47
48 MR. VINCENT-LANG: And then one final
49 question. I presume after this is all done and you get
50 a report out you'll revisit the recovery plan and the

1 recovery criteria.

2

3 MR. FISCHER: The purpose of this would
4 be to do exactly that.

5

6 MR. VINCENT-LANG:including the
7 potential that you could get to de-listing if, in fact,
8 you find out that it is a population of larger -- it's
9 a variable sub-population of the larger worldwide
10 population.

11

12 MR. FISCHER: The purpose would be to
13 revisit that whole de-listing criteria.

14

15 MR. VINCENT-LANG: Thank you.

16

17 MR. PEDERSON: I have a comment on his
18 question. I think the Council will remember a few
19 years ago we brought forward a proposal to have a
20 fidelity study done by the State, Dan Rosenberg. He
21 came to our regional management body to get approval
22 and we approved that study. He had to follow a process
23 with the Fish and Wildlife Service in order to get a
24 permit, but the Council did approve that study to look
25 at fidelity with these birds to and from Russia. In
26 the end, the Service denied him that permit. So that
27 was one way of trying to go about to figure out what
28 you just asked, Doug. I just wanted to make that brief
29 comment.

30

31 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Mike.
32 Todd, if you can come up to a mic and introduce
33 yourself and state your question, please.

34

35 MR. SFORMO: Todd with the North Slope
36 Borough. It was just a quick comment because Julian is
37 on the Eider Recovery Team and I'm also on it. As for
38 getting some of this information, I think the Eider
39 Recovery Team will receive it, but as of right now
40 there is no scheduled meeting for the entire Recovery
41 Team. Actually it's been put off for a year because of
42 other priorities that are taking place. So it's not
43 directed at anybody in particular, but it's just a
44 reality that this is going on, but the Eider Recovery
45 Team may not really be informed totally. Thanks.

46

47 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Thank you, Todd.

48

49 Peter.

50

1 MR. DEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
2 just wanted to point out a couple years ago I pointed
3 out that the population of Steller's Eiders on the
4 north end of Popof Island has grown from like 300 to
5 600. At that time, I was told that there was only 52
6 breeding pair in North America. In three years it went
7 from 52 pair to 600, but only with a 1 percent
8 increase. At that time, they told me that those
9 weren't North American birds, those were Russian birds.
10 So I think we really need to get that Russian number
11 into this factor because I think it could be de-listed
12 as it stands right now.

13
14 MR. FISCHER: Just in response to that,
15 the group of birds that was listed as threatened was
16 the Alaska breeding population. All of the Russian
17 birds -- well, not all of them, but virtually when you
18 see birds in your region, you're seeing probably 99
19 percent Russian breeding birds or more. All those
20 Russian breeders come across and come down through the
21 Alaska Peninsula and out to the Aleutian Islands. The
22 ones that are listed are that small group of birds that
23 breeds on the North Slope.

24
25 If the Russian population is
26 fluctuating, you might see some changes in your region.
27 Those are not the listed population and there might be
28 -- you know, those birds are distributed over a wide
29 area during winter and there could be any number of
30 factors that might push them from one bay to another.
31 In terms of de-listing, when we look at Steller's
32 Eiders in their wintering area, it doesn't tell us much
33 at all about the breeding population that's listed.

34
35 MR. ROWLAND: I've got one quick
36 question -- two actually. One is are those Russian
37 birds legal to harvest and do we tell them because they
38 don't quack, they say privet, comrade?

39
40 (Laughter)

41
42 MR. FISCHER: Is that a question?

43
44 MR. ROWLAND: Are they legal to hunt,
45 those Russian ones?

46
47 MR. FISCHER: No, they're not legal.
48 They're closed to harvest.

49
50 MR. ROWLAND: Why?

1 MR. FISCHER: They're closed to harvest
2 because there's a listed population that occurs in
3 amongst them.

4
5 MR. WOODS: Julian, I appreciate all
6 the work and time on this. Can I get your card. Also,
7 on the Alaska Peninsula and Becharof Refuges, the
8 information disseminated, the lady I was talking about
9 is Susan Savage. Have you ever contacted her?

10
11 MR. FISCHER: Yeah, I know Susan.

12
13 MR. WOODS: Really interested in
14 migratory birds, bird population in general. To end
15 it, the questions we asked her to come up with were
16 some of the questions you answered, especially in the
17 Bristol Bay area. Since we're a rearing and we're also
18 a rest and wintering grounds for multiple species, so
19 I'd like to -- I'll refer to you when we get to some of
20 the questions when we have our regional meeting, so
21 thanks.

22
23 MR. FISCHER: Sure. No problem.

24
25 MR. VINCENT-LANG: As you move into
26 this re-analysis of information, I would encourage you
27 to worry less about the fact that you had an Alaskan
28 population that was listed. You know, just based on
29 what you've done with wolves in the Lower 48 now, as a
30 Service, you've decided that it's not necessary to
31 recover a wolf population across this historic range.
32 It's just a matter of having a certain population of
33 wolves, of that species that you're looking at.

34
35 So I guess I'd just encourage you as
36 you move forward with this review to not worry that you
37 may not have populations of Eiders on the Yukon-
38 Kuskokwim Delta as long as you have the risk of
39 extinction of whatever population those birds are is
40 removed. So I'm glad you're taking a fresh look at
41 that. Again, the State stands ready to help you
42 through that analysis and hopefully you'll invite us to
43 the table and having meaningful dialogue as you proceed
44 with this contract with the outside university.

45
46 MR. FISCHER: Absolutely.

47
48 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Is that it for the
49 Steller's?

50

1 MR. FISCHER: That's it for Steller's.
2 Yellow-Billed Loons is the last one I was going to
3 discuss today.

4
5 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: We're getting close.

6
7 MR. FISCHER: Did you want me to just
8 call it off and.....

9
10 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: In the morning, yeah.

11
12 MR. FISCHER: Okay. I can do that.
13 Sure.

14
15 CHAIRMAN ANDREW: Since we have a 4:30
16 threshold to vacate the meeting rooms, I think we'll
17 call it a day and then start up at 9:00 o'clock
18 tomorrow morning.

19
20 (Off record)

21
22 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

