



ICE SEAL COMMITTEE ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

MINUTES DRAFT

January 22-23, 2020

9 am Start

Dimond Center Hotel – 700 E Dimond Blvd, Anchorage, AK 99515

1. Call to Order

Called to order at 0901 by Chairman Adams (1:25 on recording #1)

2. Invocation

Given by Joe Mello Leavitt

3. ISC Roll Call: A quorum constitutes 7 membersBristol Bay Native Association

Helen Aderman	Regional Representative.....	present
Sam Gosuk	Hunter Representative.....	present

Association of Village Council Presidents

Jennifer Hooper	Regional Representative.....	present
Albert Simon	Hunter Representative.....	present

Kawerak, Inc.

Brandon Ahmasuk	Regional Representative.....	present
Benjamin Payenna	Hunter Representative.....	not present

Maniilaq Association

Emerson Moto	Regional Representative.....	not present (ill)
Leonard Barger	Hunter Representative.....	present

North Slope Borough

Billy Adams	Regional Representative.....	present
Joe Mello Leavitt	Hunter Representative.....	present

4. Introductions (in order from recording)

Justin Olnes	ADFG-AMMP
Carla Sims Kayotuk	NSB Wildlife
Lori Quakenbush	ADFG

41	Shawn Carey	NMFS	
42	Peter Boveng	NOAA/NMFS-MML	<i>Federal Co-Management Partner</i>
43	Michael Cameron	NOAA/NMFS-MML	
44	Marvin Okitkun	Kotlik	
45	Albert Simon-2	Hooper Bay	
46	Albert Simon-1	Hooper Bay	<i>Hunter Representative (AVCP)</i>
47	Jennifer Hooper	AVCP	<i>Regional Representative (AVCP)</i>
48	Brandon Ahmasuk	Kawerak, Inc.	<i>Regional Representative (Kawerak)</i>
49	Billy Adams	NSB Wildlife	<i>ISC Chair & Regional Representative (NSB)</i>
50	Leonard Barger	Point Hope	<i>Hunter Representative (Maniilaq)</i>
51	Helen Aderman	BBNA	<i>Regional Representative (BBNA)</i>
52	Sam Gossuk	BBNA	<i>Hunter Representative (BBNA)</i>
53	Joe Mello Leavitt	Utqiaġvik	<i>Hunter Representative (NSB)</i>
54	Jared Nayakik	NSB Wildlife	
55	Andrew Von Duyke	NSB Wildlife	<i>ISC Executive Manager</i>
56	Nicole Kanayurak	NSB Wildlife	
57	Elizabeth Kruger	WWF Anchorage	
58	Barbara Mahoney	NMFS	<i>Federal Co-Management Partner</i>
59	Jon Kurland	NMFS	<i>Federal Co-Management Partner</i>
60	Raphaella Stimmelmayer	NSB Wildlife	
61	Larinda Danner	NSB Wildlife	<i>ISC Executive Assistant</i>

5. Welcome Remarks:

- | | | | |
|----|---------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| a. | ISC Chairman: | Billy Adams | Provided by Billy Adams |
| b. | NMFS: | Jon Kurland | Provided by John Kurland |

6. Approve the Agenda

Approved unanimously with the following corrections:

Andy Von Duyke – 3 parts of agenda need to be adjusted:

- Need to make sure to accommodate Verne (? 14:00)’s schedule.
- Marine Mammal Lab needs to present today.
- Colleen Reichmuth needs to present morning of 23-Jan-2020

7. Approve the May 30-31, 2019 Ice Seal Committee annual meeting minutes

Approved unanimously with the following corrections:

Helen Aderman: Sam’s last name was misspelled on 2nd page. It is spelled GOSUK.

Andy Von Duyke: Teleconference meeting did not have a quorum, no action needed.

Joe Mello Leavitt: Page 8, line 336 states that ringed seal fat is used for ‘caulking’.

Actually, ringed seal fat is used for waterproofing.

8. Chairman’s Report

Billy Adams

Billy Adams discussed attendance of committee members, hunting updates for Utqiaġvik, and ICC meetings held in Bethel. The wildlife safety committee, AEWC meetings. The next meeting will provide a written report. Approved unanimously.

9. Ice Seal Research (MML)¹

Peter Boveng and/or Michael Cameron

[59:36 of audio recording #3]

Dr. Peter Boveng shared recent results from aerial surveys. Surveys showed a decline in abundance between 2012 to 2013. Thinks this is from the 2011 UME. Suggests that mortality may be much higher than what is observed as strandings.

Brandon Ahmasuk asked if the surveys were in the same regions and if population was displaced due to sea ice conditions.

Dr. Boveng confirmed that the same areas were covered. Sea ice consistent both years.

Dr. Raphaela Stimmelmayer agreed that this is evidence for the scale of the UME (i.e., higher mortality than observed).

Dr. Boveng also discussed the dynamics and lack of sea ice more recently. Abundance estimates will be available by next meeting (they will be high). Dramatic changes underscore the importance of monitoring seals.

ACTION ITEM: Request and/or discuss ice seal abundance estimates for the Chukchi Sea

Helen Aderman asked about the transects flown.

Dr. Boveng showed a map and described the coverage in US waters as “high”.

Sam Gosuk asked about the causes of the UMEs?

Dr. Boveng indicated that the recent UME is different, may be related to big ecological change associated with loss of sea ice. Seals are skinny. Compounding effects may also be associated with an ecological regime shift in the Bering and Chukchi.

Dr. Michael Cameron provided an update on plans for 2020 monitoring efforts in the Bering Sea in the first three weeks of April aboard the NOAA ship Oscar Dyson. He explained their seal capture-handling-tagging methods. He also explained how to derive a correction factor to estimate the population that is underwater during the survey. Dr. Cameron Explained plans to mitigate for potential interference with subsistence. Community participant on the next cruise (2022). No hydrophones will be used. No “real-time” recording.

Nicole Kanayuruk asked about plans to achieve the multi-pronged approach.

Dr. Cameron mentioned MML’s plans to increase outreach to communities. He also highlighted the importance of continuing a long time-series monitoring effort.

Dr. Boveng presented plans to aerially survey the Beaufort Sea using essentially the same methods as in the Bering and Chukchi Seas. Will also include polar bear survey efforts. Will stick to the 30-mile buffer zone around the communities. Would like to discuss opportunities to fly within the buffer when the situations may allow. Showed slides summarizing what the sea ice has been doing.

¹ Due to scheduling conflicts, MML has requested to present on 22-Jan-2020.

130
131 **10. Section 119 Funds and Grant Process**

132 a. 2011-19 Merit Review Funding for the ISC (Table 1)

Barbara Mahoney

133
134 **Barbara Mahoney** gave an update on funding received by ISC for past 10 years in
135 Section 119 Funds (Table 1). Received funds since 2003 and since 2011 we have
136 gone through a merit-based review. In 2011-19, \$106,000 have been requested and
137 84% has been received. Amount of funds available are stagnant for much of years.

138 **Billy Adams** asked why a percentage and not 100% of requested funds were received?

139 **Barbara Mahoney** replied that Section 119 funds are strictly in regards to co-
140 management, so there needs to be a strong connection in what you're asking for in
141 regards to the co-management component. This can be through the project
142 description. Sometimes there isn't enough money to go around for everyone's
143 projects so there are cuts for that year. Past performance is also weighed into the
144 decision-making process.

145
146 Table 1

ICE SEAL COMMITTEE SECTION 119 FUNDS				
Year*	Requested Funds	ADFG [^]	Received Funds	Percent Received
2019	\$70,236		\$61,936	88.50%
2018	\$41,253		\$33,159	80.50%
2017	\$49,001		\$41,153	84%
2016	\$77,234		\$48,175	62%
2015	\$108,196		\$105,701	97%
2014	\$79,064		\$68,814	87%
2013	\$130,204		\$111,976	86%
2012	\$115,590		\$115,590	100%
2011	\$284,385	\$142,589 (\$62,882)	\$205,471	72%
Total	\$955,163	\$142,589	\$791,975	
9 Year Average	\$106,129		\$87,997	84%
* 2011 started the merit review for Section 119 grant proposals				
[^] Alaska Department of Fish and Game was a subrecipient of Section 119 funds from the Ice Seal Committee				

147
148
149 b. NMFS Section 119 Grants

Shawn Carey

150 **Shawn Carey** provided additional clarification on Section 119 granting process.

151 Because all groups are going after a set amount of money, the amount can vary from
152 year-to-year. Recently, there has been large improvements by the ISC in terms of
153 spending funds and writing proposals. Some of the pitfalls of the A&Os were
154 determined. With the board trainings, you don't really know what you're getting until
155 it starts. It is good to utilize the trainers at the workshops and ask whatever questions
156 you have. Yesterday, we had good discussions of the Research Plan. Lastly, Jen sent
157 out an email that these proposals are due by 8pm on February 10th. Please format your
158 proposals based on the email.

159 **Albert Simon-1:** Do the funds that are not spent carried over to the next year?

Shawn Carey answered that if funds are unspent (e.g., meetings cannot be held), then it is possible to request (and receive) a no-cost extension to spend the money. NMFS has extended ANO grants in the past.

Sam Gosuk asked what was meant by “proposed by the Board”? Does this refer to this group (ISC) or another?

Shawn Carey replied that the desires of the ISC Board go through the NSB (as the administrator) and through the chairman. The ISC Board determines what will be accomplished and how it will be implemented.

Barbara Mahoney further clarified that the ISC Board makes the recommendation to the executive committee and executive manager to put in a proposal for the Board.

Nicole Kanayuruk asked if there were opportunities for the ISC to receive funds (e.g., Section 119, Critical Habitat, ESA) to do what they proposed to address what they think is Critical Habitat?

Barbara Mahoney: That would likely be part of the co-management.

- c. Current Application funding request for FY_2020-21 Andrew Von Duyke
No mention on the audio recording, though portions were covered in the conversations in #10a and #10b

[end of audio recording #1]

11. Regional and Hunter Representative Reports

- a. Association of Village Council Presidents

Albert Simon-1: Poor year for seal hunting due to bad weather and poor ice conditions (too thin). Thin ice means that hunters had to pull ugruks into the boat to process. Poor hunting in the fall and the spring. Other hunters reported than not many seals were caught. Chevak didn’t do well, but Scammon Bay did very well. Currently the ice has been better and the hunters were very successful.

Albert Simon-2: Did not see many ugruks. Ice is thin. Ugruks are around, but you still need to find them.

Marvin Okitkun: Sea ice is too thin. Generally, hunters were successful. Summer seals had little fat on their body. Only had 3 days with enough ice to hunt.

Andy Von Duyke asked about body fat. Was it unusually low fat?

Marvin Okitkun replied that yes, fat was too low. As such, the seals sink very quickly due to lack of body fat.

Joe Mello Leavitt mentioned the use of a grappling hook to retrieve sunken seals. This method has not been used in AVCP area before. Instead, because the water is so shallow, an oar or harpoon have been used to retrieve sunken seals.

Jennifer Hooper: Early spring, early breakup. Crazy hot in June and July. Warm water temps killed salmon. Unusual bird sightings inland. Short-tailed shearwaters were found very emaciated. These birds may have been blown inland by storms. The village of Alakanuk reported sick seals and dead belugas in the river. Sick bearded and spotted seals looked unusual inside. Several dead belugas (gray juveniles and a baby). Fish had more worms than normal. Some fish looked bad on the outside, but

were OK on the inside. Eighteen dead bearded, ringed, and spotted seals. The fall was late fall, but December was very cold and it seems like a “back to normal” winter.

Andy Von Duyke asked for a description of the fish.

Jennifer Hooper replied that Yukon and Koyukuk river water temperatures were very warm, which caused the fish to have heart attacks.

Albert Simon-1: Fishing was very poor in Hooper Bay.

Marvin Okitkun: Water temps were 73° F. There were unusually high numbers of fish on the banks.

Billy Adams asked about the dead belugas and whether samples were taken?

b. Bristol Bay Native Association

Sam Gosuk: Bad weather for hunting, including high winds and large swells. Young bearded seals were seen up the river at start of moose hunting season. There were fewer smelt than usual and no sea ice. In early December, when ice began to freeze, seals were seen. Sea froze up. Mid 20s temps. Seals and late season smelt were observed. Seals were too skinny. Smelting season is important to seals. More ice than in recent past. Ice may be safe in the spring (2020) for hunting in the spring.

Helen Aderman: Reiterated many of the points that Sam made. Warm winters previously, no sea ice. Very warm waters with many dead salmon floating. Hot weather affected fish drying activities. Salmon dying off in large numbers. Dead eiders, shearwaters. Current winter is looking more “normal”. Recently caught seal with yellow blubber. Helen provided a written summary.

c. Kawerak, Inc.

Brandon Ahmasuk: Less sea ice. Some areas sea ice free. Difficult for boating due to high winds. Seem to be fewer seals. Numerous dead skinny seals. Some hairless UME seals. Sick seals have bad odor. Seals are sinking. More sea lions present.

Dr. Justin Olnes asked about condition of stranded seals.

Ben Payenna was not available to provide an update.

d. Maniilaq Association

Leonard Barger: Spoke of the traditional roles for men and women in Kotzebue and Point Hope. Spoke of the traditional uses of seals. Many seals and ugruks being seen. Seals are floating because they are fat. Spoke of using the miksik (weighted snagging hook) to retrieve sunken seals.

Emerson Moto was not available to provide an update.

e. North Slope Borough

Joe Mello Leavitt: Last year the sea ice went out early. Seal hunting window is getting shorter and shorter due to poor ice conditions, especially on the Chukchi Sea side. Once ice leaves, it does not seem to come back. More hunting occurring on the Beaufort Sea side. People have been getting seals. Glad to hear that Pt. Hope is still using skin boats. Environmental and habitat change is going faster over the past five years. Thinks bowheads may be staying near Canada or farther offshore (possibly diverted by shipping?). Short window for seal hunts means fewer skins for skin

boats. Losing traditional methods due to lost hunting opportunities. Has seen “trich” worms (trichinosis) in the seal’s meat. Thick ice is becoming rare. Ice east of Nuvuk is still there...currents? Lack of ice is affecting ability of hunters to “read the ocean”. Winds and weather are more difficult to anticipate. More killer whales present. Fin whales. Pilot whales. Too much SE wind.

Jared Nayakik: He has seen much change in the sea ice, even during his young life.

Albert Simon-1: Why is there more sea ice on Beaufort side than Chukchi?

Joe Mello Leavitt: Currents affect this.

Billy Adams: Conditions have affected hunting. But, those seals that have been harvested are very healthy.

Joe Mello Leavitt caught one seal with very little blubber the year before. Meat was OK, but there was hardly any oil.

Billy Adams also spoke of the effects of bad weather on seals (e.g., separation of mother and pups...even some adults don’t survive harsh weather). Past five years have been a time of change across Alaska.

[end of audio recording #2]

12. Federal Agency Reports

a. NMFS Update:

Jon Kurland

Barbara Mahoney updated the ISC about the ESA status of bearded and ringed seals, which are listed as ‘Threatened’. NMFS was sued by the Center for Biological Diversity over failing to designate critical habitat. As a part of the law suit, a determination must be made about whether critical habitat will be designated. Comments on critical habitat can be sent in to Jon, Barb, or Tammy. There will be a public comment period of 60 – 90 days after the Federal Register announcement of the intent to designate critical habitat. Public hearings will be held at the 5 regions and also Anchorage. NMFS is consulting on projects to minimize takes of threatened species. Other species are also monitored under the MMPA.

Albert Simon-1: What evidence was used to list bearded seals?

Barbara Mahoney: Evidence that is summarized in the status review pertaining to five criteria for listing. Note that it was determined that ringed and bearded seals met the ‘habitat’ criterion.

Albert Simon-1: How do you confirm the evidence that was used in the status review? What happens if the hunters and community members differ in their opinion on the status of listed seal species?

Barbara Mahoney answered that disagreements on the listing status can be addressed through the delisting petitioning process. Note that NMFS has been reviewing a ringed seal delisting petition from ADFG, NSB, et al.

Andy Von Duyke: Requested clarification on the effects of critical habitat on day to day lives of people who live in rural communities.

Barbara Mahoney: No harvest regulations that will affect the subsistence use of these listed species. Federally funded activities, development, permitting, etc. (i.e., federal nexus) within designated critical habitat requires consultation with NMFS to ensure that listed species are not negatively affected. Critical habitat designation will have no effect on how, when, where, and whether subsistence hunting occurs.

Nicole Kanayurak: Asked for confirmation that critical habitat does not affect harvest management. Also asked if there was other info that would inform the extent of critical habitat such as the EEZ.

Barbara Mahoney: NMFS can and does list species outside of the US. But NMFS cannot designate critical habitat outside of US boundaries. Review of status of seals will be based on the key factors required by the species to survive.

Billy Adams thinks that these complex ESA processes will continue to be confusing and recommends that workshops would help communities understand.

ACTION ITEM: Does the ISC wish to pursue funding for an ESA listing workshop(s) in the upcoming grant proposal for FY2021-22?

Andy Von Duyke: Commented on “best available science”. Mentioned that there is a lot of Local and Indigenous Knowledge that may be informative to listing decisions, critical habitat designation, species status reviews, etc. Suggested to the group that this info can be synthesized into an information product that will assist NMFS with their determinations.

ACTION ITEM: Would the ISC like to proactively work toward facilitating the concurrent use of Indigenous-Knowledge and Scientific-Knowledge for co-management? Examples may include supporting research, requesting research, and/or direct participation.

Helen Aderman: Asked about critical habitat boundaries in the Bristol Bay area.

Jon Kurland replied that no critical habitat designation is in place yet, but it is anticipated that some critical habitat may fall within Bristol Bay. NMFS does not anticipate any limitations to commercial fishing, non-commercial fishing, or subsistence activities as a result of critical habitat (i.e., activities without a federal nexus).

Joe Mello Leavitt mentioned that seals are still able to pup in the ice that is present. While there is more open water now, seals still have enough ice for pupping.

Brandon Ahmasuk asked how the Russians were dealing with critical habitat?

Jon Kurland responded that critical habitat can only be designated in US waters.

Albert Simon-1: Stated that most hunters don’t know what “Critical Habitat” means. What is it?

Jon Kurland answered that, simply stated, it's the types of habitat that are most important to seals.

Barbara Mahoney: Comments, observations, etc. can be submitted directly to Barbara or Jon and/or submitted through the formal public hearing process.

Helen Aderman: Tribal consultation in BBNA region would be convenient in April.

Barbara Mahoney mentioned that a decision on whether to designate critical habitat will be made by September 15, 2020. Hearings will occur after the September date (60 or 90 days after). Barbara mentioned that she will be glad to help set up consultation.

b. NMFS Marine Mammal Stranding Update:

Barbara Mahoney

Barbara Mahoney presented about the current Unusual Mortality Event (UME) with respect to ice seal strandings in the Bering and Chukchi Seas only. A UME is an abnormal, unusual, or unexpected large die off of marine mammals, ultimately requiring an immediate response from NMFS. There was a marked increase in the mortality and strandings of ice seals over the long-term average rates. For example, in 2018 and 2019 there were 132 and 167 strandings respectively, which was significantly higher (~ 4-5 times higher) than the 18-year average. These seals were skinny or emaciated. Barbara provided a stranding poster. UME designation facilitates the formation of a working group to determine its cause and if there is a population level effect. There is currently a grey whale UME that is also in effect due to many strandings of whales in very low body-condition. Whales starved before reaching Alaskan feeding areas. No cause for 2011 UME was determined.

Brandon Ahmasuk: Elephant seal molting on the beach? Does molting necessitate a stranding?

Barbara Mahoney replied that it is only considered a stranding if an action by NMFS and the Stranding Network (e.g., they were moved from a popular beach to a remote beach). Official stranding is when official actions are taken.

Billy Adams: Need to focus on ice seals.

Albert Simon-1 asked about what really happening to the seals during the UMEs?

Requested answers about the first UME, but acknowledged that there were no answers yet. Albert stated that it seems like there should be answers given the state of science and technology these days.

Barbara Mahoney conceded that the lack of a known cause is frustrating.

Brandon Ahmasuk asked for a better picture of a skinny spotted seal. He wanted to provide an example to the group. Commented that this skinny seal was "remarkably skinny".

Barbara Mahoney brought sampling equipment/supplies to deal with strandings.

Billy Adams also mentioned that the NSB has body bags that can be sent anywhere via Alaska Airlines.

[end of audio recording #3]

13. Ice Seal Research

- a. Alaska Department of Fish and Game Lori Quakenbush and/or Justin Olnes

Lori Quakenbush presented on three programs:

1. Satellite tagging
2. Biomonitoring – sampling the subsistence harvest
 - Albert stated that he believes that harvest sampling is important
3. Harvest monitoring
 - Nelson ...ISC, et al. (2019) that uses harvest monitoring to demonstrate that ice seal harvest is sustainable.

Justin Olnes presented on household surveys for harvest monitoring. Will continue until June 2020, when the funding will run out.

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=marinemammalprogram.arcticprogram>

- b. NSB Department of Wildlife Management R. Stimmelmayer and A. Von Duyke
NSB provided a presentation on health monitoring and satellite tagging activities.

[end of audio recording #4]

14. Old Business

- a. RESEARCH PROJECT UPDATES

- i. Long Marine Laboratory, UC-Santa Cruz² Colleen Reichmuth
Research update on new bearded seal.
Plans for upcoming work under next NOAA Alaska Pinnipeds Award.

Dr. Colleen Reichmuth presented on comparative studies among different ice seal species. Provided an update on new results on health, physiology and acoustics.
<https://pinnipedlab.ucsc.edu/auto-draft/>

Billy Adams strongly requested information on the duration that sedatives (Midazolam and ?) remain in the animal's system.

ACTION ITEM: Does ISC want to request information and/or research into the rate in which various sedatives and other drugs are metabolized by ice seals that have been handled?

Andy Von Duyke made a point to assure the ISC that no drugs are used by NSB when handling ice seals for research.

² Due to scheduling conflicts, Dr. Reichmuth has requested to present in the morning of 23-Jan-2020.

- 433
434 ii. Evaluating novel assessment approaches for coastal ice seal haulout areas and
435 behavior in the Alaskan Beaufort Sea

436 Donna Hauser (UAF) & Andrew Von Duyke (NSB-DWM)

437
438 **Andy Von Duyke** provided a project status update. Presentation materials
439 provided.

440 **Billy Adams** expressed some concern about the appropriate use of drones. Need to
441 consider the questions being asked and the methods employed to answer them.
442 Fundamental questions about research.

443
444 There is a need to inform public about use of drones vs harassment of marine
445 mammals. Also a need to coordinate between NMFS and FAA on regulations.

- 446
447 iii. Investigating the impact of anthropogenic noise on aquatically breeding ice seals in
448 the Alaskan Arctic

449 Aaron Rice, Holger Klinck, & Michelle E. Fourné (Cornell University)

450
451 **Dr. Michelle Fourné** presented an update of her ongoing work (previously
452 presented at the 2019 meeting). Topics included how ice seals deal with noise.
453 Summary document provided in packet.

- 454
455 iv. Integration of Local or Traditional Knowledge and Western Science using a
456 Bayesian approach for fully formed models

457 Rowenna Gryba (University of British Columbia)

458 Marie Auger-Méthé (University of British Columbia)

459 Henry Huntington (Huntington Consulting)

460 Andrew Von Duyke (NSB-DWM)

461
462 **Andy Von Duyke** provided a project status update. Presentation materials provided.

- 463
464 b. Ice Seal Management Plan Barbara Mahoney

465 **Barbara Mahoney** presented on the topic of developing an Ice Seal Management Plan.

466 She provided the beluga whale management plan as an example. This plan will be
467 archived on the website.

- 468
469 c. Ice Seal Co-Management Action Plan Barbara Mahoney & Andrew Von Duyke

470 **Barbara Mahoney** presented on the Ice Seal Co-Management Plan and requested
471 comments from the ISC.

472 **Helen Aderman** asked what was the difference between a ‘management plan’ and an
473 ‘action plan’.

474 **Barbara Mahoney** replied that a management plan has management objectives, while an
475 action plan is a list of activities that can be done in the short-term to work toward
476 meeting the management objectives.

479
480 **15. New Business**

- 481 a. Marine Mammal Data Collection Program – Lauren Divine (Aleut Community of St.
482 Paul Is.) and Bruce Robson (Community and Ecology Resources, LLC)

483
484 Dr. Lauren Divine presented on the Indigenous Sentinels Network (ISN).
485 <https://www.beringwatch.net/>
486

487 **ACTION ITEM: ISC to explore potential for use of an app to conduct harvest**
488 **monitoring and other ice seal documentation as needed by the ISC³.**

489 Sam Gosuk expressed concerns about privacy.

491 Dr. Divine assured that the ISN has a variety of ways to manage confidential
492 information. Sam also thought that this would be nice system, especially for weather
493 observations.

494
495 Billy Adams expressed optimism, but also some concerns about costs and how to
496 allocate available funding.

- 497
498 b. Vote on the agreed upon compensation for satellite tag recovery
499 A vote was held on a recommendation that the ISC standard compensation for hunters
500 and community members who return satellite tags to the tag owner be 15 gallons of
501 fuel, or \$100 village store credit, or a \$100 check.

502
503 Unanimously passed.
504

- 505 c. Discuss the need to elect ISC officers per By-Laws

506 Brandon Ahmasuk was promoted and he no longer has the time to participate in the ISC
507 as Kawerak's representative. Kawerak Inc. is in the process of recruiting/hiring a
508 replacement for Brandon. The person will take over as the Kawerak representative.
509

510 Elections were also held for a two-year term for ISC officers per the by-laws. Election
511 results are shown below.
512

Officer:	Current	New term (ends 2022)	
• Chair	Billy Adams	Billy Adams	unanimous consent
• Vice-Chair	Ben Payenna	Jennifer Hooper	unanimous consent
• Sec. /Treas.	Helen Aderman	Helen Aderman	unanimous consent

517
518 **ACTION ITEM: Is Helen Aderman retired? If yes, who is her replacement? If**
519 **Helen is retired, then the ISC will need a letter from BBNA designating Helen's**
520 **replacement as an ISC representative. Also need to discuss whether this person**
521 **will be expected to act in the role of secretary/treasurer that Helen was recently**
522 **elected to hold. Need to discuss how to proceed.**

³ Time for evaluating the use of apps for local observations has been included in the budget for FY2020-2021

- 523
524 d. Discuss amending the By-Laws to facilitate electronic (email) voting
525 To amend By-Laws there must be a 30-day advanced notice.
526

527 **ACTION ITEM: A notification will be sent out to the ISC about potentially**
528 **amending the By-Laws to facilitate electronic (email) voting.**
529

- 530 e. Ringed and Bearded Seal ESA issues
531 i. Status of ringed seal delisting petition
532 NMFS received petition to delist ringed seals. Decision expected by spring.
533
534 ii. Discussion on critical habitat for ringed and bearded seals
535 Deadline for NMFS decision to designate is September 15, 2020.
536 Recommended deadline for comments (regional partners, individuals, ANOs) is
537 March 15, 2020 (informal, not part of the record). NMFS willing to accept this
538 information as guidance.
539 Received public comments from ringed seals. Reviewing new data. Starting over
540 because of time-lag. Regional meetings will be held for public comment.
541

542 **Joe Mello Leavitt** is concerned about community involvement and strongly
543 encouraged regional meetings to better inform the public on what exactly “critical
544 habitat” means and for community members to be able to provide their comments.

545 **Barbara Mahoney** acknowledged that public hearings in the regional hubs would be
546 scheduled if NMFS determines that they will designate critical habitat.

547 **Sam Gosuk** asked about allowable actions within critical habitat.

548 **Barbara Mahoney** explained that subsistence is not affected by critical habitat, but
549 rather, projects with federal nexus must go through consultation to mitigate
550 potential takes of listed species.
551

552 **ACTION ITEM: ISC needs to pull together comments on critical habitat to be**
553 **submitted on the record at the public hearings and/or to submit prior to the 60-**
554 **or 90-day public commenting period.**
555

556 **Jon Kurland:** Acknowledged that this process is complex and sometimes confusing
557 and can be better communicated. Jon made a commitment to try to improve
558 communicating these complexities.
559

560 **Sam Gosuk:** Suggested that critical habitat be translated into Yup’ik and Iñupiat.
561

- 562 iii. Discussion of process for the current UME declaration
563 Barbara Mahoney and Gay Sheffield will be updating the public via press releases.
564 Discussing with AK Native Tribal Health Consortium for food concerns.
565 Funding for sampling available. Emphasized the importance of photos from local
566 community observers.
567
568

- iv. Discuss Shipping “best practices” guide for villages and dead stuff. When to use FedEx, USPS, etc. Account numbers, billing, lists of contact information.

Barbara Mahoney has body-bags available for sampling stranded animals. Bring dead seals to the airport and NMFS will make arrangements for it to be flown to Anchorage. I.e., ship it COD. Turnaround may be a while, but Barbara is glad to take calls with questions as needed.

Jennifer Hooper: Asked if there was a preferred airline courier.

Barbara Mahoney: No real preference. Choose whichever is readily available. Airlines are OK with COD. However, no COD with Alaska Airlines Gold Streak.

- f. ISC Website (draft) – brief demo

Andy Von Duyke showed draft version of Ice Seal Committee stand-alone website (www.iceseals.org). Objectives, in addition to being more independent from NSB, include being an archive and clearinghouse of relevant ice seal co-management information. NOTE that as of fall 2020 this website is “live”. Though functional, it will require further refinements and is a living document. Photos, research, dates, deadlines, etc. will be uploaded and will hopefully improve the function of the site.

- g. Elisabeth Kruger (WWF)⁴

Elisabeth Kruger introduced herself to the ISC and briefly presented on an “Underwater Noise” initiative being undertaken by WWF. She also mentioned approaches for how to combine Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge.

- h. Vernae Angnaboogok (ICC)⁴

Vernae Angnaboogok provided an update on the ICC Food Sovereignty Initiative. Year 2 of the initiative. Presentation saved on website.
<https://iccalaska.org/media-and-reports/alaskan-inuit-fsi/>

16. Closing Comments

Provided by: Andy Von Duyke, Jon Kurland, Barbara Mahoney, Billy Adams, Brandon Ahmasuk, Jennifer Hooper, Marvin Okitkun, Leonard Barger, Helen Aderman, Sam Gosuk, Joe Mello Leavitt, Jared Nayakik

17. Schedule next Teleconference and Meeting

- a. Includes creation of calendar with blocks of time that are better or worse for meetings and teleconferences. For example, key subsistence activity periods in the regions, AFN, etc.
January meeting dates are usually good. Will be getting back with potential dates.

18. Adjournment

Other comments that were not on the agenda

Billy Adams expressed concern about reps that are not able to attend meetings. ISC needs to ensure that reps can attend and so should recruit members that can participate more fully.

⁴ Not on the original agenda. ISC agreed to let her present at the meeting.

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615 **ACTION ITEM: ISC needs to put in a request to regional partners to recruit ISC board**
616 **members (regional and hunter representatives) that are able to commit to participation in**
617 **meetings, teleconferences, and other ISC activities.**

DRAFT