



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 members

Bristol 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	Raphaela Stimmelmayer	NSB Wildlife	
61	Larinda Danner	NSB Wildlife	<i>ISC Executive Assistant</i>

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63 **5. Welcome Remarks:**

- 64 a. ISC Chairman: Billy Adams Provided by Billy Adams
65 b. NMFS: Jon Kurland Provided by John Kurland
66

67 **6. Approve the Agenda**

- 68 Approved unanimously with the following corrections:
69 **Andy Von Duyke** – 3 parts of agenda need to be adjusted:
70 • Need to make sure to accommodate Verne (? 14:00)’s schedule.
71 • Marine Mammal Lab needs to present today.
72 • Colleen Reichmuth needs to present morning of 23-Jan-2020
73

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

- 75 Approved unanimously with the following corrections:
76 **Helen Aderman:** Sam’s last name was misspelled on 2nd page. It is spelled GOSUK.
77 **Andy Von Duyke:** Teleconference meeting did not have a quorum, no action needed.
78 **Joe Mello Leavitt:** Page 8, line 336 states that ringed seal fat is used for ‘caulking’.
79 Actually, ringed seal fat is used for waterproofing.
80

81 **8. Chairman’s Report**

Billy Adams

- 82 **Billy Adams** discussed attendance of committee members, hunting updates for Utqiaġvik,
83 and ICC meetings held in Bethel. The wildlife safety committee, AEWG meetings. The
84 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.

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10. Section 119 Funds and Grant Process

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

Barbara Mahoney

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

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

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

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				

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b. NMFS Section 119 Grants

Shawn Carey

Shawn Carey provided additional clarification on Section 119 granting process.

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

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

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

163
164 **Sam Gosuk** asked what was meant by “proposed by the Board”? Does this refer to this
165 group (ISC) or another?

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

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

171
172 **Nicole Kanayuruk** asked if there were opportunities for the ISC to receive funds (e.g.,
173 Section 119, Critical Habitat, ESA) to do what they proposed to address what they
174 think is Critical Habitat?

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

176
177 c. Current Application funding request for FY_2020-21 Andrew Von Duyke
178 No mention on the audio recording, though portions were covered in the conversations in
179 #10a and #10b

180 [end of audio recording #1]

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182 11. Regional and Hunter Representative Reports

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184 a. Association of Village Council Presidents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 206 were OK on the inside. Eighteen dead bearded, ringed, and spotted seals. The fall
207 was late fall, but December was very cold and it seems like a “back to normal”
208 winter.
- 209 **Andy Von Duyke** asked for a description of the fish.
- 210 **Jennifer Hooper** replied that Yukon and Koyukuk river water temperatures were very
211 warm, which caused the fish to have heart attacks.
- 212 **Albert Simon-1:** Fishing was very poor in Hooper Bay.
- 213 **Marvin Okitkun:** Water temps were 73° F. There were unusually high numbers of fish
214 on the banks.
- 215 **Billy Adams** asked about the dead belugas and whether samples were taken?
216
- 217 b. Bristol Bay Native Association
- 218 **Sam Gosuk:** Bad weather for hunting, including high winds and large swells. Young
219 bearded seals were seen up the river at start of moose hunting season. There were
220 fewer smelt than usual and no sea ice. In early December, when ice began to freeze,
221 seals were seen. Sea froze up. Mid 20s temps. Seals and late season smelt were
222 observed. Seals were too skinny. Smelting season is important to seals. More ice
223 than in recent past. Ice may be safe in the spring (2020) for hunting in the spring.
- 224 **Helen Aderman:** Reiterated many of the points that Sam made. Warm winters
225 previously, no sea ice. Very warm waters with many dead salmon floating. Hot
226 weather affected fish drying activities. Salmon dying off in large numbers. Dead
227 eiders, shearwaters. Current winter is looking more “normal”. Recently caught seal
228 with yellow blubber. Helen provided a written summary.
229
- 230 c. Kawerak, Inc.
- 231 **Brandon Ahmasuk:** Less sea ice. Some areas sea ice free. Difficult for boating due to
232 high winds. Seem to be fewer seals. Numerous dead skinny seals. Some hairless
233 UME seals. Sick seals have bad odor. Seals are sinking. More sea lions present.
- 234 **Dr. Justin Olnes** asked about condition of stranded seals.
- 235 **Ben Payenna** was not available to provide an update.
236
- 237 d. Maniilaq Association
- 238 **Leonard Barger:** Spoke of the traditional roles for men and women in Kotzebue and
239 Point Hope. Spoke of the traditional uses of seals. Many seals and ugruks being
240 seen. Seals are floating because they are fat. Spoke of using the miksik (weighted
241 snagging hook) to retrieve sunken seals.
- 242 **Emerson Moto** was not available to provide an update.
243
- 244 e. North Slope Borough
- 245 **Joe Mello Leavitt:** Last year the sea ice went out early. Seal hunting window is getting
246 shorter and shorter due to poor ice conditions, especially on the Chukchi Sea side.
247 Once ice leaves, it does not seem to come back. More hunting occurring on the
248 Beaufort Sea side. People have been getting seals. Glad to hear that Pt. Hope is still
249 using skin boats. Environmental and habitat change is going faster over the past five
250 years. Thinks bowheads may be staying near Canada or farther offshore (possibly
251 diverted by shipping?). Short window for seal hunts means fewer skins for skin

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

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

258

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

260 **Joe Mello Leavitt:** Currents affect this.

261

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

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

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

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270 [end of audio recording #2]

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272 12. Federal Agency Reports

273 a. NMFS Update:

Jon Kurland

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

283

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

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

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

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

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

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

304
305 **Nicole Kanayurak:** Asked for confirmation that critical habitat does not affect harvest
306 management. Also asked if there was other info that would inform the extent of
307 critical habitat such as the EEZ.

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

311
312 **Billy Adams** thinks that these complex ESA processes will continue to be confusing and
313 recommends that workshops would help communities understand.

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

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

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

327
328 **Helen Aderman:** Asked about critical habitat boundaries in the Bristol Bay area.

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

334
335 **Joe Mello Leavitt** mentioned that seals are still able to pup in the ice that is present.
336 While there is more open water now, seals still have enough ice for pupping.

337
338 **Brandon Ahmasuk** asked how the Russians were dealing with critical habitat?

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

340
341 **Albert Simon-1:** Stated that most hunters don’t know what “Critical Habitat” means.
342 What is it?

343 **Jon Kurland** answered that, simply stated, it’s the types of habitat that are most
344 important to seals.

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

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

348 **Barbara Mahoney mentioned that a** decision on whether to designate critical habitat
349 will be made by September 15, 2020. Hearings will occur after the September date
350 (60 or 90 days after). Barbara mentioned that she will be glad to help set up
351 consultation.

352

353 b. NMFS Marine Mammal Stranding Update: Barbara Mahoney

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

366

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

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

372

373 **Billy Adams:** Need to focus on ice seals.

374

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

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

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

380

381 **Brandon Ahmasuk** asked for a better picture of a skinny spotted seal. He wanted to
382 provide an example to the group. Commented that this skinny seal was “remarkably
383 skinny”.

384

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

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

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389 [end of audio recording #3]

390

391 **13. Ice Seal Research**

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

393 **Lori Quakenbush** presented on three programs:

394 1. Satellite tagging

395 2. Biomonitoring – sampling the subsistence harvest

396 • Albert stated that he believes that harvest sampling is important

397 3. Harvest monitoring

398 • [Nelson ...ISC, et al. \(2019\)](#) that uses harvest monitoring to demonstrate that ice
399 seal harvest is sustainable.

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

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

403

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

406

407 [end of audio recording #4]

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409 **14. Old Business**

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411 a. RESEARCH PROJECT UPDATES

412 i. Long Marine Laboratory, UC-Santa Cruz² Colleen Reichmuth

413 Research update on new bearded seal.

414 Plans for upcoming work under next NOAA Alaska Pinnipeds Award.

415

416 **Dr. Colleen Reichmuth** presented on comparative studies among different ice seal
417 species. Provided an update on new results on health, physiology and acoustics.

418 <https://pinnipedlab.ucsc.edu/auto-draft/>

419

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

422

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

426

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

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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.
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15. New Business

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

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

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

Sam Gosuk expressed concerns about privacy.
Dr. Divine assured that the ISN has a variety of ways to manage confidential information. Sam also thought that this would be nice system, especially for weather observations.

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

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

Unanimously passed.

- c. Discuss the need to elect ISC officers per By-Laws
Brandon Ahmasuk was promoted and he no longer has the time to participate in the ISC as Kawerak’s representative. Kawerak Inc. is in the process of recruiting/hiring a replacement for Brandon. The person will take over as the Kawerak representative.

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

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

ACTION ITEM: Is Helen Aderman retired? If yes, who is her replacement? If Helen is retired, then the ISC will need a letter from BBNA designating Helen’s replacement as an ISC representative. Also need to discuss whether this person will be expected to act in the role of secretary/treasurer that Helen was recently 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

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

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

- e. Ringed and Bearded Seal ESA issues
 - i. Status of ringed seal delisting petition
NMFS received petition to delist ringed seals. Decision expected by spring.
 - ii. Discussion on critical habitat for ringed and bearded seals
Deadline for NMFS decision to designate is September 15, 2020.
Recommended deadline for comments (regional partners, individuals, ANOs) is March 15, 2020 (informal, not part of the record). NMFS willing to accept this information as guidance.
Received public comments from ringed seals. Reviewing new data. Starting over because of time-lag. Regional meetings will be held for public comment.
Joe Mello Leavitt is concerned about community involvement and strongly encouraged regional meetings to better inform the public on what exactly “critical habitat” means and for community members to be able to provide their comments.
Barbara Mahoney acknowledged that public hearings in the regional hubs would be scheduled if NMFS determines that they will designate critical habitat.
Sam Gosuk asked about allowable actions within critical habitat.
Barbara Mahoney explained that subsistence is not affected by critical habitat, but rather, projects with federal nexus must go through consultation to mitigate potential takes of listed species.
ACTION ITEM: ISC needs to pull together comments on critical habitat to be submitted on the record at the public hearings and/or to submit prior to the 60- or 90-day public commenting period.
Jon Kurland: Acknowledged that this process is complex and sometimes confusing and can be better communicated. Jon made a commitment to try to improve communicating these complexities.
Sam Gosuk: Suggested that critical habitat be translated into Yup’ik and Iñupiat.
 - iii. Discussion of process for the current UME declaration
Barbara Mahoney and Gay Sheffield will be updating the public via press releases.
Discussing with AK Native Tribal Health Consortium for food concerns.
Funding for sampling available. Emphasized the importance of photos from local community observers.

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570 iv. Discuss Shipping “best practices” guide for villages and dead stuff. When to use
571 FedEx, USPS, etc. Account numbers, billing, lists of contact information.
572 **Barbara Mahoney** has body-bags available for sampling stranded animals. Bring
573 dead seals to the airport and NMFS will make arrangements for it to be flown to
574 Anchorage. I.e., ship it COD. Turnaround may be a while, but Barbara is glad to
575 take calls with questions as needed.
576 **Jennifer Hooper:** Asked if there was a preferred airline courier.
577 **Barbara Mahoney:** No real preference. Choose whichever is readily available.
578 Airlines are OK with COD. However, no COD with Alaska Airlines Gold Streak.
579
- 580 f. ISC Website (draft) – brief demo
581 **Andy Von Duyke** showed draft version of Ice Seal Committee stand-alone website
582 (www.iceseals.org). Objectives, in addition to being more independent from NSB,
583 include being an archive and clearinghouse of relevant ice seal co-management
584 information. NOTE that as of fall 2020 this website is “live”. Though functional, it
585 will require further refinements and is a living document. Photos, research, dates,
586 deadlines, etc. will be uploaded and will hopefully improve the function of the site.
587
- 588 g. Elisabeth Kruger (WWF)⁴
589 Elisabeth Kruger introduced herself to the ISC and briefly presented on an “Underwater
590 Noise” initiative being undertaken by WWF. She also mentioned approaches for how
591 to combine Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge.
592
- 593 h. Vernae Angnaboogok (ICC)⁴
594 **Vernae Angnaboogok** provided an update on the ICC Food Sovereignty Initiative. Year
595 2 of the initiative. Presentation saved on website.
596 <https://iccalaska.org/media-and-reports/alaskan-inuit-fsi/>
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598 16. Closing Comments

599 Provided by: Andy Von Duyke, Jon Kurland, Barbara Mahoney, Billy Adams, Brandon
600 Ahmasuk, Jennifer Hooper, Marvin Okitkun, Leonard Barger, Helen Aderman, Sam
601 Gosuk, Joe Mello Leavitt, Jared Nayakik
602

603 17. Schedule next Teleconference and Meeting

- 604 a. Includes creation of calendar with blocks of time that are better or worse for meetings and
605 teleconferences. For example, key subsistence activity periods in the regions, AFN, etc.
606 January meeting dates are usually good. Will be getting back with potential dates.
607

608 18. Adjournment

609 Other comments that were not on the agenda

610 **Billy Adams** expressed concern about reps that are not able to attend meetings. ISC needs to
611 ensure that reps can attend and so should recruit members that can participate more fully.
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⁴ Not on the original agenda. ISC agreed to let her present at the meeting.

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

DRAFT