



ICE SEAL COMMITTEE – Fall Meeting

October 16, 2019
2:30-4:00 pm

AGENDA and MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Teleconference was called to order by Billy Adams at 2:40pm.

2. Invocation

Invocation was given by Taqulik Hepa

3. ISC Roll Call: (quorum = 7 members)

Association of Village Council Presidents

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|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Jennifer Hooper | (Regional Rep.) | PRESENT |
| Albert Simon | (Hunter Rep.) | PRESENT |

Bristol Bay Native Association

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Helen Aderman | (Regional Rep.) | PRESENT |
| Sam Gosuk | (Hunter Rep.) | PRESENT |

Kawerak, Inc.

| | | |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Brandon Ahmasuk | (Regional Rep.) | PRESENT |
| Benjamin Payenna | (Hunter Rep.) | NOT PRESENT¹ |

Maniilaq Association

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|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Emerson Moto | (Regional Rep.) | NOT RESENT² |
| Cyrus Harris | (Hunter Rep.) | NOT PRESENT |

North Slope Borough

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Billy Adams | (Regional Rep.) | PRESENT |
| Joe Mello Leavitt | (Hunter Rep.) | NOT PRESENT³ |

NO QUORUM

¹ Did not hear back from Ben
² Did not hear back from Emerson
³ Did not hear back from Joe

4. Welcome Remarks

Brief welcoming remarks were made by Billy Adams, Barbara Mahoney, Peter Boveng, and Andy Von Duyke

5. Approve Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda. Because only 6 reps. were able to participate in the teleconference, there was no quorum. As such, the teleconference was informational only.

6. Recognition of Michael Pederson's work for the ISC

It was agreed that an award commemorating Michael Pederson's work on behalf of the ISC was a good idea and that the ISC should proceed. **Barbara Mahoney agreed to draft wording for a plaque.** Her draft wording will be shared among the group. No deadline was agreed upon for this, but it would be good to proceed in such a way that the final product is ready before the face-to-face meeting in January 2020. Michael has not shared plans to travel back to Alaska, so it may be necessary to ship the plaque to him directly rather than present in person.

7. Brief discussion of DRAFT minutes from 2019

DRAFT minutes from the ISC meeting were sent to all ISC Regional Reps., ISC Hunter Reps., and NOAA partners. There was no expectation for approval of the minutes during the call. The intent was to ensure that they were available for review. Changes should be referred to Andy Von Duyke (andrew.vonduyke@north-slope.org) so that they may be incorporated prior into the final draft, which will be presented at the next face-to-face meeting for final approval.

Peter Boveng asked about the Co-Management Meeting minutes. In 2019, the Co-Management Meeting was chaired by NOAA (Jon Kurland). Therefore, NOAA is responsible for producing the minutes to the 2019 Co-Management Meeting. At the time of the teleconference, these minutes were not yet ready. Minutes will be prepared in time for all to comment upon before the final draft is presented at the face-to-face meeting.

There was a brief discussion about the amount of detail that was included in the 2019 ISC minutes. Much detail was kept on the regional comments, observations, and concerns⁴. This can be partially streamlined when/if we have a way to collect more observational data (e.g., observation form on ISC standalone website). Also, the budget has funding for a transcriptionist to help with taking notes during the meetings. This will help capture the scope of conversations that took place, while also help to provide a summarized product as meeting minutes.

8. Request to vote* on resolution to clearly delineate consistent levels of compensation for hunters/community members who recover and return satellite transmitter tags used for ice seal research.

A consistent level of compensation was agreed upon during the executive session of the 2019 ISC Meeting for any person who recovers and returns a satellite transmitter used for ice seal research. The compensation level is their choice of either \$100 gift card at the local store, or a gift card from the gas station for 15 gallons of fuel. Though there was agreement, no formal vote to adopt this resolution occurred. It was requested that a vote occur during Teleconference #1, but, as noted previously, there was no quorum.

The Ex. Manager will look through the ISC By-Laws to see if it is OK to hold an electronic vote. If allowable under current ISC By-Laws, then an electronic vote (administrated by the ISC Executive Manager) on this resolution will be held⁵.

If electronic voting is not allowable under the current ISC By-Laws, then this resolution will be voted upon at the next face-to-face meeting⁶.

⁴ Helen Aderman stressed the importance of documenting the observations and regional concerns.

⁵ It appears that no provision for electronic voting is in the ISC By-Laws. Article VII states the following: *Poll Vote - Action of this organization may be taken by teleconference (emphasis added) in accordance with State Law. When, in the judgment of the Chairman, any questions arise that should be put to a vote of the membership, and when he/she deems it inexpedient to call a special meeting for that purpose, he/she may, unless otherwise required by these Bylaws, submit the matter to the membership by phone for vote and decision (emphasis added), and the question thus presented shall be determined according to a majority or unanimity of the votes received as required by these Bylaws by phone within three (3) days after such submission to the membership, provided that, in each case, votes of at least three-fifths (3/5) of the total membership shall be received. Action taken in this manner shall be as effective as action taken at a duly called meeting, and shall be ratified at the next meeting.*

⁶ A vote on this will occur at next ISC face-to-face meeting.

Resolving the topic of electronic voting will be an important agenda item for the next ISC face-to-face meeting. The ability for ISC members to vote electronically will provide more agility to get work done between meetings or teleconferences (given the difficulties of working within everybody's busy schedules to plan meetings or teleconferences).

9. 2019-20 Action Plan

A draft of the 2019-20 Ice Seal Co-Management Action Plan was provided to all ISC reps. and NOAA partners. The document provided had comments in the margins. Comments are requested to finalize this plan. Barbara Mahoney, Peter Boveng, Brandon Ahmasuk, and Andy Von Duyke will cooperate on finalizing the plan. Once finalized, the 2019-20 Ice Seal Co-Management Action Plan will be nearly out of date, but will be a good launching point for the 2020-21 Action Plan.

Peter Boveng requested a copy of the draft in Word format so that his revisions will be easier to integrate. The Executive Manager will send this draft to all ISC representatives and NOAA partners in Word format.

One factor that was discussed on how this plan got pushed so far past its due date was the recent trend of holding ISC meetings in May. This time of the year is exceptionally busy for hunters and researchers, and so things get delayed. Add to this difficulty in pinning down a teleconference date, and it is clear how the action plan got so delayed. Moving the date of the ISC meeting to January will help with this, as the subsequent months are more amenable to investing time to complete the action plan.

Helen requested that portions of the Action Plan for which the ISC is responsible be highlighted for the sake of clarity and in case the ISC want to vote on anything.

10. Meeting logistics for 2020 Ice Seal Committee and Co-Management meetings

We discussed changing the timing of the meeting (e.g., January 2020...close to Alaska Marine Science Symposium?), and it was agreed that **moving the date for the face-to-face meeting to January is favorable for many reasons.** The location will be in Anchorage. A doodle poll will be sent out to ask which week in January is preferable for the meeting. The choices are for the week of Jan-13th or the week of Jan-20th. Note that in the current grant, we have budgeted for an extra day for the ISC Meeting to hold two workshops: (1) board

training, and (2) setting future directional goal for the ISC [this will be helpful for the upcoming grant proposal]. Therefore, the next face-to-face meeting will include:

- Ice Seal Co-Management Meeting (1 day)
- Ice Seal Committee Meeting (2 days) + ISC Workshops (1 day)

11. FOLLOW-UP ON ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING (general discussion)

- a. Barbara Mahoney told Brandon Ahmasuk that she would send information about funding stranded marine mammal cleanup and personal safety supplies (e.g., body-bags, rubber gloves, etc.).

A partial shipment of sampling supplies (body bags, gloves etc.) was received in Nome, but a second shipment was inadvertently sent via FedEx, thereby causing a delays.

Barbara can send it via USPS to Gay Sheffield in Nome.

- b. Barbara Mahoney indicated that she would provide information about whaling to regions with hunters that expressed interest in hunting whales (to keep them informed of the complexities of the IWC and AEWC).

Concern was brought up by Albert Simon during the 2019 ISC meeting. Barbara Mahoney sent info to villages in the Bering Strait region that were interested in opportunistically harvesting gray whales and/or humpback whales. This complex issue is really not within the purview of the ISC, and so better to discuss through the AEWC.

- c. There was a request by ADF&G-AMMP for support for a harvest survey in Nome Nobody remembered this, but after referring back to the DRAFT minutes, this discussion was documented starting on line 568 (pg 13), where: Lori (Quakenbush) also noted that... *Nome has not been surveyed. Given its diverse population, Nome has high variability in hunter harvest levels among households. Because of its size, it is only possible to survey a subsample and then extrapolate the rest of the harvest households. As such, Nome may be overestimated for seal harvest due to extrapolation. ISC may be interested in supporting a harvest survey in Nome.*⁷

⁷ Good reason to keep detailed minutes from meetings, but also good to reorganize minutes for clarity.

12. OTHER UPDATES

a. 2020 MML aerial survey plans (Peter Boveng)

MML will be working from a research vessel in the Bering Sea in 2020. Cruise will occur in April. MML working with local communities to continually improve plans for communication, cooperation, and conflict avoidance with subsistence activities. Plans include hiring a Native marine mammal observer (from Kawerak).

Instrument based aerial surveys for ice seals will occur in the Beaufort Sea in April and May of 2020. Similar plans are under way for communication, cooperation, and conflict avoidance with subsistence communities. April-May is a critical time period for bowhead whaling activities, so this planning is very important to get right.

b. UME (Barbara Mahoney)

Based on the high numbers of stranded pinnipeds, an Unusual Mortality Event (UME) for ice seals in the Bering and Chukchi Seas was declared in September. The rate of strandings appears to be on track for 200+ strandings in 2019. The stranded animals do not appear to show any illness, however they were emaciated. Species included spotted, bearded, and ringed seals of all age classes.

The conditions for the current UME seem to have begun in 2018 and have continued into 2019. June was month with peak mortality in both 2018 and 2019.

So far, in comparison to the UME in 2011-12 (many 100s of stranded seals), this UME has fewer strandings. Also, there is no sign of the sores and alopecia (hair loss) that was evident in the 2011-12 UME.

Barbara emphasized that there is a need to improve sampling efforts of stranded seals. There have been delays in reporting, and with the warm weather it has been difficult to get good samples.

Brandon reiterated that in the Bering Strait region there are still hairless seals that are smelly when cut open. He did say that the numbers may be tapering off more recently.

Helen asked about statewide UME grant. Barbara mentioned that some funding may be available, but because there are currently many ongoing UMEs there is a lot of competition for these funds.

- c. Bearded seal critical habitat (Barbara Mahoney)

A proposal for bearded seal critical habitat designation will be proposed for the first time.
A proposal for ringed seal critical habitat will be resubmitted.

- d. Grant update (ISC Ex. Manager)

The funds were recently received for FY2019-20. **The due date for the FY2020-21 grant proposal is February 10, 2020.** An agenda item for the next face-to-face meeting (Jan 2020) is a discussion on potential items to include in the upcoming grant proposal (e.g., funding for youth to participate in the co-management process).

- e. ISC standalone website (ISC Ex. Manager)

Work has commenced on the website. There is a rough version, but it was too rough to present. Once it is further along, a link will be sent out to the ISC for comments.
A request was made for photos from the different regions to add to the website. Peter Boveng also mentioned that MML has a good archive of high quality photos, which they are willing to share. Once the website is up and running, we will put out a request for observational data from hunters/community members on ice seals. The data will be added to a database and will supplement the regional reports on ice seals, habitat, etc.

13. OTHER UPDATES and/or OLD BUSINESS?

Peter mentioned that MML has received NPRB funding to analyze the US-Russian aerial survey data. They also received an NPRB outreach grant. As part of this grant, **school outreach activities will be conducted in Utqiagvik (11-12 Nov) and Wainwright (13-14 Nov), and a ‘Soup n Science’ presentation at UIC in Utqiagvik will occur on 15-Nov.**

14. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

15. Date and time for TELECONFERENCE #2

a. After face-to-face meeting?

The next teleconference will need to be scheduled after the upcoming face-to-face meeting in January 2020. The exact date will be decided at the face-to-face meeting.

16. Closing Comments

Thanks to all who could participate in this teleconference.

17. Adjournment

5pm