

## THE AMBCC LOGO AND ITS HISTORY

Indigenous Yup'ik peoples live in Western, Southwestern, and Southcentral Alaska, as well as in the Russian Far East. In the traditional Yup'ik universe, each animal species has its own world, where they live in communities, like people, and which shamans can visit. Historically, artists carved masks to represent the shaman's spirit helpers and the spirits of fish and wildlife. The different levels of the universe inhabited by the spirits of the animals were represented by rings around a mask. Masks were used during a winter ceremony called *Kelek*, or "Inviting-In Feast." The host community invited people of other communities, as well as the spirits of people who had died and the spirits of the animals, to participate in the ceremony. During *Kelek*, people sang, drummed, and danced with masks to ask for plentiful harvests in the coming year, to appease animal spirits that may have been offended, and to avoid misfortune in the relationship between people and animals. The masks also could be funny, abstract, fearsome, representations of human faces, and very small or very large. Most *Kelek* masks were destroyed after the ceremony. Today, masks are important items in Native art and economies and are designed to be displayed rather than worn. Yup'ik animal masks are beautiful materializations of the Yup'ik appreciation and respect for the natural resources they depend upon. To learn more about *Kelek* and Yup'ik masks see Fienup-Riordan (1983, 1996) and Pete (1989).

The logo of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (AMBCC) incorporates the drawing of a Yup'ik mask by artist Katie Curtis from Toksook Bay, Alaska. Some people refer to this drawing as "The Goose Mask." The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service commissioned this drawing in the late 1990s during the process of creating the AMBCC. An actual mask was not carved. The original drawing is black and white; the colors used here were added in 2009 when new outreach materials were produced for the AMBCC subsistence harvest survey. The choice of colors was based on historical and current Yup'ik artwork. Katie Curtis was consulted during this process and agreed with the use of the colors. The mask depicts a Canada goose surrounded by 8 feathers. The feathers represent the 8 steps to implement a legal, regulated spring subsistence bird hunt: 1) Notify people of the intent to form management bodies; 2) Meet to share ideas; 3) Send out ideas and listen; 4) Choose the form of management bodies; 5) Start rule-making; 6) Recommend rules for Alaska; 7) Link with management in other U.S. flyways; and 8) Link with the nation. Since its inception, this new regulatory framework has been designed to promote true collaboration among a diversity of stakeholders as cultures intermingle in the history of wildlife management and conservation in Alaska.

Text prepared by Liliana Naves, ADF&G Division of Subsistence, AMBCC Harvest Survey Program Coordinator.



- Fienup-Riordan, A. 1983. *The Nelson Island Eskimo: social structure and ritual distribution*. Alaska Pacific University Press, Anchorage.
- Fienup-Riordan, A. 1996. *The living traditions of the Yup'ik masks: Agayuliyararput, Our way of making prayer*. University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- Pete, M. 1989. The universe in a mask. *Alaska Fish and Game*, 21(6):38–39. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Juneau.