

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Alaska Native Collaboration

We Live and Work Together



Alaska Region

Wildness for all life

At the US Fish & Wildlife Service Alaska we are shared stewards of our nation's last true wild places and world renowned natural resources. The lands and waters of this place we call home nourish a vast and unique array of fish, wildlife and people. We cultivate a reverent awareness and respect for all things, from Alaska's smallest plants and most iconic animals to its diverse communities and cultures.

Today and for generations to come, we live with, live from, enjoy and learn from the wildness of this awe-inspiring land and the people who love it.



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) partners with tribes and Alaska Native organizations on formal financial and non-monetary agreements; and countless ongoing, long-standing informal and formal agreements across Alaska.

This booklet is a snapshot of the many activities in which, together with Alaska Native peoples, we *collaborate*, *live with*, *live from*, *learn from*, and *enjoy* this place we call home.

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With a common goal to sustain the resources, the USFWS works with Alaska Native hunters, fishers, berry pickers and medicinal gatherers through management bodies, tribal governments, corporations, and organizations to collaborate on managing those resources. Here are some successes:

Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council

USFWS, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADFG), and ten Alaska Native regional partners have worked collaboratively since 2000 to co-manage the spring and summer migratory bird subsistence harvest season. The primary purpose of this council is to conserve and respect the relationship we all share with migratory birds through development of annual harvest recommendations, assessment and reporting of subsistence harvest, and statewide outreach. The Co-management Council is designed for direct involvement by Alaska Native peoples and other qualified individuals living and subsisting in the many remote communities within Alaska. The Executive Director has transitioned from a USFWS employee to that of an Alaska Native partner funded by the USFWS. This has provided an individual whose leadership can efficiently tackle problems and profoundly address complex issues that are outside the realm of normal Federal functions. Other efficiencies and improved Alaska Native access to the process are consistently being made. Conservation and collaboration is helping us achieve great things together.



Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The Kuskokwim River Chinook salmon subsistence fishery is one of the most critical cultural resource challenges to those who live along the river. Since 2010, the Chinook run has been insufficient to provide for the people of the river. In 2015, the Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fisheries Commission (KRITFC) was formed by member tribes and entered into a MOU with USFWS in 2016. This group works collaboratively with the Federal USFWS Manager to formulate management strategies and actions. Significant progress has been made in collaborative management, and maintaining effective relationships between KRITFC and the USFWS will continue to be a priority.

Refuge Information Technician Program

The Refuge Information Technician Program on Alaska's National Wildlife Refuges allows the USFWS to locally hire and employ Alaska Native peoples who know and understand their own communities. The Technicians work part-time in approximately 20 communities across Alaska to provide a physical and cultural bridge to the local residents on or near Refuges. They are teachers to the USFWS staff and managers, Native language translators at agency and community meetings, resident advisors of hunting and fishing rules, species biology technicians, and outreach professionals.

Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments Annual Funding Agreement

Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge and the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments, a consortium of 10 tribal governments have collaborated together under an annual funding agreement for 12 years. The Refuge partners with CATG through this agreement to collaborate on activities related to moose management, youth cultural camps, and other natural resource programs. Future activities and projects could also support fisheries programs in the Yukon River basin.

Polar Bear: Co-Management of the Chukchi Sea Population

In 2000, the Alaska Nanuq Commission together with the USFWS, successfully negotiated the *Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation on the Conservation and Management of the Alaska-Chukotka Polar Bear Population*. The Agreement celebrates Alaska Native and Russian Native peoples as equal stakeholders and provides for a limit on the number of polar bears that can be harvested in the U.S. and the Russian Federation. The USFWS is working with tribes and hunters to develop the best approaches for implementing the harvest limit, including reporting requirements, methods and timing.

Traditional Law Enforcement in the Native Villages of Gambell and Savoonga

USFWS upholds the tribal government marine mammal ordinances in the villages of Gambell and Savoonga. The written ordinances are a direct reflection of traditional St. Lawrence Yupik practices of traditional law enforcement. The ordinances are seen as a significant community-based effort to ensure conservation of the species as well as sustainable subsistence use for the future. Tribal Governments handle violations of local trip limit ordinances and USFWS law enforcement investigates violations of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Liaison Agreement in Allakaket

The Allakaket Liaison Contract is a shining example of the Refuge staff relying on a tribal employee for all of their liaison needs at Allakaket. The Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge requests the Allakaket Tribal Council to select and support one part-time employee, paid for by USFWS specifically to work as a liaison between the Village and the Refuge. Whenever a village resident needs a hunting license or federal permit they can go to the liaison's house for "one stop shopping" and meet all of the legal requirements for licenses and permits.

Law Enforcement and Education

Federal Wildlife Officers work across Alaska to interrupt unlawful hunting and fishing activities, which helps ensure traditional and cultural opportunities exist for future generations. Understanding the sensitivity of Alaska Native cultural traditions and ways of life, in recent years, officers have spent more time openly visiting and listening to rural hunters and fishers. Federal Wildlife Officers are making regular pre- and post-fishing season visits to villages, offering archery and other events for youth in villages and communicating more with village leadership.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska Native Relations Policy

Director Dan Ashe signed the newly revised Native American Policy on January 20, 2016. The new policy activates the development of a companion policy for its many unique mandates and relationship to Alaska Native people. The USFWS joining together with tribal governments, Alaska Native Corporations and our co-management partners, plans to publish a draft for public comment in early 2017, with the goal to finalize the policy by the spring of 2017.





The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages 77 million acres of wildlife refuge lands across Alaska. We have a presence along the vast coastline, where marine mammals inhabit the waters. We manage the migratory birds that inhabit every reach of the state; as well as any species that are listed threatened or endangered. Alaska Native peoples have been here for thousands of years and continue to live a traditional way of life; and we honor that livelihood.

Resource Development and Conservation: USFWS provides technical assistance to tribes during pre-permitting processes for large mineral extraction projects, paying close attention to the Alaska Native ways of life

Native Corporations and Land Exchanges/ROWs: Consolidating lands to benefit ANCSA corporations, their shareholders, and the USFWS

Alaska Peninsula/Becharof National Wildlife Refuge Youth Ambassador Program: 18-25 year olds are hired through Bristol Bay Native Association to be community liaisons for the Refuge

Restoring and Conserving Habitat on Corporation Lands for Subsistence: ANCSA corporations work with USFWS to secure funding for critical habitat conservation work





Local Hire: Alaska Native people are hired to work in their own village for the USFWS

Protecting Sensitive Walrus Areas with Alaska Native Partners: Eskimo Walrus Commission, Qayassiq Walrus Commission and Native Village of Point Lay are important co-management partners for walrus protection

Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program: Partnering with USFWS to provide dozens of internships

Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group: 16 years of cooperative and inclusive caribou management in northwest Alaska

Building Relationships on the North Slope of Alaska: Barrow office staffs locally hired permanent employees, helping USFWS become members of the community

The Alaska Native traditional way of life is woven with the natural ecosystem, the harmony of which is completed by songs, dance, art, and spirituality. That is why Alaska Native peoples have a deep care for the lands and waters around them, making us a good fit for conservation activity and management through policy-making. Management and policy-making systems include the National Wildlife Refuges, the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council, Marine Mammal commissions, and the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

Kuskokwim In-Season Fish Management: USFWS Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge works during the fishing season with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and the State to manage fish runs

Extinct Wood Bison Reintroduction: USFWS cooperated with ADFG and local villages to release a herd of wood bison in 2014, providing a potential future food source

Polar Bear Conservation Efforts with the North Slope Borough: USFWS and the Borough Wildlife Department work together on science and human aspects of polar bear conservation

Subsistence Management Program Tribal Consultation: Public participation is a cornerstone of the Federal program with the Federal Board having a 97% deference rate to regional advisory councils; and tribal and ANCSA consultation is now a part of day to day work

Moose Management near Quinhagak: USFWS is collaborating with ADFG and the community of Quinhagak to create and carry out a moose management plan for the Kanektok River drainage

AMBCC's Role in Helping the Emperor Geese Population: After the population declined by 50% in the 80's, USFWS implemented an AMBCC-endorsed management plan and now the population is back at harvest threshold

Legalizing the Alaska Native Sale of Non-Edible Migratory Bird Parts: AMBCC ushered a proposed regulation through levels of the USFWS and gained final approval by the Secretary of Interior

Recovery of Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Waterfowl: Multiple species have recovered from critical levels in the 1980s by collaboration between hunters, AMBCC, and USFWS

Steller's Eider Recovery and Reintroduction on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta: USFWS works closely with elders and community members to plan for a possible recovery of this sea duck



Learning is asking questions, following the scientific process, gaining knowledge by listening to each other, and finding answers about species and their habitats.

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives across Alaska and Canada: These public-private partnerships work together to address large landscape and seascape issues too broad for any one entity to address

Tribal Wildlife Grants: 44 awards totaling \$7.5 million since 2003 to tribes have conserved wildlife habitats, monitored and protected species, and researched tribally-important wildlife

Fishery Resource Monitoring Projects across Alaska: \$105.4 million has been allocated since 2000 to fund 452 projects to provide information for sustaining subsistence fisheries of Federal public lands



Invasive Species Projects on Refuge Lands: Working with tribes and providing funding around Refuges is a critical component to help prevent the spread of invasive species

Partnering on Walrus Harvest Monitoring and Biological Sampling: With Eskimo Walrus Commission and ADFG, USFWS conducts harvest monitoring and biological sampling programs on St. Lawrence Island

Alaska Native Relations Training: Offered twice annually, mandatory training for USFWS staff and managers on Alaska Native cultures, history, laws, and the special relationship to tribes.





ENJOY: With all ages, we have fun!

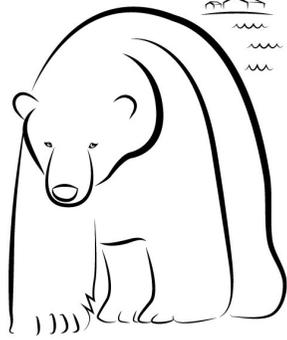
In addition to our science and cultural camps offered across a broad geography (see page 15), the USFWS also engages youth and others to both teach us and learn about our work.

Youth Wildlife Officer Camp: Youth from 4-18 years old in dozens of villages on the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers experience the day in the work of a wildlife officer; the day includes firearm safety (utilizing air rifles) and receiving a Challenge Coin for their participation

Inter-Tribal Youth Climate Leadership Congress: Dozens of Alaska Native teens travelled from remote and urban places in Alaska to share their own experiences with climate change

Kaktovik Youth Ambassadors: Kaktovik high school students teach visitors from around the world about polar bear safety and Inupiat culture prior to their polar bear viewing outings

Kaktovik Youth Ambassadors



Working for polar bears and people



Barrow Summer Youth Internships: Middle and High School students choose to work on Eider Journey, Fox Trapping, or Lemming Monitoring, then conduct outreach projects at the end of the summer

Youth Conservation Corps: Hiring tribal youth in this Program offers youth the opportunity to develop unique job skills, allowing USFWS to give back locally and foster long-term relationships with Alaska communities

Career Discovery Internship Program: Alaska Native students are employed through a partnership, providing a diverse group of youth with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the field

Arctic Youth Ambassadors: USFWS, State Department, and nonprofit partner Alaska Geographic have joined together to establish the United States Arctic Youth Ambassadors program to serve an important role in Arctic public outreach and education



Science and Culture Camps

*600 rural youth from nearly 100 communities
across Alaska participate in annual camps*

- * **North Slope Science and Culture Camps - Barrow USFWS Field Office**
- * **Taquka Kuik (Bear Creek) Science and Culture Camp - Becharof National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **Camp Qungaayux - Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **Sand Point Science & Culture Camp - Alaska Maritime & Izembek National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **The Pribilof Seabird Youth Network - Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **Introduction to Field Ornithology(2014; topic changes yearly) - Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **Camp Goonzhii - Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **Kaktovik Marine Science Camp - Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **Round Mountain Outdoor Science Camp - Innoko National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **Saagelekkakk'et (Henshaw Creek) Weir Science Camp - Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **Selawik Science-Culture Camp - Selawik National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **Kodiak Salmon Camp - Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **The Cape Peirce Marine Science and Yup'ik Culture Camp - Togiak National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **Salmon Camp - Togiak National Wildlife Refuge**
- * **The Summer Outdoor Skills and River Ecology Float Camp - Togiak National Wildlife Refuge**

How can we help serve you better?

Suggestions are always appreciated.

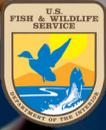
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