HUNTING AND USE OF WALRUS BY ALASKA NATIVES

FACT SHEET

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Fish and Wildlife Service • U.S. Department of the Interior

This fact sheet addresses often asked questions about walrus. For answers to other specific questions contact one of the offices listed on the back of this sheet.

WHO MAY HUNT WALRUS?

Alaska Natives (Indians, Aleuts, or Eskimos) who reside in Alaska and dwell on the coast of the North Pacific Ocean or the Arctic Ocean may harvest walrus for subsistence purposes or the creation and sale of Native articles of handicraft or clothing if the harvest is not wasteful. A Native must be one-fourth degree or more Alaska Indian, Aleut or Eskimo or be enrolled under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. It is illegal for a person who is not Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo to actively participate in any manner in hunting walrus.

IS THERE A HARVEST LIMIT FOR WALRUS?

No. Alaska Natives are not limited by Federal Law in the number that can be harvested, providing the harvest is not wasteful. Numbers killed should be limited to what can reasonably be utilized. Walrus may be harvested any time during the year. Check with the Eskimo Walrus Commission for guidelines on walrus hunting.

MAY WALRUS BE HUNTED JUST FOR THE IVORY?

No. Killing walrus only for the ivory is considered wasteful and is therefore illegal. It is commonly called "head hunting."

ARE THERE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR WALRUS HUNTERS?

Yes. Hunters must present walrus tusks to Fish and Wildlife Service representatives for tagging. Tusks must be tagged within 30 days of the kill. A list of tagging representatives is available from the Service's Marine Mammals Management Office.

WHAT MAY BE SOLD AS A NATIVE HANDICRAFT?

Authentic Native handicrafts may be sold to anyone. This means items composed wholly or in some respect of natural materials, significantly altered from the raw appearance, produced, decorated, or fashioned in the exercise of traditional handicrafts without the use of pantographs, multiple carvers, or other mass copying devices. Traditional handicrafts include, but are not limited to weaving, carving, stitching, sewing, lacing, beading, drawing, and painting.

WHAT IS BEACH FOUND IVORY?

Beach-found ivory is ivory found on the beach within 1/4 mile of the ocean. Natives who collect beach-found ivory must report it and have it tagged by a Fish and Wildlife Service representative. After tagging, Native beach-found ivory may be sold, transferred to registered agents or other Alaska Natives, or sold to non-Natives if it is first made into authentic Native handicraft items. Fossilized ivory does not have to be tagged, registered or altered; it can be sold without being made into a handicraft.

ARE THERE OTHER LEGAL USES OF WALRUS?

Yes. The meat or other edible parts from walrus may be sold if it is sold in an Alaska Native village or is sold to an Alaskan Native.

MAY WALRUS IVORY BE EXPORTED?

Only ivory that has been handicrafted may be exported to a foreign country. However, the exporter must first obtain a Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) permit from the Fish and Wildlife Service. A CITES permit is not required for ivory handicrafts that are personal items if they are carried out, are contained in accompanying baggage, or are part of a shipment of household effects. Exporters can obtain permits for transportation from one of the USFWS Agents listed below. Exporters should inquire about foreign import restrictions, since some countries may not allow the importation of walrus ivory.

MAY WALRUS IVORY HANDICRAFTS BE IMPORTED?

Walrus ivory may not be imported for commercial sale. Any person can re-enter the United States with ivory handicrafts that are personal items which were originally exported under a permit for transportation. Only Alaska Natives may import ivory handicrafts that were acquired outside of the United States as part of a cultural exchange. For specific information, contact one of the offices listed below.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE FOLLOWING OFFICES:

Eskimo Walrus Commission, P.O. Box 948, Nome, AK 99762, (907) 443-5231.

Assistant Regional Director, USFWS, Division of Law Enforcement, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503 (907) 786-3311.

Senior Resident Agent, USFWS, Division of Law Enforcement, 1412 Airport Way, Fairbanks, AK 99701 (907) 456-2335 or 1-877-535-1795

Special Agent, USFWS, Division of Law Enforcement, P.O. Box 2030, Nome AK, 99762, (907)443-2479.

Supervisor, Marine Mammals Management Office, USFWS, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503 (907)786/3800 or 1-800-362-5148