

Project Progress Report

FOR:

SUPPORT OF THE ICE SEAL COMMITTEE 2018-2019

NOAA Grant #NA18NMF4390165

Award Period: August 1, 2018 – July 31, 2019

Report Period: February 1, 2019 – July 31, 2019

Submitted by:

North Slope Borough  
Department of Wildlife Management

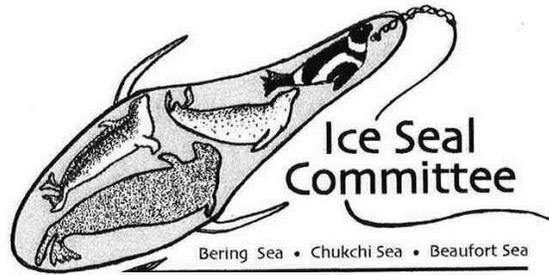
Submitted to:

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## **SUPPORT OF THE ICE SEAL COMMITTEE 2018 – 2019**

Project Progress Report Submitted on August 30, 2019

**NOAA Grant Number:** # NA18NMF4390165

**Report Period:** February 1, 2019 – July 31, 2019

**Grantee:** North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management

### **Project Summary**

The Ice Seal Committee (ISC) conducts business between meetings and continues to manage projects focused on the conservation and management of ice seals. The ISC also seeks to foster the relationship between local communities and managers to continue to improve the ability to meet research and management needs. Open communication and cooperation between hunters and resource managers conducting research projects has proven mutually beneficial. For example, hunters and their communities develop a better understanding of research objectives and goals, and research projects benefit from the hunters' knowledge of the animal behavior and local conditions.

### **Summary of progress during the current reporting period<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Support of the Ice Seal Committee**

During this reporting period, the position of Executive Manager transitioned from Carla Sims Kayotuk to Dr. Andrew Von Duyke. It should be noted that the transition over one year from Mike Pederson to Carla Sims Kayotuk to Andrew Von Duyke as Executive Manager did lead to some inefficiencies related to the loss of institutional knowledge<sup>2</sup>. A substantial amount of time

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<sup>1</sup> Funding for 2018-2019 primarily covered the costs of holding the ISC Co-Management meeting and the Ice Seal Committee meeting. However, during the *reporting period* in this progress report, activities related to work for the 2019-2020 award period were also conducted and are described herein.

<sup>2</sup> Due to the resignation of Michael Pederson, who was the longtime Executive Manager of the ISC

was required for the new Executive Manager to consolidate and synthesize the vast amount of information associated with the ISC and its operation.

Two significant events took place during the reporting period and subsequent transition between executive managers. The first was the submission of a grant proposal to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that requested funding to support the ISC for the upcoming fiscal year (August 1, 2019 – July 31, 2020). The second was the planning for and execution of the annual ISC Co-Management and Committee meetings.

A proposal (Application ID: 2791247) was written and submitted to NMFS on time. In addition to requesting funding to hold the annual ISC Co-Management and ISC Committee meetings, this proposal also sought to fund several other actions. These included conducting two workshops to: (1) establish a prioritized plan for future ISC activities, and (2) conduct professional development to provide board training to all ISC representatives. Work/time was also budgeted for holding two teleconferences in 2019-20 (scheduled ~ 4 months apart), to carry out existing and new outreach activities<sup>3</sup>. In an effort to ensure sufficient capacity, additional time was budgeted toward administrating ISC activities, including a larger budget for time spent by the Executive Manager, a new budget for an Executive Assistant, and an expansion of the budget allocated for outreach. To ensure that meeting minutes are accurately and promptly generated, funds were requested to retain a professional transcriptionist who would transcribe and consolidate all meeting notes, upon which meeting minutes will be based. Finally, funds were requested for modest honoraria to help offset the loss of income incurred by ISC Commissioners and Hunter Representatives who take time from their jobs to attend and participate in these meetings. With the exception of the honoraria, all requested funds were awarded by NOAA, nearly doubling the award from the previous year.

At the time of this report (about one month into the 2019-2020 award period) it should be noted that no funds have been received by the NSB, but work administrating the ISC is ongoing. Sean Carey has been notified about this, and a request has been made to expedite the dispensation of awarded funds so that work conducted by the NSB on behalf of the ISC can be paid out of an existing budget, rather than out of pocket.

### **Annual Ice Seal Co-Management Meeting**

This meeting was held on May 29, 2019 at the Dimond Center Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. By mutual agreement, NOAA is responsible for generating meeting minutes. The ISC will generate meeting minutes in 2020. It is assumed that the ISC will have access to these minutes prior to next annual Co-Management Meeting. It would be good to distribute these minutes prior to one of the two upcoming teleconferences so that the ISC and NOAA can respond to and revise as needed.

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<sup>3</sup> An important new outreach requested by the ISC was the design and implementation of a stand-alone ISC website that is not embedded within the NSB website.

## **Annual Ice Seal Committee Meeting**

This meeting was held on May 30-31, 2019 at the Dimond Center Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska. Meeting notes were taken by Andy Von Duyke, and meeting minutes have been completed. They will be dispensed to the ISC and NOAA for revision as needed.

## **ISC Action Plan 2019-2020**

Work has been conducted by Barbara Mahoney, Jon Kurtz, Andy Von Duyke, and Billy Adams on completing the 2019-2020 action plan. This is still in a draft stage, but is close to completion. It will be presented to all members of the ISC prior to Teleconference #1 and a request for comments/approval will be an agenda item for this meeting.

## **Teleconferences**

Time for teleconferences has been budget for in the most recent award. At this point in the reporting period, no teleconference has occurred, primarily due to the busy summer schedules of all likely participants. Plans are under way to schedule Teleconference #1 and an agenda is being drafted.

## **Outreach**

The development of a stand-alone ISC website has been requested by the ISC membership. As such, a budget for development and hosting of this website was generated via consulting with a professional web developer based on specifications provided by the Executive Manager and included in the 2019-2020 budget request. These specifications can be summarized as follows: website is to be (1) simple to read and navigate, (2) professional in appearance, (3) consistent with the branding of the ISC, (4) and to serve as an appropriate venue for both outreach activities and for the collection of local observations<sup>4</sup>. One year of web hosting was also included in the budget. It should be noted that, given the potentially large quantity of information that will need to be migrated off of the NSB based ISC website to the new stand-alone ISC website, these efforts will require more than a single year and will need to be updated periodically as new information emerges. As such, the website will likely become an ongoing line-item in subsequent grant proposals to NOAA. Currently, work has not yet begun on the stand-alone website. It is anticipated that prior to the second teleconference, a large proportion of work on the stand-alone website will have been accomplished and can be reviewed/critiqued at teleconference #2 before going live. Beyond the stand-alone website, outreach work will include a newsletter and radio shows.

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<sup>4</sup> An important aspect of the stand-alone website will be to collect hunter/indigenous knowledge observations via an online form that will populate an observational database.