

Ice Seal Committee

Minutes for May 23-24, 2018 Annual Meeting

1. Call to Order: At 9:01 by Billy Adams
2. Invocation:
3. Roll Call (Establish a Quorum 7 Members) Quorum Established : Billy Adams- NSB, Brandon Ahmasuk- Kawerak, Chuck Menadelook- Kawerak, Emerson Moto -Manilaq Association, Helen Aderman- BBNA, Jennifer Hooper- AVCP, Cyrus Harris- Manilaq Association, Joe Leavitt- NSB, Sam Gosuk- BBNA, Albert Simon -AVCP
4. Introductions were made
5. Welcome remarks were made.
6. Approval of Agenda: Joe moved to move item 10 of the agenda to 14 and item 9 to 18 for the purpose of the visitors to get their presentations completed before leaving.
7. Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting: Hellen moved to table both June 7-9, 2017 and March 20, 2018 via Teleconference. 2nd by Joe and questions called by Albert. Motion passes
8. Chairman's and Executive Manager's Report

Chairman Billy: looking for more projects, more commutations between everyone. He traveled to Edmonton Wildlife (see tab 8) report from this summit; world reports: although ice is not like it used to be the seals are healthy: we have to adapt our hunting to the changing time; there is more traffic (vessels) out on the waters

Brandon: Water Way Meeting: discussed extending the buffer zone around communities; comments made from the Representatives from the Tourist Industry made them uncomfortable: basically said this is just a gentlemen's agreement that they would go where they wanted and locals should move out of their way (upsetting); more traffic in waters, big concerns of what this could mean.

Hellen: is there a handout for this Waterways meeting- education for the safety of protection our animals, showing buffer zones, concerned about walrus, travel boats getting too close to where walrus are and where seal pups are.

Billy: no regulations of the vessels, what they can do; pamphlets: When is a good time for tourist to come in, when is it not a good time, watch for nesting time, migration time? Conflict of Avoidance: helps Whalers

Mike: no written report; tagging reports, slow for a while on ISC, Proposes April 16 for NMFS

9. Executive Session: Moved by Joe to go into executive Session, 2nd by Cyrus, Questions called by Albert. Motion passes

10. New Business:

a. Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (consider the Policy for release of rehabilitated ices seals)

i. National Marine Fisheries Service

Brandon: reports they are still getting reports of hairless seals even though the gov't close UME.

Seals Move

ii. Alaska Sea Life Center

Ring Seal: finding parasite lung worm

Dr. Woodie

Interested to see if the hairless seals being found also have the lung worm.

Raphaela: lung worms might be in the older seals

Put in the PEIS that those in the area need to be notified about the release of rehabilitated seals: June 1 deadline

*need more bodies in office

*set up teleconference before Deadline to see what kind of comments to submit.

June 1st www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NMFS 2018-0036

*pass on the link to ISC about the Stranding, agents to notify

10.b. Northern Pinniped Unusual Mortality Event UME Close-Out

Could be ice, killer whales: why higher numbers of seals being seen already; high numbers but it could be more reporting what they see

9. Financial and Grants Progress: thanks for progress reports

14. Regional and Hunter Representative Reports

AVCP: Bethel Area Jennifer and Albert

Spots on the inside's yellow/green; South Nelson area catching halibut early – should be in June, very early spring, warm winter; not much hunting in winter because of ice- think in mid-March Ice took off early. Unable to get what they needed... Bearded seals/Ring seals. Seeing different things: herring, birds. New: Flooding in spring time – never seen this before. Ice took several boats. There was persistent south warm wind. Elder reports- Ice in Ocean up until end of June, now it is open in May. The ice comes in and goes out fast.

BBNA: Helen: Did not do the fall surveys- due to high winds could not go out/ also not seeing seals, not seeing herring fish which the seals eat.

Sam: saw herring roe close to area, 1st time early opening and lots of wind both ways. Trolls getting lots of by-products herring/roe 5 million pounds is too much. If they are not allowed to spawn how will the food grow? The ice went our fast. No seals around. The fat in the seals got thin and they sink. On the 1st of May 1 seal was caught with no hair. Did not see spotted seals but saw ring seals, lots of them. There is a teacher who shows the students how to process the seal and how to make harpoons, "Subsistence Class" the students really like this. Would like to see in writing what to do when a seal is caught with no fur, who to contact?

Kawerak, Inc.: Brandon: Busy with mining going into critical seal habitat area. No Ice. The timing of hunting is getting faster-shorter time, have to go far for walrus hunting: 150 miles one way but not for seals. The ice is coming later and leaving sooner, couple hairless seals this year. The seal pups move to shore after the sea ice moves out. There were reports of both ring and spotted seals being seen up to 60 miles upriver following the fish. Updating the critical area's for seals needs to be looked at.

Chuck: First time ever no ice, the ice disappeared real fast, it looked like it melted. Seals may be bald because they are spending too much time in fresh water.

Manilaq Association: Emerson: The community was concerned about the bearded seals being listed as endangered and that there would be a limit put on hunting. Same: ice going out early, ice getting thinner. Last year we only had 2 days to hunt.

Cyrus: Language needs to be laid out for everyone to understand the listing like the endangered list not effecting subsistence. Hunting was early due to the ice conditions and no ice.

Peter and group could be added into next year's agenda under reports that Cyrus helped with checking Ice thickness, salinity among other things.

NSB: Joe: The southeast winds are acting like the prevailing winds. Young ice and hardly any currents, hunting time is limited. Lots of seals are seen around Barrow. The ice formed in November not very much multi-layer ice. The ice doesn't like to come back, 1st year ice likes to be broken up by tides.

Billy: Ring seals are seen from November year round and bearded seals June and July.

11. Research:

- a. Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game: Lori: discussion on a hand out
Tags do not represent the whole seal population

17. Executive Session – ISC Members Only at 4:39 pm Helen moved to go into executive session, 2nd by Joe and Brandon and questions called by Albert. Back to regular session at 5:39pm

Break until morning of the 24th.

11. Research:

- b. National Marine Mammal Laboratory: Peter Boveng
Discussed handout; NOAA temporary 1 year funds; Ikaagvik Sikukun handout #11b2 discussed.

*not comfortable with infrared to count polar bears; sometimes it doesn't pick up bears resting but has no problem with active bears

Michael Cameron: see handout 11b3: discussed

Raphaela: see if local hunters in that area noticed a difference in what they were harvesting, see if they saw the same thing.

Hand out 11b4: discussed; ISC members saying that there are young bearded seals in the rivers

b. NSB Dept. of Wildlife management: Raphaela: discussed molting, the closing the UME- federal funding: Formal rollout of the closing of UME finding will be contacting ISC, published in June of this year. Fact sheet will become available.

13. Old Business:

a. Sustainability of Subsistence Ice Seal Hunting: The Subsistence harvest of ringed, bearded, spotted, and ribbon seals in Alaska is sustainable

Lori: see tab 5

Motions to adopt and Co-Author by Albert, 2nd by Joe, Questions called for by Chuck, Motion passes May 24, 2018

15. Recommendations form the Ice Seal Co-Management Committee:

a. Ice Seal Management Plan: Discussed on Tuesday at Co-management

Better communication

Move in a positive direction

Meet more: training

1st step training judicial for the ISC to get the committee strong again

Management Plan: sample like Bristol Bay's plan

16. Closing Comments:

Brandon: likes the meeting at Dimond, better

Chuck: thanks: ISC come to its own by Development Plan, need one; worked with Sea life Center for training for disaster; formal training workshop; ISC should apply for their own grants to stand on their own, stronger; testing water for toxins, it's getting warmer for toxins, researched and dismissed; educate tourist on why we request what we request and be less inclined to go where we hunt; better coordination between scientist and communities.

Emerson: thankful to NSB for coming, informative; need to get the President to believe in Global Warming, first time at Deering open water, lots of erosion.

Helen: is thankful for NSB help in this committee; global warming, walrus: disturbed form food being disturbed; USFW should sample these things; trap bearded seals why they are not where they should be

Sam: learned a lot, happy there are researchers to help our concerns on seals; concerned about the effects of the travels on the ocean bottom, ships effect this; walrus habitat is changing, place where we hunt has moved to further away; look into herring changes that are happening; goal plan; communication together.

Cyrus: thanks NSB to get here; regional reports: fall storms 2 big ones, bad ones this last year, ocean side to lagoon, 1st time seeing this and waiting to see what it will look like after the thaw; all little seals fall time, adult seals come in fall, all different areas but all common concerns.

Albert: thankful, subsistence way of life

Jennifer: shipping traffic, region is concerned about the lack of disaster plan, it is a matter of when it will happen; willing to help executive manager: positive move; appreciation of all the work Mike has done, deep appreciation.

Joe: basic human right to subsist; would like to see workshops, training; get own grants to stand alone like AEWG; need to do what we can to keep it where our kids and grandkids are living off the land; look to see ISC stand alone; doesn't want to see quota on other animals; outreach is important, education to others makes a difference; don't give up, keep subsistence going.

Billy: we know how to manage our animals because of who we are, spiritual relationship tied to it; thanks to committee, researchers, work to do: planning to do while fresh.

19: Time and Place of nest meeting

Jan, Feb for main meeting, funding in Oct to Sept, send minutes out right away= make plans, recommendations for workshops, teleconferences.

Workshops; look for grantor funding for training, in 3 or 4 months call everyone about nest meeting before January, spend 2 or 3 days together

No meetings Downtown Anchorage, everyone prefers a place like Dimond easier on parking and eating, Look at having a meeting in a Village

Look at Grant Date Proposal for 2019

TBA Time and place of nest meeting

Moved by Cyrus, 2nd by Albert and Questions by Chuck; passed at 4:05pm