



Eskimo Walrus Commission

"To protect the pacific walrus population."

The EWC recently launched a new website! We are hopeful it will provide our members and the general public with more easily accessible information about the EWC, who we represent, and our activities.

Check it out:

eskimowalruscommission.org



You can also find us on Facebook!

Photo request!

If you have any photos of walrus, subsistence activities related to walrus, or processing food and/or handicrafts that you would like to share, please email us at vmetcalf@kawerak.org or lwieler@kawerak.org. We are always looking for new photos to use on our website and in publications. Quyaana!

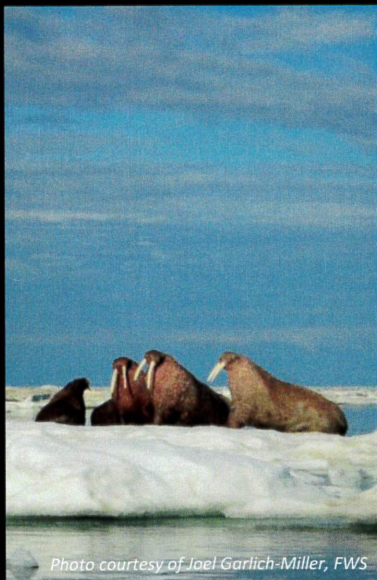


Photo courtesy of Joel Garlich-Miller, FWS

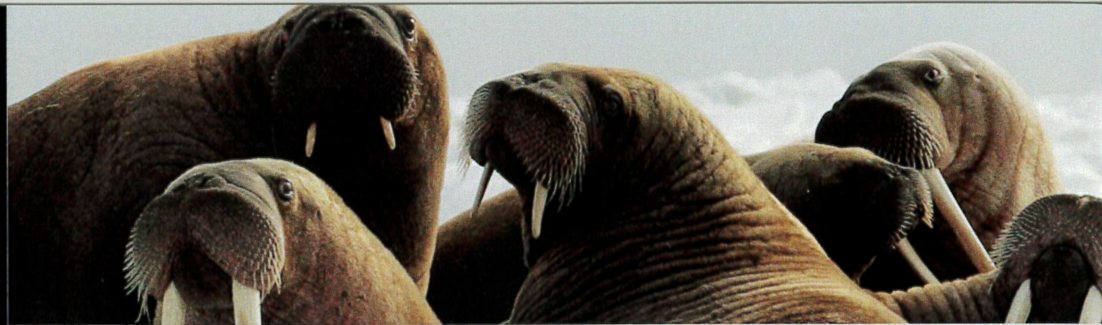


Photo courtesy of Joel Garlich-Miller, FWS

The Walrus News

Upcoming Events

May 10, 2017: Community-Based Monitoring Workshop-UAF
Fairbanks, AK

May 12-14, 2017: North by North Event, Anchorage Museum
Anchorage, AK

May 31-June 2, 2017: Blue Planet Symposium
College Park, MD

Director's Message

Vera Metcalf, Welcome!

Welcome to our first Eskimo Walrus Commission Newsletter, ***The Walrus News!*** This biannual publication will help us share news with our members and serve as a valuable resource as we continue to strive to protect the Pacific walrus population and our subsistence way of life.



Since EWC was formed by Kawerak, Inc. in 1978 **we have made incredible strides** as an organization in furthering co-management of the walrus population. However, **we still have a long way to go** to reach true co-management and coequal decision-making power for Alaska Native people in the stewardship of our subsistence resources. This requires better communication between the EWC and its membership, and greater awareness within the Alaska Native community about the issues impacting the Pacific walrus population and subsistence communities.

This newsletter, along with our newly launched website and Facebook page, is part of an effort by the EWC to improve communication and conduct more effective outreach to serve our members. In each issue of the newsletter, you'll find upcoming events, announcements, community/commissioner highlights, and feature articles on activities and issues important to walrus subsistence communities.



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Announcements

EWC will be working with the communities of Gambell, Savoonga, Shishmaref, Wales, and Diomedes on developing and updating Tribal Marine Mammal Ordinances throughout the spring of 2017.

EWC Director, Vera Metcalf, also serves as Vice President of the Inuit Circumpolar Council-Alaska, and attended the ICC Executive Committee meeting in Barrow, AK April 1-3, 2017.

EWC plans to conduct interviews for the Traditional Knowledge About Walrus project with elders and hunters in the communities of Togiak and Manokotak in 2017.

EWC will be working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Native Village of Point Lay to develop a media and outreach strategy to protect the walrus haul-out near the community of Point Lay. The EWC website will include messages asking the media and public not to travel to the community to visit the haul-out and will provide updates on the haul-out to keep the public informed.

The Walrus News will also be made available on our website and Facebook page. We encourage you to "Like" and follow the EWC on Facebook and browse www.eskimowalruscommission.org for a wealth of resources such as resolutions, articles, Traditional Knowledge reports, and approved meeting minutes. EWC looks forward to the greater opportunities for dialogue that these resources will provide.

EWC looks to increase organizational capacity despite dramatic decreases in federal funding. This is not an easy task and requires creativity, dedication, and most importantly—support from our partner organizations, including Kawerak, Inc. and our member communities.

We are always strengthened by the guidance and wisdom of those who came before us. The words of Matthew Iya, one of the first great leaders in EWC history, are especially meaningful in our efforts today.

"I contend that we must come together as the Alaska Native community and set a long-term goal of getting our inherent right to a subsistence lifestyle reinstated unequivocally. This will involve looking at this as a matter of the heart and committing to taking however long it will take to achieve this goal, even if it takes beyond our lifetime to get there."

Thank you for reading the very first issue of *The Walrus News*! We look forward to many more to come!

Feature Articles

EWC Passes Ivory Ban Resolution to Protect Alaska Native Rights

In mid-June, EWC Executive Committee unanimously passed a resolution that opposes the inclusion of walrus, mastodon and mammoth ivory in African Elephant Ivory ban laws. Currently, New Jersey, New York, California, Hawaii, and Washington have such ivory ban laws on the books, and additional states may be following suit.

These state ivory ban laws fail to recognize the important distinction between illegally obtained elephant ivory and legitimately obtained walrus,





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mammoth, and mastodon ivory carved into handicrafts and artwork by Alaska Natives.

EWC is extremely concerned about the impacts such broad ivory ban laws could have on Alaska Native carvers, subsistence hunters, and communities who depend on the sale of their ivory handicrafts for a valuable source of income in the cash-limited rural Alaskan economies.

EWC Resolution 2016-1, "A Resolution Opposing the Inclusion of Walrus, Mammoth, and Mastodon Ivory in African Elephant Ivory Ban Laws in the United States," is one step toward increasing awareness and stopping other states from passing similar laws. The Alaska Congressional Delegation supports EWC's resolution, and many other organizations have passed similar resolutions in support of the cause. For a full copy of the resolution, visit our website at www.eskimowalruscommission.org.

EWC staff will continue to work on awareness about the legitimacy of walrus ivory, and the importance of ivory handicrafts to the cultural traditions and economies of rural Alaska.

EWC and Kawerak Social Science Program Host ANSEP Intern Brandon Bachman

EWC and Kawerak's Social Science Program partnered with the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) hosting an intern in the Nome office during the summer of 2016. ANSEP is a highly successful statewide program that works with Alaska Native students from middle school to college on developing career paths in the fields of science and engineering. Brandon Bachman is an ANSEP student at the University of Alaska Anchorage pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Systems Engineering. Brandon is originally from Haines and has family ties in Kwigillingok, his mother's hometown.

Brandon's internship involved work on Traditional Knowledge projects for both EWC and the Kawerak social science program and also helped EWC with updates to our newly launched website.

In 2003, EWC completed the "Conserving Our Culture Through Traditional Management" project which further led to "Traditional Knowledge About Walrus" one that Brandon helped transcribe interviews conducted with elders and hunters in the King Island community to add to the report. As part of his internship experience, Brandon was also able to travel to Shishmaref with Kawerak social science program staff to conduct a workshop on the current project underway in the community called the "Knowledge, Beliefs, and Experiences of the Supernatural Environment."



Brandon further traveled by boat to visit archaeological sites around the Nome area with Kawerak Natural Resources program staff. Reflecting on his internship, Brandon shared the following thoughts: “I had a great experience working at Kawerak for the summer and have gained a vast array of knowledge through the Eskimo Walrus Commission and the Social Science Program. The steps that are being taken to preserve our culture and way of life and being able to learn Traditional Knowledge make me proud to be an Alaska Native.” EWC staff enjoyed having Brandon in our office and we appreciate the help he has provided during his time here. We wish you all the best in your future endeavors, Brandon!

Endangered Species Act (ESA) Listing

Determination for Pacific Walrus

The most pressing issue currently facing EWC and the subsistence walrus hunting community is the potential Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing of the Pacific walrus.

Although the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) suggested the listing would not impact the subsistence harvest of walrus, there are significant reasons for concern within the subsistence community. **If walrus is listed under the ESA, harvest restrictions could become possible.**

An ESA listing concerns EWC for several reasons:

- Listing provides leverage for outside organizations that oppose the subsistence harvest of walrus, creating political and stakeholder **pressure to establish harvest restrictions.**
- Listing shifts the legal context for management of Pacific walrus. Currently, walrus are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), with an exemption that enables Alaska Natives to exercise their right to harvest walrus for subsistence purposes. The MMPA also includes a provision that allows for an Alaska Native Organization like EWC representing subsistence interests, to co-manage the Pacific walrus with the federal government.
- Listing would place walrus under the jurisdiction of another federal law, which, unlike the MMPA, **includes no co-management provision** for an Alaska Native Organization.



- Listing introduces potential for the **Alaska Native voice to be diminished** in the overall decision-making process in the management of the Pacific walrus.

It is urgent that the EWC membership stay informed about the ESA listing determination process. We need to be up to speed on what has happened so far and be united to act in the future.

EWC's Involvement

As the Alaska Native co-management partner with USFWS in the management of Pacific walrus, EWC has sought meaningful involvement in the ESA listing determination process. EWC also consistently emphasized the need for quality Traditional Knowledge to be used meaningfully in the decision-making process. However, collaboration between USFWS and EWC in these areas resulted in EWC objecting to the ESA listing determination process and requested to Dan Ashe, USFWS Director for a further review of the process.

In the meantime, USFWS continues determination process, despite the concerns voiced by EWC. Although the USFWS began initiating tribal consultation in the spring of 2016, EWC raised the concern that consultation occurred close to the end of the listing determination process, rather than the beginning. Furthermore, extremely short notice was given to tribes for participating in this consultation, which makes effective participation difficult in terms of familiarity with the issue and availability of people to attend meetings. EWC was not included in the tribal consultation process, despite requests for consultation by EWC Chair at the 2014 EWC Annual Meeting.

Lastly, many coastal walrus hunting communities received an invitation from USFWS to attend a workshop in Anchorage in June of 2016. It was the intention of USFWS to use this workshop to gather Traditional Knowledge for the ESA listing determination. However, another concern voiced by EWC is that the USFWS did not utilize proper methodology for conducting Traditional Knowledge research.

EWC continually emphasized that Traditional Knowledge is an extremely important component of any management decision-making process regarding walrus, particularly in the ESA listing determination. Due to its importance, it is essential that the Traditional Knowledge research conducted to inform this decision be done properly, which means the involvement of appropriate people in research planning and in conducting the research itself, utilizing established Traditional Knowledge research methods, and the availability of adequate time and funding.

Despite the risks associated with the potential ESA listing determination, EWC will continue to push for awareness of the process and the potential impacts to the subsistence community. It is important that the Alaska Native people are appropriately consulted and involved in this decision. Please contact our office at **1-877-277-4392, 907-443-4380 or 907-443-4360** if you have questions or concerns regarding the ESA listing determination. It is more important than ever to remain informed moving forward. We want to hear from you by email, Facebook, phone, or through your Commission member. EWC strives to serve as an effective resource to our people.

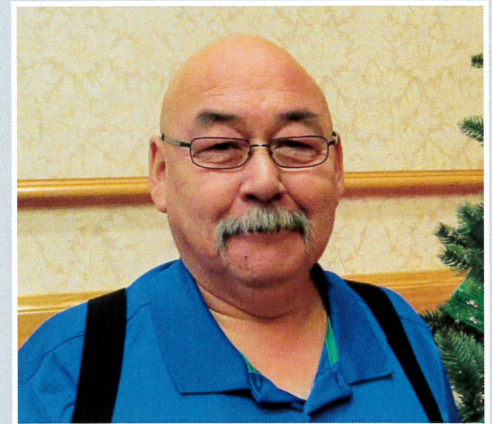


Photo, EWC Commissioners at Annual Meeting in November

Charles Brower Re-Elected As EWC Chair

Charles "Nasuk" Brower of Barrow has served on the Eskimo Walrus Commission for 22 years. In November 2016 the EWC commissioners voted to re-elect Charles as Chair of the

EWC. Charles states, "Although we continue to battle ongoing issues such as inadequate funding for co-management organizations, EWC remains



committed to ensuring responsible management of our valuable community resource. We need to be proactive in regulations that threaten the Pacific walrus such as the potential listing of Pacific walrus as an endangered species. Because we continue to work together through the Eskimo Walrus Commission, we have a stronger voice."

EWC Commissioners (Appointed November 2016)

Charles Brower, Chair – Barrow
Elmer Seetot Jr. – Brevig Mission
Kenneth Kingeekuk, EC* – Savoonga
Stephen Schaeffer, EC* – Kotzebue
Benjamin Payenna, Vice Chair – King Island
Moses Toyukak Sr., QWC Representative - Manokotak

Iver Campbell – Gambell
Daniel Foster Sr. – Kivalina
William Igkurak – Kwigillingok
Ahna Ozenna – Little Diomed
Albert Williams – Mekoryuk
Jacob Martin – Nome Eskimo Community
Jack Schaeffer – Point Hope
Leo Ferreira III – Point Lay
Morris Kiyutelluk – Shishmaref
Ted Katcheak – Stebbins
Mary Freytag – Unalakleet (April 2017)
Enoch Oktolik, EC* – Wainwright
Christine Komonaseak – Wales

**EC denotes Executive Committee*



Look inside for The Walrus News!



Kawerak, Inc.

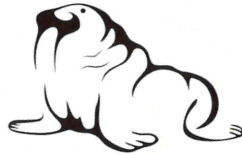
Eskimo Walrus Commission

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KAWERAK, INC.



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Eskimo Walrus Commission

Purpose

To Protect the Pacific Walrus Population.

Core Values

Proactive: Foreseeing changes and taking needed actions
Adaptable: The willingness and ability to adjust to changing environment conditions
Ethical: Being honest and acting in the best interest of our people
Traditional Knowledge: Honoring wisdom and ways that enable us to survive

Our Vision

By 2025, we will continue providing walrus for our families
 We will strive for self-management of the Pacific Walrus population
 We will secure long-term funding to stabilize the commission
 We will educate those who don't know us, about our traditions and commitment to preserve the walrus
 We will document and preserve traditional hunting and preparation of walrus as an educational method for the younger generation

The Eskimo Walrus Commission (EWC) was formed in 1978 by Kawerak, Inc. and represents 19 Alaskan coastal walrus hunting communities from Barrow to Bristol Bay. Initially formed as a consortium of Native hunters, the EWC is now a recognized statewide entity working on resource co-management of walrus on behalf of Alaska Natives.