

Bristol Bay Native Association
Marine Mammal Program



Asveq

Bristol Bay Native Association Service Area



Bristol Bay Native Association is located in Southwest Alaska and was formally incorporated as a non-profit in 1973. It services 31 Federally Recognized Tribal Communities.



BBNA's Mission Statement:

“The mission of BBNA is to promote self determination of Tribes of the Bristol Bay region, and the betterment, well-being, culture and interests of the Native people of the Bristol Bay Region.”

Yaateqqa Umyuarqlluku

- My late parent's Tom and Naomi Chythlook taught us to think ahead or beyond the future in planning for long term traditional harvesting of our Alaska Native traditional foods. This included conservation practices, to take only what you needed. We were taught to harvest extra food from the land (nuna), and the sea (imarpiig) to share for those that were not able to participate in the traditional gathering, hunting, and fishing activities. This way, when a person continued their year-round traditional harvest activities, Ellum Yua (the one who watches or takes care of us), would continue to provide for us. This is the way, I try to remember our Yu'pik Ancestor's traditional advice in managing the Bristol Bay Native Association's (Imarpiim Unungsiit) Marine Mammal Program.

“Building Capacity for Conservation and Marine Mammal Co-Management in Alaska

In Bristol Bay, the Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Program works closely with 31 federally recognized tribes. The two main marine mammal groups of the Bristol Bay Alaska Natives tribes include: the Qayassiq Walrus Commission (QWC), and the Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council (BBMMC). The Qayassiq Walrus Commission deals with walrus related issues. The traditional Yup'ik Eskimo Fall walrus hunt to Qayassiq (Round Island) was revived by the Togiak Traditional Council. Round Island is located in the Walrus Islands State Game Sanctuary and was a traditional prime walrus hunting site by the Yup'ik Eskimo ancestors. The traditional walrus hunt in Bristol Bay communities occurs in the Spring and Fall. The Alaska Natives also hunt other marine mammals including all seal species (harbor seals, ringed seals, spotted seals, bearded seals), sea lions, beluga whales, Pacific walrus. Other marine foods are harvested in the Bristol Bay and Alaska Peninsula communities. A brief summary of both the Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council and the Qayassiq Walrus Commission is as follows.

QWC Traditional Walrus Hunt

QWC was formed in 1995 to oversee walrus harvest activities for the Bristol Bay area.

QWC has the authority to:

- *Add new QWC villages
- *Determine walrus harvest allocation for each village (currently nine QWC villages)
- *Monitor harvest activities
- *Other factors related to the Fall walrus hunt

QWC Hunt Communities

Total walrus allocation for the traditional fall hunt is: 20. The allocation is divided by the nine QWC communities. Each community hunts walrus and has a QWC Hunt Captain who is responsible for selecting the hunt crew. Interested young hunters are encouraged to participate. Some communities take an elder who provides traditional advice during the walrus hunt.

Curyung Tribal QWC Hunt with Manokotak Young Hunters.



Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council

The Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council was organized in 1995. It's purpose is to promote the conservation of marine mammal populations in the Bristol Bay marine ecosystem for traditional harvest use by the 31 federally recognized tribal members.

BBMMC Council

- The BBMMC was established to take an ecosystem approach to marine mammal issues. BBMMC considers all marine mammal species in Bristol Bay. It's goal is to conserve marine mammal species and to promote healthy stock to continue the traditional subsistence harvest of resources by 31 federally recognized Tribes.

BBMMC Council priorities

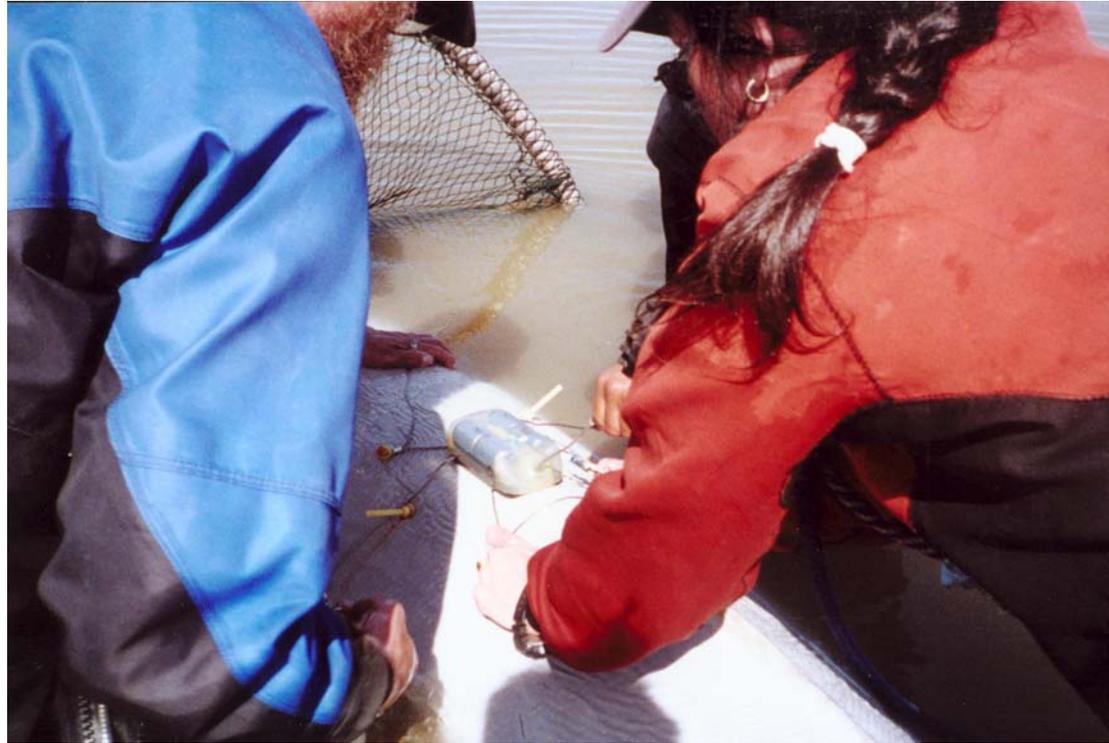
BBMMC establishes priorities each year: Excerpts of 2008 BBMMC Priorities include:

- *Continue beluga research project in Bristol Bay, Alaska
- *Monitor marine brucella disease in marine mammals
- *Work with TASSC on sea otter population surveys, TEK gathering, monitoring sea otters

BBMMC Accomplishments

- Involved in 2005 three beluga student interns during the spring beluga biopsy field season. Students learned western science and TEK of belugas in the Bristol Bay, Alaska area.
- Since 2002, BBMMC has conducted a collaborative beluga research project consisting of tagging, collecting skin biopsies for mark recapture pilot project and DNA genetic analysis. This project will be expanded from Kvichak River to the Nushagak area (2006, 2008).

Beluga Taggers-Kvichak River



Tagger Co-management partners pictured NMFS staff.

Beluga Taggers –Nushagak Bay



Other BBMMC Accomplishments

- 2003 the Bristol Bay Beluga Whale Management was signed after distributing it to 31-federally recognized Tribes in Bristol Bay. This Plan was developed to fulfill the requirements of the co-management agreement between ABWC and NOAA and to address the specific research and management concerns of Bristol Bay.

Harbor Seal Biosampling

Due to limited funding, BBNA's Marine Mammal Program works cooperatively with other Alaska Native Organizations, federal and state agencies in accomplishing their goals. One important goal is to train Bristol Bay seal hunters or other marine mammal hunters on biosampling techniques.

Youth and students participate in scientific and traditional activities

- John Boone and Danielle Savarese collect a harbor seal stomach during biosampling training as Carlos Evon, late Henry Pavian's grandson of Togiak observes.



Co-management ANHSC

Contingent upon funding, BBMMC works with ANHSC in conducting harbor seal biosample training either in Dillingham, Togiak, or other locations. Hunters and students participate to learn about the biology of the harbor seal, scientific techniques including biosampling of harbor seal. Young participants have shown interest in becoming certified biotechnicians.

Photo of biosamplers

ANHSC Harbor Seal Bios ample Training in Seward, Alaska



Left side, Togiak resident learn about biosampling seals.

Sea Otter Cooperative Projects

- In 2004 successfully completed with The Alaska Sea Otter & Steller Sea Lion and the Native Village of Perryville on the Stellar Sea Lion TEK and Population Identification Project in the Alaska Peninsula. TEK information was gathered. Boat operators were trained on biology of Stellar sea lions, small boat surveys, NMFS Marine Mammal Viewing Guidelines by TASSC and BBNA staff.

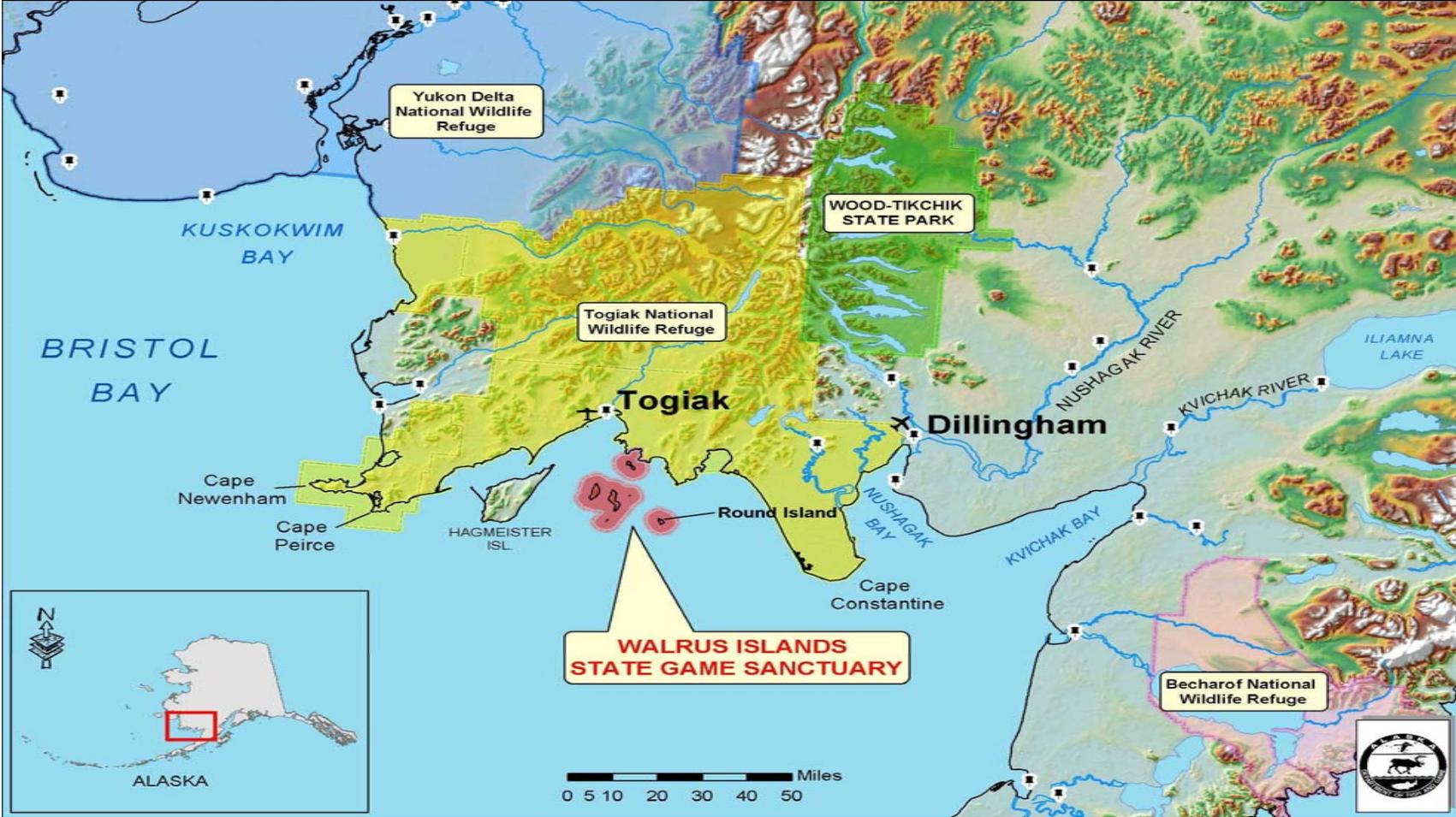
Steller Sea Lion Project Results

The Native Village of Perryville identified approximately 11 Steller sea lion rookery and haulout sites. They recommended during the Spring 2003 population surveys, no seal pups were observed. The BBNA and The Native Village of Perryville would like to continue this project on a long term basis. Funds need to be secured. Project cooperators need to be identified.

WALRUS TEK PROJECT

Subsistence Uses of Walrus in Bristol Bay, Alaska, as well as map documentation was collected from Togiak, Alaska. Topics covered: walrus population trends; subsistence activities involving walrus which include identification of traditional, current hunting sites; traditional and current walrus hunting methods; weather patterns, preservation methods, traditional conservation uses in ensuring the continuity of walrus hunting. Project funded by the PWCF.

Traditional Walrus documentation of the Qayassiq Walrus Commission
Walrus Islands-Qayassiq (Round Island), Hagemeister, Cape Peirce,
Cape Newenham and other Togiak Bay Traditional Hunting Grounds



•Map Source: ADF&G Round Island Report 2005

Qayassiq Asveq Native traditional knowledge

- Walrus migrate and feed around Round Island, Hagemeister Island, Summit Island, Crooked Island, the Twins and extend beyond the three mile boundary managed by the State. Qayassiq Walrus Commission (QWC) and the Bristol Bay Marine Mammal Council would like to recommend the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council extend walrus boundaries up to 50 miles from the walrus haulout site areas to protect the walrus, seals, salmon, halibut, clams, and other marine mammal habitat and feeding areas. The recommended boundary to prevent trawl fisheries from depleting the marine mammals is 50 mile boundary zone not open to trawl fishery from Security Cove, Cape Newenham, Togiak, Walrus Islands, Cape Constantine down to the North Aleutian Basin. The Togiak and other Yup'ik Eskimo elders traditional knowledge is the marine mammals migrating and feeding routes are the same as feeding. The animals follow their marine food resources in the Bristol Bay.

BBNA Marine Mammal Program Recommended to work with Alaska Native Organizations in establishing marine harvest and marine habitat protection boundaries

- The Bristol Bay Native Association would like to work with Alaska Native organizations to cooperatively work with us in establishing 50 mile offshore marine protection zone boundary for the protection of our Alaska Native traditional marine mammal, fish, shellfish, seabirds, clams that we harvest. This will also protect the future marine resource habitat beds of salmon, clams, and other underwater marine food sources harvested by Alaska Natives.

Traditional Subsistence Harvest

- There are other ways to ensure Alaska Native traditional harvest of all land, and marine food resource needs are met. For example, for large land animals like moose, a tribal council can work with their local fish and game advisory in establishing annual moose harvest limit per community. Trust and respect between the state and federal and tribal regulatory needs to be established. Local traditional Native knowledge needs to be a recognized tool in regulatory decision making between tribal, state, and federal agencies. The local Alaska Native traditional harvester's are affected by state and federal regulatory fish and game changes. In cooperatively working with tribal council's, a lot can be accomplished by all in meeting the needs of a tribal community.

Bristol Bay Photos



Belugas chasing salmon



Subsistence salmon net



For further information

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