



PRIBILOF ISLANDS COLLABORATIVE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTINUING THE ISSUE DISCUSSION

**AUGUST 17–20, 2004
COMMUNITY HALL ST. PAUL ISLAND, ALASKA**



PRIBILOF ISLANDS COLLABORATIVE: BACKGROUND

On August 17–20, 2004, the second formal stakeholder meeting of the Pribilof Islands Collaborative was held on St. Paul Island. For over eighteen months, a series of discussions among the diverse, key stakeholders were held to determine if the sustainability of the ecosystem and related economic issues of the Pribilof Islands' marine resources and the various communities and industries that depend on them were significant enough to warrant stakeholders' time and deliberate efforts to build agreement. In April 2004 the first formal meeting of the Pribilof Islands Collaborative (PIC) was held. The intent of the PIC is that the diverse stakeholders will together take their agreements forward to the decision-making bodies of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—Fisheries. These stakeholders anticipate working on issues of mutual interest for 18–24 months. The need to have consistent and accepted representation of the key stakeholder groups resulted in stakeholder representatives being designated to participate in the PIC.

Organizing meetings for the PIC were held in November 2002, September 2003, and January 2004. Those participating in these meetings were from St. Paul and St. George Islands, the fishing industry and conservation groups, federal government agencies, and universities. Executive summaries of the previous meetings are available. Please contact Denise Woods at 907.279-5504, or at wwfberingsea@alaska.net. The summaries are also posted on www.worldwildlife.org/beringsearbc/.

Those participating at the August meeting determined that the next meeting should focus solely on northern fur seals (NFS) and tentatively scheduled the meeting for early November in Anchorage. However the need to have experts and NMFS participate in this meeting will likely require the meeting to be held in either late January before or after the Marine Science Symposium or the week of February 21, 2005. The workgroup/planning committee will make a determination whether the November date is realistic and report back to the full group as soon as possible. Other tentative meeting dates were identified as in the spring at the end of April or in early May. PIC coordinators will work with stakeholders to identify specific dates that work best for participants.

PURPOSE OF THE COLLABORATIVE

The purpose of the Pribilof Islands Collaborative is for a consistent and representative group of stakeholders to identify areas of agreement on policies, strategies, and actions that promote a healthy ecosystem and a strong economy in and around the Pribilof Islands while maintaining viable commercial fisheries and subsistence harvests in the central Bering Sea.

The process will provide participating stakeholders with the opportunity to be proactive, rather than reactive, to a variety of marine resource concerns including fluctuations and declines in populations of northern fur seal, crab, changes in some seabird populations, and reductions in halibut availability around the Pribilof Islands.

PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING

The purpose of the August 2004 meeting was for formal stakeholders to continue discussions on resource issues and related economic concerns about the Pribilof Islands and surrounding marine ecosystem, and to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to view the area first hand, as well as meet and hear from local community members.

By the end of the meeting, the following updates and actions were identified.

Workgroups. Although certain individuals have volunteered to chair and participate in the workgroups, all workgroups are open to any member of a community or stakeholder group, and broader participation is welcomed and encouraged. Due to the specific focus of the next meeting on fur seals, other workgroups may not be meeting as often as they have been. It was also agreed that notices announcing workgroup meetings would be provided well in advance (at least two weeks).



Northern Fur Seals Workgroup (Planning Committee for next PIC Meeting).

During the August meeting, based on the workgroup's recommendation, it was decided that the next PIC meeting would focus exclusively on Northern Fur Seals. One of the items the workgroup suggested is to discuss possible management actions based on available research data, western science, and L&TK during the next meeting.

Next Step: *Fur Seal Workgroup/next meeting planning sessions will be held via conference calls at 10:00 AM Alaska time on Wednesdays, unless otherwise announced.*

Other Fur Seal Workgroup recommendations the full PIC accepted were:

Fur Seal Workgroup Co-Chairs

Phil Zavadil (St. Paul Tribal Ecosystem Office)

Max Malavansky, Jr. (St. George Traditional Council)

Support Fur Seal Research

Heather McCarty reported that the PCCRC has already designated fur seals as a priority in its current RFP. She also reported that the NPRB Science Plan includes \$500–600,000 for Fur Seal research. Heather and Margaret Williams drafted two letters, which were reviewed, revised and agreed to by the PIC. One letter is to Congress requesting new funds for fur seal research, and the other to NPRB requesting that fur seals be a priority for research funding. These letters will likely include the two-page research plan, which are primarily items from the revised draft Fur Seal Conservation Plan. They will also include all PIC members' signatures.

Suggestion: Find out if these or similar recommendations are in the Oceans Report and if so note it in the letter.

Encourage NMFS to finish Conservation Plan. This recommendation was supported by the full PIC and Kaja Brix of NMFS provided the group with an update.

Actions Recommended: Develop a strategy (and draft) for a letter regarding an international research center located on the Pribilofs. PIC could also support fur seal research proposals submitted to the PCCRC and NPRB, and encourage coordination so there are not duplicate proposals. Further, the PIC could support and make suggestions of how research can provide opportunities for communities to be involved.

Halibut and Related Economic Issues Workgroup. This group will work on a number of items ranging from data needs to defining what goals the Collaborative should set for itself in relation to this issue.

Workgroup Co-Chairs

Philip Lestenkof (St. Paul CBSFA)

Larry Cotter (APICDA)

Actions: The PIC agreed to use the problem/goal statement as recommended by the Halibut Workgroup and revised in discussions at the August meeting as its current working document.

Specifically the workgroup recommended and the PIC agreed to support the proposal before the NPFMC to allow 4C CDQ and IFQ to be harvested in 4D. L. Cotter offered to draft the letter.

Next Steps: Workgroup will likely not meet until after September when the local halibut fishing is done. Chairs will give plenty of notice.

CRAB AND RELATED ECONOMIC ISSUES WORKGROUP. This group will also work on a number of items ranging from data needs to defining what goals the Collaborative should set for itself in relation to this issue. The group is seeking a Crab industry representative to participate as a formal stakeholder in the Collaborative.

Workgroup Coordinator

Heather McCarty (CBSFA)



Actions: The PIC agreed to use the revised problem/goal statement as recommended by the Crab Workgroup and revised during discussions at the August meeting as its current working document.

Next Steps: Heather and others will talk with Crab representatives at the October 6–12 NPFMC meeting in Sitka to recruit a Crab representative for the PIC.

PRIBILOF HABITAT CONSERVATION AREA (NO-TRAWL ZONE). This Workgroup drafted a letter as requested in April. During the course of the August meeting, the purpose and the letter to NMFS was revised and agreed upon. The purpose is to request data and science experts' assistance from NMFS for the next fur seal-focused meeting, as well to let NMFS know that the PIC would be requesting additional assistance. Further, that the PIC will be requesting NMFS to evaluate if the original intent of the PHCA has been effective or not.

Next Steps: The letter will be sent soon with all PIC signatures, and a PDF emailed to PIC participants and others interested. NMFS planning team meeting is in September and it may be a good time for PIC participants to talk with them about their assistance.

The workgroup also determined that it needs to reconvene and discuss, "Where does it go now?" It was suggested that the focus should shift to more positive questions like: What are the various needs of all the critters and what can we do to help?

SEABIRDS WORKGROUP. Art Sowls with USF&WS provided the PIC with a redraft of the problem/goal statement as well as an update from this year's field season on seabirds and sea ducks in the Pribilofs, which was accepted as a working document.

Workgroup Members

Margaret Williams (WWF)

Art Sowls (USF& WS)

Evie Witten (WWF)

Action: Art identified a number of issues that he believed could be constructively addressed by the PIC. Margaret, Art and Evie agreed to work on these issues. Those specific issues identified that would enhance and protect the habitat and environment for seabirds and sea duck populations on St. Paul and St. George Islands were:

- Research halibut diet
- Work with USF&WS to coordinate its data with data WWF has contracted for on the PHCA area
- Expand rat prevention cooperation, and note industry is key to this issue
- Research habitat
- Develop best management practices
- Establish research center

Next Steps:

- Art will talk with Coast Guard representatives who will be on Island the following week to see if they could assist with efforts (e.g., reducing spills and rat prevention)
- Draft letter of support from PIC to USF&WS
- Art will get names of industry folks currently participating in industry-focused initiatives to see if the PIC can assist with their efforts

DATA COORDINATION WORKGROUP. Data needs and coordination were identified as important issues during the August meeting.

Workgroup Chair

Astrid Scholz (Ecotrust)



Workgroup framework and recommendations

- There are two aspects of the DATA issue: Technical and Policy
- Progress is already being made on research needs identified in discussions during the PIC meetings.
- Need to find ways to a) avoid duplication of effort, b) share information/data with PIC members, and c) attain confidence/trust/comfort with information/data.
- In order to achieve a, b, c above, the PIC needs to provide guidelines/standards/criteria (protocols) for documenting and making data accessible.
- PIC should look for protocols to incorporate L&TK.
- Meta data needs: Make description of data and method of analysis available to PIC members by:
 - > including this requirement in contractors scope of work,
 - > finding a way to make all the information available—via another institution or a new Pribilof Research Center,
 - > developing policy for information sharing, generating research questions that will be supported by PIC (cross-cutting group), and
 - > creating explicit protocols on how to incorporate L&TK methodology, etc.

NEEDED SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH (Identified at the April 2004 PIC meeting in conjunction with data and issue needs associated with halibut. This is listed on page 41 in the August meeting notebook).

Astrid Scholz of Ecotrust volunteered to develop data regarding the following issues:

1. Value of halibut fishery and other fisheries in Bering Sea;
2. Community/Islands impact (for example, two families have left due to halibut fishery problems—where do we get that information?);
3. Local participation in value-added activities (Islanders currently have a need for local ownership of processing and marketing of catches, beyond harvesting fish); and
4. Economic importance of subsistence use of halibut.

After the August meeting, Ecotrust described its assistance. It is committing \$10,000 of staff time to address these research needs. Astrid believes this will involve working with the stakeholders to pull together various pieces of socioeconomic information they may have and compile relevant state data. At this point, Ecotrust is not clear how far \$10,000 will go in compiling the data, but imagines that the PIC could get some solid numbers on (1) the value of the halibut fishery and (4) the economic importance of subsistence use of halibut. It will likely get some data on (2) community/islands impact based on a small set of interviews with local folks (done by phone). It's also possible that some very preliminary business planning/scoping on (3) value-added opportunities might occur.

Astrid plans to report to the halibut working group and/or steering committee, as Ecotrust proceeds, and also to the data working group.

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

Defining Success: Ecosystem Approach

One of the most significant outcomes of the August meeting was the PIC's discussion on addressing these resource issues in a way that has the possibility to be most helpful to both the stakeholders and the resources. Some of the characteristics identified as part of an ecosystem approach were to identify the most important areas for the health of the different species, economic/fishing activities, and where regulatory boundaries exist, including timing/seasonal considerations. Using GIS formatting, analyze these areas and data. It was noted that this is a good start to begin looking at the area using an ecosystem approach, but



this data is probably insufficient for ecosystem-based management. It was also noted that a good deal of this information already exists in the SEIS, SAFE and EFH documents.

Next Steps: The Steering Committee will draft a strategy for goals, expectations and timing such that each meeting will help to build information layers regarding resource and management data.

Media Policy

Agreement: PIC meetings are open, public meetings. There are three types of caucuses that can be called in order to address issues. Those caucuses are:

- Stakeholder caucuses, full group caucuses, and facilitator initiated caucuses.
- In addition, the group affirmed its support of utilizing stakeholder designated spokespeople and using press releases to announce agreements the PIC reaches.

Next Steps: Heather McCarty and Susan Murray will revise the Media Policy based on agreements made in August. Further they will work on a media plan, which will enable the PIC to be proactive about getting information out about its efforts and accomplishments. The facilitator will get the most current electronic version of the policy to Heather and Susan, and will work with them to integrate the revisions into the PIC's policies, so that the agreements are in writing.

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