

Pribilof Islands Collaborative Northern Fur Seal Workgroup
August 4, 2004 2:00PM (Alaska time) teleconference
Meeting summary

Present: Larry Cotter, Greg McGlashan, Andy Malavansky, Evie Witten, Debbie Lestenkof, Phil Zavidil, Heather McCarty, Claire LeClair (notetaker).

Action items highlighted in yellow

Summary:

- Phil would like to step down as chair, does not have enough time;
- Finding a replacement chair should be one of the issues the Fur Seal Workgroup brings before the PIC at the August meeting;
- Chair of each workgroup tasked with putting together meeting agendas and getting information out to workgroup members, designation as 'chair' does not give individual any more weight in workgroup discussions.

Because there was no agenda prepared for the meeting, participants decided to discuss what the workgroup would present at the August meeting

- Problem statement agreed on at April meeting is mostly about the Fur Seal Conservation Plan, but that is now on a longer timeframe than originally thought;
- Still use Fur Seal Conservation Plan's Research Plan as a basis for action;
- But Conservation Plan's use/status may change in light of the current decline in Fur Seals;
- Need assistance of and direction from whole PIC to change problem statement for Fur Seal Workgroup;
- Researchers/experts who will be at August meeting and who can present information for the group include: Rolf Ream, Tom Loughlin (currently scheduled to speak to the group 8/18 in the AM), someone from the Stewardship program (Karin or Bruce); Terry Spraker can't be there, but is planning to write a report or letter summarizing his observations from this year;
- Suggestion to present following action plan to PIC:
 1. Lobby for more research funds;
 2. Encourage NMFS to finish Conservation Plan
 3. Take some management action now.
- Can go along with first two, but not the third until more discussion/justification made;
- Just want to put management actions on the table, to discuss;
- Use available data to make best educated guesses, this is adaptive management;
- Adaptive management practiced by federal government when commercial harvest in effect;
- Adaptive management must have adequate monitoring, need to lay out all options with best and worst case scenarios;
- Suggestion the PIC request NMFS and the Council to have a Northern Fur Seal Symposium (similar to the Stellar Sea Lion symposium);

- NPRB has identified fur seals as one of their priorities and will be sponsoring a fur seal symposium in 2005; after the symposium, the NPRB will establish priorities for research based on the information presented;
- But there is enough research on fur seals already, need action, adaptive management;
- Not all on this workgroup agree on this issue, best to make this clear to the rest of the PIC;
- A fur seal symposium is different than what was discussed at last workgroup meeting: bringing together a panel of experts to help PIC consider and identify actions that could make a difference now;
- Action can and should happen, but need to follow the process first;
- Process can be overwhelmed by citizen comment/action, we may need to look at that as an option now;
- This process, the PIC, is meant to bring all interests together to get something done about issues in the Pribilof Islands;
- Suggestion to look at international actions that could help, through the Fur Seal Treaty; Dave Cormany can speak to this;
- Suggestion to try to get information (science-based as well as TEK-based) about Commander Islands and San Miguel Islands fur seals;
- The group agreed to bring the following information/proposals/requests to the PIC at the August meeting:
 1. Support for increased research funding;
 2. Encourage NMFS to finish Conservation Plan;
 3. PIC should have a discussion on possible management actions based on available research (both scientific as well as TEK);
 4. Re-visit/Re-write problem statement;
 5. Proposal to focus November meeting on fur seals (leave question of how to pick advisory scientists until later)
 6. Request assistance in finding a new chair for the Fur Seal Workgroup, preferably someone from St. Paul or St. George.