

Workgroup Meeting Agenda and Summary-Pribilof Islands Habitat Conservation Area  
Pribilof Islands Collaborative  
July 7, 2004 9:00AM

Agenda:

1. Review of tasks at hand
2. Efforts/Analyses currently underway
3. What progress do we want to make between now and the August PIC meeting?
4. What material do we need for the August meeting?
5. Other items
6. Schedule next meeting

NEXT MEETING FOR THE PIHCA WORKGROUP: **July 30 11:00AM** Alaska time

Present: Randy Hagenstein, Heather McCarty, Karin Holser, Bruce Robson, Evie Witten, Paul MacGregor, Leland Little, Art Nelson, Claire LeClair (notetaking)

Summary:

1. Review of tasks at hand
  - Randy read aloud the task outlined for this workgroup at the April meeting:  
“Workgroup will review data and information available to assess the effects of the Pribilof Islands Habitat Conservation Area (aka the “No-Trawl Zone”). Based on those findings, the workgroup may recommend the Pribilof Islands Collaborative draft a letter or pass a resolution requesting the NPFMC, NMFS, USFWS, PCCRC and NPRB to evaluate the positive and negative effects and impacts of the closure after nearly 10 years, by conducting the research or initiating a process to solicit proposals to conduct the research.”
  - Paul clarified that when he made the recommendation that the PIC look at the PIHCA he was thinking of an analysis that would determine if the PIHCA has been effective in addressing the specific purposes for which it was created. The rationale for closure was to protect blue king crabs, marine mammals, seabirds and their prey species to allow rebuilding of these depressed stocks.
  - Should workgroup also look at the economic effects of the PIHCA? Fishing still continues in the area except for trawling. It would be hard to analyze whether the trawl closure has had an economic impact of any kind and will remain a secondary line of questioning for the workgroup.
2. Efforts/Analyses currently underway
  - Evie introduced Bruce Robson, who WWF has hired to mine existing data sets in order to organize any and all existing information that could be used to evaluate the efficacy of the PIHCA.
  - Bruce’s work will have two components:
    1. assemble a data base for the PICHA by finding any and all information that can be used to answer the question of the PICHA’s efficacy. Bruce has made the following requests:
      - trawl survey data (1970s-2003) for the whole Bering Sea;

-observer data (1990-present, though he's trying to get data from the foreign observer program);

-marine mammals, both the 'Platforms of Opportunity Database' and the 'Pelagic Fur Seal Food Habits' database; the latter covers the 1958-1974 and contains baseline information on diet in specific foraging areas;

-temperature and bathymetry.

2. develop a prey index by looking at the probability that prey species will occur in trawl stations. The idea is that by looking at prey availability you can gain some idea of how predators are fairing in their foraging efforts. By getting data based on trawl survey grids, the area enlarges and more data is gained since there is less concern with confidentiality of catch history. Trawl surveys are only done for two months in the summer, so the addition of observer data will provide information for other parts of the year. Bruce has also requested data on a range of species, including some benthic species that are considered indices of change e.g., lyre crabs, snails and starfish.
  - Bruce will talk with Karl Haflinger and Jack Taggart about the data requests he has made and discuss this project with them;
  - Timeline: Bruce will make a draft data presentation at the August PIC meeting;
  - Data on crab may be available through ADF&G, Heather is working on getting Doug Pengilly to August meeting;
  - Art Nelson will contact Karl Haflinger to see if he can attend the August PIC meeting;
  - Question of why data requests go beyond boundaries of the PICHA, need to be efficient in data requests;
  - Since no ongoing monitoring in place for the PICHA, have to look at larger area in order to have some kind of baseline;
  - Suggestion that PIC may need a "Data Analysis Subgroup" that spans all the workgroups so that some kind of coordination for data requests can occur;
  - In the meantime, Evie is still compiling a list of all the data requests made by groups involved with the PIC;
  - Broader issue is that PIC stakeholders still haven't agreed on what questions to ask so data requests may be premature;
  - Some data may actually help the PIC formulate questions;
  - Concern raised that haulouts are empty, that perhaps PICHA has done nothing for marine mammals;
  - Maybe if PICHA not created marine mammals would be in worse shape, we just don't know;
  - Look at original proposal for PICHA, existing one is a compromise, original boundaries much larger in initial proposals;
  - There may be no way to get a conclusive answer to the question of whether the PICHA has had any effect on the purposes for which it was created since no baseline and no monitoring; forced to use surrogate data.
3. Goals for group before August meeting

- Try to refine questions and identify a strategy for answering those questions;
  - Analysis required to assess any effects of the PICHA will likely rely on a request to the managing government agency but in order for the PIC to make a ‘well-reasoned’ request, must do homework with help of people like Bruce, Karl and Jack;
  - In order to get from questions to a specific proposal, there will be many more question asked along the way;
  - Create an memo to present to entire PIC with recommendations from workgroup on what specific questions to ask in regards to this issue. Randy will draft, Paul will make first review. Work group to finalize during July 30 meeting.
4. Materials for August meeting
- Randy has series of wall sized maps with PICHA imposed on nautical chart and also a map with all the closures and special management areas in the Bering Sea. He will bring these to the August meeting.
  - Evie will get original language for PICHA amendment;
  - Bruce will contact Steve Lewis in Juneau to see if and/or how the GIS maps; produced for the SEIS can be made available to everyone;
  - Evie will bring her laptop and the SEIS CD to the August meeting.
5. Other items  
There were none.
6. The next meeting was scheduled for July 30 at 11AM Alaska time