

Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee Meeting
12/19/2022 Monday

1. Called to Order at 1:05 p.m.
2. Roll Call
 - a. Present (Quorum to open meeting and start of agenda items. Tom Gray left meeting about 1:20pm – No quorum during part of public testimony – Jack Fagerstrom entered meeting during public testimony at about 2:00pm and re-established a Quorum)
 - i. Charlie Lean
 - ii. Brandon Ahmasuk
 - iii. Kevin Knowlton
 - iv. Jacob Mannix
 - v. Drew McCann
 - vi. Patrick Knodel
 - vii. Davis Lincoln- Telephone (Beginning 1:15pm to end of meeting)
 - viii. Tom Gray- Telephone (1:05pm to 1:20PM – left meeting during public testimony on Musk Ox)
 - ix. Jack Fagerstrom – Telephone (joined about 2:00pm)
 - b. Absent
 - i. Edward Stang- Resigned
 - ii. Charlie Saccheus
 - iii. Jack Fagerstrom (joined about 2:00pm)
 - iv. Henry Olanna Jr
 - v. Lloyd Kiyuktelluk
 - vi. Clyde Oxerok
 - c. Fish and Game Staff
 - i. Keane Richards- telephone
 - ii. Alicia Carson
 - iii. Sara Germain
 - iv. Tony Gorn
 - d. Members of the Public
 - i. Diana Adams- telephone
 - ii. Beverly Tran- Telephone
 - iii. Chelsea Hubert- telephone
 - iv. Peggy Darling- telephone
 - v. Jacob Martin
 - vi. Kristy Selesky
 - vii. Miranda Musich
 - viii. Neils Hahn
 - ix. Jeff Darling
 - x. Melissa Stuart
 - xi. Kamey Kapp-Worland
 - xii. Garrick Fuller
 - xiii. Deanna Hacker- Nome Nugget
3. Committee Approved the agenda with a motion to modify for public comment early.

- a. The committee heard significant testimony on the issue of Muskoxen near and within city limits and the problems they have caused Nome residents, including the recent death of a community member.
 - b. The committee approved a resolution to draft a letter after hearing the concerns from participating members of the public.
4. Alaska Board of Game Proposals
- a. Proposal 188: Reauthorize the current brown bear tag fee exemption for Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A.
 - i. Committee votes in favor unanimously, none opposed
5. Alaska Board of Fisheries Proposals
- a. Proposal 75: to modify Arctic Grayling bag, possession and length of limits.
 - i. Committee votes in favor. 5 support, 3 oppose.
 - b. Proposal 77: Establish escapement goal of 7,000-12,000 sockeye salmon for the Salmon Lake drainage within the Port Clarence subdistrict.
 - i. Committee votes in favor unanimously, none opposed.
 - c. Proposal 78: Modify the start and end dates of the herring sac-roe, and food and bait fishery.
 - i. Committee votes in favor unanimously, none opposed.
 - d. Proposal 165: Prohibit compensation for guide services in subsistence fisheries.
 - i. Committee is opposed.
 - e. Proposal 167: require the reporting of subsistence caught salmon to be reported within 5 days.
 - i. Committee opposed unanimously.
 - f. Proposal 140: Reduction in Area M fishery seasons.
 - i. Committee supports the proposal unanimously.

 - chair

Dear Commissioner,

At the scheduled Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee meeting on December 17th 2022, during public comment time, the committee heard from a number of residents of the Nome area describe in some detail the increased number of human and pet encounters with herds of muskoxen within Nome city limits as well as the surrounding area. These testimonials were mostly in response to a recent muskox to human encounter which ended in a human fatality. The public is asking that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game review the Nome area muskoxen management strategy with a focus of reducing human and muskoxen encounters.

Members of the public shared stories of daily encounters with muskoxen around their homes causing fear for the safety for children and pets/sled dogs. Increasing number of encounters have resulted in the muskoxen injuring or killing a number of pet dogs which were tied up in accordance to common practice and city ordinance, as well as sled dogs both in the dog lots and on the mushing trails in the area. One encounter resulted in a citizen using their vehicle to come in-between a herd of angry muskoxen and an ADF&G employee whom was attempting to run-off a herd from a residential neighborhood. The Nome local muskox population has also required major actions to restrict herd access to the Nome airport area. The fencing project was estimated in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The muskoxen are now much less of a hazard at the main airport, but the smaller City Field is still very much in harms way for aircraft landing and taking off.

The public also shared stories of how the local muskoxen have become unafraid of human encounters requiring more and more aggressive tactics to get the herds to move off trails, or out of residential neighborhoods. One instance resulted in a resident taking lethal action towards a muskox in defense of life and property while in a heavily populated neighborhood, causing one home owner in the area to find pass-through bullets in the railing of their deck around their house. Thank goodness the bullets stopped there and did not hit someone sitting in their living room.

In follow-up to all of the public testimony the Northern Norton Sound Department of Fish and Game Advisory Committee strongly supports this public request for the department to review the current Nome Area Muskox Management Plan with a focus on reducing human/pet dog/sled dog encounters. Keeping in mind suggestions of reducing the herd size through allowing limited female harvest, more closely attaining the harvestable surplus by issuing more permits for the local Tier II hunt and considering a means of more evenly distributing the harvest over the season in TX095.

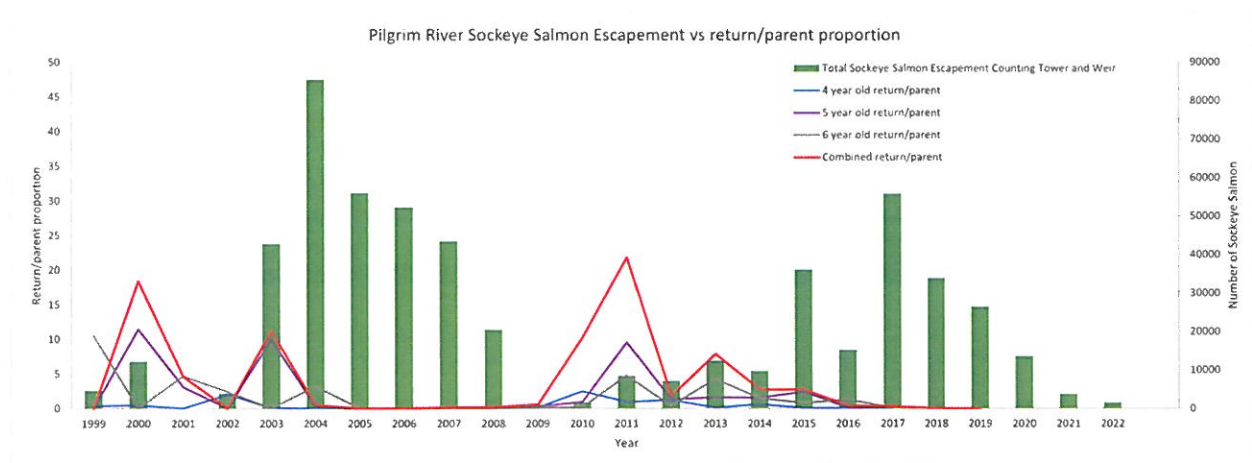


Charlie Lean, Chair
Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee

cc: The Alaska Board of Game

Comments in support of proposal #77

The proposal suggests a reduction in the upper limit of the red salmon escapement goal at Salmon Lake by using the OEG authority of the Board of Fisheries. This is intended to open a discussion of the management goal for this stock, which has been set using methodology intended to be solely reliant on a weak set of escapement data. This stock has not only escapement data, but also smolt health at out-migration, age at return, and plankton or freshwater food data. This stock has perhaps the best tracking history of all AYK salmon stocks, certainly the best of any stock north of the Yukon River. This data was used by the Department Limnology Lab to project a reasonable carrying capacity for the system and to set the amount of fertilizer for supplementing nutrients to support plankton and rearing salmon. The current upper limit of the SET goal is twice the limnologist's recommendation which was first made two years ago.



The graph of red salmon escapements, above, (green bars) shows the cyclic nature of returns over more than two decades. The cause of the vacillation is the boom and bust of the plankton the rearing salmon feed on. Over-escapement in the lake results in the rearing juveniles over-cropping the plankton which in turn results in a drop in survival.

The red line is the combined return per spawner from each parent year. This is the combination of the 4, 5 and 6 year-old returns. The best returns come from parent year strengths of the proposal's recommended escapement range. Escapements from the parent years numbering 13,000 and above are poor with one exception, 2003. The plankton levels in 2003 were high due to several years of fertilizer at the beginning of the fertilization rehabilitation of the stock, levels no longer supported by the Department oversight.

Excessive escapements result in non-sustainable population swings. The discussion of management will need to consider actions needed to attenuate these swings of abundance. Tracking the return and responding with harvest management action should be considered as well as the escapement goal.