

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

# WRITER'S GUIDE

Third Edition



Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
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For information on alternative formats and questions on this publication, please contact the Commissioner's Office at (907) 465-6166.

# Foreword

The third edition of the *Alaska Department of Fish and Game Writer's Guide* promotes consistency, simplifies writing decisions, and provides answers and standards for some of the everyday writing dilemmas met by department staff. Is active or passive voice structure a better choice? Is *Chinook* always capitalized? Can *Alaskan* be used as an adjective? Is it acceptable to use the term *fisherman* in the twenty-first century? This guide can answer these often perplexing questions and provide guidance for writers.

Before 1992, department employees lacked a concise reference for their daily correspondence. In March 1992, Commissioner Carl Rosier adopted, as policy, the *Alaska Department of Fish and Game Writing Standards*, first edition, as our department's guide to provide consistent word usage for department publications and correspondence.

In 1999, a second edition of the Writing Standards was created—*Alaska Department of Fish and Game Writer's Guide*—with updated material to further consistency. However, language evolves, and after 11 years it was time to update the department's writing standards.

Accurate and consistent writing is essential for department communications and helps further our mission. This updated edition is more than a writer's guide, it is department policy. Thank you for using this guide and adhering to the department's writing standards.

Denby S. Lloyd  
Commissioner

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This guide was organized and produced by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Interdivisional Publications Committee.

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# Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide consistent writing standards across all divisions of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). This guide ensures consistency in correspondence, educational and informational publications, and scientific and technical reports.

Peers, colleagues, and supervisors judge our work products by how well we use and write our language. We all take good writing for granted. Not until we are forced to read a weakly constructed manuscript—disorganized, filled with stacked adjectives, dangling syntax, or misplaced modifiers—do we appreciate the effective and considerate writer.

This guide is the third edition of the *Alaska Department of Fish and Game Writer's Guide*. It updates and replaces the second edition, published in 1999. As a departmental tool, this guide has been coordinated among divisions, and provides common guidance for writers.

This guide takes precedence over divisional manuals, and will provide the first level of guidance for ADF&G publications. Divisions may have their own policy and procedures for producing their reports and correspondence, and may provide specific guidelines or templates for those processes.

Follow the writing principles provided in this guide, except in cases where written materials are prepared in partnership with other agencies or universities, submitted to journals, or are bound by strict regulatory language. In those cases, standards may conflict with this guide. Manuscripts prepared for journals, for example, will take the style of the journal where an editorial style differs from this guide.

