



Customary and Traditional Use Worksheet: Migratory Game Birds, featuring Emperor Geese

**Prepared by:
Division of Subsistence
Alaska Department
of Fish and Game**

**Prepared for:
Alaska Board of Game
Bethel, Alaska
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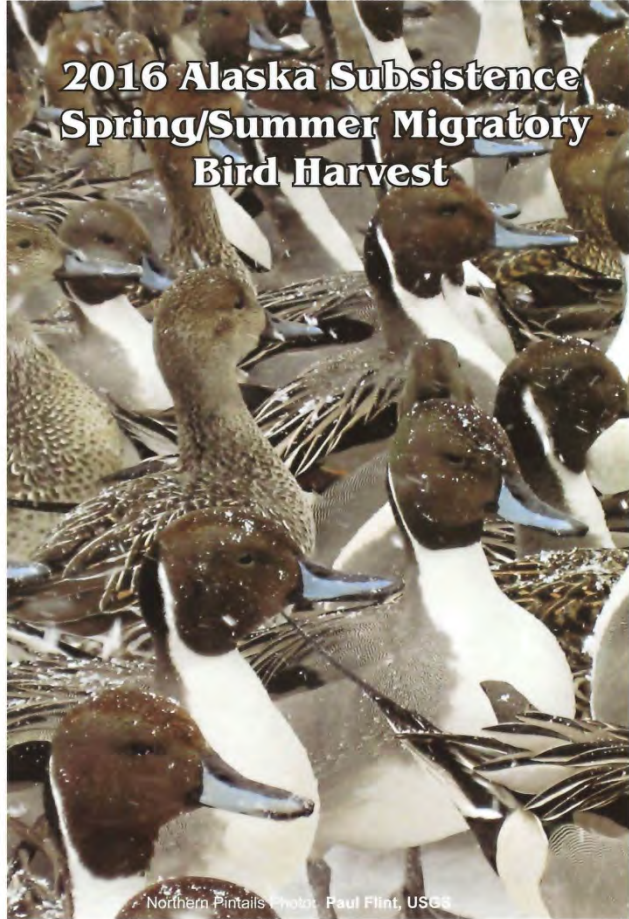
Proposal 157

- 5 AAC 85.065 (a)(4)(G). Hunting season and bag limits for small game. Migratory game birds. Emperor geese.
- 5 AAC 99.025 (a)(12) Customary and traditional uses of game populations. Small game.
- AS 16.05.258 requires a C&T finding
- The board has not addressed customary and traditional uses of emperor geese, nor of most migratory game birds.
- Full written worksheet provided in RC X – Tab X

Proposal Background

Regulations for the

2016 Alaska Subsistence Spring/Summer Migratory Bird Harvest



Northern Pintails photo: Paul Flint, USGS

Conservation through Co-Management

- Federal regulations allow spring/summer subsistence migratory bird hunting under amended MBTA
- Hunting in fall/winter allowed under state small game regulations for waterfowl, cranes, and snipe
- All emperor goose hunting closed since 1986
- Revised federal management plan for emperor geese allows spring/summer subsistence hunt and fall hunt in 2017
- Up to 1,000 bird harvest in fall general/subsistence hunt



Effective April 2 - August 31, 2016

<http://www.fws.gov/alaska/ambcc/regulations.htm>

Regulations and Definitions

A
L
A
S
K
A

2016 - 2017 Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations Summary



Photo by Milo Burcham
Graphic Design by Sue Steinacher



- Federal regulations list migratory birds open for subsistence hunting in spring/summer
- Several categories
- State regulations allow hunting under 5 AAC 85.065 (a)(4). Small game. Migratory game birds. [ducks, geese, swans, cranes, common snipe]
- Current c&t findings at 5 AAC 99.025 (a)(12). Small game

Options for C&T Finding

- Option 1. A finding that addresses waterfowl (ducks, geese, swans), cranes, and common snipe – those migratory birds open to fall/winter hunting in Alaska under state regulations, including emperor geese (beginning in 2017)
 - See list in Appendix 1
 - Potentially reverses negative finding for GMU 22 swans
- Option 2. A finding that addresses emperor geese only

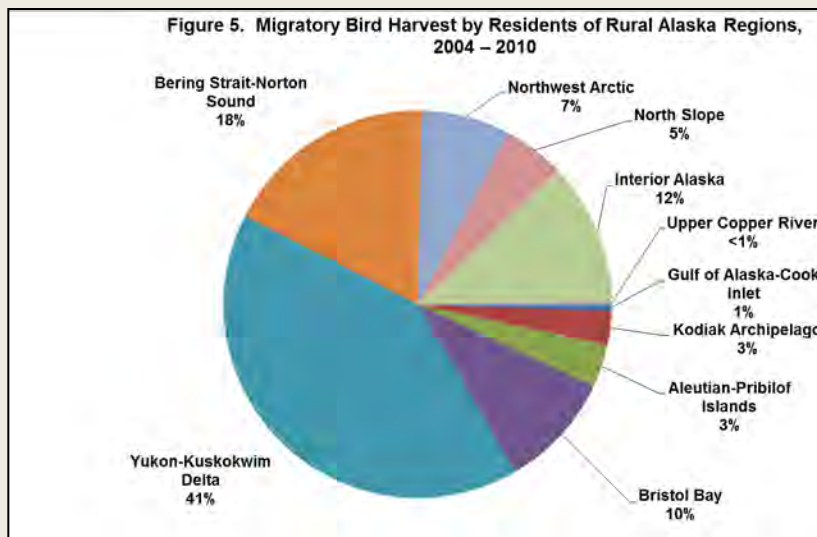
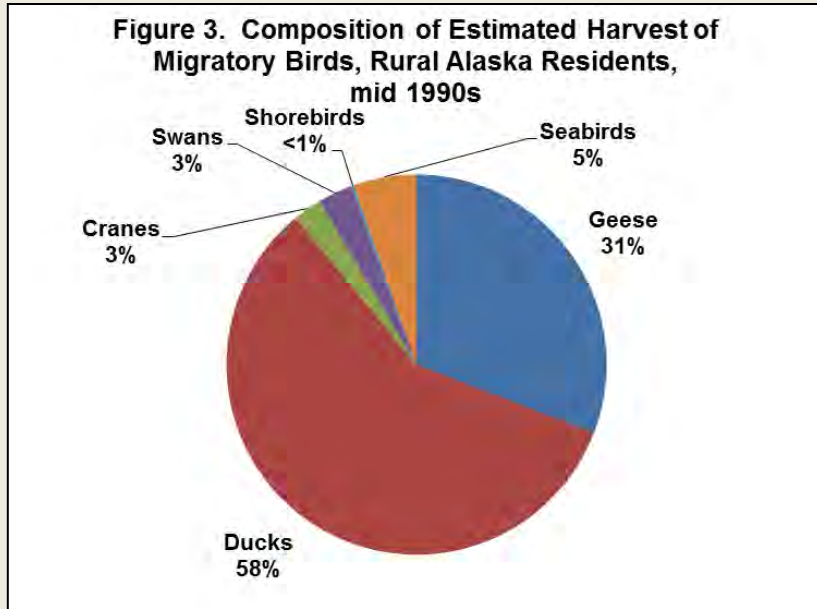
Sources of Information



- Considerable ethnographic information about migratory birds
- Harvest surveys from 1980s and 1990s
- AMBCC harvest surveys since 2004



Criterion 1: Length and consistency of use: migratory birds



- Ethnographic information documents historical and recent uses of migratory birds for food and raw materials.
- Estimated annual rural subsistence harvest, 1990s = 360,000 migratory birds
- In 1990s, statewide harvest = 58% ducks, 31% geese, 3% cranes, 3% swans
- Estimated annual rural harvest 2004 – 2012 = 345,000 migratory birds
- In early 2000s, most harvests in 6 regions

Criterion 1: Length and consistency of use: emperor geese (continued)

Figure 6. Estimated Annual Harvests of Emperor Geese by Residents of Alaska Regions, early 1990s

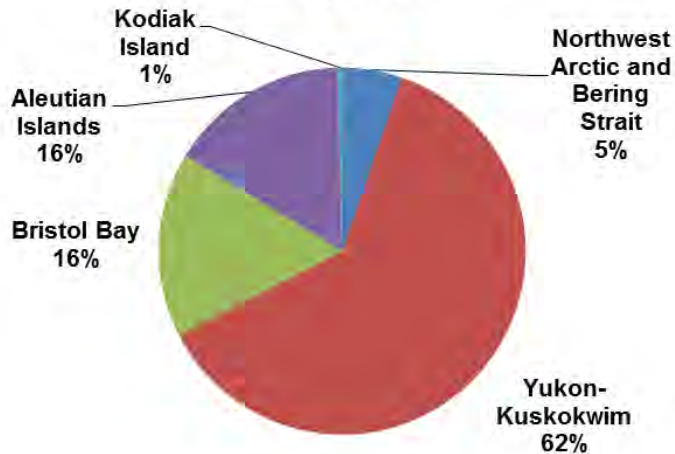
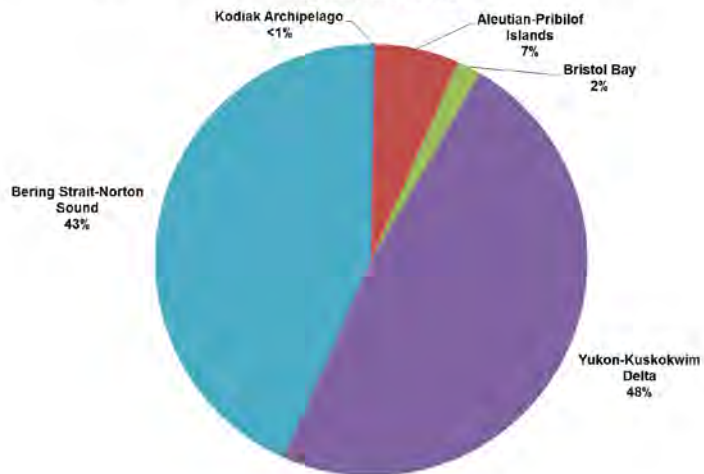


Figure 7. Emperor Goose Harvests, Percentage by Residents of Alaska Regions, 2004 – 2015



- Harvests documented for all areas within Alaska range
- Harvest estimates for 1980s/1990s = 4,500 emperor geese/year
- Harvest estimates, 2004 – 2015 = 3,500 emperor geese/year

Criterion 2: Seasonality: migratory birds

Figure 8. Seasonality of Migratory Bird Harvest, All Alaska Regions Combined, early 1990s

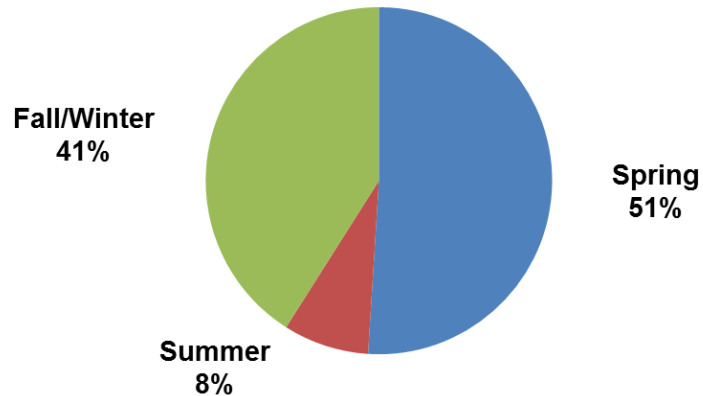
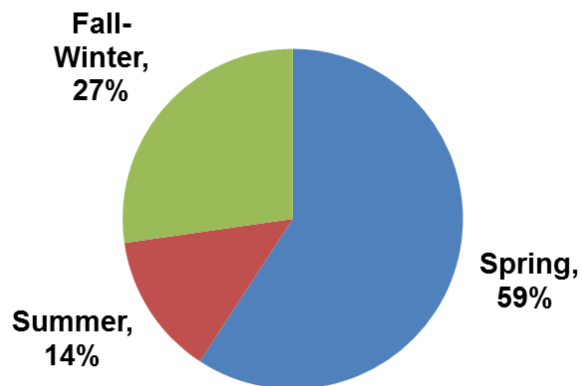


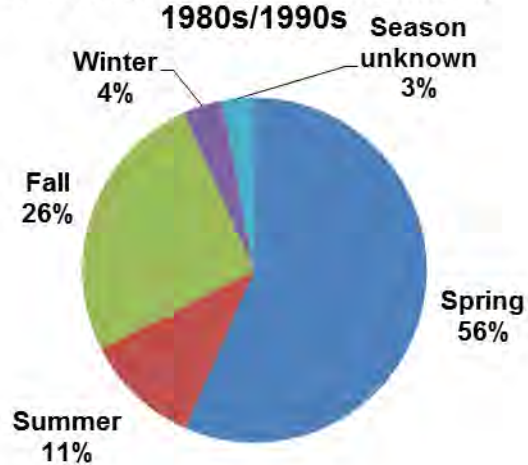
Figure 9. Seasonality of migratory bird harvests, all Alaska regions, 2004 – 2009



- Several seasonal patterns described for the state
- Seasonal pattern for 1990s
- Seasonal pattern early 2000s
- Key role of spring harvests in seasonal round
- Key distinguishing feature is role of fall and winter harvests, linked to bird movements

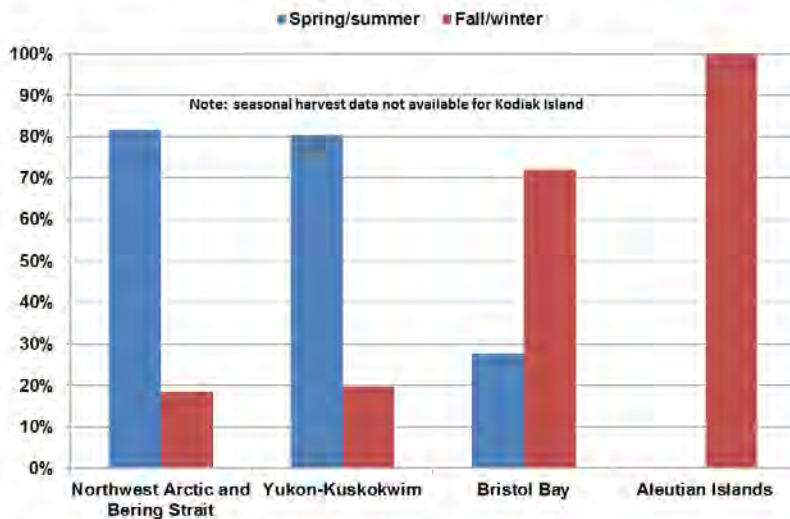
Criterion 2: Seasonality: emperor geese (continued)

Figure 10. Seasonality of Emperor Goose Harvest, All Regions Combined, 1980s/1990s



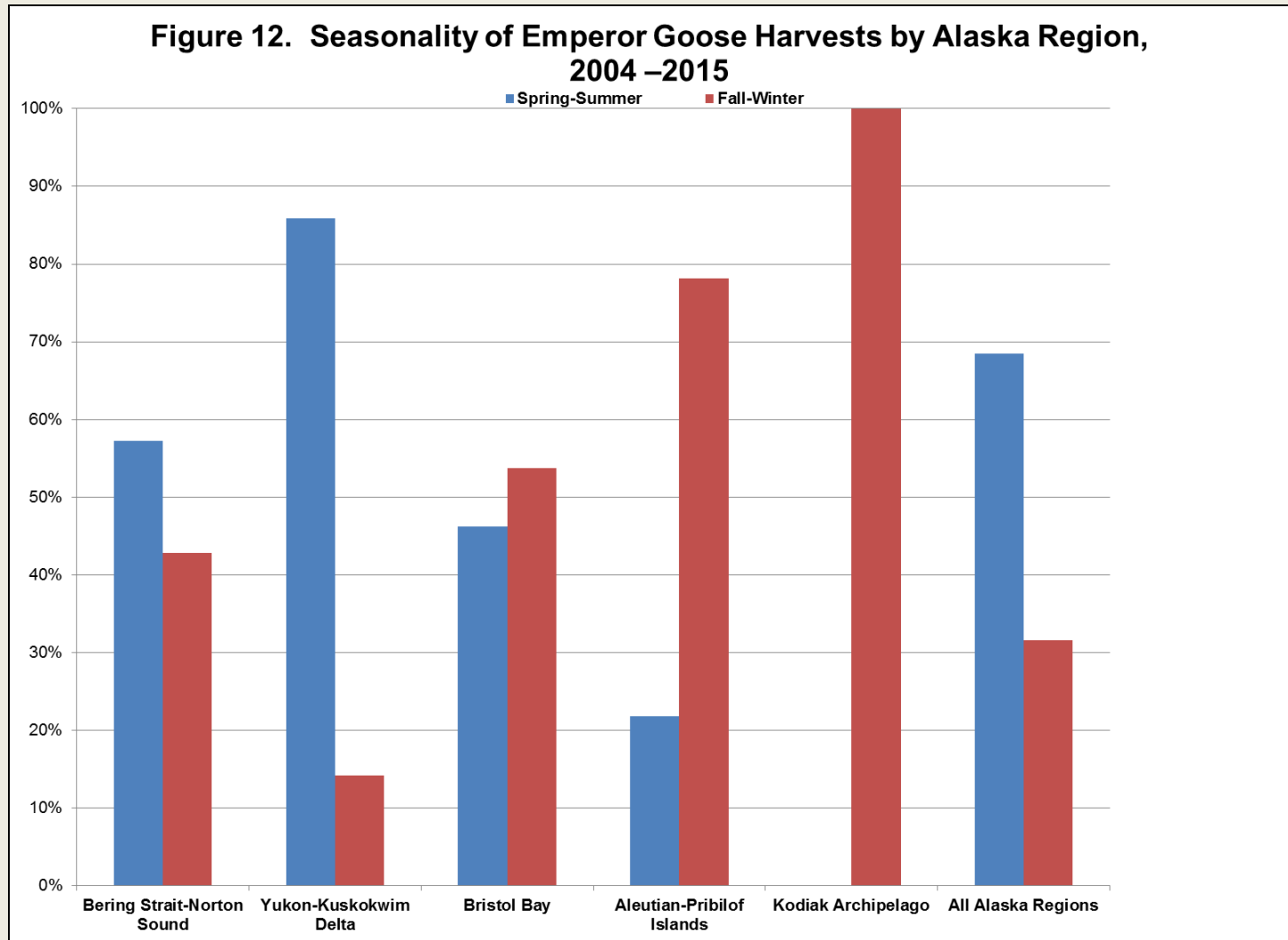
- Spring and fall harvests
- Notable differences by region
- In 1980s/1990s: northern region primarily spring; southern regions primarily fall & winter
- Worksheet has specific examples for Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands communities

Figure 11. Seasonality of Emperor Goose Harvests by Alaska Region, 1980s – 1990s



Criterion 2: Seasonality: emperor geese, continued

- In 2000s, most harvest in southern regions in fall/winter, while 85% of Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta emperor goose harvest was in spring/summer



Criterion 3: Efficient means and methods of harvest and economy of cost: migratory birds and emperor geese



Harvest of migratory birds along with whitefish, eggs, and greens, Kuskokwim River.

- Traditionally: spears, bow and arrow, nets, bolas, drives
- Use of firearms for over 100 years
- Taken in connection with other subsistence activities
- Emperor goose example from Aleutians

Criterion 4: Geographic areas: migratory birds and emperor geese



- Generally hunting occurs near communities
- Some specific information for emperor geese for Aleutian Islands, Kodiak



Criterion 5: Means of handling, preparing, preserving, and storing: migratory birds and emperor geese



- Thorough use for food; soups, frozen, salted, stored in seal oil
- Feathers used in dance fans and other art and crafts
- Some traditions specific to emperor geese – see worksheet

Criterion 6: Intergenerational transmission of knowledge of skills, values, and lore: migratory birds and emperor geese



- Family activities
- Role in oral traditions
- Role in arts and crafts
- Emperor geese featured in holiday celebrations, Aleut communities

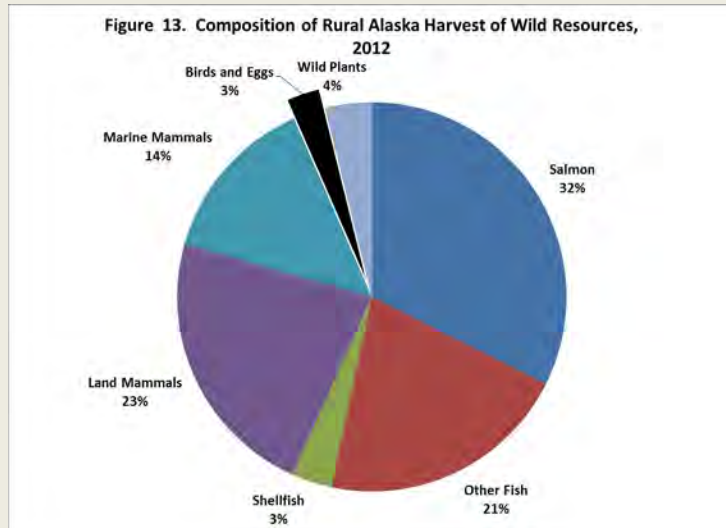
A Nondalton family processes their spring harvest of migratory birds.

Criterion 7: Distribution and exchange: migratory birds and emperor geese

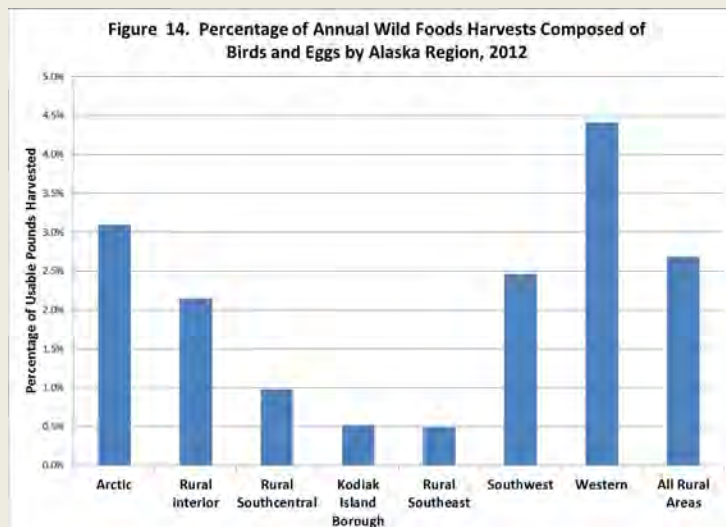


- Migratory birds are widely shared
- Emperor geese are widely shared
- See Tables 8 and 9 for examples from the 1980s/1990s and for 2013

Criterion 8: Diversity of resources in an area; economic, cultural, social, and nutritional elements: migratory birds and emperor geese



- Estimated harvest in rural areas, 2012 = 989,000 lb of birds and eggs
- About 3% of total rural harvest
- Contribution varies by region
- Emperor geese part of this general pattern



Conclusions

- No recommendation on amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) for emperor geese due to lack of open season since 1980s
- Questions?

