



Eskimo Walrus Commission

"To protect the pacific walrus population."

EWC Major Milestones & Accomplishments:

- **1978: Formation of the EWC** – Annual full board meetings of the EWC have occurred in various locations every year since formation.
- **1980s – 2008: Walrus Harvest Monitoring Program** – EWC's biological and observer-based project collected harvest information and biological samples from Diomede, Gambell, Nome Eskimo Community, King Island Community, Savoonga, Shishmaref, Wales and 8 villages in Chukotka.
- **1992: IPCoMM Member** – EWC became a member of the Indigenous People's Council on Marine Mammals (IPCoMM), which is a statewide body comprised of 15 Native Marine Mammal Commissions and Councils working together to enhance coordination of statewide marine mammal issues. For more, please click [here](#).
- **1994: MMPA Section 119** – Amendment to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) to include Section 119, authorizing cooperative agreements between the federal government and Alaska Native organizations for the co-management of marine mammal subsistence hunting by Alaska Natives. For more, please click [here](#).
- **1995: QWC & Round Island Agreement Formed** – With EWC support, the Qayassiq Walrus Commission was formed to advocate for the ability of Alaska Native subsistence hunters in Bristol Bay communities to harvest walrus on Round Island in the Walrus Islands State Game Sanctuary. A Cooperative Agreement Governing Subsistence Walrus Hunting on Round Island was signed by the EWC, QWC, FWS, and ADF&G. (link to QWC info: <http://www.bbna.com/our-programs/natural-resources/marine-mammals-program/>)
- **1997: EWC/FWS Cooperative Agreement** – Cooperative agreement developed between EWC and FWS for the co-management of Pacific walrus. (link to FWS info: <http://www.fws.gov/alaska/fisheries/mmm/agreements.htm>)
- **1998: PWCF MOU** – Memorandum of Understanding between the EWC, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, and FWS was signed to allow for the joint management of the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund. The majority of the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund is generated from the sale of raw ivory by the EWC during statewide conferences and events. The Pacific Walrus Conservation fund supports small scale walrus

conservation projects and the Matthew Iya Scholarship for Alaskan students involved in coursework or research related to the Pacific walrus.

- **2002 – present:** Hunter Meetings – Annual Hunter Meetings held in Gambell, and Savoonga to discuss hunter concerns, marking/tagging/reporting, and harvest requirements, with participation from EWC staff, FWS biologists & law enforcement staff, and local walrus hunters. From 2002 – 2010 Annual Hunter Meetings were also held in Wales and Shishmaref.
- **2002 – 2013: Summer Youth Stewardship Program** – EWC has supported the Bristol Bay Native Association/Qayassiq Walrus Commission Summer Youth Stewardship Program, which provides salary for a project coordinator and youth interns to monitor walrus at Round Island and Cape Seniavin. This project was funded by the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund.
- **2003: Traditional Knowledge Report** – EWC produced the report and poster “Pacific Walrus: Conserving Our Culture Through Traditional Management” with Traditional Knowledge interviews from elders and hunters in Diomedea, Wales, Shishmaref, Gambell, and Savoonga.
- **2003: Bio-Monitoring Workshop** – EWC and FWS jointly sponsored a Bio-Monitoring Workshop in Nome with a wide variety of participants connected to the Pacific walrus and its habitat to discuss research ideas to assess the health and stock of the walrus population.
- **2003: Chukotkan Walrus Harvest Monitoring Program** – EWC held a work session with FWS and the Association of Traditional Marine Mammal Hunters of Chukotka (ATMMHC) on a harvest monitoring program in Chukotka, and a report was produced.
- **2004: Bilateral Walrus Summit** – EWC & FWS hosted a U.S./Chukotka Summit with the goal of increasing international cooperation and coordination between Alaska and Chukotka in co-managing a shared natural resource, the Pacific walrus. All participants agreed that cooperation between Russian and American organizations should continue and be strengthened to ensure that exchanges about walrus related Traditional Knowledge, management and conservation, information on population status and health, and environmental concerns can occur.
- **2005: Pacific Walrus Research & Bio-Monitoring Plan** – Follow-up was conducted for the results of the 2003 Bio-Monitoring Workshop through a meeting held in Nome to review overall research and develop a Bio-Monitoring plan through 2014.
- **2005 – 2009: Best Walrus Hunting Practices Video** – Best hunting practices video produced and completed in 2009.
- **2005 – present: TEK Advisor for Walrus Tagging Project** – EWC advocated for and coordinated the participation of a subsistence hunter in U.S. Geological Survey walrus tagging projects. The subsistence hunter serves as a Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Advisor and assists with tracking walrus, navigating through and walking on ice, and tagging walruses.

- **2006: MOA on MMPA Section 119 Agreements** – the EWC was party to the “Memorandum of Agreement for the Negotiation of Marine Mammal Protection Act Section 119 Agreements” with the U.S. Department of Commerce/National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Department of the Interior/Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Indigenous Peoples’ Council on Marine Mammals (IPCoMM), which provides further guiding principles for marine mammal co-management. For more, please click [here](#).
- **2008: Co-Management Review** – EWC participated in a review of co-management efforts in Alaska by the Marine Mammal Commission, which resulted in a report with recommendations on how to improve co-management. (link: http://www.mmc.gov/pdf/mmc_comgmt.pdf)
- **2009: Chukotka Bio-Monitoring and TEK Reports** – Reports published on bio-monitoring and TEK research conducted in Chukotka in collaboration with the Association of Traditional Marine Mammal Hunters of Chukotka (ATMMHC).
- **2010: Tribal Marine Mammal Ordinances** – EWC worked closely with the Native Villages of Gambell and Savoonga, Kawerak, and FWS to develop Tribal Marine Mammal Ordinances adopted by each community to allow for local management of subsistence marine mammal harvests, including trip limits and harvest monitoring.
- **2012: AMMC Member** – EWC became a member of the Arctic Marine Mammal Coalition, which was formed to facilitate communication and collaboration between arctic coastal marine mammal subsistence groups and regulatory agencies on issues impacting subsistence communities in the arctic, such as increased ship traffic. AMMC membership includes the Alaska Nanuq Commission, the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee, the Ice Seal Committee and the EWC.
- **2012: Bilateral Walrus Workshop** – EWC participated in a workshop on assessing Pacific walrus population attributes from coastal haul-outs with FWS and Chukotkan partners.
- **2013: EWC Strategic Planning** – EWC conducted a strategic planning initiative to develop updated goals and priorities for the Commission. This included a visioning workshop conducted with Commissioners, resulting in a guiding document and vision navigation chart, and the adoption of an updated mission statement.
- **2014: EWC Logo** – EWC Commissioners selected a new logo for the EWC.
- **2014: Updated Bylaws** – EWC adopted updated bylaws to better meet the functional needs of the organization.
- **2014: AWSC Member** – EWC helped form and became a member of the Arctic Waterways Safety Committee, which works to develop best practices for users of U.S. waters between St. Lawrence Island and the U.S. – Canadian border. (link to AWSC website: <http://www.arcticwaterways.org/>)
- **2014: Strengthening Tribal Consultation** – EWC participated in the development of guidelines for improving government-to-government consultation related to marine subsistence resources, required by Executive Order 13,175.

- **2015:** Declared walrus harvest disasters for Native Villages of Gambell, Savoonga, Wales, and Little Diomede, passed EWC Resolution 2014-01 supporting the disasters, and received support from ICC Executive Committee, the Native Villages of Savoonga, Gambell, and other regional communities including Kawerak Board of Directors.

Worked with Strategies 360 (communications firm) to update EWC's communication infrastructure, website, newsletter, and an improved social media presence.

- **2016:** Worked with Kawerak leadership and other organizations in the state on the ivory ban laws passed in several states, shared Resolution 2016-01 passed by the EWC Executive Committee in June 2016, and received supporting resolutions from other entities. Staff remains involved in organizing an information campaign regarding the ivory ban issue including an effort at the Alaska Federation of Natives convention in October 2016, participated in a field hearing held by Senator Dan Sullivan on the ban and remains committed to work to protect the right of Alaska Natives to carve and sell legitimate walrus ivory.
- **2017:** Met with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff and Public Affairs office to review/discuss "draft communication strategy for Point Lay" and develop a plan for haul-out and stewardship efforts at Pt. Lay

Submitted a letter to USFWS with a brief summary of key areas on the draft Species Status Assessment for Pacific Walrus as part of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing determination. Received notice from USFWS of their final determination to not list the Pacific Walrus on ESA.

- **2018:** Assisted Jenna Malek, Co-management Fellow/Marine Mammal Commission (MMC) on the 1-yr. "Co-Management" project funded by North Pacific Research Board through MMC "to identify characteristics of, and impediments to, effective co-management" (EWC, Aleut Community of St. Paul, and Aleut Marine Mammal Commission are part of the review process). Ms. Malek traveled to Utqiaqvik during spring to meet with AEWK and to Gambell/Savoonga with EWC Director to interview hunters/community members willing to share their co-management experiences. The co-management report will be completed soon and distributed to EWC member communities.