



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Region 7 - Alaska
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99503
(907)786-3309 (TDD Available)

News

09-07

For Immediate Release
March 29, 2009

Contact: Bruce Woods (907)-786-3695

Agreement Outlines Conservation and Cooperation Measures for North Slope Migratory Bird Subsistence Hunt

On Thursday, March 26, 2009 the North Slope Borough, the Native Village of Barrow, the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate protection of spectacled and Steller's eiders during the 2009 Migratory Bird Subsistence Harvest on the North Slope. The Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation was also involved in the drafting of the MOU, but its President was not available at the time the other parties signed. The MOU sets forth specific measures to conserve Steller's eiders and other migratory birds. In signing the MOU, the parties recognized their shared concern for the threats facing the Alaska-breeding population of Steller's eiders, as well as their jointly held desire that the spring/summer migratory bird subsistence hunt continue as it has for thousands of years.

Under the terms of the memorandum, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and a Migratory Bird Task Force composed of representatives from each of the North Slope stakeholder groups will conduct a broad range of outreach activities. These will be designed to increase awareness of the biology and status of Steller's eiders; spread information about traditional hunting practices, hunting regulations, and the consequences of violating them; and help hunters better distinguish between the various species of migratory birds found on the North Slope during the subsistence hunting season. In addition, Service employees, volunteers, and Law Enforcement personnel working in the Barrow area this year will undergo training in the traditions of the spring/summer hunt and other cultural factors.

Geoffrey L. Haskett, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Alaska Regional Director, described the significance of the Memorandum of Understanding: "This document is a very good step toward the parties' cooperation in conservation. It came about thanks to months of work on the part of a group of partners who were unwilling to lose sight of their mutual goals of preserving Steller's eiders on the North Slope while making sure that the spring/summer hunt will go forward." North Slope Borough Mayor Edward S. Itta elaborated, saying, "I am encouraged by the progress this MOU represents and at this time feel it is the best alternative we have in light of what we face."

A photograph of a breeding pair of Steller's eiders is available to the media by contacting Bruce Woods at the telephone number above.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

-FWS-