Customary and Traditional Use
Worksheet:
Migratory Game Birds

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

Prepared for:
Alaska Board of Game
Anchorage, Alaska
November 2017
Proposal 53

- Proposal prepared by ADF&G at request of the Board
- At January 2017 meeting in Bethel, Board acted on proposal 157, opening a fall season for emperor geese
- AS 16.05.258 requires a C&T finding
- The board made a positive C&T finding for emperor geese throughout range, and migratory game birds in Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A
- The Board requested department to submit proposal for statewide meeting to address C&T in remaining units
- Full written worksheet RC 4 Tab 5. Worksheet is unmodified from January 2017 meeting.
Proposal Background

- 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
- Revised federal management plan for emperor geese allows spring/summer subsistence hunt and fall hunt in 2017; first since 1986
- Board opened fall state hunt, beginning in 2017
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

Options presented to board in January 2017:

• 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 in RC 4 Tab 5

• Option 2. A finding that addresses emperor geese only

The Board chose a modified version of Option 1 at January 2017 meeting, with intent to complete action at November 2017 statewide meeting
Sources of Information

- Considerable ethnographic information about migratory birds
- Harvest surveys from 1980s and 1990s
- ADF&G community harvest surveys (CSIS)
- 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 2: Seasonality: migratory birds

- 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 3: Efficient means and methods of harvest and economy of cost: migratory birds

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

Harvest of migratory birds along with whitefish, eggs, and greens, Kuskokwim River.
Criterion 4: Geographic areas: migratory birds

- Generally hunting occurs near communities
- Some limited, specific information for particular species
Criterion 5: Means of handling, preparing, preserving, and storing: migratory birds

- 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 particular species (emperor goose examples in worksheet)
Criterion 6: Intergenerational transmission of knowledge of skills, values, and lore: migratory birds

- Family activities
- Role in oral traditions
- Role in arts and crafts

A Nondalton family processes their spring harvest of migratory birds.
Criterion 7: Distribution and exchange: migratory birds

- Migratory birds 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

- Estimated harvest in rural areas, 2012 = 989,000 lb of birds and eggs
- About 3% of total rural harvest
- Contribution varies by region
- Species mix also varies by region
Conclusions

• No recommendation on amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) for migratory game birds
• Questions?