

Region 5

Unit Boundary



ARCTIC OCEAN

Barrow

26A

Point Lay

Anaktuvuk Pass

Chukchi Sea

Point Hope

23

Kotzebue

Ambler

Kotzebue Sound

Arctic Circle

Shishmaref

Buckland

Wales

22

Nome

Shaktolik

Norton Sound

Unalakleet

St. Michael

22

Emmonak

Bering Sea

18

St. Marys

Russian Mission

Aniak

Hooper Bay

Akiak

Bethel

Mekoryuk

Toksook Bay

18

Goodnews Bay

Bristol Bay

18

Region 5 Overview Report to the Board of Game, January 2014

Steven Machida
Regional Supervisor
Region 5

The Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) is composed of Headquarters and statewide program staff, and 5 geographic regions.

- Region 5 encompasses the western and northwest portion of Alaska.
- Region 5 comprises about 30% of state in terms of geographic area, and physically is one of the larger regions. In terms of staffing and budget allocation, it is the smallest region.
- The region consists of 4 Game Management Units (18, 22, 23 and 26A).
- DWC biologists and staff are located in Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue, Barrow, Fairbanks and Anchorage

Region 5 staff consists of 8 full time wildlife biologists, 1 wildlife education specialist, 1 fish and wildlife technician, 1 biometrician, 2 administrative support positions, a management coordinator and a regional supervisor.

- **Bethel:** Area Biologist (Phillip Perry), Assistant Area Biologist (Patrick Jones)
- **Nome:** Area Biologist (Tony Gorn), Assistant Area Biologist (Letty Hughes), Management Coordinator (Peter Bente), Administrative Manager (Karen Mitchell), Fish and Wildlife Technician (Bill Dunker)
- **Kotzebue:** Area Biologist (Brandon Saito), Western Arctic Caribou Research/Management Biologist (Jim Dau), Wildlife Education Specialist (Meghan Nedwick), Administrative Office Assistant (Esther Henry)
- **Barrow:** Area Biologist (Geoff Carroll)
- **Fairbanks:** Teshekpuk Caribou Research/Management Biologist (Lincoln Parrett)
- **Anchorage:** Steve Machida (Regional Supervisor), Biometrician (vacant)
- Most staff have lived and worked in western and northwest Alaska for many years. Region 5 is unique in that most of the staff was locally hired from within the Region; only a few were transfers from the other Regions. We even have some biologists who grew up within Region 5.

Region 5 annual operating budget including salaries is approximately \$2.9 million for the current fiscal year, which includes approximately 81% from the Fish and Game Fund and federal Pittman-Robertson funding sources. The remainder of our budget comes from general fund legislative appropriations, and federal and oil industry contract funds. The following represents our anticipated budget expenditures for the current fiscal year.

- 30% spent on the Western Arctic and Teshekpuk Lake caribou herd research and management (activities include photo censuses, spring and fall composition surveys, fall capture/radio-collaring work, calving ground surveys, disease and body condition assessments, telemetry distribution surveys and harvest assessment)
- 14% spent on moose management (activities include fall surveys, spring censuses, radio-collaring projects, browse and habitat evaluation, harvest assessment which includes management of the harvest ticket and village harvest assessment programs)
- 12% spent on muskoxen management (activities include radio telemetry-based research, censuses, composition surveys and harvest assessment).
- 11% spent on other wildlife species (activities include wolf population surveys, sheep surveys, raptor surveys, and brown bear and furbearer management)
- 3% spent on initiatives to involve the public in management (activities include the Western Arctic Caribou Herd working group, the Seward Peninsula Cooperative Management Group, and the Unit 23 user conflict stakeholder planning group) Funding for these public involvement initiatives come from legislative general fund and CIP appropriations, and federal contract funds.
- 30% spent on public services, regulatory process and administrative costs (public services would include wildlife and hunter education programs, dissemination of regulatory and other information, support of fur sealers and license vendors)

Species status reports addressed later at this meeting:

- Western Arctic Caribou Herd: This caribou herd is the largest in Alaska, and seasonally has been found within all 4 of the GMUs in Region 5, and in the western and northern portions of Region 3. A detailed report on the biological status of this herd will be provided after my regional overview report.
- Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd: This herd is found in the vicinity of Teshekpuk Lake in Unit 26A, and represents one of the most important wildlife resources on the North Slope for caribou hunters. Some of the area that this herd uses is under national scrutiny because it is located within the NPR-A oil/gas leasing area. We have received a significant amount of contract funds from BLM and Conoco-Phillips over the years to fund our Teshekpuk caribou research program. This status report will be given after my regional overview report.

Wildlife Management Challenges in Region 5

- Dual management with the state and federal management systems represents the most significant challenge in Region 5 as more than two-thirds of the Region is federal public lands. Subsistence forms the cornerstone of hunting/fishing/gathering activities in the region, and in the minds of residents of Region 5 is an important cultural concern. Federal public lands are found in all four GMUs, and coordination and cooperation with federal agency staff is an important part of our work.
- Low or declining moose populations require increasingly complex management regimes in all 4 GMUs within Region 5.
- Although arctic caribou populations (Western Arctic and Teshekpuk Lake herds) are still large in size, they are slowly declining and we anticipate that management challenges will be forthcoming in the future. The Western Arctic Herd Working Group finalized a revised management plan last year in anticipation of this ongoing population decline; additional details will be provided in our Western Arctic Herd overview report.
- Declining muskoxen populations in all Units within Region 5 present significant management challenges. Declining muskoxen populations on the North Slope in portions of Unit 26 in particular represents a critical concern for both Regions 3 and 5, and you will be given an update of muskoxen population status in all 4 area overviews.
- Increasing wolf and brown bear populations are a source of concern for Region 5 residents in regards to nuisance complaints and impacts on ungulate populations.
- User conflicts issues have been a problem in some areas, particularly in Unit 23. A user conflict stakeholder group was established to address this problem, and is in the process of completion. A report on the status of this group will be given during the Unit 23 overview.