

Alaska Invasive Species Working Group: Marine Subcommittee audio Conference

Thursday May 10, 2007

Hosted via NMFS bridge number (907-586-7977,

Participants

Kristine Benson- AKDOT

Catie Bursch- Education Assistant, Kachemak Bay Research Reserve

Tammy Davis- ADF&G, Juneau

Jennifer Gibbons- Executive Director, Prince William Soundkeeper, Cordova

Judy Hamilton- ADF&G, Kachemak Bay Research Reserve

Jeff Heys- National Park Service

Deena Jallen- UAF CES, Fairbanks

Lisa Ka'aihue- PWSRCAC, Anchorage

Denny Lassuy- USFWS, Anchorage

Whitney Rapp- National Park Service, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve

Linda Shaw- National Marine Fisheries Service, Juneau

Terry Thompson- Education Coordinator, Kachemak Bay Research Reserve

Coowe Walker- Watershed Specialist, Kachemak Bay Research Reserve

Agenda: Items to discuss

- Green crab and tunicate monitoring coordination
- Set next meeting time
- Additional Resources
 - Websites
 - ADF&G Annual Interim Performance Report on Invasive Species Monitoring on Copper River Delta

Green crab and tunicate monitoring coordination

The purpose of this meeting of the AISWG Marine Subcommittee was to share and discuss ideas about Green Crab and Tunicate monitoring efforts in Alaska.

Linda Shaw of NOAA reports that their green crab suitability model should be done in the summer. It studied areas in Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon. The model can be used to identify potential invasive points and hot spots. She suggested that ferry terminals would be good locations for monitoring, and Kristine Benson of AK DOT replied that she would look into it. Lisa Ka'aihue of Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council has been working with Dan Gilson (of PWSRCAC). In partnership with the USFWS, the PWSRCAC has gone to communities in their region, and through cooperative agreements, have been able to expand monitoring efforts out side their region. Dan Gilson has traveled to towns to train teachers and students. The PWSRCAC has sent traps to Judy Hamilton at Kachemak Bay Research Reserve. This year, they plan to expand green crab monitoring to Seward and Chenega Bay, and to Ketchikan and Sitka in Southeast Alaska. They are also working with the USFWS to expand citizen based monitoring programs, and to expand monitoring efforts to include tunicates. The PWSRCAC is generally funded by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, and receives \$2.9 million form Alyeska annually. Additional money for green crab monitoring comes from USFWS grants. The ratio of PWSRCAC funds to USFWS funds for the green crab monitoring is about 70:30, with the PWSRCAC funding Dan Gilson's time. The USFWS funds are generally secure, but the method of delivery is more complicated via the grants.gov system.

Judy Hamilton, Terry Thompson, Coowe Walker, and Catie Bursch called in from the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve. Last summer they developed a protocol for middle and high school groups to monitor for green crab. The education team took out groups last fall, and this spring. This week, they are going to set up a program with a middle school in Seldovia, and are planning to expand monitoring efforts in Kachemak Bay. ADF&G is supplying 3 years of funding to improve scientific monitoring and will help to facilitate coordination in the region for green crab and tunicate monitoring projects. The KBRR has also been in contact with the Smithsonian Institute for scientific advice.

ADF&G has provided funds to the KBRR through NISA funds (National Invasive Species Act), and will continue to fund KBRR for at least the next 3 years. ADF&G also has a contract with the Prince William Sound Science Center (Mary Ann Bishop), and will be doing green crab monitoring in Cordova. They are currently in year 2 of their contract. The PWSSC does general trawls, and monitors for green crab (the annual report for 2005-2006 is included under Additional Resources). ADF&G is continuing to fund project under the NISA-5 grant that fit the goals of that grant, and is looking at expanding monitoring in to additional coastal areas.

The KBRR has an idea of a larger scope and regional coordination for green crab monitoring. People in southeast AK, Dutch Harbor, etc. would collect data, and send it to a central hub location. Denny Lassuy was happy to see monitoring and a linked network being affiliated with the State of Alaska. Lisa Ka'aihue and Jennifer Gibbons (of Prince William Soundkeeper) were very supportive of the idea as well.

Jeff Heys of Park Service said the Parks (Katmai, Kenai Fjords, Lake Clark, Wrangell-St. Elias, Sitka, Glacier Bay, Klondike Gold Rush) would also be interested in expanding citizen and scientific green crab monitoring programs. Park Service has given \$3,000 grants to PWSRCAC in recent years to fund outreach programs and green crab ID cards. Park Service would like to be more involved in inventory and monitoring for marine invasives, their current efforts are more oriented to control. They would like to know if protocols are already being developed, and might be able to justify using them on park lands.

Judy Hamilton would like to see the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve serve as a hub for monitoring efforts throughout the gulf and southeast Alaska. She sees this as a way to work with different groups and not duplicate efforts. Jennifer Gibbons from the Prince William Soundkeeper and others expressed support. Prince William Soundkeeper is based primarily out of 5 communities in the Sound. They are in the process of developing system based monitoring and education programs. J. Gibbons would like to have more scientific and technical advice from other organizations involved with monitoring.

Call participants agreed that it would be a good idea to have a central coordinating area to compile monitoring data. Judy Hamilton of the KBRR believes that their organization would be a good place to have it. They have a good location, physically and scientifically. Terry Thompson pointed out that the KBRR has a person on staff that has time and is willing to take on the role. Catie Bursch said that from an education standpoint, the monitoring efforts would tie in well with citizen, school, and homeschool education programs. The green crab and tunicate modeling would provide a jump off point for student in the coastal communities to share their catch data and learn about marine organisms. Linda Shaw pointed out that tunicate monitoring would lend itself well to this kind of activity, linking students not only in AK. but to the US, Canada, and Europe. The timing of green crab monitoring is somewhat problematic to fit in with school scheduling. Green crab monitoring in Kachemak bay would be best done in late spring or summer (on the west coast, the crabs were mostly out and feeding in water temperatures above 10 C). Some native crab species were caught in the spring and into October. Settling plate projects may be better suited. Researchers could place the plates in summer (June) and school classes could do the pickup and sampling in mid-September.

The KBRR is part of a partnership between the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and NOAA. The employees are state employees, but most of the funds come from NOAA. There are 26 other research reserves across the US and Costa Rica, and all the others do monitoring for invasive species in their estuaries, so it would be appropriate for the Kachemak Bay location to become more involved in invasive species collaborations. The KBRR has a history of being funded by state, federal and NGO funds, so funding should not be much of an issue.

Judy Hamilton will be the contact person at the KBRR for continued coordination on green crab monitoring. Call participants agreed that it would be useful to meet in person with the new KBRR research coordinator, Daniel Doolittle, who will be starting on the 1st of June. The meeting time will be 10 am on June 12th in Homer. Participants will be able to meet on site, or call in. Judy Hamilton will try to get Greg Ruiz from the Smithsonian institute to attend via phone. Goals of the meeting will be to discuss coordinated monitoring and to develop research proposals and timelines. One issue will be linking tunicate and green crab monitoring so that the two issues can be packaged and tied into one another so that monitoring efforts can encompass both species of interest. Tunicate monitoring consists mainly of settling plates; plates are set in the summer or spring. In the fall/winter, plates are retrieved, cleaned lightly, photographed, and samples are scraped into preserving solution and sent to Smithsonian institute researchers. In past years, shipping has been difficult due to the hazardous nature of the formalin preservative solution. The protocol has now changed to an alcohol solution, making handling and shipping of samples easier. The Smithsonian institute has good protocols in place for sending in pictures. Judy

Hamilton from KBRR sent plates into the Smithsonian last year for monitoring, and is expecting to get recommendations on plate locations for this summer. They have stacks of bricks and plates available, and Gary Sonnevil with USFWS has palates of settling plates available. A consideration for placing settling plates is to get permission from harbor masters, oyster farmers, etc. before using their waters. Judy Hamilton has packets available on settling plate protocols. Good locations for settling plates would be ferry terminals (Kris Benson from AKDOT will look into this before the June 12th meeting), and harbors. Harbor masters have an annual meeting, and it was recommended that someone give a presentation on monitoring at their next meeting.

Upcoming meetings

Green Crab and Tunicate Monitoring Coordination

June 12th, 10 am. Homer, Alaska

Location and call-in information to be announced.

Please contact fndmj@uaf.edu or judy_hamilton@fishgame.state.ak.us for more information

Marine Subcommittee teleconference

June 28th, 9am 907-586-7977, allow line to ring until another party picks up.

Long distance charges apply.

Additional Resources

Kachemak Bay Research Reserve

<http://www.habitat.adfg.state.ak.us/geninfo/kbrr/index.html>

Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

<http://www.pwsrcc.org/>

Smithsonian Institute Invasive Species

http://www.serc.si.edu/labs/marine_invasions/index.jsp

Prince William Sound Science Center

www.pwssc.gen.ak.us/

Alaska Department of Fish and Game State Invasive Species Program Grant

ANNUAL INTERIM PERFORMANCE REPORT

Coop-06-088

Project Title: Invasive Species Monitoring on Copper River Delta

Project Duration: 1 July 2005 – 30 June 2008

Report Period: 1 July 2005 – June 30, 2006

Report Due Date: September 30, 2006

Objectives (*as submitted or amended in the Federal Aid Grant Agreement to the Regional Federal Aid Office*):

1. Develop a cooperative program for monitoring invasive species on the Copper River Delta involving the ADF&G and the PWSSC.

2. Collect scientific knowledge and local knowledge of invasive species in and around surveys on the western Copper River Delta and Orca Inlet.

Summary of Accomplishments (*Describe accomplishments related to the work that was proposed to be done during this same period in the Project Description and work schedule*):

Objective 1.

Ten Prince William Sound Science Center (PWSSC) staff involved with scientific collections or education outreach received outreach materials from ADFG Invasive species program including laminated identification sheets for nonnative aquatic species, and wallet-size cards for identifying mitten crab, European green crab, and Atlantic salmon, and pamphlets on invasive plants. Beginning in fall 2005, the public atrium at PWSSC has included a section dedicated to information on invasive species with a special emphasis on the small, wallet-sized cards for identifying European Green Crab and Atlantic Salmon. The area is visible to any visitor entering the building. In August 2005, PWSSC hosted a meeting on green crab monitoring, that included an evening presentation on invasive species with guest speakers Dennis Lassuy (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Marilyn Leland (Prince William Sound Regional Citizen Advisory Council).

Objective 2.

We monitored for invasive crabs and Atlantic salmon during two studies being conducted in and around the channels and mudflats of the Copper River Delta. The first study was investigating juvenile salmon use of the estuary and included two study areas: near the outflows of Eyak River and Alaganik Slough. Between 1 July and 31 October 2005, three staff members conducted 218, 20m-long beach seines (104 at Eyak, 114 at Alaganik). They also deployed 42 fyke nets (21 per study area), and conducted 132 surface trawls (66 per study area) during these months. Our second study, investigating the intertidal resources at risk to oil spills, conducted monthly bottom trawls at 6 sites on the western Copper River Delta, and 1 site southern Orca Inlet (southeast Prince William Sound). Between 1 July 2005 and 30 June 2006, 126 bottom trawls were conducted (63 trawls in each calendar year). No Atlantic salmon or invasive crab species were noted.

Significant Deviations (*if any, and explain the reasons for these*):

Actual Costs during this Report Period (*personnel plus all operating expense totals*):

Federal (from ADF&G): Partner (nonfederal share):
(Note: ADFG will fill in cost information based on billings received by 30 June 2006.)

\$ _____ \$ _____

Project Leader (*or Report Contact Person*): Mary Anne Bishop, Ph.D., Research Ecologist,

Prince William Sound Science Center, Cordova, Alaska

Additional Information: *(Please answer questions below, and add any additional detail, if desired, related to the progress of the project):*

All field work for the juvenile salmon study ended 31 October 2005. During 2006, bottom trawls for the study on intertidal resources at risk to oil spills will be conducted monthly through September 2006.