

# **A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO PRIORITIZING FISHERIES RESEARCH AND HARVEST MONITORING: A CASE STUDY OF THE FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE FISHERIES PROGRAM IN ALASKA<sup>1</sup>**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In 1990 Congress authorized the federal government to assume responsibility for managing subsistence fisheries over a vast expanse of federal lands in Alaska because the state constitution was out of compliance with Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Substantive information needs, diverse perspectives and large geographic areas posed initial challenges for the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To ensure strategic use of limited funds, and to enhance communication, OSM initiated a collaborative inter-agency, interdisciplinary process to identify and prioritize program goals, research objectives and information needs, using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). A gap analysis was used to assess which information needs should be considered for proposals. Facilitated workshops were convened in 2004-2006 for the Copper River-Prince William Sound, Bristol Bay-Chignik, Kodiak-Aleutians, and southeast areas of Alaska. Benefits from using the AHP for strategic planning included clarification of strategic priorities for fishery research and harvest monitoring, and an improvement in project proposals.

Keywords: subsistence fishery management, Analytic Hierarchy Process, gap analysis

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<sup>1</sup> Acknowledgements: The author facilitated development of the strategic plans for OSM and prepared reports from which much of the material in this paper is drawn (see [www.r7.fws.gov/asm/strategic.cfm](http://www.r7.fws.gov/asm/strategic.cfm) for full reports). The strategic plans were developed from in-depth discussion by area workgroups under the direction of OSM staff members Doug McBride, Steve Fried, Polly Wheeler, Amy Craver, and Beth Spangler who contributed greatly to the overall success of the strategic plans.