WAYS TO SUPPORT



















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ANNUAL REPORT

GIVING A Alaska is America's last great wilderness, home to a unique and spectacular array of aquatic and terrestrial

wildlife species. The Alaska Wildlife Alliance (AWA) advocates for the protection and restoration of healthy ecosystems across Alaska, ensuring that they are scientifically and ethically managed for biodiversity.

MEET AWA

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LISA FERGUSON VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Teresa Becher

We are proud to recognize Teresa Becher as AWA's 2021 Lisa Ferguson Volunteer of the Year Award recipient! This year, Teresa volunteered **152 hours** as a lead observer at AWA's Alaska Beluga Monitoring Partnership sites, and has volunteered 332 hours to the beluga monitoring effort since 2019. This fall, Teresa monitored for 38 days during rain, snow, or shine, helped train and coordinate volunteers, and managed our beluga sightings text alert system on the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers. Teresa also organized AWA's Kenai Peninsula monthly Wildlife Wednesday Spring series, which brought the community together to learn about clams, hummingbirds, and all the wildlife in between. Thank you, Teresa, for inspiring others with your volunteerism and providing critical research and outreach for wildlife on the Kenai Peninsula!

AWA's Lisa Ferguson Volunteer award is presented in remembrance of Lisa Ferguson, who died of Hodgkin's disease when she was 18 years old. Lisa's legacy lives on through her family's support of wildlife conservation and the volunteers who make that work possible.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING THIS WORK POSSIBLE



In 2021, we were honored to see a 1.7% growth in donations. Individual memberships are critical to our success, and account for 26% of our annual income. Our members also increase our influence - the bigger our pack, the more influential we are.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022



We look forward to expanding our educational programs and wildlife curriculum in 2022. Special thanks to Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Pacific Islands for donating materials for our new marine debris curriculum - coming soon!



In partnership with the Homer Foundation, University of Alaska - Kachemak Bay Campus, and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, we are hosting a marine mammal festival in Homer next spring! This event will raise awareness about local marine wildlife and connect communities with programs that protect their habitat.



In Spring of 2022, our lawsuit against the State of Alaska to protect Alexander Archipelago wolves goes to trial. Many thanks to Joe Geldhof and Joel Bennett for their pro-bono representation, and to our members for making this lawsuit possible.



Our new marine program will stretch its fins! Next year, this program will expand AWA's marine research and advocacy, including building a strategy to address marine debris.



Join us February 23-25 for a free, virtual workshop on climate adaptation in Alaska. Presentations by various agencies, researchers, and Alaska Native entities will explore adaptation strategies that strengthen biodiversity in a changing world.



Catch us at the Alaska Board of Game meetings in January and March, where we will be testifying on behalf of wildlife.

Check out akwildlife.org to see more of our plans for 2022!

akwildlife.org | PAGE 6 PAGE 1 | akwildlife.org

DEFENDING WILDLIFE IN THE COURTS



Alaska Wildlife Alliance et al., v. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service | Represented by Trustees for Alaska

In September, we filed a lawsuit to protect threatened Southern Beaufort Sea polar bears in Alaska. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service passed a rule to allow oil and gas operators in Alaska to harass polar bears and walruses in the Beaufort Sea and on the North Slope during a range of oil and gas activities, including exploration, construction, extraction, and transportation. This harassment includes scaring bears off with noise, disruptive use of equipment and vehicles, and disturbing polar bear maternal dens, jeopardizing cub survival.

Special thanks to Trustees for Alaska and our coalition partners



Alaska Wildlife Alliance and Joel Bennett v. Vincent-Lang | Represented by Joe Geldhof

In October of 2020, we sued the State of Alaska and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to prevent an unsustainable wolf trapping season on Prince of Wales Island. In only one season, trappers killed over 25% of the island's genetically distinct Alexander Archipelago wolves. We seek balanced management that ensures a healthy, sustainable wolf population on the island.

Special thanks to Joe Geldhof, Joel Bennett, Dave Persons, Grant Margeson, and Tom Counts



Alaska Wildlife Alliance, et al., v. Bernhardt, et al. | Represented by Trustees for Alaska

In August 2020, we sued the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service (NPS) for adopting a rule that would allow extreme sport hunting practices like bear baiting and killing wolves and their pups during the denning season in Alaska's park lands. These extreme and unethical practices are now allowed by NPS on iconic public lands such as Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias.

Special thanks to Bill Watkins, Trustees for Alaska, and our coalition partners



Gwich'in Steering Committee v. Bernhardt | Represented by Trustees for Alaska

We are part of the coalition taking the Department of Interior and the Bureau of Land Management to court for their plan to open the Coastal Plains of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil companies. Stopping these lease sales is essential to protecting Arctic wildlife already stressed by climate change.

Special thanks to Ronald Yarnell, Trustees for Alaska, and our coalition partners



Northern Alaska Environmental Center v. Bernhardt | Represented by Trustees for Alaska & Western Mining Action Project

We serve on the coalition challenging the Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for approving the Ambler Road. The road would cut through Gates of the Arctic National Preserve, fragment one of the longest caribou migrations in the world, cross nearly 3,000 rivers and streams, dam tundra wetlands, and stir up asbestos that pollutes air and water- all to access new open-pit hard rock mining.

Special thanks to Juliette Boselli, Anne Beaulaurier, Seth Kantner, Trustees for Alaska, and our coalition partners

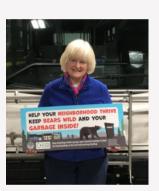
CULTIVATING KNOWLEDGE



At nearly 30 events in 2021, we educated **thousands** of people about Alaska's wildlife, ecosystems, wildlife policy, and how we all interconnect with the environment.



- **Bears, Birds, & Beers:** Our new summer wildlife program was a hit! Participants joined us on free guided wildlife walks, followed by beers at a local Anchorage brewery.
- Wildlife Wednesday Presentations: We hosted 18 Wildlife Wednesdays and shared them online. Over 2,000 people learned about Alaska's wildlife, from whales to caribou, salmon to bumblebees. Thank you to all our volunteer speakers and small business sponsors! You can view our Wildlife Wednesdays on our website, YouTube channel, and Facebook page.
- **Beluga Whale Education:** We gave educational presentations and site tours about citizen science and belugas to students and chaperones traveling with Global Leadership Adventures.
- **Denali Wolf Documentary:** Filming for the documentary, *A Good Wolf* (working title) resumed this August. This documentary focuses on the controversy over hunting and trapping of wolves at the boundary of Denali National Park. Learn more at *akwildlife.org/film-fund*.
- **Bear Awareness:** In partnership with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, we celebrated Juneau's electric bus debut with new Bear Aware signs! These signs educate the public on practices that minimize human-bear conflicts. Special thanks to our Southeast Chapter board and superstar volunteer, Laurie Craig (pictured right), for making this project possible!
- Community Outreach: At festivals and events, we educated and engaged thousands of Alaskans about the importance of wildlife and their habitats. Visit our events calendar online to learn more about our outreach.



RESEARCHING VULNERABLE SPECIES & HABITATS

- Since co-founding the **Alaska Beluga Monitoring Partnership** in 2019, AWA has co-hosted monitoring sites on the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers where volunteers track critically endangered Cook Inlet beluga whales (~279 whales left). Citizen data is shared with NOAA and other scientific databases each year to improve endangered beluga recovery.
- We continued our partnership with the **Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team** to train volunteers and monitor seabird die-offs.
- **We're published!** AWA's Deputy Director, Mandy Migura, co-authored: *To take or not take? Examination of the status quo process for issuing take authorizations of endangered Cook Inlet beluga whales and implications for their recovery* in Conservation Science and Practice. AWA's Vice President, Dr. John Morton also co-authored the following publications this year:
- Resist-Accept-Direct (RAD)—A Framework for the 21st-century Natural Resource Manager, Natural Resources Report
- Navigating Ecological Transformation: Resist-Accept-Direct as a Path to a New Resource Management Paradigm, BioScience
- Management Foundation for Navigating Ecological Transformation by Resisting, Accepting, or Directing Social-Ecological Change, BioScience
- RAD Adaptive Management for Transforming Ecosystems, BioScience
- o Integrating Distance Sampling and Minimum Count Data: A Reply to Becker and Herreman, Journal of Wildlife Management



2021 IN NUMBERS



From the tourism industry to hunters, small businesses, scientists, educators, and other conservation nonprofits, we are building coalitions that support wildlife across the state. In 2021, we partnered with over **30** organizations to support wildlife.



59,000+ MILES OF CRITICAL HABITAT

Since 2019, AWA has testified and advocated for critical habitat designations for Alaska's endangered Western North Pacific Distinct Population Segments of Humpback Whales (~1,066 left). This year, NOAA designated 59,411 square miles of marine habitat in the North Pacific Ocean, including areas within the eastern Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska, as critical habitat for these whales!



7 DAYS FOR ALEXANDER ARCHIPELAGO WOLVES

AWA successfully advocated for stricter wolf trapping requirements on Prince of Wales island. Previous regulations required reporting within 30 days of the season ending - the agency had no way to regulate trapping during the season. Now, trappers are required to report the date and location of wolf kills within 7 days, hopefully providing information to prevent overtrapping before it happens.



26 SPECIES SPOTLIGHTS

We published 26 informational blogs and videos highlighting specific Alaskan species, from Tufted puffins to ermines, marmots and everything in between. Special thanks to our University of Alaska interns and Wildlife Wednesday presenters for sharing how all species contribute to Alaska's ecosystems.



390+ HOURS OF ENDANGERED BELUGA MONITORING

In partnership with Kenai Peninsula Collage, AWA hosts Alaska Beluga Monitoring Partnership sites on the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers. In 2021, our staff and volunteers monitored critically endangered beluga whales in rain, snow, and shine:

Kenai River: **268 hours over 127 days, 45 observers**Kasilof River: **99 hours over 46 days, 15 observers**

240+ subscribers to our Kenai Peninsula beluga sightings text alert system. Text "beluga" to 833-541-0408 to join!



150+ TRAP ENCOUNTERS & SENTIMENT REPORTS

With over 150 responses, our 'Map the Trap' surveys are the first of their kind, providing one data repository for trap encounters across Alaska. In addition to understanding trap conflict, we also gathered opinions on regulatory solutions that protect public areas from unmarked traps. Visit our website to see our season report at akwildlife.org/safetrails.



31 EVENTS WITH 3,000+ PERSON PARTICIPATION

We are grateful to the supporters who participated in virtual membership meetings and *Wildlife Wednesdays*. When weather and Covid mitigation practices permitted, we also enjoyed outside, in-person events to educate and advocate for wildlife and habitat.



SPEAKING UP FOR WILDLIFE

PROTECTING TRAILS

During the 2020-21 trapping season, AWA received multiple reports of trap incidences on multi-use trails, to include: one dog killed and another dog nearly killed in conibear traps placed less than 100 feet from designated trail heads; a motocross rider pulled off his motorbike from a snare in the Jim Creek Recreation Area; and multiple dogs caught in snares at the Iditarod headquarters, at Meadow Lakes, the Big Lake Airport, and within the Western Matanuska Range Trail system. In response, AWA:

- Published our first 'Map the Trap' report with consolidated data on trap encounters across Alaska.
- Drafted and submitted a proposal to the Board of Game (Proposal 199), which requests 50 yard (150 feet) trap setbacks from over 200 designated multi-use trails in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. AWA is mobilizing public support for this proposal through the end of 2021. The proposal will be voted on at the January, 2022 Board of Game meeting.

PROTECTING CRITICAL HABITAT

Testified in support of NOAA's proposed critical habitat designations for Ringed and Bearded seals.

SPEAKING FOR WILDLIFE AT REGULATORY MEETINGS

- In partnership with Chugach Regional Resources Commission and with financial support from the First Nations Institute, we published three animated whiteboard videos to encourage public participation in the Board of Fish, Board of Game, and Federal Subsistence Board processes.
- Mobilized comments and testimony before the Board of Game in support of trap setbacks in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.
- Commented on Southcentral Alaska and state-wide Board of Game proposals that impact wildlife, including proposals regarding Alexander Archipelago wolf trapping restrictions, predator control programs against wolves and bears, and more.



SPEAKING FOR WILDLIFE AT THE STATE CAPITOL

- Testified to the Alaska House and Senate Resources Committees on the need for diversity in Board of Game confirmations.
- Testified to the Alaska House Finance Committee urging members to reject removing the sunset clause on the Intensive Management surcharge.

PROTECTING BEARS, SALMON, AND PEOPLE FROM PEBBLE MINE

Signatory on multiple coalition letters urging the EPA to use its authority under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water act to permanently protect Bristol Bay from Pebble Mine. Our most recent outreach urges the agency to finalize durable protections for Bristol Bay by the start of the 2022 fishing season.

REDUCING HARASSMENT FOR ARCTIC SPECIES

Submitted a joint comment letter in opposition to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's incidental take regulation change impacting polar bears and Pacific walrus in the Beaufort Sea and adjacent northern coast of Alaska. When the agency failed to address our concerns, we filed a lawsuit, represented by Trustees for Alaska (*Alaska Wildlife Alliance et. al., v. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service*).



REDUCING BYCATCH

Mobilized support for Alternative 4 in the Abundance-Based Management of Halibut Bycatch at the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, which would reduce bottom-trawler halibut bycatch in the Bering Sea by as much as 45%.