

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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McGarvey 202/343-5634

PUBLIC HEARING ON SPORT HUNTING OF PACIFIC WALRUS SCHEDULED

A public hearing on a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposal to waive the moratorium and implement regulations on the taking of Pacific walrus in the State of Alaska will be held on April 8, 1975, in the Washington, D.C., area. A public hearing was also held in Alaska in March.

Under the provisions of the proposed waiver and regulations, management of walrus would be returned to the State of Alaska. The Pacific walruses inhabit areas bordering the Bering and Chukchi Seas between Alaska and Siberia.

The principal effect of the proposal would be to allow once more the regulated sport hunting of walrus by all citizens, not just Alaska Natives. This activity is expected to add an estimated 50 animals a year to the current average annual harvest of about 1,650 walrus. Most of the current harvest is being taken by Alaska Natives for subsistence and their cottage industries. No return to commercial hunting will be allowed.

The primary biological factor behind this decision is the fact that the Pacific walrus population in and near Alaska is at or near its optimum sustainable level.

The public is invited to attend the hearing on April 8, 1975, at 9:30 a.m. at the following location: Hearing Room C, Office of Hearings and Appeals, 10th Floor, 4015 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22203.

The parties have already been aligned by the Court in this case and no additional parties will be allowed to intervene without good cause shown to the judge, Administrative Law Judge Joseph B. Kennedy, at the above address, telephone (703) 557-9200.

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