



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Outreach to the Alaska Native Community for a Flyway Network Site

Casey Burns – Alaska USA

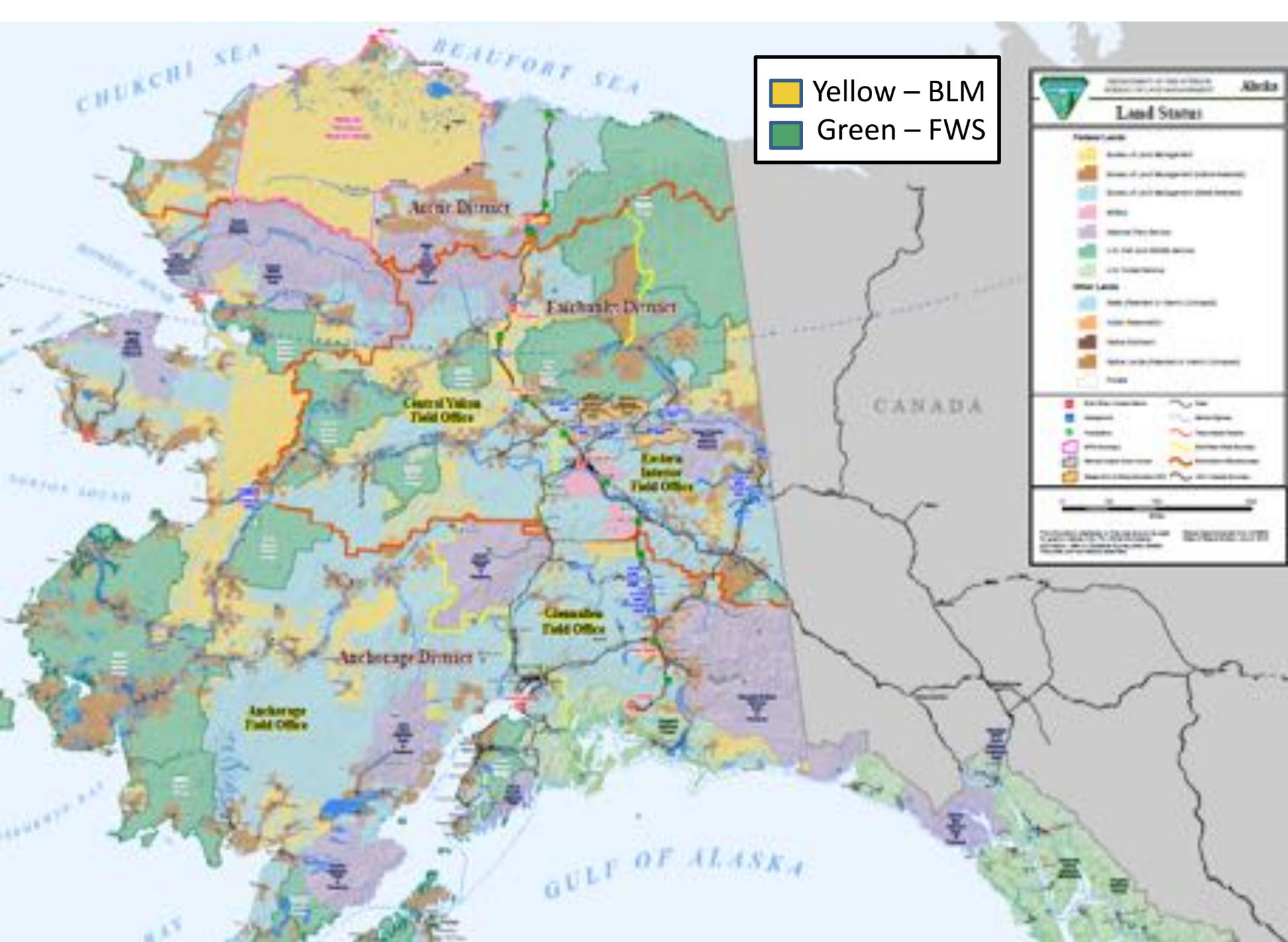


Photo: M. Robards/WCS



Alaskan Migratory Pathways







Outreach – WHY?

- My agency, the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) allows multiple uses of the land but with a sustained yield.
- We needed scope out the support and gather input for a potential flyway network site (FNS) on BLM land from the local, primarily native, users of the land,
- To ensure their values are considered and their traditional uses are maintained,
- In order to gain their input to and backing for a FNS.

EAAFP Purpose: ...to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitat, considering both people and biodiversity...



Outreach – WHAT?

- During summer 2016, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service presented the FNS concept at five different events around the NPR-A, four of which were all or primarily attended by representatives of Alaska Native communities.
- The feedback received was necessary to determine if and how to proceed with a proposed FNS.



Outreach – HOW?

- Outreach of this type is different
- Best not to go unprepared

10. Protocol and Etiquette

Protocol: a code prescribing strict adherence to a correct etiquette or precedence.

Etiquette: the forms prescribed by authority to be observed in social or official life.

10.1 General Preparation Guidance for Visiting or Working in Rural Alaska

Be prepared for distinct cultural differences. Depending upon where you go, expect to see or experience the following:

- Poverty and lack of sanitation in some areas, outhouses and honey buckets – about 130 villages do not have running water or sewer systems.
- Native foods – depending on the time of year, you may see meat or fish drying on racks. Some of the odors will be unusual. Do not react in a negative manner, verbally or in expression, to different foods.
- Walking, waiting, silence – hear a lot of silence
- Review literature on the community you will visit. Published material and website can provide valuable information. Check out the state's community database on its website www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CF_COMDB.htm.
- Find out which governing body has the leadership role concerning your assigned task. Some of the villages have dissolved their municipal governments. In such cases, you will work with the local tribal government. Always contact the local tribal government to let them know your plans to do business in their area.
- Ask if you need to hire an interpreter. This will be an area-specific concern. To locate these services across the state, contact the respective regional corporation and/or the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage.
- Advance contact should be made with all parties. Send a letter stating who will be traveling to the area, the dates of the visit, and the specific purpose. Send maps and/or



Need for Input and Support

- Establishing a FNS on BLM land in Alaska was not a sure thing, and the exact boundaries could be drawn in many different sizes and configurations.
- We would not have proceeded with the nomination of a FNS without the general support from the local communities, which are primarily Alaska native.



BLM's Subsistence Advisory Panel



Need for Input and Support


- Through five outreach events, we communicated the data supporting the high value of the habitat in the general area, shared info on EAAFP and the FNS system, asked for input on:
 - where the best location for a FNS would be,
 - emphasized the maintenance of traditional use of the site and the wildlife, and
 - discussed the benefits of holistic management of migratory birds.
- We were sure to give people time to ask questions, share experiences, and time to think about what was presented and follow up with us.



Outreach

- Additional outreach:
 - NGOs
 - Bio. Conferences
 - Congressional delegation






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Proposed Qupaluk East Asian-Australasian Flyway Site

BLM Alaska / December 2016



Background

The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) is an informal and voluntary organization focusing on the protection of migratory waterbirds, their habitats and the livelihoods of people dependent upon them. The EAAFP is currently comprised of 31 partners including 17 national governments, five inter-governmental organizations, 10 international non-governmental organizations, and one international private enterprise. One objective of the EAAFP is to develop a network of flyway sites for the conservation of migratory waterbirds. A flyway site is an area recognized by EAAFP that supports internationally important habitat for migratory waterbirds. There are 123 flyway sites designated in 17 countries. Currently, there is only one site located in North America, which is located in the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge in western Alaska.

In October 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) asked BLM to advance the nomination of the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area (TLSA) of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) for inclusion in the EAAFP Flyway Site Network. During summer 2016, BLM presented the concept at five different events – four of which were with Alaska Native-led organizations around the NPR-A. The feedback received was useful in determining how to proceed with a proposed flyway site.

Proposal

- BLM Alaska is proposing 52,000 acres within the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area in the northeast corner of the NPR-A.
- The proposed site name is Qupaluk East Asian-Australasian Flyway Network Site. Qupaluk (qoo-pa-luk) is the Iñupiat word for small shorebird.

Rationale

- The proposed flyway site was chosen to avoid conflict with any other potential land uses.
- In an area already identified as “unavailable to leasing” and “no new non-subsistence infrastructure.”

- Avoids subsistence camps and cabins.
- Sites are voluntary and can be removed from the network by the manager at any time.

Management

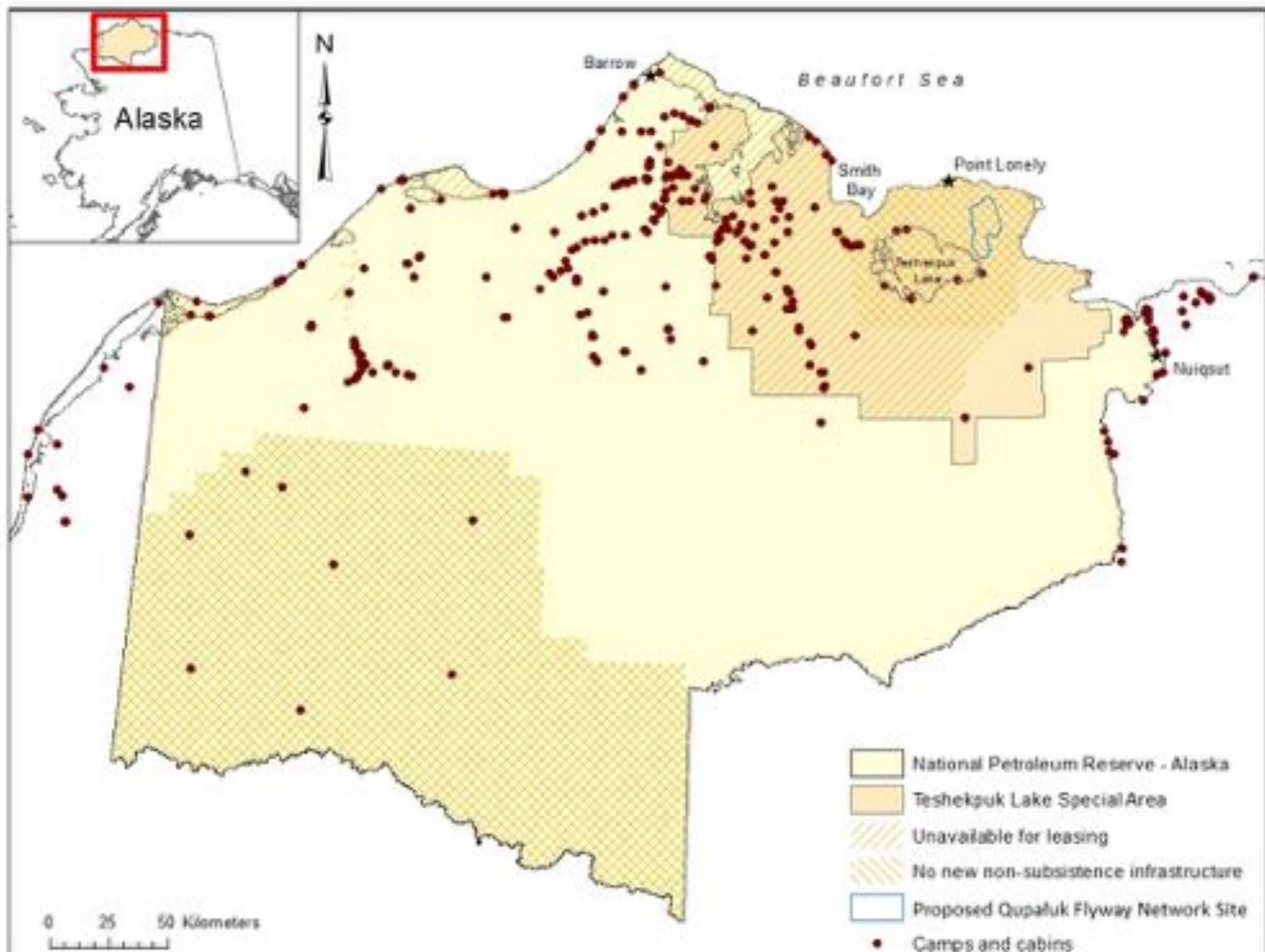
- Site management is suitable to existing management framework.
- Waterbird values of the site are maintained and enhanced, where possible.
- Subsistence use of the area is encouraged to continue as part of the site management.



Results

- A vote was taken by the BLM-convened Subsistence Advisory Panel, 7-1 in favour of proceeding with the FNS.
- Between this vote and the general positive feedback from other outreach events, we felt comfortable the FNS was generally supported and that we would proceed to submit the nomination to EAAFP.
- The name we chose for the site, Qupałuk (“*coo-pa-luke*”), is the Iñupiat word for small shorebird.













A Big Deal for BLM

First Migratory Bird Flyway Network Site on BLM-Managed Lands

205

by Courtney Burns, BLM
Gregory Adams

Story by: Casey Burns, Wildlife and T&E Program Lead. Photos by Dustin Photo: Blake Trask, Group Photo and Certificate Photo: Eugene Cheah/EAAPP.

In January 2017, Casey Burns, BLM-Alaska Wildlife and Threatened and Endangered Species Program Lead, attended a meeting of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership conducted in Singapore. The partnership is an informal and voluntary organization focused on the protection of migratory waterbirds, their habitats, and the livelihoods of people dependent upon these birds.

During the meeting, Burns received a Certificate of Acceptance from the Partnership on behalf of BLM-Alaska. It was presented in response to the January 2017 acceptance of a 52,000-acre area of land on the Arctic Coastal Plain as the first migratory bird Flyway Network Site on BLM-managed lands. Casey presented as part of a "Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration" session. The process to create the Gupakuk Flyway Network Site was of great interest to the group, since BLM-Alaska and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff conducted a much more thorough and collaborative stakeholder coordination effort than most partners, particularly involving outreach to Alaska Native communities.



Casey Burns (center, BLM-Alaska) accepts the certificate for the Gupakuk Flyway network site. With Casey is Peter Probert (left), Assistant Regional Director U.S. FWS, and Vee Cheah (right), EAAPP, and Yan Jun (right), Deputy General Director, China Department of Wildlife Conservation and Nature Reserve Management, and Chair of EAAPP.



Results

- The acceptance of the FNS into the EAAFP system has opened channels of communication between managers and biologists in Alaska and others along the flyway.
- The site is now attracting more bird monitoring attention, with a proposal to establish a long-term field camp.





Results

- Coordination with managers in other countries.





Keys to Success

- Listening
- Allowing time for dialogue
- Being realistic and honest





Challenges

- Diversity in opinions
- Historical distrust of the federal government
- Misconceptions on what a FNS would mean to an area





Lessons Learned

1. Native people, like any other group, have a wide variety of priorities and values and cannot necessarily be lumped into one group with one perspective.
2. Historical events may colour perspectives for current interactions, and may have nothing to do with you or your proposal.
3. You must be prepared to listen more than you talk.
4. You need to give people adequate time to consider a proposal, discuss it with others, and come back with more questions before you can move forward. Don't expect to show up, introduce something new, and get immediate support.



Lessons Learned

5. When you request input, you must be prepared to take the input and use it as much as possible or risk not getting input or support the next time.
6. You must be prepared to offer thoughts on why this matters to them, and the reasons may be different from why it matters to you or to the conservation community. Conversely, you need to understand the full ramifications of your proposal and be sure that their stated concerns (restrictions on hunting) will not be affected.
7. You need to be prepared to share information on the topic quickly and in a conversational manner with people when opportunities arise.



Partners

- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Geologic Survey
- Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope
- BLM Subsistence Advisory Panel
- Audubon Alaska
- Wildlife Conservation Society





Additional Case Study

- Working with farmers to use raptors as pest control

Attracting Wildlife for Pest Control on Farmland

An Introduction to Barn Owl Boxes, Kestrel Boxes, Raptor Perches, Wintering Raptors, and More



Native predators will rarely completely eliminate a pest problem, but can be part of a multifaceted solution to pest control. Using wildlife to help control pests can cut down on pesticide use, improve water quality, save time, supply important habitat, and provide viewing enjoyment. The structures outlined in this document are ideal for farmland, but can also be used on golf courses, large gardens and yards, and other open areas.

Barn Owl and American Kestrel Nest Boxes

The barn owl and the American kestrel are easy to attract to farmland by installing nest boxes. Although many raptor species will hunt on agricultural land, nesting pairs will focus hunting near the nests and will capture increased amounts of rodent prey for their growing chicks. These species are easy to attract with nest boxes because natural nesting cavities may be difficult to find.

Barn owls primarily prey on nocturnal rodents, especially voles and gophers. Barn owls are known to kill and stockpile more prey than needed. Kestrels, formerly known as sparrow hawks, will hunt large insects, such as grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, and moths, as well as small mammals and birds. Attracting raptors may also help with avian pests, such as magpies and starlings, by changing their behavior. The presence of predators nearby may make the pests more cautious and less likely to come into the area to feed.

Barn owl on



Wintering Raptors for Pest Control on Farmland



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Steve Slater
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A red-tailed hawk feeding on a vole (top) and a Cooper's hawk feeding on a magpie (bottom) are two examples of raptors at work regulating pest wildlife populations on farmland. HawkWatch International monitors raptor populations and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides assistance to agricultural producers to plan and implement conservation actions.



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THANK YOU!

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