**Sea urchins decimate Aleutian reefs**

Without otter predation, sea urchin population is booming

BY HOPE MCKENNEY
KUCB News

Sea urchins are devouring the massive limestone reefs surrounding the central and western Aleutian Islands—a process exacerbated by climate-driven changes in the marine environment, according to a new study published in Science.

In Unalaska/Dutch Harbor, the largest community in the 1,200-mile Aleutian archipelago, rich kelp beds and curious otters line the island’s shores.

“We’re pretty lucky here—especially in Unalaska Bay—we have a very healthy and, what appears to be, growing sea otter population, which is able to keep the sea urchins in check,” said Melissa Good, the local marine advisory agent with Alaska Sea Grant.

According to Good, there are two healthy sea otter populations in the Aleutian Islands: in Unalaska Bay and in Clam Lagoon in Adak. And, she said, the reason the population is healthy in Unalaska is because the otters are protected from orcas due to the infrastructure from the

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**Large salmon runs key in this year’s race for fattest bear**

Surplus led to less competition along Brook River Falls

BY TYLER THOMPSON
KDLG News

“This is probably the fattest fat bear week ever,” said Naomi Boak, a media ranger for Katmai National Park. “We had the largest salmon run ever; we had 800,000 salmon come through the Brooks River. We had three or four previous years where we had great salmon runs, so those bears are really fat.”

The 2020 salmon run bay-wide was its fifth largest on record at 58.2 million fish.

Typically bears will vie for prime fishing spots to bulk up for the winter. But this year’s surplus of salmon led to less competition along Brook River Falls. Media Ranger Brooklyn White said the peaceful harvest also saw bear cubs playing with other family groups.

“Which was really odd,” White said. “It’s not something that many people have seen or experienced before because of such a successful salmon run that allowed for a more relaxed season for the bears this year.”

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**Alaska seafood processors lose big in pandemic**

Companies estimate COVID protocols cost at least $50 million

BY ISABELLE ROSS
KDLG News

Seafood processors had a lot to deal with this season.

“Our biggest challenge in 2020 was safely staffing our plants,” said Julianne Curry, the public affairs manager for OBI Seafoods.

“It was a huge lift to get all employees tested, transported, quarantined, and fully integrated into each of our plants all while observing a closed campus and all COVID-related protocols and doing it all with very little time to plan and prepare for the summer salmon season,” she said.

To keep track of how the pandemic is shaping the seafood industry, economists at the McDoell Group have started to publish monthly briefs for the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute.

“It’s interesting to describe a crisis when you’re in the crisis, right? And that’s our situation,” said Garrett Everidge, an economist at the McDowell Group. “The goal is to try to keep up to speed on how the pandemic is impacting the seafood industry and really impacting all stakeholders, from local governments, supply chains, retailers, harvesters, processors.”

Data collection for this information can take years, so to get a real-time picture of what’s going on, the authors conducted interviews with those stakeholders.
Skills competition to replace PCR youth basketball league

Unalaska plans for COVID-19 social distancing mandates

BY MAGGIE NELSON
KUCB News

In lieu of this year’s city youth basketball league, the Unalaska Department of Parks, Culture, and Recreation will be holding a season-long skills competition in order to observe COVID-19 social distancing mandates. Because of the close-contact nature of basketball, PCR testing mandates.

Unalaska Department of Parks, Culture, and Recreation Coordinator Chris DiGiro said there will be no games this season.

A statement from the health care provider states it’s working with city and state officials to ensure precautions are taken to protect anyone who may have been exposed to the coronavirus.

How the individuals contacted the virus is under investigation.

Two Sand Point residents positive for COVID-19

BY HOPE MCKENNEY
KUCB News

Two residents of Sand Point tested positive for COVID-19 on Oct. 2, according to Eastern Aleutian Tribes. This is the third confirmed case in the 950-person island community, after another resident tested positive for the virus last week.

Upon receiving the positive test result, the unnamed individuals were placed in isolation, according to the regional tribal health care provider which operates the Sand Point Medical Clinic.

A resident of the Dillingham Census Area tested positive for COVID-19 on Oct. 1, according to an announcement from the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation. BBAHC said the case is not travel related and the individual was not showing symptoms.

Authorities representing the Arctic Village Council, Alaska’s chapter of the League of Women Voters and two older women sued in early September. They’re asking the state to stop enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic and to tell voters about the decision. The state is asking for the suit to be dismissed.

Belal Harrison, representing the suit, said the state’s vote by mail wording is confusing and will make it impossible for voters to get a second signature.

At least 95,000 Alaskans have requested absentee ballots for November’s general election. Any registered voter can request to vote absentee for any reason, but request forms must be received by Oct. 24.
Alaska’s coronavirus cases at an all-time high

ANNIE BERMAN AND ZAZ HOLLANDER
ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

Alaska’s coronavirus cases are at an all-time high, as evidenced by several red-flag indicators. Municipal health officials and state officials, including Gov. Mike Dunleavy, say they’re watching closely to see what COVID-19 does next, especially when it comes to people getting sick enough to need hospitalization.

On Monday, Alaska reported 19 new resident cases, setting a new daily record. The last time the state saw that many cases in a day was in late July, a spike blamed partly on reporting delays after a Labor Day weekend.

But that summertime peak of cases in July leveled out, Anchorage Health Department epidemiologist Janet Johnston said in an interview Monday.

“Last week, it felt like we were back in July, and the curves were pretty parallel,” Johnston said. “But now we’re continuing to go up. And it seems that most of the problem is that people have relaxed their vigilance about things like wearing masks and keeping distance at a time when we’re moving inside.”

Fifteen of Monday’s new cases were reported in North Pole, the town southeast of Fairbanks with more than 200 confirmed cases since March, where the city’s mayor quarantined at home on the upper level of his house by afternoon.

Mayor Mike Walsh said his wife tested positive for the coronavirus on Friday. She isolated on the floor below.

Walsh said he just got off the phone with Dr. Anne Zink, the state’s chief medical officer, who is “sending a team up here tomorrow” to deal with rapidly rising cases in the region. His most pressing concern at the moment: ensuring medical facilities are flexible and prepared.

The situation was deep-cleaned ahead of Tuesday’s local elections. “I think we’re all just stumbling through this,” he said.

‘A lot of virus’
Cases are rising most quickly in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Northwest Alaska, but there’s community spread throughout the state, officials say.

In Anchorage, continued high case counts have delayed the reopening of schools, added extra layers for in-person learning and led to prolonged capacity restrictions at bars and restaurants.

Around the state, rising cases have triggered school closures and village lockdowns.

This week, Alaska hit an all-time high for the 14-day average COVID-19 case rate with more than 16 cases per 100,000 of Monday, state officials warned. That translates for Anchorage for someone to be infected with transmission with many undetected cases and frequent, discrete outbreaks.

The state’s test positivity rate as of Monday also passed 4% for the first time since the pandemic began in March. Public health officials have said that if that number goes above 5%, that can indicate high community transmission and not enough testing.

“We’re very worried that there’s a lot of viruses in the state right now,” Zink, the state’s chief medical officer, said in an interview Monday. “This is not the place I would like to be entering fall and winter to be totally truthful.”

Municipal officials in Anchorage last week described regular clusters of cases in assisted living centers where some of the state’s most vulnerable may be infected by staff who pick up the virus outside work. This week, Johnston stressed that it is “community behavior” — and the changing season — not these larger outbreaks that are driving the spread.

“What’s mentioned most frequently in the media (and in our reports) is activities with families and friends,” she said.

“The days are getting shorter, it’s getting cooler, and there’s more mixing inside,” she added. “And it feels to me that that’s what the big driver is.”

Fairbanks has the state’s highest case rate at 25.5 per 100,000 and the highest test positivity at 10%, local health-care providers say.

Schools phases of a group of 40 high-needs students for in-person learning in mid-September closed for all but online classes Monday after five people at Ladd Elementary tested positive for COVID-19 in the last two weeks, according to Yu McCulloch, spokeswoman for Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

Health officials warned that the city’s hospitals could run out of ICU beds by late this month or early November if the ongoing case increases translates to more seriously ill people.

Cases are rising in Europe and other U.S. states especially in the Midwest, Zink said. Surges in other places are followed by similar surges in Alaska.

The other number that’s rising is the R0 or “R-naught” rate that indicates how contagious COVID-19 is right now, according to Tom Hennessy, an infectious disease epidemiologist and affiliate faculty member at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

That raises concerns because of the higher risks of infection as Alaskans who spent the long days of summer outside are forced inside as flu season sets in on clinics and hospitals.

“Whereas we were kind of in a standoff for about two months, we’ve now tipped over into a higher risk transmission, both from the standpoint of increased number of active cases and increased risk of transmission from those cases to other people.”

Hennessy said in an interview last week. “And that’s a very worrisome setting, given everything else we’ve just talked about — people moving indoors, colder weather, the potential amplification of that effect. That’s all very concerning and points toward a fall outbreak that could be very dangerous for Alaska.”

Johnston said that cutting down the number of cases in Anchorage will continue to be made more challenging by the arrival of cooler weather and shorter days, which make socializing outside more difficult, and demands more creativity.

The best thing people can do is to wear a mask and keep six feet of distance any time they’re around someone not in their immediate household, she said. “We’ve been at this a while, and we have to find ways to protect ourselves and protect our sanity.”

‘Wear the damn mask’
Municipal health officials last week also expressed concern that the city’s hospitals and clinics are close to capacity.

Hospitalization is already keeping at least 20% of the state’s hospital beds and intensive care unit beds fully occupied, state health officials said.

“We’re holding up and we’re not going to step up enforcement of pandemic precautions and asked businesses to ‘do the right thing’ in order to avoid more restrictions. Berkowitz said he was “looking at options” to bring cases down to allow for in-person school but wanted to make sure they were effective and had community acceptance.

“Wear the damn mask, if I can quote Chris Wallace,” Berkowitz said.

Municipal health officials last week also expressed concern that the city’s hospitals and clinics are close to capacity.

Hospitalization rates relatively low, but recent spike has many health officials worried

By Worthy of note among the red flags, the state’s hospitals as COVID-19 patients crowded limited ICU space.

“Whereas we were kind of in a standoff for about two months, we’ve now tipped over into a higher risk transmission, both from the standpoint of increased number of active cases and increased risk of transmission from those cases to other people.”

Traditionally Alaska’s hospital capacity, “A lot of virus”

‘A lot of virus’
Cases are rising most quickly in Anchorage, Fairbanks and North. Between late July and the end of August, Anchorage, Fairbanks and North have reported more than 20 cases per 100,000 people.

The number of active cases and hospitalizations is growing higher than we’ve seen to date as the month goes on.

But there are other indicators that show Alaska compares favorably with many other places when it comes to how sick we’re getting with this virus, perhaps because there are more younger people here. So far, officials say, it’s people in their 20s and 30s who are driving up the new case tallies. Generally, they tend to weather the virus with fewer complications than older people or those with underlying medical conditions.

And so far, Alaska’s death rate is still the lowest in the nation, according to Centers for Disease Control data. The number of people sick enough with COVID-19 to need hospitalization hasn’t moved much for weeks and actually dropped slightly in recent days.

As of Monday, there were 37 COVID-19 patients hospitalized statewide, 11 of them in ICU beds in Anchorage where the state’s sickest patients tend to end up, according to data from the Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association.

Generally, hospitalization numbers for coronavirus patients have stayed consistent for the last 30 to 60 days, according to association president and CEO Jared Kosin.

“Last week, it felt like we were back in July, and the curves were pretty parallel,” Johnston said. “But now we’re continuing to go up. And it seems that most of the problem is that people have relaxed their vigilance about things like wearing masks and keeping distance at a time when we’re moving inside.”

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Hospitalizations - 200-100
You can quit. We can help.
After this week, most of us probably need to go on a media diet and limit our consumption of news. The pandemic's wide-spread effects on our daily lives have created a world in which many feel empathy for those who have been dealing with an overwhelming and confusing world for a long time. Perhaps we can imagine how just one more thing can pile on to a history of past trauma and push someone who had been a pretty functional adult to being unable to complete normal daily activities. Likely all of us now understand a little better how social isol-ation compounds over time.

The Mental Illness Awareness Week—Oct. 4-10—shines a spotlight on mental illness, its prevalence, the stigma still attached, and the people who live with chronic mental illness face. We know that 70% to 90% of people with mental health challenges report improved quality of life with support and treatment, yet the average time between the onset of symptoms and getting help is 11 years. This Mental Illness Awareness Week, let’s all work to help reduce the stigma of mental illness, and help those facing challenges feel safe in seeking help without judgment. Become familiar with the resources in your community so you know how to connect people to help. Listen to what people with mental illness want you to know. And if you are struggling, know that you are not alone. Help is available.

Andrew Crow serves as board presi-dent of Alaska Behavioral Health. For more information and Mental Illness Awareness Week events is at www.alaskabe-havioralhealth.org. The Alaska Careline offers support 24-7 at 1-877-266-2457. NamiAlaska has resources for education and support groups. Alaska 2-1-1 can help find appropriate services.

BY ANDREW CROW
For the Bristol Bay Times - Dutch Harbor Fisherman

Amid the pandemic, we all need to make an effort to take care of our mental health.

T his year, we’ve heard a lot about the effect of the pandemic on mental health. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control conducted surveys in June, finding that 40% of respondents reported an adverse mental or behavioral health condition.

The number rose to 75% for those ages 18-24. The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services reported similar findings in a survey conducted in May. In that survey, 65% of Alaskans reported being more anxious or depressed than usual and 69% more angry or irritable than usual. A massive 82% said changes in routines have been stressful. We don’t know how much of this is getting worse as the pandemic continues, or if people are adjusting and stabilizing, but the fact is that the pandemic has affected our mental health.

Even in normal times, one in five adults in the United States experience a mental illness. One in 25 experience a mental, emotional or behavioral disorder serious enough to interfere with or limit one or more major life activities, such as major depression, di-42bilitation anxiety, schizophrenia. Fifty percent of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24.

The pandemic’s wide-spread effects offer us an opportunity to increase our un-derstanding and to decrease the stigma related to discussing mental health. How many of us, or those close to us, have felt isolated, wary, unsure, hope-less, and/or threatened during this time? This pandemic has created a world in which many can now relate to needing help to cope with uncertainty — and feel empathy for those who have been dealing with an overwhelm-22ing and confusing world for a long time. Perhaps we can imagine how just one more thing can pile on to a history of past trauma and push someone who had been a pretty functional adult to being unable to complete normal daily activities. Likely all of us now understand a little better how social isol-ation compounds over time.

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Growing up in the period between the first and second World Wars, the language of “dead horses” was common in some old-fashioned terms. Expressions like “cash on the barrelhead” and “having to pay off the dead horse” were common in the commercial trades. Cash on the barrelhead referred to sales made in a tent or store where the top of a barrel was the point of sale. One can easily imagine sales made like this during the Klondike Gold Rush.

The dead horse designation wasn’t specific to Alaska. Back in the day, such was the need for transportation, folks would often buy a horse on credit. Because horses were essential, it was common enough to go deep into debt to procure a horse. If the horse died or was sold, the collector, the seller still expected payment. The poor soul who now needed a new horse still had to pay off the dead horse. That’s where the term “dead horses” came from.

Not like the literal ones found along the old White Pass route where hundreds died and remain in Dead Horse Gulch outside Skagway. No, the ones I’m thinking of are the dozens of “dead horses” that our state government signed up for in the last four decades. Alaska’s government spent $54 billion on programs that were deemed desirable but not obviously essential or sustainable. Over $6 billion alone was for oil revenue dividends.

Alaska’s fiscal house is in shambles. But we can fix it.

Will America’s democracy die amid political turmoil?

Most of us have lived our lives in the free- dom of American democracy. How have we come to the point where our democracy is being threatened, one that has allowed Americans to face the pandemic-induced recession?

The renovation that is needed will take place in the Rust Belt, where the jobs will be created and the dream of a better life for all will be achieved. In contrast, those in the upper half were already recovering from the pandemic-induced recession.

He is the one who can bring us together — all Americans, regardless of party affiliation. At the conclusion of the Sept. 29 debate, he looked straight at the nation and said, “I'll be a president, not just for Demo- crats, but for all Americans.”

As a speaker, he is not strident and overconfident. Rather, he is what he is — a modest, decent, capable guy who will put in the hard work to improve the lot of ordinary Americans.

Biden was a member of Congress at a time when Congressmen of different parties prided themselves in their ability to work together. As they agreed, they were often able to pass needed legislation by working together and finding a mutually acceptable compromise.

In comparison, look at Trump. As President Obama said, “He’s shown no interest in finding common ground — no interest in using the awesome power of his of- fice to help anyone but himself and his cronies. No interest in treating the presidency as anything but one more tool to show that he can use it to get the jobs done.”

Add to this Trump’s support for white supremacists and his cruelty to children.

Most of us have pledged “allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

In conclusion, the flag will help us decide how to vote. So come on Americans, get out and vote. Nov. 3, your vote can help save our democracy. This could be our last chance to vote.

Janet McCabe has a master’s de- gree from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government and is a member of the Alaska Community Foundation. She and her husband, Dave, have lived in Alaska for most of their lives.
Low supplies of Pacific salmon are pushing up prices

With catch topping 45 million, Alaska is a leading producer

Now that the 2020 pack of Alaska salmon has arrived in the market, many stakeholders will get a better picture of how global prices may rise or fall. A look at the value of Alaska’s salmon exports is driven by sales between July and October. And right now, lower supplies of wild Pacific salmon are pushing up prices as the bulk of those sales are made.

For sockeye salmon, global supplier and market tracker Tradex reports that frozen fish are in high demand and supplies are hard to source for all sizes. With a catch this year topping 45 million, Alaska is the leading producer of that popular commodity.

“Lucky sockeye harvests were once again abundant,” said Chris Branson in Bristol Bay as fishermen caught nearly 200 million pounds. Although that’s a big-ger catch than last year, when Bristol Bay, it’s still down 9% from last year. With lower sockeye harvests in Russia and closures in Canada, we estimate the global sockeye har-vest will be down by 26% in 2020,” said Andy Wink, executive director of the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association speaking on the Tradex Three-Minute Market Report.

Tradex reports that sockeye prices are “significantly higher than last year” and suggests that suppliers are stockpiling inventories in their freezers.

“An announcement for sockeye buyers is similar to a few weeks ago, which is to se-cure your supply now. Sockeye prices are anticipated to make a good bull-run before moving into a bear-type market,” said correspondent Tasha Cadence.

Tradex predicts the same for wild chum salmon due to low catches from all producers.

“In speaking to our VP of Asia Operations, he advised they are anticipating that new sea-son chum won’t be available until the end of September and that salmon will certainly be very expensive this year,” Cadence added. “Both from Russia and Alaska, and the bulk of the frozen materi-ale price will go up to $4,300 per metric ton — which translates to about $1.95 to $2 per pound.”

“Going back a few weeks it was reported that Russian boats did not even want to make commitments at the higher prices as they wanted pricing at even higher levels,” Cadence wrote.

A weakening dollar also means foreign customers can buy more U.S. salmon for less. How the initial uptick in salmon commodity markets might play out in fisherman’s paychecks remains to be seen. Alaska processors typically post a base price as a place holder when the salmon sea-son gets underway. Then, bonus-es for fish that is chilled, bled, delivered or are offered to fisherman in the fall, and any profit-sharing checks usually arrive the following spring; No retro-payments, more than anything, are a payment to appease the fleet and keep them from jumping to another processor,” said a longtime Bristol Bay fisherman. “There are many instances where a processor has paid their retro or adjustment in the spring, only to have to make another payment in early June to match competitors. Price ad-justments are a dark art and there is no set formula as it relates to the sale of the pack.”

Fish on! Salmon num-bers continue to trickle in but salmon’s total catch won’t add up to much more than 114 million fish, about 85% of what state man-agers projected for the 2020 season.

Of that, over 45 million are sockeyes and 58 million are pink salmon, which are processed in China and distributed back to the U.S. and other countries have in-creased from $2 to $5,400 per metric ton — or from $1.20 to $1.55 per pound.

“With catch topping 45 million, Alaska is number one in the world. But, with lower supplies of wild Pacific salmon by the major produc-ers are pushing up prices as the bulk of those sales are made.”

For sablefish (black cod), the catch was nearing 17 mil-lion pounds, or 52% of the nearly 32 million-pound quo-ta. Seward, Kodiak, Sitka and Dutch Harbor were getting the most deliveries.

Both of those fisheries end in early November

The Bering Sea pollock fishery closes on Nov. 1. Alaska pollock is the nation’s top food fish and the Bering Sea will produce over 3 billion pounds again this year. And as always, fisheries for cod, flounders, rockfish and much more are ongoing in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska.

Finally, the state Board of Fisheries has accepted 27 proposals for the 2021 season at $8, as yet undetermined, meetings on Prince William Sound and Southeast subsistence, com-mercial, sport and personal use fisheries and statewide shellfish. Meeting dates have been bumped from this winter to sometime next year due to COVID-19 constraints.

The board will consider new meeting dates at an Oct. 15-16 virtual work session.

Halibut survey success

A “resounding success” is how scientists summed up this summer’s Pacific halibut sur-vey despite a more shortened and scaled down a bit due to COVID-19 virus constraints.

The so-called fishery-inde-pendent sient survey (PSS) uses standardized methods to track population trends in the Pacific halibut stock, which ranges from the West Coast and British Columbia to the far reaches of the Bering Sea.

For two months this summer 11 longline vessels (down from the usual 17) halibut survey experts aboard to fish at 898 stations, down 30% from the planned 1,283. The longline areas were wa-ters off California, Oregon and Washington. Survey areas in the Bering Sea near the Pribilof islands were also cut, along with stations at the Aleutian Islands near Unalaska and Adak.

“We also thinned out a little bit in the Western Gulf of Alas-ka, and we also removed the stations off Vancouver Island,” said David Wilson, executive director of the International Pacific Halibut Commission which oversee the stock for the U.S. and Canada.

Still, Wilson said roughly 70% of the Pacific halibut bio-mass was sampled overall and 100% in the core areas of the central Gulf, Southeast Alaska and northern British Columbia. “Normally we would have done a thinner sampling in those areas, but to ensure that we had enough samples com-ing out we went for 100% in those areas,” he explained, calling it the “most data-rich setline-survey in the IPHC’s 97-year history.

The halibut that are caught during the survey are sold to cover the cost of the operation. Wilson said the poundage and prices will be revealed next month at the IPHC interim meeting.

“The key thing is that we were able to meet both our sci-entific requirements and also maintain our economic goal of revenue neutrality,” he said.

The Nov. 19 19 meetings, which will be held online, also will provide a first glimpse at how the halibut stocks are holding up.

The interim meeting is usually an information sharing meeting for stakeholders where we present the pre-liminary stock assessment results and the outcomes of other re-search activity. We also put out some of the regulatory pro-posals we will be considering at the annual meeting,” Wilson said.

Halibut catch limits and other regulations will be re-vealed in late January.

United Fishermen of Alaska called to task

T o the Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association, the Seafood Producers Cooperative, the Bristol Bay Fish-ermen’s Association, the Seafood Producers Cooperative and the Fishing Vessels Owners’ Association, shareholders of Sitka’s long line fleet, I’m standing before you. Like many of you who I would like you to consider dropping out of the United Fishermen of Alaska but not of the support for Small Gear for the United States. UFA always says vote fish.


BY MICHAEL J. MAYO For the Bristol Bay Times - Dutch Harbor Fisherman

Well, then vote for the fisher-man, Gross. We haven’t had a good fisheries senator in the U.S. Senate since the late Sen. Ted Stevens, Warren Magnuson or JFK [Saltonstall Kene-dy grants for fishermen].

To not vote for a fisherman is a punch in the gut for a fisherman who has been a part of this industry for years. A fisherman who works his way from the back deck to become a doctor and yet still fishes.

If I have a fisheries question I don’t have to spend two hours trying to explain the IQR 3% tax mismanagement. Mostly because I’m going to get 10 minutes from Sen. Dan Sullivan. Or, how about the wasteful and highly unregul-at-ed bycatch of Bering Sea Halibut, we need to have communi-ties throughout the state including Juneau where Gross grew up. He understands these problems because he has loved them and seen his friends get hurt because of them. So please consider dropping out of UFA.

I have dropped out.

Michael J Mayo fishes from the F/V Coral Lee in Sitska.
One of those playful cubs belongs to returning champ and “Queen of Corpulence,” Bear 435 Holly. Her spring cub is also competing for the top spot. Cubs born in the winter weigh around 1 pound, but can grow up to 60 times that in their first year.

Boak says the rangers can’t play favorites, but she says 435’s cub could be a sleeper favorite. “She is part of the royal family. She was very popular on the Explore.org bear cam this year, so I’d watch her.”

Another bear packing pounds for the top spot is 480 Otis, a former champion and one of the park’s most renowned animals. Bear 747 also returns; he was 2019’s runner up and was assumed to weigh almost 1,400 pounds. That estimation was calculated using terrestrial laser scanning technology, which is normally used in civil engineering projects to scan buildings for volumes. White says the National Park System started experimenting with the scanners last year.

“With that info, we’re able to collect data that previously would only be accessible by invasive maneuvers by people. We’re able to collect data in a hands-free way that allows the bears to be as wild as they can be.”

This year’s contest is also the most popular to date. Viewership of Katmai Conservancy and Explore.org’s bear cam has doubled since last year. Mike Fitz is a naturalist for Explore.org and was a ranger at the park for 11 years. Fitz hosts online presentations interpreting bear behavior captured by the cam. “People are looking for nature-based experiences even though they weren’t physically at Brooks River and, also, the bears are charismatic animals,” he said. “They’re mindful animals, they’re individuals and we get to see that on the webcams. We get to see the differences of a very dominant bear, like 747, for instance, and one of the past champions 435 Holly who is very tolerant of other bears.”

Fitz says that Fat Bear Week is also a celebration of the environment. He was unable to travel to Katmai this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but he’s thrilled to see so many healthy bears. “Bristol Bay offers that opportunity for people to see what salmon runs truly can be like,” Fitz said. “Some of us don’t have that opportunity to experience an ecosystem that’s functioning at its fully realized potential. That’s one thing when I moved to Bristol Bay; King Salmon; Katmai that truly opened up my eyes. I had not expected that.”

You can check out Fat Bear brackets on Katmai National Park’s Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Contact the author at tyler@kdlg.org or 907-842-2200.
pandemic hit the industry hard this summer. Everidge said processors have spent $50 million on mitigation plans — so far. “So $50 million is kind of a start and it’s just going to increase,” he said.

Nicole Kimball, the vice president of the Pacific Seafood Processors Association in Anchorage, which represents several processors that operate in Bristol Bay, including Trident, Peter Pan, and Alaska General Seafoods.

“The initial quarantines (were) for thousands of workers. So that can include hotel and food and daily medical screening,” she explained. “It’s the testing that came as online, often multiple times for each worker. It’s hiring medical companies to provide daily screenings, workers. It’s hiring medical companies to provide daily screenings, and food and daily medical testing as that came online, and those precautions paid off. The outbreaks among processors were confined to the workforce, and didn’t spread to community in the region.”

Companies also saw a big drop in the size of the workforce — they had 13% fewer people processing fish this summer compared to pre-COVID-19 seasons, that was one of the biggest drivers of lost revenue.

The McDowell Group’s report says that means more low-value products, like canned and gutted fish and less high-value products, like fillets.

Kimball wouldn’t speak to any specific company or to the products that came out of Bristol Bay this season. Still, she said, processing is wholly dependent on how many people are working.

“The more labor you have, the more higher-value products you could probably model. It also depends on lots of other factors, like the volume of fish coming in at a short period of time and things like that. But generally I think the report was right on in just identifying when you, in any year when you don’t have a sufficient workforce, you’re often forced to do lower-value products.”

Less workers didn’t mean a lower harvest in Bristol Bay, however. That fleet hauled in almost 40 million fish — the fifth-largest harvest ever. Sockeye harvests in other fisheries around the state were relatively weak, however. According to the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, if Bristol Bay were excluded from the statewide total, this would have been the smallest harvest year since 1976.

Those costs had to be felt somewhere, and the price paid for pound for Bristol Bay sockeye dropped steeply; fishermen were paid about half of what they got in 2019. “This year’s harvest was 70 cents.”

Looking ahead, Kimball said that tariffs on American seafood means the costs of the pantry are more acute for everyone. Tariffs for sockeye entering China’s domestic market are at 37%. For other Pacific salmon that number is 40%.

“We’re in a challenging tariff environment for our seafood — not just Alaska seafood but U.S. seafood, so you do think about, if those costs, are just on top. They’re exacerbating an already challenging global market situation,” Kimball said.

As the 2020 summer winds down, Julienne Curry, with OBI Seafoods, said they are already bracing for more costs and more restrictions from the state in 2021. To put that in context, she said, the current mandate for the seafood industry is 10 pages long, but the draft of a new mandate for processors is around 29 pages, and the company is already making plans to exceed those requirements.

“It’s safe to say that the processing sector will be seeing an increase in protocols in 2021 and that COVID-19 far from over for our industry. We anticipate that our COVID-related costs will be just as high, if not higher than last year.”

Still, she said, they’ll have more time to prepare. They are hopeful that testing will become easier and more affordable. “There’s been a lot of support from local leadership to allow them to earn in 2020.”

Contact the author at isabelle@kal.org or 907-842-2200.
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Lifeline is a government assistance program that provides qualifying households free landline or wireless telephone service. (Limit one line per household.) Households are not permitted to receive benefits from multiple providers. To qualify for the Lifeline program you must receive benefits from one or more of the public assistance programs listed below. Documentation of participation is required.

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps
- Medicaid
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribally-administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Head Start Programs (only those meeting its income qualifying standard)
- Your income is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guideline
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Benefit programs
- Income from employment
- Benefits from other assistance programs:
  - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
  - Medicaid
  - Food Stamps (SNAP)
  - Federal Public Housing Assistance
  - General Assistance (GA)
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
  - Food and Nutrition Program (FoodPak)
  - Veterans Pension or Survivors Benefit programs

TelAlaska Lifeline Service for cellular phone service includes unlimited local calls and calls placed to and from communities within the TelAlaska Cellular Network. Lifeline is also available for your TCI cellular data plan. Please call Customer Service for details. The Lifeline benefit may only be applied to one service.

- One FREE, high quality cell phone
- 400 Long Distance Minutes per month, in-state and out-of-state calling
- Voice mail and Calling Features
- FREE nationwide unlimited text messaging plan (a $5.99 value)

The Lifeline service plan does not include “roaming” (long distance calls placed when you travel outside the TelAlaska Cellular Network). Roaming is 25¢ per minute. Long distance calls that exceed 400 minutes per month are 25¢ per minute. Monthly long distance allotments are calculated from the 24th of the month through the 23rd of the following month.

For an application, call Interior Telephone Company

1-800-478-3127 TelAlaska Cellular 1-877-478-2305
or visit, www.telalaska.com

* Violation of the one-per-household requirement could result in de-enrollment from the program and potential prosecution by the U.S. government.

†Cold Bay • Fort Yukon • Galena • Goldin • Ilamna • King Cove • Koyuk • Little Diomede • Nome • Port Lions • Sand Point • Shaktok
• Shishmaref • Stebbins • St. Michael • Teller • Unalaska / Dutch Harbor • Wales • White Mountain

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Bristol Bay Program Director

The Nature Conservancy in Alaska seeks a program director responsible for developing and implementing all aspects of our priority strategy for conservation in the Bristol Bay Region of Alaska. The director will lead a long-term holistic strategy to support Indigenous-led conservation and protect the last great wild salmon run in the world. Duties include leading a program of staff, managing a budget, fundraising, and working with a diverse set of stakeholders and partners to implement this strategy and achieve conservation outcomes.

If you are interested in protecting a world in which people and nature thrive, want to work in a collaborative environment with competitive salary and a great benefits package, please visit www.nature.org/careers and search for the position. Submit your cover letter and resume (both are required) by 11:59 PM Eastern by October 7, 2020 to be considered in the first review of applications. The position will remain open until filled.

Bristol Bay Program Director

Jennifer Gardiner. Resumes and/or letters of interest will be accepted by sending your resume and/or a letter of interest, in brief, which details the reasons you would like to become a BRISTOL BAY HOUSING AUTHORITY COMMISSIONER. If a BRISTOL BAY HOUSING AUTHORITY COMMISSIONER is a BBNHA homeowner or tenant, BBNHA bylaws require the candidate to be current in payments, or in compliance with an approved payback agreement. The term ends January 2024. Address your information to: Bristol Bay Native Association, P.O. Box 310, Dillingham, AK 99576. ATTENTION: BRISTOL BAY HOUSING AUTHORITY COMMISSIONER.

To place your ad go to www.nature.org/careers

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The Bristol Bay Times & The Dutch Harbor Fisherman

To place your ad go to ads@reportalaska.com or call 257-4568
CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1. Muscular contraction
6. D.C. mover and shaker
9. "That was close!"
13. Blood circulation organ
14. FEMA provisions, e.g.
15. Not bob, to a boxer
16. Like a whistle?
17. UN labor org.
18. Speck in the ocean
19. Fallen South Vietnamese capital
21. "War movie and Oscar-winner"
22. Once around
23. Hippocrates' promise
25. Ribonucleic acid
28. Bakery unit
30. Foliage vein
35. In fine fettle
37. Scoop or skinny
39. Nephew's sister
40. "Metamorphoses" poet
41. ABBA's genre
43. Thailand money
44. Temporarily ban
47. Jamie Fraser of "Outlander"
48. The Gods Themselves" author
50. Romanov ruler
52. Give it a go
53. It prevents objectivity
55. Brewed beverage
57. First U.S. space station
60. Mr. Jefferson
63. Nest for an eagle
64. Between Fla. and Miss.
66. Cold cream brand
68. Does like some coffee makers
69. Tasseled hat
70. Not snail mail
71. Back talk
72. Nicklaus' peg
73. Smartly dressed

DOWN
1. Anatomical pouch
2. Plural of #6 Across
3. 51, Nevada
4. "Way to Heaven"
5. Feed beet
6. Some have a high tolerance for it
7. 1973 crisis
8. Oliver Sacks' "Awakenings" drug
9. Boll weevil, e.g.
10. Saintly sign
11. Like never-losing Steven
12. Kind of nurse
13. Not outside
14. Like a whistle?
15. Not outside
16. Like a whistle?
17. UN labor org.
18. Speck in the ocean
19. Fallen South Vietnamese capital
20. Egg-shaped
21. "War movie and Oscar-winner"
22. Once around
23. Hippocrates' promise
24. Ribonucleic acid
25. Bakery unit
26. Way to fry
27. "Metamorphoses" poet
28. Bakery unit
29. Black tropical cuckoo
30. Foliage vein
31. "I call first ___!"
32. Undergo a chemical reaction
33. Blood of the Greek gods
34. First Lady, familiarly
35. South American wood sorrels
36. Talk like Demosthenes
37. "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" spin-off
38. South American wood sorrels
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73. Smartly dressed

THEME: THE 1970S

ACROSS
1. Muscular contraction
6. D.C. mover and shaker
9. "That was close!"
13. Blood circulation organ
14. FEMA provisions, e.g.
15. Not bob, to a boxer
16. Like a whistle?
17. UN labor org.
18. Speck in the ocean
19. Fallen South Vietnamese capital
21. "War movie and Oscar-winner"
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9. Boll weevil, e.g.
10. Saintly sign
11. Like never-losing Steven
12. Kind of nurse
13. Not outside
14. Like a whistle?
15. Not outside
16. Like a whistle?
17. UN labor org.
18. Speck in the ocean
19. Fallen South Vietnamese capital
20. Egg-shaped
22. Cash dispenser
24. Compensating equivalents
25. "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" spin-off
26. Center of a church, pl.
27. Defendant's excuse
28. Bakery unit
29. Black tropical cuckoo
31. "I call first ___!"
32. Undergo a chemical reaction
33. Blood of the Greek gods
34. First Lady, familiarly
35. South American wood sorrels
36. Talk like Demosthenes
37. "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" spin-off
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70. Not snail mail
71. Back talk
72. "Nicklaus'" peg
73. Smartly dressed

SUDOKU

Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

For solutions to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page 2.
The trees are responding of birch and willow trees. Rounded by the gold leaves place, the frog pond, down freezing point. Within their sap depress the dipped to 32 because sugars nights when the temperature dropped to 27 degrees Fahrenheit the night temperature dropped to 27

crunching under her feet. The daylight.
ing the bill for all that summer time for Alaskans to start pay—
everywhere in the world. It is to each last about 12 hours tor, causing days and nights
pears to sit over Earth’s equa—
On the equinox, the sun ap—
eground.
Beneath the girl’s boots, burrowed a few inches into the forest floor are wood frogs, the only amphibians in north—
ern Alaska. During the weeks ahead, a blanket of snow will protect frogs and other hibernators, such as yellowjackets and snow mosquitoes, from the cold air. Even close to the warmth of the earth, the frogs will freeze like little green ice cubes — a process that doesn’t kill them because their blood contains high levels of glucose, which acts as a sort of anti—freeze. They will thaw and hop away next spring.

Honks in the air draw the girl’s attention to the sky, which is clear and blue because air molecules in the atmosphere scatter blue light. Autumn skies in Alaska are a deeper blue than spring skies. Snow covering the ground in springtime reflects about 90% of the light that hits it. Air molecules scatter the reflected sunlight again, washing away a bit of the blue.

The little girl watches as Canada goose fly in a V forma—

It is time for Alaskans to pay the bill for all that summer daylight.

BY NED ROZELL University of Alaska Fairbanks

On the first day of October, a little girl pulls on her rubber boots and rushes outside into crisp fall air. She knows the days are getting shorter, but she doesn’t realize Alaska is a week past the autumal equinox.

On the equinox, the sun appears to sit over Earth’s equator, causing days and nights to each last about 12 hours everywhere in the world. It is time for Alaskans to start paying the bill for all that summer daylight.

The girl hears the ground crunching under her feet. The temperature dropped to 27 degrees Fahrenheit the night before, killing many of the plants in her mother’s garden. The plants didn’t die on earlier nights when the temperature dipped to 32 because sugars within their sap depress the freezing point.

She walks to her favorite place, the frog pond, down a forest path. She is surrounded by the gold leaves of birch and willow trees. The trees are responding to lower temperatures and longer nights by shutting down their solar panels by destroying chlorophyll. Packed within leaf cells, chlorophyll enables plants to convert the sun’s energy to sugars.

The trees’ shift to dormancy allows other pigments within the leaves to express themselves. It’s a brief show of color, lasting until the tree forms abscission layers at the base of leaves. After clipping their summer connection to branches, the leaves fall to the ground.

The girl notices perfect little spheres of water on the surface of a fallen aspen leaf. Water molecules tend to attract each other and trend toward the minimum possible surface area, which is a sphere. The balls of water will evaporate into water vapor as the day warms.

Beneath the girl’s boots, burrowed a few inches into the forest floor are wood frogs, the only amphibians in northern Alaska. During the weeks ahead, a blanket of snow will protect frogs and other hibernators, such as yellowjackets and snow mosquitoes, from the cold air. Even close to the warmth of the earth, the frogs will freeze like little green ice cubes — a process that doesn’t kill them because their blood contains high levels of glucose, which acts as a sort of anti-freeze. They will thaw and hop away next spring.

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The little girl watches as Canada geese fly in a V formation, leaving the rich breeding grounds of the far north for warmer places. Scientists, who once studied flying geese, found that a flock of 25 birds in a V could fly 70% farther than a single bird using the same amount of energy. In a well-formed V, even the bird at the front receives a benefit from its neighbors.

As the girl turns to walk home, she catches the musky smell of fall wafting from highbush cranberries. The fragrance will remind her of home the rest of her life.

The scent — a chemical compound released as the fruit matures — may be intended to lure a creature to eat the tart berries, but the girl wrinkles her nose and walks past the bushes, back up the path to her house. She will not be a seed carrier for the highbush cranberry; it’s a task she leaves for the foxes and birds.

Vocational Rehabilitation ~Gail Sorensen, Program Manager

BBNA has successfully operated Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services since 1989 and was recently awarded another five (5) year grant (2020-2024) from Rehabilitation Service Administration’s nationally competitive American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

VR’s purpose is to provide services to tribal members with physical or mental disabilities. Offering assistance with obtaining and maintaining employment and/or learning skills necessary for self-sufficiency; specifically, for eligible, enrolled tribal members who experience a physical, cognitive, mental or sensory challenge that creates a barrier to employment.

The following services and appropriate accommodations are provided, but are not limited to: equipment, supplies, hear devices, assistive devices, transportation, training, higher education, self-employment and more. This may also include becoming productive in the subsistence lifestyle.

An Alaska yellowjacket in the late fall.

Highbush cranberry, which emits a musty smell in autumn.

Aspen trees near Glennallen, Alaska.
Sea urchins are the primary natural predators of sea urchins. With few otters, the urchin population is out of control in the Aleutian Islands.

Lillian Parker
Week of Sept. 28–Oct. 2, 2020
5th/6th Grade Department Selected Lillian as Student of the Week for the following reasons:

Lilly is model student. She is always prepared, asking great questions, ready to contribute, and always ready to help out. She is a self-motivated student who exceeds expectations with the quality of her work. Keep rocking it, Lilly!

Keeping Alaska Open for Business
Northern Air Cargo is committed to continuing our cargo operations. There’s enough worry in the world, you need to be able to count on getting the supplies you need.

Regulations are changing constantly. For the most up-to-date information visit www.nac.aero.