

Alaskans still favor rural priority

The following are questions on subsistence excerpted from a public opinion survey which AFN commissioned in December.

The results of the survey, conducted by Hellenthal & Associates, show that the majority of Alaskans favor a rural subsistence priority today as they did in 1982.

The poll randomly surveyed 555 adult Alaskans from throughout the state via telephone.

- There is presently a bill before the Legislature that defines subsistence use as providing a priority for rural Alaskans, over urban Alaskans, in the taking of fish and game for personal consumption such as food, clothing, fuel, or tools. Do you favor or oppose providing a priority for rural Alaskans in the taking of fish and game for subsistence use?
Favor, 315, 56.7%
Oppose, 203, 36.5%
Don't know, 38, 6.8%
- Do you favor or oppose Alaskan Natives being allowed to regulate fish and game in their own areas?
Favor, 222, 40.4%
Oppose, 269, 48.4%
Don't know, 64, 11.6%
- Think now about the overall quality of hunting and fishing in Alaska during the last three years. Do you think the quality of hunting and fishing in Alaska has improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse over the past three years?
Improved, 75, 13.6%
Stayed the same, 236, 42.5%
Gotten worse, 244, 43.9%
- If the respondent said worse they were asked: Which of the following reasons do you think are most responsible for this change for the worse?
More fishermen, 186, 33.5%
More hunters, 179, 32.2%
Fewer animals, 140, 25.3%
More outside trophy hunters, 137, 24.6%
More restrictions on where one can hunt, 135, 24.3%
More restrictions on where one can fish, 135, 24.3%
Fewer fish, 100, 18%
- Do you feel there is enough fish and game in Alaska for everyone to go hunting and fishing for whatever the amount they want,



A Native woman harvests berries near the Great Kobuk sand dunes along the Kobuk River.

National Park Service Photo

- or do you feel there should be regulations limiting the amount of fish and game any individual can take?
Whatever amount they want, 28, 5%
Regulations limiting amount, 515, 92.7%
Don't know, 12, 2.2%
- If a fish stock or game population is not large enough to allow everyone to fish or hunt, should rules limiting the amount of fish and game people can take be based on...
The customary and traditional uses of fish and game for personal consumption, 337, 60.7%
Income or economic status of

- household, 240, 43.2%
Rural residency, 247, 44.5%
How much people depend on fish and game, 402, 72.5%
A person's race, 28, 5.1%
- Alaska's fish and game resources are used in three ways: subsistence use which is personal consumption by rural Alaskans for food, clothing, fuel or tools; sports and recreational use; and commercial use. Please tell me which of these fish and games uses is most important for Alaska? How about second most important? And least (3rd) important?
Subsistence, 47.7%
Sports and recreation, 12.6%
Commercial, 37.9%

- How important would you say

subsistence hunting and fishing by rural Alaskan residents for personal consumption is to the economies of rural communities? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, neither important or unimportant, somewhat unimportant or very unimportant?

Very important, 275, 49.6%
Somewhat important, 166, 29.9%
Neither important or unimportant, 39, 7%
Somewhat unimportant, 36, 6.5%
Very unimportant, 16, 2.9%
Don't know, 23, 4.1%

- There has been some discussion in Alaska concerning subsistence fishing and hunting. Some people believe, if there is not enough fish and game for all Alaskan residents, a priority for the taking of fish and game should be given to rural Alaskans. Other people believe subsistence is not that important anymore and that all Alaskan residents should be treated the same. Do you think rural Alaskan residents should be given a priority or do you think all Alaskan residents should be treated the same?
Rural Alaskan residents, 265, 47.8%
All Alaskan residents, 275, 49.5%
Don't know, 15, 2.7%
- Some people say it is fair for rural subsistence uses of fish and game to be considered more important than commercial and recreational uses of fish and game. Do you think it is fair or not fair for rural subsistence uses to be considered more important than commercial and recreational uses?
Fair, 301, 54.3%
Not Fair, 225, 40.6%
Don't know, 28, 5.1%

- Now that you have heard some of the reasons for and against providing a subsistence priority for rural Alaskans, let me ask you again, do you favor or oppose providing a priority for rural Alaskans in taking of fish and game for subsistence use?
Favor, 338, 60.9%
Oppose, 178, 32.1%
Don't know, 39, 7%