

Native group warns against waste

(Editor's Note: Nunam Kitlutsisti is the environmental program of the Association of Village Council Presidents, the Native non-profit association serving the lower Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.

TO: Village Councils, Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)

FROM: Charles F. Hunt, Lands Coordinator, Nunam Kitlutsisti, Bethel, Alaska 99559

SUBJECT: Fish and Game Waste and Headhunting

In the past two years we have received numerous reports both from the villages within the AVCP region and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game that waste of fish and game have occurred within our region. Carcasses of walrus were found along the coastal area with their ivory tusks and heads removed. Fish were observed floating down rivers with the guts opened and roe removed. Reliable reports from villages within AVCP region indicated that these wastes were from our own people. **THIS TYPE OF WASTE MUST STOP IMMEDIATELY!** Reasons for immediate cessation of this fishing and hunting practices are as follows:

(1) Villages of this region have demanded that Nunam Kitlutsisti no longer tolerate this type of fishing and hunting and if the village

councils do not do anything to stop such fishing and hunting practices within our Native people, we will go to the village and if the village council does nothing, then we will ask the Fish and Game Advisory Board of that area to supervise enforcement. The next step would be an appeal to the newly founded Western Alaska Resource Commission for enforcement and penalty. Only as a last resort would Nunam Kitlutsisti bring in the State of Alaska Fish and Wildlife Protection Officers.

(2) During the fall of 1977, the Fish and Game Advisory Boards within the AVCP region have voted and made proposals to the State Board of Fish to do away with the sale of salmon roe. This was mainly due to waste of king and chum salmon during subsistence fishing periods. The Association of Village Council Presidents during the November 1977 meeting tabled this issue and no action was taken.

(3) The Alaska Department of Fish and Game have given the AVCP region a privilege of no quota and an open season on walrus within its rules and regulations. Such practices of waste could result in an annual quota and an open and closed season on marine mammals, especially walrus.

(4) The request by the State of Alaska to manage marine mammals within the State has not been finalized. The proposed rules and regulations for the taking of marine mammals by Eskimos, Aleuts and Indians state that they can continue to hunt marine mammals as they have in the past. But, if such waste continues, I am definite the State of Alaska will make rules and regulations, such as quotas and open and closed seasons for spotted seals, ringed seals, bearded seals, beluga whales and walrus.

(5) At present, different committees in Congress are working on the d-2 bill, H.R. 39, and within this bill is Title VII, which as you know, has to do with subsistence hunting and fishing within d-2 lands. If this type of hunting and fishing practice continues, senators and congressmen who are against the passage of Title VII could use such information (waste & headhunting) in trying to defeat Title VII in Congress.

If such practices of waste and headhunting occur in your village, please contact Nunam Kitlutsisti as soon as possible and give the following information:

- (1) Your Name and Village.
- (2) Name of person Headhunting or wasting
- (3) Location of Headhunting or Waste.
- (4) Date and Time of Occurrence.

Again, AVCP villages have demanded that we at Nunam Kitlutsisti no longer tolerate anyone wasting and headhunting our fish and game resources. Our way of life; subsistence, is a sacred heritage brought to us for many centuries by our ancestors. We must do everything we can to protect this heritage. Wasting and headhunting is an unwritten law opposed by those who subsistence hunt and fish throughout the world. We, as Natives, should do everything in our power to stop such waste and headhunting.