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**Climate Change
and Arctic Sustainable Development :
scientific, social, cultural and educational challenges**

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ABSTRACT: BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

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Sustaining a Healthy Human-Walrus Relationship

The rapidly changing arctic environment has prompted concern about the impacts to marine mammals and those that depend on them. An important method to understanding the health of Pacific walrus, which is a species highly susceptible to the many changes arriving in the Arctic, is found in its relationship with the Alaska Native communities that rely on it for nutritional, cultural, and economic needs. Unique to each, coastal communities rely on a variety of resources found in marine waters. This dependence is a cultural foundation for Alaska Native communities.

Without these natural resources, Alaska Native communities are even more vulnerable to the many potential changes to come. Consequently, we are concerned about environmental, social, or political changes to our relationship to the Arctic marine waters.

Here, we summarise our contribution to the effort, focusing on the challenges facing co-managers and subsistence hunters of walrus in the dynamic Beringian environment. We describe how the ability of coastal walrus subsistence hunters to access, harvest, transport, store and utilise walrus is affected by a dynamic suite of endogenous and exogenous factors, including ecological, social, economic, and political conditions. Impacts specifically as a result of a changing climate will affect subsistence hunters within the context of these diverse and sometimes global factors. We finish by highlighting some of research areas relating to climate change that might contribute to the overall health of the human-walrus relationship.