# comprehensive Data delivery README FILE

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| **Study Section** | Study 9.17: Cook Inlet Beluga Whale (CIBW) Study |
| **Study Component** | Video and Still Camera Observations |
| **Field Date Range** | July 1, 2013 – October 17, 2013 |

**Introduction:** The goals of this study are to (1) provide current, fine scale information on Cook Inlet Beluga Whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*; CIBW) distribution and movements within the Susitna River delta, (2) correlate these data with information on the ecology and habitat parameters of CIBW prey species, including Eulachon (*Thaleichthys pacificus*) and Pacific salmon (*Oncorhynchu*s spp.), and (3) record incidental observations of all marine mammals sighted during beluga whale studies. This multi-year study was initiated with aerial surveys and photo/video data collection in 2013. Study 9.17 is focused on understanding CIBW habitat use and behavior within the Susitna River in order to evaluation the potential that this whale population could be affected by construction and operation of the proposed Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project (Project) in Alaska.

Three specific objectives have been developed for Study 9.17, a few of which include multiple tasks. Photo and video observations will help document CIBW distribution, group size, and behavior in support objectives 1 & 2. Data collected as part of these studies will be used to provide a baseline characterization of Beluga Whale use of the Susitna River in support of identification and evaluation of potential Project-induced, indirect effects on CIBW and inform development of any necessary protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures.

**Data Summary:** To increase the ability to detect CIBW presence in the Susitna River and to document group composition and behavior (e.g., traveling, foraging), a combination of remote live-feed video camera systems and high-resolution still cameras was utilized. Video and still cameras were located at two stations pointing east and west near PRM 6, and four additional cameras were placed upstream of these stations at project river miles 11, 12 and 16. Video data (recorded or live-feed) were collected between September 3 and October 17, 2013. Still camera imagery was collected between July 1 and October 17, 2013. Data were collected following the methodology proposed in the Final Study Plan with the exception of variances reported in the ISR Part D.

A single database contains photo catalogs (timestamp, review sightings), video environment conditions (glare, whitecaps, visibility, weather), master table of video review (timestamp, sightings of beluga whales and other marine animals, conditions, human presence), and summary table of beluga whale sightings in videos (beluga whale count, whale color, activity, and positional grid). The live video surveillance from Sept 25 – Oct 17, 2013 yielded no beluga whale sightings, but observations of other marine animals are included in this database.

Data quality control (QC) is considered to be level QC3, which is generally described as:

* QC3–Senior Review: Final review by senior professional before submitting field data to AEA, or the QC level of raw data cleaned up for delivery to AEA.

**Data Organization:**  2013 video and photo review data are organized as an MS Access relational database and accompanied by a data dictionary for information such as table and attribute descriptions.

**Software Considerations:** MS Access version 2003 or newer is needed for database use.

**Online Data Link:**  <http://gis.suhydro.org/SuWa/09-FISH/9.17-CIBW/>

File 9\_FAQ\_Database\_Data\_Dictionary\_20170630.pdf at <http://gis.suhydro.org/SuWa/09-FISH/00/FAQ_Data_Documentation/>

**Online Report Link:** AEA has prepared several documents with data pertaining to this study component. However, because database QC is an ongoing process, the most recent version of the data found through the hyperlink above may supersede the results reported in study documents. Copies of the datasets used for analysis in the ISR and SIR are available through the hyperlink found at the beginning of the results section (Section 5). To aid review, study documents using this study component are listed below. Each of these documents is accessible on AEA’s Project licensing website (<http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/type/documents/>) or through FERC’s eLibrary system (<http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/elibrary.asp>), in Docket No. P-14241.

| **Title** | **Date** | **Description** | **Link** |
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| Draft Initial Study Report for Study 9.17  | 2/3/2014 | This draft of the ISR summarized the study methods and variances during the 2013 study season, and presented preliminary data collected for Study 9.16. This draft ISR was later republished as Part A of the final ISR. | [Draft ISR for Study 9.17 (File 1)](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/09.17_CIBW_ISR_Draft_1_of_2.pdf) [Draft ISR for Study 9.17 (File 2)](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/09.17_CIBW_ISR_Draft_2_of_2_Apps_A-D.pdf) |
| Initial Study Report for Study 9.17  | 6/3/2014 | This document is the Initial Study Report (Parts A, B and C) for Study 9.16. Part A republishes the Draft ISR. Part B identifies supplemental information and errata in Part A. Part C presents study modifications and plans for completing the study. | [ISR Part A for Study 9.17 (File 1)](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/09.17_CIBW_ISR_PartA_1_of_2.pdf)[ISR Part A for Study 9.17 (File 2)](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/09.17_CIBW_ISR_PartA_2_of_2_Apps_A-D.pdf)[ISR Part B for Study 9.17](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/09.17_CIBW_ISR_PartB.pdf)[ISR Part C for Study 9.17](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/09.17_CIBW_ISR_PartC.pdf) |
| Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Study (Study 9.17) 2014 Study Implementation Technical Memorandum | 9/26/2014 | Technical memorandum prepared by AEA that summarizes activities conducted in 2014 that tested methods to document CIBW prey and prey habitat in the Susitna River delta. | [Sept. 2014 TM for Study 9.17](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/9.17_CIBW_DRAFT_TM_20140909.pdf) |
| Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Study Plan (Study 9.17) 2015 Implementation Plan Technical Memorandum | 9/30/2014 | Technical memorandum prepared by AEA that describes modifications to Study 9.17. | [Sept. 2014 TM for Study 9.17](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/9.17_CIBW_DRAFT_2015_IP_20140911-1.pdf) |
| Initial Study Report Meetings, October 21, 2014 (Parts A and B) | 11/15/2014 | Transcripts and AEA’s agenda and PowerPoint presentations for the ISR meeting concerning the Project fish and aquatic studies filed by AEA. | [Transcripts from ISR Meeting](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Oct15_ISR_Meeting_PartA_Transcripts.pdf)[Materials from ISR Meeting](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Oct15_ISR_Meeting_PartB_Agenda_Presentations.pdf) |

**[[1]](#endnote-1)**

1. **Data Distributor Contact Information:**

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