

# ASK THE GANG!



**Q: What are packing bands and why are they so dangerous to wildlife? How can I help reduce the risk?**

**A:** Plastic packing bands are used in the fishing industry (on bait boxes), in all types of consumer products (lumber, appliance boxes, toys, etc.) and in the shipping

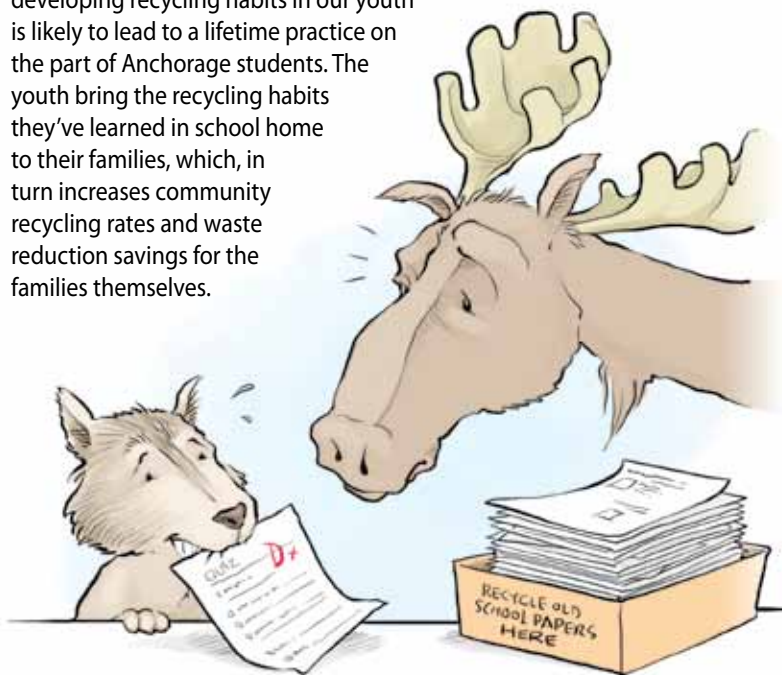
industry. Lightweight, they are blown, or thrown, overboard or find their way into the sea after being blown or washed into storm drains and streams from parking lots, streets, and neighborhoods. They are the number one type of neck entanglement found in a study on Steller sea lions in Alaska and British Columbia. These plastic bands have replaced natural fibers over the last 40 to 50 years because they are lightweight and low cost. But after their one-time use, these bands can last hundreds of years in the environment before they break down, wreaking havoc along the way. Consumers can reduce the risk to wildlife by cutting all packing bands before disposal. If you are in an industry that uses bands, consider using biodegradable bands.

**Q: When will Solid Waste Services complete its phase-in of automated trash service and curbside recycling?**

**A:** SWS began roll-out of automated trash service with curbside recycling in the fall of 2008. The goal was to implement one phase of service each year until all parts of the SWS service area were provided automated service. SWS is working with community councils on some service accessibility issues with the remaining neighborhoods. This fall, 900 more customers receive service and only 1,500 customers remain to be brought on board. This will happen in fall of 2014.

**Q: What is the Anchorage School District doing to reduce waste? How do these efforts benefit the community?**

**A:** The Anchorage School District began phasing in mixed-paper recycling in all of its schools and support facilities during the 2008-2009 school year. By the following school year, all buildings were recycling paper. In that first full year of recycling, the district diverted 364 tons of mixed paper, and the quantities diverted have risen every year since. This past year, the district diverted 489 tons of mixed paper. This continuous increase is due in large part to the consistent outreach and education efforts of the district's Resource Conservation Manager who oversees recycling programs. The "Recycle it Right" campaign teaches staff and students the "Do's and Don'ts" of recycling. The benefits of reducing the district's waste stream are seen in schools and in the community. Internally, diverting mixed paper to recycling from the trash stream reduces overall waste management costs. For the community, developing recycling habits in our youth is likely to lead to a lifetime practice on the part of Anchorage students. The youth bring the recycling habits they've learned in school home to their families, which, in turn increases community recycling rates and waste reduction savings for the families themselves.



## A QUICK LOOK: Waste & Recycling Resources

Additional resources are listed on page 5 in the article about Business Recycling.

Alaskans for Litter Prevention and Recycling (ALPAR).....	<a href="http://www.alparalaska.com">www.alparalaska.com</a> .....	274-3266
Anchorage School District Recycling.....	<a href="http://www.asdk12.org/depts/recycling">www.asdk12.org/depts/recycling</a> .....	348-5151
Green Star .....	<a href="http://www.greenstarinc.org">www.greenstarinc.org</a> .....	278-7827
MOA Solid Waste Services.....	<a href="http://www.muni.org/sws">www.muni.org/sws</a> .....	343-6262
MOA SWS Customer Service (for excess waste and bulky pick-ups) .....		343-6250
Valley Community for Recycling Solutions (VCRS).....	<a href="http://www.valleyrecycling.org">www.valleyrecycling.org</a> .....	907-745-5544