



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Anchorage Fish & Wildlife Field Office
605 West 4th Avenue, Room G-61
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2249



In reply, refer to:
AFWFO

Agenda Item B-6: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
April 8, 2010

Sea otters

The Sea Otter recovery team is submitting the draft recovery plan to the Service on April 8th for review. After review and acceptance of this draft, it will go out for public comment. This will be announced in the Federal Register.

Pacific walrus

The Service is going through the peer review process for the Pacific Walrus status assessment. Final status assessment is due out before June. It is at that time that the Service will have the information that it needs to make a decision on whether a proposal for listing the walrus is warranted.

The Region's recommendation on whether a listing proposal is warranted will be forwarded to the Washington Office around June 11th. The 12 month finding or proposed rule to list the walrus will be published in the Federal Register on or about Sept. 10th.

Short-tailed Albatross

The third cohort of short-tailed albatross chicks was successfully translocated to Mukojima Island from Torishima in mid February. Fifteen chicks were moved and continue to be hand-reared by staff from the Yamashina Institute in Japan. Seven of these chicks, and seven parentally-reared chicks on Torishima, will be outfitted with backpack satellite transmitters in May shortly before fledging. This allows us to track post fledging survival, compare survival of hand-reared vs. parentally reared chicks, and to track the movements of birds from the two islands to Alaskan and Russian waters.

On 13 February, just after the translocated chicks were removed from the main colony on Torishima, a landslide occurred at the colony site, burying and killing at least 6 chicks. Two other chicks that were partially buried in volcanic ash were rescued by Yamashina staff. This erosion hazard, and the fact that the entire colony, some 90% of the global population, is in the shadow of an active volcano, highlight the conservation need to establish new colonies at safer sites. We are morally committed to two more years of translocation, but currently have funding for only one more translocation operation.

Two of the black-footed albatrosses that were translocated in 2007 to Mukojima Island as a pilot project have returned to Mukojima and are conducting behaviorally normal courtship displays to one another, which portends well for the eventual success of the short-tailed albatross translocation operation.

Compliance with seabird avoidance regulations seems to be improving. For 2006, 2007, and 2008, the Fisheries Science Center reports that the number of affidavits filed by observers for non-compliance has dropped from 16 to 6 to 2, respectively.

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives

In response to DOI Secretarial order 3289, signed 9/14/2009, DOI agencies are working collaboratively across the US with partners from State governments, Tribes, local governments, universities, NGO's, and other stakeholders to form applied science-based partnerships that will approach landscape level conservation in a more collaborative manner. To this end, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives are being formed to address landscape level stressors, especially those related to our changing climate. They will each work within specified geographic areas, and in Alaska, we have parts or all of 5 different LCC regions.

LCCs will provide spatially-explicit scientific analysis and tools that link biological planning, conservation design, conservation delivery, monitoring, and research in an iterative, adaptive cycle, helping to address climate change threats and other limiting factors on fish, wildlife, and habitats at a landscape level.

All participants of an LCC will work collaboratively to achieve the cooperatives goals. They will create a synergistic relationship in pursuit of conservation. No one agency will be "in charge". And while there will be some measure of funding available to accomplish the works of LCCs, they will not usurp any groups existing authority nor will they have regulatory authority or seek to pass new regulations. Basically, they will be a source of multi-agency science and technical support, and a source for coordinating the actions taken by multiple partners.