

Exxon Valdez Oil Spill
Restoration Project Annual Report

Sound Ecosystem Assessment (SEA): Synthesis and Integration

Restoration Project 97320-Z
Annual Report

This annual report has been prepared for peer review as part of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council restoration program for the purpose of assessing project progress. Peer review comments have not been addressed in this annual report.

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April 1998

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Study History: Project 320-Z was established in FY 96 to assist the SEA lead scientist prepare and distribute single, integrated DPDs and Annual Reports. Funding was also provided to support the many aspects of synthesis and integration within the multi-project program. Conference calls, subgroup meetings and meetings and workshops of all investigators and selected staff and students are examples of synthesis activities supported by project 320-Z. The first annual report for this component of SEA was submitted by the Lead Scientist as part of the SEA 1996 single, integrated annual report in April, 1997. Project 320-Z (re-titled 320-Z1 for FY 99) will close-out in 1999.

Abstract: Support for synthesis and integration activities in FY 97 was used to receive, collate, reproduce, and submit the single, integrated FY 98 DPD and FY 96 Annual Report in April, 1997. Funding also supported participation in the SEA annual meeting, held in conjunction with the 48th Arctic Division AAAS Science Conference, September 24-27, 1997, in Valdez. This meeting developed the titles and suggested authorship for papers comprising the SEA synthesis volume to be written for the journal Fisheries Oceanography in FY 99. SEA web services were used in December, 1996, and January, 1997 to prepare the SEA FY96 public presentation for the EVOS public workshop, and to assist the modeling and herring components of SEA for peer reviews of their activities in January and February, 1997.

Key Words: Synthesis, Integration, SEA, EVOS.

Project Data: Synthesis and integration activities draw upon information generated by all the SEA components. Data sharing and transfer are aided by web and other network tools developed by project 320-J, Information Services and Modeling. SEA supports a web page at the following address: <http://www.pwssc.gen.ak.us/sea/sea.html>.

Citation: Cooney, R.. T. 1998. Sound Ecosystem Assessment (SEA): Synthesis and Integration, Exxon Valdez Oil Spill restoration project annual report (320-Z), Institute of Marine Science, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99775-7220.

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Executive Summary

Support for synthesis and integration activities in FY 97 was used to receive, collate, reproduce, and submit the single, integrated FY 98 DPD and FY 96 Annual Report in April, 1997. Funding also supported participation in the SEA annual meeting, held in conjunction with the 48th Arctic Division AAAS Science Conference, September 24-27, 1997, in Valdez. This meeting developed the titles and suggested authorship for papers comprising the SEA synthesis volume to be written for the journal Fisheries Oceanography in FY 99. SEA web services were used in December, 1996, and January, 1997 to prepare the SEA FY96 public presentation for the EVOS public workshop, and to assist the modeling and herring components of SEA for peer reviews of their activities in January and February, 1997.

Objectives

The following general objectives were approved in the FY 97 DPD:

1. Convene meetings of SEA principal investigators and staff as needed for program planning, and the debate and application of SEA results to overall program goals.
2. Use information from all SEA projects to provide the Trustee Council with a single, integrated annual report for work completed in FY 96, and to prepare and submit a single, integrated DPD for continuing studies in FY 98.

Methods

The SEA Lead Scientist (Ted Cooney) works with an executive committee (David Eslinger, Vince Patrick, Kevin Stokesbury for Brenda Norcross, and Mark Willette) to establish agendas for meetings, to review issues arising in SEA, and to make recommendations about program direction and change. Subgroups and others requesting travel approach the Lead Scientist with requests which are then reviewed on the basis of need. Funds are expended until they are exhausted. Each year, the Lead Scientist serves as the focal point for the receipt of hard and electronic copies of budgets for the DPD and manuscripts for the single integrated annual report. The Lead Scientist also provides a synthesis chapter for the annual report - an expanded executive summary of progress requested by the EVOS Chief Scientist, Robert Spies.

Results

The SEA FY 98 single, integrated DPD was submitted for consideration by the Trustee Council on 15 April, 1997. The single, integrated SEA annual report of progress for 1996 was submitted 1 May, 1997. Project 320-Z assisted with travel for investigators to attend the SEA annual meeting in Valdez, September 28, 1997 specifically to review the status of the program and to create titles and authorship for papers proposed for the SEA synthesis volume in FY 99. Some

investigators and staff were also supported to participate in a SEA herring sub-group meeting held during the AAAS science conference in Valdez.

Discussion

The SEA program must respond in a timely manner to formal reviews of progress by EVOS peer reviewers, to proposal and reporting schedules, and to shifts in emphasis responding to streams of information generated by the field and laboratory studies. As the study approaches the termination of its funding and the need for an overall summing up of results, it is imperative that support is available to stimulate communications between all investigators and their respective staffs and students. Without the flexibility of 320-Z funds, it is doubtful that the process of science in a program as complex as SEA could proceed efficiently, or meet its stated goals.

Conclusions

Funding for project 320-Z in FY 97 was the second year that support of this kind was available. There is no question that it fostered a much better climate for synthesis and integration between members and working groups composing the SEA family of projects. In this regard, these were funds well spent.

Acknowledgments

All SEA principal investigators and their staffs and students are gratefully acknowledged for their assistance with report and proposal preparation, and for their dedication to tasks set by SEA to resolve issues concerning ecosystem-dominated production limitations to pink salmon and herring production in Prince William Sound. I am particularly indebted to Maggie Billington in Fairbanks, and to Nancy Bird and Penny Oswalt in Cordova for assistance with budgeting and proposal preparation. Jennifer Allen continues to provide innovative network services that assist communications within SEA. Lastly, I thank Bill Hauser for his skillful hand at program management. Without the continuing contributions from this entire team, SEA would have fallen short long ago of the expectations the stakeholders in the region have for the science.