

EVOSTC ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT

Recipients of funds from the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council must submit an annual project report in the following format by **Sept. 1 of each fiscal year** for which project funding is received (with the exception of the final funding year in which a final report must be submitted). **Please help ensure that continued support for your project will not be delayed by submitting your report by Sept. 1. Timely receipt of your report allows more time for court notice and transfer, report review and timely release of the following year's funds.**

Satisfactory review of the annual report is necessary for continuation of multi-year projects. Failure to submit an annual report by **Sept. 1** of each year, or unsatisfactory review of an annual report, will result in withholding of additional project funds and may result in cancellation of the project or denial of funding for future projects. **PLEASE NOTE:** Significant changes in a project's objectives, methods, schedule, or budget require submittal of a new proposal that will be subject to the standard process of proposal submittal, technical review, and Trustee Council approval.

Project Number:..... **070853**

Project Title:..... **Pigeon Guillemot Restoration Research in Prince William Sound**

PI Name: **David Irons and Dan Roby**

Time period covered:..... **April-September**

Date of Report:..... **September 6, 2007**

Report prepared by:..... **David Irons**

Project website (if applicable):

Work Performed: Summarize work performed during the reporting period, including any results available to date and their relationship to the original project objectives. Explain deviations from the original project objectives, procedural or statistical methods, study area or schedule. Also describe any known problems or unusual developments, and whether and how they have been or can be overcome. Include any other significant information pertinent to the project.

We had two field seasons this year, one to trap mink and one to study Pigeon Guillemots.

We planned to obtain mink genetic samples from four locations in the Sound: northern Knight Island, Montague Island, southwestern mainland of PWS, and northwestern mainland of PWS. We were successful in collecting 29 mink from northern Knight Island, 32 mink from Montague Island, 29 mink from southwestern mainland of PWS, and 18 mink from the northwestern mainland of PWS. These samples, along with the 15 mink samples previously collected on the Naked Island Archipelago, will undergo genetic analysis in the laboratory of Joseph Cook at the University of New Mexico. The remaining mink samples necessary to fill in data gaps necessary

for describing the genetic structure of the mink population in western PWS will be collected during early spring 2008, as described in our original proposal.

An unplanned late season attempt to remove mink from Storey Island – to compare Storey with Naked Island in 2008, where no mink removal has occurred since 1999 -- met with limited success. The effort to trap mink on Storey Island began so late in the season that only 3 mink were removed.

Guillemots were censused at Naked, Peak, Storey, Smith, and Little Smith islands in late May to ascertain population size. We found that the Pigeon Guillemot population declined roughly 90%, from about 1000 to about 100, since our last survey in 1998. Also the populations of about 500 Tufted Puffins and 700 Parakeet Auklets were decimated, only a handful of each remains. The EVOS funded marine bird surveys of PWS showed a sound wide decline of Pigeon Guillemots, excluding the Naked Island complex and during the same time period of about only 20%, so we know the declines on Naked, Storey and Peak do not reflect the sound-wide population trends. We expect that recently introduced mink are responsible for these declines.

Active guillemot nest sites were identified on Naked Storey and Peak Island. Only 13 were found. In 1999, the last year that we worked there we found over 100. We expected to find more this year, but mink have apparently killed most the Guillemots on the island group making it impossible to study guillemots there as we had planned.

Future Work: Summarize work to be performed during the upcoming year, if different from the original proposal. Describe any proposed changes in objectives, procedural or statistical methods, study area or schedule. *NOTE: Significant changes in a project's objectives, methods, schedule or budget require submittal of a new proposal subject to the standard process of proposal submittal, technical review and Trustee Council approval.*

We will plan to finish trapping mink next April, if we need more specimens. The mink that we sent to the genetics lab will be analyzed to determine if there is evidence that they were introduced to Naked Island.

Since we cannot assess relative food availability by comparing reproductive parameters of guillemots at Naked Island to those in the past when there were 10 times as many birds there we will have to use alternative methods to obtain information on food availability. Some options are to: examine reproductive parameters for guillemots on nearby mink-free islands, such as Fool or Smith islands, assess prey availability at Naked Island and compare abundance to that in the mid 1990's. This could be done by an aerial survey for forage fish and an underwater survey for benthic fish. We have money in our budget to examine guillemots at other islands and we plan to do this, but we do not have money to conduct the fish surveys. Another proposal was submitted to fund this work.

Given the huge decline of birds at Naked Island it appears that removing mink would be an excellent method of restoring Pigeon Guillemots. To ensure the best data available is used in the

restoration plan we think that other guillemot colonies should be surveyed to see if Naked declined more than others with out mink, or others that have always had mink. Ideally there would be a Sound-wide survey of guillemot colonies. We do not have money in our budget for this survey, but we submitted a proposal to fund this.

Coordination/Collaboration: Describe efforts undertaken during the reporting period to achieve the coordination and collaboration provisions of the proposal, if applicable.

This project has been to date a stand alone project.

Community Involvement/TEK & Resource Management Applications: Describe efforts undertaken during the reporting period to achieve the community involvement/TEK and resource management application provisions of the proposal, if applicable.

We contacted people in Chenega, Tatitlek, Cordova, Valdez and Whittier looking for trappers to hire to trap the mink in PWS for us. We found no one who wanted to do the trapping for us. We have also contacted several people in these villages to help determine the history of mink distribution in the sound. People were very helpful, we collected information that suggests that there were no mink on

Information Transfer: List (a) publications produced during the reporting period, (b) conference and workshop presentations and attendance during the reporting period, and (c) data and/or information products developed during the reporting period. *NOTE: Lack of compliance with the Trustee Council's data policy and/or the project's data management plan will result in withholding of additional project funds, cancellation of the project, or denial of funding for future projects.*

Efforts to data include sample acquisition and management. Data management will compile with the Trustee Councils; data management policies.

Budget: Explain any differences and/or problems between actual and budgeted expenditures, including any substantial changes in the allocation of funds among line items on the budget form. Also provide any new information regarding matching funds or funds from non-EVOS sources for the project.

NOTE: Any request for an increased or supplemental budget must be submitted as a new proposal that will be subject to the standard process of proposal submittal, technical review, and Trustee Council approval.

We have stayed within our budget to date. Mink capture required longer than expected so we did not have money to charter a vessel and instead stayed in cabins, fish hatcheries and motels. We had an abbreviated guillemot field season at Naked because we were funded late in the year and were not able to hire personnel in a timely manner. However, increased gas prices were higher than we budgeted and the Mink field season was longer than expected. In the end we spent what we had allocated.

We can accept your annual report as a digital file (Microsoft Word or WordPerfect), with all figures and tables embedded. Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) files (version 4.x or later) are also acceptable; please do not lock PDF files or include digital signatures.

Please submit reports electronically in [ProjectView](#) or by email to mandy.migura@alaska.gov. Also, please be sure to post your annual report on your own website, if you have one.



*We appreciate your prompt submission of your annual report
and thank you for your participation.*