

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:11100853

Project Title: **Pigeon Guillemot Restoration Research in Prince William Sound, Alaska, FY11 Amendment**

PI Name: **David B. Irons and Daniel D. Roby**

Time period covered: **Feb 1, 2015 –Jan. 31, 2016**

Date of Report:.....**March 22, 2016**

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.

Mink Work

Despite increased trapping efforts in 2015, overall mink take declined from 76 mink in 2014 to 23 mink in 2015. Of the 23 mink removed during 2015 trapping efforts, 12 were male (52%) and 11 were female (48%) (Table 1). A total of 358 traps were utilized in the mink control areas for a total of 9,391 trap nights in 2015. The maximum number of active traps in the field at one time was 249. Corrected trapping efforts increased from 7,656 in 2014 to 9,378 corrected trap-nights in 2015, as did the average number of traps set/trap night from 20.72 (2014) to 26.34 (2015), an additional 5.62 traps/trap-night, increasing the trap saturation throughout.

Table 1. Sex composition of mink taken by island in 2014 and 2015.

Island	2014		2015	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Storey Island	6	5	1	5
Peak Island	7	4	5	3
Naked Island	31	23	6	3
Totals	44	32	12	11
	76		23	

For analysis purpose, the total length of the trapping duration was divided into two halves. Catch per unit effort was analyzed for both halves and compared to the trapping results done in 2014. The duration of mink control operations were 46 days and 58 days for 2014 and 2015, respectively. Catch per unit effort was greatest during the first half of trapping efforts in 2014, as expected, with 1.70 mink/100 corrected trap nights. Following the initial removal effort, the corrected catch rate resulted in 0.30 mink/100 corrected trap nights. Catch per unit effort declined in 2014 and was attributed to a decreased interest in food; likely because of breeding. Signs of mating were observed by specialist in early April, around the same time mink take dropped despite increased trapping efforts.

Trapping efforts began on February 28th, 2015, to exploit mink movements prior to breeding season. A decline was again noted between the first half and second half of 2015 removal effort. Catch per unit effort remained relatively constant throughout the month of March, decreasing suddenly and substantially as the project progressed into April. No mink were removed during the first twenty days of April. Mink control efforts in 2015 resulted in an initial 0.28 mink/100 corrected trap nights, sinking to .017 mink/100 corrected trap nights during the second half of the season. While there are contributing factors that may explain the reduction in take, (such as reduced population and increased alternative food sources available to mink) the consistent drop in the catch per unit effort from control year to control year indicates a promising trend that is likely due to a decreased density in mink on the Naked Island Group.

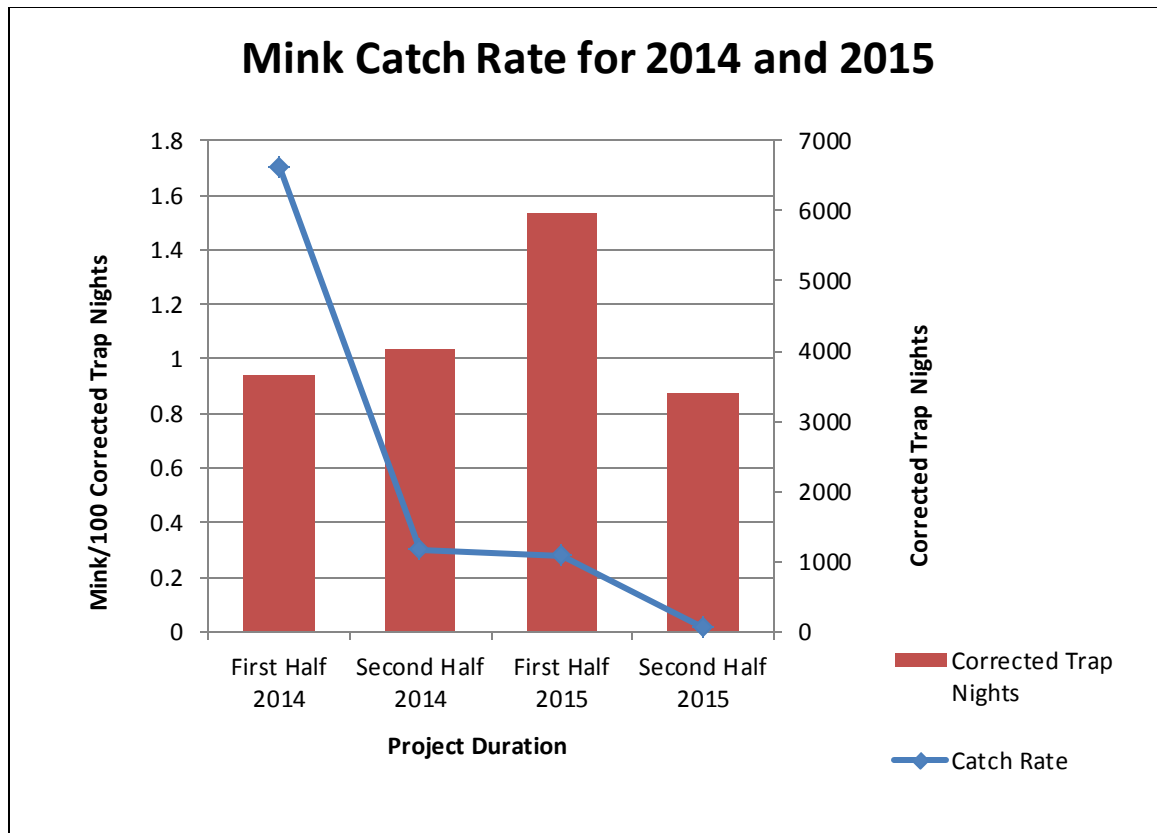


Figure 1. Catch rate of mink/100 corrected trap nights during the first and second half of trap efforts for the 2014 and 2015 trapping season.

As in all wildlife management actions involving trapping, attempts were made to reduce incidental take. Zero incidental take was observed for the 2015 trapping efforts.

The mink's heads were cut off and sent to UAF Museum for archival of tissue samples and skulls. Prey samples were opportunistically collected and preserved.

Pigeon Guillemot Work

This project provides an opportunity to restore the population of Pigeon Guillemots (*Cephus columba*) in Prince William Sound, Alaska, which has fallen by more than 90% at the Naked Island Group since 1989. A restoration plan for Pigeon Guillemots in PWS was prepared to address the species' lack of population recovery following injury by the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. Predation on nests and adults by mink is now the primary limiting factor for guillemot reproductive success and population recovery at the most important historical nesting site for guillemots in PWS (i.e., the Naked Island group). Mink on the Naked Island group are descended in part from fur farm stock and arrived on the island group during the 1980s. The goal of the project is to remove all mink from the Pigeon Guillemot nesting areas and allow for recovery to occur.

This summer we counted over 90 pigeon guillemots, up from 74 last year, control islands did not have a similar increase. We did not expect to see this large of increase in birds this year. The warm water in the Gulf of Alaska may have contributed as other species were moving from the Gulf to PWS. We surveyed active nests and found about 30 confirmed nests and about 20 suspected nests, last year we found 11. Colonies are starting to form again with up to 6 nests in one area. Productivity during the chick stage was high, around 80%, indicating that the adults could find enough food for their chicks. This winter and spring we will trap again.

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.*

This will be the third year of field work for this project. This spring mink will be trapped on the Naked Island Group to reduce the numbers of mink and allow pigeon guillemots to breed successfully. Also a pigeon guillemot survey will be completed in May and guillemot nests will be located in July during the chick rearing season.

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

The FWS has acquired permits from ADF&G to remove mink and from the USFS to work on their land.

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.

None this year.

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.*

None this year.

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 decided to employ a graduate to document the recovery of pigeon guillemots at the Naked Island Group rather than just hire biologists. We will have the graduate student at Oregon State University with Dan Roby and David Irons as advisors. To accomplish this we will do a contract (Intragency Agreement) between USFWS and OSU. This will result in a large decrease in the personnel costs and subsequent increase in the contract costs. Matching funds remain the same. The overall total cost remains the same.

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 catherine.boerner@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.*

**EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL TRUSTEE COUNCIL
DETAILED BUDGET FORM FY 10- FY 12**

Budget Category:	Proposed FY 14	Proposed FY 15	Proposed FY 16	Proposed FY 17	Proposed FY 18	TOTAL PROPOSED	ACTUAL CUMULATIVE
Personnel	\$43,800.0	\$43,800.0	\$70,200.0	\$70,200.0	\$70,200.0	\$298,200.0	36,903
Travel	\$1,914.0	\$1,914.0	\$3,712.0	\$3,712.0	\$3,712.0	\$14,964.0	7,147
Contractual	\$275,190.4	\$270,190.4	\$43,985.7	\$37,148.7	\$23,148.7	\$649,663.9	476,572
Commodities	\$40,000.0	\$40,000.0	\$20,400.0	\$14,350.0	\$14,350.0	\$129,100.0	33,871
Equipment	\$3,000.0	\$3,000.0	\$3,000.0	\$3,000.0	\$3,000.0	\$15,000.0	35,826
SUBTOTAL	\$363,904.4	\$358,904.4	\$141,297.7	\$128,410.7	\$114,410.7	\$1,106,927.9	590,319
General Administration (9% of subtotal)	\$32,751.4	\$32,301.4	\$12,716.8	\$11,557.0	\$10,297.0	\$99,623.5	
PROJECT TOTAL	\$396,655.8	\$391,205.8	\$154,014.5	\$139,967.7	\$124,707.7	\$1,206,551.4	
Other Resources (Cost Share Funds)	\$173,000.0	\$173,000.0	\$113,000.0	\$98,000.0	\$98,000.0	\$655,000.0	254,000
NFWF Grant	\$218,280.0	\$198,280.0	\$204,580.0	\$215,580.0	\$214,580.0	\$1,051,300.0	371000

Comments: Cost-Share Funds

David Irons salary (GS13 for 6 months) = \$60K
 Boat user fee (FY14 300 days, FY15 300 day, FY16 180 days, FY17 150 days, FY18 150 days @ \$500/day) = \$540K
 Equipment user fee (computers, survival suits, electronics, etc.) = \$12K/Year X 5 Years = \$60K
 GSA vehicle user fee = \$1k/Year X 5 Years = \$5K

 Total = \$665K

FY14 - 18

Project Title: Pigeon Guillemot Restoration
Lead PI: David B. Irons
Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**FORM 3A
TRUSTEE AGENCY
SUMMARY**