

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, 2016 –Jan. 31, 2017**

Date of Report:.....**February 14, 2017**

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.

Summary of accomplishments of the project to date.

Mink Trapping

We trapped for the first time in the late winter and spring of 2014. Seventy-six mink were killed. During the 2015 trapping season 23 mink were killed. In 2016 we trapped on the Naked Island group in March and April, for a total of about 60 days. We trapped 7 mink (4 male, 3 female). Breakdown by island: Storey 0, Peak 5 (2 male, 3 female), Naked 2 (male). Total traps set about 400 for 17,274 trap-nights. Overall catch rate was 0.04 mink/100 trap-nights. Two non-target species were taken, a red back vole and a river otter.

We used up to 20 trail cameras on Naked, Storey, and Peak islands during the trapping period to aid in searching for active mink. Each camera was out for one to four weeks.

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.

Attached are figures showing the trapping zones (Fig.1), where the traps were set (Fig. 1), where the mink were caught (Fig. 2) and the historical guillemot colonies (Fig. 3).

Pigeon Guillemot Summer Surveys and Nest Searches

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 162 pigeon guillemots, up from 95 last year, control islands did not have a similar increase (See Table 1). 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 42 confirmed nests, last year we found 30. Colonies are starting to form again with up to 8 nests in one area. Productivity during the chick stage was high, around 80%, indicating that the adults could find enough food for their chicks. In contrast, the Black-legged Kittiwakes and Common Murres failed throughout Prince William Sound.

We used up to 30 trail cameras on Naked, Storey, and Peak islands during the summer period to look for pigeon guillemots and mink. Each camera was out from four to eight weeks.

We used up to seven playback systems to play calls of pigeon guillemot. Each sound system was out from four to eight weeks.

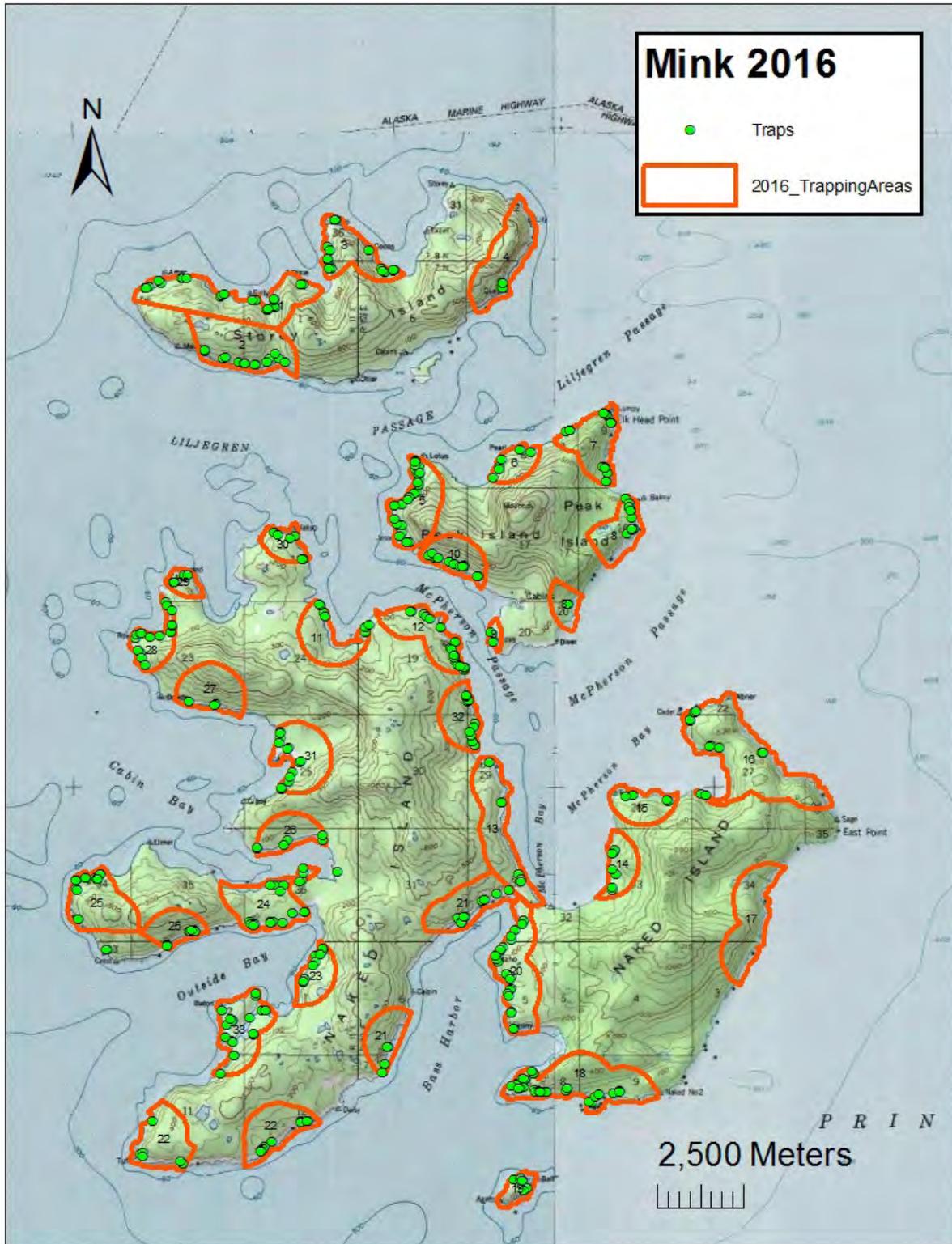


Figure 1. Map of trapping areas allowed by ADF&G in 2016, outlined in red, and locations of traps set in 2016, green dots.

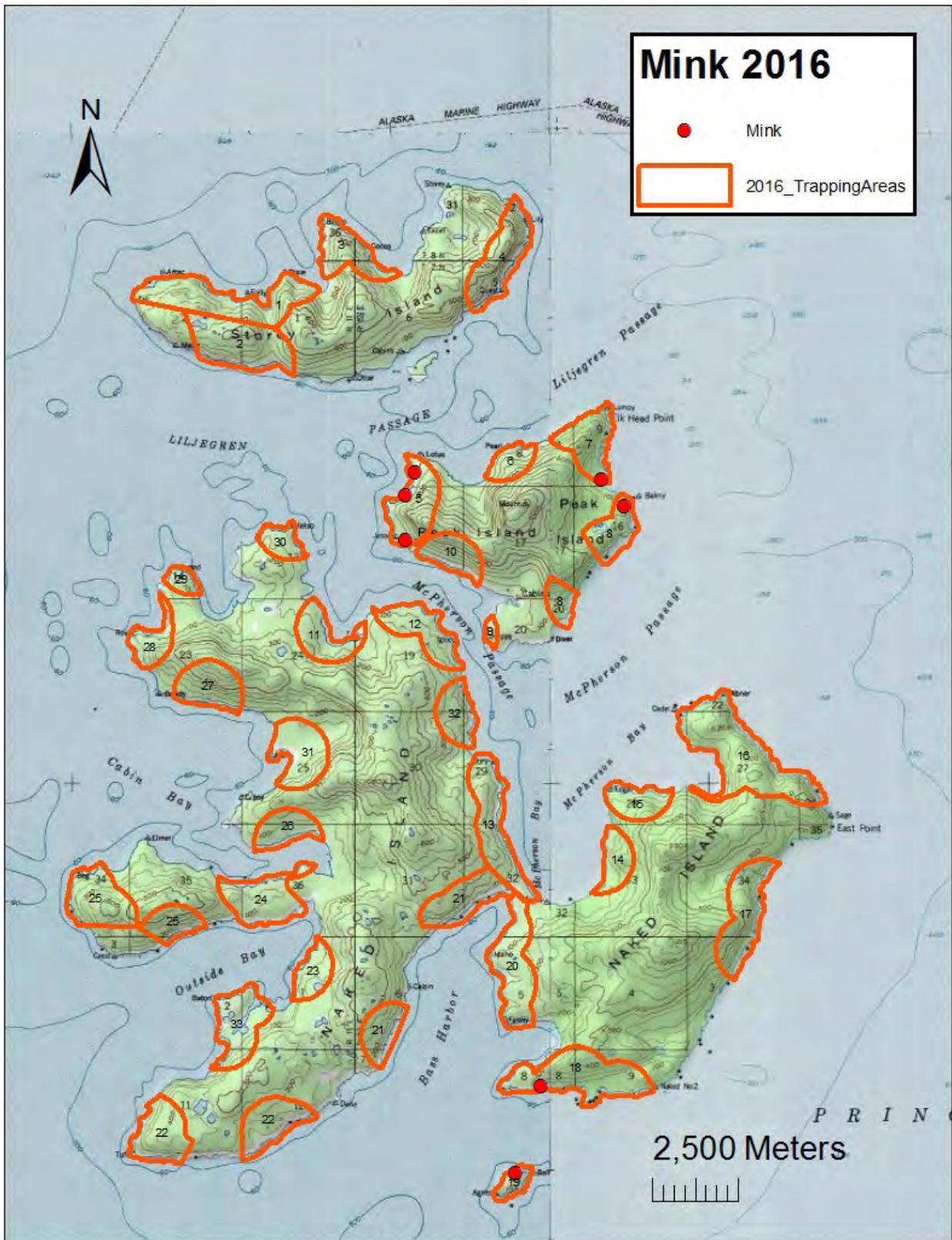


Figure 2. Map of a trapping areas allowed by ADF&G, outlined in red and locations of trapped mink in 2016, red dots.

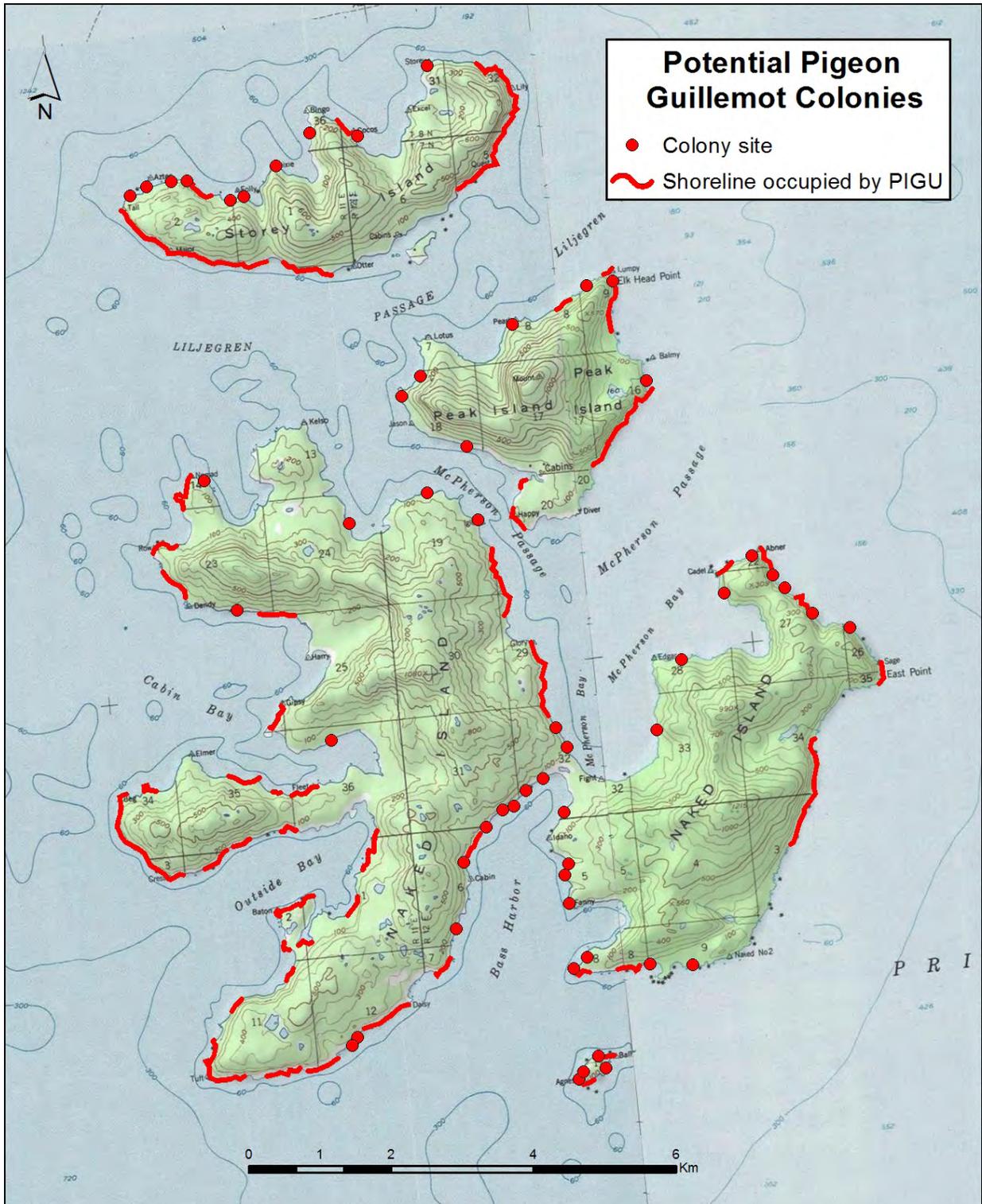


Figure 3. Map of potential pigeon guillemot colony sites on the Naked Island Group. These are a combination of historical colonies and current colonies.

YEAR	NAKED ISLAND GROUP					CONTROL ISLAND GROUP				
	Bass Harbor Island	Naked Island	Peak Island	Storey Island	Naked Group Total	Smith Island	Little Smith	Seal Island	Fool Island	Control Island Group Total
2012 PIGU Survey	1	32	13	12	58	ns	ns	ns	31	ns
2013 PIGU Survey	2	37	15	13	67	151	36	53	25	265
2014 PIGU Survey	7	42	12	8	69	171	38	106	53	368
2015 PIGU Survey	3	56	18	18	95	178	27	54	56	315
2016 PIGU Survey	6	93	17	46	162	168	39	46	57	310

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 fourth 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. Additionally, we will monitor reproductive success of the pigeon guillemots throughout the summer.

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.*

The results of last years work will be presented at the Pacific Seabird Group meeting in February 2017.

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 decided to employ a graduate to document the recovery of pigeon guillemots at the Naked Island Group rather than just hire biologists. We have hired a graduate student at Oregon State University to work with Dan Roby and David Irons as advisors. To accomplish this, we did a contract (Inter-agency Agreement) between USFWS and OSU. This resulted in a large decrease in the personnel costs and subsequent increase in the contract costs last year and it will be the same for this years. The overall cost of the project remains the same. Matching funds remain 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	NFWF Budget Share
Personnel	\$43,800.0	\$43,800.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$87,600.0	\$ 36,903.00	
Travel	\$1,914.0	\$1,914.0	\$3,712.0	\$3,712.0	\$3,712.0	\$14,964.0	\$ 7,147.00	
Contractual	\$275,190.4	\$270,190.4	\$134,585.7	\$121,698.7	\$107,698.7	\$909,363.9	\$ 677,680.00	
Commodities	\$40,000.0	\$40,000.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$80,000.0	\$ 33,871.00	
Equipment	\$3,000.0	\$3,000.0	\$3,000.0	\$3,000.0	\$3,000.0	\$15,000.0	\$ 35,826.00	
SUBTOTAL	\$363,904.4	\$358,904.4	\$141,297.7	\$128,410.7	\$114,410.7	\$1,106,927.9	\$ 791,427.00	\$1,051,300.0
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		\$1,051,300
Other Resources (Cost Share Funds)	\$173,000.0	\$173,000.0	\$113,000.0	\$98,000.0	\$98,000.0	\$655,000.0		
NFWF Grant	\$218,280.0	\$198,280.0	\$204,580.0	\$215,580.0	\$214,580.0	\$1,051,300.0		

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

**FORM 3A
TRUSTEE AGENCY SUMMARY**