

## BIRD STUDY NUMBER 2

Study Title: Boat Surveys to Determine Distribution and Abundance  
of Migratory Birds and Sea Otters in Prince William  
Sound

Lead Agency: USFWS

### PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Boat-based surveys for migratory birds and marine mammals in the pelagic and nearshore regions of Prince William Sound were conducted following the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Over 120 species of birds and 20 species of mammals have been counted on these surveys. Objectives of the study include: determining distributions, estimating abundances, determining differences in bird and mammal abundances between oiled and un-oiled areas, and determining changes in abundances following the spill.

Preliminary results indicate that bird populations in Prince William Sound declined since pre-spill surveys for 16 species or species groups including grebes, cormorants, northern pintail, harlequin duck, oldsquaw, scoters, goldeneyes, bufflehead, black oystercatcher, Bonaparte's gull, black-legged kittiwake, Arctic tern, pigeon guillemot, murrelets, and northwest crow. More than 30,000 carcasses representing over 90 species of birds were collected from the spill zone in 1989. In addition, both direct and continuing effects of the spill have been demonstrated in NRDA studies on harlequin duck, black oystercatcher, black-legged kittiwake, marbled murrelet, murre, and pigeon guillemot. Intensive studies have also revealed evidence of injury to populations of sea otters.

A preliminary report of results has been prepared for this study but comprehensive data synthesis and analysis have not been completed. The preparation of a final report will be essential for understanding the injuries the spill caused to marine birds and sea otters. If this information is not clearly and completely available to those responsible for restoration, it will not be possible to adequately address the restoration needs of the resource.

	BUDGET (\$K)
Salaries	\$ 42.2
Travel	0.0
Contractual	0.0
Commodities	0.0
Equipment	0.0
Other Non-Contractual	<u>0.0</u>
Subtotal	\$ 42.2
General Administration	<u>6.3</u>
Total	\$ 48.5