

**BIRD STUDY NUMBER 6**

Study Title: Assessment of the Abundance of Marbled Murrelet  
Sites Along the Kenai Peninsula and Prince William  
Sound

Lead Agency: USFWS

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

This study was implemented to assess injury to marbled murrelets from the oil spill. The marbled murrelet population in Prince William Sound has declined from about 300,000 in 1972 to 100,000 in 1989-91. Counts in the Naked Island area in 1989 and 1991 were also lower than counts made from 1978-1980. The length of time between pre-oil surveys and post-oil surveys makes it difficult to determine the contribution of the Exxon Valdez oil spill to this decline.

In Prince William Sound, marbled murrelets comprised 12% of all seabird carcasses retrieved in 1989 following the spill. Based on an 8% chance of carcass recovery, an estimated 9,570 murrelets were killed directly by oil in the Exxon Valdez oil spill zone. In addition, apparently healthy murrelets from oiled areas showed signs of petroleum hydrocarbon exposure, whereas murrelets from unoiled areas in Prince William Sound did not show such signs.

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 marbled murrelets. 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	\$ 21.6
Travel	0.0
Contractual	0.0
Commodities	0.0
Equipment	0.0
Other Non-Contractual	0.0
Subtotal	\$ 21.6
General Administration	3.2

Total

\$ 24.8