

**BIRD STUDY NUMBER 7**

Title: Assessment of the Effects of Petroleum Hydrocarbons on Reproductive Success of the Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel

Lead Agency: USFWS

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Following the oil spill, fork-tailed storm-petrel colonies in the Exxon Valdez oil spill zone were visited to determine reproductive success. The study objectives were to: determine if reproductive success was lower than in pre-spill years; assess the impact of crude-oil exposure on reproduction; count the number of adults contaminated by oil; and determine persistence of crude oil in the marine environment by comparing hydrocarbon contamination of petrel stomach oils with pre-spill data on hydrocarbon contamination of petrel stomach oils collected at the same site.

Preliminary results suggest that there was no measurable change in the storm-petrel reproductive success following the spill. However, it is difficult to conclude that the storm-petrels have not been impacted by the oil spill until the stomach oil samples have been analyzed. Previous studies established that petrels dosed with oil showed significant decreases in hatching success and chick survival.

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 fork-tailed storm-petrels. 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	\$	6.5
Travel		0.0
Contractual		0.0
Commodities		0.0
Equipment		0.0
Other Non-Contractual		0.0
Subtotal	\$	<u>6.5</u>
General Administration		1.0
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