

Exxon Valdez Oil Spill
Restoration Project Annual Report

Sound Ecosystem Assessment (SEA): Synthesis and Integration

Restoration Project 96320-Z
Annual Report

This annual report has been prepared for peer review as part of the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council restoration program for the purpose of assessing project progress. Peer review comments have not been addressed in this annual report.

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Study History: Project 96320-Z was established in 1996 to assist the SEA lead scientist prepared and distribute single, integrated SEA DPDs and Annual Reports. Funding was also provided to assist with the important aspects of synthesis and integration within the multi-project SEA program. These activities are facilitated by conference calls, subgroup meetings and workshops of all investigators and selected staff and students.

Abstract: Support for synthesis and integration activities within the SEA program was used to receive, collate, reproduce and submit the single, integrated SEA FY97 DPD and FY95 Annual Report. Funding was also used to sponsor (travel) model subgroup meetings, and a workshop of all SEA principal investigators, selected staff and students in September.

Key Words: Synthesis, integration, SEA

Project Data: Much of the synthesis and integration activity in SEA was conducted using information and data services provided by 96320-J. This includes a SEA web-page and associated cyber tools.

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Executive Summary

Funding allotted to 96320-Z was used to submit a single integrated FY97 DPD and FY95 Annual Report. This project also sponsored travel for the herring model subgroup to meet in Anchorage in May, and to bring the entire SEA organization together for a three-day workshop at the Seward Marine Station in late September. At that time the workshop reviewed the status of all projects, received updates from each of the modeling subgroups, and explored ideas for improving the efficiency of reporting SEA results to peers and the EVOS Trustee Council. It was decided that future reporting would be handed primarily by manuscripts for the reviewed literature. Also, initial ideas were explored regarding the structure of the close-out activities, including assignments to selected investigators to search for appropriate journals to which a major SEA synthesis could be submitted. Dr. James Brady was invited to attend the meeting and agreed to serve as the Alaska Department of Fish and Game contact for developing management applications arising from the SEA program.

Objectives

The following objectives were stated in the approved FY96 DPD:

1. Convene two (or more) internal meetings of SEA principal investigators to discuss and debate program scientific results, and to apply these findings to hypothesis testing.
2. Use SEA information to address timely reporting and program planning required of program 320 each year to include collecting, copying, collating and distributing single integrated reports and proposals.

Methods

The SEA lead scientist (Dr. Cooney), working with the SEA executive committee (Dave Eslinger, Vince Patrick, Mark Willette) and other SEA principal investigators, sets the agenda for full meetings of SEA. Subgroups and others requesting travel support approach the lead scientist with justification for such travel. Decisions are based on scientific need. Funds are expended until they are exhausted. The lead scientist receives digital and hard copies of reports and proposals. These are collated, copied and distributed to the Trustee Council, and internally to all SEA scientists.

Results

The SEA FY97 single, integrated DPD was submitted by 15 April, 1996. The single, integrated FY95 Annual Report was submitted by 1 May, 1996. The SEA herring workgroup met in May in Anchorage for a subgroup modelling workshop. All of SEA attended a program status and planning workshop in Seward in September, 1996.

Discussion

Funding year FY96 was the first year that funds were made available to address the tasks associated with the timely submission of SEA reports and proposals in a single, integrated format. This provide the lead scientist with local support to compete these tasks. I judge this was funding well spent. The ability to convene subgroups and meetings of all SEA principal investigators, staff and students is crucial to the success of the program. The isolation of the Seward meeting provided three days of uninterrupted discussion that led to several good ideas about making the reporting and proposing more efficient, and described better ways to pursue the collective science endeavors. Travel for subgroup meeting was well spent.

Conclusions

The SEA program must respond in a timely manner to reviews, proposals, and reporting schedules assigned by the Trustee Council. Because of the size and complexity of the study, support is needed for a variety of synthesis and integration activities associated with these tasks, and with the cooperative science. This project allows the lead scientist the necessary flexibility to address the overall management of SEA in a way that would be impossible without such support.

Acknowledgments

All SEA principal investigators, their staffs and students are acknowledged for assistance with proposal and report writing, and for participating aggressively in the process of science, including the debate and application of results to management tools. I am particularly indebted to Rosemary Ruff (UAF) and Nancy Bird and Penny Oswalt (PWSSC) for assistance with proposals, budgets and reports. Jennifer Allen provided network services that assisted in all of the synthesis and integration activities. Lastly, I acknowledge the unselfish assistance of Bill Hauser (ADF&G) with budgeting and other program tasks.