United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2943 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93003

IN REPLY REFER TO:
PAS 1687.2001.2623

October 7, 2004

Peter Schuyler
Catalina Island Conservancy
P.O. Box 2739
Avalon, California 90704

Dear Mr. Schuyler:

As you know, the Island Fox Recovery Coordination Group (RCG) has met to discuss the analysis provided by Task Force 3 of the Island Fox Working Group and to formulate recommendations for land managers regarding releases of island foxes this fall. Enclosed are the RCG's recommendations and the analysis provided by Task Force 3.

The requested analysis is entitled, "Urgent Technical Analysis Related to Analyses 3.1 and 3.3: Determine whether, how, and where to release captive-bred foxes this fall and, if no releases, develop contingency plans that may include establishing mainland populations or expanding existing on-island populations." The RCG's recommendations are based on this analysis and other available information.

I have read the recommendations and find the supporting discussion well-reasoned. Recommendations 1 and 2 regard the management (releases) of captive foxes on the northern Channel Islands this fall. I believe that the RCG has provided reasonable recommendations and contingent recommendations if there are limiting constraints for managing these three captive populations. Recommendations 3, 4, and 5 identify tasks that are important for recovery planning purposes, and I understand that the RCG has already taken steps to initiate these recommendations. Recommendation 6 regards the importance of collecting of information on any foxes released at Catalina Island. Such information would be valuable to the on-going recovery efforts at Catalina Island as well as those at the northern Channel Islands.

I would appreciate a timely response as to how you intend to proceed with implementing those recommendations for which you are responsible. In your response, please identify what actions you intend to take, implementation timelines, and an explanation for your decision.

If you have questions, please contact me at (805) 644-1766.

Sincerely,

Diane K. Noda

Diane K. Noda
Field Supervisor