United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93003

IN REPLY REFER TO:
PAS 1687.2001.3548

May 3, 2005

Lotus Vermeer, Ph.D.
Project Director, Santa Cruz Island
The Nature Conservancy of California
3639 Harbor Boulevard, Suite 201
Ventura, California 93001

Dear Dr. Vermeer:

The Island Fox Recovery Coordination Group (RCG) held a meeting on April 5-7, 2005, during which the group concluded discussion of Analysis 3.4, which concerns management and husbandry plans for each subspecies. The RCG's recommendations and the requested analysis are enclosed here.

The analysis request reads as follows: "Develop management and husbandry plans for each subspecies, taking into account studbook data and results from research into best husbandry practices (pen size, mate choice, etc.). The focus for research and management for each captive population will depend on the size and stability of that subspecies' wild and captive populations." The response to the analysis request by the task force provided animal husbandry guidelines and identified research and management strategies to address known husbandry and reintroduction problems. The response included two attachments: husbandry guidelines and the mate choice recommendations originally prepared for the June 2004 Island Fox Conservation Working Group meeting.

After review of this analysis the RCG's recommendations to Land Managers are two-fold: that Land Managers standardize record-keeping protocols so that data can be compared across facilities and that Land Managers undertake or support three research projects identified to improve rates of reproductive success in captive island foxes. Furthermore, the RCG proposes to distribute the Husbandry Guidelines and the results of the husbandry workshop held in 2003 at Santa Barbara Zoo to all managers and caretakers of island foxes, and encourage the Captive Populations Technical Expertise Group to review and update the guidelines each year.

I agree with the enclosed recommendations of the RCG and urge The Nature Conservancy to implement them in collaboration with the other Land Managers. Please let me know in writing what actions you intend to take and relevant timelines.

If you have questions, please contact me at (805) 644-1766 extension 313 or Carl Benz at extension 311.

Sincerely,

/s/ Diane K. Noda

Diane K. Noda
Field Supervisor

Enclosures