



Sharing Wildlife, Sharing Resources



Assistant Director – International Affairs Teiko Saito and Regional Director – Alaska Geoff Haskett conveyed FWS priorities to the Russian delegation. Photo by Charles Lane, EPA



Acting Assistant Director –Migratory Birds Jerome Ford joined Meeting Chair Geoff Haskett, Regional Director-Alaska in engaging the Russians in a dialogue on wildlife management and conservation.

FWS/DIC photo by Matthew Manning



Russian visitors at Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia. June 3, 2011. FWS/DIC photo by Peter Ward



Deputy Superintendent George Liffert accompanied Russian visitors on the Pine Grove Forest Trail at Prince William Forest Park, Virginia. June 3, 2011. FWS/DIC photo by Peter Ward



Greg Siekaniec, Assistant Director – National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) updated the Russians on changes since the last such meeting in 2009. FWS/DIC photo by Matthew Manning

A senior level delegation from Russia’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment met with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service managers and staff in Arlington, Virginia June 1-3, 2011 to chart a course for cooperation through 2012.

As neighboring countries, the U.S. and Russia share certain populations of fish, marine mammals and migratory birds, many of which have economic, cultural and subsistence importance in addition to their ecosystem role and intrinsic value. To better manage and research wildlife, biologists participate in a number of cooperative conservation activities on the ground, in the air, on and below the sea, and using satellite technology.

Information sharing and joint field studies benefit migratory bird and marine mammal species, and also assist in addressing the challenges of climate change, human/wildlife health linkages and invasive species.

Alaska staff of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service frequently interact with Russian biologists. Recent joint efforts include collecting population data on Pacific walrus from marine vessels and aircraft using thermal imaging systems and satellite transmitters. An agreement between Native and government representatives of the U.S. and Russia serves to better coordinate management of the shared Alaska-Chukotka polar bear population that inhabits the



Spectacled eider.
FWS photo by Laura Whitehouse



Pacific walrus. FWS photo



Crested auklets. Photo by Nikolai Konyukhov



Bolonsky Nature Reserve, Russia.
Photo by Charles Lane, EPA

Chukchi and northern Bering Seas. Populations of eider ducks, snow geese, and other wildlife benefit from U.S.-Russia collaborative efforts.

Since 2000 more than \$1.5M has been provided to strengthen tiger conservation in Russia under the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act. Additional grants through *Wildlife Without Borders-Russia* totaling more than \$1.3M since 1995 has assisted law enforcement, field studies and environmental education efforts in Russian nature reserves and parks. Both programs are managed by the Division of International Conservation.

The Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Protection of the Environment and Natural Resources is a mechanism for federal agencies to interact with Russian counterparts. Currently, FWS, USGS, NOAA and EPA are agencies that utilize the Agreement, which also encourages the active engagement of non-governmental organizations. Over the years, the two governments have noted the contributions to nature conservation of organizations such as World Wildlife Fund, Wild Salmon Center, International Crane Foundation, and EcoCenter Zapovedniks.

Russians and Americans have long maintained a dialogue on wildlife issues. Indeed, the first international treaty to address wildlife conservation was the North Pacific Fur Seal Convention of 1911. A more recent example: The **U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Commission**, which met for the first time in 2009, includes both Governmental and Native representatives.

Recent changes in Russia include the transfer of management of game species and oversight of hunting from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. The Russian Government is encouraging expanded visitation of natural areas. Russian federal nature reserves and parks are responding to the directive, in part by examining U.S. practices and infrastructure. The next senior level meeting under the Agreement will be held in Russia in 2013.

For additional information please contact:



Mr. Steven Kohl, Russia Program Coordinator
Division of International Conservation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arlington, Virginia, U.S.A.
russiachina@fws.gov tel. 703/358-1762
<http://www.fws.gov/international/>