



**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**  
**Region 7 - Alaska**  
**1011 East Tudor Road**  
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**(907)786-3309 (TDD Available)**

**NEWS**

**14-03**

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### **SERVICE SEEKS COMMENTS ON PROPOSAL TO REINTRODUCE STELLER'S EIDER IN ALASKA**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is seeking input on the proposed reintroduction of threatened Steller's eiders to Alaska. Specifically, the Service would like to determine the scope of the issues to be considered in an environmental assessment. The public comment period begins March 3, 2014. The deadline to submit ideas on the proposed action is April 15, 2014. Later in 2014, the Service will provide an opportunity for additional public input on the draft environmental assessment, which will lay out the issues, alternatives, analysis of impacts, and the preferred alternative.

Currently, the Alaska-breeding population of Steller's eiders nests on the North Slope. Outside the nesting season, the birds may be found in coastal areas of the eastern Aleutians, Bristol Bay, Kodiak and the western Kenai Peninsula where they overlap with Steller's eiders that breed in Russia. Steller's eiders were once considered a common nesting bird on the Yukon-Kuskokwim River Delta (Y-K Delta). However, this sub-population declined in the mid-20th century and only three nests have been found in the last decade. Their near disappearance was a primary factor in the listing of the Alaska-breeding population as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act (Act).

To recover species, the Act requires use of all methods and procedures needed to bring an endangered or threatened species to the point that the Act's safeguards are no longer necessary. Providing a critical safety net for America's native fish, wildlife and plants, the Act has prevented the extinction of hundreds of imperiled species across the nation while promoting the recovery of many others.

A healthy population of Steller's eiders nesting on the Y-K Delta is considered necessary for recovery of the listed Alaska-breeding population. Furthermore, the presence of these unique birds will contribute to the overall ecological diversity of this internationally-recognized waterfowl breeding area. It is unlikely that a population of Steller's eiders will reestablish there without reintroduction. After gathering input from stakeholders, the Eider Recovery Team (a group of scientists and wildlife managers), and representatives from central Y-K Delta tribes and communities in 2013, the Service is proposing to reintroduce Steller's eiders to this region. If successful, we anticipate reintroduced birds will migrate to and use the same non-breeding areas currently used by Steller's eiders.

The public may submit their comments by any of the following methods:

**E-mail:** [kate\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kate_martin@fws.gov)

**Post:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Kate Martin  
101 12th Avenue, Room 110  
Fairbanks, AK 99701

**Phone:** (907) 456-0215 or **Fax:** (907) 456-0208

**Or at the following meetings:**

**Bethel - March 6th, 4-7 p.m.** at the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, 807 Chief Eddie Hoffman Road, Bethel.

**Anchorage - April 9th, 4-7 p.m.** at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gordon Watson Conference Room, 1011 E. Tudor Rd., Anchorage. Photo identification, such as a driver's license, must be presented at the building reception desk.

More information on this topic, including updates on meeting schedules, may be found on the Service's Web site: <http://1.usa.gov/1bmQkZ2> or on Facebook: <http://on.fb.me/1bmPEmy>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to ensuring access to meeting attendees. If you need an accommodation (i.e. sign language interpreting, large print materials, etc.), please contact Kate Martin at [kate\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kate_martin@fws.gov) or (907) 456-0215 with your request one week prior to a public meeting, or as soon as practicable.

All comments received, including those from individuals, become part of the public record, and are available to the public upon request in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and Departmental policies and procedures. Name, address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information, if attached to a comment, may be made available to the public upon request. Withholding personal identifying information from public review can be requested but cannot be guaranteed.

Finally, regarding public comments, certain concerns related to the Steller's eider recovery program are outside the scope of this process and will not be addressed. For example, the issue of removing protections provided by the Act is a decision the Service would make using a separate procedure.

*The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov), or connect with us through any of these social media at <http://www.fws.gov/home/socialmedia/index.html>.*