

# Inventory of International Work

*Alaska Region, Fiscal Years 2006–2008*



USFWS



Anatoliy Kochnev



USFWS



USFWS

**Front Cover Background Photo:** NASA picture of the earth.

# Preface

This Inventory of International Work is a product of the Alaska Region Coordinating Team for International Cooperation (ARCTIC). The team was formed in 2007 to improve collaboration between and among U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) programs in Alaska, the International Affairs program of the national headquarters, and other partners. The team conducted the inventory as a first step in a process to develop a strategic plan for the international activities of the region. This report documents the results of the inventory and illustrates the breadth and depth of the international work of the Alaska Region, USFWS.

## ARCTIC TEAM MEMBERS

**Janet Hohn, Chair**

*International Conservation*

**Phillip Johnson**

*Fisheries and Ecological Services  
Environmental Contaminants*

**Charlie Hamilton**

*Fisheries and Ecological Services  
Marine Mammals Management*

**Stephen Talbot**

*Refuges*

**Kent Wohl**

*Migratory Bird Management (Retired)*

**Richard Lanctot**

(acting team member)

*Migratory Bird Management*

**Don Rivard**

*Office of Subsistence Management  
Fisheries Division*

**Cathy Rezabeck**

*External Affairs*

**Steve Tuttle**

*Law Enforcement*

**Peter Ward**

*National Headquarters-International Affairs*

## Acknowledgements

**Kent Wohl** envisioned forming an ARCTIC team and conducting an inventory of the Alaska Region's international work. He was a member of the ARCTIC team until retirement, January 2008.

**Maureen deZeeuw** helped coordinate and lead ARCTIC team meetings. She developed the questionnaire to collect information on international projects and circulated it to all the Alaska Region's programs through their ARCTIC team member. Maureen collated and edited each program's responses to the questionnaire and worked with each ARCTIC team member on their program submissions to ensure consistency.

**Maeve Taylor** helped review program responses.

**Mike Boylan** provided critical review of the Refuges section of this report.

**Andrea Medeiros** edited, designed, and formatted this report and maintained critical dialog with team members throughout the process. She also provided guidance on messages delivered.

# Contents

<b>Preface</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>International Conservation</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Fisheries and Ecological Services</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Refuges</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Migratory Bird Management</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Office of Subsistence Management</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>Office of Law Enforcement</b> .....	<b>39</b>

# Executive Summary

The Alaska Region is home to many species, populations, and ecosystems of national and global significance. Nearly 200 species of birds that breed here migrate beyond Alaska, many traveling outside the borders of the United States. The three species of marine mammals managed by the USFWS in Alaska are shared with bordering countries; the Pacific walrus and sea otter with Russia and the polar bear with both Canada and Russia. Some of Alaska's five species of Pacific salmon, resources that are important to our subsistence, commercial, and sport fisheries, return to river systems that flow from Canada and through our state before reaching the sea. To effectively manage these shared wildlife and fish, and the ecosystems upon which they depend, the USFWS must work with the international community to meet its mission:

*We work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.*

The USFWS has an International Affairs program, based in Washington, D.C., that is primarily concerned with foreign species and habitats, and with those species that range to temperate, subtropical, and tropical regions (see <http://www.fws.gov/international/>). Alaska is the only USFWS region that has its own International Conservation program at the assistant regional director's level, and it concentrates primarily on those species and habitats of arctic and subarctic latitudes that range from Alaska into foreign countries and waters (see the International Conservation section). All the USFWS' programs in Alaska, however, are engaged in international activities according to their own program priorities. These activities are often directly coordinated by the programs, or receive assistance from the region's International Conservation program or the International Affairs program in Washington, D.C. The Alaska Region's office of External Affairs also assists with international work when appropriate, including media, legislative, outreach, publication, video, graphic, and internet projects. Other programs, such as Budget and Finance, Contracting and General Services, Information Technology Management, Division of Administrative Support, and Human Resource provide essential support for the region's international efforts as well.

The USFWS in Alaska is involved in international work within and outside the arctic and subarctic zones. Regional staffs participate directly in international monitoring, mapping, conservation, and other related efforts for the benefit of our transboundary species. We conduct and contribute to international workshops and conferences in order to share information, methodologies, and conservation efforts. We provide technical assistance to scientists and researchers, land managers, visitor-service specialists, and law enforcement officers in other countries, in order to promote the conservation of shared species and habitats. This technical assistance also helps improve and increase the effectiveness of shared methodologies, increasing both the accuracy and consistency of international monitoring and conservation efforts.

Through its international programs, the USFWS also works with many partners and nations in the implementation of international treaties, conventions, and on-the-ground projects for conservation of species and the habitats on which they depend. The United States is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, as well as to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Fish and wildlife species native to other countries are important to the American people for their ecological and cultural values, as well as for the potential risks posed by their introduction to non-native habitats.

Because of the increasing interest in and focus on climate change and its impacts to fish and wildlife resources in Alaska, the circumpolar arctic and subarctic environments (both of which are particularly sensitive to the effects of warming) have taken on new significance in our international work in recent years. Continued changes in the Arctic will likely have global repercussions, affecting the planet's biodiversity as a whole. An ecosystem-based approach to monitoring that bridges habitats, species, and processes is now underway. USFWS' developing Arctic Strategy and the North Slope Science Initiative will make significant contributions to this circumpolar effort.

This report highlights some of the most significant international work done by the Alaska Region of the USFWS.

## At-A-Glance Inventory of International Work—Alaska Region

Project Title	International Conservation	Fisheries and Ecological Services	Refuges	Migratory Birds Management	Office of Subsistence Management	Office of Law Enforcement	Page
Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group	★						7
Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program	★	●	●	●			7
Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program Partnership Workshop	★						8
An Integrated Ecosystem Management Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimize Habitat Fragmentation in Three Selected Model Areas in the Russian Arctic	★			●			9
Arctic Biodiversity Assessment	★						9
Marine Mammal Commission	★						9
International Polar Year Coordination	★						9
U.S.-Russia Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection	★	●					10
Implementation of the U.S./Canada Yukon River Salmon Agreement: Coordination Activities for Managing Canadian Origin Pacific Salmon in the Yukon River		★					12
Spectacled Eider Productivity and Survival Study on Ayopechan Island in the Chaun-Delta, West Chukotka, Russia		★	●				12
Waterfowl Subsistence Harvest Surveys in Northeast Russia		★					12
International Cooperative Efforts to Recover the Endangered Short-Tailed Albatross		★					13
Spill Response Planning with Canada		★					14
Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program		★	●				14
Canadian Transboundary Mines		★					14
Queen Charlotte Goshawk Listing Decision		★					15
Agreement Between the United States and the Russian Federation on the Conservation and Management of the Alaska-Chukotka Polar Bear Population		★					15
U.S.-Canada Bilateral Cooperation		★					16
Polar Bear Management Agreement, Southern Beaufort Sea		★					16
International Union for Conservation of Nature/World Conservation Union Species Survival Commission Polar Bear Specialist Group		★					17
Managing Polar Bears in Russia's Far East		★					17
Sea Otter Health Studies and Standardization of Techniques Near Bering Island, Russia		★					18
International Union for Conservation of Nature/World Conservation Union's Species Coordinator for Sea Otters		★					18
Range-Wide Survey of the Pacific Walrus Population		★					19
Meeting for Joint U.S.-Russia Analysis of 2006 Joint Pacific Walrus Survey		★					19
Joint Annual Walrus Harvest Monitoring Project with Eskimo Walrus Commission		★					20
Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Flora Technical Expert Group			★				21
Circumboreal Vegetation Map Development Workshop			★				21

USFWS Alaska Region ★ Lead ● Partner

## At-A-Glance Inventory of International Work—Alaska Region

Project Title	International Conservation	Fisheries and Ecological Services	Refuges	Migratory Birds Management	Office of Subsistence Management	Office of Law Enforcement	Page
USFWS International Grants for Russian Conservation Projects			★				22
Alaska Firefighters Assist Australians in Wildfire Response			★				22
Rat Eradication, Canna Island, Scotland			★				22
“Sister Refuge” with Commander Islands Nature Biosphere Reserve			★				22
DOI Technical Assistance with Kolketi National Park (Republic of Georgia)			★				23
Porcupine Caribou Herd Monitoring			★				23
Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Cooperative			★				23
North Slope Precalving Muskox Census			★				24
Transboundary Land Managers Working Group			★				24
DOI Technical Assistance with Guatemala Law Enforcement Needs Assessment			★				24
Fostering Brown Bear Conservation Through International Collaboration and Cooperation			★				25
Document Inter-Seasonal Movements and Habitat Use by Black Oystercatchers in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska Using Satellite and Conventional VHF Radio Telemetry			★				25
Selawik NWR Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments Site			★				25
Upper Tanana Subsistence Fisheries Traditional Ecological Study			★		●		25
Cultural Resources Inventory of the Scottie/Desper Creek Area			★				25
Salmonid Rivers Observatory Network			★				26
Arctic Flight: Adventures Amongst Northern Birds			★				26
Ecology and Demography of Shorebirds Staging on the Coast of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta			★				26
Pacific Shorebird Migration Project			★				26
Baikal Sedge Research, Koyukuk NWR Wilderness			★				27
Helping Russian Longliners Conserve Shared Seabird Resources			★				27
Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey				★			28
West Coast of Mexico Midwinter Waterfowl Survey				★			28
Waterfowl Breeding Population Survey for Central and Western Arctic				★			29
Habitat Use and Physiology of Sea Ducks near Haida Gwaii: Evaluating Effects of Offshore Wind Farms				★			29
North Pacific Seabird Colony Database				★			30
Seabird Information Network				★			30
International Black Oystercatcher Working Group				★			30
Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group			●	★			31
Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan				★			31

USFWS Alaska Region ★ Lead ● Partner

## At-A-Glance Inventory of International Work—Alaska Region

Project Title	International Conservation	Fisheries and Ecological Services	Refuges	Migratory Birds Management	Office of Subsistence Management	Office of Law Enforcement	Page
Fluctuations in Circumpolar Seabird Populations Linked to Climate Oscillations				★			32
Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring – Arctic Component				★			32
Committee for Holarctic Shorebird Monitoring				★			32
Determine Linkages Between Breeding, Staging, and Wintering Populations of Hudsonian Godwits Using Genetics			●	★			33
Bird Harvest Regime in the Kolyma River Delta (Sakha Republic): An Example of Community Based Monitoring				★			33
South Pacific Regional Environment Program Central Pacific Flyway Bird Working Group				★			33
Ecotoxicology of Shorebirds in North and South America				★			34
Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group				★			34
International Rusty Blackbird Technical Group			●	★			34
U.S.-Japan Migratory Bird Convention				★			35
East Asian Flyway Dunlin Migration & Banding Database Projects				★			36
East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership Avian Influenza Workshop				★			36
East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (Briefing Paper)				★			36
Coordination and Consultation Activities with the Transboundary River Panel and the U.S.-Canada Pacific Salmon Commission					★		38
Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program					★		38
Wildlife Inspection Program						★	39
Protected Area Law Enforcement Needs Assessments for Honduras and the Dominican Republic						★	39
U.S. Agency for International Development Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network						★	40

USFWS Alaska Region ★ Lead ● Partner

# International Conservation

The International Conservation program in the Alaska Region works with others to strengthen cooperation and scientific exchange, promote communication, and provide leadership in Alaska for the conservation of internationally shared fish, wildlife, and plant resources, especially in the circumpolar Arctic. The monitoring, management, and conservation of our transboundary species and ecosystems require complex, coordinated international efforts. Alaska is in a unique position as the only Arctic state in the United States. The Arctic and its vast fish and wildlife resources are also particularly affected by changing global conditions such as climate, the spread of exotic species, the loss of sea ice cover, and evolving fire regimes. The Arctic Council, a high-level intergovernmental forum shared among the eight circumpolar Arctic nations (including the United States), was formed in 1996 as a result of the Ottawa Declaration signed by those nations' foreign ministers. The Assistant Regional Director (ARD) of International Conservation is the lead U.S. representative to the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna working group (CAFF) of the Arctic Council, and serves as the USFWS' delegate in addressing international issues. The work of the International Conservation program supports our nation's conservation laws, such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, as well as numerous international treaties.

Most of the USFWS' programs in Alaska, including Migratory Bird Management, Refuges, the Office of Subsistence Management, Office of Law Enforcement, and Fisheries and Ecological Services (including Marine Mammals Management,) directly engage in international fish and wildlife conservation activities. Because of the complexity of these activities and the workloads they involve, and in order to promote increased Regional and international efficiencies and funding opportunities, International Conservation provides management and coordination of international issues for the Region. The program initiates planning, budgeting, evaluation, and communications involving international issues. The ARD serves as a policy advisor to the Regional Director on international conservation and management issues. The ARD also chairs the ARCTIC team, newly formed in fiscal year 2006, to enhance coordination with the USFWS' International Affairs program in Washington D.C., and to strengthen international collaboration opportunities among programs in the Region. The International Conservation program is responsible for monitoring the status, activities, and policy implications for most international agreements involving the USFWS in Alaska.

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

### Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Working Group

**Project Duration:** 1992 to present

**Purpose:** CAFF is the Biodiversity Working Group of the Arctic Council. CAFF's mission is to address the conservation of Arctic biodiversity, and communicate its findings to the governments and residents of the Arctic, helping to promote practices which ensure the sustainability of the Arctic's living resources.

**USFWS' Role:** The USFWS is the lead agency for the CAFF Working Group and provides a U.S. national representative to CAFF. This responsibility has been delegated to the ARD of the Alaska Region's International Conservation program.

**Partners:** The CAFF Working Group consists of national representatives assigned by each of the eight Arctic Council Member States (Canada, Denmark [including Greenland and the Faroe

Islands], Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, United States) and their delegates, representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations that are permanent participants to the council, and Arctic Council observer countries and organizations.

**Contact:** Dr. Janet E. Hohn, ARD, International Conservation, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-121, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. janet\_hohn@fws.gov. 907/786 3850.

### Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP)

**Project Duration:** 2004 to present

**Purpose:** The CBMP strives for conservation of biological diversity, to halt or significantly reduce its loss, and provide information for the sustainable use of the Arctic's living resources for the indigenous peoples of the region, and other residents and stakeholders within and outside the Arctic. CAFF initiated the CBMP effort as a direct result of

recommendations for biodiversity monitoring made in the *2005 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment*.

**USFWS' Role:** International Conservation, through its official role in CAFF, has been involved in the development of the CBMP since its inception in 2004. International Conservation is the lead for CBMP partnership building and also serves as a representative on the CBMP steering committee as part of CAFF. The CAFF board, including the International Conservation ARD, provides overall direction and guidance to the CBMP chair. Among other specific tasks, Alaska's International Conservation program co-hosted, with Environment Canada, the CBMP Experts Implementation Planning Workshop in Anchorage, Alaska, November 29–December 1, 2006. International Conservation is the lead for the CBMP Funding Task Team that successfully planned that executed a stakeholder's workshop in Washington D.C. in March 2008 and is also providing essential assistance with writing the CBMP Implementation Plan.

**Partners:** The CBMP is a vast network of international partners, including the eight Arctic countries and organizations such as the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre, United Nations Environment Programme GRID-Arendal, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. In addition to the International Conservation program, other Alaska Region programs participate in the CBMP including Migratory Bird Management, Refuges, Fisheries and Ecological Services, and External

Affairs; all supported staff participants in the 2006 Experts Implementation Planning Workshop. The Washington International Affairs office also provided assistance in the development of the 2008 stakeholder's workshop.

**Contact:** Dr. Janet E. Hohn, ARD, International Conservation, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-121, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. janet\_hohn@fws.gov. 907/786 3850.

### Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program Partnership Workshop

**Project Duration:** 2006–2008

**Purpose:** The partnership workshop provided the CBMP with an opportunity to draw in new partners to support funding and in-kind program needs.

**USFWS' Role:** USFWS Alaska Region led an international CBMP partnership workshop steering committee and served as one of the primary sponsors for the workshop.

**Partners:** The State Department has assisted USFWS in supporting the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program Partnership Workshop. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the Northern Forum are also partners in this workshop through separate agreements.

**Contact:** Dr. Janet E. Hohn, ARD, International Conservation, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-121, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. janet\_hohn@fws.gov. 907/786 3850.



*CBMP Partnership Workshop—panelists David Carlson, Skip Walker, Craig Fleener, and Fae Korsmo lead a discussion on expanding CBMP targeted partnerships and sustaining the CBMP and its related monitoring networks.*

International Union for the Conservation of Nature

### **An Integrated Ecosystem Management Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimize Habitat Fragmentation in Three Selected Model Areas in the Russian Arctic (ECORA)**

**Project Duration:** 2003–2009

**Purpose:** ECORA will help to secure the integrity of some of the world's last remaining pristine areas and support livelihoods of indigenous and local peoples. Major outcomes of the project will include approved integrated ecosystem management strategies and action plans in three selected model areas in the Russian Arctic.

**USFWS' Role:** International Conservation provides the Western Advisor to the Beringovskiy Model Area and, via its official role in CAFF, has participated in all of the annual ECORA meetings in Russia.

**Partners:** The Russian Federation, Norway, CAFF and United Nations Environment Programme GRID-Arendal, and the USFWS Migratory Bird Management Office, Alaska.

**Contact:** Dr. Janet E. Hohn, ARD, International Conservation, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-121, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. janet\_hohn@fws.gov. 907/786 3850.

### **Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA)**

**Project Duration:** 2006–2013

**Purpose:** The Arctic Biodiversity Assessment will provide a baseline of the status and trends of biodiversity across the Arctic. It will provide a set of deliverables to the Arctic Council Ministers covering the time frame from 2010 to 2013, and like the CBMP, is a primary follow-up to the biodiversity-related recommendations put forth in the 2005 *Arctic Climate Impacts Assessment*. The Arctic Biodiversity Assessment will provide input to the Convention on Biological Diversity assessment of progress towards the 2010 biodiversity targets.

**USFWS' Role:** The United States has recently agreed to serve as co-lead country for the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment and lead responsibility has been delegated to the USFWS in Alaska. The International Conservation ARD is currently serving on the steering committee along with a representative from Finland, the CAFF chair, the CAFF Secretary, a permanent participant and an observer group.

**Partners:** The eight Arctic nation members of the Arctic Council and the six permanent participant organizations (Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council

International, Inuit Circumpolar Conference, Saami Council, and Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North).

**Contact:** Dr. Janet E. Hohn, ARD, International Conservation, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-121, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. janet\_hohn@fws.gov. 907/786 3850.

### **Marine Mammal Commission**

**Project Duration:** 2007–2009

**Purpose:** Under a reimbursable agreement, the USFWS and the Marine Mammal Commission joined efforts to conduct a workshop in Valencia, Spain, that brought together experts and specialists on two circumpolar marine mammal species, ringed seals and beluga whales. The overall purpose of the workshop was to develop circumpolar monitoring plans for the two species which may be used as models for other species of marine mammals in Arctic waters.

**USFWS' Role:** The International Conservation program in Alaska serves as program officer on the reimbursable agreement with the Marine Mammal Commission (<http://www.mmc.gov>), which like the USFWS works to help meet the conservation and protection goals of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. In the 2006 agreement, the USFWS provided administrative support for an international experts' workshop to develop circumpolar monitoring plans for two Arctic marine mammals.

**Partners:** National Marine Fisheries Service and Environment Canada

**Contact:** Dr. Janet E. Hohn, ARD, International Conservation, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-121, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. janet\_hohn@fws.gov. 907/786 3850.

### **International Polar Year (IPY) Coordination**

**Project Duration:** March 2007–March 2009

**Purpose:** The IPY (<http://www.ipy.org>) is a period of intense scientific attention that aims to provide better observation and understanding of the earth's two polar regions. To ensure opportunity for work at both polar regions in summer and winter, the IPY runs from March 2007 to March 2009. The first polar year was 1882–1883, and the last such initiative was in 1957–1958. These initiatives have involved an intense period of interdisciplinary research which collected a broad range of measurements that provide a snapshot in time of the state of the polar regions. The concept of the IPY is of an international program of coordinated, interdisciplinary scientific research and observations in the earth's polar regions to: explore

new scientific frontiers, deepen our understanding of polar processes and their global linkages, increase our ability to detect changes, attract and develop the next generation of polar scientists, engineers and logistics experts, and capture the interest of schoolchildren, the public and decision-makers.

**USFWS' Role:** As a contribution to the IPY, the USFWS has taken a lead role in the international development and implementation of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring program. In addition, the USFWS, via its role in the CAFF Flora Group, will convene an international group of experts to develop an action plan for mapping the boreal forest and via the CAFF Seabird Group will greatly expand the international knowledge base on Arctic seabirds.

**Partners:** CBMP program and all CAFF countries

**Contact:** Dr. Janet E. Hohn, ARD, International Conservation, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-121, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. janet\_hohn@fws.gov. 907/786 3850.

### **U.S.-Russia Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection**

**Project Duration:** 1972–present

**Purpose:** The USFWS cooperates with the Russian government under the U.S.-Russia Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection. Originally signed in 1972 and reaffirmed by Vice President Gore and Prime Minister Chernomyrdin in 1994, the agreement provides a framework for cooperation and facilitation of science, technology, and education exchanges. The program focuses on wildlife research and management, habitat protection, training, and conservation education.

**USFWS' Role:** In 1972, the USFWS and its counterpart agencies in the Soviet Union launched a cooperative program to study and protect wildlife and their habitats under the newly signed U.S.-Russia Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Protection of the Environment and Natural Resources. That relationship, known as Area V and formally labeled “Protection of Nature and the Organization of Reserves,” has continued uninterrupted for 35 years and has grown to encompass a broad range of joint activities focusing on shared species of migratory birds, fish and marine mammals; refuges and parks; and the vast ecosystem represented by the Bering and Chukchi Seas, which link the two countries. The resulting data have enabled both sides to conserve and manage wildlife and its habitats more effectively than would have been possible without such collaboration. The workload required for implementing this program is shared between the

Washington Office’s Russia/China program and the Alaska Region.

**Partners:** The Russian Government, USGS, EPA.

**Contact:** Dr. Janet E. Hohn, ARD, International Conservation, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-121, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. janet\_hohn@fws.gov. 907/786 3850.

# Fisheries and Ecological Services

The importance of international conservation efforts in Alaska reflect both the state's location at the crossroads of two continents and its wealth of fish and wildlife resources. The Alaska Region's Fisheries and Ecological Services program is responsible for the fisheries, endangered species, environmental contaminants, habitat conservation, and marine mammals programs within Alaska. The program delivers these services through seven field offices statewide.

Many of the Fisheries and Ecological Services' collaborative efforts with other countries are driven by statute or treaty. Implementation of the U.S./Canada Yukon River Salmon Agreement is one such example. The Endangered Species Act recognizes many of the USFWS' international treaties and specifically authorizes the use of funds in other countries for efforts necessary or useful for the conservation of listed species. The act also encourages cooperation with foreign countries in these conservation efforts, and authorizes the Secretary of the Department of the Interior to make personnel available for this international work. The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 likewise provides the statutory impetus for many of the Alaska Region's international conservation and management activities. It established the goal of maintaining marine mammals at an optimum sustainable population level. It also recognized the importance of protecting and conserving the habitats upon which marine mammals depend and specifically directed the USFWS to develop bilateral or multinational agreements for the protection and conservation of marine mammals. Each of the marine mammal species found in Alaska can also be found across international boundaries, and the USFWS coordinates management of these species with other countries.

The Arctic Council is an outgrowth of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy. While there are four working groups that operate under the auspices of the Arctic Council, the Fisheries and Ecological Services program efforts have primarily involved the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program which was formed to address Arctic contamination issues, and Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna which focuses on protection of Arctic species and their habitats.

Ultimately, all the USFWS' international conservation efforts are biologically driven. Salmon return to many rivers that flow from Canada to the United States and then the sea. Alaska's bird species listed under the Endangered Species Act spend significant portions of their life cycles in other countries. Stressors that impact our trust resources, including oil spills, atmospheric pollutants and discharged mine wastes, can easily cross borders. Similarly, many of the most damaging invasive species originate in foreign countries. In all these instances, the USFWS can achieve greater conservation benefits by cooperating with international partners to pursue a shared vision.



Andy Bassich

*Signing of the U.S./Canada Yukon River Salmon Agreement in 2002.*

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

### **Implementation of the U.S./Canada Yukon River Salmon Agreement: Coordination Activities for Managing Canadian Origin Pacific Salmon in the Yukon River**

**Project Duration:** 1985 to present

**Purpose:** The Yukon River Salmon Agreement establishes a cooperative management approach, via the Yukon River Panel and its U.S./Canada Joint Technical Committee, through a combination of coordinated management, on-the-ground habitat assessment and restoration, and much needed scientific assessment of Canadian origin Pacific salmon in the Yukon River.

**USFWS' Role:** The Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office Subsistence Fisheries and Fisheries and Habitat Restoration Branch staff are members of the Joint Technical Committee and serve as staff advisors to the Yukon River Panel. The Subsistence Fisheries Branch Chief is the U.S. government representative on the panel. Office staff participate on the Joint Technical Committee review subcommittee for the Restoration and Enhancement Fund for U.S. and Canadian projects. USFWS staff also manage the Research and Management Fund for projects on the United States side of the border.

**Partners:** National Marine Fisheries Service; Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Department of Fish and Game; Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada; Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, and public panel appointees; Tanana Chiefs Conference; Association of Village Council Presidents.

**Contact:** Russell R. Holder, Subsistence Fisheries Branch Chief, Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 101 12th Avenue, Room 110, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. russ\_holder@fws.gov. 907/455 1849.

### **Spectacled Eider Productivity and Survival Study on Ayopechan Island in the Chaun-Delta, West Chukotka, Russia**

**Project Duration:** 2003 to present

**Purpose:** To fill data gaps on the breeding biology and demographics of the Russia-breeding population of Spectacled Eiders. The study also helps accomplish several other recovery tasks related to increasing our knowledge of the species in Russia and to promoting Russian eider conservation.

**USFWS' Role:** The USFWS and the Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office have participated in the development of this project, by providing guidance on the study methods. The USFWS has also participated in the procurement of funds since its



Laura Whitehouse/USFWS

*Spectacled Eider.*

initiation in 2003. The Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office, Endangered Species Branch serves as advisor; assists with grant writing and submission, reviews annual reports, reports on findings to the Spectacled Eider Recovery Team, and oversees USFWS grants that provide funding.

**Partners:** Dr. Diana Solovieva and the Wrangel Island State Nature Reserve, Chukotka, Russia; Yukon Delta NWR; USGS, Alaska Science Center.

**Contact:** Nora Rojek, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 101 12th Avenue, Room 110, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. nora\_rojek@fws.gov. 907/456 0276.

### **Waterfowl Subsistence Harvest Surveys in Northeast Russia**

**Project Duration:** 2003–2008

**Purpose:** To provide estimates of the harvest of eiders, loons, and other waterfowl in the Northeast Russia by sampling Arctic villages and towns throughout the region of Yakutia and Chukotka during a three-year period.

**USFWS' Role:** The USFWS and the Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office participated in the development of this three-year project by providing guidance on the study methods. The USFWS has also participated in the procurement of funds for three years of surveys. The Endangered Species Branch serves as advisor; assists with grant writing and submission, reviews annual reports, reports on findings to the Spectacled and Steller's Eider Recovery Team, and oversees USFWS grants that provide funding.

**Partners:** Dr. Syroechkovski of the Russian Academy of Science Institute of Ecology and Evolution and the Goose, Swan and Duck Study Group of Northern Eurasia, Moscow, Russia; and Dr. Klokov of Saint-Petersburg State University, Institute of Geography, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

**Contact:** Nora Rojek, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 101 12th Avenue, Room 110, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. nora\_rojek@fws.gov. 907/456 0276.

### International Cooperative Efforts to Recover the Endangered Short-Tailed Albatross

**Project Duration:** 1997 to present

**Purpose:** Recovery of the listed Short-tailed Albatross. One of the greatest concerns for this species is that these birds are known to breed only on two remote islands in the western Pacific. Torishima Island, Japan, where the majority of Short-tailed Albatrosses breed, is an active volcano where the breeding colony is subject to mudslides and erosion. The other site in the Senkaku Islands is subject to political uncertainty and potential oil development. The recovery team has determined that establishment of new breeding colonies is necessary for the recovery of the species. The Yamashina Institute of Ornithology is working with the USFWS and Japan's Ministry of the Environment to develop new breeding colonies at safer locations in Japan.

**USFWS' Role:** The USFWS provides partial funding and participates in satellite telemetry, seabird bycatch reduction, translocation experiments, and banding. The USFWS does not serve as the principle investigator for any of these activities.

**Partners:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Marine Advisory Program, Alaska Longline Fisherman's Association, American Seafoods Company, Australian Antarctic Division, Cordova District of Fishermen United, Fishing Vessel Owners Association, Glacier Fish Company, Groundfish Forum, Hokkaido University, International Pacific Halibut Commission, Japanese Ministry of the Environment, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Marine Fisheries Service, North Pacific Fishery Management Council, North Pacific Longline Association, Oregon State University, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Petersburg Vessel Owners Association, Pollock Conservation Cooperative, Russian Academy of Sciences, Southern Seabird Solutions, Toho University, United Fishermen of Alaska, University of Massachusetts, University of Tokyo, USGS Southwest Science Center, Washington Sea Grant Program, World Wildlife Fund, Yamashina Institute of Ornithology.

**Contact:** Greg Balogh, Endangered Species Branch Chief, Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 605 W. 4th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. greg\_balogh@fws.gov. 907/271 2778.



Greg Balogh/USFWS

*Researchers attach a radio transmitter to the back of a Short-tailed Albatross.*

## Spill Response Planning with Canada

**Project Duration:** 1999 to present

**Purpose:** The purpose of this trans-boundary planning effort is to allow natural resource agencies, the Canadian Coast Guard and U.S. Coast Guard to develop working relationships that enhance their understanding of each other's legislative and regulatory mandates, in order to facilitate timely decision-making during oil spill response.

**USFWS' Role:** Participate in the Wildlife Response Working Group and Resource Agency Working Group to develop the Canada-U.S. Dixon Entrance Wildlife Response Guidelines, establish a process for identifying potential places of refuge for vessels in distress, and establish a process for considering requests for the use of dispersants and in situ burning in the Dixon Entrance trans-boundary area.

**Partners:** Department of the Interior, U.S. Coast Guard, National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Canadian Coast Guard, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service, British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection, Southeast Alaska Petroleum Resource Organization, International Bird Rescue Research Center

**Contact:** Catherine Berg, Regional Spill Response Coordinator, Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 605 W. 4th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. catherine\_berg@fws.gov. 907/271 1630.

## Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program

**Project Duration:** 1991 to present

**Purpose:** To advise the governments of the eight Arctic Council countries (Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States) on matters relating to threats to the Arctic region from pollution, and associated issues. The program has produced a series of high-quality, scientifically-based assessments of the pollution status of the Arctic.

**USFWS' Role:** Providing contaminants data and other relevant information for use within circumpolar assessment reports, participating in workshops, and providing reviews of reports or other technical documents.

**Partners:** Canadian Wildlife Service, USGS, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Alaska Department of Health, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, various National Wildlife Refuges, and a number of academic researchers.

**Contact:** Philip Johnson, Environmental Contaminants Coordinator, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, 99503. philip\_johnson@fws.gov. 907/786 3483.

## Canadian Transboundary Mines

**Project Duration:** 1995 to present

**Purpose:** Provide resource information and technical input to Canadian regulatory agencies regarding development of three mines in British Columbia. The Galore Creek Mine, a large copper, gold and silver deposit, and the Schaft Creek Mine, also a multi-metal deposit, are located adjacent to rivers that flow into the Stikine River. The Tulsequah Chief Mine is adjacent to the Taku River. The Stikine and the Taku rivers are major salmon-producers and provide hundreds of acres of floodplain migratory bird habitat.

**USFWS' Role:** Review of project documents, meeting and technical work group participation, and site visits. Our participation and written comments for all three projects focus on protection of fish and migratory birds and their specific habitats.

**Partners:** U.S. Department of the Interior, USGS, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, British Columbia Provincial natural resource agencies, Environment Canada.

**Contact:** Deborah Rudis, Environmental Contaminants Specialist, 3000 Vintage Blvd., Suite 201, Juneau, Alaska 99801. deborah\_rudis@fws.gov. 907/780 1183.



Taku River.

Deborah D. Rudis/USFWS



Rich Lowell/ADF&amp;G

*Juvenile Queen Charlotte Goshawk.*

### Queen Charlotte Goshawk Listing Decision

**Project Duration:** 1994 to present

**Purpose:** In 1994 the USFWS was petitioned to list the Queen Charlotte Goshawk, a small, dark subspecies of the northern goshawk that lives in coastal rainforests of British Columbia and Southeast Alaska. We found that listing was not warranted, but the finding was litigated and remanded, and a new negative finding was issued in 1997. In 2004, our 1997 finding was remanded, with instructions to determine whether Vancouver Island, British Columbia, was a “significant portion of the range”, within the meaning of the Endangered Species Act, and if so, determine if the subspecies should be listed there. In April 2007, the USFWS completed an updated status review, and in November 2007, published a response to the court in the Federal Register. We found that Vancouver Island is a significant portion of the range, that British Columbia and Southeast Alaska each constitute distinct population segments, and that listing as endangered or threatened is warranted for the British Columbia population segment, but not for the Southeast Alaska population segment. We are currently coordinating with the British Columbia and Canadian federal governments as we prepare a proposed rule to list the British Columbia population segment.

**USFWS’ Role:** The Juneau Fish and Wildlife Field Office is drafting a rule for the Federal Register that will propose to list the British Columbia distinct population segment of the Queen Charlotte Goshawk as either threatened or endangered. We will continue to coordinate with the British Columbia and Canadian Federal governments to determine which designation is more appropriate. After a public comment period following publication of the proposed rule, we will publish a final rule.

**Partners:** British Columbia Ministry of Forests and Range and the Ministry of Environment, Canadian Wildlife Service, and USFWS headquarters International Affairs.

**Contact:** Steve Brockmann, Juneau Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 3000 Vintage Blvd. # 201, Juneau, Alaska 99801; [steve\\_brockmann@fws.gov](mailto:steve_brockmann@fws.gov). 907/780 1181.

### Agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation on the Conservation and Management of the Alaska-Chukotka Polar Bear Population

**Project Duration:** 1992 to present

**Purpose:** Conserve and manage the shared Chukchi/Bering Seas polar bear population.

**USFWS’ Role:** Develop recommendations for the Bilateral Commission that will direct research and establish sustainable and enforceable harvest limits needed to address potential population declines due to over harvest; coordinate with the U.S. Department of State, the Alaska Nanuuq Commission, and colleagues in the Russian Federation to convene the first meeting of the Bilateral Agreement.

**Partners:** Department of State, the Alaska Nanuuq Commission, U.S. Marine Mammal Commission, and colleagues in the Russian Federation

**Contact:** Tom Evans, Acting Polar Bear Project Leader, USFWS Marine Mammals Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-341, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. [thomas\\_evans@fws.gov](mailto:thomas_evans@fws.gov). 907/786 3814.



USFWS

*On October 16, 2000, the United States and Russian Federation signed a bilateral agreement to conserve polar bears shared between the two countries.*

### **U.S.-Canada Bilateral Cooperation**

**Project Duration:** 1984 to present

**Purpose:** To conserve and manage the shared Southern Beaufort Sea polar bear population

**USFWS' Role:** The USFWS meets annually, as well as on an ad hoc basis, with representatives of Canadian Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments to ensure that species information, e.g., stock assessments, health monitoring status, etc., as well as harvest information is shared among our jurisdictions.

**Partners:** Representatives of Canadian Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments

**Contact:** Tom Evans, Acting Polar Bear Project Leader, USFWS Marine Mammals Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-341, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. thomas\_evans@fws.gov. 907/786 3814.

### **Polar Bear Management Agreement, Southern Beaufort Sea**

**Project Duration:** 1998 to present

**Purpose:** To conserve and manage the shared Southern Beaufort Sea polar bear population

**USFWS' Role:** Marine Mammals Management continues to provide technical assistance, harvest data, and information regarding research and management studies to the Inuvialuit Game Council (Canada) and North Slope Borough for consideration in implementing the Inuvialuit-Inupiat Polar Bear Management Agreement in the Southern Beaufort Sea.

**Partners:** Inuvialuit Game Council (Canada), North Slope Borough, and, Alaska Nanuq Commission

**Contact:** Tom Evans, Acting Polar Bear Project Leader, USFWS Marine Mammals Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-341, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. thomas\_evans@fws.gov. 907/786 3814.



USFWS

*Polar bear with cubs.*

### **International Union for Conservation of Nature /World Conservation Union Species Survival Commission Polar Bear Specialist Group**

**Project Duration:** 1977 to present

**Purpose:** To fulfill the terms of the 1973 Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears, signed by the five circumpolar nations of Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Norway, Russia, and the United States. This agreement works for the conservation of polar bears and the environment upon which they depend.

**USFWS' Role:** The USFWS hosted the 14th meeting of the Polar Bear Specialist Group in Seattle, Washington, from June 20 through 24, 2005. The polar bear program lead for Marine Mammals Management chaired the meeting.

**Partners:** Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Norway, Russia, Greenland Home Rule Government, the Alaska Nanuq Commission, the Inuvialuit Game Council and Wildlife Management Advisory Council, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, USGS, NOAA Fisheries, National Environmental Research Institute

**Contact:** Tom Evans, Acting Polar Bear Project Leader, USFWS Marine Mammals Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-341, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. thomas\_evans@fws.gov. 907/786 3814.

### **Managing Polar Bears in Russia's Far East**

**Project Duration:** 2006–2007

**Purpose:** To Conserve polar bears through mitigation and/or amelioration of negative bear human interactions in Russia's Far East.

**USFWS' Role:** USFWS wildlife biologist Craig Perham participated in a workshop at Vankarem, Russian Federation, and shared information and techniques with Vankarem local hunters regarding how the USFWS addresses polar bear/human interactions. Mr. Perham also brought back to the United States information on management techniques used in the field by polar bear patrols in Russia.

**Partners:** World Wildlife Fund, Community Members in Vankarem Russia,

**Contact:** Craig Perham, Polar Bear Program, USFWS Marine Mammals Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-341, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. craig\_perham@fws.gov. 907/786 3800.

### Sea Otter Health Studies and Standardization of Techniques Near Bering Island, Russia

**Project Duration:** 2004–2005

**Purpose:** To increase the understanding of northern sea otter population dynamics and standardize techniques used to assess sea otter health and status with Russian sea otter researchers.

**USFWS' Role:** In March 2005, at the request of the Russian Institute of Ecology, Kamchatka, Russia, Marine Mammals Management participated in an expedition to Bering Island, Russia, to capture live otters and conduct necropsies of over-winter mortalities. The USFWS provided funding through a grant agreement with the Alaska Sea Life Center. Marine Mammals Management will continue to work through the Alaska Sea Life Center to further our, and our Russian counterparts, understanding of population dynamics of the northern sea otter.

**Partners:** Russian researchers, Alaska SeaLife Center

**Contact:** Verena Gill and Angie Doroff, Wildlife Biologists, USFWS Marine Mammals Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-341, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. verena\_gill@fws.gov, angela\_doroff@fws.gov. 907/786 3800.

### International Union for Conservation of Nature/World Conservation Union's Species Coordinator for Sea Otters

**Project Duration:** 2005 to present

**Purpose:** To promote international understanding, conservation, and management of the sea otter.

**USFWS' Role:** Serves as the International Union for Conservation of Nature/World Conservation Union's species coordinator for sea otters. In July 2005, the species coordinator, along with biologists from Hokkaido, Japan, presented information at a symposium on sea otters and their interactions with commercial fisheries. This was the first time there has been a symposium on sea otters in Japan. The coordinator also served as a convener and presenter at a special session on sea otters and river otters at the 9<sup>th</sup> International Mammalogical Congress in Sapporo, Japan.

**Partners:** Researchers from Hokkaido, Japan, USGS

**Contact:** Angie Doroff, Wildlife Biologist, USFWS Marine Mammals Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-341, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. angela\_doroff@fws.gov. 907/786 3800.



Brian Hatfield/USGS

*USFWS Wildlife Biologist Verena Gill, with colleagues from the Alaska Sealife Center and the Russian Institute of Ecology on Bering Island, Russia prepare for a field day .*



Anatoly Kochnev

*Spring tagging effort for international walrus survey, 2006.*

### Range-Wide Survey of the Pacific Walrus Population

**Project Duration:** March–April 2006

**Purpose:** To estimate the size of the Pacific walrus population across its spring range, which is the ice-covered continental shelf of the Bering Sea.

**USFWS' Role:** Marine Mammals Management, in collaboration with the USGS and Russian scientists from GiproybFlot (Fleet Development and Research Institute of the Russian Federal Fisheries Committee and ChukotTINRO (Chukotka Branch of the Pacific Institute of Fisheries Oceanography), conducted a range-wide survey of the Pacific walrus population.

**Partners:** USGS and Russian researchers from GiproybFlot and ChukotTINRO

**Contact:** Suzann Speckman, Ph.D., Wildlife Biologist, USFWS Marine Mammals Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-341, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. [suzann\\_speckman@fws.gov](mailto:suzann_speckman@fws.gov). 907/786 3800.

### Meeting for Joint U.S.-Russia Analysis of the 2006 Pacific Walrus Survey

**Project Duration:** Spring 2007

**Purpose:** Analyze the results of the 2006 joint Pacific walrus survey and discuss current and emerging conservation issues including harvest trends, haulout trends, information needs, upcoming projects, and possible joint ventures in Alaska and Chukotka.

**USFWS' Role:** Hosted the meeting with Russian researchers in the spring of 2007. The Chukotka Native marine mammal harvesting community was invited to participate in the workshop with U.S. scientists and Alaska Natives to discuss current and emerging conservation issues including harvest trends, haulout trends, information needs, upcoming projects, and possible joint ventures in Alaska and Chukotka.

**Partners:** USGS, Eskimo Walrus Commission, and Russian researchers from GiproybFlot and ChukotTINRO

**Contact:** Suzann Speckman, Ph.D., Wildlife Biologist, USFWS Marine Mammals Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-341, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. [suzann\\_speckman@fws.gov](mailto:suzann_speckman@fws.gov). 907/786 3800.



*USFWS Wildlife Biologist Douglas Burn holds an audience of USFWS, USGS, and Russian researchers captive as he demonstrates how to detect walrus signatures in thermal imagery.*

## **Joint Walrus Harvest Monitoring Project with Eskimo Walrus Commission**

**Project Duration:** 1998 to present

**Purpose:** To collect harvest information from the walrus hunting communities in Chukotka, Russia.

**USFWS' Role:** Marine Mammals Management and the Eskimo Walrus Commission sponsor the annual walrus harvest monitoring project. Data are collected by a network of local Native harvest monitors through observation of the harvest and through interviews with hunters in the villages. Marine Mammals Management will continue to work with the Eskimo Walrus Commission and our partners in Chukotka, Russia, to assess and monitor harvest of this shared resource.

**Partners:** National Park Service, Eskimo Walrus Commission, members of the Chukotka Union of Traditional Marine Mammal Hunters and ChukotTINRO (Russian Federation).

**Contact:** Jonathan Snyder, Wildlife Biologist, USFWS Marine Mammals Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-341, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. jonathan\_snyder@fws.gov. 907/786 3800.

# Refuges

The Refuges program in Alaska consists of 16 national wildlife refuges encompassing more than 77 million acres of protected lands. The mission of these refuges, as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, is to administer a network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans. Alaska's national wildlife refuges are managed according to common purposes established by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. These purposes include: conserving fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity; fulfilling international treaty obligations of the United States regarding fish, wildlife and their habitats; ensuring water quality and necessary quantity; and providing the opportunity for continued subsistence uses by local residents. Some refuges have special purposes resulting from their unique attributes, e.g., Alaska Maritime Refuge has a purpose to provide "a program of national and international scientific research on marine resources."

Refuges manage a wide diversity of species, including some that migrate to other countries such as birds and wide-ranging caribou herds. Refuge managers and biologists often work in collaboration with scientists in other countries to manage such migratory species, as well as other species that they have in common, such as brown bears. Many Alaskan refuges host visiting staff from other countries who assist in biological field work. Likewise, staff from Alaskan refuges occasionally visit other countries to share their technical expertise with other scientists and land managers. Some Alaskan refuges also participate in global studies, contributing data to circumpolar projects.

During the next few decades, forces including the impacts of global climate change, resource development, changes in numbers of wildlife species, increases in permanent residents, and burgeoning tourism may strongly affect the Arctic. The relatively simple and often fragile Arctic ecosystems are dramatically altered through vegetation changes, destruction of wetlands, and thawing of permafrost, as well as through feedbacks of these effects to global hydrologic and atmospheric systems. To preserve plant diversity, conservation programs must be guided by the biological requirements of species and other ecosystem components as biological diversity ensures a healthy biosphere.

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

### Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Flora Technical Expert Group (CFG)

**Project Duration:** 2001 to present

**Purpose:** The goals of the CFG are to draw botanical expertise from CAFF member countries, in order to promote, encourage, and coordinate internationally the conservation of biodiversity of Arctic flora, habitats, and research activities in these fields; and to enhance the exchange of information relating to Arctic flora and vegetation and factors affecting them.

**USFWS' Role:** A Refuges staff member chairs the CFG. The chair facilitates the annual meeting and coordinates the work of the CFG between annual meetings.

**Partners:** The CFG is comprised of up to two representatives from each of the eight Arctic Council member states and permanent participants.

**Contact:** Stephen S. Talbot, Refuges, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. stephen\_talbot@fws.gov. 907/786 3381.

### Circumboreal Vegetation Map Development Workshop

**Project Duration:** May 2007

**Purpose:** Develop a strategy to map the vegetation of the circumpolar boreal zone, related to global change and modeling vegetation change, expanding the region covered by the Circumpolar Arctic Vegetation Map into boreal regions to the south. A new vegetation map is needed to provide a common legend and language for ecosystems of the boreal region.

**USFWS' Role:** A Refuges staff member chaired the workshop; organized the agenda and presentations and was responsible for publication of the workshop proceedings.

**Partners:** University of Alberta, Canadian Museum of Nature, Life Sciences, Faroese Museum of Natural History, Wesfalische Wilhelms-Universitat, University of Helsinki, Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Botanisk Museum, University of Tromsø, Moscow State University, Russian Academy of Sciences, Species Information Centre, University of

Alaska Museum of the North, University of Alaska  
Fairbanks

**Contact:** Stephen S. Talbot, Refuges, 1011 East  
Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. stephen\_  
talbot@fws.gov. 907/786 3381.

### **USFWS International Grants for Russian Conservation Projects**

**Project Duration:** 2006 to present

**Purpose:** Award USFWS international grants to  
Russian conservation projects.

**USFWS' Role:** Member of the selection committee  
that reviews and awards grants to Russian grant  
applicants.

**Partners:** Russian government

**Contact:** Steve Kohl, Division of International  
Conservation, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 100,  
Arlington, Virginia 22203. steven\_kohl@fws.gov.  
703/358 1762.

### **Alaska Firefighters Assist Australians in Wildfire Response**

**Project Duration:** January 20–February 20, 2007

**Purpose:** Assist the Australian government with fire  
suppression.

**USFWS' Role:** Provided two staffers for a month-  
long fire suppression effort in Australia. Staff were  
assigned to supervise a response to a lightning fire  
in the Snowy Mountains and to lead a Situation Unit  
for an Incident Management Team with four other  
Americans in the small foothill community of Swifts  
Creek.

**Partners:** Australian government

**Contact:** Mary Kwart

### **Rat Eradication, Canna Island, Scotland**

**Project Duration:** February 16–March 2, 2006

**Purpose:** Gain first-hand knowledge, experience,  
and skills that could be used in the development and  
implementation of Alaska Maritime's rat eradication  
program.

**USFWS' Role:** Two refuge staff members went to  
Canna to participate in the rat eradication project.  
The Refuge funded Peter Dunleavy and Steve  
Ebbert's travel to Canna Island to participate in this  
project.

**Partners:** Elizabeth Bell, Canna Island Project  
Leader, Wildlife Management International invited  
Steve and Peter to participate in the Canna Island  
Rat Eradication Project.



Steve Ebbert/USFWS

*Setting bait stations for rat eradication on Canna Island,  
Scotland.*

**Contact:** Steve Ebbert, Alaska Maritime NWR, 95  
Sterling Highway, Suite 1, Homer, Alaska 99603.  
steve\_ebbert@fws.gov. 907/235 6546.

### **"Sister Refuge" Partnership with Commander Islands Nature Biosphere Reserve**

**Project Duration:** 2006–2007

**Purpose:** To develop and foster a "sister refuge"  
(informal) partnership between the Commander  
Islands Nature Biosphere Reserve and the  
Alaska Maritime NWR. One specific objective is  
to standardize the collection of seabird data with  
the reserve. Because the Commander Islands  
are at the western extent of the Aleutian Islands,  
the two protected areas share ecological features  
and wildlife species. The Commander Islands are  
designated as an important bird area by Audubon  
Society and Birdlife International, as a biosphere  
reserve by the United Nations Educational,  
Scientific, and Cultural Organization, and as one of  
World Wildlife Fund's highest priority areas in need  
of conservation in the Bering Sea.

**USFWS' Role:** Participated in World Wildlife Fund-sponsored expedition in July 2006. The American delegation was led by ecologist Olga Romanenko of the World Wildlife Fund, and included Arthur Sowls of the Alaska Maritime NWR and wildlife biologist Thomas Van Pelt. The group went to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Russia and met with World Wildlife Fund's Russia staff and Commander Islands Nature Biosphere Reserve Director. They discussed opportunities for U.S.-Russia cooperation, and led a workshop to determine effective local strategies for rat control and oil spill prevention and response. The group met with nature reserve staff and local residents in Nikolskoe on Bering Island, and visited the seabird colonies on Airy Kamen Island. They also shared a methodology to have young people track ocean life changes and monitor beached seabirds. (Information from World Wildlife Fund's Kamchatka/Bering Sea Ecoregion News Winter 2006–2007)

**Partners:** World Wildlife Fund, Commander Islands Nature Biosphere Reserve, University of California, Santa Cruz (Jim Estes)

**Contact:** Art Sowls, Alaska Maritime NWR, 95 Sterling Highway, Suite 1, Homer, Alaska 99603. art\_sowls@fws.gov. 907/235 6546.

### DOI Technical Assistance with Kolkheti National Park (Republic of Georgia)

**Project Duration:** 2004–2006

**Purpose:** This project was part of an established working relationship between DOI and the Georgian government to foster a national system of protected areas within the country of Georgia. Through this project, the refuge staff gained experience in the research, development, and design of interpretive signs for internationally and culturally diverse audiences.

**USFWS' Role:** One person from the Arctic NWR staff participated in the planning and development of 15 interpretive panels.

**Partners:** USFWS, BLM, DOI, World Bank, Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia-Department of Protected Areas (numerous staff at various levels within the Georgian Government and at Kolkheti National Park), and numerous subject-area experts in Georgia including botanists, scientists and architects.

**Contact:** Cathy Curby, Arctic NWR, 101 12th Ave., Room 236, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. cathy\_curby@fws.gov. 907/456 0519.

### Porcupine Caribou Herd Monitoring

**Project Duration:** 1975 to present

**Purpose:** Monitor the Porcupine Caribou Herd demography to fulfill obligations put forth in the International Agreement between the United States and Canada for the conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd.

**USFWS' Role:** The USFWS contributes airplanes, pilots, and biologists to fly survey flights; purchase/refurbish VHF and satellite collars; provide expertise to analyze and evaluate data; and assigns one biologist to serve on the Porcupine Caribou Technical Committee.

**Partners:** Canadian Wildlife Service, Yukon Territorial Government-Department of Environment, Porcupine Caribou Management Board-Canada, Ivvavik National Park, Vuntut National Park, Government of the Northwest Territories, Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, University of Alaska-Fairbanks, USGS

**Contact:** Tara Wertz, Arctic NWR, 101 12th Ave., Room 236, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. tara\_wertz@fws.gov. 907/456 0519.

### Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Cooperative

**Project Duration:** 1994 to present

**Purpose:** Preserve traditional ecological knowledge and promote capacity building in the natural resources field within rural villages in Canada and Alaska. The main focuses are ecological monitoring including climate change, contaminants, and regional development. Village findings are summarized annually and shared at annual gatherings, which provide opportunities for participants to compare and discuss the findings at a regional scale. In addition, participants make decisions about the coop's program in order to maintain and enhance a system of ecological monitoring so that it is relevant to the coop members. To date, the gathering has been held in Whitehorse, Inuvik, Old Crow, Aklavik and Fort McPherson.

**USFWS' Role:** The Arctic NWR provides in-kind support in the form of salary for individuals who seek grant opportunities, provide outreach capacity, and support of one person who sits on the board of the cooperative. To date the main grant funding has come from the Challenge Cost Share program; an application for future funding has been submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

**Partners:** USFWS, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Yukon Territorial Government-Environment, Environment Canada-Whitehorse, Wildlife Management Advisory Council-North Slope; Old

Crow, Ft. MacPherson, Tsiigehtchic, Inuvik, Aklavik Renewable Resource Councils; Inuvik, Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk Hunters' and Trappers' Committees; First Nation and Aboriginal governments and organizations (Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation), Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board, Parks Canada, Heritage Canada, Government of Northwest Territories-RWED, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Joint Secretariat, Porcupine Caribou Management Board, Community Corporations

**Contact:** Joanne Ahlfs, Arctic NWR, 101 12th Ave., Room 236, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. joanne\_ahlfs@fws.gov. 907/455 1834.

**North Slope Precalving Muskox Census**

**Project Duration:** 1982 to present

**Purpose:** Obtain trends in abundance for this international population of muskoxen.

**USFWS' Role:** Arctic NWR typically flies transects of the census area within the refuge boundaries. In 2006, the staff of the Arctic NWR flew transects in Canada at the request of Canadian cooperators.

**Partners:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game, National Park Service, Yukon Territorial Government-Department of Environment, Parks Canada.

**Contact:** Patricia Reynolds, Arctic NWR, 101 12th Ave., Room 236, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. patricia\_reynolds@fws.gov. 907/456 0519.

**Transboundary Land Managers Working Group**

**Project Duration:** 1989 to present (biennial meetings)

**Purpose:** To discuss transboundary issues with Canadian and U.S. land managers and to share resource information. Topics of discussion

are: coordination of visitor information and interpretation programs, transboundary recreation (river float management), staff training and exchanges, ecological monitoring, coordination of harvest of transboundary wildlife populations, and sharing of information and databases.

**USFWS' Role:** Contribute information, resource data, and results of resource inventory and monitoring studies.

**Partners:** Ivaavik National Park, and Vuntut National Park (Canada), Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve (Alaska); Dawson City National Historic Site (Canada), Tetlin NWR, Wrangell-St Elias National Park, (Alaska); Kluane National Park (Canada), Glacier Bay National Park (Alaska); Tatshenshini-Alsek Park (Canada), Klondike Gold Rush National Park (Alaska); and Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site (Canada).

**Contact:** Richard Voss, Arctic NWR, 101 12th Ave., Room 236, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. richard\_voss@fws.gov. 907/456 0253.

**DOI Technical Assistance with Guatemala Law Enforcement Needs Assessment**

**Project Duration:** February 25–March 10, 2007

**Purpose:** To provide law enforcement training and conduct a law enforcement needs assessment in Guatemala under an Interagency Agreement with the U.S. Department of State, in support of the Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement. The objective of this trip is to increase the capacity of local and national environmental law enforcement bodies.

**USFWS' Role:** Provide technical training for park guards in the Peten region, and complete a needs assessment that focuses on Guatemalan law



*Muskox on the coastal plane of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.*

USFWS

enforcement capabilities within, and adjacent to, protected areas.

**Partners:** Department's International Technical Assistance Program, Foundation for Anthropological and Environmental Studies.

**Contact:** Heather Knudsen, Refuge Officer, 101 12th Ave., Room 236, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. heather\_knudsen@fws.gov. 907/456 0410.

### **Fostering Brown Bear Conservation Through International Collaboration and Cooperation**

**Project Duration:** 2002 to present

**Purpose:** To help ensure that all parties interested in brown bears will have a common forum to promote, facilitate and coordinate research, management, monitoring, enforcement, conservation and outreach initiatives of mutual interest. To date the Brown Bear Working Group's efforts have focused primarily on the North Pacific Rim—United States, Japan, Russia, and Canada—although other countries, e.g., Sweden, have recently expressed interest in participating.

**USFWS' Role:** The USFWS and Kodiak NWR, in particular, have been cooperating with the Brown Bear Working Group since 2002. The USFWS Division of International Conservation has provided funding for workshops.

**Partners:** The Northern Forum, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Kodiak Brown Bear Trust

**Contact:** William B. Leacock, Kodiak NWR, 1390 Buskin River Rd., Kodiak, Alaska 99615. william\_leacock@fws.gov. 907/487 0249.

### **Document Inter-Seasonal Movements and Habitat Use by Black Oystercatchers in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska Using Satellite and Conventional VHF Radio Telemetry**

**Project Duration:** 2008

**Purpose:** Identify locations of important wintering areas, the number of birds in those wintering areas, movements between breeding and wintering sites, inter-seasonal habitat use, and important limiting factors and threats during the nonbreeding period.

**USFWS' Role:** Kodiak NWR provides logistical support, collects tracking data, and provides tracking data to USGS for compilation.

**Partners:** USFWS, U.S. Forest Service, USGS, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Oregon State University, and Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada.

**Contact:** Dr. Richard B. Lanctot, USFWS Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd.,

Anchorage, Alaska 99503. richard\_lanctot@fws.gov. 907/786 3609.

### **Selawik NWR Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments (GLORIA) site**

**Project Duration:** July 2007

**Purpose:** Establish a long-term observation site to monitor trends in soil and permafrost temperature and species diversity.

**USFWS' Role:** Selawik NWR provided travel and logistic support and will continue to monitor and revisit the site every 3 years.

**Partners:** GLORIA program of standardized international monitoring protocols.

**Contact:** Stephen Talbot, USFWS, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. stephen\_talbot@fws.gov. 907 786 3381.

### **Upper Tanana Subsistence Fisheries Traditional Ecological Study**

**Project Duration:** January 2004–December 2006

**Purpose:** To understand and document traditional ecological knowledge of all of the fisheries of the Upper Tanana Valley by indigenous residents of Alaska and the Yukon area of Canada. Researchers combined ethnographic interviews, linguistic documentation, mapping and survey techniques to provide an historic and contemporary picture of traditional knowledge and subsistence practices among Upper Tanana fisheries.

**USFWS' Role:** A member of the Tetlin NWR staff is the leading principal investigator.

**Partners:** USFWS Office of Subsistence Management (funding), Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Yukon College, Alaska Native Language Center, Rick Thoman (linguist) and Irene Arnold (language specialist).

**Contact:** Connie Friend, Tetlin NWR, P.O. Box 779, Tok, Alaska 99780. connie\_friend@fws.gov. 907/883 5312.

### **Cultural Resources Inventory of the Scottie/Desper Creek Area**

**Project Duration:** 2007–2008

**Purpose:** Document important historical and cultural sites and resources in Lower Scottie Creek/Desper Creek and Upper Chisana River areas. An extensive amount of human habitation and use of the Upper Tanana Valley have been documented to have occurred for several thousands of years prior to European contact. The aboriginal inhabitants of the area traveled extensively between what is presently the Tetlin NWR and the Yukon Territory in Canada.

There has been only limited documentation of the cultural resources of the area.

**USFWS' Role:** The Tetlin NWR has been collaborating with Dr. Norman Easton, Yukon College, Whitehorse, YT to survey the cultural resources of the area and has administered the special use permits and provided some logistical support for the cultural resource surveys.

**Partners:** Yukon College

**Contact:** Connie Friend, Tetlin NWR, P.O. Box 779, Tok, Alaska 99780. [connie\\_friend@fws.gov](mailto:connie_friend@fws.gov). 907/883 5312.

### Salmonid Rivers Observatory Network

**Project Duration:** 2004–2008

**Purpose:** To quantify biophysical processes producing the shifting habitat mosaic and associated biodiversity in the observatory rivers, in context of influences on salmon population structure and productivity. And to devise and promote a new conservation and management protocol for wild salmon rivers that is based on this model.

**USFWS' Role:** The Yukon Delta NWR provides logistic support, training, equipment and personnel to the project.

**Partners:** The Flathead Lake Biological Station of the University of Montana ([www.umt.edu/flbs](http://www.umt.edu/flbs)), Wild Salmon Center, Moscow State University.

**Contact:** Daniel Gillikin, Yukon Delta NWR, P.O. Box 346, Bethel, Alaska 99559. [daniel\\_gillikin@fws.gov](mailto:daniel_gillikin@fws.gov). 907/543 3151.

### Arctic Flight: Adventures Amongst Northern Birds

**Project Duration:** 2004–2007

**Purpose:** To publish a collection of paintings, sketches, and observations of Arctic wildlife. More than thirty paintings and nearly seventy studies and sketches from the Delta are included in Arctic Flight: Adventures Amongst Northern Birds.

**USFWS' Role:** The Yukon Delta NWR hosted wildlife artist James McCallum during his visit to Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge between April and July of 2004 as a volunteer. In the fall of 2006, McCallum asked Yukon Delta NWR Education Specialist Brian McCaffery, to write the introductory essay for the portion of the book devoted to paintings from the Delta. McCaffery's draft essay was submitted in January 2007.

**Partners:** James McCallum and Langford Press.

**Contact:** Brian J. McCaffery, Yukon Delta NWR, P.O. Box 346, Bethel, Alaska 99559. [brian\\_mccaffery@fws.gov](mailto:brian_mccaffery@fws.gov). 907/543 3151.

### Ecology and Demography of Shorebirds Staging on the Coast of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.

**Project Duration:** 2004 to present

**Purpose:** To investigate the ecology of shorebirds staging on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta (including Bar-tailed Godwits, Dunlin, Rock Sandpipers, and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers); to incorporate observations of marked birds into flyway-wide demographic models of the Alaska-breeding race of the Bar-tailed Godwit.

**USFWS' Role:** The refuge provided all on-site infrastructure, safety, aerial, and logistic support, as well as personnel (both seasonal and permanent staff) to assist and/or lead different components of the field work.

**Partners:** Swedish Polar Research Secretariat, Lund University (Sweden), University of Groningen (Netherlands), Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research, Netherlands Institute of Ecology, Otago University and Massey University (New Zealand), Department of Conservation and Land Management-Western Australia Wildlife Research Centre, Global Flyway Network, Simon Fraser University (Canada), Virginia Tech University, U. S. Geological Survey, Point Reyes Bird Observatory.

**Contact:** Brian J. McCaffery, Yukon Delta NWR, P.O. Box 346, Bethel, Alaska, 99559. [brian\\_mccaffery@fws.gov](mailto:brian_mccaffery@fws.gov). 907/543 3151.

### Pacific Shorebird Migration Project

**Project Duration:** 2005 to present

**Purpose:** To determine the migratory routes of individual Pacific basin Bar-tailed Godwit, Hudsonian Godwit, Bristle-thighed Curlew, Whimbrel, and Long-billed Curlew; to incorporate these data into a framework that identifies key sites along the migratory routes of these larger shorebirds, identifies potential threats to their populations, and develops conservation initiatives to protect these populations.

**USFWS' Role:** In 2005 and 2006, the Yukon Delta NWR had primary responsibilities for locating Bar-tailed Godwit nests at the Old Chevak Field Station, so that the USGS crew would have subjects of platform telemetry transmitter and VHF deployment. In 2007, the refuge selected the field site and suggested the timing of the field work for a USGS crew working on Bristle-thighed Curlews in the Andreafsky Wilderness. In all years, USGS provided the transmitters, veterinarian, expanded field crews, and regular downloading and reporting of telemetry data.

**Partners:** U. S. Geological Survey, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Massey University (New Zealand).



USFWS

*Bar-tailed Godwit.*

**Contact:** Brian J. McCaffery, Yukon Delta NWR, P.O. Box 346, Bethel, Alaska, 99559. brian\_mccaffery@fws.gov. 907/543 3151.

### **Baikal Sedge Research, Koyukuk NWR Wilderness**

**Project Duration:** 2008

**Purpose:** To compare and contrast the genetics, habitat, and reproductive characteristics of this species identified as “rare” in Alaska found only at the Nogahabara Sand Dunes within Koyukuk NWR that is also a “Threatened” species in Canada with six populations known to exist in the Yukon Territory.

**USFWS’ Role:** Refuge and Canadian scientists will collect specimens of Baikal sedge from Koyukuk NWR for genetic analysis and research into seed viability and parasites.

**Partners:** Yukon Department of the Environment, Canadian Museum of Nature, Kluane National Park and Preserve, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and University of Alaska Fairbanks Institute of Arctic Biology.

**Contact:** Karen Lehmkuhl, Koyukuk NWR, P.O. Box 287, Galena, Alaska 99741. karen\_lehmkuhl@fws.gov. 800/656 1231.

### **Helping Russian Longliners Conserve Shared Seabird Resources**

**Project Duration:** 2008

**Purpose:** Alaska Maritime NWR and USFWS Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office will cooperate with World Wildlife Fund, a Russian fishing association, and Russia Academy of Science to reduce seabird bycatch by Russian commercial fishermen.

**USFWS’ Role:** Alaska Maritime NWR and Russia’s Commander Islands Nature Reserve have a “Sister Refuge” agreement to share technical assistance.

**Partners:** World Wildlife Fund, ACRLOS (a Russian commercial fishing consortium), Pacific Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Science

**Contact:** Vernon Byrd, Alaska Maritime NWR, C/O Alaska Islands and Ocean Visitor Center, 95 Sterling Highway, Suite 1, Homer, Alaska 99603. vernon\_byrd@fws.gov. 907/235 6546.

Greg Balogh, USFWS Alaska Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 605 West 4th Avenue, Room G-61, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. greg\_balogh@fws.gov. 907/271 2778.

# Migratory Bird Management

Although it is well known that migratory birds in Alaska are an important national heritage, it is far less known that Alaska's birds are a significant international resource. In fact, Arctic breeding migratory birds in Alaska highlight the interconnectedness of the hemispheres as they pursue their annual migrations from breeding to nonbreeding grounds via international flyways. For example, of the 318 species of regular breeding migratory birds in Alaska almost 200 species, or more than 60 percent, migrate beyond Alaska and the legal jurisdiction of the United States. More than 90 percent of Alaska's seabird, shorebird, and loon/grebe species migrate beyond the United States

Alaska is the terminus of the four North American migratory bird flyways as well as four additional flyways: Central Pacific, East Asia, Central Asia-India, and East Africa Flyways. The Alaska Region is the only region whose birds fly within eight of the ten global flyways.

The international aspects of migratory bird management in Alaska makes the region unique, and highlight the need for a rangewide approach to managing Alaska's migratory birds. Obviously, it is insufficient and ineffective to approach migratory bird conservation on the breeding grounds, migration staging sites, and wintering area in isolation of each other. Effective migratory bird conservation, management, and research can only be achieved by integrated, multinational approaches that span a bird's entire range or flyway.

The Alaska Region's international migratory bird management responsibilities, program activities, and complexities have expanded significantly in the last 15 years. The expansion has been a reflection of the increased understanding of the nonbreeding areas of Alaska's migratory birds and threats to their populations on the nonbreeding grounds. The increase in international activities has also been a reflection of nations within a flyway understanding and accepting a shared and equal responsibility for the conservation of migratory birds. A developing recognition of the Alaska Region's international bird resources and the pivotal role it plays in the conservation of these resource outside the United States has presented the region with important leadership and collaboration opportunities on international migratory bird projects.

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

### Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey

**Project Duration:** 1955 to present (annual aerial survey)

**Purpose:** To provide geographically comprehensive (Alaska [except the North Slope] and the Old Crow Flats of Yukon Territory) annual indices of dabbling and diving duck populations for use in the development of waterfowl hunting regulations.

**USFWS' Role:** The Alaska Region Division of Migratory Bird Management is responsible for all aspects of planning, conducting, and reporting results for the Alaska and Canadian Yukon Territory portions of this survey. This is accomplished through aerial surveys flown at approximately 150 feet above ground level at approximately 100 miles per hour while air crews record observations into a GPS-linked computer program. Results are presented at the March Pacific Flyway Study Committee meeting.

**Partners:** Canadian Wildlife Service, USFWS-Alaska Region Refuges, National Headquarters Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S.

Forest Service-Chugach National Forest, National Park Service.

**Contact:** Edward Mallek, Project Leader, Waterfowl Migratory Birds Fairbanks Field Station, USFWS Division of Migratory Bird Management, 1412 Airport Way, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. [ed\\_mallek@fws.gov](mailto:ed_mallek@fws.gov). 907/456 0341.

### West Coast of Mexico Midwinter Waterfowl Survey

**Project Duration:** 1986 to present (annual aerial survey)

**Purpose:** To obtain complete counts of Pacific Brant in their dense winter aggregations along the west coast of mainland and Baja Mexico. Survey data are used to set the annual Pacific Brant harvest regulations.

**USFWS' Role:** The Waterfowl Management Branch is responsible for all aspects of planning, conducting, and reporting results for the survey area. Complete aerial coverage is flown through all major brant wintering areas in the salt-water bays of the west coast of Mexico.

**Partners:** Mexico: SEMERNAT; USFWS National Headquarters Division of Migratory Bird Management

**Contact:** Edward Mallek, Project Leader, Waterfowl Migratory Birds Fairbanks Field Station, USFWS Division of Migratory Bird Management, 1412 Airport Way, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. ed\_mallek@fws.gov. 907/456 0341.

**Waterfowl Breeding Population Survey for Central and Western Arctic**

**Project Duration:** 2005 to present (annual aerial survey)

**Purpose:** To provide geographically comprehensive breeding pair indices of sea ducks and nesting geese in unsurveyed nesting areas of Arctic Canada.

**USFWS' Role:** The Division of Migratory Bird Management became involved in this project in March 2005 when assistance was requested by the Canadian Wildlife Service and National Headquarters Division of Migratory Bird Management. Juneau Field Station personnel worked with Canadian Wildlife Service and National Headquarters Division of Migratory Bird Management personnel to design the survey and a Juneau-based pilot and observer flew the survey in 2005. Pilots from the Juneau and Fairbanks offices flew the survey in 2006. The Waterfowl Management Branch and partners are responsible for all aspects of planning, conducting, and reporting results for the survey area. The National Headquarters Division of Migratory Bird Management helps coordinate this activity as part of the USFWS' trust responsibility towards protecting migratory birds.

**Partners:** Canadian Wildlife Service, Arctic Goose Joint Venture, Sea Duck Joint Venture, Wildlife Management Institute, Central Flyway Council, USFWS National Headquarters Division of Migratory Bird Management.

**Contact:** Edward Mallek, Project Leader, Waterfowl Migratory Birds Fairbanks Field Station, USFWS Division of Migratory Bird Management, 1412 Airport Way, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. ed\_mallek@fws.gov. 907/456 0341.

**Habitat Use and Physiology of Sea Ducks near Haida Gwaii: Evaluating Effects of Offshore Wind Farms**

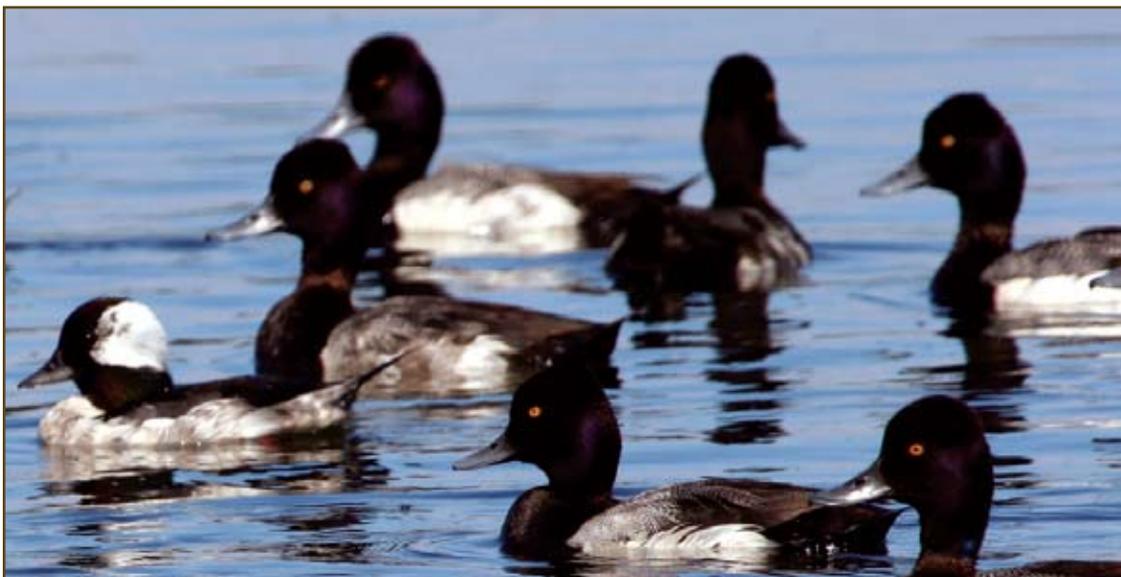
**Project Duration:** 2005–2007

**Purpose:** To quantify the abundance and distribution of sea ducks during winter and spring staging periods, and the relationships with habitat features.

**USFWS' Role:** The Division of Migratory Bird Management became involved in this project in March 2005 when assistance was requested by the Canadian Wildlife Service and Simon Fraser University. Juneau Field Station personnel worked with Canadian Wildlife Service personnel to design the survey and a Juneau-based pilot and observer flew the survey in 2005 and 2007.

**Partners:** Canada: Canadian Wildlife Service, Simon Fraser University

**Contact:** Rob MacDonald, Waterfowl Migratory Birds Juneau Field Station, USFWS Division of Migratory Bird Management, 3000 Vintage Blvd. Ste 240, Juneau, Alaska 99801. rob\_macdonald@fws.gov. 907/780 1165.



Donna Dewhurst/USFWS

*Bufflehead and Greater Scaup.*



Art Sowi/USFWS

*St. Paul Island seabird rookery.*

### North Pacific Seabird Colony Database

**Project Duration:** 1992 to present

**Purpose:** To create a web-based North Pacific seabird colony database that stores current and historical data on breeding population size, species composition, and location data of colonies.

**USFWS' Role:** Migratory Bird Management, in cooperation with the Institute of Biological Problems of the North, Magadan, Russia have combined Alaskan and Russian Far East seabird data to create the North Pacific Seabird Colony Database.

**Partners:** USGS, UAF, Canada, Russia, Alaska Maritime NWR

**Contact:** Dr. David Irons, Regional Seabird Coordinator, USFWS Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. david\_iron@fws.gov. 907/786 3376.

### Seabird Information Network (SIN)

**Project Duration:** 2006 to present

**Purpose:** The Seabird Information Network (SIN) is a simple web-based information network that will provide immediate information on seabird

productivity, especially breeding failures. This data could then be compared circumpolar-wide, and would provide an immediate picture of how seabirds were doing and how widespread a breeding failure might be. This information would be of interest to seabird researchers, the media and fisheries and oceanography people who are starting to appreciate seabirds as indicators of change in the marine ecosystem.

**USFWS' Role:** The USFWS contributes information to this network from work conducted in Alaska.

**Partners:** The United Nations Environmental Program-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Canada, Mexico, Russia, Japan, Korea, Greenland, Iceland, Faroe Islands, United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Finland, USGS, and several nongovernmental organizations, Alaska Maritime NWR

**Contact:** Dr. David B. Irons, Regional Seabird Coordinator, USFWS Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. david\_iron@fws.gov. 907/786 3376.

### International Black Oystercatcher Working Group

**Project Duration:** 2003 to present

**Purpose:** The International Black Oystercatcher Working Group, of which USFWS is an integral member, seeks to coordinate activities and promote the conservation of Black Oystercatchers throughout their range. This is an essential task of the USFWS given that our agency listed the Black Oystercatcher as a focal species.

**USFWS' Role:** USFWS personnel participate actively in the Alaska Black Oystercatcher Working Group, which was formed in 2003 to identify and prioritize regional research needs and to facilitate interagency coordination and cooperation. Successful regional coordination in Alaska spurred the formation of the International Black Oystercatcher Working Group in 2004. The working group—a diverse international partnership that includes members from a number of organizations and agencies across the species' range—determined that a range-wide strategy was indispensable for coordinating research and conservation efforts, and met for the first time at the Shorebird Science in the Western Hemisphere meeting in Boulder, Colorado, in February 2006. The group began working on the Black Oystercatcher Conservation Plan in April 2005. The USFWS listed the Black Oystercatcher as a focal species in 2006 and agreed to help write the plan, which has just been completed. The Group is also engaged in a telemetry study to document movements between northern breeding areas and southern nonbreeding areas.



Tim Bowman/USFWS

*Black Oystercatcher.*

**Partners:** Canada, Mexico, and many governmental and nongovernmental organizations in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and California; Pacific Region, Migratory Bird Management and State Programs in Oregon and Alaska

**Contact:** Dr. Richard B. Lanctot, Regional Shorebird Coordinator, USFWS Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. richard\_lanctot@fws.gov. 907/786 3609.

### Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group

**Project Duration:** 1994 to present

**Purpose:** To promote, facilitate, coordinate, and harmonize seabird conservation, management and research activities among circumpolar countries, and to improve communication between seabird scientists and managers in and outside the Arctic. The group is primarily focused on the following issues: circumpolar biodiversity monitoring, circumpolar murre and eider conservation strategies, birds of Arctic conservation concern, harvest of seabirds in the Arctic, Arctic seabird status and trends, circumpolar Black-legged Kittiwake status and trends, and international Ivory Gull conservation strategy. The Nordic countries have recently completed a database of seabird colonies and there is also an existing North Pacific Seabird Colony Database. The existence of these two major databases prompted the group to propose a Circumpolar Seabird Colony Database, which would be web-based and make data readily available to all users.

**USFWS' Role:** The Division of Migratory Bird Management helps coordinate the group's activity as part of the USFWS' trust responsibility towards protecting migratory birds. Personnel from this office have also acted as chair of the group its entire history, participated in meetings, and several projects.

**Partners:** Up to 18 national representatives (up to two representatives from each of the nine member countries of the Arctic Council) and representatives from the council's permanent participants and official observers. National representatives are appointed by their respective CAFF national representatives. The representatives reflect the range of organizations and geographic areas important to seabird research, management and conservation in the Arctic. Refuges is an internal partner.

**Contact:** Dr. David B. Irons, Regional Seabird Coordinator, USFWS Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. david\_irons@fws.gov. 907/786 3376.

### Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan

**Project Duration:** 2005 to present

**Purpose:** To create a circumpolar scale seabird monitoring plan that would take into account all seabird monitoring activities of the eight countries in the Arctic.

**USFWS' Role:** USFWS leads the effort in producing the plan and work with the partner countries to increase efficiency. Most Arctic countries have a seabird monitoring program that may or may not be adequate at the country scale. This project would take a circumpolar perspective and recommend an Arctic-wide monitoring program to cover the prominent species nesting in the northern latitudes. It would be based on current monitoring programs and would identify gaps that should be filled in the future.

**Partners:** USGS, UAF, Canada, Mexico, Russia, Greenland, Iceland, Faroe Islands, United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Alaska Maritime NWR

**Contact:** Dr. David B. Irons, Regional Seabird Coordinator, USFWS Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. david\_irons@fws.gov. 907/786 3376.

### Fluctuations in Circumpolar Seabird Populations Linked to Climate Oscillations

**Project Duration:** 2003–2007

**Purpose:** To publish the first paper to examine seabirds and climate change at the circumpolar scale. Researchers from around the Arctic agreed to bring their data together to allow the first circumpolar view of changes in seabird populations in relation to climate change. This was only possible through the work of CAFF's Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group ensuring that researchers' data would not be misused and that appropriate credit would be given.

**USFWS' Role:** A USFWS Alaska Region employee serves as chair of Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group, which promoted this study.

**Partners:** USGS and UAF, Russia, Greenland, Iceland, Faroe Islands, United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Canada, Mexico, Finland, Alaska Maritime NWR.

**Contact:** Dr. David B. Irons, Regional Seabird Coordinator, Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. david\_iron@fws.gov. 907/786 3376.

### Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring—Arctic Component

**Project Duration:** 2001 to present

**Purpose:** To (1) estimate the size of breeding populations of 74 shorebird taxa in North America; (2) describe the distribution, abundance, and habitat relationships for each of these taxa; (3) monitor trends in shorebird population size; (4) monitor shorebird numbers at stopover locations, and; (5) assist local managers in meeting their shorebird conservation goals.

**USFWS' Role:** USFWS has been instrumental in designing, coordinating, and implementing surveys for shorebirds in Alaska since 1998. This includes a large influx of funds and personnel to work on the Arctic coast and the western and Aleutian coastline of Alaska. A Canada-U.S. Shorebird Monitoring and Assessment Committee formed the Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring in 2001. It has four main components: Arctic and boreal breeding surveys, temperate breeding surveys, temperate non-breeding surveys, and neotropical surveys. The Arctic program, has three components: (1) an extensive survey of the entire Arctic region of North America, using random sampling and methods that permit estimating abundance; (2) annual or semi-annual surveys at non-randomly selected permanent shorebird sites using either index or density methods; and (3) collection of checklist data, using a standard protocol, at as many sites and as often as possible. Taken together,

these components will provide essentially unbiased estimates of actual population size and thus of change in size since the last major survey.

**Partners:** Canada, USGS and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States, and National Wildlife Refuges in the Arctic and subarctic regions of Alaska

**Contact:** Dr. Richard B. Lanctot, Regional Shorebird Coordinator, Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. richard\_lanctot@fws.gov. 907/786 3609.

### Committee for Holarctic Shorebird Monitoring

**Project Duration:** 2003 to present

**Purpose:** To ensure that existing shorebird monitoring programs continue to be well coordinated and supported in a circumpolar context. Specific recommendations for monitoring shorebirds in breeding and nonbreeding areas are provided in published and informal platforms.

**USFWS' Role:** USFWS personnel serve as the co-chair of this Committee, which meets opportunistically, typically in conjunction with the International Wader Study Group, to coordinate activities. No funding is in place for regular meetings. The Pan-Arctic Shorebird/Wader Monitoring and Research Workshop brought together 30 specialists to discuss monitoring and research of Arctic-nesting shorebirds. The meeting was held in Karrebäksminde, Denmark from December 3–6, 2003. Participants formed the Committee for Holarctic Shorebird Monitoring—considered an essential first step for guiding the implementation of an effective circumpolar program for monitoring Arctic-nesting shorebirds. Subsequently, the committee organized a workshop to discuss issues and methodologies surrounding the demographic monitoring of waders at a meeting of the International Wader Study Group in Germany in November 2004. Members of the committee have published several papers that began from discussions at this workshop.

**Partners:** All countries in circumpolar Arctic, USGS and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States

**Contact:** Dr. Richard B. Lanctot, Regional Shorebird Coordinator, Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. richard\_lanctot@fws.gov. 907/786 3609.

### **Determine Linkages Between Breeding, Staging, and Wintering Populations of Hudsonian Godwits Using Genetics**

**Project Duration:** 2005 to present

**Purpose:** To document population subdivision within the breeding grounds, and to examine linkages between breeding, staging, and wintering populations of Hudsonian Godwits using mark-resightings and genetic techniques.

**USFWS' Role:** Personnel of the USFWS of the Alaska Region and the headquarters lead this study. The Hudsonian Godwit was identified as a species of high conservation concern in Alaska, Canada, and the United States. Prior genetic analyses indicate population subdivision exists among the three disjunct and restricted breeding areas located in the North American Arctic. Whereas this differentiation suggests each population should be managed separately, other information on population sizes and trends of each breeding population are unknown and linkages between breeding, staging, and wintering sites have not been established. As this species concentrates in only a few staging and wintering areas where they are particularly vulnerable to disturbance and habitat loss, understanding these linkages will enable managers to effectively is critical for managing each promote the conservation of the three breeding populations of this species at the flyway level. Genetic samples have been collected from Hudsonian Godwits on their breeding, migration and wintering ranges for the past three years. Field work began in Chile during January/February 2006 to capture birds atin the two primaryknown wintering locations, Chiloe Island and Tierra del Fuego. Additional genetic samples have also been collected from Hudsonian Godwits on their breeding grounds and migratory staging areas. A population genetics analysis, Genetic analysis will be conducted on all samplesin conjunction with the USGS Alaska Science Center, is currently underway. The Alaska Region Migratory Bird Management program has also worked with the Canadian Wildlife Service and Chilean biologists to repeat surveys in Chiloe Island and Tierra Del Fuego in January 2006 and 2007 to estimate the size of each of the three breeding populationsmajor nonbreeding populations. USFWS personnel are also building partnerships with local conservation groups and state and federal governments in Chile to protect sites known to support large numbers of Hudsonian Godwits and other waterbird species.

**Partners:** Chile, Canada, USGS and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States, USFWS National Headquarters; Yukon Delta NWR

**Contact:** Mr. Jim A. Johnson, Nongame Wildlife Biologist, Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. jim\_a\_johnson@fws.gov. 907/786 3423.

### **Bird Harvest Regime in the Kolyma River Delta (Sakha Republic): An Example of Community Based Monitoring**

**Project Duration:** 2005 to present

**Purpose:** To document, annually, both the subsistence harvest of birds in the Kolyma region through a community based monitoring system, and the social, culture, and spiritual values and economic importance of the bird harvest.

**USFWS' Role:** USFWS personnel support this project. The harvest of birds in the spring and fall in the Kolyma River Delta is a longstanding tradition of the six indigenous people groups and other local residents, and an important source of food in this remote region. The key species are Greater and Lesser White-fronted Geese, Tundra Swan Black Brant, Bean Goose, Willow Ptarmigan, and several other species of ducks. Eggs are collected opportunistically and are not an important aspect of this subsistence harvest. Birds are also part of the culture and social structures of the people as swan and loon skins are used to make hats and other crafts, birds are shared among village residents, and birds are part of the indigenous people's lore and spirituality. At this time, little is known about either the subsistence harvest of migratory birds or its sustainability in the region. Some harvested species e.g., eiders, are a shared population between Russian and Alaska.

**Partners:** Russian Ministry of Natural Resources, United Nations Environment Programme, CAFF, Alaska Region International Conservation

**Contact:** Dr. David B. Irons, Regional Seabird Coordinator, Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. david\_irons@fws.gov. 907/786 3376.

### **South Pacific Regional Environment Program Central Pacific Flyway Bird Working Group**

**Project Duration:** 2002 to present

**Purpose:** To promote cooperation and collaboration for migratory bird issues in the Central Pacific Flyway.

**USFWS' Role:** In 2002, the USFWS Alaska and Pacific regions collaborated to organize the first Central Pacific Flyway Bird Conservation Workshop. As a result of that workshop, a Central Pacific Flyway Bird Working Group was established. The goals of the working group are to provide a forum to coordinate and harmonize research,

management, monitoring and education activities within the flyway, and to provide a framework to link national bird programs in order to approach bird conservation on a range-wide basis. The first joint working group expedition was completed in the South Pacific in 2003 and focused on the status of wintering populations of Bristle-thighed Curlews, at-sea distribution of seabirds, and invasive species in the Line Islands. Although no joint activities have been conducted since 2003, we are currently working with the USFWS Pacific Region to promote a flyway-wide approach in the South Pacific Regional Environment Program.

**Partners:** South Pacific Regional Environment Program, Pacific Island nations, and international nongovernmental organizations, Refuges, and Invasive Species Program

**Contact:** Dr. Richard B. Lanctot, Regional Shorebird Coordinator, Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. richard\_lanctot@fws.gov. 907/786 3609.

### Ecotoxicology of Shorebirds in North and South America

**Project Duration:** 2004 to present

**Purpose:** To determine exposure to organophosphorus and carbamate cholinesterase-inhibiting pesticides in shorebirds during migration in the Central Flyway of the United States and on their nonbreeding grounds in South America.

**USFWS' Role:** USFWS provided funds to conduct the study, and have served as advisors to the project. This project involves sampling birds in protected and agricultural areas that are likely to differ in contaminant exposure in both the Central Flyway of the United States and the southern cone of South America. Species sampled include the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, American Golden Plover and Upland Sandpiper, and three species associated with wetland habitats: Greater Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, and White-rumped Sandpiper. All six of these shorebirds are ranked as high priority species by national and regional conservation plans. Exposure to contaminants is one of the leading reasons why shorebird numbers are thought to be declining, and yet little study on this subject has been conducted.

Initial funding to conduct this work was obtained from the USFWS when it approved sampling Buff-breasted Sandpipers for contaminants in 2004. Additional funds were obtained from the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Grant to sample five other species in 2005. Field efforts for this study began in 2006 and continued through 2007. Final analyses and write-up are expected in 2008.

**Partners:** Paraguay, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil; and state and nongovernmental organizations from Kansas, Nebraska, Louisiana and Texas; USFWS refuges in Kansas, Nebraska, Louisiana and Texas

**Contact:** Dr. Richard B. Lanctot, Regional Shorebird Coordinator, Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. richard\_lanctot@fws.gov. 907/786 3609.

### Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group

**Project Duration:** 2006 to present

**Purpose:** The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group binds the many other shorebird initiatives together, including the Shorebird Research Group of the Americas (research branch), the Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring (the monitoring branch), the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (site-based conservation branch), Shorebird Sister Schools Program (outreach/education branch), the U.S. and Canadian Shorebird Conservation plans and councils (national implementation framework branches), and the many other state and regional shorebird entities.

**USFWS' Role:** USFWS personnel serve as chair of this group, whose principal tasks are to: 1) organize and hold scientific meetings once every two years, 2) establish a website with links to information on a wide variety of shorebird topics at various geographic scales, and 3) prepare a bi-annual electronic newsletter that would report on ongoing projects, provide regional summaries, and foster a hemispheric-wide shorebird identity. The first hemispheric-wide meeting, entitled "Shorebird Science in the Western Hemisphere", was held in 2006. Using the enthusiasm generated from this meeting, participants decided to form the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group. The 2nd Shorebird Science in the Western Hemisphere meeting was held in conjunction with the VIII Neotropical Ornithological Congress in Maturin, Venezuela, 2007.

**Partners:** All countries in North and South America, USGS and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States, other USFWS personnel across the United States interested in shorebirds

**Contact:** Dr. Richard B. Lanctot, Regional Shorebird Coordinator, Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. richard\_lanctot@fws.gov. 907/786 3609.



Donna Dewhurst/USFWS

*Rusty Blackbird.*

### International Rusty Blackbird Technical Group

**Project Duration:** 2005 to present

**Purpose:** To understand and reverse the decline of the Rusty Blackbird. This bird has suffered one of the largest population declines (90–98%) among North America’s birds since 1966. The species breeds across the boreal zone from Alaska to Newfoundland and winters primarily in the Southeastern United States

**USFWS’ Role:** The Migratory Bird Management program became involved in this technical group in March 2005 when the group was formed and continues to be an active participant. The division helps coordinate this activity as part of the USFWS’ trust responsibility towards protecting migratory birds. The objectives are to prioritize information needs, publicize the species’ decline, and coordinate studies across the species’ range.

**Partners:** Canadian Wildlife Service, Max Plank Institute for Ornithology (Germany), Alaska Bird Observatory, BioDiversity Research Institute, Department of Defense, Smithsonian Institute, U.S. Forest Service-Southern Hardwood Laboratory, USGS-Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, and several universities, USFWS Refuges (Alaska and Southeast regions)

**Contact:** Mr. Steve Matsuoka, Regional Landbird Coordinator, Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-201, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. [steve\\_matsuoka@fws.gov](mailto:steve_matsuoka@fws.gov). 907/786 3672.

### U.S.-Japan Migratory Bird Convention

**Project Duration:** 1999 to present

**Purpose:** To coordinate migratory bird conservation activities for common species and shared populations and threats with Japan specifically, and the East Asia Flyway generally. The goal is to strengthen the rangewide and flyway-wide approach to migratory bird conservation and build partnerships to implement that approach.

**USFWS’ Role:** USFWS personnel traditionally attend treaty meetings, and host it every other year. The Convention between the United States and Japan for the Protection of Migratory Birds in Danger of Extinction and Their Environment (U.S.-Japan Migratory Bird Treaty) was signed in 1972, and was put into effect in 1974. The convention reflected an expansion of scientific knowledge regarding long-distance avian migrants and other shared bird populations, and a concern for their conservation. In particular, the convention covers 190 species of migratory birds common to, or shared by, Japan and the United States (e.g., Short-tailed Albatross). It represented the third U.S. bilateral agreement regarding migratory birds. Between 1974 and 1981, Japan and the United States met only three times to discuss bird issues. Subsequent to the meeting in 1981, discussions were also held regarding the Migratory Bird Treaty under the auspices of the U.S.-Japan Cooperative Program in Natural Resources. Those meetings took place in Tokyo in 1983 and in Washington, D.C., in 1986 and 1993. Since 1993, it became evident that many new opportunities existed between Japan and the United States to share information, exchange research results, establish joint ventures, provide guidance and advice, and better collaborate on migratory bird

issues of mutual conservation concern between the two nations. The Alaska Region Migratory Bird Management has coordinated formal meetings under the auspices of the Migratory Bird Treaty in 1999 (Tokyo), 2000 (Anchorage), 2002 (Tokyo), 2004 (Anchorage), and 2006 (Tokyo). The meetings accomplished the following: 1) reestablished relations and redefined future cooperation and collaboration between our two countries' bird programs, 2) reviewed an Alaskan-East Asian Australasian Shorebird migration program targeting Dunlin, 3) reviewed opportunities for collaboration with the East Asian Australasian Shorebird and Anatidae Networks, and 4) assessed opportunities for collaboration on migratory bird educational curricula, including the U.S. Shorebird Sister School Program. A trilateral meeting with Japan and Russia was also conducted in 2006.

**Partners:** Ministry of Environment of Japan.

**Contact:** Dr. Richard B. Lanctot, Regional Shorebird Coordinator, Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. richard\_lanctot@fws.gov. 907/786 3609.

### East Asian Flyway Dunlin Migration and Banding Database Projects

**Project Duration:** 1999 to present

**Purpose:** The Dunlin project is aimed at documenting movement patterns of these birds by resighting birds marked in other locations, employing geolocators, and identifying subspecies and populations through stable isotope and genetic analysis.

**USFWS' Role:** USFWS personnel have taken a lead role in documenting the migratory patterns of the Dunlin—a shorebird that breeds only in Alaska but winters exclusively in Asia. Dunlin are the most numerous shorebirds within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, breeding in Alaska and the Russian Far East and migrating to East Asia during the nonbreeding season. Much of the habitat they use during the nonbreeding and migration periods is under very serious threat from reclamation, degradation, pollution and human disturbance. Given recent outbreaks of avian influenza and the potential for migratory birds to spread the virus along migratory pathways, understanding the migration ecology (i.e., where they go and when) of this species is important. This is particularly challenging since four of the nine generally recognized subspecies of Dunlin occur within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, with likely overlap in migration and stop-over sites. The USFWS first began banding Dunlin on the North Slope of Alaska in 1999 and 2001. Beginning in 2003, and for every year thereafter, we have banded Dunlin extensively in Barrow and in recent years throughout the North

Slope. In 2006, the USFWS established contracts with various entities to partially analyze all band resightings for the four subspecies collected during the past 25 years, place geolocators on birds in Barrow that can monitor bird locations within 150 km throughout their migration, delineate population structure using genetic markers, and to survey and capture birds in China for monitoring the presence of avian influenza.

**Partners:** University of Science and Technology, Fudan University (China), Yamashina Institute (Japan), Wetlands International (Australia), Republic of Korea, Russia, Taiwan, USGS and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States.

**Contact:** Dr. Richard B. Lanctot, Regional Shorebird Coordinator, Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. richard\_lanctot@fws.gov. 907/786 3609.

### East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) Avian Influenza Working Group

**Project Duration:** 2006 to present

**Purpose:** To coordinate avian influenza surveillance programs and bird banding, color marking, and resighting programs in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

**USFWS' Role:** To provide information and to collaborate on issues related to avian influenza. The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership created an Avian Influenza Working Group in 2006. In 2007 the working group conducted its first meeting in Beijing, China. The objectives of the workshop were to review progress of country avian influenza surveillance programs, develop a coordinated and collaborative flyway surveillance sampling scheme, and coordinate banding and resighting programs on a flyway basis.

**Partners:** East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership, and Wetlands International-India, USGS, Several USFWS divisions.

**Contact:** Dr. Richard B. Lanctot, Regional Shorebird Coordinator, Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. richard\_lanctot@fws.gov. 907/786 3609.

### East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership

**Project Duration:** 2006 to present.

**Purpose:** To strengthen flyway collaboration through the formation of working groups for avian influenza, waterfowl, shorebirds, seabirds, and cranes.

**USFWS' Role:** To ensure Alaska, at the top of this flyway, is represented and incorporated into this partnership. The United States (Alaska) provides about 35 species of migratory birds to the East Asia Flyway. Species consist mostly of shorebirds and waterfowl, many of which are birds of conservation concern or species with a high potential for transporting avian influenza to Alaska. The partnership builds on the achievements of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee (1996–2006), which the United States joined in 2001. The development of the Waterbird Flyway Site Network nomination program remains a major focus of the partnership. The United States announced that it would be reviewing its participation in the Site Network program. The Yukon Delta NWR site nomination paperwork has essentially been completed for five years and would be easy to resurrect.

**Partners:** Seven countries (U.S., Australia, Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Russia, and Thailand) and several international nongovernmental organizations initially announced their commitment to the partnership.

**Contact:** Dr. Richard B. Lanctot, Regional Shorebird Coordinator, Nongame Migratory Bird Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. richard\_lanctot@fws.gov. 907/786 3609.

# Office of Subsistence Management

The Office of Subsistence Management is currently engaged in international activities in order to keep informed of, and provide input on, fisheries activities, regulations, harvest allocations, and research on U.S./Canada trans-boundary rivers—the Yukon, Stikine and Taku rivers. Providing for subsistence activities on these rivers requires coordination and consultation with the Yukon River Panel and the Pacific Salmon Commission. The Office of Subsistence Management has participated in an international wildlife (e.g., caribou) management planning effort with Canada in the past; however, there were no such activities in fiscal years 2006–2008. For more information on the responsibilities of the Office of Subsistence Management, see <http://alaska.fws.gov/asm>

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

### **Coordination and Consultation Activities with the Transboundary River Panel and the U.S.-Canada Pacific Salmon Commission.**

**Project Duration:** 2000 to present

**Purpose:** To provide Federal subsistence fishing opportunities on the Stikine and Taku rivers.

**USFWS' Role:** The Federal Subsistence Board, through the Office of Subsistence Management, has a responsibility to ensure that the Pacific Salmon Commission is informed of, and consulted on, any proposed Federal subsistence fisheries actions and/or regulations, which may affect the Pacific Salmon Treaty. In 2004, through a three-year coordination effort with the Transboundary River Panel and the U.S.-Canada Pacific Salmon Commission, the Federal Subsistence Board established a subsistence fishery for sockeye salmon on the Stikine River. In 2005, through coordination with the Panel and Commission, the Federal Subsistence Board added directed fisheries for Chinook and coho salmon. Regulatory changes for the 2006 season included an increase in the mesh size of gillnets during the Chinook fishery and an earlier starting date for the sockeye fishery.

**Partners:** Canadian members of Pacific Salmon Commission.

**Contact:** Larry Buklis, Office of Subsistence Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd. Anchorage, Alaska 99503. [larry\\_buklis@fws.gov](mailto:larry_buklis@fws.gov). 907/786 3822.

### **Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program**

**Project Duration:** 2000 to present

**Purpose:** To provide information needed for effective management of subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands in Alaska. The program funds projects to address research priorities identified by management agencies and local users from around the state. Data collected through some of these projects can be used by the USFWS to help meet U.S./Canada Yukon River Treaty obligations.

**USFWS' Role:** Administration of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program.

**Partners:** Funding has been awarded to Alaska Native organizations, universities, and Federal and State agencies.

**Contact:** Steve Fried, Fisheries Division, Office of Subsistence Management, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503. [steve\\_fried@fws.gov](mailto:steve_fried@fws.gov). 907/786 3605.

# Office of Law Enforcement

The mission of the Office of Law Enforcement is to protect wildlife resources. Through the effective enforcement of Federal laws, the office contributes to USFWS' efforts to recover endangered species, conserve migratory birds, preserve wildlife habitat, safeguard fisheries, combat invasive species, and promote global wildlife conservation. Some of the primary federal laws that the Office of Law Enforcement is tasked with enforcing are the Endangered Species Act, Lacey Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The United States is among the world's largest consumers of wildlife and wildlife products. Growth in importations of wildlife and wildlife products is echoed by the growth in the number of protected species listed under laws and treaties such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Listings under CITES include tens of thousands of species. By virtually any measure, wildlife trade has been and continues to be a growth industry. The Office of Law Enforcement polices U.S. wildlife trade to ensure compliance with the CITES treaty and an array of U.S. wildlife protection laws and regulations. U.S. wildlife importers and exporters must declare their shipments to the USFWS, bring them through ports authorized to handle such trade, and make them available for examination by USFWS wildlife inspectors. These officers, who are stationed at major airports, ocean ports, and border crossings, play a critical role in facilitating legal wildlife trade and intercepting illegal trafficking. Their work also gives the USFWS ready access to a wealth of information about wildlife trade in the United States. Anchorage is the third largest port in the nation in terms of the total number of shipments imported/exported. There are four wildlife inspectors in Alaska and all are stationed in Anchorage.

The Office of Law Enforcement's mandate to enforce wildlife trade laws encompasses a concomitant responsibility to deal fairly and efficiently with the businesses, organizations, and individuals that import and export wildlife. By law, virtually all wildlife imports and exports must be declared to the USFWS and cleared by wildlife inspectors.

The speed and efficiency of wildlife inspection operations affect the ability of businesses to engage profitably in legal wildlife trade as well as the international movement of wildlife for purposes that range from scientific research to public entertainment. The USFWS' trade monitoring efforts also determine the ease with which individual Americans can travel internationally with wildlife or wildlife items, move hunting trophies across U.S. borders, or ship household goods made from or incorporating wildlife parts overseas and back again.

USFWS officers provide guidance to individuals and businesses to help them obey wildlife laws and expedite their legal import/export transactions. "Customer service" efforts also include using technology to facilitate trade, streamline the import/export community's interactions with the USFWS, and improve public access to information about wildlife trade laws and regulations.

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

### Wildlife Inspection Program

**Project Duration:** Ongoing

**Purpose:** To ensure compliance with the CITES treaty and an array of U.S. wildlife protection laws and regulations. The Wildlife Inspection Program contributes to the USFWS' efforts to recover endangered species, conserve migratory birds, safeguard fisheries, combat invasive species, and promote global wildlife conservation. Illegal or unsustainable wildlife trade is a primary or significant threat to thousands of species, from among the most well known such as rhinos and tigers, to the unique such as chameleons and seahorses, to such obscure creatures as sea cucumbers and glass eels.

**USFWS' Role:** Through the wildlife inspection program, USFWS inspectors investigate wildlife crimes; regulate wildlife trade; help individuals understand and comply with wildlife protection laws.

**Contact:** Steve Tuttle, Law Enforcement, Regional Agent in Charge, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-151, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. [steve\\_tuttle@fws.gov](mailto:steve_tuttle@fws.gov). 907/271 4950.

### Protected Area Law Enforcement Needs Assessments for Honduras and the Dominican Republic

**Project Duration:** 2007



USFWS

*Ranger on boat patrol with his military counterparts at Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge, Honduras.*

**Purpose:** The DOI International Affairs office requested federal volunteers with particular expertise (in this case, law enforcement) to conduct assessments in order to get recommendations on what can be done to increase natural resource protection in the protected areas of Honduras and the Dominican Republic. The countries participate, in part, because of requirements of the Central American Free Trade Agreement that they have certain environmental protections in place.

**USFWS' Role:** USFWS provided a staff member to participate on the assessment team. The assessment team focused on the application and enforcement of laws and regulations concerning natural resources and protected areas.

**Partners:** U.S. State Department (funding); DOI Office of International Affairs; Government of Honduras; and the Government of the Dominican Republic. In Honduras, the Secretary of Natural Resources and the Environment, Fiscalía (Prosecutor's Office), State Forest Administration-Honduran Forest Development Corporation, Department of Protected Areas and Wildlife, Attorney General for the Environment, Friends of La Tigra National Park, Directorate for Conservation of Forests and the Environment, Municipality of San Lorenzo, Aquaculture Association of Honduras, PRONHPAC (fisheries regulating group), Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge, Pico Bonito National park, La Ceiba Tourism Department, Red Ecologista Hondurena Para El Desarrollo Sostenible, La Tigra National Park, and others.

**Contact:** Rory Stark, Special Agent, Office of Law Enforcement, 605 West 4th Avenue, Room 57, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. rory\_stark@fws.gov. 907/271 1967.

### **U.S. Agency for International Development Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network**

**Project Duration:** 2007

**Purpose:** To rid Southeast Asia of illegal trade in wild animals and plants. Indonesia is second only to Brazil in biodiversity, and is a global hot spot for trade in wild plants and animals. Indonesian forests are under serious threat from illegal and unregulated logging. Species such as tigers, orangutans and rhinoceros are now facing extinction because of habitat destruction, weak enforcement, persistent smuggling, and lack of awareness on the part of the general public.

**USFWS' Role:** The USFWS provided technical support to a training course in nature crime investigations for 30 Indonesian police, customs, and forestry agencies officers. A USFWS special agent from the Office of Law Enforcement traveled to the National Police Detective and Criminal Training Center in Bogor, West Java to assist with the training.

**Partners:** Government of Indonesia, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Agency for International Development.

**Contact:** Dave Rippetto, Special Agent/Pilot, Office of Law Enforcement, 1412 Airport Way, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. david\_p\_rippeto@fws.gov. 907/456 2335.



**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
**1011 E. Tudor Rd.**  
**Anchorage, AK 99503**

<http://alaska.fws.gov/>

**September 2008**

