

“About Dusky Surveys” Audio File Captions

Speakers include Wildlife Biologist Joe Sands and Public Affairs Officer Lev Levy

Sands: So the way the data are used primarily from this is to estimate survival rate of dusky geese because we have summertime breeding ground surveys that kind of estimate how many there are. But since duskys are of conservation concern to the Pacific Flyway, and they have no open hunting season, we use the survival estimates from collared birds as sort of a check, just another parameter in the population to sort of evaluate what's going on.

Levy: So at some point, are you capturing duskys and putting collars on them?

Sands: Yeah. So actually that gets done every other year in the Copper River Delta in Alaska and they put out about 600 collars a year from the birds they catch. And they're these red and white collars, and each collar has a unique set of characters on it that you read. And as we read those over the year, for each sampling period, it gets entered into a database. And so by having birds with detections and not detections, you can actually estimate the probability of survival or survival rate from them.

Levy: So are you supposed to read the collars while you're surveying them?

Sands: Yeah. So what we'll do when we find some, hopefully, is we'll get out, we'll get the scope on them and then we'll read the neck collar. So that represents a unique individual within the data set. And so if you could picture like what a spreadsheet would look like, you know, each one would have here's a bird, here's a sampling period, was it detected or not, and a detection equals a one and a non-detection equals a zero in there. And the Pacific Flyway office actually cranks those numbers out.

Levy: Well that's cool.

Joe: Let's see where we are.