

Preassessment Data Report #9

Bird Species Found Oiled, December 2004 – January 2005, at Unalaska Island Following the M/V *Selendang Ayu* Oil Spill

COMMENTS OF THE RESPONSIBLE PARTY

Page 3; Paragraph 3; Results and Discussion

“...most of the species known to be in the area based on...”

Add “were” after “species”

“However, at least some of these, particularly the 5 species of ducks, were likely exposed to the oil and were probably just not detected.”

This is speculative and should be deleted. At a minimum change “*were likely exposed to the oil and were probably just not detected*” to “may have been exposed to oil, but not detected.”

“The eighth, Steller’s eider, was not recorded as oiled in the spill zone, but at least one oiled bird was seen in Unalaska Bay, (S. Golodoff, pers comm.)”

There are other possible sources of oil in Unalaska Bay. Without being able to determine the source of the oil, the implication that this bird was oiled by the spill is pure conjecture. Add “the source of this oil is unknown.”

“Further, our methods underestimated the relative abundance of live oiled birds...”

Add “may have” before “underestimated”

How did the methods underestimate this relative abundance of live oiled birds?

The discussion pertaining to the species seen in the study area but not detected as oiled is confusing. Were these birds not found on the beaches at all, even as unoiled carcasses? It is highly unlikely that these birds died from oiling and were then not detected on the beaches of the study area. Without being able to determine the source of the oil, the implication that this bird was oiled by the spill is pure conjecture.

Page 3; Paragraph 4; Results and Discussion

“... and flocks were seen in the vicinity of the wreck during the time of the spill...”

Can we better describe “vicinity of the wreck” and “during the time of the spill”?

“...and flocks were seen in the vicinity of the wreck during the time of the spill (A.L. Sowls, unpublished data). “

Replace “*unpublished data*” with “observations reviewed in Appendix B”

“...winter in the vicinity of Unalaska were affected.”

Is the reference to the Island or the community?

Page 4; Paragraph 2; Results and Discussion

“Relative abundance of oiled birds was underestimated for species that were contaminated while foraging on oiled beaches...”

Replace “was” with “may have been”.

“...probably died later...”

Replace “*probably*” with “may have”.

Page 10; Paragraph 2; Appendix B

“Nevertheless, there is some evidence that auklets were present in the oil spill area.”

The narrative that follows has no evidence of a confirmed sighting of a Crested Auklet. Therefore, the best that can be said is “may have been present” as opposed to “were present”.