

**FEDERAL AID
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
State Wildlife Grant**

Grant Number: T-21

Segment Number: 1

Project Number: 7.0

Project Title: Coordinating the conservation of the rare Black Oystercatcher in Alaska

Project Duration: 16 April 2011 – 30 June 2014

Report Period: July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

Report Due Date: 30 September 2013

Principle Investigator: David Tessler, ADF&G

Project Location: Locations in Prince William Sound, Kenai Fjords, and other coastal locations throughout Alaska.

I. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON JOBS FOR LAST SEGMENT PERIOD ONLY

***Objective 1:** Convene a symposium on recent and current research on the Black Oystercatcher to better understand the current state of knowledge and the extent to which priorities in the Plan have been addressed.*

***Job/Activity a.:** Plan and hold symposium and International Black Oystercatcher Working Group (IBOWG) meeting in association with an appropriate regional or international meeting sometime in 2013 or 2014. Arrange a one day or one half day session in the general meeting proceedings.*

***Job/Activity b.:** Solicit members of the IBOWG to present recent results of Black Oystercatcher projects and develop a schedule of presentations for the symposium.*

Accomplishments:

Objective 1:

Job/Activity a.:

No progress to report on this Job/Activity for this reporting period.

Job/Activity b.:

No progress to report on this Job/Activity for this reporting period.

***Objective 2:** Convene a meeting of the IBOWG (preferably immediately following the above symposium) to address the revision of the Plan to: 1) Assess how recent accomplishments relate to the previous priorities outlined in the Plan – what's been done and what remains to be done; 2) identify any new emerging priorities; 3) develop a strategy for revising the Plan.*

Job/Activity a.: *Hold a workshop with the IBOWG to assess recent accomplishments relative to revision of the plan;*

Job/Activity b.: *Use the workshop to develop a strategy for revising the Plan;*

Job/Activity c.: *Use the workshop to facilitate a working group discussion on coordinated, collaborative, range-wide monitoring; determine feasibility of coordinating efforts already underway.*

Job/Activity d.: *At conclusion of symposium and workshop, hold business meeting to elect new officers and chairperson.*

Accomplishments:

Objective 2,

Job/Activity a-d:

No progress to report on this Job/Activity for this reporting period.

Objective 3: *Conduct final surveys of banded populations in Harriman Fjord and Kenai Fjords to finalize demographic data set.*

Job/Activity a.: *Conduct boat and foot based surveys of Harriman Fjord in Prince William Sound to resight any surviving birds banded from 2004-2007. This will involve three (3) two-day visits spaced throughout the breeding season at roughly three (3) week intervals from late May to mid-July.*

Job/Activity b.: *Conduct boat and foot based surveys of Aialik Bay in Kenai Fjords National Park to resight any surviving birds banded from 2004-2007. This will involve three (3) two-day visits spaced throughout the breeding season at roughly three (3) week intervals from late May to mid-July.*

Accomplishments:

Objective 3: Job/Activity a.:

We had planned to begin survey activities in May. However, the vessel intended for this work was acquired late in the spring and was not fit for sea duty until the end of June 2013. We conducted one survey of Harriman Fjord on June 24-25, 2013 to identify occupied territories and resight banded birds. We also conducted one capture trip July 6-7, 2013 to capture banded birds whose color bands were missing. However large spring tides during the last days of June flooded most of the active nests, and most of the birds targeted for capture were not seen during the capture trip. We plan to conduct the full set of survey and capture visits in summer 2014.

Objective 3: Job/Activity b.:

We had planned to begin survey activities in May. However, the vessel intended for this work was acquired late in the spring and was not fit for sea duty until the end of June 2013. As a result we had to reduce survey effort, and conduct work using charter vessels. We conducted two surveys Aialik Bay on June 1-7 and June 17-20, 2013 to identify occupied territories and resight banded birds. We also conducted one capture trip July 17-20, 2013 to capture banded birds

whose color bands were missing. However large spring tides during the last days of June flooded many active nests, and plans were scrapped for another capture trip in July. We plan to conduct the full set of survey and capture visits in summer 2014.

Objective 4: *Complete final analyses of outstanding Black Oystercatcher data sets;*

Job/Activity a.: *Finalize analyses of demography data from strategic banding effort;*

Job/Activity b.: *Finalize analyses of comparative productivity data and its variance between years and sites;*

Job/Activity c.: *Finalize analyses of causes of nest, egg, and chick loss across sites and its variance between years and sites;*

Job/Activity d.: *Finalize analyses of genetic material using mitochondrial and nuclear DNA microsatellite techniques;*

Job/Activity e.: *Finalize analyses of data on capture methods and their relative success;*

Accomplishments:

Objective 4, Job/Activity a-e: No progress was made on these activities in this reporting period.

Objective 5: *Disseminate findings of final analyses of the data sets in Objective 4*

Job/Activity a.: *Develop technical reports for sharing with various agencies that partnered in the projects;*

Job/Activity b.: *Develop manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals where appropriate;*

Job/Activity c.: *Present findings of analyses of the data sets in Objective 4 at appropriate local and national professional meetings and conferences;*

Accomplishments:

Objective 5, Job/Activity a-c: No progress was made on these activities in this reporting period.

II. PUBLICATIONS

Guzzetti, B. M., **D.F. Tessler**, V. A. Gill, G.K. Sage, E. C. Murphy, and S. L. Talbot. Genetic Population Structuring of the American Black Oystercatcher, *Molecular Ecology*, *In Review* .

Tessler, D.F. The Black Oystercatcher: new insights on their ecology and history in Sitka Sound. Sitka Natural History Seminar Series supported by a grant from the Sitka Permanent Charitable Trust to the Sitka Sound Science Center, the University of Alaska Southeast, and the Sitka Conservation Society. April 2013.

Tessler, D.F. The cumulative effect of boat wakes and high tides on black oystercatcher productivity in South-central Alaska. Oral Paper presented at the Alaska Bird Conference, Anchorage, AK. October 2012.

**III. ADDITIONAL FEDERAL AID-FUNDED WORK NOT DESCRIBED ABOVE
THAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED ON THIS PROJECT DURING THIS SEGMENT
PERIOD**

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

Prepared by: David Tessler, ADF&G

Date: September 30, 2013