

16. AN INTEGRATED REGIONAL ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE BLACK OYSTERCATCHER  
(*HAEMATOPUS BACHMANI*).

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This project aligns and expands several previously unrelated studies of the black oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*) at multiple sites in the heart of the species' range. Coordinated efforts to assess breeding ecology, productivity, local threats, survival, mate and site fidelity, and population structuring began in 2003 and will continue through summer 2006 in Alaska at Kenai Fjords, Glacier Bay, Prince William Sound, and Middleton Island, and in British Columbia on Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands. Winter surveys throughout Alaska to identify important wintering areas and interseasonal movements began in 2005 and will continue in 2006. Since 2003, we have banded over 400 oystercatchers in Alaska (4-5% of the global population), monitored 330 territory-seasons, and collected over 400 genetic samples in Alaska and British Columbia. Clutch size, hatching percentage, fledging success, overall productivity, and causes of egg and chick loss vary widely both between study areas and between years. When study areas and years are considered together, the average clutch has 2.43 eggs; 32.8% of eggs survive to hatch; 18.5% of eggs laid successfully fledge. Overall productivity (fledglings \* pair<sup>-1</sup> \* season<sup>-1</sup>) is 0.32. The greatest documented cause of egg loss is tidal inundation, accounting for over 40% of 2005 losses. Although severe weather curtailed most 2005 winter efforts, aerial surveys of the western Aleutian Peninsula sighted 121 birds, boat based surveys of Kodiak Island documented at least 1716 oystercatchers none of which were banded, and winter ground counts on Middleton Island failed to detect a single oystercatcher.

# *11<sup>th</sup> Alaska Bird Conference*

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