

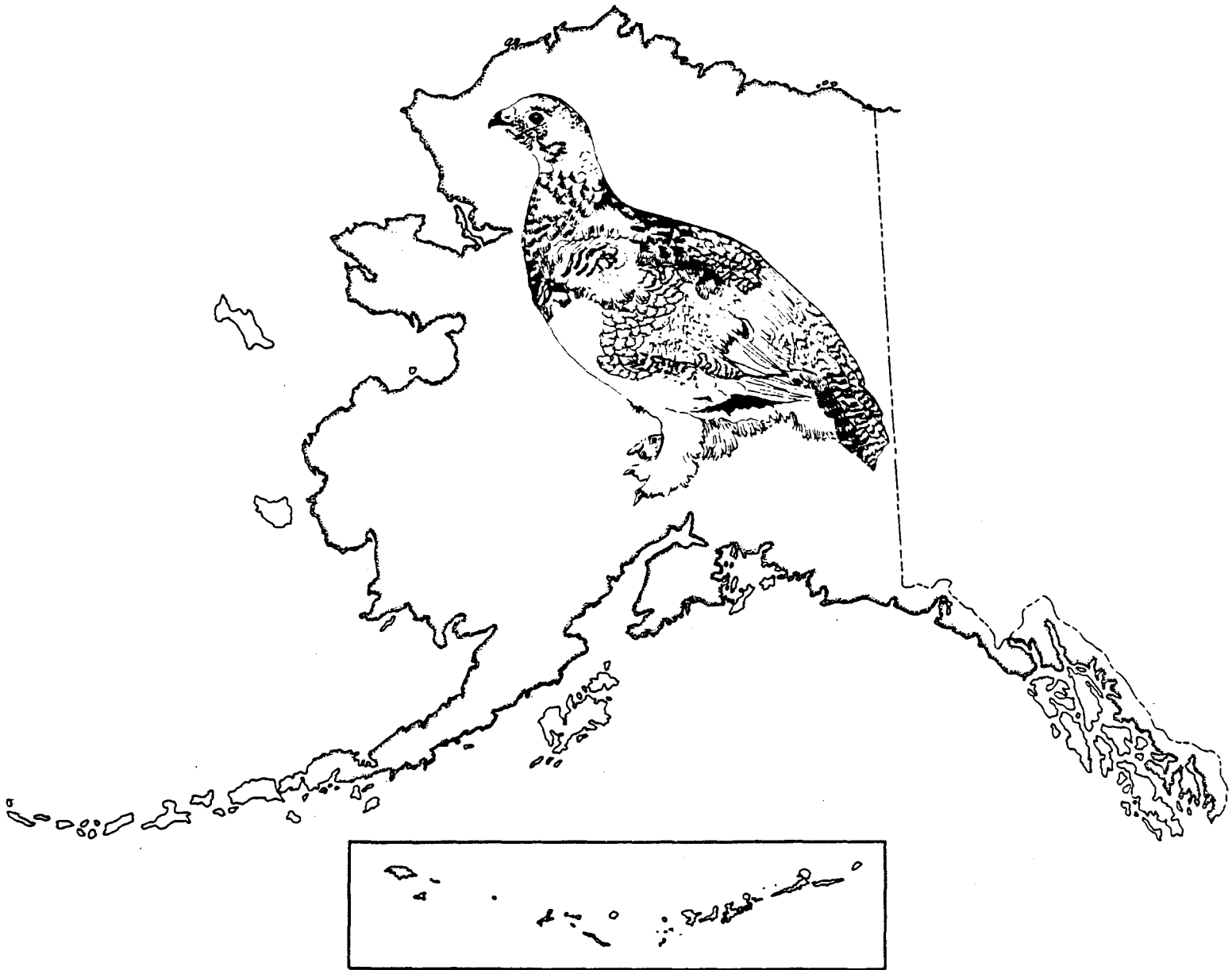
RESULTS OF A CAPTURE AND RADIO-TAGGING STUDY OF MARBLED MURRELETS.

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Concern about potential conflicts between logging of old-growth forest and marbled murrelet nesting habitat requirements led to an ongoing study to identify marbled murrelet nest sites. Despite the abundance of this species in Alaska, little is known about the species nest site preferences. Only a few nests have ever been found, and these include nests in old-growth forest and ground nests in tundra and alpine areas. During two field seasons of work, we developed techniques for capturing and radio-tagging these small diving alcids. Eighteen murrelets were captured using a modified capture net gun. Radio transmitters were attached (with varying success) using backpack harnesses, sutures, implantation, and epoxy glue; the later method was most successful. In 1984, nine murrelets were radio-tagged and released. Seven of the eight paired birds rejoined their mates soon after release. We relocated seven of the nine birds one or more times after release; the longest period between release and relocation was 22 days. Maximum known distances traveled by tagged birds were 1.6 - 9.6 km. One bird was relocated at a nest site. The nest was 1.2 km inland at 348 m elevation, in a large, old mountain hemlock. The nest located in this study lends additional weight to the concern that the species may require old-growth forest in parts of its range. However, further effort is needed to locate additional nests and determine the species nest preferences.

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