

14. THE SOUTHEAST ALASKA OWL NETWORK: PRELIMINARY DATA COLLECTED USING CITIZEN SCIENCE

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A cooperative owl monitoring program was initiated in southeastern Alaska in 2005 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and Juneau Raptor Center. The primary objectives of the program were to develop a network of trained volunteers to participate in a long-term forest owl monitoring program, and to compile

and summarize data collected on seasonal distribution and relative abundance. Fifty-one individuals from 12 communities located throughout the region volunteered to conduct monthly surveys from January to December 2005. The volunteers conducted silent-listening surveys covering five points, one-half mile apart, one evening per month. Volunteers surveyed 445 points, resulting in 59 detections of eight species of owls. Efforts were also made to collect ancillary observations in communities throughout the region. Eighty-five owl sightings, representing ten species of owls, were recorded from the ancillary sighting cards sent in by surveyors and other participants. Northern saw-whet (*Aegolius acadicus*) and Western screech-owls (*Megascops kennicottii*) were the most abundant species detected in both survey and ancillary sighting data. Owl sightings early in the year were probably adults during breeding season, while the detections in the early fall were most likely juveniles. The owl monitoring program will initiate limited broadcast surveys in 2006 during the months of February-July, using western screech-owl and barred owl (*Strix varia*) calls. Data from ancillary owl sightings will be gathered from August-December.

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