



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

September 10, 1993

Mr. George J. Divoky
Chairman, Pacific Seabird Group
10535 Interlake North
Seattle, Washington 98133

Dear Mr. Divoky:

Secretary Babbitt has asked me to respond to your March 8 letter concerning the biodiversity of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). I apologize for the late response. We share your concern for the damage done to refuge resources by introduced species.

My review of this situation leads me to conclude that the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has long recognized the problem you identified and has been carrying out a rather aggressive program to achieve the objectives you seek. Lack of funding and approval to use certain control techniques have slowed the effort.

We also share your concern about rats. Last year the Service worked with people from the Pribilof Islands, Saint George and Saint Paul, and the Department of Agriculture on a harbor management plan designed to prevent the introduction of rats from ships in the Pribilof Islands. The local inhabitants and the Service are concerned that increased commerce may result in the introduction of rats to these islands. This year we will assist the local governments and the Department of Agriculture in training harbor personnel in awareness, prevention of introduction, and eradication of any rats that do come ashore through the new port facilities. In addition, the Refuge staff has canvassed over 60 different organizations, agencies, private companies, and other interested groups to get ideas on preventing rat introductions.

Regarding predator control on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, past control of Arctic foxes in small areas of concentrated goose nesting was experimental. The study was funded by a congressional add-on of funds earmarked for the project and these funds were never intended to be used for control of foxes in the Aleutians.

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Thank you for your support. We hope you will continue to be supportive of our management activities to control exotic species.

Sincerely,



for George T. Frampton, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for Fish
and Wildlife and Parks