



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Pacific Islands Ecoregion
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122
Box 50088
Honolulu, Hawaii 96850

In Reply Refer To: Seabirds (kwr)

MAR - 3 1999

Craig S. Harrison
Hunton & Williams
P.O. Box 19230
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Harrison:

This responds to your January 28, 1999, facsimile in which you requested an update on several activities with respect to the Newell's shearwater (*Puffinus auricularis newelli*). Your facsimile was sent as a follow up to our previous correspondence dated June 19, 1998. I will respond to your questions in the same order in which they were written.

1. There have been no additional section 6 projects funded since our letter of June 19, 1998, because the Region One section 6 allocation to the States for FY 1999 has not yet been completed.
2. There is not a recovery team for the Newell's shearwater, and we do not at this time anticipate the formation of such a team for the revision of the recovery plan.
3. We had hoped to have at least a preliminary draft of the revised recovery plan prepared for our own internal review sometime this year, but the biologist who was working on this and other seabird issues for the office, Ms. Lorena Wada, was pulled from her regular duties and assigned to work on the Hawaii plant critical habitat workload for several months. With our current budgetary and staffing shortages, we are unable to assign another biologist to this task in FY 1999. We were recently allocated our endangered species listing program budget for FY 1999 and plan to hire some temporary biologists for the critical habitat workload, thus allowing Lorena to reinitiate her work on the seabird recovery plan revision. However, this will likely be several months from now. We, therefore, do not anticipate having a draft revised recovery plan prepared and ready for public review until sometime in FY 2000 or FY 2001.
4. There will be a public notice and comment period published in the *Federal Register* at such time that a draft revised recovery plan is completed.

5. We agree with you that the radar surveys and follow-up site visits to colonies should be done on as many of the Hawaiian Islands believed to harbor seabird colonies as possible. Our hope is that these surveys can be done on both the islands of Hawaii and Kauai. However, the State's budgetary restraints may preclude them from conducting them on any other island than Kauai this year.

Thank you for your continuing interest in the recovery of seabirds in Hawaii. If you have any additional questions, please contact Assistant Field Supervisor Karen Rosa (phone: 808/541-3441).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert P. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".

Robert P. Smith
Pacific Islands Manager

cc: Michael Buck, DOFAW
Carol Terry, DOFAW
Beth Flint, USFWS