



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
1011 E. TUDOR RD.
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503

IN REPLY REFER TO:

WM:0064g

DEC 29 1986

Lora L. Leschner, Chair
Pacific Seabird Group
9209 180th Street N. W.
Stanwood, Washington 98292

Dear Ms. Leschner:

Thank you for your inquiry concerning seabird research and management activities in the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Service recognizes the importance of Alaskan seabirds as a major component of the north Pacific ecosystem and as an international wildlife resource. We are committed to management and conservation of Alaskan seabirds, as mandated by law.

The Alaskan region (Region 7) of the Service maintains a number of monitoring programs and carries out studies to improve management of seabirds. We are providing some details on these projects and on personnel and funding below. Other more intensive investigations of seabird ecology and management in Alaska are carried out by the Alaska Office of Fish and Wildlife Research. This group, although located in the same building as the Region 7 directorate, is administered under Region 8, the nationwide research arm of the Service. Region 8 is responding separately to your inquiry on behalf of the Alaska Office of Fish and Wildlife Research.

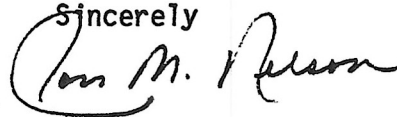
The Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge comprises most islands along the state's 30,000-mile shoreline and the Aleutian chain. The refuge was formed in 1980 under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. Biologists in this refuge monitor seabird populations and productivity in approximately eight sites from Cape Lisburne to southeastern Alaska. Additional sites are expected to be covered in 1987 or shortly thereafter, especially in the Aleutians. Logistical support is also provided for monitoring of two other sites on the refuge by private researchers. In addition, two studies to improve management of seabirds are underway: determination of diets of the declining populations of kittiwakes in the Pribilofs, under contract to the University of Alaska, and removal of foxes on Kiska Island to permit recolonization by seabirds. The Alaska Maritime Refuge had 3 full-time biologists assigned to seabird work in 1986, and another who is employed during the summer; the refuge budget for seabird work was \$370,000. In fiscal year 1987 (which started in October 1986) there will be 5 full-time biologists due to the transfer of two people from the regional office to the refuge, as well as the intermittently employed biologist and several summer technicians. The 1987 budget for refuge seabird work is expected to be about \$450,000. These figures do not include administrative and overhead costs that support the program.

The Division of Wildlife Assistance in 1986 carried out monitoring in Prince William Sound and other sites in central Alaska, and maintained the Seabird Colony Catalogue. The group had four full-time employees and a budget of \$210,000. In fiscal year 1987 the group was disbanded due to a Service-wide reorganization, but all biologists were reassigned to other divisions. The Alaska Office of Investigations will continue the monitoring work in Prince William Sound, and will initiate a study of possible contaminant effects on marine birds of the Valdez oil terminal. One biologist will be responsible for these projects; final budget estimates are not available yet.

In October 1986 the Service established a new unit in the Alaskan regional office, the Branch of Coastal and Marine Resources. This group will provide overall planning and coordination of Service work on coastal ecosystems, including seabirds. It will also provide technical consultation to other units of the Service and to private researchers, and will identify new management issues of concern to the agency. One biologist serves as Marine Bird Coordinator within the branch, with a budget of \$55,000. Among other things, this person is responsible for the maintenance and expansion of the Seabird Colony Catalogue.

I hope this answers your concerns. Please contact me again if you wish further information about our seabird programs in Alaska. We are dedicated to the conservation of Alaskan seabirds, and as the above figures show, we are maintaining our staff and funding at or above last year's levels. We look forward to expanding our work in the future in areas of particular concern.

Sincerely



Deputy
Assistant Regional Director