

Sea Duck Joint Venture

Annual Project Summary

FY22 (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022)

Project Title: Assessing Hunting Pressure on Common Eiders in Chukotka, Russia.

F21AC01463

Principal Investigators: Dr. Martin Robards, Wildlife Conservation Society,
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Partners: Alaska Department of Fish and Game Subsistence Division (Dr. Liliana Naves), Birds Russia (the late Dr. Evgeny Syroechkovskiy), and Saint Petersburg State University (Dr. Konstantin Klokov).

Project Description: Harvest rates of waterfowl in Chukotka, Alaska, and Arctic Canada are poorly understood, as is the case for much of the Arctic. Consequently, modeling and management of the Pacific Common Eider population is constrained by lack of information about mortality rates. This project will develop a methodology and implementation plan for estimating harvest of Pacific Common Eiders in eastern Russia. A survey tool will be developed with established experts in Alaska and Canada and implemented by Russian partner Birds Russia. The product will be a statistically defensible estimate of the magnitude of common eider hunting in Chukotka, distribution of that pressure, and observations of change over time.

Under this award, we planned to: (1) Review and develop a draft survey tool based on North American harvest survey efforts, including a data management plan (June 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021); (2) Collaborate with Birds Russia to translate and adapt survey tool to the Chukotka environment, including identification of focal villages (January 1, 2022 - May 31, 2022); (3) Conduct surveys (June 1, 2022 - December 31, 2022); (4) Analyze results, develop a manuscript for submission to peer-reviewed journal, provide data and report to partners, and share results with partners and Russian villages (January 2023 - May 31, 2023); and (5) submit a technical report to the USFWS Project Officer no later than September 28 in all years covered by this agreement. The report will document preliminary results of the project, and a breakdown of project costs and partner contributions for the reporting year.

To ensure project success, the Service will be substantially involved in the project. The Service will be responsible for the following: reviewing the study design, data management plan, and implementation plan, disseminating results to wildlife managers in US and Canada, and making publicly available all reports and products that are generated as a result of this study via the Sea Duck Joint Venture website, seaduckjv.org.

Project Objectives: Our overarching goal is to document the magnitude, distribution, any sex bias, and long-term changes in eider hunting in coastal Chukotka. Our specific objectives within this project are to:

1. Develop a survey tool that allows for data on waterfowl hunting to be collected in Chukotka, Russian Federation which is comparable to North American efforts;
2. Implement the survey tool in a select suite of villages in coastal Chukotka with a focus on Pacific Common Eiders;
3. Extrapolate data from surveys for wintering eiders across their range in coastal Chukotka.

Preliminary Results (*include maps, photos, figures/tables as appropriate*): We have completed Objective 1 (develop a survey tool) and began to test implementation as planned. During summer and fall of 2022, we focused specifically on a) piloting the translated survey tool with anonymous participants in the Anadyr, the capital of Chukotka, and Kanchalan, a small village, and b) assessing implementation options that could utilize assistance of the Provincial Department of Wildlife Conservation and Use of Chukotka.

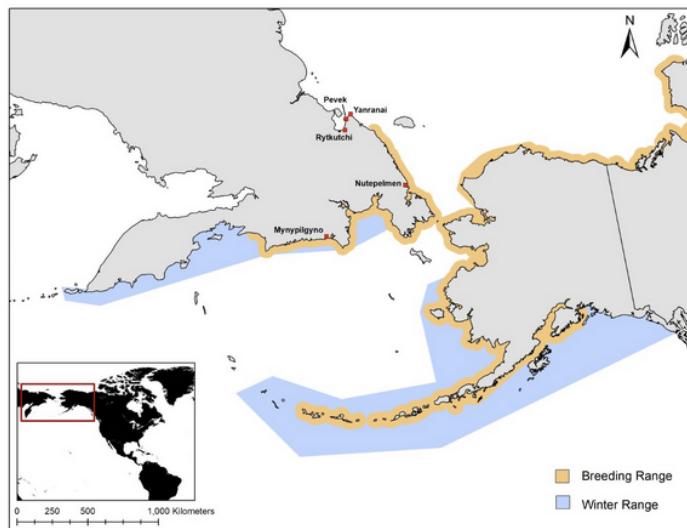


Figure 1. Distribution of Common Eiders with the five focal communities that will be the focus of our surveys in Chukotka. They were all previously surveyed for bird harvests by Syroechkovski and Klokov (2004) allowing for historical changes to be assessed.

We are currently making some adjustments to the survey protocol based on feedback from the work in Anadyr and Kanchalan, as well as our communications with officials at the Provincial Department of Wildlife Conservation and Use. The latter has indicated their support for the work which alleviates any concerns we had on political hurdles for the survey to take place.

Project Status: Our project is making steady progress and we are confident that it will fully meet all three objectives, as well as fulfill the primary goal of providing data on the magnitude, distribution, sex bias, and long-term changes in avian hunting (including of eiders) in coastal Chukotka. However, we are currently running about 6-months behind schedule. This is a result of a) the COVID-19 pandemic that slowed the onset of the work, b) the untimely death of lead project partner Dr. Evgeny Syroechkovskiy, and c) the onset of the Ukraine/Russia conflict that has presented significant constraints on communications and logistics. Given these challenges,

we are happy to have made as much progress as we have, and to be moving into the full implementation of the survey tool.



Figure 2. The Village of Kanchalan, Chukotka



Figure 3. An interviewed hunter and his wife outside their summer yaranga near Kanchalan, Chukotka

Project Funding Sources (US\$). Complete only if funded by SDJV in FY22. This is used to document: 1) how SDJV-appropriated funds are matched, and 2) how much partner resources are going into sea duck work. You may include approximate dollar value of in-kind contributions in costs. Add rows as needed for additional partners.

SDJV (USFWS) Contribution	Other U.S. federal contributions	U.S. non-federal contributions	Canadian federal contributions	Canadian non- federal contributions	Source of funding (name of agency or organization)
\$38,247					USFWS SDJF (2 years)
		\$35,000			Trust for Mutual Understanding
		\$5,250			WCS matching ICR

Total Expenditures by Category (SDJV plus all partner contributions; US\$). Complete only if project was funded by SDJV in FY22; total dollar amounts should match those in previous table.

ACTIVITY	BREEDING	MOLTING	MIGRATION	WINTERING	TOTAL
Banding (include only if this was a major element of study)					
Surveys (include only if this was a major element of study)					
Research				\$26,969	\$26,969