

**Sea Duck Joint Venture
Annual Project Summary
FY2021 (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)**

Project Title

Assessing Hunting Pressure on Common Eiders in Chukotka, Russia (SDJV # 164, USFWS Agreement # F21AC01463)

Principal Investigators

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Partners

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Dr. Mark Mallory, Canadian Wildlife Service
Dr. Evgeny Syroechkovskiy, BirdsRussia
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Project Description

This project will develop a methodology and implementation plan for estimating hunting pressure on eiders in eastern Russia. Our work will allow direct synergies with similar efforts in Alaska and Canada toward a more holistic understanding of hunting of North American eiders across their range. Furthermore, deployment of the survey tool will subsequently be expanded to several other species of broader interest (beyond the Sea Duck Joint Venture), such as shorebirds and Emperor Geese, in the Russian Far East for which this information is in high demand.

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 are:

- 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

No results to report as yet (only 4 months into the project).

Project Status

We are currently working on Objective 1. We have confirmed with the Russian component of the team that our initial focal communities will include the six settlements surveyed two decades ago by these same collaborators. Given the large range of options with respect to survey approach, this allows us to develop a realistic timeline and expected robustness of the survey for review by the team based on these six villages. Perhaps most importantly, it will allow us to assess budget per village for a given methodology (e.g., full household surveys or interviews with local experts) and thus enable us to assess our capacity to expand to other communities of interest moving forward. This latter component is critical given the importance of surveying the East Siberian Sea coastal areas and not just those in Chukotka.

Our efforts have also focused on compiling existing data, including archived materials with USFWS, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and directly from our Russian partners. This component of our work is now complete.

Next steps are to continue working with Dr. Liliana Naves; we are in the process of finalizing the contract with Alaska Department of Fish and Game for her time developing the draft survey tool. With that done, we'll set up a meeting with the Russian partners to discuss any necessary adjustments and approach to implementation of that tool, as well as the scope of interviews within a community – individuals or households in particular.

We expect our survey tool to be finished and available for review by USFWS/CWS partners by early 2022. With that in hand and approved by partners, we will arrange for translation and begin planning for village visits by the survey team in spring/summer and fall 2022. There have been no obstacles as yet, although we obviously hope that Covid-19 impacts to travel in the Russian Far East ameliorate in 2022.