

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

Project Title: Advancing Trans-boundary Sea Duck Conservation Actions: Surf Scoter Habitat Use and Movement Patterns in the Salish Sea SDJV Project #166

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Project Description: In order to influence and guide sea duck conservation planning and actions on landscape-level transboundary issues such as aquaculture, conflicting species management (e.g. salmonid habitat and food web enhancements, Pacific Herring management and status), environmental assessments (e.g. oil/gas/other shipping, coastal and port development) and to assess effects and response to oil spills, there is an increasing need to produce coherent and relevant species data. Recent advancements in implantable GPS-quality devices offer the ability to refine and target our knowledge towards identifying critical habitat features and time periods for Surf Scoters in the Salish Sea.

Project Objectives: 1) Deploy a minimum of 60 GPS-GSM transmitters (approximately 30 per year over 2 seasons) on Surf Scoter, 2) Create detailed spatial data products that can be used to identify critical habitat features to inform marine spatial planning, emergency preparedness and response, and other relevant conservation planning initiatives in the Salish Sea, 3) Establish relationships with regionally relevant interpretive centers using data collected from marked Surf Scoter.

Preliminary Results: The Project Team and collaborators have secured 37 Ornitela OrniTrack-I30 4G transmitters for deployments targeted to begin late-November 2021. The Project Team has secured the surgical implantation expertise of Dr. Malcom McAdie in British Columbia and Dr. Joe Gaydos in Washington.

Project Status: July 28, 2021 – Agreement finalized between Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Sea Duck Joint Venture. September 2, 2021 – Project team met to discuss transmitter sample size and allocation for first season deployment, and to discuss strategies with respect to veterinarian availability with anticipation of COVID-19 restrictions for border crossings.