

RESTORATION

Summer 1999

U P D A T E

Volume 6 Number 3

Speakers share human dimensions of the spill

The 10-year legacy of the *Exxon Valdez* spill is a "mixed bag" of accomplishments, frustration, struggle, and pain, according to speakers representing the spill region during the day-long Report to the Nation held March 23 in Anchorage. About 600 people attended the event to mark the 10th anniversary of the spill.

Commercial fishermen, Native leaders, scientists, trustees, and land managers each stood at the podium and together drew a picture of a restoration effort that was not always rosy. They unanimously agreed that a great deal of progress has been made since the tragedy, but many also pointed out that the path to restoration was both difficult and painful. Today's successful restoration program took too many years to develop, some said, marked by discourag-



ing mistakes along the way. These are some of their main points:

- Research has provided a wealth of new insights about the marine environment, but it took years to develop the larger ecosystem-based studies and to focus on data and tools useful to fish and wildlife managers.

- Habitat protection efforts have been hugely successful, benefiting injured resources, corporate landowners, government, and the people who live and work in the spill region. But the difficult, drawn-out negotiations took a toll on everyone and compromises made by sellers were often agonizing.

- The people most impacted by the spill – residents, commercial fishermen, and others – felt left out of the restoration

See Human Dimensions, Page 2

Keynote address emphasizes threats to the world's oceans

It fell to Dr. Jane Lubchenco, a world-renowned marine scientist, to explain how the Exxon Valdez and the lessons learned from the spill fit into a worldwide perspective of oceans. These are her words.

By Dr. Jane Lubchenco

Today's Report to the Nation and this week's *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill (EVOS) Symposium provide an occasion to reflect on the meaning and legacy of EVOS. My task is to set EVOS into the larger context of the ongoing transformation of our oceans and indeed the entire planet.

My messages are: 1) that the vivid, dramatic disasters are only the tips of the iceberg; 2) that lessons learned the hard way from the EVOS experience are directly applicable to addressing the larger threats; and 3) that the real potential legacy of EVOS is a new awareness, a new ethic, new knowledge, new partnerships and new action – not just for Prince William Sound, not just for Alaska, but for all oceans.

What do we know about the State of the Oceans? How are oceans changing and at what rate? What are the likely conse-

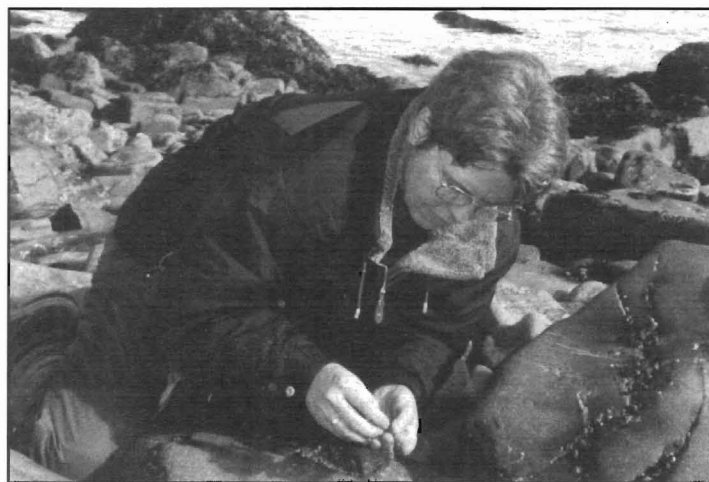


Photo by Bruce Wright

Dr. Jane Lubchenco, a professor of marine biology and zoology at the University of Oregon, toured Prince William Sound before delivering her keynote address "The State of the World's Oceans."

quences of these changes? Which ones are most important for us to address immediately? Answering these questions for oceans presents special challenges because we lack basic information and baseline data for most oceanic systems.

Nonetheless, we can assess some very important aspects

See Lubchenco, Page 6

Human dimensions: Restoration a struggle

“Exxon has not paid one penny of that. They continue to wage a pathetic legal battle to try and keep from doing what is right.”

Jerome Selby,
former mayor, Kodiak Island Borough
concerning the \$5 billion judgment
against Exxon for punitive damages

Continued from Page One

process during the first few years until the Restoration Plan took shape in 1993.

- A long-term scientific effort, to be funded with \$115 million from the Restoration Reserve, must be carefully crafted to provide useful information for fish and wildlife managers, not just academic knowledge for scientists.

- Restoration of the spill region is far from over, with many species still recovering from their injuries and others not recovering at all. Until key species like herring and harbor seals are fully recovered, restoration for resources and residents alike will still be needed.

- Without a final settlement with Exxon over the \$5 billion owed in punitive damages, emotional scars will not heal and the people of the spill region and other plaintiffs will not be able to move on with their lives.

Speeches were both powerful and emotional. The 10th anniversary of the spill, the public symposium sponsored by the Trustees, and the intrusive return of worldwide media attention to Prince William Sound all served to bring back the devastation of the

spill itself and the 10-year struggle to live with its consequences.

“We were in shock after the spill,” said Torie Baker, a Cordova resident who represents commercial fishing on the Public Advisory Group. “There’s no doubt about it, we were traumatized. And thereafter, the trials and the paperwork, the claims and the lawyers and the formation of the citizen tanker traffic oversight group (RCAC), state and federal legislation, the Trustee process itself, the scientists, the media. After the horror of the spill, it was overwhelming how so many more events came in to bear on our lives, let alone try and make good decisions as businessmen and fishermen.”

Baker noted that the fishing community was too overwhelmed to take an active role in restoration until 1993, when the herring population crashed and pink salmon returned in low numbers. One aim of a fishermen’s blockade of the Port of Valdez in 1993 was to get the Trustee Council to fund “more meaningful science,” she said. The broad-based Sound Ecosystem Assessment (SEA) project was soon forged to help understand the dy-



LEGACY OF AN OIL SPILL: 10 YEARS OF

Exxon Valdez runs aground on Bligh Reef; \$2 billion cleanup begins.
March 24, 1989

Oil reaches the Alaska Peninsula, the farthest reach of the spill, 470 miles from Bligh Reef.
May 18, 1989

Exxon and state/federal governments agree to a record civil and criminal settlement; Trustee Council established to oversee restoration.
October 9, 1991

Oil Pollution Act of 1990 passed by Congress
August 1990

After four successive summers of cleaning beaches, Exxon pulled the last of its crews and the Coast Guard officially declared the cleanup effort to be concluded. However, oil remains to this day on many hard-hit beaches.



Photo by Patrick Endres

1989

1991

1992



Photo by Karen Dutcher-Krieger

The Battle of Sawmill Bay.

Before oil reached the western shore of Prince William Sound, Cordova’s commercial fishing fleet mobilized along with the Alaska National Guard and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to save the salmon hatchery at Sawmill Bay and the nearby village of Chenega Bay. A state ferry was used as headquarters for the operation. Several dozen volunteers and about 40 fishing boats laid boom and scooped up oil using 5-gallon buckets, bringing in as much as 1,000 barrels of oil/water mix a day. Their efforts were largely successful in deflecting a direct hit by the floating oil.

Last of the cleanup crews leave the beaches.
June 12, 1992

namic influences on herring and salmon in the sound.

"Our demands fell on responsive ears," Baker said, "but we had to pull pretty damn hard."

Gary Kompkoff, president of Tatitlek Corporation, said that Native voices must be a part of future restoration activities. The civil settlement did not include the people of Prince William Sound as an equal voice on the Trustee Council, he noted.

It wasn't until 1994 that a concerted effort was

"During the last few weeks, it has been very painful to revive some of the memories of 1989 and '90. But I think it's necessary for us all to be reminded what the oil spill has done to our land and to our waters, the resources, to the environment, and to our lives. I think it's necessary to be reminded because we cannot afford to forget."

Gary Kompkoff

President, Tatitlek Corporation

made to improve communications with spill area communities and include Native residents in the process, he said. Kompkoff cited a community involvement program, development of the Public Advisory Group, incorporation of traditional knowledge into the research projects, educational programs for youth, and other efforts that he said helped establish trust in the Trustee Council and its process.

Nancy Barnes, president of Eyak Corporation, and Ron Burns, secretary of Akhiok-Kaguyak Corporation, each endorsed the habitat protection efforts between their corporations and the Trustee Council. Conservation easements and land sales were the best way to get an economic return from their lands and at the same time protect traditional uses, they said.

The decision to sell the land was very difficult and the years of negotiations very

See Human Dimensions, Page 4



Nancy Barnes, president of Eyak Corporation, discusses habitat protection from a seller's point of view while Trustees Marilyn Heiman, special assistant for Alaska to the Secretary of the Interior, and Frank Rue, Commissioner of the Dept. of Fish and Game, listen.

RESTORATION AFTER EXXON VALDEZ

The \$12 million commercial herring fishery in Prince William Sound crashes.

April 1993



Photo by Roy Corral

Pacific herring hatched during the 1989 oil spill should have returned for the first time as adults to spawn in 1993, but never showed up. Intensive research identified a latent virus and fungus as the probable cause of the collapse. But what caused the epidemic? Oil is considered one possible trigger, though other factors could also have played a role.

Nearly 24,000 acres of private land within Kachemak Bay State Park, a popular recreation area located across the bay from Homer, were slated to be logged. The state acquired and protected the land. This was the first major habitat protection act by the Trustee Council, which partially funded the package.

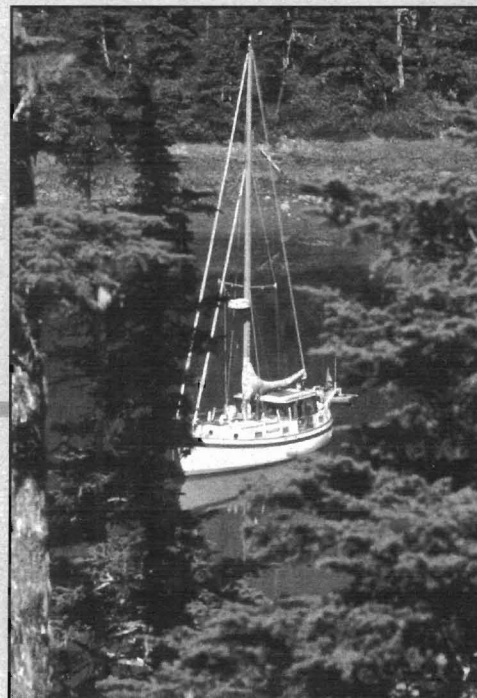


Photo by Rob Schaefer

Kachemak Bay State Park inholdings acquired.

August 1993

1993

Human dimensions: Restoration a struggle

Continued from Page Three

painful, Barnes said. "We sought and contend to this day that government should not have insisted on fee acquisition on the largest portion of land in the package," she said. "Conservation easements can provide every bit the conservation of the habitat as fee. However, the mindset of both the federal and state governments was that such easements were difficult to administer and not as valuable to the public as owning outright. Our position was and is that such easements can be drafted to allow the same protection as fee, but allow

title to remain in Native ownership. This is a subtle, but important point.

"However, the more the board thought about the sale," she said, "and considering the purpose of ANCSA to provide some economic return, we became convinced that a package could be worked out meeting both the public and shareholder needs."

Burns said that the prospect of developing Akhiok-Kaguyak lands on the southern shores of Kodiak Island presented a dilemma for the corporation.

"This (habitat protection) program allowed us to solve an almost unsolvable problem -- how to provide a financial return to our shareholders from our lands at the same time protecting our ancestral lands and subsistence way of life."

Another primary concern, echoed by many of the speakers, centered on the need for Exxon to settle damage claims awarded 20,000 Alaskans and other users of the sound who joined in a class action lawsuit. A jury awarded \$5 billion in punitive damages in 1994, but Exxon has vowed to appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. The case was presented before the Appellate Court in April.

"As you know, fishermen must live with volatile fish returns, markets, weather. Variability is an integral part of our lives. Although variability can pose tremendous challenges, risks, and stresses, fishermen do come to terms with it and accept it. However, for many fishermen, the oil spill has thrown this acceptance of natural variability completely out of balance, undermining the confidence and knowledge they have about the natural world around them."

Dan Hull
Commercial Fisherman
Member, Public Advisory Group

The protection of 41,549 acres of mature spruce forest on northern Afognak Island resulted in the creation of a new state park. The parcel is adjacent to highly productive marine waters and includes salmon streams and habitat for bald eagles and nesting marbled murrelets.



Photo by Daniel Zatz

Sound Ecosystem Assessment (SEA) study begins.
Spring 1994

1994

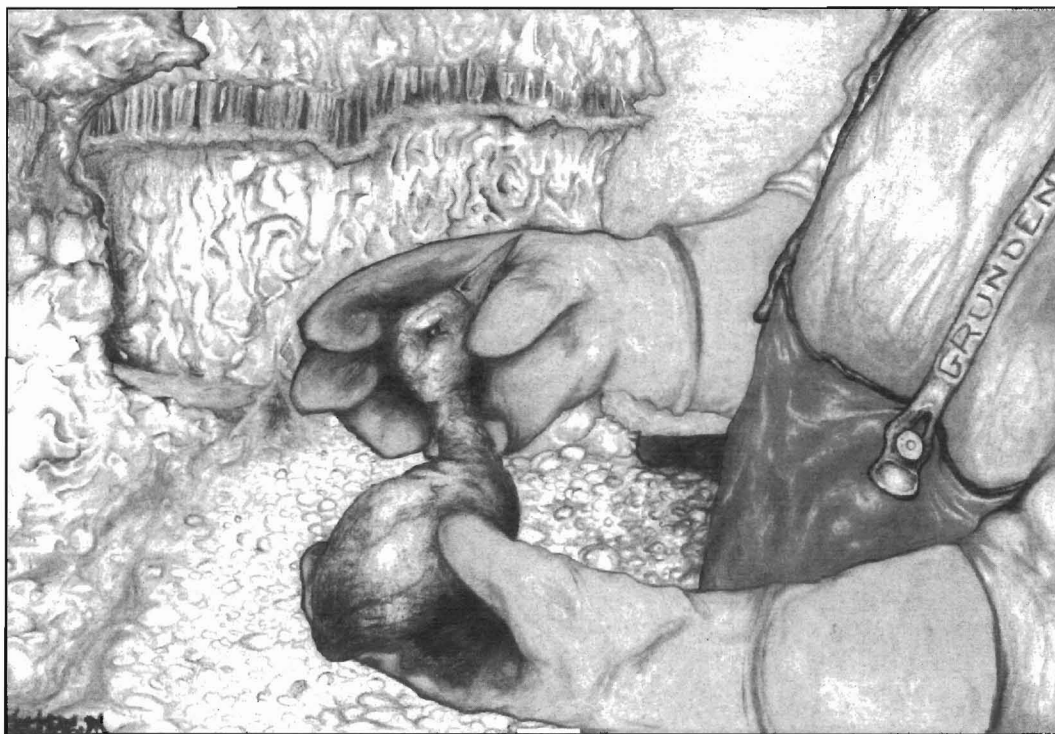
Afognak Island State Park created.
May 1994



Photo by Bob Spies

In response to the collapse of the herring fishery in Prince William Sound and erratic returns of pink salmon, the Sound Ecosystem Assessment (SEA) study was initiated. This 5-year \$21 million study has made vital discoveries about survival needs of juvenile herring and salmon fry. It has provided new insights about the influence of ocean currents, nutrients and temperatures on plant and animal plankton, which should help predict returns of adult fish.

We Remember . . . We Learn.



Student artwork, essays reflect childhood views of spill

Students from throughout the spill region participated in an art and essay contest co-sponsored by the Trustee Council and the U.S. Forest Service. Students, many who were not yet born at the time of the spill, were asked to create artwork reflecting the theme: "We Remember . . . We Learn." Older students, who would have been ages 4 to 8 in 1989, were asked to write essays.

Winning artwork was created by: George Morton, Homer High School, 1st Place (at left) and Danny Dykema, Soldotna High School, 2nd Place. Ten honorable mentions were also awarded. Essay winners were: Marilyn Honkola, Cordova High School, 1st Place; Haleena Hanson, Skyview High School (Soldotna), 2nd Place; and Brian Johannesssen, Cordova High School, 3rd Place.

The Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak opens with cultural and archaeological exhibits. The Trustee Council provided \$1.5 million for inclusion of a climate-controlled repository for proper care of artifacts.



Photo by Roy Corral

Marine pollution prevention project initiated for Prince William Sound region. This project was later expanded to include Kodiak Island and lower Cook Inlet.

Youth Area Watch begins.
Spring 1995

Alutiiq Museum opens.
May 1995

The Chugach School District, which covers the Prince William Sound region, initiates a program that involves students in the restoration process. Students take part in field and laboratory studies, working side-by-side with restoration researchers.

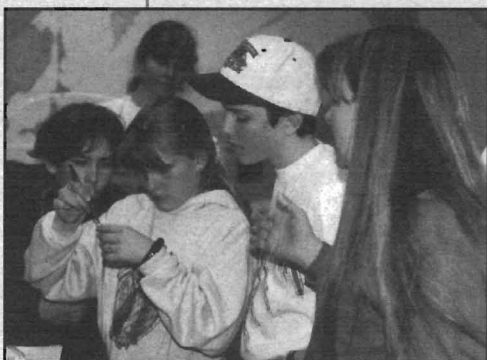


Photo by Mel Henning

1995

Lubchenco: new ethic needed for oceans

Continued from Page One

of oceans. I've chosen to focus specifically on a suite of indicators of change where we can document the magnitude and, in some cases, the rate of change. Some indicators focus on land-based activities, highlighting the reality that oceans are affected both by land-based and ocean-based activities. Land use practices have far greater impact on ocean ecosystems than is generally appreciated.

Eight global scale indicators of change in oceans include:

1. **Two thirds of the major marine fisheries are fully exploited, over exploited or depleted.** Just over 40 years ago, this figure stood at less than 5 percent. In some cases, over-exploited species may recover; in others extinction appears virtually a certainty.

2. **The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased by 30 percent since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.** Because we can "fingerprint" this heat-trapping, greenhouse gas, we are certain that the increase is a direct result of human activities, primarily the burning of fossil fuels. The consensus within the scientific community is that the increases in CO₂ and other greenhouse gases have probably al-



Dr. Jane Lubchenco

ready affected climate.

3. **Humanity currently utilizes over half the available surface freshwater.** About 70 percent of that amount is used in agriculture. Above and beyond the ramifications of these

numbers for an explosively growing human population, this figure has critical implications for water flow through estuaries and bays, and therefore habitat quality.

4. **Between one-third and one-half of the land surface of the planet has now been transformed by human action.** Examples include the conversion of wetlands and forests to urban and industrial areas or of grasslands to pastures and agricultural fields. The resulting alterations affect ocean ecosystems directly and indirectly. The recent listing of nine salmon and steelhead populations in the Pacific Northwest highlight some of the consequences to marine species of land transformation due to

Habitat protection agreements finalized for Kodiak Island parcels.

May-November 1995

Agreement reached to protect 26,665 acres on Shuyak Island, allowing the state park there to quadruple in size.

December 1995

1996

Habitat protection on Kodiak Island takes a giant leap as agreements are reached for protection of 267,000 acres, all within the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. The protection packages include 426 miles of shoreline, 63 salmon streams, and prime habitat for bears, bald eagles, seabirds and other species.



Photo by L.J. Evans

Genetic identification of red (sockeye) salmon from the various Kenai River spawning areas is used for the first time to help fisheries managers regulate the commercial fishery. The information helps protect individual Kenai River salmon stocks from overfishing.

Genetic research used to manage Kenai River red (sockeye) salmon.

July 1996



logging, grazing, hydroelectric power generation, agriculture and urbanization.

5. **The amount of nitrogen that enters the nitrogen cycle each year has more than doubled over the past century as a result of human activities.** The making of fertilizers and the burning of fossil fuels accounts for the bulk of this increase. The problem is that vast amounts of nitrogen in fertilizers are not used by crop, garden or lawn plants, but are washed away into streams, rivers and oceans. It's been suggested that harmful algal blooms that cause red tides are partly related to the increased amounts of nitrogen in the coastal waters around the world.

6. A number of scientific experts have stated that Earth is in the early stages of the sixth mass extinction event in the history of the planet. This is the first mass extinction that is due directly to human activities. Major drivers include habitat destruction or alteration, introduced and invasive species, and overhunting and overfishing. We know, for example, that **one-fourth of the bird species on the planet have gone extinct**, due primarily to human actions.

7. **There are now some 50 "dead zones" (areas with low to no oxygen) in the coastal**

areas around the world, most of which have appeared within the last 50 years. The dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico has doubled in size since 1993, and at 1,600 square miles is the largest in the Western Hemisphere.

8. Habitat destruction occurs in the oceans as well as on land, but is more difficult to quantify for most marine habitats. We have better estimates for coastline habitats. **Fifty percent of the mangrove forests of the planet have been destroyed in the last few decades, due to a combination of coastal development and conversion to shrimp-farming ponds.**

These eight global-scale indicators of change, as fundamental and important as they are, do not provide us with a complete picture of ways in which oceans are changing. Nonetheless, they give us a firm position from which to draw some conclusions.

- It is clear that human activities are changing the chemistry, the physical structure, and the biology of the oceans, especially along coastal margins.

- It is clear that we live on a human-dominated planet. Humanity has emerged as a new force of nature, on a par with the traditional forces of nature such as hurricanes, volcanoes, **See Lubchenco, Page 8**

“Scientists, you must find ways to speak with nonscientists. You must find ways to communicate what you know with others -- policy makers, politicians, the media, the average citizen. . . Help them understand what you know about this planet, about its oceans, about its special creatures. . . Because as you share that knowledge you make it easier for those of us who manage, who make laws, who set budget priorities to do the right thing for mother earth.”

Lt. Governor Fran Ulmer,
before introducing Lubchenco

Evidence from ocean trawls indicates that there was a late-1970s change in the basic food supply for some seabirds and marine mammals in Gulf of Alaska waters. Warmer waters may have been responsible for a drop in fat-rich forage fish, such as sand lance and capelin (photo below), and a rise in lean fish such as pollock and cod.

Harbor seals, pigeon guillemots, and marbled murrelets are all suffering long-term declines, possibly due to this change in food supply. Warmer waters also could have been the cause for the drop in crab and shrimp in the gulf region and the increase in bottomfish populations.

APEX reveals
sea change.
Summer 1996



Photo by Roy Corral

Protection of 59,520 acres, including some of the most valuable habitat in Prince William Sound, was completed. This package protects 190 miles of shoreline, old-growth forests and 45 salmon streams, including the largest red (sockeye) salmon-producing system in the sound.

1997

The bald eagle becomes the first of the injured species to be declared as "recovered."
September 1996.



Photo by Roy Corral

Western Prince William Sound habitat protected.
March 1997

Lubchenco: new ethic needed for oceans

“The oceans are changing dramatically. We are ignorant about many of these changes, in denial about some and generally complacent about the likely consequences.”

Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Keynote Speaker

Continued from Page 7

floods, droughts, or earthquakes.

- It is clear that now is a fundamentally different time on Earth than ever before: the rates of change are faster, the scale of change is larger and the kinds of changes are in many cases fundamentally different from any other time in the history of humans on Earth.

- It is clear that human activities are modifying oceans and the entire planet faster than our ability to measure or understand the changes.

E.O. Wilson has suggested that humanity will soon enter the Century of the Environment. I believe that we are in the process of redefining what “environment” means. We are realizing that human health, the economy, social justice and even national security are each environmental issues that depend on intact, functioning ecological systems.

Ecological systems provide essential goods and services that together compose the life-support systems of the planet. Most of us are well aware of the “goods” provided by nature – food, fiber, genes, medicines. What about the “services” we receive? Forests, wetlands, grasslands, kelp forests, and coral reefs, for example, all provide services. These in-

clude flood control; purification of water, air and soil; partial climate regulation; pest control; pollination. As we transform these ecological systems, we disrupt their functioning, and in many cases, lose the services we take for granted.

Thus, discrete disasters such as EVOS, though often more dramatic and visible, are not the most serious problems. This statement is not intended to minimize the importance of the damage from a spill like the *Exxon Valdez*, but rather to put it in perspective. The global-scale, ongoing alterations often receive much less attention.

Oil spilled a decade ago is still persistent; ecological communities and the human communities dependent upon them still bear scars of the damage. Yet this damage is not the most egregious change; it is one of many, the vast majority of which are invisible, incremental, sometimes irreversible and taken together, quite insidious.

The oceans are changing dramatically. We are ignorant about many of these changes, in denial about some and generally complacent about the likely consequences. Lessons learned from EVOS about the price of complacency are immediately relevant in this context. Impres-

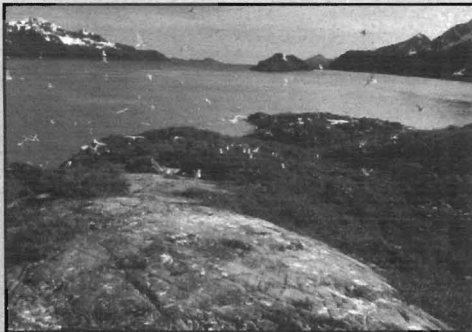


Photo by Bud Rice

Protection of 30,200 acres in Kenai Fjords National Park and another 2,270 acres in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge is completed.

Kenai Fjords National Park inholdings acquired.
May 1997

The common murre population at the Barren Islands got a huge boost when a large brood that hatched in 1993 returned for the first time. Common murrens made up approximately 75 percent of the estimated 250,000 seabirds that died in the spill. With the 1997 population, common murrens now appear to be recovering from the spill.

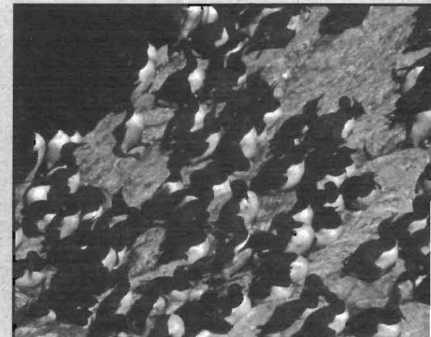


Photo by Roy Corral

Crews return 8 years after the spill to Chenega-area beaches to remove entrenched oil.
Summer 1997



Photo by Roy Corral

Murrens return to Barren Islands.
Summer 1997

sive gains have been made in instituting mechanisms to prevent future spills and in being prepared in case a disaster occurs.

In addition, lands acquired by the Trustee Council will protect important terrestrial and shoreline habitat. This protection is of vital importance. It also needs to be complemented by comparable protection of ocean habitats. No-take marine reserves should be a cornerstone of protection of ocean resources. In view of the greater "openness" of ocean ecosystems compared to terrestrial ones, significantly larger areas of ocean habitats should be protected than are being conserved on land. Land-based and ocean-based activities are threatening ocean ecosystems; land-based and ocean-based solutions are both essential.

The Trustee Council's priority on investing in long-term, peer-reviewed research and monitoring is visionary. If executed properly, it will reap untold benefits in providing the knowledge and understanding to inform future decisions and manage resources wisely.

To an outsider, the immediate legacy of EVOS includes:

1) a new awareness of the dangers of complacency and the vulnerability of complex ecological/social systems;

2) a new ethic which emphasizes prevention and stewardship;

3) new knowledge about the effects of the spill and future knowledge about the functioning of the integrated land-ocean ecosystems;

4) new partnerships across federal and state agencies, Native peoples and citizen groups; and

5) new action to protect critical terrestrial habitat and initiate a vigorous long-term monitoring and research program.

This immediate legacy is indeed impressive. But, unless it is complemented by comparable awareness, ethics, knowledge, partnerships and action on a larger scale, little real progress will be made.

Among those actions needed, I would place high priority on reducing overfishing, reducing ocean habitat destruction, weaning ourselves of fossil fuels, reducing introduction of invasive species, establishing networks of no-take marine reserves, and slowing the growth rate of the human population and wasteful consumption.

The real potential legacy of EVOS is to apply the lessons learned more broadly – for as Governor Knowles told us this morning, the price of complacency is too high.

“(D)iscrete disasters such as EVOS, though often more dramatic and visible, are not the most serious problems. . .

... (EVOS) damage is not the most egregious change; it is one of many, the vast majority of which are invisible, incremental, sometimes, irreversible and taken together, quite insidious.”

Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Keynote Speaker

The research portion of the SeaLife Center was funded with more than \$26 million from the Trustee Council.

Otolith marking used to regulate pink salmon fishery.
August 1997

A new way to identify hatchery-raised pink salmon in Prince William Sound allows better protection of wild salmon during commercial fisheries. Raising the water temperature of hatchery incubators causes distinctive tree ring-like markings on the earbone or otolith of salmon, which can be easily detected in the field. This method was tested with 98% accuracy during the 1997 pink salmon fishery.

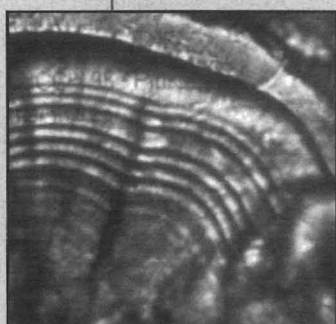


Photo courtesy Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game

1998

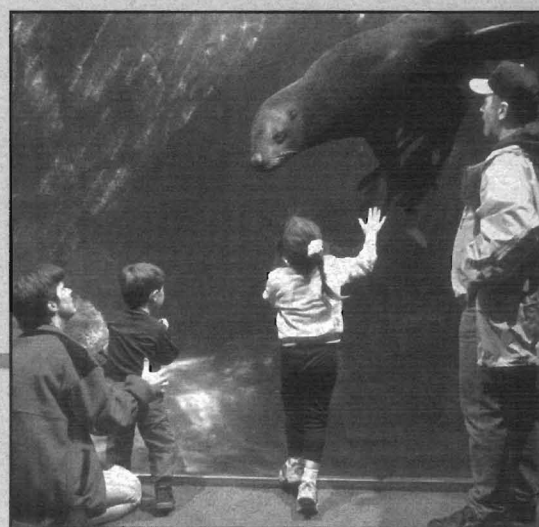


Photo by Chris Arend

Alaska SeaLife Center opens.
May 1998

PWS herring population collapses again

The return of Pacific herring to Prince William Sound was about half of what managers expected, leading to cancellation of the commercial season. The herring season was cancelled for four successive years (1993-1996) before rebounding for two lackluster years. The 1988 year class was the last large year class to recruit into the Prince William Sound herring fishery.

The 1999 season was cancelled April 20 when fishery managers determined that less than 20,000 tons of herring returned to spawn. The preseason forecast for Prince William Sound herring predicted a spawning biomass of 39,500 tons. Only a few spawn-on-kelp fishers were able to begin harvest before that season was cut short.

Researchers believe that this year's collapse was related to the same disease that decimated the population in 1993, but studies will not be conclusive until later this summer.

"Most of the mortality probably occurred during and after spawning a year ago (1998), when prevalence of ulcers and virus was high, and when fish behavior was abnormal," said Gary Marty, research pathologist at the University of California at Davis. "Resultant

mortality was not documented until this spring because Pacific herring disperse during the summer, and the most accurate population estimates are made in late March and early April when the fish congregate to spawn. This year, fish are relatively healthy and they should provide the basis for population recovery."

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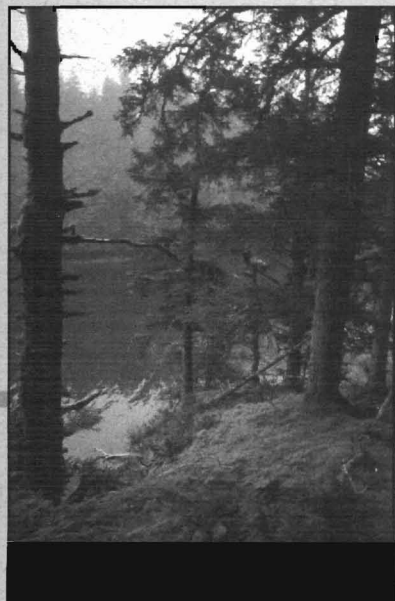


Photo by Roy Corral

Northern Afognak Island protected
November 1998

Most of the northern shore of Afognak Island was protected through the acquisition of 41,750 acres adjacent to the Afognak Island State Park and Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. The \$70.5 million package included 99 miles of shoreline, 18 salmon streams, and old growth forest slated to be logged.

Tatitlek-area habitat protected
June 1998



Photo by Kevin Hartwell

1999

Protection of 212 miles of shoreline and 50 salmon streams in north central Prince William Sound was completed, including a conservation easement for Bligh Island.

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service and the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission have agreed to share management of harbor seals in Alaska through an accord that ensures that seal populations are conserved and subsistence harvest needs are met. The co-management agreement was formalized at a signing ceremony at the Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall in Yakutat, Alaska, during the Commission's spring meeting on April 29.

Each year the agency and commission will produce a plan for the conservation of harbor seal populations and the co-management of subsistence uses of harbor seals. Agreement goals are: to promote the sustained health of harbor seals in order to protect the culture and way of life of Alaska Natives who rely on harvests for subsistence uses; to promote scientific research and collection of data, that includes the traditional knowledge of Alaska Natives; to identify and resolve any management conflicts that may arise associated with Alaska harbor seals; and to inform subsistence hunters and the public on the management and conservation of harbor seals in the state.

"This is the result of 18 months of hard work by both groups," said Ron Berg, Deputy Regional Administrator for NMFS. "The agreement provides a strong partnership for managing harbor seals that builds on both the agency's scientific expertise and the traditional and local knowledge of Alaska Natives."

Harold Martin, chair of the Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission, agreed. "This clearly demonstrates that we can understand each other and that we can live in harmony," he said. "We look forward to this new partnership."

The agreement is the first to be signed between NMFS and Alaska Natives since a 1994 amendment to the Marine Mammal Protection Act authorized such pacts.

First harbor seal management agreement signed



Sitting from left: ANHSC Attorney Carol Daniel, Ron Berg of NMFS, ANHSC Chairman Harold Martin, ANHSC Executive Director Monica Riedel, and Kaja Brix of NMFS. Middle row: ANHSC board members Mitch Simeonoff, Lillian Elvsaa, Wendy Gruber, Flore Lekanof, and Ray Sensmeier. Standing in back: ANHSC board member Walter Meganack, Jr. and Dan Alex, Cook Inlet Marine Mammal Council.

Photo courtesy National Marine Fisheries Service

The river otter became the second species to be termed "fully recovered" from the spill. The conditions of five other species were upgraded, but 10 years after the spill, common loons, three species of cormorant, harbor seals, harlequin ducks, the AB Pod of killer whales, and pigeon guillemots are showing little or no improvement since their spill injuries.



Photo by Robert Angell

Eastern Prince William Sound protected.

March 1999

Trustees approve update to "List of Injured Resources and Services."

February 1999

Protection of 75,425 acres in eastern Prince William Sound was finalized with Eyak Corporation. The package of conservation easements, timber easements, and land transfers included 80 salmon streams, 189 miles of shoreline, and 50 miles of freshwater shoreline.

Photo by Kevin Hartwell



"Legacy of an Oil Spill: 10 Years After the Exxon Valdez." A four-day symposium on the impacts of the oil spill took place in Anchorage to mark the 10th anniversary of the accident.

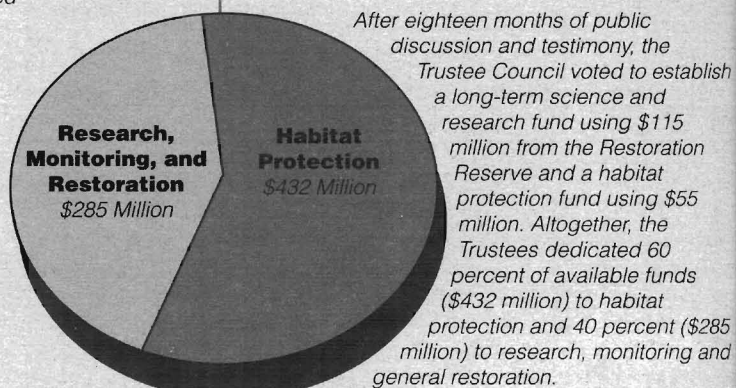
March 23-27, 1999

Trustees decide long-term use of the Restoration Reserve.

March 1999

Herring population crashes again. Commercial fishing cancelled.

April 1999



Draft Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2000 now available

The Draft FY 2000 Work Plan was released June 17 and contains recommendations to fund approximately \$8.3 million of research, monitoring and restoration projects.

The draft plan includes 26 new projects at a cost of \$2.1 million and 53 continuing projects requiring \$6.2 million in funding.

The Restoration Office received 133 project proposals requesting \$16.4 million in funds. The Council set a funding target for the year at \$8 million to \$9 million, down from this year's funding of \$11.6 million.

The Draft Work Plan includes recommendations by Executive Director Molly McCammon and Chief Scientist Bob Spies. A panel of scientists and experts reviewed each of the proposals, taking into consideration project methods, budgets and how each fits into the overall restoration goals of the Trustee Council. Trustee agencies and Public Advisory Group representatives also provided input.

The draft plan is available for public comment until July 21. A public hearing will be held at the Anchorage Restoration Office on July

15 at 7 p.m.. The Public Advisory Group will meet in Anchorage July 15-16 to discuss the Work Plan. The Trustee Council is scheduled to meet in Anchorage August 10 to make final funding decisions for the FY 2000 Work Plan.



Draft Work Plan
for Federal Fiscal Year 2000

June 1999



Prepared by:

Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council

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Public Hearing

July 15, 1999
7:00-8:30 p.m.
Anchorage Restoration Office

The Public Advisory Group will host a hearing to accept public testimony on the Fiscal Year 2000 Work Plan. To join the hearing by teleconference, call Rebecca at 800-478-7745. The PAG will hold its summer meeting July 15, 1-5 p.m and continue July 16, 8:30 a.m. - noon, to review and discuss the Work Plan. The Trustee Council is expected to meet August 10 to vote on funding the plan.

Restoration Office

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