



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Fort Raleigh National Historic Site Wright Brothers National Memorial

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

1401 National Park Drive

Manteo, NC 27954

252-473-2111



IN REPLY REFER TO:

L7615 (CAHA)

March 30, 2007

Mr. Pete Benjamin, Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Raleigh Field Office
P.O. Box 33726
Raleigh, NC 27606-3726

Dear Mr. Benjamin:

Cape Hatteras National Seashore (Seashore) has previously consulted with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's (FWS) Raleigh Field Office on our Interim Protected Species Management Strategy (Strategy) and FWS issued a Biological Opinion on the Strategy dated August 14, 2006. The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing a decision document on the Strategy. The decision document will include new performance measures that are designed to gauge the success of the implementation of the Strategy on the protection of endangered and threatened species within the Seashore. The performance measures are as follows:

Performance Measures – Piping Plover

Based on public comments and discussions with the USFWS, performance measures were developed to gauge the success of the selected alternative. The terms and conditions in the Biological Opinion require monitoring relative to the various breeding stages (number of breeding pairs, number of scrapes, number of nests, and number of fledglings); thus it is appropriate to have performance measures relative to most of these stages. In recent years (2003-2005) there has been an average of 2.6 breeding pairs of plovers at the Seashore with an average of 2 nests and 2.3 chicks fledged each year. Improvement on these results would be indicative of the success of the selected alternative. There are 4 main recent breeding sites at the Seashore, Bodie Island, Cape Point/South Beach, Hatteras Spit and Ocracoke, so it is reasonable to consider "4" as an initial target number for breeding pairs and a percentage of that number as an initial target for nesting attempts. The following performance measures will be considered minimum targets during the period the interim strategy would be in effect.

Performance Measure 1: Number of breeding pairs of piping plovers in Seashore. Target is 4 or more breeding pairs per year.

Performance Measure 2: Number of piping plover nests in the Seashore. Target is 3 or more nests or 75% of the number of breeding pairs, whichever is greater.

Performance Measure 3: Number of fledged chicks in the Seashore. Target is an average of at least one chick, on average, per nest per year.



Performance Measure 4: For wintering piping plovers, the NPS and USFWS will jointly develop a systematic monitoring protocol to help establish where the wintering enclosure should be placed.

Performance Measures – Sea Turtles

The Seashore has averaged about 76 loggerhead turtle nests per year over the past 10 years; however, this number is highly variable year-to-year and no trend is apparent. The same trend applies to other turtle species at the Seashore. The Seashore has also generally represented approximately 10 percent of the total North Carolina sea turtle nests. Under the selected alternative the Seashore expects to continue to contribute approximately the same percentage of the State's total sea turtle nests for all species. One of the primary anticipated responses of sea turtles (all species) to management actions would be a reduction in the false crawl to nest ratio. The ratio at the Seashore has been reported to be as high as 3:1. The literature (Dodd, 1988) reports an observed ratio of 1:1 on undisturbed beaches.

Performance Measure 5: Sea turtle false crawl to nest ratio (all species). Target is less than or equal to 1:1 annually.

Performance Measure 6: Percentage of State's total sea turtle nests (all species). Target is that the number of sea turtle nests at CAHA annually would be greater than or equal to 10 percent annually of the state-wide average for the previous 5 years.

Reinitiation of Consultation if Performance Measure Targets Not Met:

If one or more targets are not met, the Seashore will reinitiate consultation with USFWS as part of the annual review process identified in the Biological Opinion, unless the Seashore and the USFWS mutually agree that the failure to meet the target was caused by factors beyond the management control or influence of the Seashore (e.g., a higher than normal frequency of severe storms occurred during the breeding season resulting in an increased incidence of nest failures).

The Seashore requests reinitiation of consultation with FWS based on the inclusion of these performance measures in our draft FONSI. If you have any questions about these measures, please contact me at (252) 473-2111, ext. 148.

Sincerely,

/sgd/ Thayer Broili
(for)

Michael B. Murray
Superintendent