



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)

January 6, 2010

Mr. Pete Benjamin
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Raleigh Field Office
P.O. Box 33726
Raleigh, NC 27636-3726

Dear Mr. Benjamin:

This follows up on our telephone conversation of November 24, 2009. Below is a summary of Cape Hatteras National Seashore's 2009 breeding season results related to the Reinitiation Notice identified in the Second Amendment to the Biological Opinion for Cape Hatteras National Seashore's Interim Protected Species Management Strategy (dated March 28, 2008).

Piping Plovers

- 1.a. Nine (9) breeding pairs of piping plovers were found on the Seashore surpassing the minimum required level of six (6) breeding pairs of piping plovers per year.
- 1.b. The nine (9) breeding pairs produced nine (9) known nests surpassing the minimum required level of nests (75% of the number of breeding pairs producing nests per year).
- 1.c. The nine (9) nests resulted in six (6) chicks fledged for a fledge rate of 0.67 chicks per breeding pair, which is below the target level of producing an average of one (1) fledged chick per breeding pair, per year.

The following statements address the measures in the Reinitiation Notice described in the 2008 Second Amendment to the Biological Opinion.

- a. The Seashore documented 9 piping plover nesting attempts for 9 breeding pairs. The number of nesting attempts for all breeding pairs was less than double the number of breeding pairs.
- b. The Seashore did not document more than two nests for any one breeding pair. However, of the 9 breeding pairs, one pair lost the first egg of its clutch and continued to lay the remainder of the clutch approximately 40 meters from the original nest location.

Sea Turtles

- a. The statewide total nest number for 2009 was 619 nests. The 104 nests at CAHA in 2009 represent 17% of the state's total nesting numbers, surpassing the minimum required level of 10%.
- b. In 2009, there were a total of 104 nests and 101 false crawls resulting in a 0.97:1 false crawl to nest ratio. This falls within the acceptable false crawl to nest ratio of 1.3:1 or lower.

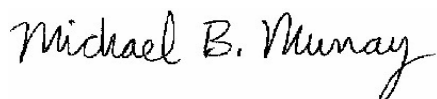
As provided in 50 CFR §402.16, reinitiation of formal consultation is required where discretionary NPS involvement or control over the action has been retained (or is authorized by law) and if the amount or extent of incidental take is exceeded. Based on the above triggers for reinitiation of formal consultation (based on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Second Amendment to the Biological Opinion dated March 28, 2008), we request reinitiation of formal consultation on our failure to meet the target level of producing an average of one (1) fledged chick per breeding pair, per year.

In comparison to the rest of the state, piping plover reproductive success at the Seashore was slightly lower than the statewide average. In North Carolina reproductive success improved over the previous year with 39 chicks surviving to fledge from the 54 pairs for a productivity of 0.72 chicks per pair (D. Allen, pers. comm. 2009). The state's average is heavily influenced by the productivity on Cape Lookout National Seashore where 37 pairs fledged 30 young for a productivity of 0.81. The Seashore's productivity was slightly lower with 9 pairs fledging 6 chicks for a productivity of 0.67 chicks per pair.

As required under the reporting requirements of the biological opinion, the annual reports will be submitted to your office on or before January 31, 2010. These reports will contain detailed observations and data related to the breeding season and provide additional basis for evaluation of the 2009 breeding season performance.

If you have any questions about the information provided, please contact Thayer Broili at (252) 473-2111, extension 137.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Murray
Superintendent

cc:
CAHA Chief Resource Management
CAHA Wildlife Biologist