

**From:** [Mike Murray](#)  
**To:** [Sandra Hamilton](#)  
**Cc:** [Britta Muiznieks](#); [Doug Wetmore](#); [Thayer Broili](#)  
**Subject:** Re: question on response to comment  
**Date:** 07/01/2010 07:41 AM

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Sandy,

In our revision of Table 10 for the "revised Alternative F", we simply struck out "using the SECN protocol" (see language below) in the Nonbreeding Survey section. My impression of our discussion was that the revised Table 10 would apply only to "revised alternative F" (i.e., not to the other action alternatives).

(language from revised Table 10)

The NPS will monitor and document the presence, abundance, and behavior of migrating and wintering shorebirds from July through May ~~using the SECN protocol~~. The NPS will obtain data similar to International Shorebird Survey data. The following information will be recorded: Date, time, and location of observations; identity of observer; species and number of birds observed; weather variables and tidal stage; habitat; behavior of the majority of birds in the flock (foraging, resting, disturbed [source will be recorded], other); site management in effect where birds are seen; and number of pedestrians, pets, ORVs and other potential disturbances. Species to be surveyed include piping plover, American oystercatcher, Wilson's plover, red knot, and other selected species. Species recently added to the surveys include whimbrel, sanderling, and black-necked stilt.

That is what we are planning to do; however, I'm not sure what our wording needs to be to address the concern.

Mike Murray  
Superintendent  
Cape Hatteras NS/ Wright Brothers NMem/ Ft. Raleigh NHS  
(w) 252-473-2111, ext. 148  
(c) 252-216-5520  
fax 252-473-2595

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▼ [Sandra Hamilton/DENVER/NPS](#)

**Sandra  
Hamilton/DENVER/NPS**

07/01/2010 09:15 AM

To Thayer Broili/CAHA/NPS@NPS  
cc Britta Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Doug  
Wetmore/DENVER/NPS@NPS, Mike  
Murray/CAHA/NPS@NPS

Subject Re: question on response to comment

The pigeon-hole is already in the DEIS. To remove it in the FEIS we'll need to delete the language in the FEIS that says the Seashore will use the SECN protocol. Here's one option.

Delete in:

Table 10 p. 123 (Nonbreeding survey) (applies to all action alts)  
p., 340 (Alt C)  
p. 445 (Alt C impacts)  
p. 453 (Alt D impacts)  
p. 460 (Alt E impacts)  
p. 470 (Alt F impacts)

We would leave the SECN language in following places in the FEIS:

Acronyms and Abbreviations p. IXii  
p. 204 and others in CH 3 that report on the results of the SECN surveys  
p. 332 Alt A referencing the IPSMS BO which says we'll use it to monitor  
p. 363 Table 52 column for Alt B, impacts of alt B to PIPL

Basically, it would stay in for Alt A and B since that's what's on-going now, but come out for the action alts and be replaced with either nothing or something like "will use the SECN protocol for the immediate future as other options are examined"

Saying nothing, I think, looks weird. Any suggestions on a simple replacement?

Thanks.

Sandy Hamilton  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
National Park Service - Environmental Quality Division  
Academy Place  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver CO 80225  
PH: (303) 969-2068  
FAX: (303) 987-6782

▼ Thayer Broilli/CAHA/NPS

**Thayer  
Broilli/CAHA/NPS**

07/01/2010 06:35 AM

To Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS@NPS  
cc Britta Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Doug  
Wetmore/DENVER/NPS@NPS, Sandra  
Hamilton/DENVER/NPS@NPS

Subject Re: question on response to comment

I especially agree with Mike's pigeon-hole remark and think it is important to keep this in mind when responding to comments overall.

Thayer Broili  
Chief of Resource Management  
Cape Hatteras National Seashore  
Phone 252-473-2111 ext.137  
Fax 252-473-2595

▼ Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS

**Mike  
Murray/CAHA/NPS**

To Sandra Hamilton/DENVER/NPS@NPS, Britta  
Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Thayer  
Broili/CAHA/NPS@NPS

06/30/2010 05:39 PM

cc Doug Wetmore/DENVER/NPS@NPS

Subject Re: question on response to comment

I agree with continuing to use the protocol we are using but deleting the SECN label. Something better may come along at some point. Do we have to pigeon-hole ourselves? I think the notes confused the point about research. Not sure what is meant that ISS protocol is okay if a research proposal was submitted. We were okay with a study to look at nonbreeding shorebird in areas open or closed to ORV use (not an ISS survey).

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Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

▼ Sandra Hamilton

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Sandra Hamilton  
**Sent:** 06/30/2010 05:03 PM EDT  
**To:** Britta Muiznieks; Mike Murray; Thayer Broili  
**Cc:** Doug Wetmore  
**Subject:** Re: question on response to comment

Thanks, Britta. That's helpful information for responding to this comment. My recollection and the notes from the June meeting (calls) on the issues from the comment analysis are that we would stick to the SECN protocols rather than switch to the ISS. Here are (1) the excerpt from the meeting notes and (2) the draft response that was prepared based on them. It's up to the Seashore, just let me know what's decided. Thanks.

excerpt from meeting (calls) notes:

**Nonbreeding surveys (concern about SECN protocol)**

Concern is that protocol as designed does not adequately determine or document the difference in shorebird utilization of areas closed to ORV use vs. open to ORV use.

OBJECTIVE: Compare alternative F with stakeholder suggestion(s) and decide upon best approach.

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION:

Delete reference to “SECN protocol.” Should survey and compare beach areas that are fully open to ORVs with areas that are closed to ORVs. Suggest survey methods used at ASIS (Forgues 2010) or CALO (Tarr 2009). Add GPS locations for banded birds so that information can be provided to researchers.

Delete CWB from nonbreeding surveys as they are not dependent upon Seashore land for foraging.

Follow ISS protocol.

**Group Discussion**: SECN complaint: Transects are too far apart to accurately count plovers.

NPS response: The counts are not meant to count every single bird, but are designed to show trends over time. Could provide research study in the future to compare open places vs. closed areas? Data is being collected over time; unsure what NPS wants to do with that information. More of a response to comment, no need to address within the DEIS. SECN is the data collection arm of the NPS regional office; we are coordinating with their other seashore parks. There is no objection to ISS protocol, if a research application is submitted. SECN protocols are also more robust than ISS. SECN collection can feed into ISS.

All surveys are dependent on foraging—check language for clarity.

**Decision**: Continue to do what are doing—use SECN, not ISS.

[attachment "Concern 24205.docx" deleted by Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS]

Sandy

Sandy Hamilton  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
National Park Service - Environmental Quality Division  
Academy Place  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver CO 80225  
PH: (303) 969-2068  
FAX: (303) 987-6782

▼ [Britta Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS](#)

**Britta  
Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS**

To Sandra Hamilton/DENVER/NPS@NPS  
cc Doug Wetmore/DENVER/NPS@NPS, Mike  
Murray/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Thayer Broilli/CAHA/NPS@NPS  
Subject Re: question on response to comment

06/30/2010 02:40 PM

Sandy-

It was my understanding from a brief conversation with Mike, that we were taking out any references to the SECN protocols in case we wanted to modify/deviate from the protocols in the future. The surveys are extremely time consuming since they are walked not driven. I know that at one point we had asked if we could drive them and the answer was that we would then have to drive them all for the data to be comparable. Since we cannot drive the multiple transects that we have at the points and spits, we are currently walking all the transects. I agree that the SECN protocols are better than the ISS which are more of a presence/absence survey but I think there are less time consuming ways of getting the information that we need. The SECN protocols are self imposed rather than mandated by the BO or consent decree.

The SECN protocols have a completely different objective (i.e. looking at population trends over time) than what Sydney and his folks are trying to accomplish by resighting color banded birds. Because the transects in our protocols are timed, they cannot be interrupted to try to get band combinations. Their recommendations are **not** compatible with the surveys that we are conducting. Obtaining band combinations is a timely endeavor especially when bands are faded. Sydney has spent many hours documenting the relatively few banded PIPs on the Seashore. It is good information but just not compatible with our surveys. Since he helped band the wintering birds in the Bahamas I am sure that he is interested in resightings and wants to know the timing of their migration through the area.

Britta Muiznieks  
Wildlife Biologist

0027098

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

252-995-3740-**Office**  
252-475-8348-**Cell**  
252-995-6998-**FAX**

▼ Thayer Broili/CAHA/NPS

**Thayer  
Broili/CAHA/NPS**

06/30/2010 10:12 AM

To Sandra Hamilton/DENVER/NPS@NPS  
cc Doug Wetmore/DENVER/NPS@NPS, Mike  
Murray/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Britta  
Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS@NPS  
Subject Re: question on response to comment

I've been otherwise occupied with various tasks and am just now catching up on your requests. I'm forwarding this to the EIS? Where are the specific comments from SELC? My general response is that it is not required or appropriate for them to try to run our bird program at this level of detail via this EIS and that the suggestions don't need any response other than we'll consider their suggestions. Whether their comment is "out of scope" or not is your call.

Britta will have more specific thoughts, but I'm sure she is concerned about any publication of GPS information regarding bird locations, particularly AMOY. PIPL are not currently banded. Are they suggesting we or someone else band them? Anyway, Britta can call you or Doug W, or you can call her, for more discussion. Her number is 252-995-3740. Again, as written below, I'm confused on who is saying what, what the issues are, or whether you're suggesting that the below warrants a change in the FEIS text.

Thayer Broili  
Chief of Resource Management  
Cape Hatteras National Seashore  
Phone 252-473-2111 ext.137  
Fax 252-473-2595

▼ Sandra Hamilton/DENVER/NPS

**Sandra  
Hamilton/DENVER/NPS**

06/28/2010 05:28 PM

To Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Thayer  
Broili/CAHA/NPS@NPS  
cc Doug Wetmore/DENVER/NPS@NPS  
Subject question on response to comment

How would you like us to respond to the 3 suggestions in the comment from SELC below on nonbreeding surveys:

Would the SECN protocol prohibit adopting these? On the surface they seem like decent suggestions to one who is not on the ground counting birds (me). Thanks.

we added recording of GPS location for banded birds, so that precise location data can be provided to the scientists who banded the birds; while Seashore biologists may be aware of where "South Point" is, a biologist who banded breeding or migrating birds hundreds of miles away may not be familiar with the area, and providing a GPS location will be very helpful to these scientists in accurately locating the resight location. We also have added the requirement that a spotting scope will be used to scan the legs of piping plovers for color bands. We support the proposal's inclusion of observers recording color bands. However, based on our extensive experience with non-breeding surveys for piping plovers and knowledge of the locations at the Seashore, we are very concerned that without a requirement that a scope be used, many, if not most, of color bands on piping plovers will be missed. Using binoculars clearly is not sufficient to detect difficult-to-observe color bands, especially at the distances that are involved in some locations. Band returns can provide very valuable data about non-breeding birds for the Seashore and scientists working on bird recovery efforts (e.g. Stucker et al 2010). The survey methodology should be designed in a way that actually allows a reasonable chance of band resight data being collected.

Finally, we added the start and end time, so it is clear how long the surveys actually take.

Sandy Hamilton  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
National Park Service - Environmental Quality Division  
Academy Place  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver CO 80225  
PH: (303) 969-2068  
FAX: (303) 987-6782