

**Consent Agenda Briefing for PWSRCAC Board of Directors – May 2026**

**ACTION ITEM**

**Sponsor:** Danielle Verna and the Scientific Advisory Committee

**Project number and name or topic:** 9110 - Prince William Sound Marine Bird Winter Survey

1. **Description of agenda item:** The Board is being asked to authorize a sole source contract with the Prince William Sound Science Center (PWSSC) in an amount not to exceed \$81,224 for project 9110 to conduct marine bird and mammal surveys in Prince William Sound during the fall and early winter months (September and November 2026). Prior Council-sponsored surveys in late winter (March) have identified areas that may warrant additional protection in the event of a spill during that time period. However, the marine bird community varies throughout the non-breeding season, and community composition is distinct between fall, early winter, and late winter. This project will document density, species composition, and distribution of marine birds and mammals, and identify high-use areas in and around the tanker escort lane. This is the third of four proposed years of surveys during fall and early winter.

This contract authorization is contingent upon Board approval of the FY2027 budget, which contains funding for this project, at the May 2026 Board meeting.

2. **Why is this item important to PWSRCAC:** This project will monitor habitat and densities of marine bird species that were impacted by the Exxon Valdez oil spill and would be impacted again in the event of another spill. The project identifies nearshore habitat important to marine bird survival that may warrant additional protection and can inform spill responders. These surveys take place in the fall and early winter months, which have been identified as gaps in the available survey data for marine birds in Prince William Sound, particularly in and around the tanker escort lanes. The survey areas include Port Valdez, the Valdez Arm, Tatitlek Narrows, Port Fidalgo, Storey, Peak, and Naked Islands, Rocky Bay, Port Etches, Zaikof Bay, and mid-Sound west of Port Gravina. Data will be made publicly available via the Alaska Ocean Observing System data portal and NOAA's Environmental Response Management Application.

3. **Previous actions taken by the Board on this item:**

Meeting	Date	Action
Board	5/1/2025	The Board adopted the FY2026 budget as presented during the Budget Workshop on April 25, 2025, with total expenses of \$5,177,664 and a contingency of \$75,000. This project was approved as part of the FY2026 budget.
Board	5/1/2025	The Board authorized the Executive Director to enter into a sole source contract with the Prince William Sound Science Center to conduct Project 9110 – Marine Bird Fall and Early Winter Surveys in 2025, in an amount not to exceed \$80,060.

4. **Summary of policy, issues, support, or opposition:** None.

## FY2027 Marine Bird Winter Survey Contract Authorization 3-4

5. **Committee Recommendation:** The Scientific Advisory Committee supports this project.
6. **Relationship to LRP and Budget:** Project 9110 – Prince William Sound Marine Bird and Mammal Fall and Early Winter Survey is in the proposed FY2027 budget in an amount of \$81,224.
7. **Action Requested of the Board of Directors:** Authorize the Executive Director to enter into a sole source contract with the Prince William Sound Science Center to conduct project 9110 – Marine Bird Fall and Early Winter Surveys in 2026, in an amount not to exceed \$81,224.

*Note: This action is contingent upon approval of full funding of this project in the FY2027 budget.*

8. **Alternatives:** None recommended.
9. **Attachments:** None.