

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument Permit Application Cover Sheet

This Permit Application Cover Sheet is intended to provide summary information and status to the public on permit applications for activities proposed to be conducted in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. While a permit application has been received, it has not been fully reviewed nor approved by the Monument Management Board to date. The Monument permit process also ensures that all environmental reviews are conducted prior to the issuance of a Monument permit.

Summary Information

Applicant Name: Eric A. VanderWerf

Affiliation: Pacific Rim Conservation

Permit Category: Conservation and Management

Proposed Activity Dates: 10 January to 28 February 2021

Proposed Method of Entry (Vessel/Plane): Plane

Proposed Locations: Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge

Estimated number of individuals (including Applicant) to be covered under this permit: 6

Estimated number of days in the Monument: 6

Description of proposed activities: (complete these sentences):

a.) The proposed activity would...

Establish a new nesting colony of Black-footed Albatrosses on Guadalupe Island, Mexico by translocating birds from Midway Atoll.

b.) To accomplish this activity we would

Remove up to 42 Black-footed Albatross eggs and 25 Black-footed Albatross chicks from Midway and transport them by plane to Tijuana, Mexico and then to Guadalupe Island. The eggs would be placed in Laysan Albatross foster nests and raised by foster parents. The chicks would be raised by hand until fledging. We would take eggs and chicks from nests located on the perimeter of the atoll where they are threatened by high waves and coastal erosion to minimize the impact to the source population, thereby also saving those eggs and chicks from drowning.

c.) This activity would help the Monument by ...

aiding in the long-term conservation and resiliency of the Black-footed Albatross through establishment of an additional nesting colony on a high island that is not vulnerable to climate change.

Other information or background:

We have translocated 89 Black-footed Albatross chicks from the Monument from 2017-2020, and those birds were taken to James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge, Oahu in order to start a

new nesting colony there, where it will be safe from climate change. That project has been successful thus far, with 94% survival to fledging of the translocated chicks, and the return of the first translocated bird as an adult in 2020. The previous translocations have been covered under the Monument managers permit because they were regarded as management actions directly relevant to one of the species protected by the Monument. We are proposing to continue that project, but to begin moving Black-footed Albatrosses to Guadalupe Island, Mexico. Because this would no longer be a direct transfer of birds from one refuge to another, and would involve moving birds to another country, it was recommended that we apply for a permit specifically for this action. We are proposing to continue moving the same number of chicks per year as in previous years (25), for three more years. In 2021, 12 of them would go to James Campbell NWR, which would achieve our goal of releasing 100 birds on the refuge, which we believe will be a sufficient number to establish a new colony. The other 13 chicks in 2021 would be moved to Guadalupe Island, and 25 chicks would be moved to Guadalupe in 2022 and 2023. In addition, we would like to collect up to 42 Black-footed Albatross eggs from Midway each year and move them to Guadalupe. All eggs and chicks removed from Midway would be taken from beaches where many nests are destroyed by waves and coastal erosion and have a low chance of surviving anyway. The impact on the source colony thus would be very low, perhaps even zero, and the eggs and chicks collected would be saved from possible drowning.

This project will be done in collaboration with the Mexican government (the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas; CONANP) and with a partner non-profit organization based in Mexico (Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas; GECI). CONANP and GECI have already provided permission and letters of support for the project.