

## PHOTO FLIGHT 1994

Menasha Corp. MD 500e Helicopter

Pilot - Ronald V. Patton

Right Front Photographer - Roy W. Lowe, USFWS

Right Rear Photographer - David S. Pitkin, USFWS

Survey were originally scheduled for 7 & 8 June but rain forced the cancellation on 7 June so the south coast was flown on 8 June. The aircraft was unavailable on 9 June due to an FAA inspection so the north coast was flown on 10 June.

### 8 JUNE 1994

The weather was sunny and calm with some high clouds upon departure from North Bend at 1029. We arrived at Goat Island in Brookings at 1112 with clear sky and winds only about 5-7 mph NW. The ocean swell was only 2-3 feet but increased to 5 feet or so toward the end of the survey north of Cape Blanco. At Cape Sebastian the wind picked up only a little to about 8 mph NW where it remained until north of Cape Blanco where it tailed off a little. Around 1151 we began taking photos of Pyramid Rock but the Steller sea lions reacted to our flight at 800-900' and began to bail off the rock so we terminated our flight over the rock. The animals seemed easily disturbed here possibly as a result of the two days of in colony work the previous week. Sea lions were not disturbed by our flight elsewhere on this reef or Orford reef. I recommend not flying over Pyramid Rock in future surveys. Over close to the north face of Needle Rock, others were quite distant from the rocks. We reached Orford Reef at 1230 with winds only 8 mph NW. There were Not many animals were present on Seal Rock and it does not appear that any breeding will occur here. We have seen lots of Zc today at haulout sites and swimming south along the surf line. Out on the Orford Reef we encountered some big slicks of Vellela and the water from here south was murky indicating upwelling except for a small patch of extremely clear water trapped behind Cape Sebastian. After photographing Black Rock for Ej we headed for Cape Blanco airport at 1245 to refuel We departed at 1327 and started photographing again at Gull Rock. After finishing at Blackcock Point we headed north and the water immediately became crystal clear and we could see the bottom in the surf and running well offshore We arrived at Bandon at 1348. By 1347 we were finished here and headed north again. At Shell Island the numbers comprised mostly of Zc were very high with most of the beach covered. The waters all around Cape Arago were so clear they looked tropical. After finishing at 1402 we checked the South Slough eagle nest and then proceeded to North Bend arriving there at 1417. Murres looked real strong at all colony sites. Total flight time was 3.3 with probably the best weather conditions for this flight ever.

### 10 JUNE 1994

On 10 June there was a high fog cover at about 700-800 feet as we drove south to meet the helicopter in Florence. Just past Cape Perpetua the fog cleared up and a NW wind was blowing. We loaded up and were airborne at 1010 from the Siuslaw Airport. The

wind was blowing about 8-10 NW as we began at the DCCO colony on the Siuslaw River. From 1019 to 1033 we did all of the Sea Lion Caves/Heceta Head area then moved north. Just past Cape Perpetua the remaining fog was breaking up very fast and it was mostly clear with a fog bank on the horizon. From 1042-1047 we checked the Cape Perpetua area for bald eagles but could not find a nest. The nest here is not active. We then checked the Alsea and Yaquina Bays bald eagle nests before landing at Newport for fuel at 1100 hrs. At 1122 hrs we departed Newport and continued north. At Yaquina Head it was blowing 10-12 mph NW. We checked all bald nests from Rocky Creek to Cascade Head. We were just barely able to check the old eagle nest at Cascade Head because the fog was laying right on top of the headlands here and we were flying in it. We were not successful finding the new nest because fog was a real problem here. At 1206hrs (except we checked the Cape Meares BE nest on the way) arriving there at 1239 hrs where the wind was only 6-8 mph NW. South doing eagles and seabirds. found BRCO nesting on rock 219-036 which is a first record for here. We completed Twin Rocks at 1317 hrs and headed for the Tillamook Airport arriving there at 1327 after checking the BE nest at Dick Point truck and took off again at 1404. From 1413-1423 at Three arch Rocks Susan Riemer had been present earlier but was now gone. At Cape Lookout winds were squirrely but manageable. Most of the top of the Cape was foggy. We landed on the trailer at the Pacific City Airport at 1504. Murre numbers looked real good at all colony sites in the survey area. The ocean waters were very clear throughout the central and north coast area except for some dirty surf in some areas.

Film exposed by Roy W. Lowe 1-50, 71-72, film exposed by David S. Pitkin 51-68, & 78.

Roy W Lowe