

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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## SOVIET SCIENTIST TRACKS "PINK" SNOW GEESE

A Soviet expert on migratory birds, Dr. Vladimir E. Jacobi, has arrived in the United States to work with American scientists tracking the migration of "pink" lesser snow geese from the Soviet Union to the American west coast. The birds were dyed this color as part of a joint experiment.

This is the first cooperative field project of its kind carried out under the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Environmental Agreement of 1972. Dr. William J. L. Sladen of Johns Hopkins University is the U.S. coordinator for the project. Dr. Jacobi will visit National Wildlife Refuges along the Pacific Flyway during his stay in this country.

The Soviets are concerned over declining lesser snow geese populations in their country, where this species breeds only at one location--on Wrangel Island in the Soviet Arctic northwest of the Bering Strait. Lesser snow geese are plentiful on the North American continent.

Last spring 24 lesser snow geese were live-trapped and marked with distinctive green neck bands by the Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service biologists at two National Wildlife Refuges in California before they began their annual spring migration.

This summer Soviet scientists dyed more than 250 geese pink and marked another 200 with coded orange neck collars. Scientists hope to determine the degree to which the Wrangel Island geese intermingle on migration and wintering areas with lesser snow geese that breed in northern Canada.

Soviet migratory bird experts are interested in studying the North American bird banding system developed and operated jointly by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service working in close cooperation. Bird banding records are centrally stored at the Bird Banding Laboratory located at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland, where the data are computer-processed and made available to both U.S. and Canadian scientists. Soviet scientists are investigating the possibility of developing a similar method.

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