



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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JAPANESE COMPANY WINS WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP AWARD

The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently presented Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT) its "Corporate Wildlife Stewardship Award" for developing an innovative miniature satellite transmitter allowing biologists to track the migration of Wrangel Island snow geese.

The Wrangel Island snow geese, a unique species that nests only on Wrangel Island, an island in the Bering Sea between Alaska and the Soviet Union, have been difficult to track during their 2,000-mile fall and spring migrations.

In the fall, the geese fly through Alaska, Alberta, and British Columbia to wintering areas on the Fraser River Delta in British Columbia and the Sacramento Valley in California. But scientists have been unable to track the migration precisely because the 5- to 6-pound birds are too small to carry conventional satellite transmitters used on larger animals.

NTT, one of the world's largest corporations, developed the 2-ounce transmitter for the Fish and Wildlife Service and then provided \$300,000 in financial and material assistance to the Service for tracking the birds.

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"NTT has set an outstanding example in corporate citizenship and conservation," said Service Director John Turner. "The new technology opens up a whole new frontier in migratory bird research and management. We will be able to learn much more about the migration of snow geese and other smaller species than ever before, allowing us to protect them better."

This fall, biologists placed transmitters on 30 birds in time for the migration southward. Remarkably 20 of the transmitters were still operating in mid-November. The biologists currently are tracking the birds and their transmitters using National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration satellites.

In the spring, biologists are to place transmitters on another 30 birds for the northward migration.

NTT currently is attempting to further miniaturize the transmitter so that it can be used to track even smaller birds.

NTT is the second company to earn the "Corporate Wildlife Stewardship Award," which recognizes extraordinary contributions to wildlife conservation. Last year, Arkla Inc., a major natural gas pipeline company, won the award for its efforts to preserve wildlife resources along the route of a 225-mile pipeline project in Oklahoma and Arkansas.