



25 August 2015

Ms. Robyn E. McGhee, Senior Environmental Scientist
ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.
P.O. Box 100360
Anchorage, AK 99503

Subject: Nest Search at CD-4 Gravel Deposition Site, 2015

Dear Ms. McGhee:

This data report summarizes the nest search ABR conducted along the CD-4 road where gravel washed out from the road during high water in May 2015. The nest search was conducted to maintain compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which prohibits destruction of active bird nests and eggs.

Please contact either Rick Johnson or Kristen Rozell for further information.

Thank you,

Rick Johnson
Senior Scientist

Kristen Rozell
Research Biologist

INTRODUCTION

Gravel was deposited on tundra along the CD-4 road during a high-water event in May 2015. In preparation to clean up the gravel, a nest search was conducted to determine if any birds were nesting within 100 feet of the gravel deposition area. ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc., was responsible for cleaning up the tundra to prevent soil and vegetation damage. Cleanup involved heavy equipment and personnel that might inadvertently disturb nesting birds. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)(16 U.S.C. 713–711) prohibits actions that will destroy nests or eggs of migratory birds. Guidance issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recommends that activities which could possibly cause the loss of bird nests, eggs, or young (e.g., construction,

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vegetation clearing, or disturbance, etc.) be avoided during 1 June to 31 July in northern Alaska (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Land Clearing Timing Guidance for Alaska, http://alaska.fws.gov/fisheries/fieldoffice/anchorage/pdf/vegetation_clearing.pdf). A nest search was conducted on 3 June 2015 to ensure compliance with the MBTA.

STUDY SITE AND METHODS

The gravel deposition area was adjacent to the CD-4 road (Figure 1) in patterned wet meadow habitat. Three people approximately 5 m apart walked the perimeter of the gravel with 2 handheld GPSs to record tracks. Parallel paths around the gravel perimeter were increased in distance until 45 m (130 feet) outside the perimeter was searched thoroughly. Birds seen on the ground or flushed were observed until they landed at nests or flew off the site. Nest locations were recorded on handheld GPSs and tracks were saved to document the search effort. A digital camera was used to document site conditions and nest observations.

RESULTS

Two active nests were found near the gravel deposition. The nearest nest to the gravel belonged to a Semipalmated Sandpiper that nested 33.5 m (110 feet) from the north side of the gravel (Figure 2). This nest contained 4 eggs, which is the typical clutch size. The nest was marked with survey lath (1 set of crossed lath and 2 pieces on opposite sides) so that cleanup personnel could see its location (Figure 3). In addition, 2 sets of crossed survey lath were placed at the edge of the gravel closest to the nest. A Pectoral Sandpiper nest was found at approximately 55 m (180 feet) from the gravel. This nest also had the normal 4-egg clutch. No other nests were found. All active nests discovered were greater than 100 feet from where equipment and personnel would be working during tundra rehabilitation activities.



Figure 1. Photo of gravel deposition along CD-4 road, 3 June 2015.

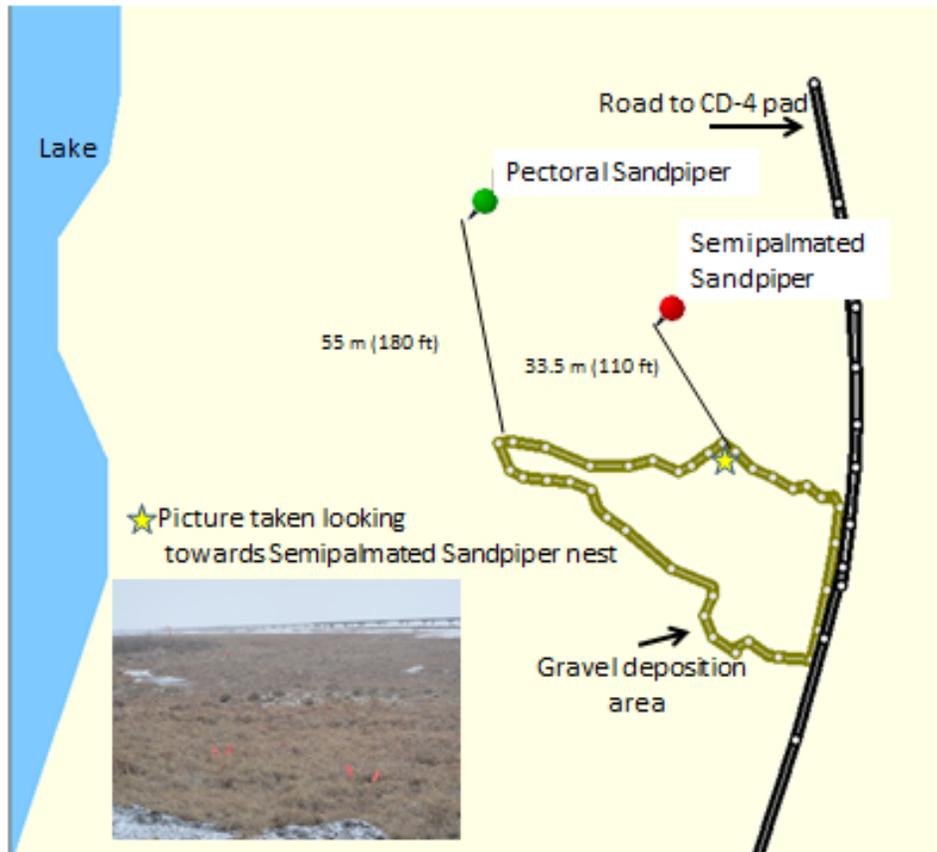


Figure 2. Map of gravel deposition area and nest locations, CD-4 area, 3 June 2015.

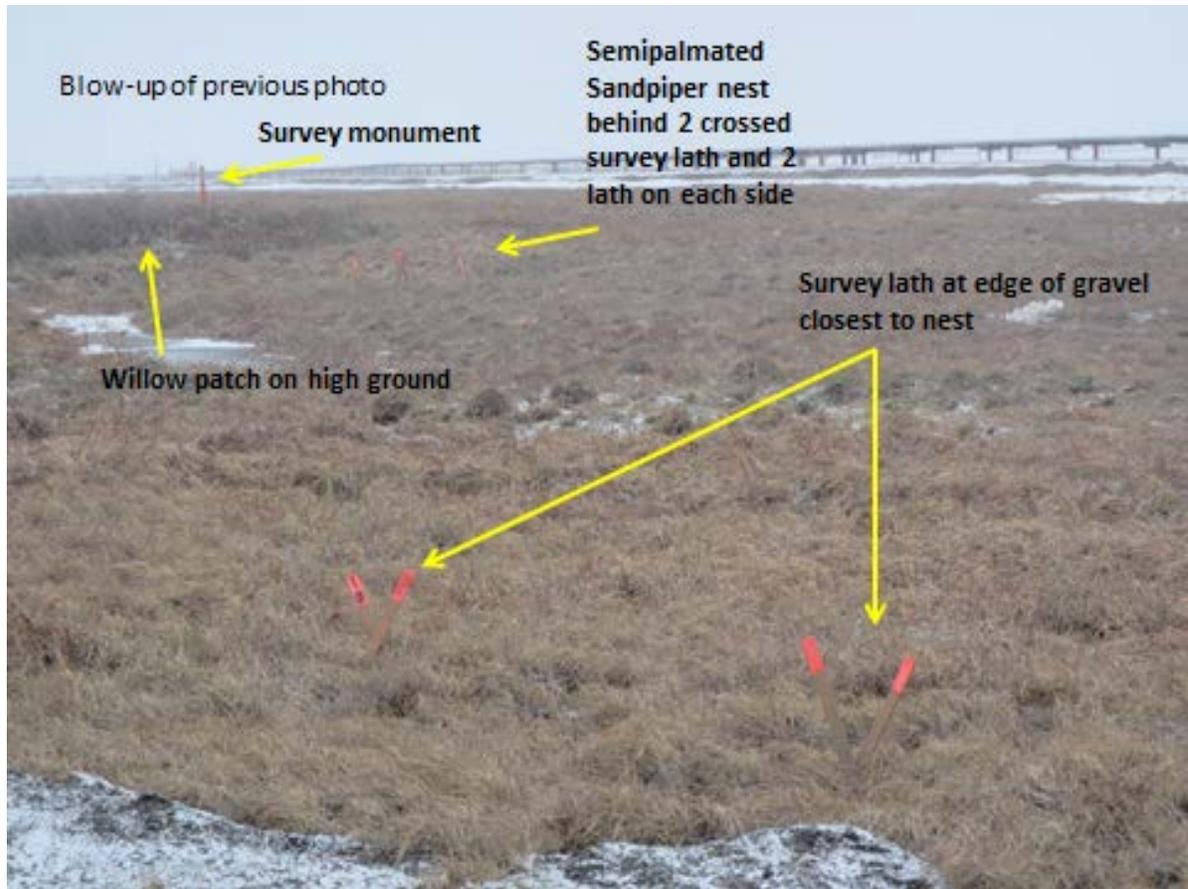


Figure 3. Photo of Semipalmated Sandpiper nest location taken from gravel deposition area along the CD-4 road, looking northward, 3 June 2015.