

## **Sakhalin II Project On-site Inspection Report August 2006 by Hokkaido Raptor Research**



### **Inspection Members:**

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### **Inspection Itinerary:**

Aug 14<sup>th</sup> Inspection on the pipeline construction site - Chaivo Lagoon

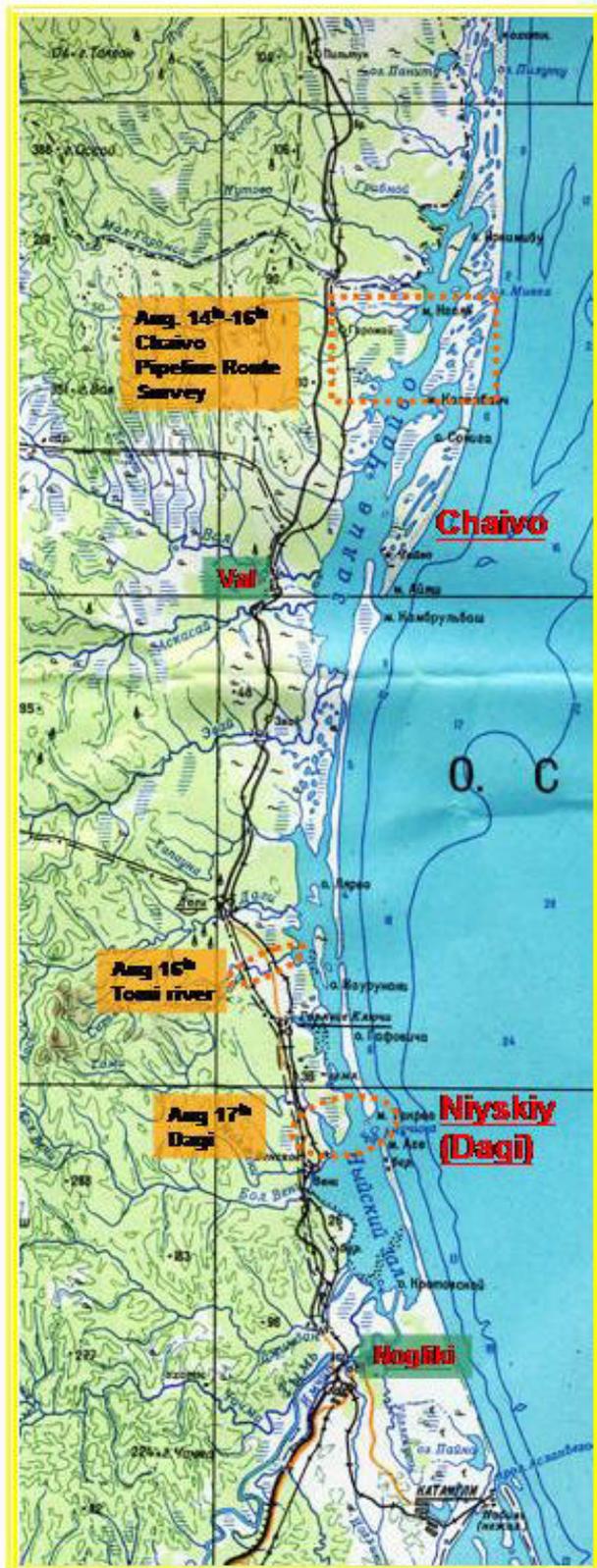
Aug 15<sup>th</sup> Inspection on the pipeline construction site - Chaivo Lagoon

Aug 16<sup>th</sup> Inspection on rivers connected to Chaivo Lagoon, adjacent to Dagi Lagoon

Aug 17<sup>th</sup> Study on Dagi Lagoon

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<sup>1</sup> Institute for Raptor Biomedicine Japan conducted on the spot surveys of the breeding situation and behavior of Steller's Sea Eagle every summer since 2000 to 2005 in partnership with Moscow state University



## Chaivo Lagoon

- We observed a considerable amount of soil eroding into the wetland habitat where Spotted Greenshank was found and Sakhalin Energy Investment Company (SEIC) identified as a key habitat. According to SEIC, the destruction was caused by the Exxon pipeline which runs parallel to the SEIC's, but there is already a construction road crossing streams along the planned pipeline route, and the influence of their construction is rather evident. Incidentally, SEIC insists the rivers in this area are small streams without salmon and trout spawning, and therefore, the river system itself is not an object to be protected.



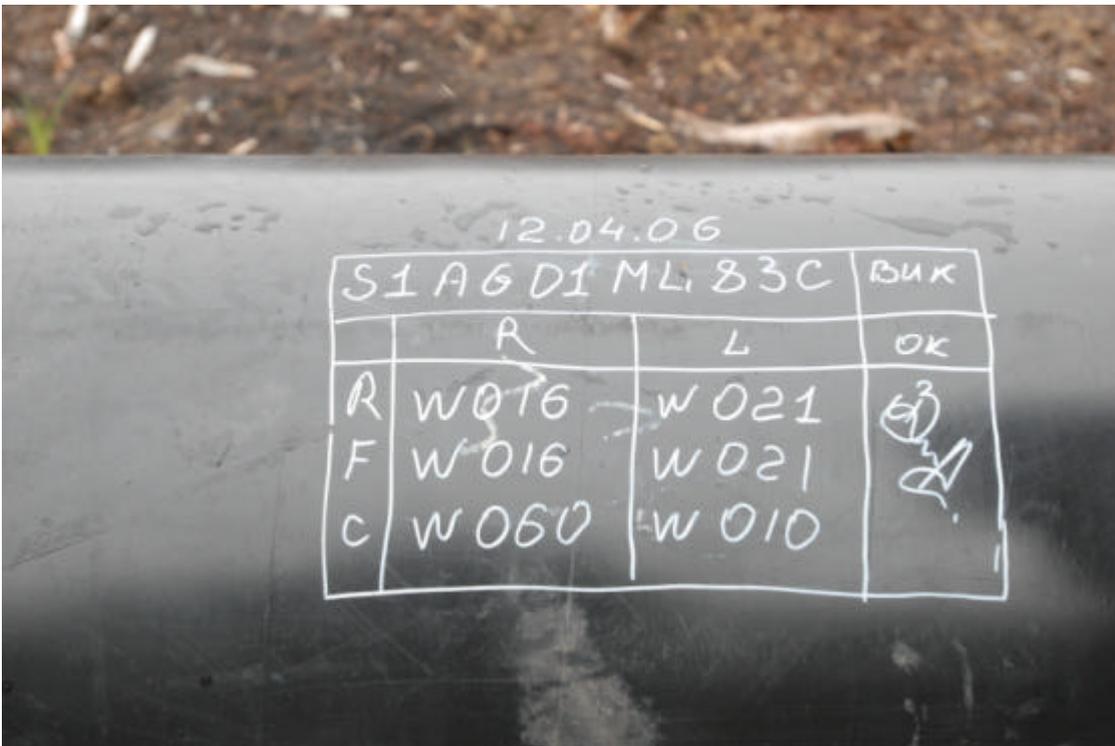


- The pipeline construction which was supposed to be limited during winter time (until March 15<sup>th</sup>, according to a SEIC's on-site staff member) due to the nesting activities of Steller's Sea Eagle was actually extended by 1 month, until April 15<sup>th</sup>, which we were told by SEIC's employee (management level). They explained that they had obtained an approval from Dr. Vladimir Mastrov (a Steller's Sea-Eagle researcher) who was their advisor. It means that their EIA (and its addenda) which SEIC insisted as the results based upon researches of many experts, and supposed to be the 'Constitution' and to be respected the most in their construction planning had been easily retracted by an opinion of a single researcher, to speed-up the construction.
- On the sand spit on the other side of Chaivo Lagoon, most of the pipeline construction were already completed. The pipes laid under water through the wetlands, small lakes and ponds were only treated with surface coating. We did not recognize any special measures taken to prevent oil leak accidents.



- We observed pipelines constructed only 300 m away from a nest of Steller's Sea-Eagles on the spit across the lagoon. SEIC's on-site staff member explained to us that no construction activities had been taken place within 700 m radius from the nest after March 15<sup>th</sup> as a mitigation measure. We read, however, the work completion date written on 2 pipelines (2 sectors) were April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006. (Both of

them were newly printed beside the old dates of mid March. )



- We observed soil eroding into marshes along several streams which were supposed to be non-salmon/trout spawning rivers (including some streams with treatments done). An on-site staff member of SEIC clearly stated that even for the salmon-trout spawning rivers where some mud-blocking treatments were installed, it will be necessary to repair those fences (made of cloth) at every rainfall. We can speculate that soil erosions into rivers/streams and marshes were extremely common.





#### Tomi River

- We observed an active nest of Steller's Sea-Eagles approximately 100 m from the (pipeline) crossing over Tomi River, which flowed into Dagi Lagoon (we confirmed at least one fledgling in the nest). Besides this active nest, we observed another nest of the same pair within 100 m across the pipeline (we confirmed one adult bird near the nest). Also, a few hundred meters farther from the nest, a third nest which most likely belonged to the same pair was observed. It indicated that the pipeline was dividing the breeding pair's exclusive nesting territory (crucial area necessary for reproductive activities) into two. The nesting territory was located in riverside forest only left among the wide area burnt by wild fires, and it could be assumed there were very few other places left as good nesting sites except this location. Furthermore, as we observed more than one nest within extremely close range. It was apparent that the pair had been using this location as a nesting site for many years. It is very difficult to understand why this location was not avoided during the pipeline route planning.

We also observed that the notice signs and fences (at 2 places) to indicate Steller's Sea-Eagles' nesting sites were apparently new, compared to other construction-related objects. According to preliminary information from a local source, there could be no clear signs and fences to restrict the entries into the

nesting sites of eagles. SEIC's personnel explained to us that these signs and fences we observed this time had been placed since the winter construction period. (Incidentally, we had informed SEIC in advance that we would like to visit this area.)



Steller's Sea-Eagle's active nest in circle



Steller's Sea-Eagle's nest in circle

- The construction work on the pipeline crossing Tomi River had been mostly completed in winter time, but we observed several cases of soil erosions and mud inflows into river systems on bare river banks. The company employee stated that they could not do maintenance work as the sites were close to eagle's nests, but the cause of the problems was the pipeline itself which they had constructed in the Steller's Sea-Eagles breeding range in first place. We think this kind of problems were predictable beforehand, and it is interesting to hear what kind of maintenance procedures were being planned for this area.





In order to prevent/mitigate the influences of the development on the environment, especially on wildlife, we believe that following steps should be considered:

**Habitat Protection:** Securing sufficient distances between the key habitats of wildlife (breeding ground, feeding ground, migration routes, etc.) and the construction sites that would influence the ecosystem.

**Risk Prevention:** Careful selections of the development areas and sufficient risk prevention measures in order to be prepared for accidents such as oil leaks (besides areas).

**Mitigation of the Development's Direct Influence :** Careful selections of construction time and methods in order to minimize the influence on wildlife found around the development areas.

From what we have observed, it is difficult to say that the steps and which ought to be considered more than anything during the project planning were taken sufficiently. Around Chaivo Lagoon, many bird species are found including internationally rare species. Further, along the coastal areas, there exist vulnerable geographic features such as number of line-shaped ponds and vast high-moors. In case of oil leak accidents, the risk that serious environmental damage would occur is extremely high. We conclude that Chaivo Lagoon area should have been avoided as a pipeline route in first place.

The environmental mitigation measures taken in current project are limited in only . And as we observed number of cases that made us speculate they were hastening the construction, we were inclined to think that SEIC was rather prioritizing the completion of the project to environmental care.

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