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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 9, 2011

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AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF NISQUALLY IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

Pierce County, Washington – The Nisqually Delta Important Bird Area (IBA) has recently undergone a large-scale expansion to form the Nisqually Reach IBA. The new IBA, which is roughly 15,000 acres, mirrors the boundary for the recently formed Nisqually Reach Aquatic Reserve, encompassing the shorelines of Anderson Island, Ketron Island, Eagle Island, and the southern shoreline of McNeil Island. The driving forces behind the expansion of the IBA are the site's ecological connection to the Nisqually River Delta, its identification as prime foraging habitat for the threatened Marbled Murrelet, and the opportunity to encompass a more diverse range of bird species. For a more detailed description of the site, visit:
<http://iba.audubon.org/iba/profileReport.do?siteId=4009&navSite=search&pagerOffset=0&page=1>

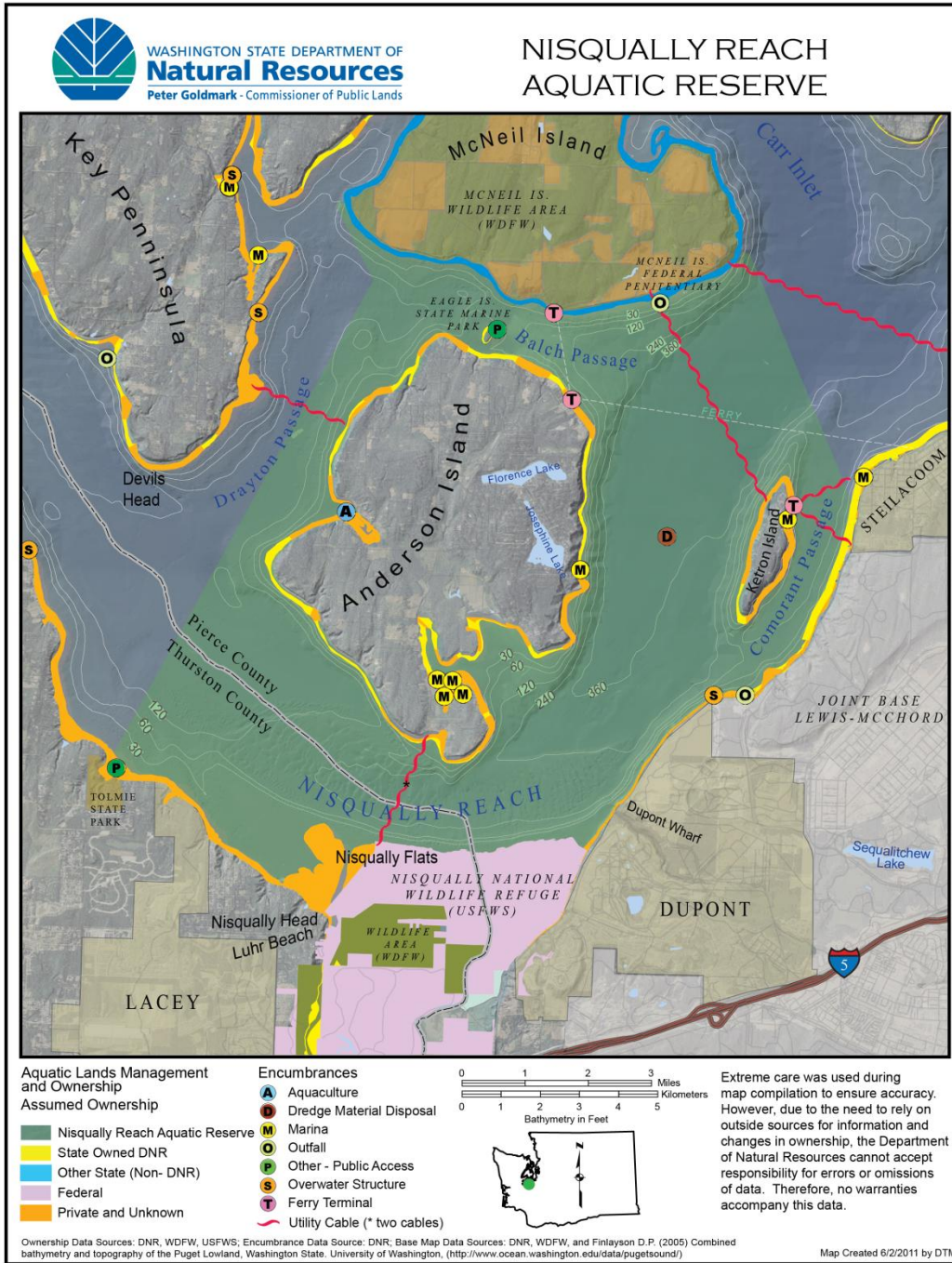
The Important Bird Areas program in Washington has two primary and complementary goals: (1) to identify the sites in the state of Washington that are the most essential for long-term conservation of birds, and (2) to take action to ensure the conservation of these sites. For more information about Audubon Washington's Important Bird Areas Program, visit
http://wa.audubon.org/science_ibawashington.html

There are multiple reasons for the expansion of the Important Bird Area in the Nisqually Reach area. First is the identification of the area--through the research of Lindsay Raab--as ecologically connected to the Nisqually River Delta in terms of energy cycling and nutrient flow via fish. Seeking shelter and sustenance, fish gather in nearby marine vegetation, providing ample food for waterbirds in the area. The area is also recognized habitat for the Marbled Murrelet—a threatened species as determined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition, the new Important Bird Area encompasses more habitat types and therefore a more diverse range of species of conservation concern.

“Expansion of the Nisqually Important Bird Area is an important step in highlighting the unique resources and habitats the area provides to many bird species including those of conservation concern, like the Marbled Murrelet. This expansion highlights the region and also the conservation achievements of the many public agencies and partners as they actively work to conserve this part of Washington”, said John Cecil, Director of the Important Bird Areas Program at the National Audubon Society.

The proposal to expand the existing Important Bird Area was submitted in 2010 and reviewed by National Audubon staff and a Technical Review Committee for the Important Bird Areas program in Washington. The proposal was approved in July 2011.

The Nisqually Reach Important Bird Area boundary is depicted below, mimicking the recently approved Nisqually Reach Aquatic Reserve Boundary. For more information about the Washington Department of Natural Resources’ Aquatic Reserve Program, visit http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience/Topics/AquaticHabitats/Pages/aqr_rsve_aquatic_reserves_program.aspx



Tahoma Audubon Society is a chapter of National Audubon Society with over 1,200 members in Pierce County whose mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity. For more information on Tahoma Audubon Society, visit <http://www.tahomaaudubon.org/>

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