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Secretary Salazar Presents Rat Island Restoration Project with *Partners in Conservation* Award

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today presented a *Partners in Conservation Award* to the Rat Island Restoration Project for their work to eradicate rats and restore biological diversity to a 6,681-acre island in the Aleutian Chain, part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge.

It was one of 26 national awards to individuals and organizations presented at a ceremony at Interior headquarters in Washington, D.C. to honor “those who achieve natural resource goals in collaboration and partnership with others.”

The 26 Partners in Conservation Awards recognize conservation achievements resulting from the cooperation and participation of a total of 600 individuals and organizations including landowners; citizens’ groups; private sector and nongovernmental organizations; and federal, state, local, and/or tribal governments.

“The Partners in Conservation Awards demonstrate that our greatest conservation legacies often emerge when stakeholders, agencies, and citizens from a wide range of backgrounds come together to address shared challenges,” the Secretary said. “Restoring this natural habitat in Alaska will benefit at least 26 species of breeding birds, including 13 species of seabirds.”

This cooperative project is carrying out the largest island rat eradication in the United States. The goal is to restore biological diversity to “Rat Island” in the remote regions of the Aleutian Islands archipelago. The Norway rat, an introduced predator, had changed the island’s biological community composition. As a result of this successful conservation partnership, Rat Island will again provide a habitat in which native fish and wildlife species can thrive.

“These 26 awards recognize the dedicated efforts of thousands of people from all walks of life, from across our nation– and from across our borders with Canada and Mexico,” Salazar noted. “They celebrate partnerships that conserve and restore our nation’s treasured landscapes and watersheds, partnerships that engage Native American communities, and partnerships that engage youth.”

The groups and individuals sharing this award include:

Island Conservation of Santa Cruz, California:

Sarah Abel, Stacey Buckelew, Amy Carter, Jen Curl, Sally Esposito, Jonathan Giffard, Gregg Howald, Pete McClelland, Heather N’te Inzalaco, Iris Saxer, Jacob Sheppard, Noe Silva, Kirsty Swinnerton

The Nature Conservancy:

Randall Hagenstein, Sarah Leonard, Steven MacLean, Dustin Solberg

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Poppy Benson, Vernon Byrd, Laurie Daniel, Steve Ebbert, Dan Erickson, John Faris, Ruben Guetschow, Will Meeks, Eric Nelson, William Pepper, Gregory Siekaniec, Leslie Slater, Lisa Spitler, Kent Sundseth, Greg Thomson

U.S. Geological Survey:

John Vogel

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