

Motivating and engaging volunteer hunters to control the invasive alien American mink *Neovison vison* in Norway

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL Mink *Neovison vison* control campaign at Vega World Heritage Site

In 2010, as part of a status report on mink ecology and control in Norway and other European countries (Stien et al., 2011), commissioned by the Norwegian Environment Agency, a meeting was held with participants of a citizen-initiated mink control programme at the World Heritage Site on Vega Island, Nordland County. The goal was to hear and report back to the Norwegian Environment Agency the participants' experiences of mink control to protect several individual island colonies of eider *Somateria mollissima*. As a result of the existence of these colonies the traditional coastal eider down culture was reinstated and the area was designated a World Heritage Site. The control programme included bounty payments of NOK 400 (EUR 47.33) per mink, paid by Vega municipality, mink trapping at eider colony islands by landowners, free traps for residents on the main Vega Island, and trapping at a nature reserve on Vega Island by Local Environment Agency Inspectorate staff. In addition, two proficient hunters with tracking dogs were on call to remove problem mink (i.e. mink not caught in campaigns already initiated by colony owners) from eider down colonies. On their own initiative these hunters also hunted mink on the chains of islands to the south and north of the World Heritage Site. The joint trapping and hunting campaign was judged to be a success by the participants, as the number of eider fatalities caused by mink was reduced to virtually none, whereas previously it had been impossible to carry out commercial eider-down farming because of predation by mink. On initial visits to each island the dogs were rapidly worn because of the amount of scent from mink (confirmed by sightings of individuals and their sign). Thereafter the dogs became proficient hunters as the amount of scent (interpreted as number of mink) decreased, and after the third season the number of mink caught decreased significantly, suggesting that the majority of mink had been removed from the islands, thus hampering the recolonization of mink to the eider farms. The hunters were partly motivated by receiving the municipal bounty but also had a strong motivation to eradicate mink to aid the conservation of ground-nesting seabirds.