



Keeping an Eye on Our Channel Island Bald Eagles



Eagle chick with fully recovered broken wing before returning to Santa Cruz Island.



Yvonne Menard from National Park Service talks about bald eagle restoration with third grade classroom from Lemonwood Elementary.

An unidentified juvenile bald eagle attacked two bald eagle chicks in their Pelican Harbor nest halfway through this year's breeding season. The attacker had blue wing tags, indicating that Institute for Wildlife Studies (IWS) biologists had released it on the island in a previous season. The 30 foot fall from their nest to the ground injured both chicks. The Eagle CAM that streams live video of the nest via the internet captured the attack, and one of the faithful Eagle CAM watchers called IWS, which manages the eagle restoration program on the islands, to alert them to the incident. A team of biologists rushed to the nest site to attend to the eagle chicks. "Today was the fastest we ever hiked to the Pelican Harbor nest!" said an IWS biologist. The biologists carefully rescued the chicks and took them to a veterinary hospital in Orange County.

At the hospital, veterinarians fully assessed the injuries of both eagles: one of the chicks suffered a cracked beak and the other one had a broken wing. Medical staff operated on the broken wing, inserting pins to help fix the fracture. IWS released both chicks back into the wild on Santa Cruz Island in July, after a recovery period.

We sent one of the injured eagle chicks, A65, off in style, with lots of media attention and a visit from a third grade classroom. The Lemonwood Elementary School classroom in Oxnard, California, faithfully follows the nesting activity of the eagle chicks during the breeding season using the Eagle CAM. To show our appreciation for their dedication to this project, we invited the class to visit the chick before it left the National Park Service headquarters in Ventura, California. The third-

graders also had a chance to ask Dr. Peter Sharpe, biologist for IWS, questions about MSRP's Bald Eagle Restoration Project. Several media outlets also attended this event.

Biologists also discovered a new nest with two eggs on Santa Rosa Island. They found that the eggs were infertile, and sent them for a full contaminant analysis. Although the eggs in the Santa Rosa nest didn't hatch, we are hopeful that this nest will be successful next year!

In April of this year, six eagle chicks hatched naturally at four out of six nests on Catalina Island. These hatchlings joined the four eaglets that hatched in two separate nests in 2007. A total of 10 bald eagles have been born naturally on Catalina over the past two years!

If you haven't joined the Eagle CAM discussion forum now is a good time, so that you will be ready for next year's breeding season. IWS biologists post weekly updates on the forum and it is a good place to ask these experts your burning bald eagle questions! There are over 1,178 forum members that have posted 256,801 comments to date. **Please visit http://chil.vcoe.org/eagle_cam.htm to register today!**

In Brief



Brent Schweier/SEA Lab

Student participant in SEA Lab's Fun Fishing Program displays a mackerel she caught while participating.

MSRP Spreads the Word on Fish Contamination

This year MSRP provided funds to local community organizations to educate the public on fish contamination. Some fish species found near the site of DDT and PCB contamination continue to have unsafe levels of these toxins. Using outreach tools created by MSRP, these community programs focus on safe fishing and food preparation techniques. These techniques help people make healthier choices when consuming locally caught fish. More details about each project are below.

"What's In Your Catch?"-Implementing Practices for Safe Fish Consumption

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium (CMA) located in San Pedro, California has created a fish contamination curriculum that is directed towards 4th-6th grades and incorporates the concepts of the comic book "What's the Catch?" The curriculum topics include the history of DDT and PCB contamination in southern California, environmental impacts from

contamination, local fish species identification and safe preparation of fish for human consumption. CMA is currently holding teacher and community workshops. To find out more about the workshops visit their website at <http://www.cabrilloaq.org/science.html>.

Los Angeles Conservation Corps' (LACC) SEA Lab Fun Fishing Program

LACC's SEA Lab located in Redondo Beach, California is educating corps members on the benefits of recreational fishing and the alternatives to consuming contaminated fish species. Five hundred corps members are expected to participate in this program, which started earlier this year. Participants will learn fish identification, engage in pier fishing, demonstrate proper handling and releasing of fish, and practice proper preparation of fish for consumption. For more information about SEA Lab and their program visit the LACC's website at <http://www.laccorps.org>

Project Highlight



Jennifer Boyce / MSRP

Western Gull chicks in their ground nest on San Nicolas Island.

Restoring Seabird Populations on San Nicolas Island Feral Cats on San Nicolas Island

U.S. Navy-owned San Nicolas Island, located off the coast of southern California, is nesting habitat for numerous seabirds and is also home to the State threatened island fox and Federally threatened island night lizard. Currently, feral cats introduced to San Nicolas Island are impacting the nesting success of native seabirds because they prey on adult birds and their young. The cats also prey on the native deer mouse, which is one of the basic components of the island fox's diet.

Restoring Balance

DDT releases severely affected Brandt's cormorants (*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*) and western gulls (*Larus occidentalis*), which use San Nicolas Island as a breeding site. The MSRP Trustee Council has proposed the humane eradication of feral cats to restore these seabird populations and to protect the native fauna on San Nicolas Island.

Public Involvement

The MSRP has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) that outlines the potential benefits and adverse effects relating to the eradication of feral cats from San Nicolas Island in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. We released the EA for public review in the Spring of 2008 and held a public open house at Ventura City Hall on June 4, 2008. For more information about this project or to get a copy of the EA please visit our website (www.montrosere restoration.gov).

MSRP Hosts Field Trip to Santa Cruz Island for Legislative Members



David Witting / MSRP

Jennifer Boyce, MSRP Program Manager, discusses restoration projects on Santa Cruz Island with congressional staff while visiting a project site by boat.

On June 19th, six staff members from five different local and national legislative congressional offices representing California attended a field trip to Santa Cruz Island hosted by the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program (MSRP) Trustee Council. We had sent invitations to local California district offices that included coastal regions near the site of impact and to California U.S. Senators and Representatives.

We started the day with a boat ride on the National Park Service Research Vessel, Ocean Ranger, to view seabird and bald eagle restoration projects on Santa Cruz Island. The staff members visited Orizaba Rock where we are using nesting boxes and vocalizations to attract ash storm-petrels back to this breeding area. Laurie Harvey, the MSRP seabird biologist managing this project, gave a brief update on the work that has been done to date. Her team installed a solar panel on Orizaba Rock this year to power the vocalization equipment and there are currently 21 nest boxes installed.

Just a short boat ride away the visitors viewed from the boat, the Pelican Harbor bald eagle nest, where bald eagle chicks have hatched for three consecutive years since this restoration project began. Peter Sharpe from the Institute for Wildlife Studies spoke about the bald eagle restoration project and specifically the success of this particular nest.

We spent the rest of the day on the island with a short hike up to Harvey's Lookout, where the group discussed how MSRP is addressing fishing impacts specifically by enhancing Marine Protected Areas. Ken McDermond, Deputy Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service California and Nevada Region, spoke to the group briefly during lunch about the process of obtaining funds for restoration following injury to the marine environment and the challenges that can be faced.

Bob Haddad, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Director of the Assessment and Restoration Division followed Ken's lead by talking specifically about the various capabilities of NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remedial, and Restoration Program (DARRP).

At the end of the day we had a short reception and heard from two partners that work closely with MSRP on restoration efforts. Bryan Shipley from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation talked about how his organization is providing a mechanism to fund additional MSRP restoration projects in the Southern California region. The Nature Conservancy's Rachel Wolstenholme discussed the overall restoration of Santa Cruz Island and how her organization is contributing to this effort.

The day was very successful and gave MSRP the opportunity to build relationships with legislative staff members in support of future restoration work!



For more information contact:

Gabrielle Dorr
Montrose Settlements
Restoration Program
501 W. Ocean Blvd. Suite 4470
Long Beach, CA 90802
(562) 980-3236
msrp@noaa.gov

www.montroserestoration.gov

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