



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Farallon National Wildlife Refuge

Planning Update 3 - Fall 2006

Alternatives Developed for the Comprehensive Conservation Plan



Great Arch. (USFWS)

This is the third update for the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) process. These updates are sent out periodically to local residents, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and others who have requested to be included in the Refuge's mailing list.

Since the last update, Refuge management has developed alternatives for managing the Refuge based on comments received during the public comment process, as well as the Refuge's purpose and mission. These alternatives are summarized in this update. A draft CCP and EA are expected to be available in March 2007. Please check for availability of the document by contacting us or by accessing the website: www.fws.gov/cno/refuge and clicking on "CNO Planning". If you would like a hard copy or CD of the draft CCP/EA, please contact us via email or phone.

We expect that the comment period for the draft CCP/EA will last at least 30 days. We will notify you of the comment period in advance. Thank you very much for your continued interest in this process!

Joelle Buffa
Refuge Manager

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The Planning Process

- Identify Public and Agency Issues
- Gather Data
- Develop Goals and Objectives
- Develop Management Strategies
- Evaluate Environmental Impacts
- Prepare Draft CCP/EA
- Public Review of Draft EA
- Public Notice of Decision



Farallon History

The Farallon has had quite an extensive human history replete with stories of wars, domestic life and dramas. The Spanish named the Farallon Islands in the 1600s, which meant “cliff” or “small island in the sea”. Juan Rodriquez Cabrillo was the first known visitor, who sailed along the California coast in 1539. Later, Sir Francis Drake is speculated to have anchored off the Islands to replenish his food supply with seals and birds. In the late 18th and 19th centuries, Americans and Russians sailed to the islands to exploit the abundant elephant seals, sea lions, furs seals and sea otters for their pelts and oil.

During California’s Gold Rush era, the islands were heavily harvested for their eggs. One of the “egg companies” during that time period reputedly gathered and sold close to four million murre eggs between 1850 and 1856 (USDOI 1970). Egg wars between companies arose, leading to clashes between collectors and finally, restrictions by the Secretary of Interior in 1890 that led to the eventual ban on egg harvesting on the islands.

San Francisco’s expansion in the early 1800s as a major seaport led to the need for a lighthouse on Southeast Island in 1855. The lighthouse keepers lived on the island until 1972, at which point the light became automated. The Navy had also manned a radio station on the island in 1905, which provided a vital communication point during World Wars I and II.

President Theodore Roosevelt established the islands as a refuge for native birds in 1909. Southeast Farallon Island was officially added to the Refuge in 1969. Biologists from Point Reyes Bird Observatory began their research presence on the islands in 1967. In 1971 Point Reyes Bird Observatory and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service formally began joint protection, monitoring, research, and management of the Refuge through a cooperative agreement. Today, the waters surrounding the Farallon Islands, the Gulf of Farallons, is a heavily trafficked area with about 3,000 to 4,000 large vessels transiting the Gulf annually, using three separate navigation/traffic lanes maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard.



Common Yellowthroat. (USFWS)

Update on the CCP Process

Since developing the vision statement and goals, alternatives were created. A draft CCP and Environmental Assessment are being completed to analyze the alternatives. The alternatives were developed with varying degrees of consideration balancing resource protection, wildlife-dependent recreation and public education. A general summary of the alternatives is provided in the following page. A more detailed description of the objectives and strategies for achieving the alternatives will be provided in the draft.

Once published, the CCP/EA draft will be available for public comment for at least 30 days. Comments will then be reviewed and changes will be considered for the draft. The final CCP/EA will then be published and made available to the public.



Burrowing Owl (©PRBO files)

Summary of Draft Alternatives

GOALS

	Alt. A: No Action	Alt. B: Increase public education and outreach; expand resource management	Alt. C: Increase public education and outreach; allow supervised public access during non-nesting season; and expand resource management	Alt. D: Reduce human presence through closures of certain areas to monitoring and management activities; increase public education and outreach
<i>Maintain, restore, and enhance island habitat to support the diverse habitat needs of seabirds, mammals, and the historic landscape.</i>				
<i>Non-native Vegetation</i>	Continue herbicide spraying and manual removal of vegetation, focusing on two priority weeds that impact seabird habitat.	Same as Alt. A; expand removal activities and manage adaptively; develop a GIS database of non-native species to monitor removal; and develop a prevention protocol for visitors.	Same as Alt. B; increase monitoring to prevent non-native introduction from guided tours.	Same as Alt. B.
<i>Native Vegetation</i>	Seed collection and planting in limited areas; close areas to human traffic to prevent spread of non-natives.	Same as Alt. A, map closure areas; develop native plant restoration plan so that seed collection and planting can be expanded.	Same as Alt. B; evaluate need for additional closed areas to maintain native plant areas as a result of increased human presence.	Same as Alt. B; close additional areas to prevent spread of invasive plants.
<i>Excess Infrastructure</i>	Remove when possible	Inventory and develop timeline for removal/reuse	Same as Alt. B.	Same as Alt. B.
<i>Wilderness</i>	Limited access to wilderness areas for monitoring purposes and eliminate house mice from wilderness areas.	Same as Alt. A; map non-native vegetation in wilderness areas and develop a strategy for removal.	Same as Alt. B.	Do not access wilderness areas. Only monitor by boat.
<i>Protect and enhance populations of seabirds, pinnipeds and other native wildlife, with an emphasis on habitat preservation and protection from human disturbance. Protect and support the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species and birds of conservation concern, and California State species of concern and their habitats.</i>				
<i>Disturbance</i>	Monitor and enforce prohibition on landing on the Refuge; enforce Refuge boating and aircraft regulations that protect wildlife from disturbance.	Same as Alt. A; conduct outreach program to pilots and boaters to reduce overflight and vessel disturbance; train U.S. Coast Guard and other agency personnel to document violations; and evaluate current restrictions and need for modifying them.	Same as Alt. B.	Close North Landing, portion of Lighthouse Hill, and additional areas during seabird nesting season when feasible to any human access to reduce disturbance; and reduce monitoring and research activities.
<i>Breeding Seabirds and Marine Mammals</i>	Monitor breeding population and success of seabird and pinniped species; identify threats and options for removing them; conduct investigations of diet and other life history parameters; monitor marine bird and mammal population response to habitat restoration and other management activities; integrate research on Farallon wildlife into studies in the larger marine ecology field.	Same as Alt. A; focus research on priority management needs, including conducting predator control studies to conserve storm-petrel populations, mapping seabird burrow/crevice habitat, and foraging ecology of seabirds; and give priority to research methods and technology that are non-invasive (video cameras).	Same as Alt. B; expand research to also include ecosystem-based research that will benefit wildlife conservation; utilize new technology to facilitate monitoring; and monitor other resident/migratory wildlife on the Refuge.	Explore possibility of using web cameras to monitor seabirds. Limit data on Brandt's cormorant, common murre, and pelagic cormorant species to increase habitat at North Landing, Lighthouse Hill, and other feasible sites.

Cont'd	Alt. A: No Action	Alt. B: Increase public education and outreach; expand resource management	Alt. C: Increase public education and outreach; allow supervised public access during non-nesting season; and expand resource management	Alt. D: Reduce human presence through closures of certain areas to monitoring and management activities; increase public education and outreach
<p><i>Species of Concern:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ashy storm-petrel</i> • <i>Cassin's auklet</i> • <i>Steller sea lion</i> • <i>CA brown pelican</i> 	<p>Monitor trends and document population threats to species of concern; studying options for removing threats; implement eradication program for non-native house mice; and protect species from human disturbance.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. A; increase efforts to improve effectiveness of seabird and pinniped monitoring; study gull predations on species of concern to determine need and method for removal; encourage partnerships to develop studies on population structure and threats; and contribute to regional datasets.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. B.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. B, except monitoring of burrows would be reduced to protect habitat and prevent disturbance.</p>
<i>Other Species</i>	<p>Landbird arrivals are monitored and quantified during fall migration; incidental observation of salamanders and some insects are recorded.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. A; initiate baseline survey for salamanders to determine distribution and season movements; encourage outside studies to better understand insect populations and interactions.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. B.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. A.</p>
<i>Oil Spill Threats</i>	<p>Monitor and maintain a database of oiled wildlife; report numbers, incidents to Oil Spill Prevent and Response Team.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. A; participate in the development of oil spill mitigation projects.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. B.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. A.</p>
<i>Provide opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education while maintaining wilderness and wildlife character of the Refuge.</i>				
<i>Wildlife viewing and photography</i>	<p>Only allowed through tour boats (no landing and not operated by the Refuge) or through permitted media visits.</p>	<p>Tour boats (no landing) with expanded program to include interactive program with Refuge staff; conduct naturalist training program; provide two guided media tours per year through special use permit.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. B; provide on-island guided public tours by lottery in a fee-based program.</p>	<p>Expand coordination with tour boats to include an interactive program with Refuge staff; conduct naturalist training program; allow 2-4 media visits per year by special use permit.</p>
<i>Environmental Education and Outreach off Refuge</i>				
<i>Method</i>	<p>Limited interpretive information at visitor centers; programs given to environmental and civic groups, on request; and update website to provide current events at the Refuge.</p>	<p>Install interpretive displays at partner visitor centers; revise and develop outreach materials; develop school and community programs; increase outreach using public displays and internet tools; and install a web camera during the breeding seasons.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. B.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. B</p>
<i>Cultural and Natural Resources</i>	<p>Refuge brochure and marine educational program for selected schools.</p>	<p>Install interpretive panels at visitor centers, develop additional interpretive materials; and expand school and community programs.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. B</p>	<p>Same as Alt. B</p>
<i>Cultural Resource Management</i>				
<i>Data Collection and Management</i>	<p>Conduct cultural clearance on an as needed basis through Service archaeological staff.</p>	<p>Conduct inventory with GIS layer to record information; train Refuge personnel on how to preserve cultural resources; and develop a cultural resources outreach program.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. B</p>	<p>Same as Alt. A</p>



Arboreal Salamander (USFWS)



Claytonia Perfoliata (USFWS)



Habitat Structure (USFWS)

Help Us Plan the Future

We appreciate your continued interest in the future of this Refuge. We will be sending these planning updates periodically to interested individuals and organizations. You will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft CCP and Environmental Assessment. We anticipate that the draft will be available in March 2007.

Please feel free to contact us

We are available to provide additional information regarding the Refuge and the planning process. Feel free to call, write, or e-mail at sfbaynwrc@fws.gov.

If you did not receive this update through the mail and would like to be on our mailing list, or if you would like to be removed from the list, please contact us.

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