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## **Bi-National Seabird Restoration Effort Launched on the Baja California Pacific Islands**

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Government of Mexico have announced a \$4 million award to a U.S.-Mexico partnership that will implement a comprehensive five-year restoration project focused on the seabirds of the Baja California Pacific Islands.

Support from the Montrose and Lukenbach Trustee Councils, groups of government agencies including FWS that manage legal settlements for injured natural resources, will enable the partners— National Audubon Society, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas (GECI), and the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature—to restore seabird populations on seven Baja California Islands by 2017. This partnership will strengthen an ongoing successful conservation program conducted by GECI on these islands over the last 15 years.

"The Trustee Councils are thrilled to support this partnership between leading conservation organizations in both Mexico and the U.S." said Dan Ashe, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Seabirds cross freely over international boundaries and

so must our restoration efforts. This bi-national project on the Baja California Pacific Islands will benefit seabird populations in both countries for years to come."

The partnership will begin work in January 2012 on Coronado, Todos Santos, Martín, San Jeronimo, Natividad, Asunción, and San Roque Islands, targeting threatened and endangered seabird species including the California Brown Pelican, Cassin's Auklet, Ashy Storm-Petrel, and Xantus's Murrelet. These populations face threats from non-native predators; nest and burrow destruction in high use areas; and disturbances from lights and other man-made structures.

Restoration projects will use decoys to increase social interactions and construct artificial nests to improve nesting opportunities. The partners will also conduct habitat restoration, reducing human disturbance and artificial light, and support environmental education in surrounding communities.

The Baja California Pacific Islands are located in the northwestern portion of Mexico, off of the Pacific coast of Baja California. These islands support a diverse group of breeding seabirds and are known for high levels of biological diversity. Seventeen species of seabirds breed on the islands, ten of which also breed on the California Channel Islands in the U.S. Most of the seabird colonies in Mexico form part of a larger population that breeds, forages, and disperses into California.

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to work with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the*

*American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov). Follow us on Twitter @USFWSInternatl and on Facebook, USFWS\_International Affairs.*

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