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Seabird Colony Protection Program

Program Goal



To improve the survival of California's seabirds by reducing human disturbances at their breeding and roosting colonies on the Central California Coast.



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Seabirds of Concern



Seabirds nest and rest on offshore rocks, islands or steep mainland cliffs -- areas that are inaccessible to most land predators.



Seabirds of Concern



Seabirds of Concern

Other surface nesting and roosting seabirds



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cassin's_Auklet



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Top Three Disturbances



1) Low-Flying Aircraft



2) Boats



3) Humans on Foot

Strategies and Action Items

Monitoring

- Seasonal Monitoring at Key Colonies
- Annual Reports on populations and disturbance events
- Administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Strategies and Action Items

Enforcement and Coordinated Management

- Standardized Incident Reporting Form
- Regulatory Gap Analysis
- Viewing Guidelines
- Actions to address low-flying Aircraft and close-approaching vessels



Strategies and Action Items

Education and Outreach

- Maps, posters, brochures, displays, news articles
- Air shows, presentations at flying clubs
- Boat shows, website postings
- Signage at coastal access points



Technical Advisory Committee

2nd annual meeting held October 2007

- NOAA -Maria Brown
- Robert Yerena
- CA Coastal Commission
- CA Boating and Waterways
- CA State Lands Commission
- CA State Parks
- US Coast Guard
- Bureau of Land Management
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- CA Dept. of Fish and Game



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Working Groups

Education and Outreach

3 meetings held in 2007

- SAC Rep: Bob Breen
- MBNMS - Lisa Uttal
- USFWS
- California Boating and Waterways
- PRBO Conservation Science
- NPS
- Stakeholders (2 pilots and a recreational boater)



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Enforcement and Coordinated Management

1st meeting: March 13th

- SAC Rep: Bob Wilson
- MBNMS - Scott Kathey
- NOAA Office of Law Enforcement
- USFWS
- BLM
- NPS
- Department of Fish and Game
- California Boating and Waterways
- Stakeholders

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Distributing General Information

Facts and Tips



FACT SHEET SEABIRD COLONY PROTECTION PROGRAM

PURPOSE AND NEED

Breeding seabird species, particularly those species that nest on cliffs or offshore rocks, are highly susceptible to human disturbances. The potential to harm or disturb breeding seabirds can come from various sources: popular coastal activities including kayaking, boating and coastal hiking; planes and helicopters; water-based ecotourism such as wildlife watching or diving; and fishing operations. When human disturbance events occur near seabird colonies, the birds can vacate their nests, leaving their eggs and chicks unprotected from predators and adverse weather conditions. In addition, eggs and chicks may be dislodged from the rocks or moved into areas where they may be attacked or killed. Repeated disturbance may result in total colony abandonment.

Currently, no coordinated management and conservation program for seabird colonies and roosting sites exists in California, while overlapping jurisdictions have made it difficult to adequately address human disturbance issues. Seabird restoration efforts have been underway for several years, but human disturbance has been a main factor impeding recovery at some colonies. An organized outreach and education program, focused on individuals who minimize and work along the coast, is the best way to boost these recovery efforts.

PROJECT GOAL

To improve the survival of California's seabird species by reducing human disturbances at their breeding and roosting colony sites from Point Sur to Point Reyes.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Seabird Colony Protection Program (SCPP) is funded by the Command Oil Spill Restoration Fund. The successful prosecution of the Command and the recovery of natural resource damages mark the first time a tanker vessel has been held accountable for illegally dumping oil in California. Common Murres, Marbled Murrelets and other seabirds were killed and many miles of beaches between Año Nuevo and Pacifica were lightly oiled. An estimated 3,000 gallons of oil was spilled and oil sat offshore of the San Mateo County coast for approximately four days before any came ashore. Natural resource injuries included \$4,000,000 in estimated resource damages, as well as 1,490 Common Murres and other surface-nesting seabirds killed.

These damages spurred the formation of the Command Oil Spill Natural Resource Trust. The SCPP is overseen by the Trustees. Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GfNMS) is taking a lead coordination role in implementing the SCPP in collaboration with NOAA Restoration Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other sanctuaries, agencies and organizations.

For more information or questions regarding the Seabird Colony Protection Program please email California.Seabird@noaa.gov.

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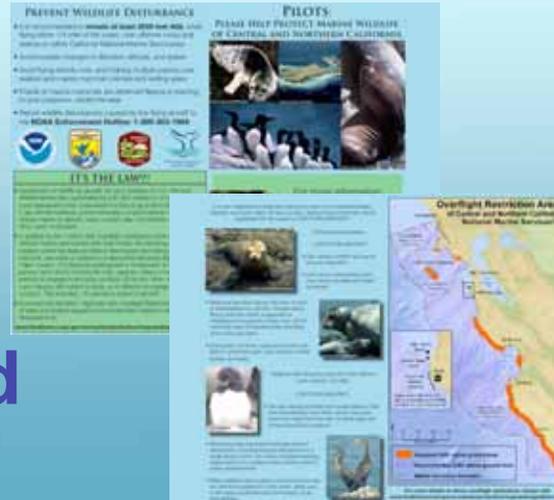
New, Improved Map



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Outreach to Pilots

2007 Mailing:
• 287 Aircraft
Outfitters Reached



Airshows:

- Dream Machines
- EAA Fly-in
- Wings over Wine County
- Watsonville

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Outreach to Pilots

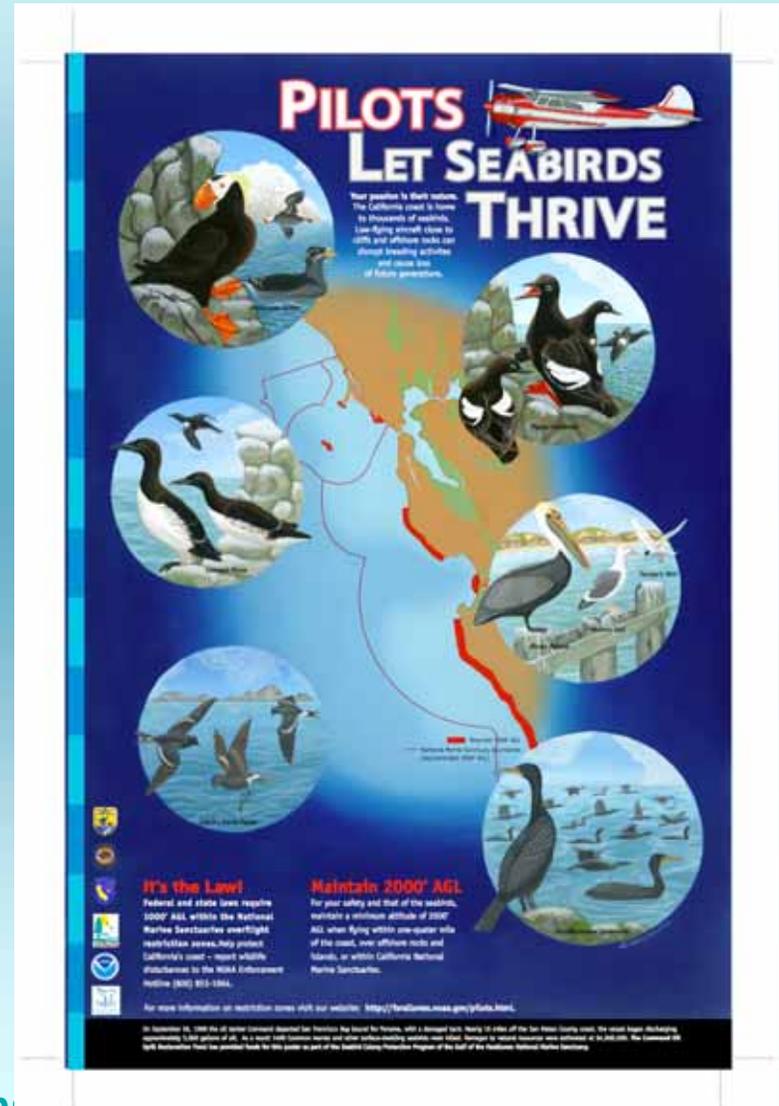


Club & Association Presentations

Display Posters



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Outreach to Boaters

- Signage:
 - Monterey Bay, Santa Cruz, Pillar Point, Bodega Bay
- Events:
 - Bodega Bay Fishermen's Festival
 - International Sportsmen's Expo
 - Rock the Dock
 - Fishermen's Swap Meet



Major Seabird Breeding Colonies of North-Central California, 2006

San Francisco
Monterey

● Breeding Colony
— Marine Sanctuary Boundaries

Breeding colony locations provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2005. Contributing by David Scaife and Tim Reed, BENTHOSPAC, January 2006, v.1.2

HIGH & LOW TIDES 2007

Gulf of the Farallones
National Marine Sanctuary

**Seabird Colony
Protection Program**

California.Seabird@noaa.gov

[www.farallones.noaa.gov/
ecosystemprotection/seabirdprotect.html](http://www.farallones.noaa.gov/ecosystemprotection/seabirdprotect.html)

• Conserv

Attention

All Boaters & Kayakers

Steer Clear of Seabirds

Seabirds are highly susceptible to human disturbances. Vessels close to cliffs and offshore rocks can disrupt breeding activities and cause adults to permanently abandon their nests. Keep your distance from breeding and resting sights. Steer around rafts and feeding flocks of seabirds.

Follow these tips and help protect seabirds

- Avoid rocks, reefs, and islands where seabirds rest, feed and nest.
- Note bird behaviors such as head bobbing, calling, or fluttering. These are signs that you are too close.
- While fishing, keep all food and bait covered. Do not throw fishing line overboard, and use barbless hooks or artificial lures when possible.

This project is made possible by the **Seabird Colony Protection Program and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary**

For more information email California.seabirds@noaa.gov or visit our website <http://farallones.noaa.gov/ecosystemprotection/seabirdprotect.html>

For real-time viewing, visit the Common Murre camera at Devil's Slide Rock. <http://www.fws.gov/abair/stages/Murre/murrehome.html>

Outreach to Boaters

Feature Articles

THE CHANGING TIDE
Spring 2007

News from the Northern Chapter

Save the Date!
August 18, 2007
Free Seminar at South Beach Harbor: Your Boat Hull, Water Quality & Invasive Species

You're invited to a free seminar to learn about:

- ✓ Invasive species that have been brought here on boat bottoms.
- ✓ Their impacts on California waterways.
- ✓ What you can do to prevent invasive species from being transported on your boat bottom, and
- ✓ Non-toxic bottom paints and their long-term performance results from a demonstration project.

The California Department of Fish and Game

California Seabirds Need Your Help

The Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary's "Seabird Colony Protection Program" aims to improve the survival of California's seabird populations by reducing human disturbances at their breeding and nesting sites on the North-Central California Coast.

Seabirds can be found breeding and nesting on cliffs or offshore rocks, or feeding or rafting on the ocean surface all throughout California. Some seabirds are burrow-nesting or nocturnal, so they are not always easy to spot. Seabirds are long-lived animals with low reproductive rates. To breed successfully and maintain populations, they have evolved to nest in areas that are inaccessible to most land predators.

All seabirds are highly susceptible to human disturbances, which can come from the land, air and sea. Activities such as kayaking, boating, diving, wildlife viewing, hiking, flying planes and helicopters, and operating fisheries that fish or anchor near colonies, can cause a disturbance event. Boaters can help seabirds thrive by following these tips:

- ✓ Avoid rocks, reefs, and islands where seabirds rest, feed and nest.
- ✓ Note bird behaviors such as head bobbing, calling, or flustering. These are signs that you are too close.
- ✓ While fishing, keep all food and bait covered. Do not throw fishing line overboard, and use barbless hooks or artificial lures when possible.

For more information, please visit www.farallonesnms.gov/boats.html or contact us at salifornia.seabirds@noaa.gov

Key Issues Fact Sheet

SEABIRDS AND BOATING: AN OVERVIEW OF KEY ISSUES

Significant seabird populations nest along the North-Central California coast. The area, including the Farallon Islands, supports the highest concentrations of breeding seabirds in the contiguous United States. Seabirds indicate the health of marine ecosystems.

Successful breeding is critical. Seabirds are long-lived animals with low reproductive rates and are susceptible to stress, variability, prey availability and habitat destruction. To breed successfully and maintain populations, seabirds have evolved to nest in areas such as offshore rocks, reefs, and steep, mountain cliffs that are inaccessible to most land predators. Human disturbance interferes with successful seabird breeding.

Benefits of seabird protection include:

- Maintaining local biodiversity and ecosystem health.
- Returning on seabird colony restoration funds authorized for Central California seabird populations.

Boats have caused the most severe observed impacts in areas that are regularly monitored. Boats, including kayaks, whale-watching boats, commercial and recreational fishing vessels, cruise motorized vessels and all sea are sources of human disturbance. The impacts from boats are mostly from vessels approaching, anchoring, drifting, or lingering in close proximity to the colony.

Closets approaching boats interrupt seabird breeding. This can be affected by a single adverse event can lead to increased stress, lower flight energy, and the disruption of critical seabird behaviors like finding an adequate nesting site, nest defense, and the feeding of young. This may lead to lower nest abandonment, or foraging, increased predation, and/or colony abandonment. Severe disturbance that causes abandonment of nests or colonies can ultimately result in several years of nest abandonment.

Threats to seabird conservation: A case for creating protection zones.

Seabird colonies are still recovering from past declines. For example, the Central California Common Murre population suffered a decline of about 90% between 1982 and 1989 due primarily to mortality, byproducts and oil spills. During that period, one colony of approximately 5,000 murrelets at Devil's Slide Point was completely extirpated and others nearby as restoration efforts that followed, such as the restoration project at Devil's Slide Point, had been underway since that time. Despite these restoration efforts, disturbance from boats has interfered with nesting, feeding, and resting. The Central California murre population remains well below historic levels.

Display Poster

BOATERS STEER CLEAR OF SEABIRDS

The California coast is home to thousands of seabirds. Boats close to cliffs and offshore rocks can disrupt breeding activities and cause loss of future generations.

Steer - Avoid areas where seabirds breed or nest.

1000' - Stay at least 1000 feet away from seabirds, cliffs, reefs, and offshore rocks.

Signs - They are a sign of a healthy colony. Do not touch or disturb them.

Cover - Cover your food and bait. Do not throw anything overboard.

It's the Law - Federal and state laws prohibit harassment of seabirds, marine mammals and sea turtles. Help protect California's coast - report wildlife disturbances to the NOAA Enforcement Hotline (800) 853-1864.

For more information visit our website: http://fishandgame.org/seabirds.html



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Website

<http://farallones.noaa.gov/seabirds.html>

NEW FEATURES:

- Added "Pilots" and "Boaters" Pages
- Clearinghouse of Seabird Publications Working Groups Page

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.farallones.noaa.gov>. The page title is "Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary". The main content area is titled "ecosystem protection | seabird colony protection program". Below the title are links for "Workshops | Seabird Publications | Action Plan | Maps and Regulations". A photograph of a seabird colony is shown, with a caption: "Click [here for the Live Murres Cam](#) at Devil's Slide Rock." Below the photo is a paragraph of text: "Seabird species, particularly those species that nest and roost on cliffs or offshore rocks, are highly susceptible to human disturbances. When human disturbance events occur near seabird colonies, the birds vacate their nests, leaving their eggs and chicks unprotected from predators and adverse weather conditions. In addition, eggs and chicks may be dislodged from the rocks or moved into areas where they may be attacked or killed. Repeated disturbance may result in total colony abandonment." Another paragraph follows: "The potential to harm or disturb breeding seabirds can come from various sources such as a number of popular coastal activities including kayaking, boating and coastal hiking; flying planes and helicopters; water-based recreation such as diving or surfing; and fishing operations. Increased public awareness, coupled with coordinated management and strategic partnerships is necessary to effectively address the sources of seabird disturbance." A third paragraph describes the Seabird Colony Protection Program (SCPP): "The Seabird Colony Protection Program (SCPP) is funded by the [Command Oil Spill Restoration Fund](#) (308KB PDF). The successful prosecution of the Command and the recovery of natural resource damages mark the first time a tanker vessel has been held accountable for illegally dumping oil in California. Common Murres, Herring Gulls and other seabirds were killed, and many miles of beaches between Ano Niue and Pacifica were lightly oiled. Nesting seabird populations are significant living resources of Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFRMS) and its surrounding waters, with the Farallon Islands supporting one of the largest concentrations of breeding seabirds in the contiguous United States. The islands, waters, and surrounding coastal rocky shores and sandy beaches, are breeding seabird hotspots that were possibly affected by the Command spill." A fourth paragraph states: "The goal of the SCPP is to improve the survival and..." To the right of the text is a photograph of the ship "COMMAND MONROVIA".

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Outreach to Coastal Managers

Presentations and Posters

- Fish and Wildlife Service Annual Conference
- National Marine Sanctuary Program Headquarters
- Special Fulmar Cruise for State Agency Directors
- Coastal Zone 07



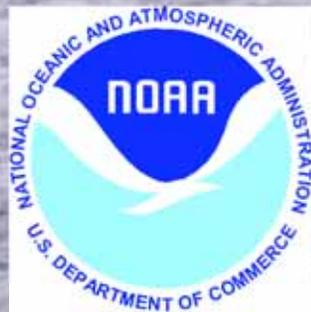
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Desired Results

1. Elimination or reduction of human disturbances to seabird colonies
2. Increased awareness of potential impacts of adverse human-seabird interactions
3. Increased awareness of safe methods of observing seabirds while engaged in recreation
4. Increased ocean user/pilot awareness
5. Increased awareness of decision makers

Thanks to the *Command* Oil Spill Natural Resource Trustee Council





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