

# RESTORING SEABIRDS ON SAN NICOLAS ISLAND



Nesting seabirds that were preyed upon by feral cats on Natividad Island (Baja Mexico).  
Holly Gellerman



Island fox pups on San Nicolas Island.  
Francesca Ferrera



Western gull chicks on Anacapa Island.  
Jennifer Boyce

## Island Ecosystems in Danger

Islands support a diversity of life and provide important habitat for seabirds and marine mammals. Unfortunately, between 80-90% of all recent extinctions have been of island species, and more than half of those have been the direct result of the effects of introduced species. The feral cat, a generalist predator, is among the most detrimental of such invasive species, causing population decline, extirpation, and extinction to a diverse array of wildlife.

## Feral Cats on San Nicolas Island

On the U.S. Navy-owned San Nicolas Island located off southern California, non-native feral cats are taking their toll on native wildlife. Feral cats on San Nicolas island are known to kill seabirds, the island night lizard (*Xantusia riversiana*), and the endemic deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus exterus*). They also compete with the State threatened San Nicolas island fox (*Urocyon littoralis dickeyi*) for food and habitat.

## Restoring Balance

The Trustee Council for the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program was created in 2001 to restore marine resources in the southern California region that were harmed by releases of DDT into the marine environment. Brandt's cormorants (*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*) and western gulls (*Larus occidentalis*) which use San Nicolas island as a breeding site were severely affected by the releases of DDT. To restore these seabird populations and to protect the native fauna on San Nicolas Island, the Trustee Council has proposed to completely remove feral cats.

The removal of feral cats on San Nicolas Island will provide benefits to:

- Nesting seabirds
- State threatened San Nicolas island fox
- Federally threatened island night lizard
- Federally threatened western snowy plover
- Endemic deer mouse
- Island biodiversity

## Final Environmental Assessment

On behalf of the Trustee Council, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the lead agency for this project and the U.S. Navy is a cooperating agency. A Final Environmental Assessment (Final EA) has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. As discussed in the Final EA, a combination of trapping and hunting will be used to remove feral cats from the island. Trapped cats may be made available to The Humane Society of the United States or other approved party if certain conditions are met.

For more information on the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program, please visit our website at:

[www.montrosere restoration.gov](http://www.montrosere restoration.gov)

### For more information contact:

Jane Hendron  
Public Affairs Division Chief  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
6010 Hidden Valley Road  
Carlsbad, CA 92011  
760-431-9440  
Jane\_Hendron@fws.gov

