

Background



In 1953 the freighter *S.S. Jacob Luckenbach* collided with another vessel and sank off the coast of central California in the Gulf of the Farallones. As the ship decayed on the ocean floor, it leaked oil and became the source of many oil spills, killing thousands of seabirds. The source of the oil was unknown until 2002 when these “mystery spills” were linked to the *Luckenbach*. The owners of the vessel no longer exist, but the federal government created the Oil Spill

Liability Trust Fund, managed by the US Coast Guard, to fund clean-up operations and restoration projects for oil spills such as these. The same year, the Coast Guard used the Trust Fund and spent about \$20 million to remove oil from the vessel and seal it from future leaks. In order to provide for restoration, the natural resource trustee agencies prepared a Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan, which summarized the injuries to natural resources and proposed 14 projects to restore the impacted seabirds and otters. After public input, the trustees presented their claim for \$25 million for the restoration projects to the US Coast Guard. In 2008, a small part of that claim was approved and several projects were initiated. In January, 2010, most of the remainder of the claim was approved and a small portion remains under review. This newsletter describes restoration actions taken to date.

Restoration Project Updates

Año Nuevo Island Restoration

2010 looks to be a big year on the island, with all the planning completed to restore Rhinoceros Auklets to this small but important nesting island. The main goal of the project is to increase the number of breeding auklets by creating quality breeding habitat.



Three main efforts are required to accomplish this goal: 1) protect the existing habitat from destructive trampling by California sea lions, 2) augment natural burrows with sturdy nest modules, and 3) restore a native plant community to reduce soil erosion and the further loss of breeding habitat. All of these will take big steps forward this year.



Kokechik Flats Nest Protection

This project, designed to protect nesting loons and other waterfowl from human disturbance, is off to a promising start, with close cooperation between the Yukon-Delta National Wildlife Refuge and tribal members from Hooper Bay, Alaska. At right, a community member points out travel corridors identified for subsistence hunters, to avoid unnecessary disturbance to breeding birds.



Sea Otter Pathogens Education

This project, designed to educate the public about diseases that sea otters get as a result of human actions, started last year with a series of public presentations. The project will continue this year with the development of public information kiosks. A new comprehensive website, seaotters.com, is about to be released.



Seven More Projects on the Way

The US Coast Guard's National Pollution Funds Center (NPFC) is adjudicating the trustee's claim for funds for natural resource restoration. Here is a summary of the adjudication process to date:

Wave 1: Approved September 29, 2008

- \$600,000 for Kokechik Flats (project underway)
- \$774,060 for Grebe Colony Protection (project to begin in 2010)
- \$250,000 for Common Murre Reading Rock Colony (project to begin in 2010)
- \$1,024,000 for Año Nuevo Island Restoration (project underway)
- \$121,155 for Sea Otter Pathogens Education (project underway)

Wave 2: Approved January 4, 2010

- \$972,313 for Farallon Islands Mouse Eradication (project to begin in 2010)
- \$55,649 for Taiaroa Head Shearwater Colony (project to begin in 2010)
- \$2,955,116 for Baja Islands Seabird Enhancement (project to begin in 2010)
- \$370,835 for Point Reyes Dunes (project to begin in 2010)
- \$11,264,140 for Seabird Protection Network (project to begin in 2011)
- \$400,000 for Point Reyes Corvid Management (project to begin in 2010)
- \$193,439 for Queen Charlotte Is. Rat Eradication (project to begin in 2010)

Wave 3: still under review

- Marbled Murrelets—Habitat Protection
- Marbled Murrelets—Corvid Management



Luckenbach Trustee Council Budget

Restoration Projects

Amount Received	\$18,980,707
Total Interest Accrued	280
Total Amount Available	\$18,980,987

Allocations

Kokechik Flats Protection	\$70,000
Grebe Colony Protection	0
Farallon Islands Mouse Eradication	0
Taiaroa Head Shearwater Colony	0
Baja Islands Seabird Enhancement	0
Point Reyes Dunes	0
Seabird Protection Network	0
Point Reyes Corvid Management	0
Common Murre Reading Rock Colony	0
Murrelets—Habitat Protection	0
Murrelets—Corvid Management	0
Queen Charlotte Is. Rat Eradication	0
Año Nuevo Island Restoration	122,000
Sea Otter Pathogens Education	121,155
Total Project Allocations	\$313,155
Total Amount Remaining	\$18,667,832

Natural Resource Trustee Agencies

- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- CA Department of Fish and Game



Trustee Council Administration

Amount Received	\$937,985
Total Admin. Allocations	\$90,000
Total Amount Remaining	\$847,985