

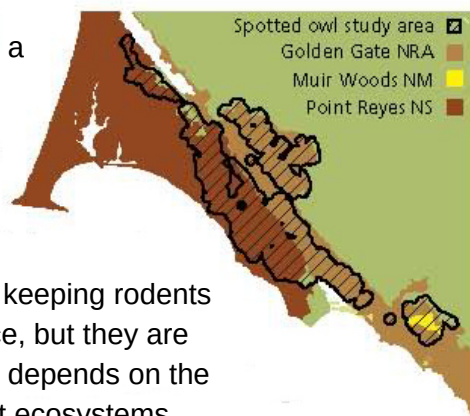


Species of the Year
2015

Coast Redwood
Northern Spotted Owl

Northern Spotted Owl

Northern spotted owls, a key predator within a redwood forest, were listed as federally threatened in 1990 due to habitat loss. They reside in old-growth forests and often nest in tree holes.



These owls are not only important predators keeping rodents and other small animal populations in balance, but they are indicators of forest health since their survival depends on the presence of diverse, robust, evergreen forest ecosystems.

Monitoring Northern Spotted Owls

The National Park Service has been working hard to monitor Northern Spotted Owl populations throughout the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Muir Woods and Point Reyes National Seashore since 1999. They look at where the territories of nesting pairs exist, reproductive success and nesting site characteristics and habitat preferences. With this data land managers are better informed on where the owls are nesting so they can avoid disruptive activities during that time. Studying these birds can also give the parks insight in how to best implement conservation efforts for local populations and to monitor current threats such as barred owls, west Nile virus, and climate change.

Monitoring Results

Marin County supports the southernmost population of Northern Spotted Owls, and possibly the densest population on record anywhere in their range. The Marin population seems to have remained relatively stable over the years but still face many threats. Barred owls which started breeding in Marin County in 2007, are aggressively outcompeting the spotted owls for territory and nesting sites. The hope is with continued monitoring efforts we can maintain a stable population in Marin County indicating a thriving old-growth forest.



For More Information

SF Bay Area National Parks Science and Learning

http://www.sfnps.org/northern_spotted_owls

