

WINTER BEACH CARCASS SURVEY SUMMARY (MARINE BIRDS AND MAMMALS), REDWOOD NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS (RNSP) 1998-99

Introduction

As part of RNSP Fish & Wildlife staff western snowy plover surveys on park beaches, carcass surveys are performed simultaneously to record sea bird and marine mammal mortality on the coast. This information can help determine background levels of oil in marine fauna populations, as well as any unusual natural events (for example, El Nino, a warming of ambient sea temperature).

Results

Winter 98/99 carcass surveys noted one loon (sp. unk.), one common murre, and one harbor seal. Last winter's total was 18 seabirds and 2 marine mammals. Carcasses were undoubtedly more difficult to spot this winter, due to the noticeably higher tides. This causes debris (and carcasses) to wash further onto the back beach. The carcasses become much harder to spot when they're mixed in with debris. No oiling was noted on the dead birds/mammals; small tar balls were found while surveying Gold Bluffs Beach in late January. Very few were noted, however. Klamath Spit-N was not surveyed this year since the mouth of the Klamath River has moved north, effectively washing out the north spit.

DATE	REACH NAME	REACH #	SPECIES
12/1/98	Carruthers Cove	5	None Found
12/3/98	Gold Bluffs S	3	None Found
12/7/98	FW Spit	2	None Found
12/9/98	Klamath S	6	None Found
12/10/98	Gold Bluffs N*	4	Loon sp.
1/13/99	FW Spit	2	None Found
1/13/99	Klamath S	6	None Found
1/25/99	Gold Bluffs N	4	Common murre
1/26/99	Gold Bluffs S	3	None Found
1/28/99	Carruthers Cove	5	None Found

*Reaches 3-5 surveyed on ATV's in one day