

WINTER BEACH CARCASS SURVEY SUMMARY (MARINE BIRDS AND MAMMALS), REDWOOD NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS (RNSP) 1999-00

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).

Carcass/plover surveys during the winter season take place in mid-December and mid-January yearly when personnel and weather allow. Reaches and associated numbers of the parks' beaches are as follows:

Freshwater Spit #2 (Stone Lagoon is Reach #1, and is surveyed by state personnel).

Gold Bluffs Beach S #3

Gold Bluffs beach N #4

Carruthers Cove #5

S Klamath Spit #6

N Klamath Spit #7 (this area has been washed out since the '97 storms)

Crescent Beach #8

During December of 1999, only a limited number of reaches were surveyed (#s 2, 6, and 8) since other projects took priority (GMP Biological Assessment). In January of 2000, all reaches were surveyed with the exception of Reach #8; **this reach should be surveyed breeding season only, since in winter high tides wash clear up to the backing bluff.**

Results

Winter 99/00 carcass surveys noted four gulls (species not recorded); two harbor seals; one common murre; one surf scoter; and one unknown seabird. This is consistent with the generally low numbers of carcasses found during the winter on the parks' beaches:

Year	Comu ¹	Susc ²	Gull Sp.	Loon Sp.	Corm ³ Sp.	Unk. SB ⁴	Fulmar	Whale Sp.	Sea Lion	Harb. Seal	Total
96/97	1										1
97/98	3		8	1		4	2	1	1		20
98/99	1			1							2
99/00	1	1	4			1				2	9

No oil was found on any of the species collected; the only oiled birds found during carcass surveys at any time of year have been associated with oil spills.

¹Common murre

²Surf scoter

³Cormorant

⁴Seabird