

WINTER CARCASS SURVEY SUMMARY, REDWOOD NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS (RNSP) 1997-98

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 97/98 surveys turned up 18 dead seabirds, 2 marine mammals, and 1 ray sp. (last winter's total was 4 seabirds); none showed the presence of oil, and cause of death could not be determined on any specimens. This report does not include data from the post 11/5/97 Humboldt Bay oil spill (those surveys were done from 11/10 to 11/18/97). The two Klamath Spit reaches (#6 & 7) were not surveyed in January 1998 due to high tides washing over the spit, making surveys potentially hazardous.

DATE	REACH NAME	REACH #	SPECIES
12/2/97	Stone Lagoon	1	None found
12/4/97	Carruthers Cove	5	None found
12/9/97	Gold Bluffs S	3	Unk. Seabird (3) Gull sp. (3) Fulmar (1) Loon sp. (1) Sea lion (1)
12/10/97	Gold Bluffs N	4	Unk. Seabird (1) Common murre (2)
12/11/97	Klamath N	7	None found
12/11/97	Klamath S	6	None found
12/15/97	Freshwater Spit	2	None found
01/5/98	Freshwater Spit	2	Gull sp. (1)
01/5/98	Stone Lagoon	1	Gull sp. (3) Common murre (1) Fulmar (1)
01/15/98	Gold Bluffs N	4	Ray sp. (1)

01/20/98	Gold Bluffs S	3	Gull sp. (1) Grey whale (1)
01/22/98	Carruthers Cove	5	None found

Based on surveyor's observations of beach conditions (many of the high tides washed right up into the vegetation and backing seasonal lagoons), some carcasses could have been missed since they may have been deposited in the vegetation or the lagoons, making observation difficult.