

Farallon National Wildlife Refuge Restoration Project

Public Comment Period and Meeting

We are inviting the general public to comment and provide input on the Refuge's proposal prepare an environmental document evaluating the alternatives for the eradication of house mice from the South Farallon Islands portion of the Refuge. We expect the Notice of Intent to be published in the Federal Register in early to mid April after which the public will have 45 days to respond. A public meeting is scheduled to be held in San Francisco, CA from 6:30pm-8:00pm, May 17 2006, at the Marina Room in Building A, Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA. There is no street address, the location is at the intersection of Marina Boulevard and Buchanan Street.

We are proposing the project to protect and restore the population and habitat for nesting seabirds. Ashy storm-petrels in particular will benefit from removing the mice. The South Farallon Islands are home to about half of the worlds breeding population of the small nocturnal seabirds. These birds have been in steady decline for at least 30 years due to a variety of reason, including predation caused by western gulls and mortality caused by

the non-native house mice. We have documented ashy storm-petrel mortality from predation by juvenile burrowing owls attempting to over-winter. The mice are the pivotal player as their population is exceptionally high during the fall when the wayward owls arrive. The owls arrive to find abundant food and a few of them stop migrating and continue feeding on the mice. However, in January the mouse population experiences a dramatic decrease. The owls are forced to switch prey-to the only small seabird available, the ashy storm-petrel. When the mice are taken out of the equation the wayward owls will find a lack of food and continue migrating.

The Refuge has partnered with Island Conservation and PRBO to complete the project. Island Conservation is a leader in seabird restoration and was the principle organization that successfully eradicated mice from Anacapa Island in southern California. Funding for preparation of the environmental document has been provided by The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Project Biologists Jesse Irwin or Joelle Buffa at the above address or telephone: (510)792-0222. Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in the

public meetings should contact Jesse Irwin sufficiently in advance of the meeting to allow time to process the request.



ASHY STORM-PETREL



ONE OF THE GUILTY BURROWING OWLS