

RESTORING SEABIRDS

*I know
I'm cute, but I have an
amazing story, too!
Check it out!*



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What are DDTs and PCBs?

They are toxic mixtures of chemicals that breakdown very slowly in the environment. DDT was once a widely used pesticide in the United States. One of the largest DDT manufacturing factories, owned by the Montrose Chemical Corporation, was located in Torrance, CA. PCBs are a group of chemicals that are resistant to heat and pressure. They were used by many companies for making products such as paints and for cooling electronic parts.

Where did they come from?

Most of the DDTs and PCBs contaminating the marine environment near Los Angeles came from companies that dumped their waste products into the local sewer system many years ago.

Wastewater from these factories was discharged into the ocean through pipes offshore of the Palos Verdes peninsula. Although releases of DDTs and PCBs ended in the 1970s, over 100 tons of these chemicals still contaminate the sediments and living organisms of the Southern California marine environment.

How has DDT contamination affected the Seabirds?

In 1992, the Trustees funded a study of eggshell thinning and DDT/PCB contamination levels in seabirds of the Channel Islands. These studies showed that a suite of seabirds had eggshell thinning, so the following seabirds have become the priority for MSRP restoration efforts:

- Xantus's Murrelet
- Brandt's Cormorant
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Cassin's Auklet
- California Brown Pelican
- Western Gull
- Ashy Storm-petrel
- Pelagic Cormorant

What is being done?

Restore Seabirds to Scorpion and Orizaba Rocks Located off Santa Cruz Island, these rocks are important islands for burrow-nesting seabirds in California. The goal is to restore the habitat for nesting seabirds on the rocks. Restoration efforts on Scorpion Rock include removing non-native plants and replacing them with native plants that the seabirds can build their burrows under. Efforts on Orizaba Rock include creating additional seabird nesting sites and attracting the birds to the new sites.

Restore Alcids to Santa Barbara Island Santa Barbara Island supports California's largest colony of Xantus's Murrelets (a state-threatened species). The goal is to recover Murrelets and Cassin's Auklets by restoring their nesting habitat. Non-native vegetation has been removed from several sites and replaced with native plants. Nest boxes have also been installed and vocalization playback systems are used to attract the birds to the restored nesting sites.

Restore Seabirds to San Nicolas Island The goal of this project is to restore nesting Brandt's Cormorant and Western Gull colonies on San Nicolas Island by removing feral cats. This project will also benefit other native animals that live on this island, including lizards, mice, and birds.