



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Channel Islands National Park
1901 Spinnaker Drive
Ventura, California 93001

IN REPLY REFER TO:

N1419 (CHIS)

November 15, 1994

John Piatt
Pacific Seabird Group
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99503

Dear John:

Thank you for your letter of August 15, 1994, outlining the Pacific Seabird Group's recommendations to the Park concerning conservation of Xantus' Murrelets. Thoughts and comments on issues regarding Park resources are always greatly appreciated.

Projects and proposals submitted by researchers outside of the Park will be reviewed and accommodated whenever possible. However, current Park housing and transportation constraints restrict the number of people and projects that can take place at one time.

Our comments on your suggestions are enclosed. Once again, thank you for your excellent suggestions. In addition to the proposed annual conference to discuss the Xantus' Murrelet, please don't hesitate to contact us regarding your observations, concerns, and/or recommendations to assist in our mutual goal of species restoration.

Sincerely,

C. Mack Shaver
Superintendent

cc: Craig Harrison
William Everett
Sarah Allen
Trudy Ingram

**RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS BY PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP TO
CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK FOR THE CONSERVATION OF XANTUS'
MURRELET**

1. The entire Seabird Monitoring program will be undergoing review in Fall 1995 and Xantus' Murrelets monitoring protocols will be revised along with protocols for other species. Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) along with others will be invited to be a part of the review process. Our hope is to collect the best biological data within/given our funding and logistical constraints.
2. Harry Carter/National Biological Survey began intensive census efforts of all Channel Islands in 1994. Plans for 1995 include additional surveys within the Park and the Park Service continues to support these efforts. The data collected as part of our seabird monitoring program is published in an annual report as soon as possible. The data is public and can be acquired sooner by writing to request it.
3. Funding to begin a rat eradication program on Anacapa Island is anticipated within two years. It has been the park's #1 priority for multi-year project funding. The park has tried to obtain funding for the rat eradication through oil spill and DDT mitigation funds, with no success to date.
- 4-6. A Pest Policy Plan which will include plans to minimize the potential introduction of weeds and rats to all Park islands is being written by the Park's seabird and plant restoration biologists. Rats and feral cats are known to live in the rocks surrounding Ventura Harbor.
7. A supplemental nest box program will be considered when we review the Seabird Monitoring Program.
8. As facilities have improved on Santa Barbara Island, storage space has become increasingly "murrelet proof". We are developing thoughts on how to educate park personnel about situations that would prove hazardous to murrelets or create ephemeral nest sites.
9. The Park is unable to control use of bright deck lights by boats anchored around the island. At this time the best option is for the island ranger to issue advisories during routine contacts. Further questions on establishing policies should be directed toward California State Fish and Game. We are open to other actions that the PSG would propose to mitigate this problem.
- 10-11. Park personnel will be participating in the Oil Spill Wildlife Response Team being coordinated by Point Reyes Bird Observatory CDFG/OSPR. As participants of the team, we will be a part of the incident command system should an oil spill occur in the Santa Barbara Channel. There are no plans for the park to develop its own individual contingency plan for murrelets.

12. Developing a research project to determine the significance of predation by mice and owls on XAMU at SBI is not very feasible. Projects such as rat eradication from Anacapa Island appear higher on the priority list when competing for Park monies. There is also insufficient personnel to devote to such a project at this time.
13. Future construction on Santa Barbara Island will be conducted outside of the Murrelet breeding season as recommended by the Park Resource Management staff. There are no structures which offer significant artificial nesting habitat on Santa Barbara Island. US Fish & Wildlife Service will be consulted on unforeseen issues as they arise.
14. The Park will continue to participate in PSG's annual conferences. Information regarding the status and conservation of Xantus' Murrelets will be disseminated at PSG.