

## ANNUAL REPORT 2002

ANACAPA ISLAND RESTORATION  
PROJECT — ALL THE NEWS IS GOOD!

It happened. The National Park Service and the Island Conservation Group along with the American Trader Trustee Council successfully implemented two phases of a project aimed at removing rats from Anacapa Island in the Channel Islands National Park. Now we're moving on to the final phase — monitoring to evaluate project success. Our goal is to improve seabird nesting habitat on the island. The unwelcome rat pests probably invaded Anacapa Island over 100 years ago and have adversely affected nesting birds, native vegetation and the overall balance of life on the island. This project should not only enhance bird populations on the island, the main goal of the American Trader Trustee Council, but will also enhance the island's overall ecosystem, the main goal of the National Park Service and the Island Conservation Group. With the cooperation of the weather and the assemblage of the necessary project personnel in November 2002, the final helicopter drops of rodenticide took place.



Anacapa Island Xantus's Murrelet chick.



We hope that these rat-eaten eggs will soon be a thing of the past on Anacapa Island.  
Photo by Full Frame Productions

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## WHY NOW? DIDN'T THE AMERICAN TRADER OIL SPILL HAPPEN IN 1990?

The American Trader oil spill happened in 1990 off of the shores of Huntington Beach in Orange County, California. Although a \$3 million settlement was agreed upon shortly after the spill, court challenges delayed the availability of funds until 1998. After preparing and finalizing the Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment for Seabirds Injured by the American Trader Oil Spill (see back page), the actual work of restoration began.

Legal challenges continued in 2002 questioning whether the Anacapa Restoration Project had met all the legal and regulatory requirements. But the final outcome of the lawsuits has been in favor of continuing the restoration activities set forth by the Trustee Council. The courts recognized the appropriateness of the efforts the various agencies have put into restoration planning and the value of continuing the restoration projects.

The American Trader Trustee Council is an interagency organization that is tasked with managing and implementing the court settlement including restoration planning, fund administration, restoration implementation and assuring that all appropriate state and federal laws are adhered to.

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The team of restoration biologists once again ran a safe and smooth operation spreading rodenticide throughout the habitat of the black rat on Middle and West Anacapa islets. East Anacapa was completed in 2001 as part of a planned staging of the project to ensure the protection of the endemic Anacapa Island deer mouse. (As insurance, we also temporarily kept a captive population of mice.) Prior to the helicopter's arrival, a team of biologists from UC Santa Cruz's Predatory Bird Research Group caught and relocated predatory birds including hawks, falcons and owls. Although accidental poisoning of birds remains a concern, major efforts were undertaken to minimize such effects. Based on study results and last years East Anacapa effort, the trustees are confident that the adverse short-term effects to some birds will be overshadowed by the positive long-term benefits to the island ecosystem as a result of this project.



Rat eating a "decoy" egg on Anacapa Island caught on video. Photo by ICEG

## VIDEO DOCUMENTARY OF THE ANACAPA RESTORATION PROJECT COMPLETED

The American Trader Trustee Council and a cast of dedicated restoration biologists worked with Full Frame Productions (San Francisco, CA) to document the chronology of events leading up to the selection and implementation of the Anacapa Island Restoration Project.

"Restoring Balance: Removing the Black Rat from Anacapa Island" is a remarkable video. It tells our story very effectively and elicits praise from everyone who sees it. Not only does this video showcase an important conservation success story, but it also serves to promote these types of projects for the future. The value of the video to tell our story has proven to be a powerful tool both in educating the public and informing federal, state and local organizations of the importance of the Anacapa project to the Channel Islands National Park and to achieving the habitat restoration goals of the Trustee Council. To request an electronic version of the video (compressed movie file), see contact information on back page.



Videographer Kevin White (rt) and Cameraman Don

## PELICANS AND THEIR ROOSTING HABITAT

We're proud to be checking things off the list of restoration activities identified in the Restoration Plan. New planning reports were completed this year to aid future work.

- Disturbance to Brown Pelicans at Communal Roosts in Southern and Central California
- Brown Pelican Roost Sites on the Mainland Coast of southern California: Size, quality, and value of diurnal roost sites
- Night Roost Sites on the Mainland Coast of Southern California

The authors of these reports, Deborah Jaques and Craig Strong of Crescent Coastal Research (Astoria, Oregon) are researchers that have devoted much of their careers to understanding seabirds and their habitat. In these reports, they document how California Brown Pelicans use roosts in southern California and how they are impacted by habitat loss and human activities throughout this region. They not only scientifically evaluated the status of roosts and disturbances to roosts in our region, but they also identified measures that can be taken to improve habitat and protect pelicans on their roosts. We are anxious to begin implementing some of their recommendations including habitat enhancements and seabird protection projects.

*The Trustees are another step closer to their goal "...to improve habitat and protect pelicans on their roosts."*

## BUDGET REPORT 1998-2002

<b>American Trader Budget Overview</b>	
Starting funds in 1998	\$2,972,157
Interest earned through 10/31/01	\$ 593,598
Expenditures and obligations through 12/31/2002	-\$2,321,482
<b>Balance as of 12/31/02</b>	<b>\$1,244,273</b>
<b>Summary of Expenditures and Obligations</b>	
Anacapa Island Restoration Project	\$1,579,367
Pelican Roost Enhancements and GIS atlas	\$ 54,700
Grebe Habitat Enhancement	\$ 22,840
Seabird Education Project	\$ 32,400
Restoration Plan Development (TC agencies)	\$ 227,526
UC Davis - Restoration Plan assistance	\$ 63,809
Administration costs (TC agencies)	\$ 223,565
Contract Administration (NFWF and FWS)	\$ 117,274
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$2,321,482</b>

*“We’re checking things off the list in our efforts to implement the American Trader Restoration Plan”*

## AMERICAN TRADER TRUSTEE COUNCIL REPS

### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Since 1999, Carol Gorbics has been the Fish and Wildlife Service’s ATTC representative. She is a biologist with extensive restoration experience. She spent over 10 years of her career working on restoration activities following the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska. Scott Sobiech, an Environmental Contaminants biologist, is the Service’s alternate representative.

### California Dept of Fish & Game

Since 2000, Paul Kelly has been the state’s ATTC representative. He is a biologist with extensive experience and publications in seabird restoration activities in California. He has been with OSPR since its inception and has responded to numerous oil spills throughout California. Steve Hampton, a resource economist, is OSPR’s alternate representative.

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Jennifer Boyce took over as NOAA’s lead ATTC representative in 2001, replacing Lt Cmdr Michael Devany. She is a biologist with extensive oil spill response, injury assessment and restoration experience related to seabirds and other natural resources. Katherine Pease, an attorney for NOAA, is NOAA’s alternate representative.

## PROTECTING OUR SEABIRDS

The Trustees have teamed with NOAA’s Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary staff to develop and distribute bilingual brochures telling people what to do — and what not to do — when they encounter seabirds. We hope these brochures, accompanying signs and even local workshops will help avoid negative human-bird interactions in the future.

We’ve also enlisted the aid of biologist Gary Ivey (Wildlife and Wetlands consultant) to start work in 2003 on identifying ways to protect grebe habitat on their nesting lakes in northern California to hopefully improve the survival of grebe chicks. The need for this effort was emphasized when a nesting colony of grebes was destroyed this summer by improper, and maybe even illegal, boating activities.

## SEABIRD MONITORING— MURRELETS AND PELICANS

Monitoring of Xantus’s Murrelets and California Brown Pelicans around Anacapa Island continued in 2002. The murrelet monitoring team (Humboldt State University, Hamer Environmental, National Park Service and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary) was delighted to report the discovery of an intact murrelet egg laid in one of the sea caves on East Anacapa Island. We hope this is a sign of things to come! In the past, eggs in this cave were probably eaten by rats since successful nesting had not recently been documented. Brown pelicans weren’t so lucky this year. An outbreak of domoic acid poisoning in fish may have been passed on to pelican chicks by their parents as poisoned fish were brought back by the adults to feed the chicks. Chick survival was low in the pelican nesting area according to pelican monitors (California Institute of Environmental Studies).

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## American Trader Trustee Council

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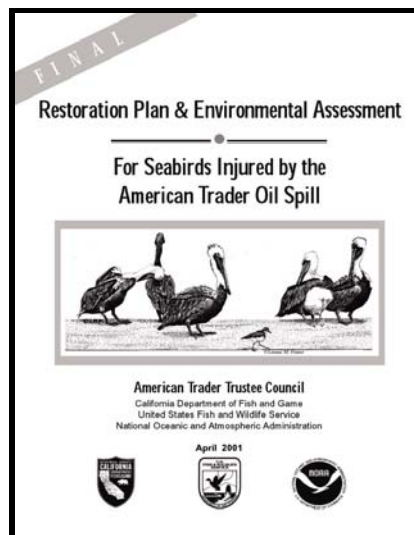
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*Restoring Injured Seabird Resources in California*

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# THE AMERICAN TRADER TRUSTEE COUNCIL'S RESTORATION PLAN

The "Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment for Seabirds Injured by the American Trader Oil Spill" was prepared jointly by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the California Department of Fish and Game with considerable public input. Implementation of restoration projects began in 2001 and will continue for approximately five or six years. The intent of the collection of restoration projects is to compensate for injuries incurred during the spill and for interim losses incurred during the period of recovery. The plan may be viewed on-line at [www.darcnw.noaa.gov/amtrader.htm](http://www.darcnw.noaa.gov/amtrader.htm).



To request an electronic copy of the full restoration plan on CD, please contact:

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6010 Hidden Valley Road  
Carlsbad, CA 92009

Email: [carol\\_gorbics@fws.gov](mailto:carol_gorbics@fws.gov)

For more information about American Trader Trustee Council activities and other restoration projects check out these websites:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/ospr/index.html>

<http://www.darcnw.noaa.gov/amtrader.htm>

<http://contaminants.fws.gov/Issues/Restoration.cfm>

<http://www.nps.gov/chis/naturalresources/airp.html>