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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Earliest Known Record of a Bald Eagle Chick Hatching on the Channel Islands

The 2012 bald eagle breeding season is kicking off to a record start with the earliest known natural hatching of a bald eagle chick on the Channel Islands. This early arrival was witnessed on Monday at a nest near Carl Peak on Santa Cruz Island.

There are a record number of 15 breeding pairs active on the Channel Islands this year, with the number likely to increase as the season progresses. Moreover, there are between 60 to 70 resident bald eagles—a sizeable number since their disappearance from the Channel Islands in the early 1960s.

So far this breeding season there are six known active nests on Santa Cruz Island, including one with a hatched chick and three other nests with eggs. On Santa Rosa Island there are two nests, each with eggs. There is one nest on West Anacapa Island in the same area where last year a bald eagle chick hatched for the first time since 1949 on the tiny islet. On Santa Catalina Island there are six pairs actively incubating eggs.

The famed Pelican Harbor pair that in 2006 naturally hatched the first bald eagle chick in over 50 years on the Channel Islands once again left everyone guessing. Biologists moved the webcam several times to follow the nesting pair before the birds finally settled on a site near Chinese Harbor on Santa Cruz Island. The female laid her first egg on March 5, 2012.

The Pelican Harbor pair's first offspring, a female known as A-49, has been seen with a mate nesting near the west end of Santa Cruz Island. If A-49 successfully hatches her eggs this year another milestone will be set with a second generation of naturally-hatched eagles.

To watch these majestic birds daily during the breeding season visit the Channel Islands Live Bald Eagle Webcams on Santa Cruz Island at:

<http://www.nps.gov/chis/photosmultimedia/bald-eagle-webcam.htm>

To watch bald eagles on Santa Catalina Island visit:

http://iws.org/interactive_nestchat.html

A Bald Eagle Webcam Discussion Forum can be found at:

<http://www.nps.gov/chis/photosmultimedia/bald-eagle-webcam.htm>

Biologists post regular bald eagle updates on the forum at:

http://z7.invisionfree.com/CHIL_EagleCAM/index.php?showforum=11

To follow a bald eagle blog and regular updates visit:

<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/california/explore/santa-cruz-island-bald-eagles-the-sequel.xml>

For a film on the bald eagle recovery and other media visit:

<http://www.montroserestoration.gov/multimedia/videos/>

<http://www.nps.gov/chis/photosmultimedia/bald-eagle-archives.htm>

History of Recovery

Prior to 2006, the last known successful nesting of a bald eagle pair on the northern Channel Islands was in 1950 on Santa Rosa Island. Bald eagles disappeared from the Channel Islands by the early 1960s due to human impacts, primarily DDT contamination. The effects of these chemicals are magnified in the food chain, causing bald eagles to lay thin-shelled eggs that either dehydrate or break in the nest.

A Partnership for Bald Eagle Recovery

Bald eagle restoration efforts on the Channel Islands are funded by the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program (MSRP), a multi-agency program funded by court settlements and dedicated to restoring natural resources harmed by DDTs and PCBs released into the environment by Montrose Chemical Corporation and other industrial sources in southern California. To learn about MSRP visit: www.montroserestoration.gov.

The National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy, co-owners of Santa Cruz Island, continue to partner to protect and restore the island ecosystem. The Saucers nest is on The Nature Conservancy property. For more information visit:

<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/california/explore/santa-cruz-island-bald-eagles-the-sequel.xml>

The Institute for Wildlife Studies, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of wildlife species, has conducted bald eagle restoration on the Channel Islands for over 30 years, including efforts on the northern islands within Channel Islands National Park. To learn more about IWS visit: www.iws.org.

This publication is available on line at: www.nps.gov/chis/parknews/newsreleases.htm