

George Hollister
Hollister Ranch Comptche Redwoods
PO Box 111
Comptche, CA 95427

Jan 28, 2018

NSO Stakeholder Forum 1/30/18

My wife and I are non-industrial forest landowners in Comptche, CA. I have monitored Northern Spotted Owls(NSO) on and near my property, since 1993. To begin with, there was a long period of robust NSO activity. Now, in the last few years, I don't hear NSOs, but I do hear many Barred Owls(BDOW), both during the day and night.

What everyone should be asking themselves is, are current NSO protection protocols, required for timber harvesting on private forest land, in place to harass forest land owners, or protect NSOs? What we have known, since NSO surveys were first done over 25 years ago is NSOs can prosper in second growth forests, and around timber harvesting, with protection for their active nest sites in place.

When those first NSO surveys were done, BDOWs were seldom found, and were considered an oddity. Now BDOWs are increasingly common, and NSOs much less so. There needs to be a change in the thinking of the long accepted NSO narrative, that ran off the tracks more than 25 years ago. Timber harvesting, with protections for active nesting, is not, and never has been, a threat to NSOs. BDOWs are. Unless the narrative changes, and there is a refocus on BDOW intrusion, NSOs appear to be headed for extinction. What current NSO protection protocols do, at great expense, is chronicle the extinction of NSOs, and the establishment of BDOWs. What we are witnessing is a classic biological example of the **Competitive Exclusion Principle** in action.

What forest landowners are dealing with is a broken system, that increases onerous regulatory protocols but fails to recognize the reason for NSO decline. Should forest landowners expect more of the same in the future, as this transition from NSOs to BDOWs in our forests continues, to it's inevitable biological conclusion?

Sincerely,

George Hollister