

## COMMAND TRUSTEE COUNCIL RESTORATION PROJECTS UNDERWAY:

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## Case History

The oil and tarballs resulting from the *T/V Command* spill affected large numbers of seabirds, including Common Murres, California Brown Pelicans, and endangered Marbled Murrelets. Sandy beach and rocky intertidal shoreline habitats were also affected, and human recreation was interrupted at several beaches in the area.

The group of federal and state agencies, together known as the Natural Resource Trustees, that initiated legal action

against the Pearl Shipping Corp. and Anax International Agencies, Inc are:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,
- CA Department of Fish and Game,
- CA Department of Parks and Recreation, and
- CA State Lands Commission.

## Sooty Shearwater Restoration Project Implemented in New Zealand

The Sooty Shearwater is a seabird impacted by the Command oil spill that spends much of the year off the California coast, but breeds on islands off New Zealand. Rats had been eating shearwater eggs and chicks on several islands that have important shearwater colonies.

The New Zealand Department of Conservation, working with local Maoris, the US non-profit organization Oikonos, and funds from the Command oil spill, announced in July that they successfully eradicated non-native rats from four islands in southern New Zealand. The goal of this project is to allow for the recovery of the Sooty Shearwater and the restoration of the islands' unique ecosystem.

The rats, believed to have been brought to the islands in the 1960s by fishing boats, were devastating the island's flora and fauna. The rats were eradicated using poison bait. Project leaders with experience from other

islands say they must monitor for several years to be confident that the rats are all gone. As part of the project, quarantine plans are now being developed to protect the islands from a potential re-invasion of rodents.

Project member Robert Coote, of the New Zealand Department of Conservation, said, "It is marvellous to see a great deal of collaboration and planning between the native community, Oikonos, and the Department of Conservation come to fruition." As for California: we can hope to see more of the shearwaters off our coast.

*Watermark: Sooty Shearwater Restoration Project logo / Sophie Webb*



*Sooty Shearwater (Puffinus griseus)*

*"The Maori community is very excited about this eradication and looks forward to seeing the rewards in a diversity of native bird species resettling on the islands."*

Robert Coote  
Project member  
Sooty Shearwater  
Restoration Project

To see international flight paths of satellite-tagged shearwaters, visit [www.toppcensus.org](http://www.toppcensus.org).

# Restoration Project Updates

## Marbled Murrelet Land Aquisition and Enhancement Project

On March 20, 2006, California State Parks used funds from the T/V Command oil spill settlement to close escrow on a parcel of redwood forest habitat in the Santa Cruz Mountains of central California. The 80-acre “Girl Scout Creek” parcel is located just north of Butano State Park, and contains stands of residual old growth redwoods in which Marbled Murrelets have been observed nesting.

The parcel will become a part of Butano State Park, and the Marbled Murrelet nesting habitat will be protected and enhanced under park management. Biologists will begin surveying the murrelet population next summer.

*The Girl Scout Creek parcel contains stands of old growth redwood trees such as those pictured here.*

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## Common Murre Nesting Ledge Creation Project

The Farallon Islands, located 28 miles west of San Francisco, are home to one of the largest and most important colonies of Common Murres on the west coast of North America south of Alaska. The goal of this project is to create Common Murre nesting habitat on Southeast Farallon Island, a part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Farallon National Wildlife Refuge.

Construction has begun on the framework for a man-made concrete wall and observation blind made of recycled materials. The wall will include various nesting ledges

that can be used by up to 400 breeding Common Murres. A stainless steel frame for the ledges has been secured in place, and an observation blind, which will be incorporated into the backside of the ledge, has been built on the mainland and will be transported to the island.

Once in place, the observation blind will be covered with copper shingles and additional concrete nesting ledges. The blind will act as a barrier between the colony and a nearby path, reducing human disturbance and allowing biologists to monitor the birds.

For more information on the activities of the Command Trustee Council, please contact:

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On the web, at:  
[www.darp.noaa.gov/southwest/command](http://www.darp.noaa.gov/southwest/command)

### T/V Command Restoration Program Preferred Restoration Projects

#### Natural Resource Restoration Projects

1. Marbled Murrelet Restoration and Corvid Management Project
2. Marbled Murrelet Land Aquisition and Enhancement Project
3. Seabird Colony Protection Program
4. Common Murre Nesting Ledge Creation Project
5. Brown Pelican Roost Site Enhancement and Protection Project
6. Brown Pelican Entanglement Reduction and Outreach Program
7. Sooty Shearwater Restoration Project

#### Lost Human Use Restoration Projects

1. Improve Beach Access at Half Moon Bay State Beach
2. Improve Beach Access at Seal Cove Beach (Fitzgerald Marine Reserve)
3. Create Coastal Trail and Coastal Access at Mirada Surf Property

### Summary of T/V Command Trustee Council Budget

Original Natural Resource Damages Settlement	\$3,973,159
Total Interest Accrued	720,234
<b>Total Amount Available for Restoration</b>	<b>\$4,693,393</b>
Marbled Murrelet Land Aquisition	\$ 400,000
Seabird Colony Protection Project	377,480
Common Murre Nesting Ledge Creation Project	35,331
Marbled Murrelet Restoration and Corvid Mgmt	500,965
Sooty Shearwater Restoration Project	437,369
<b>Total Project Allocations (to date)</b>	<b>\$1,751,145</b>
<b>Total Admin/Planning Expenditures (to date)</b>	<b>\$ 686,827</b>
<b>Total Funds Allocated (to date)</b>	<b>\$2,437,972</b>
<b>Total Amount Remaining for Restoration (to date)</b>	<b>\$2,255,421</b>