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News Release



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San Nicolas Island Seabird Restoration Project Provides Wildlife and Cats with Home Improvements

The San Nicolas Island Seabird Restoration Project, a component of the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program (MSRP), completed its initial year of removing feral cats from San Nicolas Island off the coast of southern California. A total of 59 adult cats and 12 kittens were transported from the Island to two sanctuaries on the mainland - CARE in Los Angeles County, and the Fund for Animals Wildlife Center in the community of Ramona, San Diego County.

Through a Memorandum of Agreement between the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Navy, and The Humane Society of the United States (The HSUS), the cost of transporting, housing, feeding, and providing veterinary care for the cats is being funded by The HSUS. All of the adult cats now have permanent shelter at the two facilities whereas the kittens were made available for adoption to private homes as indoor-only pets – currently, all but 2 of the 12 kittens have found loving homes. The partnership with The HSUS and its resources made it possible to remove cats from San Nicolas Island without having to euthanize them.

Navy-owned San Nicolas Island is located off the coast of southern California and provides vital nesting habitat for numerous native seabirds and shorebirds, including western gulls and Brandt's cormorants. The island is also home for the federally threatened western snowy plover and island night lizard, and the State listed island fox.

Removal of the cats from San Nicolas Island benefits the island's wildlife by reducing predation and competition for food sources, and is another step in the Navy's ongoing efforts to restore the ecological balance on the Island.

"In addition to our defense mission, the Navy provides a secondary benefit to the nation, that being the protection of sensitive natural resources on our lands," says Captain James J. McHugh, Commanding Officer Naval Base Ventura County. "The outcome of the partnership between the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Navy, and The HSUS shows what can be accomplished when groups of different missions

and viewpoints work towards a common goal. The Montrose seabird restoration project protects sensitive species and compliments the Navy's natural resources conservation program, with a win-win outcome for the cats as well."

"Although improving nesting success of seabird populations is the most important objective of this project, The HSUS' willingness to take responsibility for the cats allows us to move forward with the project knowing the cats will be well taken care of," says Jim Haas, the Service's Representative for the MSRP Trustee Council. "We are elated that this project is a win for wildlife and the cats."

"This project is a testament to the commitment of multiple agencies to find common ground and develop life-saving strategies for both feral cats and wildlife in very sensitive habitats," said Betsy McFarland, The HSUS' Companion Animals senior director. "Although The HSUS supports trap-neuter-return for feral cats, we recognize there are some situations--such as San Nicolas Island--that require a unique approach and we're pleased with the results."

Following the end of the first year of feral cat removal, remote cameras have been installed to determine whether any cats remain on the island. Indications are that at least a few cats likely remain, and the removal effort will resume in July 2010, following the end of the breeding season for the island fox.

The MSRP is a multi-agency effort to restore resources injured by past DDT and PCB releases. The program oversees bald eagle, seabird, and peregrine falcon restoration projects, as well as projects to restore fishing and fish habitats. Funding for the MSRP is provided through settlement agreements with Montrose Chemical Corporation and other entities that discharged DDT and PCB contaminants into the marine environment.

The full story of the San Nicolas Island Seabird Restoration Project, including an update on the feral cats in their new homes can be found on the Internet at [[insert link to Journal story](#)].

Further information about MSRP and the San Nicolas Island Seabird Restoration Project is available on the Internet at [Montrose Settlements Restoration Program](#). For information about the new feral cat habitat for the San Nicolas Island cats at the Fund for Animals Wildlife Center, visit www.humanesociety.org/sannicolascats

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov/

The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization – backed by 11 million Americans, or one of every 28. For more than a half-century, The HSUS has been fighting for the protection of all animals through advocacy, education and hands-on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty -- On the web at humanesociety.org.