

From: [Grim, Mary](#)
To: [Michael Long](#); [Michael Fris](#); [Darrin Thome](#); [Angela Picco](#)
Subject: Fwd: Ashy storm petrel article
Date: Monday, September 9, 2013 8:10:17 AM

fyi

Mary Grim

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Hendron, Jane** <jane_hendron@fws.gov>
Date: Mon, Sep 9, 2013 at 7:56 AM
Subject: Ashy storm petrel article
To: Sabrina West <sabrina_west@fws.gov>, Jim Bartel <jim_bartel@fws.gov>, Scott Sobiech <Scott_Sobiech@fws.gov>, Mary Grim <mary_grim@fws.gov>

Audubon's quote is quite alarmist.

Jane

[Marin wildlife advocates have mixed views on Farallon Islands mice eradication plan](#)

[By Mark Prado Marin Independent Journal](#) POSTED: 08/30/2013 06:14:34 PM PDT

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposal for a strategic strike over the Farallon Islands to rid it of thousands upon thousands of house mice is drawing criticism from Marin animal welfare groups. But other local groups, including Marin Audubon and [Point Blue Conservation Science](#) — the former Point Reyes Bird Observatory — say the plan to drop poison via helicopter is the only way to restore ecological balance on the island, which has been thrown out of whack by the invasive mice. The rodents were likely inadvertently introduced in the 1800s by fur traders who stopped at the islands, situated some 27 miles west of the Golden Gate. "There are times when there are so many mice there it looks as though the ground is moving," said **Gerry McChesney, refuge manager at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**, who is developing the mouse plan. He spoke on the issue this week during a hearing in the Presidio. "When you stay on the island, they crawl over you when you sleep in your bed," he said. "We try to keep them out of the buildings, but it's difficult." In peak season, 500 mice were once counted on a single acre. The islands are 141 acres. While it would be inaccurate to assign 500 to each acre, McChesney said, they number easily in the thousands. "This is the highest density of these invasive mice on any island in the world," said Ellie Cohen, who heads Point Blue Conservation Science. The group — which does research on the island — supports the eradication plan. A just released U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service environmental impact statement on the issue calls for no action, or for rodenticide grain pellets to be dropped via helicopter in two to three applications with a stated goal of wiping out the population. "We want to get every single one. It has been done," McChesney said, noting mice have been removed from other islands in the manner being suggested. "If you leave one pregnant female on the

island you have failed because they are such prolific breeders. They come back very, very quickly."... **Allowing the house mice to stay threatens other species, according to researchers.** They are predators of Ashy Storm-petrel eggs and chicks, sea birds that are a "species of concern" in the state. There are only 15,000 worldwide, half of which breed and nest on the islands. **Every year as much as 12 percent of the eggs and chicks of this species are lost to mice. Meanwhile the native, migratory burrowing owls have become unnatural residents on the islands every winter to munch on mice. As the mouse population declines the owls turn to seabirds for their diet. By spring, hundreds of Ashy Storm-petrels and other seabirds have been killed, according to researchers. By removing the mice, the Ashy Storm-petrel and other seabirds will avoid further population decline and the ecosystem will begin to be restored. That's why the mice must go, supporters say.....The eradication could occur as soon as the fall of 2014.** "We have to do it," said **Barbara Salzman, president of Marin Audubon**, who attended the hearing as well. "What are the alternatives? If they let them increase, we will lose all the petrels."....

Jane Hendron
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