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**Modeling the Impacts of House Mouse Eradication on Ashy Storm-Petrels on Southeast Farallon Island**

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**Summary**

* This study provides quantitative estimates of the anticipated benefit to Ashy Storm-Petrels from proposed house mouse eradication on the South Farallon Islands.
* The objective of this study was to examine the ecological relationships between House Mouse abundance, Burrowing Owl abundance, Ashy Storm-Petrel predation by Burrowing Owls, and Ashy Storm-Petrel annual survival on Southeast Farallon Island.
* Indices of House Mouse abundance, Burrowing Owl abundance, and Ashy Storm-Petrel predation by owls each showed a clear and distinctive seasonal pattern. Owls arrive at the island in the fall when mice are abundant. The owls then switch to preying upon storm-petrels after mouse population crash in December and January. There is a sharp peak observed in predation on Ashy Storm-Petrels by Burrowing Owls in February and March, during the storm-petrel pre-egglaying period.
* On a monthly basis, owl predation on storm-petrels is strongly positively related to Burrowing Owl abundance and strongly negatively related to House Mouse abundance, reflecting the fact that mice are the primary prey and Ashy Storm-Petrels the secondary prey.
* Burrowing Owl abundance and predation on storm-petrels have increased in recent years, with especially high levels of both parameters in recent years. Annual variation in owl abundance and predation on storm-petrels are highly correlated.
* Capture-recapture analyses reveal a strong and significant effect of Burrowing Owl abundance on annual Ashy Storm-Petrel adult survival. A 50% reduction in owl abundance can be expected to reduce overall annual mortality by 27%.
* We estimate the change in population trend of Ashy Storm-Petrels as a result of anticipated reductions in Burrowing Owl predation on SEFI, using a population-dynamic model. With no reduction in Burrowing Owl abundance (assuming recent conditions continue into the future) the population is expected to decrease by 27.4% over a 10 year period.
* A 50% reduction in Burrowing Owl abundance can be expected to change a declining storm-petrel population into one that is approximately stable: increasing by 0.7% after 10 years. With a 71.5% reduction in the Burrowing Owl abundance index, an increasing population is expected, increasing by 11.8% after 10 years.
* Reducing Burrowing Owl abundance will have a substantial and significant effect in reducing overall Ashy Storm-Petrel mortality and promoting stable or increasing future population trends.

**Introduction**

Colonially breeding seabird populations worldwide face major threats, including climate change, habitat loss, overharvesting and bycatch, invasive species, pollution, and disease (Wilcove et al. 1998). When compared with other birds, seabirds produce few young per year; they breed at an older age, and have higher adult survival (Weimerskirch 2002). For extremely long lived, low-fecundity species such as those in the order Procellariformes, adult survival is the key demographic trait in determining population growth or decline (Nur & Sydeman 1999). Management actions to counter threats can be difficult to implement, but one example where direct conservation action has had success in is the elimination of introduced predators impacting seabird colonies.

Natural resource managers are primarily concerned with the often severe and obvious effects of predators on island-breeding seabird species, where the introduced predator decreases the abundance of prey species and can cause population declines (Schoener and Spiller 1996, Krajick et al. 2005). In addition, indirect interactions may exacerbate predation on prey species of concern. One example is hyperpredation, where there is an enhanced predation pressure on a secondary prey, due to either an increase in the abundance of a predator population that displays a numerical response to the primary prey, which itself may be an introduced species, or there is enhanced predation pressure due to a sudden decline in the abundance or availability of the primary prey. In both cases, with and without indirect effects, we have predation by a predator on a prey (in this case, seabird), but in the latter case, the level of predation on the prey species of concern is determined by a third species (the “primary” prey of the predator).

In this study, we analyze field data explicating the inter-relationships among three species: an introduced rodent (House Mouse, *Mus musculu*s), a native predator (Burrowing Owl*, Athene cunicularia*), and a seabird of conservation concern (Ashy Storm-Petrel, *Oceanodroma homochroa*) on Southeast Farallon Island, California (SEFI). In addition to examining variation in abundance among the three species, we also analyze field data on predation intensity by the predator on the seabird. Using a long-term mistnetting study of the Ashy Storm-Petrel on SEFI (Bradley et al. 2011), we estimate the change in an index of adult survival with respect to variation in the abundance of Burrowing Owls. We then construct a population dynamic model that accounts for current population trends and estimate the change in future population trends that is expected given a reduction in owl predation activity. We argue that the available evidence indicates that eradication of the primary prey (mice) will reduce or eliminate Burrowing Owl predation on Ashy Storm-Petrels. Thus, this study provides quantitative estimates of the benefit to Ashy Storm-Petrels from proposed house mouse eradication.

The two primary objectives of this study are:

1. Demonstrate the ecological relationships between House Mouse abundance, Burrowing Owl abundance, Ashy Storm-Petrel predation, and Ashy Storm-Petrel annual survival.
2. Quantify the expected change in adult survival and consequent change in population trend as a result of anticipated reductions in Burrowing Owl predation on SEFI.

**Study Species**

House mice are one of the most widespread invasive mammals on earth; amongst vertebrates the breadth of their global distribution is second only to that of humans (Bronson 1979; Brooke and Hilton 2002). In island ecosystems, house mice have been shown to have significant impacts on plant, invertebrate, and seabird communities (Angel et al. 2009). Despite this, there has been little conservation action devoted to mice on islands, relative to other introduced mammals (Wanless et al. 2007; Howald et al. 2007, Wanless et al. 2012). House mice were introduced to the South Farallon Islands sometime during the 1800’s (Ainley and Boekelehide 1990). Despite over 40 years of continuous study of breeding seabirds on the Farallones, there is little evidence of major direct effects of mice on breeding seabirds – though these interactions would be difficult to document.

The Burrowing Owl is found in the interior of California and other western states (Gervais et al 2008). They arrive on the Farallones on their southbound fall migration ([DeSante and Ainley 1980](file:///C:/Users/rbradley/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/Content.Outlook/8X8DKM50/Revised%20Draft%20Purposeand%20Need%20%203-30-12_PRBO_FWS_Comments.docx#_ENREF_14)) starting in September. The arrival of migrating or dispersing landbirds onto the Farallones is not uncommon; over 400 different landbird species have been recorded on the islands since 1968 ([Richardson et al. 2003](file:///C:/Users/rbradley/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/Content.Outlook/8X8DKM50/Revised%20Draft%20Purposeand%20Need%20%203-30-12_PRBO_FWS_Comments.docx#_ENREF_29)). Most landbirds that arrive on the Farallones depart within a few days ([DeSante and Ainley 1980](file:///C:/Users/rbradley/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/Content.Outlook/8X8DKM50/Revised%20Draft%20Purposeand%20Need%20%203-30-12_PRBO_FWS_Comments.docx#_ENREF_14)). However, Burrowing Owl arrival in fall occurs at the time the house mouse population is at its annual peak (Irwin 200?; also see Results). Some Burrowing Owl then remain on the islands for up to several months, subsisting primarily on a diet of mice (Mills 2006; PRBO, unpubl. data). By May, all Burrowing Owls have departed the island for breeding grounds. As we demonstrate in this study, in the winter months, the mouse population declines rapidly, severely reducing their availability as prey items for Burrowing Owl. Consequently, Burrowing Owl switch to alternative prey sources. Adult storm-petrels, which arrive on the islands starting in mid-winter to visit breeding sites and engage in courtship activity, and are nocturnal like the owls, become a major alternative prey item for the owls.

The Ashy Storm-Petrel is a seabird species of major conservation concern. This small (~42 g), colonially breeding species is endemic to waters of the California Current along the coast of California and Mexico, , with breeding populations concentrated at the Farallon and Channel Islands (Carter et al. 2008). Sydeman et al. (1998a, 1998b) estimated a 44% decline in breeders, with a 95% confidence interval of 22-66% decline, in the population from 1972 to 1992 at Southeast Farallon Island (SEFI). This represents the largest colony for this species, with perhaps 50% of the world population (Carter et al. 2008). Due to major population declines, threats from colony predation, and at-sea mortality (e.g., from oil spills), the species has been listed as a California Species of Special Concern for many years (Carter et al. 2008) and was recently petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The Ashy Storm-Petrel is currently listed as “Endangered” by IUCN (http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/106003987/0) due to its restricted geographic range, small population size, and apparent declines (Sydeman et al. 1998a, Ainley and Hyrenbach 2010).

The Ashy Storm-Petrel has been the subject of much study on the Farallon Islands (Ainley et al. 1990, Ainley 1995, Sydeman et al. 1998a). PRBO has conducted two previous Population Viability Analyses, one that considered only the South Farallon Islands population (Sydeman et al. 1998b) and the second that expanded the geographic scope to include the Channel Islands population as well (Nur et al. 1999a). As part of the PVAs, Sydeman et al (1998b) and Nur et al (1999) developed a population dynamic model that synthesized the best available demographic information on the Farallon population and accounted for observed population trends. Here we update the model developed by Nur et al. (1999) based on the most recent observations and analysis of data since 1997. In particular, we analyze variation in annual survival of the Ashy Storm-Petrel, based on constant-effort mist netting that has been conducted since 1992, with specific focus on estimating the effect of Burrowing Owl abundance on Ashy Storm-Petrel survival during the period 2000 to 2011.

**Methods**

**Field Data Collection**

**Mistnetting of Ashy Storm-Petrels**

Southeast Farallon Island is the largest of the 39 hectare South Farallon Islands, located approximately 35 km west of San Francisco, California (Figure 1). As part of this study, we present an index of variation in population size based on statistical analysis of standardized mist-net captures. We use the population index to estimate change over time in the adult population of Ashy Storm-Petrel from 1992 to 2011.

We also estimate adult survival, specifically in relation to Burrowing Owl abundance (see Statistical Analysis) based on the same set of captured and recaptured Ashy Storm-Petrels. Survival analyses presented here are based on capture-mark-recapture data of uniquely banded individuals. The survival analyses focused on 2000 to 2011 because standardized Burrowing Owl abundance was only available as of January 2000 (see below).

Mist netting was conducted for 3 hours each netting session (from 22:20 – 01:30), with one or more sessions per month, as part of an on-going capture mark-recapture study. Two mist net sites were used (Lighthouse Hill – LHH and Carpenter Shop – CS; Figure 1) and differ in the characteristics such exposure, proximity to primary breeding habitat, proximity to the shoreline, and bird density. Nets were only opened if there was less than 10 knots of wind and little or no moon visible. Our goal was to conduct one session at each site once per month from April to August, weather permitting. Net location and net type were kept constant at these two sites for the duration of the study. We used one 12 m long, 4 shelf nylon mist net (Avinet Inc.) with 30 mm mesh and a height of 2.6 m. Birds were banded with incoloy or stainless steel metal leg bands (size 1b) with unique numbers assigned by the U.S. Geological Survey’s Bird Banding Laboratory. LHH site is south facing, approximately half-way up Lighthouse Hill (~50 m elevation), and surrounded by a large amount of storm petrel breeding habitat and known high density of breeding sites (Sydeman et al. 1998a, PRBO unpublished). CS is east facing, adjacent to the ocean (~6 m elevation) in an area of less storm-petrel breeding habitat, apparently fewer breeding birds, and has lower capture rates than LHH (Sydeman et al. 1998a). We restricted our analyses to the period between April 1st and August 15th, as this time period had relatively standardized effort across the entire time series 1992-2011, as well as matching periods of regular Ashy Storm-Petrel colony attendance (Ainley et al. 1990). Note that egg-laying typically commences in May (Ainley et al. 1990).

Social attraction, in the form of broadcast recordings of Ashy Storm-Petrel calls, was used during all net sessions to increase the chance of Ashy Storm-Petrel captures at the netting sites. A portable cassette tape player was placed at the base of the middle of the mist net and broadcast at a volume of ~65db throughout the netting sessions. The main calls on the tape were “flight calls,” but in the background low frequency burrow “purring calls” and “rasping calls” are present (Ainley 1995). The flight call rate was approximately 0.44 calls per second or 26.5 calls per minute.

**Field Methods: Ashy Storm-Petrel reproductive success**

Ashy Storm-Petrel reproductive success (number of chicks fledged per pair) was determined for a sample of birds breeding in rock crevices in accessible habitat. Clutch size for Ashy Storm-Petrel is 1 and birds can relay after failed breeding attempts (Ainley 1995). Beginning 5 May in each year, from 1992 to 2011, we checked all previously occupied breeding sites every 5 days to determine nest contents. All occupied sites were monitored for reproductive success, with a goal of at least 40 sites monitored each season. New sites were added annually during the breeding season by confirmed breeding of birds which responded to Ashy Storm-Petrel calls played during the day. Sites that had not been occupied for at least 5 years were dropped from further study. We used a flashlight and, starting in 2007, a small camera (“See Snake”) to carefully and thoroughly examine each site. The camera allowed for increased sample size from 2007-2011, doubling the number of active sites we could follow. Once an egg was found or an adult was observed in incubation posture for two consecutive checks, the site was left undisturbed for 8 checks (40 days) before returning to check for hatch. Once a hatched chick was confirmed, the site was left undisturbed for an additional 8 checks. After the second skip period, we resumed checking the site every five days until the chick fledged. The “skip” periods help to reduce potential disturbance to incubating adults and young chicks. Chicks that were fully feathered and disappeared from their nesting crevice after 60 days of age were assumed to have fledged. Reproductive success was determined with respect to all attempts (including relays).

**Ashy Storm-Petrel predation index**

We developed an index of predation on Ashy Storm-Petrel for the years 2003 to 2011. Before 2003, data were not collected in a sufficiently systematic and standardized fashion. For each month beginning in 2003, we counted the number of depredated wings based on repeated, standardized surveys every 5 days from March to August, supplemented by incidental collections throughout the year. Incidental collections were based on access to areas visited as part of long term studies at approximately the same time across all years. Thus, effort in September to February may not have been the same as in March to August but the effort was consistent from one year to the next. We used data from January 2003 through April 2012. Identified remains were allocated to either Western Gull or Burrowing Owl, or were classified as unknown predator. Only remains positively identified as being caused by owls were used in this analysis.

**Burrowing Owl abundance index**

An index of Burrowing Owl abundance was determined based on daily observations from January 2000 to April 2012, as well as detailed roost surveys of Burrowing Owl every 3 days from 2010 to 2012. As part of daily Farallon operations, island biologists search the island for non-breeding birds and tally a total in the daily journal (Desante and Ainley 1980, Richardson et al. 2003). While effort varies through the year (i.e. ~8 hours in the fall and ~3 hours in the winter), effort is relatively consistent across years. However, to reduce effects of variation in daily sightings of owls, and allow for the fact that daily survey effort in earlier years was lower than in more recent years, we developed a robust and conservative index of Burrowing Owl abundance. The index was the maximum number of owls seen per month on a single day – as obtained by daily surveys throughout the time series and supplemented by roost surveys in recent years. Excluding May to August, when Burrowing Owl were absent or rare, the index varied from 1 to 10 in most months (mean = 2.85, SD = 2.78). During the four months from May to August each year, the monthly index was 0 (in 90% of the cases) or 1 (the other 10%).

A preliminary analysis indicated that the most consistent monthly metric of owl abundance was the maximum number of owls estimated to be on the island at any one time rather than mean or minimum per month; this metric (maximum monthly value) was more closely related to Ashy Storm-Petrel predation than were mean or minimum monthly values (see below).

For Ashy Storm-Petrel survival analyses, we examined several annual indices of Burrowing Owl abundance that differed with respect to which months were included. The most comprehensive measure was the mean of monthly maximum values calculated for the months of September to April. Burrowing Owls were almost entirely absent during the months of May to August. The September-April measure showed a significant relationship with respect to Ashy Storm-Petrel survival (see below), and its effect was stronger than other Burrowing Owl abundance metrics (e.g., January-April). In any case, all Burrowing Owl abundance metrics examined were highly correlated and thus population modeling results presented here are notsensitive to which metric was chosen.

**Statistical Analysis**

**Negative Binomial Regression Modeling for Population Index**

We used negative binomial regression to analyze capture rates of Ashy Storm-Petrel in order to construct a population size index. Negative binomial regression allows for non-linear relationships and residuals that are not normally distributed, as was the case in this study. This method is especially suitable for count data and is more suitable than Poisson regression as it accounts for overdispersion; that is, the variance exceeds the mean, as is common in ecological studies (Carmen and Trivedi 1998; Hilbe 2007). Note that negative binomial regression analyzes ln(Y) in relation to a set of predictor variables, where, in this case Y = count variable. No log-transformation is required.

We employed negative binomial regression (using program STATA 10.0) to model the dependent variable, ln(counts), while controlling for variation in: hours of netting effort; number of days spent netting at a site in a given year; Day of Year; (Day of Year)2, to allow for a quadratic seasonal effect; and site. In particular, we included “Year” as a categorical variable (i.e., as a factor) in order to derive year-specific estimates for the count variable, which was the goal of this analysis. The final model included the two effort variables, the two date variables, site, and year as a categorical variable. This model was preferred by AIC to models that had only a subset of these variables, i.e., the inclusion of each variable was justified with respect to AIC.

From the preferred model we estimated the year-specific effect for each year. The coefficient for the first year in the time series (1992) was set at 0.0, and the other coefficients were estimated as the difference in ln(counts) for that year relative to the base-year (1992), after controlling for the other variables. We then back-transformed the year-coefficient values, since the negative binomial coefficients were on a natural-log scale. The back-transformation provided an index value of 1.0 for 1992 (i.e., *e*0 = 1.0); the values for all other years were then the proportional change in each year relative to the base-year. For example, a value of 1.65 for year X indicated that counts were 65% higher in that year compared to 1992, once the other variables were controlled for. We used these index values as our measure of changes in relative population size.

**Analysis of Ashy Storm-Petrel Population Trends**

To obtain a recent estimate of population change for use in the population model, we performed a regression of ln-transformed population index values (see above). The regression coefficient for a given time period, once back-transformed, estimates the constant percent change for the specified time period (Nur et al. 1999b). We carried out analyses for two recent time-periods, 2007-2011 (last 5 yrs of mist net data, a 4 yr-interval) and 2006-2011(last 6 yrs, a 5 yr-interval) and then took the geometric mean of the two estimates. The geometric mean was then used to model the current period.

**Statistical Estimation of Effects of Burrowing Owls on Survival of Ashy Storm-Petrels**

We used the package RMARK (Laake et al. 2012) to analyze Ashy Storm-Petrel capture-recapture data and thus estimate survival and recapture probabilities and effects of covariates on these. Our goal was to obtain reliable estimates of survival probability, not to estimate recapture probability. However, in order to obtain the former, we needed to obtain reliable estimates of recapture probability (Cooch et al. 1996). We constructed a capture history table that included all Ashy Storm-Petrels captured between years 2000 and 2011, maximizing overlap between our Ashy Storm-Petrel mistnetting and Burrowing Owl abundance datasets. The following covariates of survival were included in the set of competing models we evaluated: Burrowing Owl abundance index (described elsewhere in this Report), capture site (LHH vs. CS), Southern Oscillation Index values in winter (SOI), and all possible combinations of these three variables. To model recapture probabilities, we considered the following covariates: net site, effort (net hours per year), SOI, and all combinations of these three variables. We also modeled year-specific variation in survival (with year as a factor, not as a covariate), but for the population modeling component of this study we were concerned only with estimates reflecting specific covariates, especially Burrowing Owl abundance.

The SOI influence on Ashy Storm-Petrel survival was included in our survival models because January-March SOI has been shown previously to predict Cassin’s Auklet (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*) adult survival on the Farallones (Lee et al. 2007, Nur et al. 2011). We therefore expected Ashy Storm-Petrel may also respond to the biophysical effects associated with winter SOI. We included SOI in the recapture models because we wanted to ascertain the influence of SOI on the behavior of the birds. For example, it is possible that, under some large-scale climatic conditions, birds may be more likely or less likely to attempt to breed on the Farallones in a given year, thus influencing their chances of re-capture. SOI values from <http://www.cgd.ucar.edu/cas/catalog/climind/SOI.signal.ascii> were obtained on a monthly basis. We summarized the SOI values from two intervals that we suspected may best reflect the influence of the large-scale climatic conditions on Ashy Storm-Petrel survival and recapture in the Farallones: the period from December to February and the period from January to March, both prior to the initiation of egg-laying. In a preliminary analysis, the latter period’s SOI showed a stronger effect on survival and recapture probabilities, so we used it in our final models.

We included capture site in the estimation of recapture probability because there may be differences in the capture probabilities for these two sites, which differ in a number of respects (see above). Differences between sites may be reflected in the composition of transients vs. true resident birds. Transient birds are very unlikely to be recaptured in subsequent years. If transients are more common at one site compared to the other site, this will be reflected in differences in capture probabilities. Any method that can improve our estimate of recapture probability will also improve our ability to estimate survival. However, our goal in the capture-recapture analysis was not to estimate absolute survival probability but rather the relative difference in survival probability, especially in relation to differences in Burrowing Owl abundance. For this reason, we included site in modeling recapture probability and survival probability.

Burrowing Owl abundance was estimated by averaging “maximum owls per month” over a specified period of months. We considered several different time periods, but the two time periods that were both statistically predictive and ecologically meaningful were: (1) September to April, the 8 months during which Burrowing Owls are on the island and (2) just January to April. The justification for considering the latter is that owl predation on Ashy Storm-Petrels is almost entirely confined to these four months (see below). We evaluated a total of 128 models: 1) 64 models with various combinations of 0 to 3 covariates for survival (site, Burrowing Owl abundance, SOI) and 0 to 3 covariates for recapture probability (site, netting hours, SOI), for which the Burrowing Owl abundance metric was the September to April mean monthly value and 2) another similar set of 64 models in which the Burrowing Owl abundance metric was the January to April metric instead of September to April. We chose the top model, i.e., the one that optimized AIC, and use these results for inclusion in the population dynamic model. Specifically, the statistical model results were used to indicate the change in logit survival with a change in Burrowing Owl abundance (logit survival is the dependent variable used in capture-recapture analyses; Cooch et al.1996). The change in logit survival was converted into a change in absolute survival and this was used in the population model; note that:

logit survival = ln((survival probability)/(1-survival probability)).

**Population Modeling of Ashy Storm-Petrels**

**Overview and Approach Used**

To assess and quantify the impact of a change in Burrowing Owl abundance and predation on Ashy Storm-Petrels, we developed a deterministic population dynamic model for the Farallon Island population, building on previous modeling by Nur et al. (1999) for this same population.

Our modeling approach was to first construct a population dynamic model that could best account for recent, observed Ashy Storm-Petrel population trends on SEFI, given field observations, previous studies, and the scientific literature. The estimation of recent population trend is described in this report. We then incorporated changes in adult survival associated with presumed changes in Burrowing Owl abundance on the Farallon Islands. These changes in Burrowing Owl abundance in turn reflect the consequences of mouse eradication. The second step was to model the population dynamics of Ashy Storm-Petrels given the presumed, statistically estimated, changes in survival.

The changes in adult survival were directly estimated from the statistical analysis of the 12-year dataset (capture histories from 2000 to 2011) during which time we had independent estimates of Burrowing Owl abundance on a monthly and annual basis.

Thus, the pre-eradication parameter values used were derived from a population dynamic model that accounted for recently observed population trends; the theoretical post-eradication parameter values reflect our statistical analysis of the effect of Burrowing Owls on Ashy Storm-Petrel population dynamics.

**Parameters of the “Current Population Dynamic Model”**

There are six important demographic processes that a seabird population dynamic model needs to incorporate (Nur & Sydeman 1999). The first two concern survival, the next three are components of reproductive success, and the sixth is the balance between emigration and immigration. We discuss each in turn.

1. **Survival** **of adults.** Nur et al. (1999) determined that a stable population of Ashy Storm-Petrels would require an adult survival rate of 89.2%. We did not use this value, but instead adjusted survival values of adults to produce a population that exhibited the same population trajectory as has recently been observed (a decline of approximately 3% per year, see “Results”).
2. **Survival of juveniles and subadults.** We followed Nur et al. (1999), who in turn followed Ainley et al. (2001), and estimated survival of first-year, second-year, and third-year individuals as a fixed percentage of adult survival. The percentages used by Nur et al. (1999) were: 72%, 86%, and 98% of the adult value. By the fourth year of life, Ashy Storm-Petrels have begun breeding, and so we assumed that survival in their fourth year reached adult levels.
3. **Reproductive Success** is the number of young reared to fledging per breeding pair per year. It is conditional on a pair actually breeding. Field methods for determining annual reproductive success are described elsewhere in this report. For the population modeling, we used the mean reproductive success for this population over the last 10 years (2002-2011).
4. **Probability of Breeding Among Experienced Breeders.**  Ainley et al. (1990) reported that over a 12 year period on SEFI, an egg was laid in 92% of crevices that were occupied by Ashy Storm-Petrels. We follow Nur et al. (1999) and use this value.
5. **Probability of Breeding for the First Time.** No field data are available to estimate this parameter for this species (Ainley 1995). Here we followed Nur et al. (1999) who relied on a field study of the closely related Leach’s Storm-Petrel (*O. leucorhoa*). Nur et al. (1999) assumed that, for the Farallon Ashy Storm-Petrel population, 10% of four-year olds, 50% of five-year olds, 90% of six-year olds, and 100% of seven-year olds were capable of breeding. This does not mean that, for example, 100% of seven year olds bred, but rather that by age 7, Ashy Storm-Petrel breeding probability reached 100% of the adult value for breeding, 92% (see above). Thus, our model assumes that most Ashy Storm-Petrels first bred at ages 5 or 6, but a few earlier (age 4) or later (age 7 or later).
6. **Balance between Emigration and Immigration.** The closest significant breeding population relative to the Farallon Islands is on the Channel Islands, at least 420 km away (Carter et al. 2008). There have been only a few records of banded birds from the Channel Islands being recaptured on the Farallones and vice versa (Nur et al. 1999a,USGS unpublished, PRBO unpublished). From 1992 to 1997, less than 1% of all recaptured individuals on SEFI were known to have been first banded on the Channel Islands. Nur et al. (1999) estimated that the actual dispersal rate was 1.6%, which is still a low rate of immigration. In the population dynamic model we allow for some immigration and emigration but assume that immigration equals emigration; that is, that dispersal is balanced. The empirical evidence indicates that emigration from the Farallones to the Channel Islands is also very low, an inference supported by genetic studies (Girman et al. 1999). If dispersal is not balanced, then population dynamic results would be affected.

**Additional assumptions**

We assumed no maximum longevity. Ashy Storm-Petrels from SEFI show a maximum observed longevity of 35 years (Bradley and Warzybok 2003). Leach’s Storm-Petrels have been observed to live at least to age 36 years (Huntington et al. 1996). Though we assumed no maximum life span, we also assumed that older adults (beyond prime breeding age) displayed slightly lower adult survival rates, consistent with other studies of seabirds (Pyle et al. 1997, Nur et al.1999; Bradley et al. in prep.). Model results were robust to the assumption of maximum age because few adults are expected to survive beyond age 36.

We assumed no density dependence. Population density for this species is low, especially when compared to other seabirds on the Farallones. In any case, there is no evidence of density dependent reproductive success or survival for any petrel species.

We did not differentiate between males and females. The species is monogamous, and so reproductive success of one sex equals that of the other sex. No sex-specific information is available regarding survival or age of first breeding for this species.

**Starting Population Size**

Sydeman et al. (1998b), reviewed and updated by Nur et al. (1999a), estimated a breeding population of 2,660 Ashy Storm-Petrels on SEFI in 1992. Nur et al. (1999a) assumed 53.5% of the population were breeders, and therefore they estimated a total population size of 4,972 birds. For current population size for the purposes of the modeling, we relied on the mist-net based population index, as described above. Using data from the last 3 years (2009-2011), the number of captures (after controlling for mist netting site, mist netting effort, and date) was 75% to 171% greater in 2009-2011 than in 1992. The geometric mean of the three annual index values corresponds to a 128.2% increase over the 1992 value. Hence, we estimate a breeding population of 6,070 individuals for the most recent 3-year period (= 2,660 x 2.282). In other words, we assumed the proportion of breeders to non-breeders in the mist netting sample did not differ among years. Given 6070 breeding individuals and 53.5% of the total population consisting of breeders (Nur et al. 1999a), this implies an estimated total population of 11,346 birds for the period 2009-2011. The population model used a starting total population size in “Year 0” of 11,346 individuals, equivalent to a breeding population of 6,070 birds.

**Population model matrix: population size and calibration**

Population projections were carried out using the initial population size (see above) and an age-based Leslie matrix assuming a pre-breeding census (Caswell 2000). The elements of the Leslie matrix were constant over time. Reproductive success was based on recent (10-year) observations in the field (see above). Survival of adults was calibrated to yield a lambda value that matched the “recent observed” value (see above). Note that adjustment of adult survival also resulted in proportional adjustment of survival rates of first-year and sub-adults (i.e., individuals in their second and third year of life). As noted, fourth-year individuals were presumed to display adult survival values.

**Population model matrix: modeling impacts of Burrowing Owl predation**

The result of the calibration process was that the population dynamic model reproduced recent behavior of the population. These are conditions under which Burrowing Owl abundance has been relatively high. Thus, we used the “recent population dynamic model” to represent the baseline condition scenario: that is, the expected population trend if there was no change in abundance of Burrowing Owl on the island. The “recent” model is one in which we assume that current conditions continue into the future, specifically, for the next 20 years.

The next stage of modeling was to estimate the change in population trend resulting from a change in survival, as a result of an assumed change in Burrowing Owl abundance on the island. The change in survival rates was determined from the statistical analysis of mist-net capture-recapture data (see above).

We examined the most recent 3-years of data on Burrowing Owl abundance on SEFI to provide the most relevant values regarding current owl levels and how these may be changed in the future as a result of mouse eradication. We considered 2 levels of Burrowing Owl abundance reduction, reducing abundance by 50% and 71.5% compared to the 3 most recent years. The latter scenario, 71.5% reduction, involves reducing Burrowing Owl abundance by the mean observed per month over the most recent year, from September 2011 to April 2012. These scenarios correspond to a reduction of 3.145 and 4.50 Burrowing Owls per month, respectively.

We also suspect that migratory Burrowing Owls will visit the Farallon Islands in the future, even if all house mice are eradicated. For owls arriving in September and October, as many do, there will be an opportunity to prey upon Ashy Storm-Petrels, which are present in moderate to low numbers during those months. Furthermore, we assumed that first-year and second-year survival did not improve as a result of Burrowing Owl reduction, but only survival of third-year and older individuals improved, as per our statistical estimate. For the purposes of modeling we assumed that second-year birds were absent from the island, but that third-year birds were present. Whereas we have good reason to believe that fourth-year birds are present on the island, we have little information as to whether second- and third-year individuals are present (and therefore subject to Burrowing Owl predation) or absent (and therefore not subject to Burrowing Owl predation). The assumption made in our modeling was intermediate between two more extreme assumptions (complete susceptibility of second- and third-year individuals vs no susceptibility of second and third-year birds).

In summary, we model three scenarios of reduction in Burrowing Owl abundance: a) No reduction, b) 50% reduction and c) 71.5% reduction. For each scenario we consider a 20-year time horizon.

**Results**

**Monthly variation**

House mice, Burrowing Owl abundance, and Ashy Storm-Petrel predation by owls each showed a clear and distinctive seasonal pattern (Figure 2). For mice, the population index was lowest in March-May and highest in August-December. For owls, the abundance index was high in October-March and near zero in June-August. The index of owl predation on Ashy Storm-Petrels was highest in February-April, and near zero in June-December. Thus, two temporal trends can be noted: 1) the Ashy Storm-Petrel predation index increases in January and February, just as the house mouse index drops precipitously, 2) at the time that Burrowing Owls arrive on the island (in September), house mouse populations are at very high levels (September is the second-highest month for house mouse abundance). Despite presence of owls in September and October, months that coincide with peak house mouse levels, predation on Ashy Storm-Petrels is near zero at this time, even though Ashy Storm-Petrels are still breeding in those months (Ainley et al. 1990).

Monthly variation in the Ashy Storm-Petrel predation index (ln-transformed) was well accounted for by variation in Burrowing Owl abundance and the house mouse abundance index (R2 = 0.538; Adj R2 = 0.502; P < 0.0001, Table 1). The effect of Burrowing Owl abundance on owl predation of storm-petrelswas highly significant when controlling for the abundance of mice: greater monthly owl abundance was associated with greater predation on Ashy Storm-Petrel (P = 0.001; Table 1). The effect of house mouse abundance on owl predation of storm-petrels was highly significant when controlling for the effect of Burrowing Owl abundance (P < 0.001; Table 1); greater house mouse monthly abundance was associated with lower Burrowing Owl predation index values for Ashy Storm-Petrel. This pattern suggests that when mice are available, Ashy Storm-Petrels are not the primary prey for Burrowing Owls.

**Annual Variation in Population Size and Predation**

**Variation in Index of Population Size**

The population index displayed marked year-to-year variation from 2001 to 2011, and much less variation from 1992 to 2001 (Figure 3). The estimated rate of decline for the period 2007-2011 was 5.46%, i.e., Lambda = 0.9454; the estimated decline for 2006-2011 was 0.78% per year. The geometric mean of the two rates is 3.15% decline. We therefore used a lambda of 0.9685 to model recent population trends. The estimated decline of 3.15% per year was not much different from the 2.78% per year decline estimated by Sydeman et al. (1998a) for the earlier time period, 1972 to 1992. Ainley and Hyrenbach (2010) estimated a substantial decline over the period 1985 to 2006 for the Central California population based on at-sea surveys. Finally, analyzing the population index for SEFI 1992 to 2001, the estimated decline was 4.99% per year (Figure 3). Thus, except for the period 2001 to 2007, Ashy Storm-Petrels on the Farallones and in proximity to the Farallones, have exhibited declines.

**Annual Trends in Burrowing Owl abundance and Ashy Storm-Petrel predation**

Burrowing Owl abundance appeared relatively stable from 2001 to 2006 and then began to increase (Figure 4). The overall trend depicted is significant (P = 0.001); the best fit, as determined by AIC was a quadratic transformation, i.e., an accelerating increase over time beginning in 2000 (Figure 4). Note that the four highest years of abundance have been the four most recent years (2009-2012).

**Predation**

The Ashy Storm-Petrel owl predation index has increased over time (Figure 5). Like the Burrowing Owl abundance index, the trend is both significant and accelerating (P = 0.003). The best fit, as determined by AIC is the quadratic transformation of year relative to 2003, the first year of standardized data collection for this variable.

Furthermore, the annual Ashy Storm-Petrel owl predation index is very well accounted for by the annual index of Burrowing Owl predation: The linear relationship between the two is highly significant (P = 0.003; R2= 0.740; R2adj= 0.703). This result strongly suggests that the recent increase in the Burrowing Owl abundance index has led to an increase in predation on Ashy Storm-Petrels.

**Variation in Ashy Storm-Petrel Survival Probability**

The analysis of Ashy Storm-Petrel survival was restricted to 2000-2011 to match the period of time for which the Burrowing Owl abundance index was available. We also considered survival values for the 1990s to be less relevant than those since 2000, for the purposes of modeling future population response.

There was support for year-to-year variation in survival (LRS = 16.51; df = 10, P = 0.086), comparing a model with year as a factor with a model with constant survival. Of greater relevance was the dependence of annual survival on Burrowing Owl abundance. Specifically, the optimal model (among 128 examined) included two factors affecting survival: September-April index of Burrowing Owl abundance and location of mist-netting site (LHH vs. CS). The optimal model also included two factors affecting recapture probability: site and winter SOI. The coefficients and other statistics for the optimal model are depicted in Table 2.

The most relevant result for the modeling is that an increase in the Burrowing Owl index by 1 individual (per month, over the 8-month period) decreased logit survival by 0.1131. The effect was highly significant (P = 0.009, Table 2). Therefore a reduction in the Burrowing Owl index by 50% is expected to increase logit survival by 0.356. A reduction in the Burrowing Owl index by 71.5% is expected to increase logit survival by 0.509. The change in adult survival associated with the three scenarios was calculated and is presented in Table 3. The estimated magnitude of the effect of reducing (or increasing) Burrowing Owl abundance was large: a decrease of 1 Burrowing Owl in the abundance index (= 8 “owl-months”) is associated with an absolute increase in survival of 0.7% to 1.1%, depending on the baseline value of survival. Thus, reduction of 3.145 owls is expected to increase adult survival by 0.033, or 3.3%; reduction of 4.5 owls is expected to increase adult survival by 0.044, or 4.4% (Table 3). The relative change in mortality is especially dramatic: a 50% reduction in Burrowing Owl numbers is expected to produce a relative decrease in overall Ashy Storm-Petrel mortality, from all causes, of 27%; a decrease of 71.5% in Burrowing Owl numbers is expected to produce a relative decrease in Ashy Storm-Petrel mortality, from all causes, of 37%.

**Population Dynamic Model**

We developed a population dynamic model that produced a population that declined at 3.15% per year, corresponding to the most recent 5 – 6 years. The demographic parameter values are listed and annotated in Table 4. Adult survival value of 88% is consistent with an observed population decline of 3.15%, given the other parameter values including an estimate of reproductive success from the most recent 10 years.

We then modified survival of all individuals beyond second-year individuals (see Methods) under the two “Burrowing Owl reduction scenarios.” The new adult survival values are depicted in Table 3. The new lambda values under the two Burrowing Owl reduction scenarios are also depicted in Table 3. Changes in population size for the three Scenarios over a twenty year time period are displayed in Figure 6.

The most important results to emerge from this analysis are:

1. With no reduction in Burrowing Owl abundance (i.e., assuming recent conditions continue into the future) the population is expected to decrease by 27.4% over a 10 year period. This is equivalent to a loss in the breeding population of 1,663 individuals compared to current levels (4,407 vs 6,070).
2. A 50% reduction in Burrowing Owl abundance can be expected to change a declining population into one that is approximately stable; the estimated population trend under the 50% reduction scenario is an increase of about 0.1% per year. After 10 years, the difference in breeding population between 0% and 50% reduction of Burrowing Owl abundance is 1,706 individuals. The population is projected to have increased by 0.7% after 10 years (6113 vs 6070).
3. With a 71.5% reduction in the Burrowing Owl abundance index, an increasing population is expected (given all other parameter values), one that increases at a rate of 1.1% per year. After 10 years, the difference in breeding population between 0% and 71.5% reduction of Burrowing Owl abundance is 2,378 individuals. The population is projected to have increased by 11.8% after 10 years (6,785 vs 6,070).

**Discussion**

Our statistical analysis demonstrates that observed changes in Burrowing Owl abundance and predation on Ashy Storm-Petrel do indeed result in ecologically and statistically significant changes in Ashy Storm-Petrel relative survival. Given these impacts, we can expect, all else being equal, that changes in Burrowing Owl abundance will have potent changes on Ashy Storm-Petrel population trends. Our results show that at 50% reduction in Burrowing Owl abundance will likely turn a declining Ashy Storm-Petrel population into a stable one, and a reduction of greater than 50% of Burrowing Owl abundance will allow Ashy Storm-Petrel populations on SEFI to increase. These results are quantitative evidence of the benefits to Ashy Storm-Petrel populations from proposed house mouse eradication, if it results in reduction in Burrowing Owls.

The monthly data presented here indicate that Ashy Storm-Petrels are a secondary prey item for Burrowing Owls. That is, Burrowing Owls prefer mice as prey, and prey on storm-petrels when mice are not available. Both the monthly and annual data demonstrate that more Burrowing Owl on SEFI results in greater predation on Ashy Storm-Petrel by owls. Most importantly, the Ashy Storm-Petrel survival analysis indicates that, on an annual basis, more Burrowing Owl results in lower adult Ashy Storm-Petrel survival. The estimated effect of a reduction in Burrowing Owl abundance was large: A reduction of even one Burrowing Owl (per 8-months), a 16% decrease relative to current levels, is expected to increase storm-petrel survival by approximately 1%; 50% reduction is expected to increase survival by more than 3%, which is equivalent to reducing annual mortality by 27%. For a long-lived seabird such reductions in mortality and increases in survival rates, are of great consequence in improving population viability.

Our measure of predator abundance or activity is coarse, but provides an index of year to year variation in attendance and activity of Burrowing Owl on SEFI. However, the tight correlation (r = 0.860) observed between the annual index of Burrowing Owl abundance and the index of Ashy Storm-Petrel predation by owls provides convincing evidence of a causal relationship between Burrowing Owl abundance on SEFI and variation in mortality rates of Ashy Storm-Petrel. In fact, analysis of the Ashy Storm-Petrel predation index in relation to annual survival yields very similar results as those presented here with respect to potential changes in Burrowing Owl abundance.

The recent increase in Burrowing Owl abundance and/or activity at SEFI may be due to population increases in Burrowing Owl, or changes in the coastal distribution of this primarily inland species. The most recent four years have seen the greatest abundance values for Burrowing Owl, and so the current levels of this predator present a grave problem for Ashy Storm-Petrel, if no action is taken.

It is rare in ecological studies to have direct evidence of variation in predation rates that is so tightly coupled with observations on the predator (variation in Burrowing Owl abundance) as well as the demographic parameter of interest (variation in survival rates of Ashy Storm-Petrel). Thus, we believe the causal, quantitative relationship between owl abundance and Ashy Storm-Petrel survival rates elucidated here is strong. The longer current levels of owl predation continue, the less likely this population is to recover. It should also be noted that these analyses do not include effects of Western Gull predation on Ashy Storm-Petrel, whose overall magnitude in similar to that of owl predation (Bradley et al. 2011). Reducing this predation would also have positive impacts for Ashy Storm-Petrel populations, but reduction of Western Gull predation is not required for the population to switch from decline to growth: a large reduction in Burrowing Owl predation will suffice.

In summary, there is strong evidence for current impacts of Burrowing Owl predation on Ashy Storm-Petrel population dynamics. Whether or not mouse eradication results in significant reduction in Burrowing Owl predation will depend on the behavioral response of Burrowing Owl. Eradication of house mice will not prevent Burrowing Owl from visiting the Farallon Islands, but we argue that they would not be staying several months on the island, until January when Ashy Storm-Petrel begin to return, in the absence of house mice, their preferred prey. In particular, there are few or no Ashy Storm-Petrel on the Farallon Islands in November and December (Ainley et al. 1990, PRBO unpublished). It is not plausible, from an energetic point of view, that Burrowing Owl would continue to stay on the island during those months in the absence of their primary prey (house mice) and their secondary prey (Ashy Storm-Petrel). Predation on other seabirds by Burrowing Owl has rarely been observed (PRBO, unpublished).

**Caveats and Limitations**

We did not consider direct impacts of house mice or Burrowing Owl on Ashy Storm-Petrel reproductive success (see Wanless et al. 2012). Reproductive success may increase as a result of house mouse eradication, either directly or indirectly. The direct effect would be due to possible reduction in egg and chick mortality due to house mice eradication – though evidence of direct mice effects on breeding Farallon storm-petrels is minimal (Ainley et al. 1990; PRBO, unpublished); the indirect effect would be a decrease in Ashy Storm-Petrel parental mortality before or during the egg stage (in March and April) due to reduction in Burrowing Owls at this time.

Our projections do not specifically incorporate impacts of environmental variability on future population trends, in contrast to analyses by Nur et al. (2011) and Nur et al. (2012). One justification is that SOI did not demonstrate a significant effect on adult survival. Secondly, the goal of our analysis was to determine the impacts of a change in predation by Burrowing Owls. In the variable marine environment of the California Current, reduction of predation impacts will help Ashy Storm-Petrel populations buffer potentially poor oceanic conditions in the future.

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**Table 1.** Results of Regression Analysis of Ashy Storm-Petrel Predation index (ln-transformed) in relation to House Mouse and Burrowing Owl monthly indices.

Source | SS df MS Number of obs = 29

-------------+------------------------------ F( 2, 26) = 15.12

Model | 31.8463208 2 15.9231604 Prob > F = 0.0000

Residual | 27.3863056 26 1.05331945 R-squared = 0.5376

-------------+------------------------------ Adj R-squared = 0.5021

Total | 59.2326264 28 2.11545094 Root MSE = 1.0263

------------------------------------------------------------------------------

lasspwings~l | Coef. Std. Err. t P>|t| [95% Conf. Interval]

-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------

homotrap\_sux | -3.346294 .6744003 -4.96 0.000 -4.732543 -1.960044

max\_owl | .198841 .0560014 3.55 0.001 .0837285 .3139535

\_cons | 1.744644 .3006782 5.80 0.000 1.126591 2.362697

------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Table 2.** Ashy Storm-Petrel Survival Estimation Results for Top Model, 2000-2011 for Southeast Farallon Island. For the model, Survival (Phi) is a function of site and September-April Burrowing Owl abundance; recapture probability (p) is a function of site and January-March SOI. Model statistics: Number of parameters = 6, -2lnL = 2635.107, AICc = 2647.124.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Parameter | Estimate | St. Error | Lower CI | Upper CI |
| Phi: Intercept | 1.398 | 0.281 | 0.847 | 1.950 |
| Phi: site (LHH vs CS) | -0.997 | 0.283 | -1.552 | -0.443 |
| Phi: Burrowing Owl abundance | -0.1131 | 0.0413 | -0.1941 | -0.0321 |
| p: Intercept | -3.740 | 0.202 | -4.136 | -3.345 |
| p: site (LHH vs CS) | 0.973 | 0.245 | 0.494 | 1.452 |
| p: SOI | 0.050 | 0.030 | -0.009 | 0.110 |

Likelihood ratio test for effect of Burrowing Owl: LRS = 6.743, df = 1, P = 0.009.

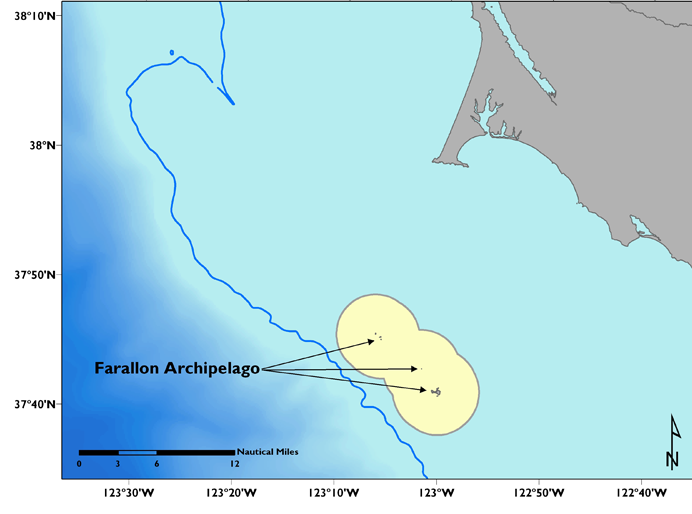
**Table 3.** Impact of a Change in Burrowing Owl Abundance on Southeast Farallon Island on Ashy Storm-Petrel Population Parameters (Per Year), based on on owl and Storm-Petrel data from 2000-2011.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Change in Burrowing Owl Index** | **Adult Survival/yr** | **Change in Survival/yr** | **Percent Change in Mortality** | **Lambda** | **Change in Lambda** | **Population Growth Rate** | **Description** |
| 0 | 0.8800 | 0 | 0 | 0.9685 | 0 | 3.15% decline | Recent trend, no change in Burrowing Owl |
| Decrease by 3.145 owls | 0.9128 | 0.0328 | -27% | 1.0007 | 0.0322 | 0.07% increase | Recent trend; decrease of owls by 50% of recent mean |
| Decrease by 4.5 owls | 0.9242 | 0.0442 | -37% | 1.0112 | 0.0427 | 1.12% increase | Recent trend; decrease of owls by 71.5% of recent mean |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 4.** Ashy Storm-PetrelDemographic Parameter Values Used to Model Current Conditions of No Burrowing Owl Reduction on Southeast Farallon Island. | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Age** | **Proportional Survival to Mature Adult 1** | **Survival 2** | **Breeding Probability 3** | | **Breeding Success 4** |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | 0.72 | 0.6336 | 0 | | 0 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | 0.86 | 0.7568 | 0 | | 0 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | 0.98 | 0.8624 | 0 | | 0 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | 1 | 0.88 | 0.092 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | 1 | 0.88 | 0.46 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | 1 | 0.88 | 0.828 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | 1 | 0.88 | 0.92 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | 1 | 0.88 | 0.92 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | 1 | 0.88 | 0.92 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | 1 | 0.88 | 0.92 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | 1 | 0.88 | 0.92 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | 1 | 0.88 | 0.92 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | 1 | 0.88 | 0.92 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | 1 | 0.88 | 0.92 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15 | 1 | 0.88 | 0.92 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16+ | 1 | 0.863 | 0.92 | | 0.588 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 1 - From Nur et al. 1999a | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2 - Adult survival calibrated to produce population lambda = 0.9645 | | | | | | |  |  |  |
|  | 3 - Product of mature adult breeding probability and probability of breeding for the first time | | | | | | | | |  |
|  | 4 - Mean value, SEFI, 2002-2011 | | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |

**Figure 1.** Ashy Storm-Petrel mist-netting sites on Southeast Farallon Island, CA. Two mist-netting locations are shown. Inset is general location of the Farallon Islands.

100m



**N**

Carp Shop

Lighthouse Hill

**Figure 2**. Seasonal Cycle of House Mouse Abundance (2001-2004, 2011-2012),

Ashy Storm-Petrel predation by Burrowing Owl (2008-2012), and Burrowing Owl abundance (2008-2012) at Southeast Farallon Island. Monthly values with standard deviation are shown.

ASSP_Mouse_Owl_5_21_12_final.EMF

**Figure 3.** Population Index from Mist-netting Analyses for Ashy Storm-Petrels, 1992 to 2011 from Southeast Farallon Island, after controlling for…. The index is set at 1.0 for 1992 (see Methods). Index values are presumed directly proportional to abundance of Ashy Storm-Petrels.



**Figure 4.** Variation in the annual Burrowing Owl abundance index (mean Sept-April abundance) for 2001 to 2012 on Southeast Farallon Island. The curve of best fit, as determined by AIC, is shown: a quadratic, accelerating trend.

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**Figure 5.** Ashy Storm-Petrel Burrowing Owl Predation Index from 2003 to 2011 on Southeast Farallon Island. The curve of best fit, as determined by AIC, is shown: a quadratic, accelerating trend.



**Figure 6.**  Farallon Ashy Strom-Petrel Population projections under the three scenarios of reduction in Burrowing Owl Abundance: 0% reduction, 50% reduction, and 71.5% reduction. Depicted are estimated breeding population size for a 20-year period. Year 0 corresponds to most recent conditions and is the year that Burrowing Owl reduction occurs.

