



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

FISH AND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION

701 OCEAN STREET, ROOM 312, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 454-3154 FAX: (831) 454-3128

AGENDA

September 3, 2020, 7:00 PM

This meeting will be conducted as a phone conference.
Please call 831-454-2222 and enter meeting code 122998.

Agenda Item #	Start Time	End Time	Description
1	7:00	7:00	Call to Order
2	7:00	7:05	Roll Call and Guest Introductions
3	7:05	7:10	Approval of Minutes
4	7:10	7:15	Staff update on public participation information/Public Comments
5	7:15	8:00	CZU August Lighting Complex Fire status and impacts to fish and wildlife; discuss recovery actions and consider any emergency funding requests
6	8:00	8:15	Public Grants Program: Review grant reports, make final decision on funding amount for 2020-21 and approve Request for Proposals.
7	8:15	8:20	Update on Regional Conservation Investment Strategy https://scrtc.org/funding-planning/environmental/rcis/
8	8:20	8:30	Topic updates: Joint meeting with Water Advisory Commission and Commission on the Environment Homeless encampments in riparian corridors
9	8:30	8:45	Commissioner Reports and Announcements
10	8:45	8:55	Staff Reports
11	8:55	9:00	Discuss November agenda / Review Correspondence
	9:00		Adjourn

14. CORRESPONDENCE

Please see Fish and Game commission for regulatory announcements

<https://fgc.ca.gov/Regulations/2020-New-and-Proposed>

The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. This online meeting is available to anyone with a telephone. If you are a person with a disability and require special assistance in order to participate in the meeting, please contact Kristen Kittleson at (831)454-3154 or TDD number (454-2123) at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting in order to make arrangements. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format. As a courtesy to those affected, please attend the meeting smoke and scent free.

Commissioner and Public Participation Information and Guidelines

The meeting of the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission will take place via a phone conferencing system. You can call in with either a landline or a cell phone.

Call (831) 454-2222. Enter the Meeting Code 122998. This phone number and code will be used for any future FWAC phone meetings.

Please join the meeting a few minutes BEFORE 7:00 pm so that we can start at 7:00 pm. Staff will open the phone conference line at 6:50 pm. Feel free to chat and say hello before 7:00 pm.

Meeting Roles and Rules:

Chris Berry, Chair, will lead the meeting. Chair Berry will announce each agenda item, identify who will be leading an item and introduce discussion and public comment periods.

Kristen Kittleson, staff, will assist with roll call, note taking, and tracking who wants to speak. Please allow time for staff to make notes about any decisions. Kristen will monitor both her email and her text messages during the meeting.

If you call in with a cell phone, please keep your phone on “mute” unless you are speaking. This will improve the quality of the call for everyone. If you are speaking and no one seems to be responding, check and see if you are on “mute”. After you are finished speaking, please put the phone on “mute” again.

During a discussion, please start by stating your name. Announcing your name provides 3 functions: (1) we know who’s speaking; (2) your name announces your intention to speak and if no one else speaks, you have the “right-of-way” to go ahead and speak.; (3) if 2 or more people say their name at the same time, please defer to the person who speaks first. In any moment where we have some confusion due to multiple people wanting to speak, please pause and let the Chair take the lead. The Chair will call on someone to speak.

During a discussion, if you can’t jump into the conversation, you can send a message to Kristen (email Kristen.Kittleson@santacruzcounty.us or text 831-227-7404 and she will call on people who want to comment.

There will be a public comment period for each item and the Chair will invite the public to participate at the appropriate time.



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FISH AND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION

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Meeting Minutes June 4, 2020

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – 7:03 pm
2. **ROLL CALL**
 - Present: Commissioners Berry, Morrow, Baron, Somerton, Lee, Buchwald, Gómez, Michelsen
 - Excused: Hoffman, Wise
 - Absent: none
 - Guest Introductions: Larry Freeman; Ben Harris, Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project (MBSTP)
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Commissioner Somerton made a motion to approve the minutes; Commissioner Baron seconded the motion. All aye, the minutes were approved.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS.** Larry Freeman reported that the Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project is planning a fish rescue for Corralitos Creek, in the section that typically dries out (Browns Road to Varni Road). The City of Watsonville is not planning to divert this summer. The fish rescue will be challenging to conduct due to social distancing requirements.
5. **Update on the Fish and Game Propagation Fund.** Environmental Health provided an update on the Propagation Fund (Fund) and made a recommendation to allocate \$10,000 for the Public Grants Program (PGP), which would leave reserve to fund the PGP the following year, if necessary. Between July 1, 2019 and June 3, 2020, the Fish and Game Propagation Fund had received \$9,727. Reserves are \$22,342. The Covid-19 pandemic has slowed civil cases moving through the courts and is expected to affect revenue over the next year. While the goal has been to match revenue to expenditures, Commission Lee made a strong point that non-profits will be struggling in the coming year and that this is a time to use our reserves instead of holding on to them. There was a productive discussion about the level of spending (\$10,000, \$12,000 or \$15,000) versus maintaining the reserve. Commissioner Michelsen made a motion to run the Public Grants Program in 2020-21 at \$12,000, using the 2019-2020 revenue and some reserve funds. Commissioner Buchwald seconded the motion. All aye, the motion passed. Staff will proceed with planning for the PGP and the funding could be increased at the September meeting.
6. **Discuss Regional Conservation Investment Strategy.** Staff reported that the Regional Transportation Commission and the Resource Conservation District are working together to create a Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) that can be used for both transportation mitigation needs and restoration prioritization for Santa Cruz County. The RCIS is a great opportunity for the FWAC to provide input on focal species, conservation elements and priority projects. The discussion included suggestions for focal species, conservation elements and conservation priority actions. Commissioner Gomez made a motion to create a subcommittee to discuss and track the RCIS process; Commissioner Michelsen seconded the motion. Commissioner Morrow and Chair Berry offered to serve also on the subcommittee. All aye; the motion passed.
7. **Discuss holding joint meeting with Water Advisory Commission and Commission on the Environment.** Chair Berry has periodic discussions with representatives of the Water Advisory Commission and Commission on the Environment. He reported that there was interest among the 3 commissions to have a joint meeting about the RCIS and wildlife corridors, which would be on-line or via phone conference. There was some interest in a joint meeting and a few commissioners would need more information about the other commissions. The consensus was that an on-line or phone meeting

could be difficult and not worth it. Chair Berry suggested that if we have a presentation by Bryan Largay, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, then we could invite the other commissions.

8. **Discuss Soquel Lagoon and City of Capitola funding for lagoon management in 2020.** Staff reported that due to Covid-19, the City of Capitola has about a 25% budget deficit for the coming year. The City held a special meeting last night to discuss funding Soquel Lagoon management. Traditionally, the City manages the lagoon by constructing a beach berm in late spring that creates excellent habitat for steelhead. In addition, the City benefits by clearing out potentially smelly kelp and by building the beach in front of the esplanade. The City unanimously voted to support funding for the lagoon management.
9. **Updates to the Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance.** During the development of the County's Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance, the FWAC weighed in on environmental aspects of the ordinance and the licensing program. The issues around Cannabis Cultivation are complex and involve balancing allowing legal cultivation, environmental protection and protecting neighborhood quality. Recently, the Cannabis Licensing Office (CLO) proposed to reduce restrictions for cultivation on Commercial Agriculture (CA) property that was supported by the Board. In addition, CLO proposed to reduce restrictions for commercial cultivation on smaller Residential Agricultural (RA) properties (called "cottage grows" at 500 square feet) that was not supported by the community or by the Board. Since this is not a priority for this year's work program, the FWAC does not expect to weigh in on these issues.
10. **Update on Homeless Encampments during Covid-19 Health Emergency.** Homeless encampments are often near waterways and in riparian areas, which impacts water quality in addition to fish and wildlife habitat. The County manages homeless issues through the Department of Human Resources. The County and the City of Santa Cruz have been working together to address homeless issues during the Covid-19 Health Emergency. Four new homeless shelters have been opened and 550 people have been moved into temporary or permanent housing. In addition, hotels have been reserved to provide places for homeless people to recover from Covid-19 if they do not need to go to the hospital. The Covid-19 Health Emergency has provided an opportunity to test new models of housing the homeless that could be expanded in the future.
11. **Discuss PG & E's draft Habitat Conservation Plan.** PG & E has completed a draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for a large region of Central California that focuses on listed species but does not include steelhead and coho salmon. PG & E do not plan to take actions that impact steelhead and coho salmon without an Army Corps of Engineers permit (needed for any in stream work) which would include a consultation with NOAA Fisheries. It is unclear if work in riparian areas - including the cutting or removal of trees or the clearing to bare ground around poles - would be covered or not by the HCP. We expect that NOAA Fisheries will follow this issue.
12. **Update on Funding for Coho Salmon Broodstock Program.** At long last, the Coho Salmon Broodstock Program has secured funding outside of the competitive FRGP program which will provide more stability for this critical program. Ben Harris reported that the Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project has secured 2 years of funding and NOAA Fisheries are working to finalize their contracts. Supervisor Coonerty has offered to send a thank you letter to CDFW for the funding.
13. **Commission Reports and Announcements.** Commissioner Gomez and Michelsen met to discuss the Significant Tree Ordinance expansion outside the Coastal Zone. Due to upcoming elections in the Fifth District, they decided that it would be best to wait until after the November election to work with the elected Supervisor on this issue. Commissioner Buchwald reached out to Caltrout about potentially working in the Pajaro Watershed on steelhead conservation projects; he and staff will meet with Caltrout and Zone 7 Manager, Mark Strudley, next week.
14. **Staff Reports and announcements.** Staff reported that the County has a significant budget deficit due to the Shelter-in-Place orders for the Covid-19 Health Emergency and is planning to cut costs and use reserves for the upcoming fiscal year. The County is expected to institute 10% furlough for all staff starting in early July. While furlough is not expected to affect the commission, staff requested that the Commission focus on a few priority issues to streamline commission support.

15. **Discuss September Agenda.** The September agenda will include preparing for the Public Grants Program, more discussion of the RCIS, report on fish rescues and letter to CDFW re: coho funding and tri-commission meeting.
16. **ADJOURNMENT.** The meeting adjourned at 8:59 pm.

Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission
Budget and Public Grants Program Update

August 25, 2020

The following table shows the past year (2019-20) and current year (2020-21) budget:

Fiscal Year	Anticipated Revenue	Actual Revenue	Current Reserve	Budgeted and Approved for Grant Program	Expended from Grant Program
2019-20	\$7,200.00	\$10,202.00 (as of June 30)	\$19,937.00 (as of June 30)	\$15,000.00	\$15,000 (as of June 30)
2020-21	\$8,300.00	\$ 19.77 (as of Aug 24)	\$19,937.00 (as of Aug 24)	\$18,000.00	

Definition of terms:

Fiscal year runs July 1 to June 30 of the following year

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Budgeted for the Grant Program – expected spending for the Public Grants Program includes \$2,000 for the Hallway Display grant awarded in 2017.

Expended from the Grant Program – actual amount expended to date.

Budget Updates for 2020-2021

In June 2020, the commission voted to expend \$12,000 for the Public Grants Program and agreed to consider increasing the amount to the full funding (\$15,000) to assist organizations impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission have 2 options for the Public Grants Program (PGP) for 2020-21:

- Fund the PGP to at \$12,000
- Fund the PGP at \$16,000 and use a portion of the reserve funds

Due to Covid-19, there will be a reduction in civil penalties processed by the court system which is expected to affect revenue during the remainder of 2020 and into 2021.

County of Santa Cruz Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission
GRANT APPLICATION

GRANT CONTACT INFORMATION

This information will not be posted on-line as part of the public notification process.

A. Application Date 09/01/2020

B. Name of organization or individual submitting the proposal

Monterey Bay Salmon & Trout Project

C. Contact Person – Name, address, phone and email

**Ben Harris
MBSTP Executive Director
101 Cooper St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831)-531-2051
Director@mbstp.org**

D. Fund Recipient: Name on the check and mailing address:

**Monterey Bay Salmon & Trout Project
101 Cooper St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060**

E. Have you received a grant from the Fish and Game Advisory Commission previously?

Yes

If you receive grant funding as a first-time applicant, the fund recipient will be required to register with the County of Santa Cruz and to submit a W-9.

If you have received grant funding previously, you will need to either confirm that the name and address of the fund recipient is the same or you will need to resubmit a new W-9.

NOTE: If your request is approved for funding, you will be required to report back to the Commission with a ½ - 1 page summary of the project, including how the funds were expended and the success of the project. If the grantee submits a new request for funding, a progress or completion report must be submitted by August 15th of that year. If the grantee does not plan to request other funding, a progress or completion report must be completed within a year of receiving the funds.

County of Santa Cruz Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission
GRANT APPLICATION

1. Project name

Kingfisher Flat Hatchery ATV

2. Name of organization or individual submitting the proposal

Monterey Bay Salmon & Trout Project (MBSTP)

3. Amount of funding requested

\$5,000

For each of the following sections, give a brief description:

4. Project Description

The Monterey Bay Salmon & Trout Project (MBSTP) operates a coho salmon captive broodstock program at Kingfisher Flat Conservation Hatchery. In partnership with CDFW and NOAA Fisheries, MBSTP engages in the spawning of adult broodstock, and release of individual cohorts to area watersheds. The captive broodstock program at Kingfisher Flat is listed as a “High Priority” recovery action for Central California Coast coho salmon. By applying a genetically-informed broodstock parentage spawning “matrix”, this program has helped to prevent the extinction of coho salmon in local watersheds.

This program supplements ongoing habitat restoration efforts for salmonids in Santa Cruz County undertaken by the County RCD, CDFW, NOAA Fisheries, and partner nonprofits. By providing genetically diverse, locally-adapted cohorts of juvenile coho salmon for release, MBSTP helps directly increase the abundance of endangered coho in watersheds of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The recent CZU lightning complex fires heavily damaged the Kingfisher Flat outdoor rearing facilities and infrastructure. However, roughly 30,000 Central Coast coho salmon remain alive at the facility. **MBSTP’s immediate and urgent need is to transport all fish out of the facility prior to the rainy season.** With the winter rains, the Scott Creek watershed will become inundated with ash, silt, and fine particulates. This will create a major issue for water quality at the Kingfisher Flat facility. Vehicle access bridges to the hatchery have been destroyed. Acquisition of an ATV will allow MBSTP to transport captive broodstock to another rearing facility until watershed conditions improve (likely in winter 2021), and will support ongoing conservation hatchery operations for many years to come.

County of Santa Cruz Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission
GRANT APPLICATION

5. Project objectives and goals

The ultimate objective of the coho salmon captive broodstock program at Kingfisher Flat hatchery is to prevent the extinction of coho salmon south of San Francisco Bay. The immediate objective of this grant request is to support purchase of an all-terrain vehicle (Gator, or similar) to engage in the transport of captive broodstock groups from the 2019 and 2020 cohorts. The short-term goal of this project is to transport all fish off-site, either to other rearing facilities or release to area watersheds. After this immediate goal has been achieved, the ATV will allow MBSTP to engage in the reconstruction process at Kingfisher Flat, including reconstruction of water intake infrastructure and outdoor rearing tanks. This vehicle will also facilitate MBSTP's ongoing conservation work at Kingfisher Flat for many years to come.

6. Background and history of the problem

The recent CZU lightning complex fire heavily damaged the MBSTP Kingfisher Flat hatchery facility. While the main building remains intact, several outdoor rearing tanks have been destroyed. The access road (Big Creek Rd.) has two vehicle bridges that have likewise been destroyed. Access to the hatchery by truck will likely not be possible for several weeks or months. In order to engage in transport and release of all fish at the hatchery, some level of vehicle access is required.

The condition of the post-fire Scott Creek watershed will be unsuitable for rearing fish on-site. The rainy season will lead to substantial water quality issues related to fine particulate matter, ash, and silt. Problems associated with water quality in the Big Creek/Scott Creek watershed will gradually improve, but likely not until several "flushing" rainfall events. MBSTP anticipated returning to normal spawning and captive broodstock rearing operations in the Winter of 2021.

7. How will the project be accomplished (design specifications or plans, if applicable)

Consultation with partner agencies is ongoing, but the transport of all fish currently on-site at Kingfisher Flat prior to November 1 is the most likely scenario. MBSTP will engage in transport of surviving captive broodstock groups (2019 & 2020) to other facilities (either the NOAA SWFSC lab in Santa Cruz or CDFW's Warm Springs Hatchery in Healdsburg).

Access to the "main" road (Swanton Rd.) is currently possible only by foot or ATV. Captive broodstock will be loaded into aerated, chilled coolers and onto an ATV. The ATV will then be driven to a waiting fish transport truck operated either by MBSTP or CDFW for transport to another facility. Captive broodstock will likely be returned to Kingfisher Flat in the Spring or early summer of 2021.

8. Budget (include sufficient detail to explain use of grant monies). Specify if there are any

**County of Santa Cruz Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission
GRANT APPLICATION**

sources of other funds committed to the proposed project.

Item	Funds Requested	Match Contribution	Total Amount
Gator ATV	\$5,000	\$11,000	\$16,000*
TOTAL AMOUNTS	\$5,000	\$11,000	\$16,000

**Budgeted amount of \$16,000 is based off of preliminary research into ATV market and previous purchases by MBSTP. MBSTP is continuing to search for used/resale opportunities to reduce overall cost.*

9. Timeline for completion

MBSTP plans to engage in the transport of all captive broodstock and release of all 2020 cohort fish no later than November 1st, 2020. A report to will be made to the SCCFWAC regarding all broodstock transport/rescue operations undertaken with the support of emergency grant funds.

10. Background or history of your organization

The Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project (MBSTP) is a small 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the recovery of native salmon and steelhead populations of the Monterey Bay area. For over forty years MBSTP has been working to prevent the extinction of local coho salmon, recover native steelhead populations, enhance ocean salmon fishing in Monterey Bay, and engage in education and outreach in local schools through the MBSTP Salmon & Trout Education Program (STEP). MBSTP operates the Kingfisher Flat conservation hatchery in northern Santa Cruz County to support ongoing recovery efforts for local at-risk salmonid populations.

MBSTP operates with the support and partnership of federal, state, and local natural resource agencies to accomplish goals in fisheries conservation. Qualified and proficient hatchery personnel are crucial to operation of the Kingfisher Flat conservation hatchery- in addition to a dedicated corps of MBSTP volunteers. This facility represents the ‘backbone’ of MBSTP’s actions in local salmonid recovery.

MBSTP is engaging in conservation actions in local watersheds in both an immediate and long-term context- including steelhead stranding rescues, youth education and outreach, and recovery planning with management agencies. With support from management agencies alongside a strong foundation of volunteers, MBSTP will continue to provide meaningful and lasting benefits for local salmonid populations for many years to come.

Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission
Budget and Public Grants Program Update

August 25, 2020

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Budget Updates for 2020-2021

In June 2020, the commission voted to expend \$12,000 for the Public Grants Program and agreed to consider increasing the amount to the full funding (\$16,000) to assist organizations impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. With the recent CZU August Lightning Fire, the commission also has the option to fund emergency projects related to the fire.

The Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission has multiple options for the Public Grants Program (PGP) for 2020-21, including:

- Fund the PGP to at \$12,000
- Fund the PGP at \$16,000 and expect to use a portion of the reserve funds

Due to Covid-19, there will be a reduction in civil penalties processed by the court system which is expected to affect revenue during the remainder of 2020 and into 2021.

Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission Public Grants Program 2019-20 Reports

This document includes reports for the following grants awarded in 2019-2020:

1. Freeman Hydrologic Data Services – Understanding Scotts Creek Hydrology, \$2,500 (full funding)
2. Sandra Baron – A Vision for Santa Cruz County Wildlife brochure, \$865 (full funding)
3. Raintancer Media – Fresh Water in Peril: Blue Green Algae on the Rise, \$1,000 (partial funding)
4. Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project – San Lorenzo River Adult Steelhead Population Monitoring, \$1,554.71 (full funding)
5. Santa Cruz Bird Club – Santa Cruz County Breeding Bird Atlas, \$1,950 (full funding)
6. Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group, UC Santa Cruz Foundation – Raptor Pilot Study for Pajaro River Flood Protection, \$2,880.29 (partial funding)
7. Salmonid Restoration Foundation – 38th Annual Salmonid Restoration Conference, \$2,250 (full funding)
8. Native Animal Rescue – Wildlife Rehabilitation, \$2,000 (full funding)

Freeman Hydrologic Data Services – Understanding Scotts Creek Hydrology

Three tasks were identified in the proposal for the 2019 Grant:

- Task A: Recompute the periods that were identified during the previous 2017 grant study.
- Task B: Provide the revised data to SPR, Cal Poly, NOAA Fisheries, and other researchers as needed to support the continuing efforts in the watershed.
- Task C: Summarize the findings for items above in a final report, with presentation to all partners working on projects in the Scotts Creek system.

To date, approximately 75% of the record revisions under Task A have been completed. As the revisions are finalized, the computations with supporting data and documents are placed in a Google Drive folder managed by NOAA/NMFS (Task B). After completion of Tasks A and B, Task C will be scheduled for a future date in coordination with Swanton Pacific Ranch. Completion is expected by the end of October.

Sandra Baron – A Vision for Santa Cruz County Wildlife brochure, \$865 (full funding)

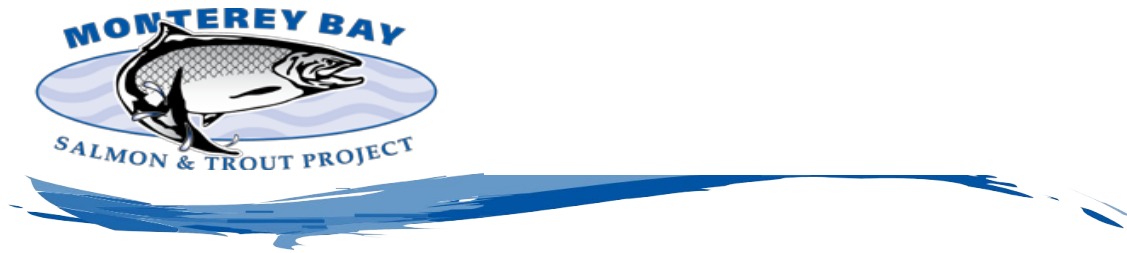
Sandra Baron completed and printed the brochure! Due to cancelled events and closed visitor centers, the brochure has not yet been distributed widely but is available at the County Building and Kelly's Books in Watsonville.

The plan for next year is to offer it to visitor centers at Ramsey Park, Henry Cowell, Loch Lomond, Santa Cruz and Watsonville libraries and the Santa Cruz History Museum. She also

plans to find ways to distribute it at spring and summer events like the Monterey Bay Youth Outdoor Day, Earth day, Invasive and native plant events, etc. with a focus on locations and events that attract local families.

Raindancer Media – Fresh Water in Peril: Blue Green Algae on the Rise, \$1,000 (partial funding)

The research and outline for the video has been completed. With Covid-19, Ed Schehl is working to conduct interviews via Zoom. The video is expected to be complete by the end of 2020.



August 2nd, 2020

Santa Cruz County Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission

701 Ocean St., Suite 312

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to provide the Commission with a status report on the Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project (MBSTP) adult steelhead monitoring program in the San Lorenzo River watershed. Earlier this year, the Commission awarded MBSTP a grant of \$1,554.71 for the purchase of sampling supplies and safety equipment to support this program. These funds were used to purchase a PIT tag reader, PFDs, and additional sampling equipment.

I am pleased to report that MBSTP was able to engage in adult steelhead trapping at the Felton Diversion last winter. The trap was successfully operated over the weekend of January 17-19, with eleven adult steelhead being captured, sampled, and released (see photos below). All fish were released in excellent condition, and they likely continued their upstream migration to headwater spawning habitats. However, river flow conditions and Covid-19 shelter in place orders for Santa Cruz County limited available sampling opportunities last winter/spring. MBSTP intends to operate the Felton trap for substantially more days in coming seasons.

The PIT tag reader and safety equipment were greatly helpful to this year's sampling effort. Additionally, the equipment is durable and has a long "lifespan". MBSTP anticipates using the equipment purchased under the FWAC grant for at least five more years. We will continue to provide annual updates on our steelhead sampling to the Commission. As always, MBSTP is deeply grateful for the support and engagement of the Commission. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments regarding any of our programs.

- *Ben Harris, MBSTP Executive Director*



101 Cooper Street, Suite 246

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

<https://mbstp.org>

Non-Profit Tax ID #94-2401308

14 August 2020

Dear Fish and Wildlife Advisory Committee,

The Santa Cruz County Breeding Bird Atlas will be concluding the fourth year of field work this month. While Covid-19 greatly impacted our ability to do the outreach and trainings we had planned with the FWAC grant, this year turned out to be our most successful in terms of data collection and project progress.

Due to Covid-19 we were unable to offer in-person trainings as in previous years. Instead, a [virtual training](#) was provided to prospective and returning atlasers. This virtual training was supplemented with ten email messages sent to atlasers that intended to build their skills and interest in the project. These messages discussed what species and behaviors to look for, how to maximize atlasing effort, and fun stories from the field.

Due to Covid-19 the outreach events we had planned to table at this year were cancelled. We did, however, have the opportunity to table at the Migration Festival at Natural Bridges State Beach on February 8. The event attracted hundreds of visitors and our table was bustling with folks interested in breeding birds and the atlas project.

We offered four paid internships to students and recent graduates pursuing a career in field biology. The interns were trained to record their observations on a datasheet and were provided field training through the internship. The interns were given weekly assignments by the project director that were focused on observing data deficient species to improve our understanding of where and when they breed in the county.

Some of the most impactful contributions made by our interns this year include the following.

- Doubled or tripled the data we have for the following species: Tree Swallow, Marsh Wren, Purple Martin, Great-tailed Grackle, and White-crowned Sparrow.
- Found the first Horned Lark nest during the atlas project.
- Found the latest breeding record of Common Gallinule in central coastal CA.
- Improved completeness of block 0575 from 21% to 39% (goal is 60%).

We will provide the FWAC with a 2020 annual report and summary of spending by when the project year concludes in November. Please let us know if you have any questions in the meantime. Thank you for your support of the atlas project and our local birds.

Sincerely,



Alex Rinkert
Project Director
Santa Cruz Bird Club

Pajaro Raptor Pilot Project Report to Santa Cruz County Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission – Predatory Bird Research Group, UCSC

August 13, 2020



1. Owl nest box installed along the Pajaro River Levee

Thanks to the funding we received from the SCCFWAC in 2020 we completed installation of 6 barn owl nest boxes and 6 raptor hunting perches along our study transect on the Pajaro River Levee and conducted monitoring activities through the spring months. Three undergraduate interns were hired (one funded by the SCCFWAC Grant) and this past spring quarter they completed a cumulative 120 hours of field work, literature research, and educational outreach. Due to COVID-19 restrictions in our community, we were not able to include local high school students and volunteers in our survey efforts as planned.

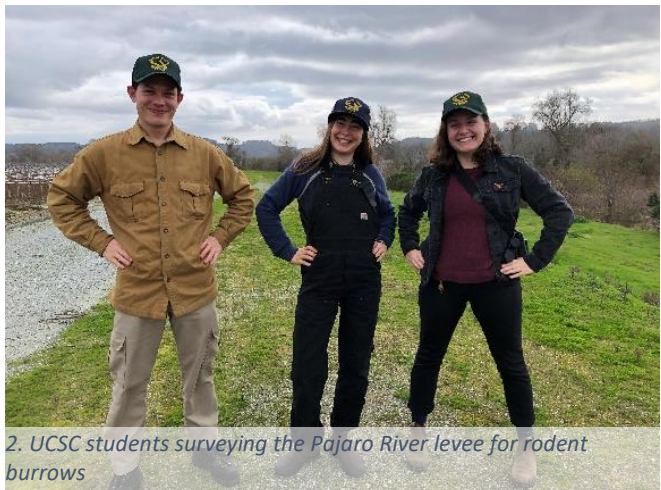
However, our undergraduate interns performed outreach remotely for Watsonville Wetlands Watch stewardship program and presented an update on their work in the [Ken Norris Center for Natural History's Spring Symposium](#). Our working group also generated bilingual educational materials and rodenticide use surveys for the surrounding landowners which will be mailed out this summer.

Data collection completed to date: An initial survey of rodent burrows along 5 miles of the levee was completed February 2020, logging the locations of 2,567 burrow systems total. March-June weekly surveys were performed to document nesting attempts in the barn owl boxes and the locations of raptors observed in the study area. Two nest boxes were occupied this season and produced young. A total of 70 raptor sightings were recorded, and with 8 raptor species observed during our levee surveys to date. We have also collected owl and raptor pellets on site to determine the diet of hawks and owls hunting along the levee system.

Work to be completed this Fall/Winter: Our students will be identifying raptor prey species in found raptor pellets. They will also analyze several fresh pellets for presence of rodenticides. After seasonal mowing and vegetation removal we will return to log rodent burrowing activity and determine whether there are measurable differences between burrow densities in our raptor structure treatment area versus our control transect. Results will be made available to the public via the [Predatory Bird Research Group](#) project page and the Santa Cruz County Government website.



2. Two barn owls residing in Box 6



2. UCSC students surveying the Pajaro River levee for rodent burrows

Raptors on the River

The Pajaro River Levee Pilot Study



Pamela Dimeler

About the Project

The Pajaro River corridor is home to a wide variety of wildlife. Unfortunately, the prevalence of burrowing rodents here can cause damage to river levees and increase the risk of catastrophic flooding. The Predatory Bird Research Group at UC Santa Cruz and the Zone 7 Flood Control and Water Conservation District are seeking to help solve this problem by implementing a 1-year pilot program to investigate the effectiveness of recruiting native hawks and owls, also known as raptors, to supplement current raptor-friendly pest management activities on the Pajaro River Levees.

Hunting perches and owl nest boxes have been placed along a 2.5 mile section of the river.

Our team will investigate whether encouraging raptors to hunt on the levee will help our county work towards reducing the use of ecologically harmful anticoagulant and fumigant rodenticides for pest management. You can also help

protect local raptors by not using rodent poisons on your property (see raptorsarethesolution.org for non-toxic alternatives).

Biologists, county maintenance crews, community volunteers, and local students will be working together to monitor bird and rodent activity on the levee in 2020. The initial findings of this pilot study will be available at the end of the year.



Mark Schleicher

Raptors kill rodents/ help farmers

A recent study by Humboldt State University of occupied barn owl boxes in Napa Valley vineyards found that during one breeding season (March to June) alone, each adult barn owl consumed 155 rodents while each nestling ate 191 rodents. In 20 owl boxes, over 20,000 rodents were eaten by the owls, providing natural, non-toxic rodent control to vintners. Red-tailed hawks, red-shouldered hawks, and other raptors are also on the job: one red-shouldered hawk can consume 30 rodents in a month! In Ventura County, a pilot study using raptor perches and owl boxes found substantially less damage from ground squirrels and gophers to their levees than in areas where poison was used. Levee managers estimate a cost savings of \$7,500 a year for each mile of levee.

Rodenticides kill raptors and more

There is no such thing as a "safe" rat poison. Dozens of scientific studies have found rat poisons in a wide variety of wildlife, including foxes, bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, and every species of hawk and owl. Rat poison also kills pet dogs and cats as well as scavengers like raccoons, skunks and opossums. Rat poison leads to a slow, painful death for all animals who are exposed to it, whether they consume the poison directly or eat the flesh of a poisoned animal.

Rat poison is often used in bait stations, but the rodents do not die inside the stations. After eating the bait, rats and mice go back into the wild and can take more than a week to die. During that time they may return to the bait station and ingest many more times the lethal dose. Weakened from internal bleeding, poisoned rodents are a toxic ticking bomb for any animal who preys on them.

For more information see <https://pbrg.pbsci.ucsc.edu/PajaroRaptors.html>



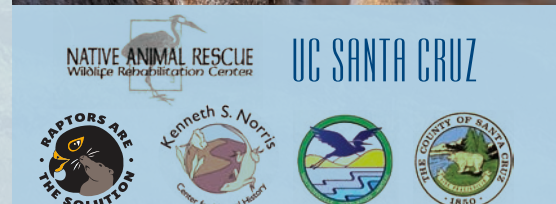
Pamela Dimeler



Jerry Ting



Vishal Subramanyan



Partners: UC Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group, Zone 7 Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Native Animal Rescue, Ken Norris Center for Natural History, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, Raptors Are The Solution

This pilot study is made possible by the Santa Cruz County Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission Grant program.

Rapaces en el río

El estudio piloto del Dique del Río Pájaro



Pamela Dimeler

Sobre el proyecto

El corredor del río Pájaro alberga una gran variedad de vida silvestre. Desafortunadamente, la prevalencia de roedores excavadores puede causar daños a los diques de los ríos y aumentar el riesgo de inundaciones catastróficas. El Grupo de Investigación de Aves Predadoras en la Universidad de California Santa Cruz y el Departamento de Obras Públicas del Condado de Santa Cruz, Distrito de Control de Inundaciones y Conservación del Agua de la Zona 7, están tratando de ayudar a resolver este problema mediante la implementación de un programa piloto de 1 año para investigar que tan efectivo es reclutar halcones y búhos nativos, también conocidos como aves rapaces, para suplementar las

actividades actuales de manejo de plagas amigables con aves rapaces en los diques del río Pájaro. Se han colocado perchas de caza y nidos de búhos a lo largo de una sección del río de 2.5 millas. Nuestro equipo investigará si alentar las aves rapaces a cazar en el dique ayudará a nuestro condado a reducir el uso de rodenticidas anticoagulantes y fumigantes

ecológicamente dañinos para el manejo de plagas. Puede ayudar al no usar venenos para roedores en su propiedad (consulte raptorsarethesolution.org para obtener alternativas que no son tóxicas).

Los biólogos, los equipos de mantenimiento del condado, los voluntarios de la comunidad y los estudiantes locales trabajaran juntos para monitorear la actividad de las aves y los roedores en este año, 2020. Los resultados iniciales de este estudio piloto estarán disponibles al fin de año.



Mark Schleicher

Las aves rapaces matan roedores/ayudan a los agricultores

Un estudio reciente realizado por la Universidad Estatal de Humboldt sobre las cajas de lechuzas ocupadas en los viñedos del Valle de Napa descubrió que solo durante una temporada de reproducción (marzo a junio), cada lechuza adulta consumió 155 roedores, mientras que cada polluelo comió 191 roedores. En 20 cajas de búhos, más de 20,000 roedores fueron comidos por los búhos, proporcionando un control natural y no tóxico de los roedores a los viticultores. Halcones de cola roja, halcones de hombros rojos y otras aves rapaces también están en el trabajo: ¡un halcón de hombros rojos puede consumir 30 roedores en un mes! En el condado de Ventura, un estudio piloto con perchas de rapaces y cajas de búhos encontró mucho menos daño de ardillas terrestres y topes a sus diques que en áreas donde se usó veneno. Los administradores de diques estiman un ahorro de \$7,500 al año por cada milla de dique.

Los rodenticidas matan a las rapaces y más

No existe el veneno para ratas "seguro". Docenas de estudios científicos han encontrado venenos para ratas en una amplia variedad de vida silvestre, incluidos zorros, lince, coyotes, leones de montaña y todas las especies de halcones y de búhos. El veneno para ratas también mata a los perros y gatos, así como a los carroñeros como mapaches, zorrillos y zarigüeyas. El veneno para ratas lleva a una muerte lenta y dolorosa para todos los animales expuestos, ya sea que consuman el veneno directamente o se coman la carne de un animal envenenado.

El veneno para ratas se usa a menudo en estaciones de cebo, pero los roedores no mueren dentro de las estaciones. Después de comer el cebo, las ratas y los ratones regresan a la naturaleza y pueden tardar más de una semana en morir. Durante ese tiempo pueden regresar a la estación de cebo e ingerir muchas mas veces la dosis letal. Debilitados por el sangrado interno, los roedores envenenados son una bomba tóxica para cualquier animal que se alimente de ellos.

Para más información, <https://pbrg.pbsci.ucsc.edu/PajaroRaptors.html>



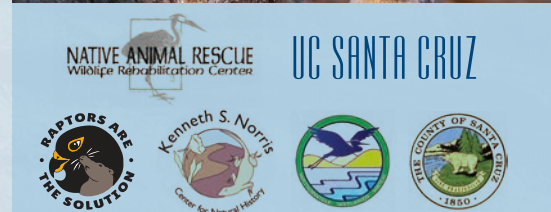
Pamela Dimeler



Jerry Ting



Vishal Subramanyan



Socios: Grupo de investigación de aves rapaces de la Universidad de California Santa Cruz, Departamento de Obras Públicas del Condado de Santa Cruz - Distrito de Control de Inundaciones y Conservación del Agua de la Zona 7, Rescate de animales nativos, Centro Ken Norris de Historia Natural, Observatorio de Humedales Watsonville, Las aves rapaces son la solución.

Este estudio piloto es posible gracias al programa de subvenciones de la Comisión Asesora de Pesca Y Vida Silvestre del Condado De Santa Cruz.



Salmonid Restoration Federation

August 11, 2020

County of Santa Cruz
Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission
Public Grants Program Project Report

On January 17, 2020, the County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors approved an allocation in the amount of \$2250 to Salmonid Restoration Federation. These funds were intended to be used for conference scholarships and a videographer for our annual Salmonid Restoration Conference, to be held in Santa Cruz from March 31 to April 3, 2020.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing shelter-in-place orders, our 2020 conference was first postponed and ultimately cancelled. We replaced the videographer line item with our monthly [Restoration Webinar series](#), scheduled for the fourth Friday of each month until we are able to resume our in-person events. This funding enabled us to upgrade our video conferencing software so that we can host more participants on Zoom. We are also now able to live stream our webinars to YouTube, so agency personnel who are not approved to use Zoom can still watch and participate in our live events.

The [first restoration webinar was on May 22](#), and featured fish passage engineer Michael Love. He gave an overview of Part XII of the CDFW Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual, summarizing contemporary design approaches and implementation techniques for providing fish passage at existing and replacement stream crossings and other in-stream structures. 140 people registered to attend this webinar, and the maximum number of viewers we had at one time was 116.

Our [second webinar took place on June 26](#), and featured two biologists from California Trout: Jacob Katz and Jacob Montgomery. This webinar examined the effects of food webs and aquatic habitat productivity on the growth of juvenile salmonids, particularly in productive ecosystems or where food webs strongly interact with physical habitat attributes to influence growth. 330 people registered to attend this webinar, and the maximum number of viewers we had at one time was 255.

The second day of SRF's [virtual Spring-run Chinook Symposium](#) took the place of our monthly restoration webinar series on July 24. The symposium consisted of two partial days of presentations, and topics included spring Chinook genetics, the impacts of climate change, restoration projects, historical distribution and reintroduction. We requested a suggested donation of \$40 for both days to cover the costs of this event, but we offered a full scholarship to anyone that was interested in attending. We provided a total of 19 scholarships to participants that included students, tribal members, and Americorps. In total, 137 people registered for this event.

Native Animal Rescue
August 10, 2020

Report on how 2019 County of Santa Cruz Fish & Wildlife Advisory Commission grant funds were used by Native Animal Rescue.

In 2019 Native Animal Rescue took in 2,517 animals of which 1,671 were birds (seabirds, songbirds & raptors) and 802 were mammals (including squirrels, bats, raccoons, fawns & skunks).

With so many different species, food costs are always our greatest expense because we need to offer many specific diets. We purchase large amounts of mealworms and seed for songbirds, fish from a local company for our seabirds, and meat in the form of frozen mice and rats for raptors. We buy many different milk formulas for the baby mammals, and fruits, nuts, frozen rodents and various pet foods for the weaned mammals.

Our busiest season is Spring through Summer when we take care of orphaned wildlife. Every mammal baby has a specific formula which is bottle-fed to them until they can eat solid food.

Because we take in injured wildlife, we have veterinary expenses such as x-rays, medications, de-wormers and vaccines. We are thankful for two local vets who do not charge us for office visits, which is an appreciated savings.

We use a great number of both cardboard and plastic transport boxes at Native Animal Rescue. These are costly in that we can't find them locally and buying them in quantity includes large shipping costs. These boxes are vital for safely getting stabilized seabirds to International Bird Rescue in Fairfield. Our volunteer rescuers also need these transport boxes in the field. We also use these boxes when returning rehabilitated animals back to the habitat where they were found.

We could never operate a clean facility without a large amount of general supplies. Laundry soap and bleach are essential and we use a lot of hand and dishwashing soap, paper towels and TP (for nests).

We appreciate the ongoing financial support of the County of Santa Cruz Fish & Wildlife Commission. It is good that so many people and agencies care deeply about the diverse wildlife population here.