

Black Oystercatcher Conservation
Mendocino County, CA
Final Report on Nesting Success

Audubon California Collaborative Grant
California State Parks – Mendocino Coast Audubon – Bureau of Land
Management – California Department of Fish and Wildlife

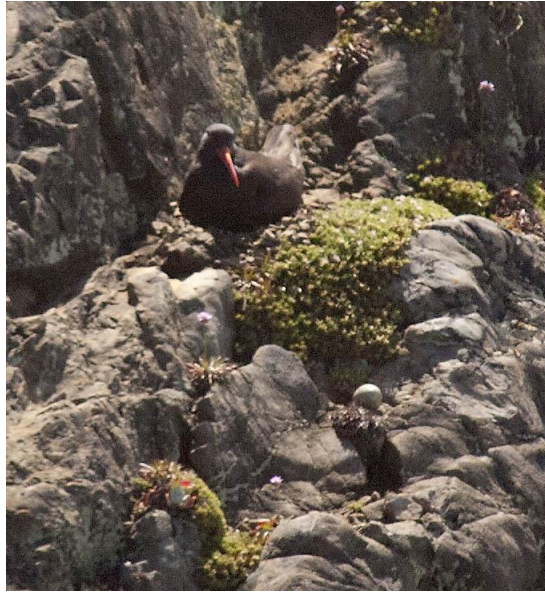


Photo by Dan Knowles – Glass Beach

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Prepared by:

Joleen Ossello, Mendocino Coast Audubon Society President



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Project Goals and Background

The Black Oystercatcher, *Haematopus bachmani*, is a year-round shorebird along the rocky intertidal west coast of the United States. Listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as a species of focal concern, the long term goal of the Black Oystercatcher Conservation Project is to apply gainful knowledge to current conservation efforts that will preclude the need for an Environmental Species Act listing. Oystercatchers are associated with healthy, productive marine intertidal habitat, which prescribes them as an indicator species of intertidal marine health.

The goal of the 2013 Nest Success Survey is to continue to record baseline data beginning in 2012 on habitat status and fledging success trends in Mendocino County, California. The regional chapter coordinator advises volunteers and state park personnel on guidelines, protocol, data collection and public outreach. Weekly surveys are performed by citizen science volunteers, state park personnel, state fish and wildlife personnel and Audubon's regional chapter coordinator from May through September at select sites of high species density. The following data is provided to Audubon California's Seabird Program Manager and will assist the USFWS range-wide working plan in identifying the best conservation practices needed to address threats and reverse declines.

The project is a collaborative effort between California Audubon, Mendocino Coast Audubon Society (MCAS), Mendocino District of California State Parks, Bureau of Land Management's California Coastal National Monument Program (CCNM), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

2013 Project Timeline and Accomplishments

- On April 29th Joleen Ossello, as regional chapter coordinator, conducted a five-hour volunteer training workshop including speakers: Angela Liebenberg, California State Parks Environmental Scientist and Judy Steele, MCAS Grant Administrator for CCNM public outreach funding
- Acquisition of the Community Based Seabird Colony Monitoring -Challenge Cost Share funding from the CCNM for project's public outreach through social media and informational magnets and maps
- Establishment of Yahoo BLOY Group for volunteer/coordinator communications
- In early May eighteen volunteers, two state park environmental science personnel, one fish and wildlife personnel, and regional chapter coordinator began weekly surveys of pair/nest identification at the following sites of high density: Hardy Rock, MacKerricher State Park, Point Cabrillo State Historic Park & Preserve, Russian Gulch State Park, Mendocino Headlands State Park, Mendocino Bay Overlook, Van Damme State Park, and Navarro Point Preserve
- On May 20th the coordinator presented a ten minute presentation of the project for participants at the MCAS annual chapter meeting
- In June the regional coordinator submitted a progress report to Audubon California.
- On August 31st the last successful fledgling was recorded and all weekly surveys completed by September 16th with infield support on three surveys
- Conclusive monitoring of forty-three nests
- On October 7th a meeting was conducted by regional coordinator to announce preliminary results and collect project feedback from volunteers including local wildlife biologists associated with supporting agencies
- Distribution of 1275 CCNM/BLOY magnets and approximately 75 Rock Walk Maps

Observations - BLOY

- Non breeding birds were reported flying and/or aggregating in groups of 3-5 throughout survey period and groups upwards of sixty by August
- Territorial nesting areas were shared with Western Gulls, Pelagic Cormorants, and Pigeon Guillemots
- Forty-three nesting sites observed and conclusively recorded; the majority of nests were found in the same area if not exactly where nesting occurred in 2012
- Many more pairs exhibited territorial displays at the beginning of the season than actual nesting territories eventually established
- Four pairs re-nested after initial failure
- Two to three pairs were recorded as nesting on the same rock; thus sharing territory
- Copulation and re-nesting after initial failure was recorded in fewer instances than in 2012
- Successful observation of hatched young intermittent, however more conclusive than in 2012
- Not all volunteers were interested in the public outreach portion of project
- No direct predation was observed, but highly suspected as reports indicate young present only one to three days after hatching
- Sightings of Common Raven, Western Gull, Peregrine Falcon, Great Horned Owl and river otter near nesting areas reported
- The last successful fledgling was recorded on August 31st

Observations – Survey sites

- General public continue to access particular nesting areas at low tide; Glass Beach nest site failed directly due to such a disturbance
- Recreational divers and kayakers access areas close to nesting sites at Van Damme State Park
- Parks with high recreational use (MacKerricher, Point Cabrillo, Russian Gulch, and Mendocino Headlands) had the most number of CCNM magnets distributed

Results

Forty-six nests were identified (Appendix C - Table A) and forty-three were determined to have conclusive data (Appendix C - Table B). Of the forty-three conclusively monitored nests, twelve nests or 27.9% successfully fledged one or more young and 72.1% failed in various stages of progression.

Fifty-two young successfully hatched with 17 or 32.7% successfully fledging, that is, they were capable of sustained flight and reached 38-40 days old.

All participants expressed excited interest in contributing to the future of the project and have requested an additional project meeting mid-season.

Expenditures

The independent contractor acting as the said regional coordinator will furnish upon request to Audubon CA or any other agency involved disclosure of project expenditures in the amount of \$4625.00 for services rendered.

Recommendations

- Modify length of survey season; May 1 – September 30th or until the site has exhausted the presence of nesting pairs
- Furnish participants with map of previously recorded nesting sites as well as an initial map to record potential nesting pairs on first few surveys
- Modification of revised data sheet to accommodate re-nesting, public outreach, weather, and observations
- Ensure each participant is following coded protocol on data sheet for each visit
- Continue to provide the public with project information in hand and through social media
- Continue to monitor existing sites
- Conduct mid-season meeting with participants
- Utilize a social media group site for ongoing communication with participants
- Collaborate with California State Parks to establish specific areas of sea bird nesting signage

Appendix – A

2013 BLOY Nest Success Survey Results – Mendocino County

Nest Failure	Nest Success	Inconclusive data	Nesting Attempt
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Table 1

Hardy Rock MPA
K. Havlena
Nest #1
5/2 IE, 1E
5/6 IE, 2E
5/9 IE, 3E
5/12 IE, 3E
5/15 IE, 3E
5/17 IE, 3E
5/22 3E
5/25 IE, 3E
5/27 3E
5/31 1Y, 2E
6/2 2Y, 1E
6/3 2Y, 1E
6/6 2Y, 1E
6/8 2Y, 1E
6/13 2Y, 0E
6/19 2Y
6/26 2Y
7/3 0Y, FS
7/10 F

Table 2

Laguna Point, MacKerricher SP			
T. Jensen, T. Fuller			
Nest #1	Nest #2	Nest #3	Pair #4
5/11 NS	5/30 N, I, IE	5/11 N	5/24 C
5/17 UN	6/4 I, IE, ES	5/17 UN	5/30 UN
5/24 UN	6/11 IE, ES	5/24 UN	6/4 UN
5/30 UN	6/18 I, ES	5/30 N, I, ES	6/11 UN
6/4 IS	6/26 FS	6/4 I, IE, 2E	6/18 C
6/11 UN	7/2 F	6/11 FS, C	6/26 UN
6/26 F		6/18 F	7/2 UN
		6/26 I, 2E - Renest	7/11 UN
		7/2 FS	7/17 UN
		7/11 F	7/23 UN

Table 3

Glass Beach, MacKerricher SP		
A. Morley, D. Knowles, M. Riwney, J. Mann		
Nest #3	Nest #4	Nest #5
5/15 I, ES	5/22 I, ES	5/29 I, IE, 2E
5/22 I, ES	5/29 I, 3E	6/5 I, ES
5/29 I, ES	6/5 I, ES	6/12 I, ES
6/3 2Y	6/12 I, ES	6/19 FS
6/5 FS	6/19 3Y	6/26 I, ES
6/12 F	6/26 FS	7/3 I, IE, 1E
	7/3 F	7/10 I, 2E
		7/19 I, ES
		7/24 2Y
		7/31 2Y
		8/1 FS
		8/3 F

Appendix – A cont.

2013 BLOY Nest Success Survey Results – Mendocino County

Nest Failure	Nest Success	Inconclusive data	Nesting Attempt
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Table 4

Point Cabrillo State Historic Park						
D. Shephard, J. Ossello						
Nest #1	Nest #2	Nest #3	Nest #4	Nest #5	Nest #6	Nest #7
5/20 I, ES	5/20 NS	5/28 I, 1E	5/28 N, IE, 2	6/10 I	6/17 I, ES	6/17 I, 2E
5/28 I, ES	5/28 NS, ES	6/3 I, 3E	6/3 I, IE, ES	6/17 I, ES	6/24 UN	6/24 UN
6/3 I, ES	6/3 NS	6/10 I, ES	6/10 I, 2E	6/24 ES	7/1 FS	7/1 2Y
6/10 I, ES	6/10 NS, ES	6/17 I, ES	6/17 1E, 1Y	7/1 3Y	7/9 F	7/9 FS
6/17 YS	6/17 UN	6/24 I, YS	6/24 YS	7/9 UN	7/15 F	7/15 UN
6/24 FS	6/24 FS	7/1 1E, 1Y	7/1 F	7/15 UN		7/23 F
7/1 2Y	7/1 F	7/9 FS, 1E	7/9 C, N	7/23 FS		7/29 F
7/9 1Y	7/9 UN	7/15 1E, F	7/15 UN	7/29 F		8/5 F
7/15 1Y	7/15 YS	7/23 F	7/23 UN	8/5 F		
7/23 UN	7/23 UN	7/29 F	7/29 I, ES - Renest			
7/29 1Y	7/29 1FL	8/5 F	8/5 I, 2E			
8/5 1FL			8/12 I, 2E			
			8/19 1Y			
			8/27 2Y			
			9/3 2Y			
			9/9 FS			
			9/16 F			

Table 5

Russian Gulch State Park											
A. Cebula, A. Hutchins											
Nest #1	Nest #2	Nest #3	Nest #4	Nest #5	Nest #6	Nest #7	Nest #8	Nest #9	Nest #10	Nest #11	Nest #12
5/13 NS	5/22 N, I	5/22 I	5/3 C	5/24 N, I, IE	5/24 I, IE, 1E	5/17 NS	5/24 I, IE	5/31 I	Nesting attempt	Nesting attempt	7/11 1Y
5/22 NS	5/31 I	5/24 I, ES	5/13 UN	5/31 I	5/31 I, IE	5/24 UN	5/31 I, IE	6/5 I			7/16 1Y
5/31 IS	6/5 I	5/31 I, ES	5/22 I, 2-3E	6/5 I	6/5 I	5/31 UN	6/5 I, IE	6/13 I, 1E			7/24 1Y
6/5 IE	6/13 I	6/5 I, ES	5/31 I	6/14 2Y	6/14 1Y	6/5 UN	6/14 IE	6/19 I			7/31 FS
6/13 I, IE	6/19 3Y	6/13 I, ES	6/5 I	6/19 YS	6/19 1Y	6/14 UN	6/19 3Y	6/27 1Y			8/7 1Y
6/19 1Y	6/27 3Y	6/19 1Y	6/13 I, IE	6/27 YS	6/27 1Y	6/19 UN	6/27 1Y	7/3 1Y			8/14 1FL
6/27 FS	7/3 3Y	6/27 1Y	6/19 1Y	7/3 YS	7/3 FS	6/27 UN	7/3 2Y	7/11 FS			
7/3 F, C	7/11 YS	7/3 1Y	6/27 1Y	7/11 1Y	7/11 FS	7/3 1Y	7/11 2Y	7/16 YS			
7/11 C	7/16 YS	7/11 FS	7/3 1Y	7/16 YS	7/16 F	7/11 FS	7/16 2Y	7/24 1Y			
7/16 UN	7/24 YS, 1Y	7/16 FS	7/11 FS	7/23 1Y	7/23 F	7/16 1Y	7/23 2Y	7/31 1YS			
7/24 F	7/31 2Y, 1F	7/24 F	7/16 FS	7/31 2Y	7/31 F	7/23 1Y	7/31 2Y	8/7 1FL			
7/31 F	8/7 2FL	7/31 F	7/24 F	8/8 2FL	8/8 F	7/31 1Y	8/8 2FL	8/14 1FL			
8/7 F	8/14 2FL	8/8 F	7/31 F			8/8 1FL					
			8/8 F								

Appendix – A cont.

2013 BLOY Nest Success Survey Results – Mendocino County

Nest Failure	Nest Success	Inconclusive data	Nesting Attempt
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Table 6

Mendocino Headlands State Park				
D. Jensen, J. Steele				
Pair #1	Nest #2	Nest #4	Nest #5	Nest #6
5/19 NS	5/19 I, IE, ES	5/11 N	5/26 I, ES	5/19 UN
	5/26 I, ES	5/19 UN	6/11 UN	8/31 1Y
	6/1 I, ES	5/26 I, IE, ES	6/16 UN	
	6/16 I, ES	6/1 I, ES	6/23 UN	
	6/23 UN	6/16 IE, 1Y	6/30 UN	
	6/30 UN	6/23 UN	7/10 I, ES	
	7/10 UN	6/30 UN	7/18 I, ES	
	7/21 1Y	7/10 UN	7/21 I, ES	
	7/31 UN	7/18 UN	7/31 UN	
	8/4 1Y	8/31 2FL	8/4 UN	
	8/11 YS		8/18 1Y	
	8/18 2Y		8/31 YS	
	8/31 2FL			

Table 7

Mendocino Bay Overlook	
L. Mariana	
Nest #1	
6/30 N	
7/1 I, 2E	
7/17 I, 2E	
7/30 YS	
8/1 1Y	
8/3 FS	
8/16 F	

Table 8

Van Damme State Park - Little River Headlands					
R. LeValley, C. McAllister					
LR Nest #1	LR Nest #2	LR Nest #3	LR Nest #4	LR Nest #5	LR Nest #6
5/21 I, ES	5/15 I	5/13 I	5/15 I	5/15 NS	6/5 N
5/24 3E	6/13 1Y	6/5 I	6/26 UN	6/5 C, 2E	6/12 I, ES
6/15 3E	6/17 FS	6/9 FS	6/8 FS	6/12 FS	6/13 I, ES
6/20 3Y	6/18 F	6/14 F	6/17 F	6/20 F	7/15 2Y
6/24 3Y		6/23 N, IE - Renest	6/22 NS - Renest		8/3 1Y
6/26 F		6/25 2E	8/3 1Y		8/10 1FL
		6/26 3E	8/26 1FL		
		7/22 2Y			
		8/3 FS			
		8/6 F			

Appendix – A cont.

2013 BLOY Nest Success Survey Results – Mendocino County

Nest Failure	Nest Success	Inconclusive data	Nesting Attempt
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Table 9							
Van Damme State Park - Spring Ranch							
R. LeValley, C. McAllister							
SR Nest #1	SR Nest #2	SR Nest #3	SR Nest #3A	SR Nest #4	SR Nest #5	SR Nest #6	SR Nest #7
5/9 C	5/15 N, I, 3E	5/15 N, IE	6/18 N	6/5 I, 2E	5/15 N, IE	6/5 N, I, ES	6/18 C
5/15 NS	6/5 I, 3E	6/5 2E	6/22 I, 2E	6/12 I, 2E	6/5 I, ES	6/12 I, ES	6/22 UN
6/5 I	6/12 UN	6/12 2E	6/28 2E	6/18 I, 2E	6/12 3Y	6/18 I, ES	6/28 UN
6/12 I	6/18 UN	6/18 1E	7/6 2E	6/22 I, 2E	6/18 1Y	6/22 I, ES	7/6 UN
6/18 I	6/22 FS	6/22 1E	7/13 2E, 2E two nests!	6/28 OE, FS	6/22 1Y	6/28 I, ES	7/13 UN
6/22 3Y	6/28 F	6/28 OE, UN	7/15 2E, 2E	7/6 F	6/28 1Y	7/6 UN	7/15 YS
6/28 UN	7/6 F	7/6 FS	8/18 F	7/13 F	7/6 UN	7/13 FS	8/18 F
7/6 UN	7/13 F	7/13 F		7/15 F	7/13 1Y	7/15 F	
7/13 FS		7/15 F		7/18 F	7/15 1Y	8/18 F	
7/15 F					8/18 UN		
7/18 F							

Table 10		
Navarro Point Nature Preserve		
L. Perkins, B. Heil		
Nest #1	Nest #2	Nest #3
5/25 N	5/18 C	6/5 N, I, ES
6/1 UN	5/25 UN	6/14 I
6/5 I, ES	6/1 UN	6/22 2E
6/14 I, ES	6/5 UN	6/28 FS
6/22 I, IE, 2E	6/14 UN	7/2 FS
6/28 I, ES	6/22 N, I, IE, ES	7/6 FS
7/2 I, IE, ES	6/28 UN	7/8 F
7/6 I, ES	7/2 YS	7/12 F
7/8 I, IE, ES	7/6 C	7/21 F
7/12 UN	7/8 C	7/29 F
7/21 FS	7/12 UN	
7/29 F	7/21 FS	
	7/29 F	

Appendix – B

2013 BLOY Nest Success Survey Results - Mendocino County Inconclusive data

Table 1a
Hardy Rock

Nest #	1
# of Young	2
# Young Fledged	0

Table 2a
Laguna Point, MacKerricher State Park

Nest #	1	2	3
# of Young	0	0	0
# Young Fledged	0	0	0

Table 3a
Glass Beach, MacKerricher State Park

Nest #	3	4	5
# of Young	2	3	2
# Young Fledged	0	0	0

Table 4a
Point Cabrillo Historic State Park & Preserve

Nest #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
# of Young	2	1	1	3	3	0	2
# Young Fledged	1	1	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5a
Russian Gulch State Park

Nest #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	12
# of Young	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	1
# Young Fledged	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	2	1	1

Appendix – B cont.

**Table 6a
Mendocino Headlands State
Park**

Nest #	2	4	5	6
# of Young	2	2	1	1
# Young Fledged	2	2	UN	UN

**Table 7a
Mendocino Bay
Overlook**

Nest #	1
# of Young	1
# Young Fledged	0

**Table 8a
Van Damme State Park - Spring Ranch**

Nest #	1	2	3	3a	4	5	6	7
# of Young	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
# Young Fledged	0	0	0	0	0	UN	0	0

**Table 9a
Van Damme State Park - Little River Headlands**

Nest #	1	2	3	4	5	6
# of Young	3	1	2	1	0	1
# Young Fledged	0	0	0	1	0	1

**Table 10a
Navarro Point Nature Preserve**

Nest #	1	2	3
# of Young	0	0	0
# Young Fledged	0	0	0

Appendix – C

2013 BLOY Nest Success Survey Results - Mendocino County

Table A - Inconclusive Results

# Nesting attempts observed		46		
# Young seen		55		
# Nests with young		32	0.696	69.6%
# Nests that fledged		12	0.261	26.1%
# Young that fledged		17	0.309	30.9%
# of Successful Nests		UNKNOWN		
# of Failed Nests		UNKNOWN		

Table B - Conclusive Final Results

# Nests conclusively monitored		43		
# of Young		52		
# Nests with young		29	0.674	67.4%
# Nests that fledged		12	0.279	27.9%
# Young that fledged		17	0.327	32.7%
# of Successful Nests		12	0.279	27.9%
# of Failed Nests		31	0.721	72.1%