

June 17, 2023

Carol Rose research:

SEA OTTERS DATA/INFORMATION

1987 Translocation:

“In August 1987 sea otter translocation began with San Nicolas Island. Dispersal of the animals proved a serious obstacle. A total of 139 otters were translocated as of July 1990. Of these about 17 otters remain at the island; 33 (24%) known to return to central California, many returned near exact site of initial capture. 11 are known or suspected dead and fate of remaining 81 unknown. In 2000, the "experimental translocation of sea otters to San Nicolas Island was declared a failure.”

81 are missing!!!

Oil Spill Danger:

Draft Revised Recovery Plans for Southern Sea Otter (US Fish & Wildlife Service, February 8, 2000) Pages and pages of data, information and danger to otters from oil spill(s) provided the basis for the translocation to protect the sea otter.

“The number of sea otters likely to be contacted by an oil spill between the Oregon Border and Bodega Head is relatively high. The greatest risk would result from spills originating in the area Eureka to Ft Bragg. Spills south of Bodega Head do not represent a major threat to the expanded sea otter range.”

The main reason for the 1987 translocation was protection from oil spills as at the time the main sea otter population was centered in central California and vulnerable to tanker oil spills.

What is the current status of oil spill danger on Sonoma Coast?

Sonoma Coast:

Appears to be area of proposed translocation.

1) what is the food supply situation for otters on Sonoma Coast? No abalone, 90% of kelp gone, massive sea urchin barrens. Idea that otters will control urchins is refuted by Monterey Bay where otters are doing little to control urchin barrens.

2) In past translocation, about 24% of the translocated animals 'went home.' Sonoma Coast is a long way home with many obstacles to current population.

Question:

Trammel net regs passed for southern CA protected otters, but, when passed, only applied to So Ca. What is status of regs on Sonoma Coast now?

Economics of Translocation:

Somewhere in the past and likely in my numerous library, there is a statement made by the DF&W Service reading: no translation to Sonoma/Mendo coast due to severe impact on economy. That economy was based mostly on recreational abalone and commercial fishing including urchins. Yes that base is gone, but bringing in otters will not help but only impede recovery.

Recreational divers spent a lot of money on the coasts – gasoline, food, campsite costs, rental properties, misc. purchases, tourist purchases (jewelry, art), motels.

My dive club went to Sonoma/Mendo coast monthly in dive season: April to Oct. Some 15-20 persons, rented campsites at Redwood River Campground. I once did a survey of what members spent over the year – this year being 1985 likely so adjust values – at \$200/person x 6 x 15 = \$180,000. One guy even bought a house at Sea Ranch and tried to add it to his yearly cost!

Sponsor: House Rep Jared Huffman, District 2 – covers entire coast SF to Oregon Lives in San Rafael. Born in Missouri; graduated college UC Santa Barbara; law school, Boston College. Excellent student. Serves on several House committees; one is Natural Resources, Water Wildlife and Fisheries. In House since 2006.

Before the House, he was in California Assembly, and before that he was senior attorney for NRDC. He is a fisherman.

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