

Monitoring Success

The Seashore continues to monitor the northern spotted owl population as part of our long-term Vital Signs Monitoring Program. The partners in the monitoring program include Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument, Marin Municipal Water District, Marin County Open Space District, and PRBO Conservation Science. The NPS annually monitors over 60 spotted owl activity sites around the county to determine the number of adult owls present each year and we monitor nesting success at a smaller number of sites by counting the number of young owls that successfully fledge out of the nests.

Park staff describe nesting habitat and monitor known threats to spotted owls and their habitat, such as occurrence of Sudden Oak Death near spotted owls sites and the occurrence and breeding status of barred owls. As the barred owls have expanded their range from the east coast to the west coast, spotted owl populations have diminished. Two years ago, the first barred owl in the county was seen at Muir Woods. This year, we had a second record of a barred owl in our study area during the spotted owl breeding season in Olema Valley.

In January of 2004, park staff participated in the range-wide demographic data analysis, which is required every five years under the Northwest Forest Plan. Although we have a shorter study than most of the other 13 areas that submitted data and our results weren't used in all portions of the analysis, we were happy to see our data placed in the larger context of the spotted owl range, since we are the southernmost northern spotted owl population.

Our long-term monitoring continues to provide valuable information for environmental reviews for resource management, maintenance and fire management projects.



Pair of spotted owl chicks and an adult

