



Josh Ackerman/USGS

## New Open File Report on San Francisco Bay Waterbird Nest Monitoring Program

WERC scientists [Josh Ackerman](#) and [Mark Herzog](#) have authored a summary of nesting ecology data for Forster's terns (*Sterna forsteri*), American avocets (*Recurvirostra americana*) and black-necked stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*) from 2005 to 2010 in the areas of the [South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project](#), including lands managed by the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge and California Department of Fish and Game's Eden Landing Ecological Preserve. They report baseline conditions for breeding waterbirds prior to implementation of most restoration actions, which can be used to guide adaptive management plans for the restoration, as well as to determine the effect of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project on breeding waterbirds.

<http://www.werc.usgs.gov/ProductDetails.aspx?ID=4769>

### NEW JOURNAL ARTICLES

Briggs, AA, HS Young, DJ McCauley, [SA Hathaway](#), R Dirzo, [RN Fisher](#). 2012. **Effects of spatial subsidies and habitat structure on the foraging ecology and size of geckos.** *PLoS ONE* 7(8): e41364. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0041364

<http://www.werc.usgs.gov/ProductDetails.aspx?ID=4772>

Lorda, J, [KD Lafferty](#). 2012. **Shading decreases the abundance of the herbivorous California horn snail, *Cerithidea californica*.** *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology* 432-433: 148-155. doi: 10.1016/j.jembe.2012.07.009

<http://www.werc.usgs.gov/ProductDetails.aspx?ID=4771>

[Medica, PA](#), [KE Nussear](#), [TC Esque](#), MB Saethre. 2012. **Long-term growth of desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) in a southern Nevada population.** *Journal of Herpetology* 46(2): 213-220. doi: 10.1670/11-327

<http://www.werc.usgs.gov/ProductDetails.aspx?ID=4775>

### AWARDS

The American Society of Mammalogists has given WERC alumnus [James Estes](#) the **2012 C. Hart Merriam Award**, recognizing his career contributions to marine community ecology and sea otter biology. "His insights have strongly influenced our theories of community functioning, predator-prey relationships, the role of apex predators, and the evolution of food webs," says the society.

<http://www.mammalsociety.org/2012-merriam-award-james-estes>

### EVENTS

**August 8-14, 2012 (Vancouver, BC)**

WERC was well-represented at the **2012 World Congress of Herpetology**, featuring research by [Gary Fellers](#), [Robert Fisher](#), [Todd Esque](#), [Brian Halstead](#), [Jon Richmond](#), [Kristina Drake](#), [Adam Backlin](#), [Ken Nussear](#) and others. Topics included tortoise translocation, giant gartersnake monitoring, Yosemite amphibian trends and red-legged frog genetics.

<http://www.werc.usgs.gov/Event.aspx?ID=114>

**August 14-18, 2012 (Vancouver, BC)**

[Barbara Kus](#) and colleagues are attending the **5th North American Ornithological Conference** in Vancouver, Canada.

<http://www.werc.usgs.gov/Event.aspx?ID=97>

### IN THE NEWS

**Mountain Lion Makes Itself at Home in Griffith Park** (*Los Angeles Times*)

Reporter Martha Groves discusses P-22, a cougar roaming in Los Angeles which was first photographed by [Erin Boydston](#) and Cooper Ecological Monitoring near the "Hollywood Sign" park, and is now tracked by National Park Service.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-griffith-park-mountain-li-on-20120814,0,1598272.story>

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## NEW JOURNAL ARTICLES (CONT'D)

Troy, RJ, **PS Coates**, JW Connelly, G Gillette, DJ Delehanty. 2012. **A modified night-netting technique for recapturing quail.** *Wildlife Society Bulletin*.

doi: 10.1002/wsb.176

<http://www.werc.usgs.gov/ProductDetails.aspx?ID=4774>

## NEW PUBLICATION BRIEFS

### Translocation Does Not Elicit a Physiological Stress Response in Desert Tortoises

According to research by **Kristina Drake**, **Ken Nussear**, **Todd Esque**, **Phil Medica** and colleagues at the University of Nevada, Reno, translocation of desert tortoises does not result in elevated stress levels, based on plasma total corticosterone as an indication of stress in these animals. The research was published in *Animal Conservation*.

<http://www.werc.usgs.gov/ProductDetails.aspx?ID=4727>

### Nonnative Coconut Palms Alter Trophic Position of Geckos in a Pacific Island Ecosystem

Observations at the Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge are shedding light on how nonnative vegetation can alter nutrient subsidies and native food webs. In a study published in *PLoS ONE*, researchers from Stanford, Harvard, UC Berkeley and WERC scientists **Stacie Hathaway** and **Robert Fisher** describe how coconut palm trees (*Cocos nucifera*) reduced seabird guano deposits and affected the body size, dietary composition and trophic position of terrestrial vertebrate predators.

<http://www.werc.usgs.gov/ProductDetails.aspx?ID=4773>

The improved classroom activity package *Winged Ambassadors – Ocean Literacy through the Eyes of Albatross* is now available free online courtesy of NOAA, Oikonos, and other partners. Albatrosses, charismatic and threatened seabirds, are ambassadors for a clean ocean because they traverse vast oceanic regions searching for floating food. Along their journeys, they ingest plastic trash and feed it to their chicks. These five lessons comprise new and modified activities, using inquiry-based science instruction, aligned to standards for grades 6 – 8 with extensions for grades 9 – 12.

**Unique features:**

- Students will use real data from current research tracking albatross migrations and ocean plastic pollution.
- Students will be inspired by paintings and photographs from scientist and artist Sophie Webb.

Oikonos

## 'Winged Ambassadors' Deliver Ocean Science Literacy to Classrooms

Along with NOAA, the nonprofit organization Oikonos has released a new product called *Winged Ambassadors - Ocean Literacy Through the Eyes of Albatross* for educators around the globe. The free lesson plans are designed for grades 5-8 with extensions for 9-12, and were compiled with input from research partners including WERC seabird ecologist **Josh Adams**, who studies albatross, shearwater and other seabirds. Students can explore albatross migrations, learn about ocean hotspots and make connections between campus garbage and marine debris.

<http://www.downloadwingedambassadors.org/>  
<http://www.oikonos.org/projects/wingedambassadors.htm>  
<http://cordellbank.noaa.gov/education/curriculumactivities.html>  
<http://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov/education/wa.html>

## IN THE NEWS (CONT'D)

### The Salt Pond Puzzle: Restoring South San Francisco Bay (*High Country News*)

**Josh Ackerman** and **Cory Overton** are quoted in this feature by reporter Nick Neely on the dilemma of endangered birds habitat in the South Bay restoration.

<http://www.hcn.org/issues/44.13/the-salt-pond-puzzle-restoring-south-san-francisco-bay>

### Scientists Challenge Conventional Wisdom on Preventing Home Loss During Wildfires (*Pasadena Star-News*)

It's all about location, says reporter Steve Scauzillo, profiling research by **Jon Keeley** and **Alex Syphard** on how housing density can dictate risk of home loss in San Diego and Ventura County wildfires.

[http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/news/ci\\_21287763/its-all-about-location](http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/news/ci_21287763/its-all-about-location)

### CSI Sea Otter (*DOI NewsWave*)

The Summer 2012 issue of the Interior's oceans, coasts and lakes newsletter revisits *Microcystis*, a freshwater microbe linked to deaths in sea otters, being studied by the California Department of Fish and Game with assistance from **Tim Tinker's** research group.

<http://www.doi.gov/pmb/ocean/news/NewsWave/index.cfm>

### #WCH2012 (USGS Facebook)

USGS promoted WERC talks at the World Congress of Herpetology via a **Facebook** photo gallery and **Twitter** at @USGSlive. <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.419485728097416.93353.102635589782433&type=1>

## OUTREACH NEWS

WERC scientist **Nate Stephenson** was filmed for a **National Park Service** climate change training video. The video aims to help orient and spark discussions among employees throughout the NPS system about climate change and possible approaches to adaptation.

WERC scientists **Chris Brown** and **Carlton Rochester** will lead an educational hike on August 19 in collaboration with the **San Diego National Wildlife Refuge**. Brown and Rochester will guide the public in learning about the reptiles and amphibian species at the refuge.

<http://www.fws.gov/sandiegorefuges/events%20and%20activities.htm>