

Survey: Another Down Year For Sea Otters

Sea Otter Population Down 7% Based On Data

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MONTEREY, Calif. -- The California sea otter population appears to be headed for another period of decline based on the latest survey.

Officials of the Otter Project, which evaluates the population levels of sea otters, said their indicators are pointing to another decline for the sea otter, which has been struggling to make a full recovery for years.

“We’re hesitantly pessimistic,” said Allison Ford, the program manager of The Otter Project. “The count for Monterey Bay was especially low and we are troubled.”

The fall 2008 survey found 2,144 otters, down about 7 percent from 2007.

The data shows there was a higher mortality rate in sea otter pups and reproductive adults.

“Ideally you’d like to see grizzled silver haired otters living into old age,” Ford said. “But we are seeing prime age -- reproducing -- otters dying.”

Population growth for sea otters depends on pups, but the ratio of pups to independent sea otter was also down in 2008, according to the survey data.

The sea otter population has been on a decline for a number of years and is listed as an endangered species.

The Otter Project points to two major factors as reasons for the population decline -- disease and a smaller food supply.

The Otter Project is taking steps in trying to grow the sea otter population, including reducing disease by improving water quality, working to prevent oil spills throughout the sea otter range and improving food resources.

To learn more about the Otter Project, [click here](#).

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