

Sea otter population in decline

The Associated Press

Posted: 03/30/2010 09:17:09 PM PDT

Updated: 03/30/2010 09:17:11 PM PDT

MONTEREY, Calif.—The fragile California sea otter population is in decline for the third straight year.

The Otter Project, a Monterey-based organization that aims to help the recovery of the animal, says the decline is due to a number of conditions, including chemicals in the ocean and disease.

The population report released by the Otter Project on Monday is based on surveys conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey in coordination with other organizations, including the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

The third year in a population study is considered significant because the third-year average number helps determine an animal's status under the Endangered Species Act, according to the Otter Project.

The otter saw a 12 percent increase from 2006 to 2007. It is currently list under the Endangered Species Act as "threatened."
