

Fisheries and Sea Otter Conservation Coalition

~working for Balanced Marine Ecosystem Management

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News Release

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"Another 28 Sea Otters Die in August While the FWS Diddles"*

(Sacramento Sept. 28, 2006) ----The Fisheries and Sea Otter Conservation Coalition (FSOCC) is dedicated to achieving balanced management of fisheries and sea otters. "When the most recent preliminary sea otter stranding numbers came out and the death of another 28 sea otters was recorded during the month of August, it's very frustrating for us," according to Vern Goehring, coordinator for the FSOCC and executive director the Sea Urchin Commission. "The FSOCC feels the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has failed to address the main threat to the sea otter and the new report reflects this."

Attempting to save sea otters, the FWS is reconsidering 20 years of sea otter management mandated by Congress in favor of a program of "no management" -allowing sea otters to go wherever they want. This approach will needlessly lead to the destruction of valuable commercial and recreational fishing with potential devastating job and economic losses. It also threatens the existence of other protected species.

The FSOCC's objective is to protect the California sea otters, while also protecting the livelihoods of people in commercial fishing, the interests of recreational fishermen, and other species whose survival may be threatened by growing sea otter populations. The concern is _the FWS fails to address the main threat to sea otter recovery. Years of monitoring confirms that nearly half of sea otters deaths are caused by pollutant discharges and poor water quality. It is likely that nearly 1,400 sea otters have died since 1994 because of pollution that public agencies have yet to get serious about. "Pursuing a 'no management' program at the expense of local businesses and locally produced seafood, while failing to focus on the real threats to sea otters_ is misguided and should not be tolerated", says Goehring.

Dave Rudie, Chairman of the California Sea Urchin Commission, was recently interviewed on this subject on the "Issues Today" radio show, heard on over 160 radio stations nationally! The interview can be heard on issuestodayradio.com until October 20.

For more information go to FSOCC.org or call Vern Goehring 916.444.8194

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