Finding Aid to the UCSC Elephant Seal and other Pinniped Research records

UA.132

University of California, Santa Cruz
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Title: UCSC Elephant Seal and other Pinniped Research records
creator: University of California, Santa Cruz. Institute of Marine Sciences
creator: Le Boeuf, Burney J.
Identifier/Call Number: UA.132
Physical Description: 10 Linear Feet6 cartons, 1 box, 14 oversize folders
Date (inclusive): 1967-2011
Abstract: Hand written field data from northern elephant seal research at UC's Ano Nuevo Reserve at Ano Nuevo State Park (San Mateo County, CA). Primarily census records with some specific accounts. Many of these documents were originally kept in 49 binders filed in rough chronological order. Notes have been re-housed for ease of use and preservation purposes, the original notations on each binder have been transcribed onto the corresponding folders. Also includes charts detailing daily observations from northern California elephant seal research, and elephant seal and marine mammal films.
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UCSC Elephant Seal and other Pinniped Research records. UA 132.] Special Collections and Archives, University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz.
Biographical / Historical
The elephant seal tagging and censusing project was initiated and financed from federal grants by B.J. Le Boeuf, at UCSC, from Fall 1967 to 2012. The project built on the previous work of Thomas Poulter (Stanford Research Institute) and Robert Orr (California Academy of Sciences) on Año Nuevo Island from 1961 to 1966.
Scope and Content
There are 49 binders (re-housed into folders) holding original data sheets recording counts of pinniped species at Año Nuevo. Four species are routinely included: the northern elephant seal (Mirounga angustirostris), harbor seal (Phoca vitulina), California sea lion (Zalophus californianus), and Steller's sea lion (Eumetopias jubata). Occasionally, counts of sea otters (Enhydra lutris) in the water are listed, and during two years in the 1970s a northern fur seal (Callorhinus ursinus) was counted. A single sheet carries data from one day, with a date and observer names near the top. Each row in the table is a specific location at Año Nuevo, and each column is an age or sex category of the species. The number in each cell is a head count of animals taken from the ground, often with the aid of binoculars. There are also a few counts taken off aerial photographs. In general, a single binder has all censuses from one year, but sometimes two or more years are grouped in a binder.
The records on a single sheet usually include a complete count of either Año Nuevo Island or the entire Año Nuevo mainland; the two portions were almost never counted at once by one observer. In many cases, though, the mainland was counted in two separate sections, so a single page includes either the southern portion of the mainland or the northern portion of the mainland. This information is usually provided at the top of the form.
A single daily count, however, may not be complete. In most cases, a note to this effect should be found. Moreover, all specific locations of both island and mainland are usually listed, indicating a complete, or near-complete census. When only some locations are listed, and others obviously missing, it must be assumed the count was not complete.
The specific locations are indicated with standard abbreviations. A table of abbreviations is included here, with a full name and coordinates of each. Individual observers sometimes used non-standard names or abbreviations, and most are linked to standard names in the table. In some cases, it has not been possible to be certain what a designation means. A map is also included.
The categories of individuals are also indicated with standard abbreviations, including species, sex, and age category. A full table of those designations is likewise included. Once again, there are some non-standard abbreviations, and on rare
occasions it has not been possible to identify their meaning.

Finally, a table of many of the observers whose name appear is included as well. This, however, is not complete, and quite a few names and initials have not been identified. We extend many thanks to all those hundreds of observers, named or not. We also acknowledge consistent support from the University of California Marine Sciences program, many of its staff who helped with logistics, and Año Nuevo State Park and its many personnel that have helped. Funding was provided by UC Santa Cruz, the National Science Foundation, the Office of Naval Research, plus smaller grants from numerous other organizations.

Related Materials

Digital copies of this data dating from 1967-2017 have been deposited in Dash and can be accessed at https://dash.library.ucsc.edu/stash/dataset/doi:10.7291/D1PP47.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Año Nuevo State Reserve (Calif.)
Año Nuevo Island (Calif.)
Northern elephant seal -- Counting -- San Mateo County (Calif.)

Scope and Contents

Hand written charts of daily observation records from northern elephant seal research at the University of California Año Nuevo Reserve at Año Nuevo State Park (San Mateo County, CA).

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Scope and Contents

16 mm film recordings of marine mammals, the seals and sea lions of Año Nuevo Reserve and other animal behavior films. Many of these films depict the research of biologist Richard Peterson, and biologist and UCSC professor Bernard Le Boeuf’s research on elephant seals.