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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Island Welcomes Six New Bald Eagles in Final Reintroduction Effort

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND, CA - Today, biologists introduced six juvenile bald eagles from the San Francisco Zoo to their new home on Santa Cruz Island. These six birds are among the last group of bald eagles to be released on Santa Cruz Island as part of an effort to re-establish bald eagles on the northern Channel Islands.

The juvenile bald eagles will acclimate in a “hack tower” for about a month prior to taking their first flight. During that time, biologists will monitor the birds’ feeding habits and overall health via solar-powered remote video cameras and one-way glass in the hack towers. Once released, satellite transmitters attached to the eagles will allow biologists to track their movements.

Funded by the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program (MSRP), a multi-agency effort to restore resources injured by DDT and PCB releases in the mid-20th century, the bald eagle reintroduction study aims to determine whether eagles released on Santa Cruz Island can establish a self-sustaining population on the Channel Islands.

Since 2002, 46 bald eagles have been released by Institute for Wildlife Studies biologists and about 25 remain on the northern Channel Islands. Another 12 eagles will be released this summer, bringing the total to 58 birds. Biologists have recaptured several of the birds to obtain blood samples for chemical analysis.

The first major milestones for the reintroduction study came earlier this spring when two bald eagle chicks hatched on Santa Cruz Island. Before the two chicks hatched this year, the last known successful nesting of a bald eagle on the Channel Islands was in 1949 on Anacapa Island.

“Although this is the last year we will releasing birds on the island as part of the study, our work is not over,” said Annie Little, MSRP bird biologist. “We will continue to monitor these birds as they begin to breed in the years to come.”

“We are now very excited about the prospect for restoring bald eagles to the Channel Islands,” said Channel Islands National Park Superintendent Russell Galipeau.

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This bald eagle reintroduction study is part the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program (MSRP), a multi-agency program dedicated to restoring natural resources harmed by DDTs and PCBs released into the environment by Montrose Chemical Corporation and other industrial sources in Southern California in the mid 20th century. MSRP is overseen by representatives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, California Department of Fish and Game, California State Lands Commission, and California Department of Parks and Recreation.

The National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy co-own Santa Cruz Island and support the reintroduction of bald eagles as part of an island-wide restoration program that includes saving island foxes, relocating golden eagles, and eliminating non-native feral pigs from the island.

Further information on the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program can be found at: www.montroserestoration.gov.