



**Initiative  
Trilatérale  
des Îles**

**Trilateral  
Island  
Initiative**

**Iniciativa  
Trilateral  
de las Islas**

# **2015 Summary Report**

**Prepared for the Trilateral Committee  
by the Trilateral Island Working Group**

**May 2016**

# Trilateral Island Initiative 2015 Summary Report

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## **Background**

The Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management was established in 1995 to effectively address priorities of continental significance and enhance the conservation efforts of the three countries of the North America bioregion. Under the umbrella of the Trilateral Committee, a Letter of Intent (LOI) was signed between Canada, United States, and Mexico in 2014. The purpose of the LOI is to promote collaboration on the conservation and restoration of island ecosystems and their adjacent coastal and marine environments. This includes islands located in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic Oceans, Gulf of California, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea.

The Trilateral Island Initiative has the following goals: 1) Strengthen on-the-ground conservation and restoration of islands and their surrounding marine waters, 2) Improve coordination on island-related natural resource issues of mutual interest, 3) Strengthen institutional capacities within the three countries, and 4) Improve efficiencies and increase success of island-related conservation projects. The Trilateral Island Initiative is focusing efforts on invasive species, biosecurity, restoration, local communities, and climate change.

In 2015, federal, state, and non-governmental partners from Canada, United States, and Mexico collaborated on multiple island-related activities, some of which are highlighted below.

## **A. Island Restoration Projects**

***Baja California Pacific Islands Seabird Restoration Project, Mexico.*** A bilateral partnership aimed at restoring seabirds on seven islands off the coast of Baja California, Mexico. This collaboration consists of partners from Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas (GECI), Montrose Settlements and S.S. Jacob Luckenbach Trustee Councils, National Audubon Society, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Friends of the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Partner planning meetings for this project occurred in January 2015 (Ensenada, Mexico) and December 2015 (San Diego, CA).



***Northern Gannet Restoration Project, Canada.*** A bilateral planning effort between the U.S. and Canada to benefit Northern Gannets impacted in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Restoration activities discussed by USFWS and Environment Canada and the Memorial University of Newfoundland include use of social attraction to attract additional breeders, habitat restoration, re-establishing colonies on breeding islands, managing human disturbance to nesting birds, reducing mortality and increasing fledgling production by removing fishing gear

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and plastic debris from gannet nests and trapping and relocating predatory foxes and environmental education and outreach.



**Guadalupe Island Restoration, Mexico.** Feral cats are present and pose a serious threat to nesting seabirds, such as the Laysan Albatross. Collaborative planning efforts are underway to eradicate the feral cats with partners from GECI and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. In 2014, GECI visited a predator-proof fence at Kaena Point, Oahu, aimed at protecting nesting Laysan Albatross. In 2015, GECI completed a 735-meter long cat-proof fence along the southern tip of Guadalupe Island in order to protect the growing albatross colony. Also in 2015, biologist David Mazurkiewicz of Channel Islands National Park provided technical assistance on the ongoing cypress forest restoration project on Guadalupe Island.



**Gwaii Haanas, British Columbia, Canada.** For the last five years, Parks Canada, the Haida Nation and international partners have been restoring seabird habitat on several remote islands in Gwaii Haanas, by removing invasive rats. From 2011-2015, bilateral and trilateral collaboration has occurred during implementation of rat eradication projects across four islands. Partners includes Parks Canada, the Haida Nation, Island Conservation, Coastal Conservation, S.S. Jacob Luckenbach Trustee Council, Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. In 2015, Parks Canada continued to monitor the response of seabirds to the absence of rats on these globally important islands.



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***Socorro Island Restoration Project, Mexico.*** This bilateral project focuses on the eradication of the feral cat in order to protect the critically endangered Townsend's Shearwater. In 2011, Mouflon sheep were eradicated from the island. As a result there has been an increase in vegetation and the abundance of native land birds. In 2015, collaborative efforts continued to eradicate the feral cats with partners from GECI, American Bird Conservancy, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. It is anticipated that the eradication project will be completed in 2017.



## **B. Biosecurity Projects**

***Seabird and Invasive Species Curriculum, United States.*** In 2015, a seabird and invasive species curriculum was completed for grades 5 and 6 students in the Pribilofs School District, Alaska. This bilateral project is a partnership between Coastal Conservation, Northern Research Technical Assistance Centre in Alaska, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The curriculum focuses on seabirds and their importance to the ecosystem as well as invasive species, their impacts, and prevention. The curriculum will be made available to teachers and students in other parts of the United States, as well as in Mexico, Chile, Canada, and Russia.



***Island Biosecurity Workshops, Mexico.*** A series of biosecurity workshops were conducted for the Mexican Navy and managers of Natural Protected Areas. With support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity, Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas implemented at least 14 local workshops, trained 70 public officers, and assisted with the completion of 5 Island Biosecurity Plans.



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## C. Exchanges

**Spring 2015: Santa Barbara Island, Channel Islands National Park.** Two biologists from Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas spent a week on Santa Barbara Island with biologists from the California Institute of Environmental Studies. During the visit, the visiting biologists conducted seabird monitoring and learned about the on-going seabird habitat restoration program on the island.

**Summer 2015: Egg Rock, Maine.** Two biologists from Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas participated in the National Audubon Society's Seabird Management Internship program at Maine Coastal Island Sanctuaries. The 10-week field practicum focused on applied seabird management techniques.



## D. Conferences/Meetings

- **February 18-21, Pacific Seabird Group Meeting, San Jose, CA:** Multiple presentations by Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas on the bilateral Baja California Pacific Islands Seabird Restoration Project.

- **April 10-13, California Islands Botanical Extravaganza, San Clemente Island, CA:** Botanists and ecologists from the U.S. and Mexico held their annual workshop to discuss plant conservation on the California Islands archipelago.

- **April 13-16, Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management Meeting, San Diego, CA:** Presentations by the Trilateral Island Working Group to the Migratory Bird, Species of Common Concern, and Executive Tables.

- **May 27-29, Sonoran Joint Venture Meeting, Kino Bay, Mexico.** Presentation by David Mazurkiewicz, Channel Islands National Park, on bilateral partnership opportunities for islands.

## E. Proposals/Agreements/Plans

**Plan of Action:** The Letter of Intent identifies the development of a Plan of Action aimed at strengthening cross coordination, setting priorities, and identifying collaborative projects. In 2015, the Trilateral Island Working Group worked on the Plan of Action for the initiative, including identifying goals, focal areas, and priority actions.

**Commission for Environmental Cooperation:** The Trilateral Island Working Group submitted a proposal titled "*Promoting Sustainable Local Island Communities in North America by Building*

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*Capacity on Island Biosecurity*” as part of the North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action grant program. Submitted in August 2015.

**IUCN World Conservation Congress:** The Trilateral Island Working Group submitted a proposal titled "*Catalyzing Conservation by removing Invasive Species from Islands: A North American Perspective*" for the 2016 meeting in Oahu, Hawaii. The proposal was accepted and the group will participate in the workshop in September 2016. Proposal submitted in October 2015.

**Memorandum of Understanding:** An MOU between Island Conservation (IC) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was signed in 2015 at the Trilateral Meeting. The MOU reflects the commitment of the U.S. to further the Letter of Intent. The MOU will strengthen and expand the USFWS/IC partnership and allows for other partners to join effort. The MOU promotes a coordinated approach to island conservation through project implementation, information exchange, education and training, inventorying and monitoring.

## Coordination Calls

Trilateral Working Group coordination conference calls were held on January 13, March 3, August 11, 2015. Participants in the Trilateral Working Group calls include: Patrick Nantel (Parks Canada), Robyn Irvine (Parks Canada), Annie Little (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Humberto Berlanga (Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad), Gregg Howald (Island Conservation), Alfonso Aguirre Muñoz (Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas), Federico Méndez Sánchez (Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas), Eduardo E. Iñigo-Elias (Cornell Lab of Ornithology) and Jonathan Putnam (National Park Service).

## Partners

