



End of Year Newsletter

Winter 2017

Dear Friends,

Sitting in my home office watching crossbills, nuthatches, chickadees, thrushes, ravens, various raptors, and woodpeckers flit among the mixed woodlands outside, I'm forever grateful for the boons granted us.

I'm one of the many who, during difficult times, takes comfort from the endlessly complicated simplicities of nature – nature that's difficult to understand and nurture properly, but easy to love and fight for. No doubt it can be a wearying, uphill battle, as the last year's depraved attacks upon our democracy and environmental protections have illustrated.

But we at ROEP aren't done, quitting or tired, not by a long shot. In fact, we are energized, because there's hope and joy to be had in overcoming enormous obstacles. With every environmental law undermined, with every fresh attack on science, we grow more determined. In truth, we are

stronger now in wisdom and understanding than we were a year ago. Our continuing goal is to use that strength effectively, and to bolster determination at every opportunity. This is our planet.

We carry on in large and small ways. **Today I'll highlight just part of our work in 2017 and look ahead to 2018. It's been an excellent year for our project, thanks to your support in every way, from volunteering to offering advice and financial support.** In the new year, as requested through a member poll, we'll offer quarterly updates with in-depth program news.

It's been almost 6 years since our founding, with lots of otters under the bridge, the pier, the willows, the boathouse, the clouds, and occasionally almost underfoot. I can report with thanks and gladness that our community science project has grown from a tiny bundle of possibilities to a thriving, here-to-stay organization.

**We're still small, lean and hungry, a little fierce, extremely adaptable and a lot of fun – just like an otter.**

With your continued enthusiastic support, we'll continue our research and our mission to educate and engage the community in working toward conservation of our shared watersheds. Now and onward!

For the otters, for the waters,



Megan Isadore, Executive Director

[Donate Now](#)

Our Board began 2017 with two things in mind. One, we have established that otters are back, they're doing reasonably well, and are expanding their range south and westward.

**Now our challenge is to expand our reach, our education and research programs to keep up with the otters.**

### *Our Mission ...*

*is to engage the public in supporting conservation and restoration by linking river otter recovery to the health of our watersheds through education, research, and community science.*

### *Our Vision ...*

*is to inspire personal connections and motivate meaningful actions to preserve our shared natural landscapes for future generations.*

To that end, we revisited our mission statement and revised our vision statement, the better to express our determination **to turn research and education into action, and to reach every individual we can to truly participate in responsibility for caretaking our beautiful planet.**



[Donate Now](#)

# The Year in Review: Highlights



## Celebrating the Sentinels of the Watershed

In May we hosted our second large event, a **5th Anniversary celebration** at the Berkeley Botanical Gardens. We were thrilled to invite Dr. Nicole Duplaix, IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist Group Chairperson as an honored speaker, not to mention our own local heroes, Dr. Sarah Allen and Ranger Mia Monroe from the National Park Service. In difficult political times, we look to our strongest, most intelligent and creative leaders to bolster our determination to continue to preserve watersheds and wetlands for all living beings.



Terence Carroll, Megan Isadore, Nicole Duplaix, Mia Monroe, Bob De Leo

## New Partners, New Endeavors

2017 brought us a **long-planned project, a prey species analysis study. We're investigating both Drakes Bay and Tomales Bay prey species during 2017 and 2018**, under the able guidance of Stori Oates, our Board Science Lead. In addition to Stori, our enthusiastic team is composed of interns present and past, four Marin Academy students, several volunteers and four of our own Board members. We're all excited about this project, and it's a terrific way to pass knowledge, experience and skills among generations.



© Carlos Porrata

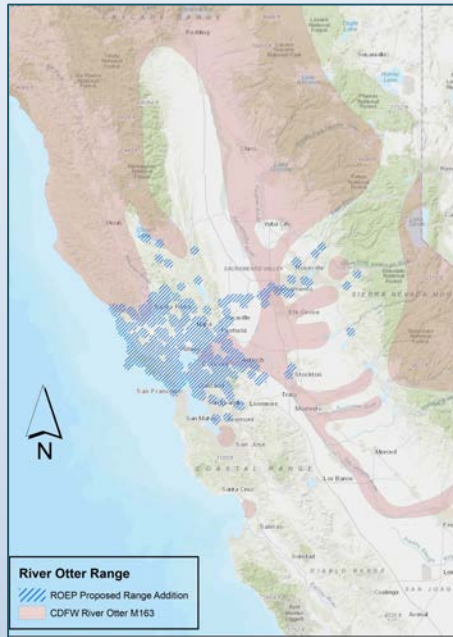
The need for research on the diet of river otter populations is important to their conservation, as river otters are top carnivores, and diet has direct implications for protecting other aquatic resources. As a potential keystone species in the San Francisco Bay Area aquatic habitat, our study will provide a better understanding of the role river otters might play in the Tomales Bay and Drakes Bay food webs. An understanding of river otter seasonal diets will aid in management of species of local concern, including threatened or endangered species such as Steelhead and Coho Salmon, by providing data on whether, when, and in what proportion otters take such prey, and **will provide a baseline for continuing work to measure the effects of climate change and to understand complex ecological interactions in our watersheds.**

*This project is made possible with partial funding through the Sacramento Zoo Conservation Fund and the Pt. Reyes National Seashore Association.*

## Otter Spotter Heads South

Here at ROEP Central, we love to watch Otter Spotter reports come in through our website portal. Since we began soliciting otter sightings, we've received more than 2300, and have established that river otters are expanding their range southward and westward. Within the past year we received our first sighting from Gilroy, as well as a possible sighting in the Santa Cruz mountains. Neither sighting was confirmed through photos, so we're stepping up our outreach and surveying in the southernmost areas of likely otter range.

**An updated understanding of otter range in California is important for agencies and organizations, that require current data on presence and/or abundance of river otters to help resource managers to make decisions about restoration, mitigation, spill response and land and/or water management.**



**In 2018, with your support, we'll be hitting the road to offer presentations, complete surveys along waterways of interest, speak to land managers and advertise the return of river otters.** Our goal is always to let the otters speak for us, spreading the joy of healthy watersheds and inspiring a meaningful connection to our home places.

Please see our [Otter Spotter Map](#).

*Supported by the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment Wildlands Grass Roots Fund and the Lagunitas Community Grants Program.*

## Honors

Director Megan Isadore was appointed Deputy Continental Coordinator for North America by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Otter Specialist Group.



Volunteer Karen James won an international photo competition for the cover of the IOSF's Otter Review.



We were recognized for our work with an "Otter Oscar" by the International Otter Survival Fund.



Congressman Jared Huffman honored us with a Certificate of Recognition for our conservation work.

## Our Volunteers

I've been following Dan Rather's postings from his trip across America in the past year, and have been both elated and devastated by his observations, but always educated and grateful for his attention and wisdom. A recent post resonated deeply, since we depend upon our volunteers for many aspects of our project.

*“And then there are those I've met in my travels around the United States who give of themselves every day to strengthen their communities. They are teachers, firefighters, and guidance counselors. They volunteer in nursing homes and youth centers. They are part of an America of largely unappreciated service, but most who do this work have no interest in seeking recognition. They understand that each act of assistance is a vote of confidence in our common humanity.” Dan Rather*

And they are great-hearted people who are drawn to supporting a clean, healthy planet, our shared watersheds and are in love with their home place.  
Volunteers, we salute you!

### In the Spotlight ~ Jocelyn Winkler



“My first otter encounter was at Rodeo Beach during our training. Through binoculars, I was able to see the otter fishing and eating—whiskers puffed in all directions. The next time I saw otters I watched them for at least thirty minutes, fishing and playing with each other. Such a blast!!

I've been volunteering with ROEP since June and love seeing the wildlife videos that pop up on the cameras each week-- otters, coyotes, bobcats! I'm so happy to have the opportunity to learn from such fascinating and genuine people doing such important work in the field of conservation--thank you ROEP!“



2018 Volunteers (not all are pictured):

Sarah Allen, Jordan Arce, Robyn Aston, Peter Barto, Terence Carroll, Beth Cataldo, Frank Cipriano, Daniel Dietrich, Brenden Collet-Grether, Robert De Leo, Barry Deutsch, Jaymi Heimbuch, Megan Isadore, Sierra Jackovics, Kevi Johnson, Dudley Miller, Brett Miller, Holly Groves, Karen James, Nancy Jean, Mary Ellen King, Julie Litwin, Dave Mackenzie, Brett Miller, Dudley Miller, Macie Millstein, Aurelia Moriyama-Gurish, Christian Naventi, Craig Nikitas, Stori Oates, Maia Perry, Carlos Porrata, Yvonne Provaznik, David Schatzki, Tom Serfass, Emma Sharpe, Jouko van der Kruijssen, Jeffrey Wang, Jocelyn Winkler

[\*\*Donate Now\*\*](#)

## With Appreciation

*Thank you for your support. Every donation helps us protect and conserve watersheds for all.*

Jean Amos  
 Peter Barto  
 Sharon Beals  
 Annamarie Beckel  
 Suzanne Bohan  
 Christopher Boyd &  
 Margaret O'Brien  
 Anthony Brewer  
 Holly Butler  
 Jim Carroll  
 Terence Carroll & Megan Isadore  
 Karin & Steven Chase  
 Glenda & Henry Corning  
 Ann Cross  
 Susan Delmanowski  
 Thomas Denune  
 Barry and Barbara Deutsch  
 Wendy Doherty  
 Annie & Paul Dolan-Niles  
 Barbara Dornan  
 Ken Drexler  
 Dunn Esparza Family

Ashley Eastman  
 Michelle Eaton  
 Cathy Edgett  
 June Eidson  
 Connie English  
 Virginia Fifield  
 Larry Ford  
 Mary Gleim  
 Holly Groves  
 Virginia Hadley  
 Julie Hanft  
 Jo Healey  
 Susan Heick  
 Claudia Hein  
 Eva Heninwolf  
 Ceci Herrmann  
 Denise Hill  
 Stephen Hillard Gary  
 Holm  
 Heather Hughes  
 Janet Isadore-Barreca  
 Julie Jacobs

Karen James  
 Diane Jenett  
 Katherine Jones  
 Julie Kaye  
 Mary Keydash  
 MaryEllen King & Bob DeLeo  
 Mikael Kwart  
 Julie Litwin & Shelley Sella  
 Cynthia Lloyd  
 Erin Loury  
 Gerald Meral  
 Bridger & Katherine Mitchell  
 Mia Monroe & Steve Meyer  
 Ryan Monroe  
 Craig Nikitas  
 Liam O'Brien  
 Stori Oates & Bill Meyer  
 Anne Oliver  
 Lois Patton  
 Carol Peterson  
 Anastasija Petrosova

Yvonne Provaznik &  
 David Schatzki  
 Emily Savage & Stefan  
 Gracik  
 Dick Schneider  
 Frank Snitz  
 Alice Stauffer  
 Laraine Stein  
 Margaret Szczepaniak  
 Duncan Taylor  
 Heidi & Charles Triay  
 Diane Valenti  
 Annette Varady  
 Monica Ventrice  
 Tanis Walters  
 David Watts  
 David & Idie Weinsoff  
 Karin Zahorik  
 Rebecca Zettler

[Donate Now](#)



### Photography

Beth Cataldo  
 Daniel Dietrich  
 Karen James  
 Megan Isadore  
 Jouko van der Kruijssen  
 Carlos Porrata  
 Joe Soule

### Science Advisory Board

Dr. Sarah Allen  
 Dr. Nicole Duplaix  
 Dr. John Kelly  
 Dr. Frank Cipriano  
 Dr. Brian Simison  
 Dr. Thomas Serfass  
 Richard Vacha

### Advisors

Robert De Leo  
 Jacqueline Jones  
 Mia Monroe  
 David Schatzki  
 Ramon Townsend

### Painting

Megan Isadore

### Board of Directors

Terence Carroll, President  
 Barry Deutsch, Vice President  
 Robyn Aston, Treasurer and Volunteers  
 Christian Naventi, Secretary  
 Mary Ellen King, Development  
 Stori Oates, Science  
 Megan Isadore, Executive Director