



SAN FRANCISCO BAY
BIRD OBSERVATORY



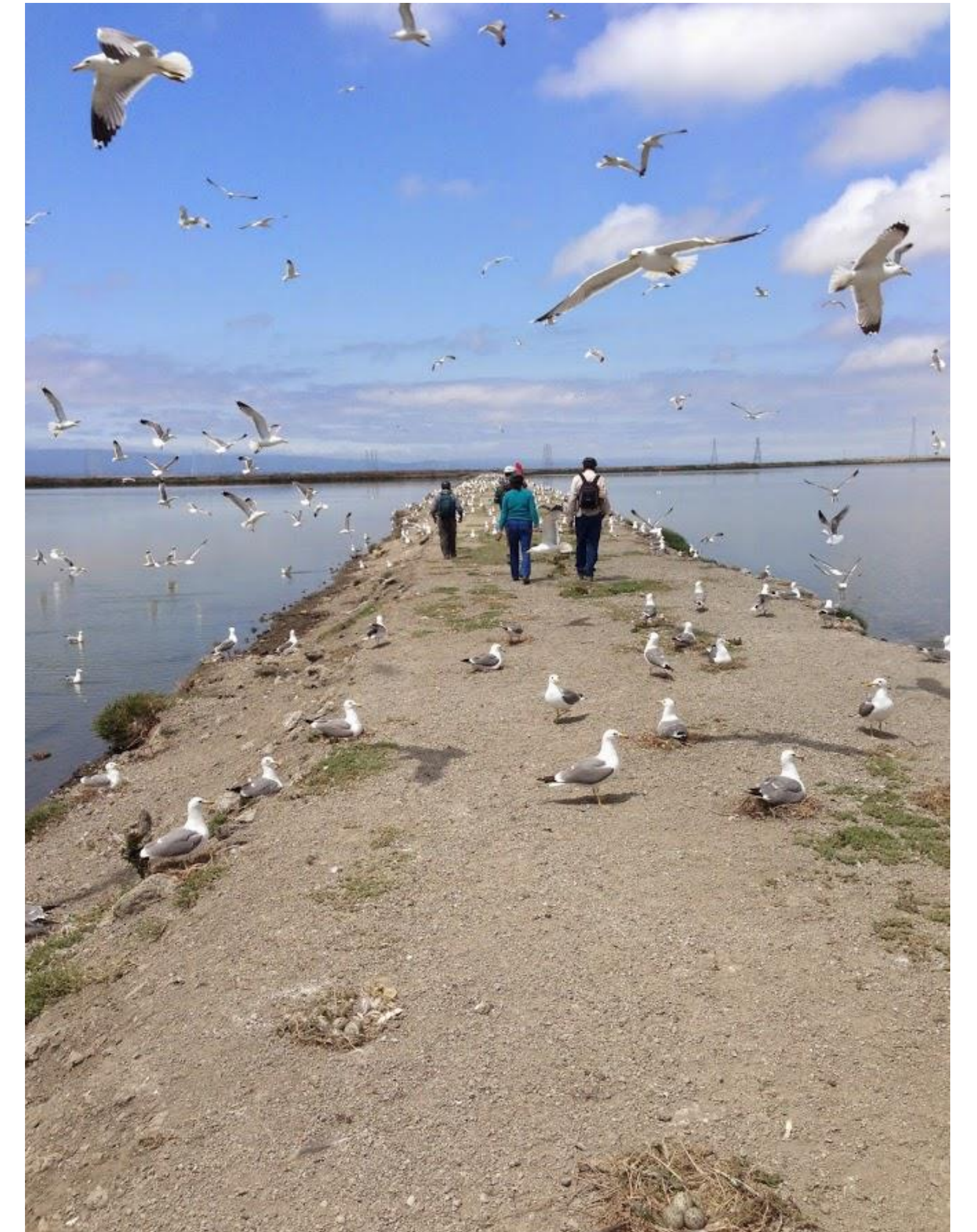
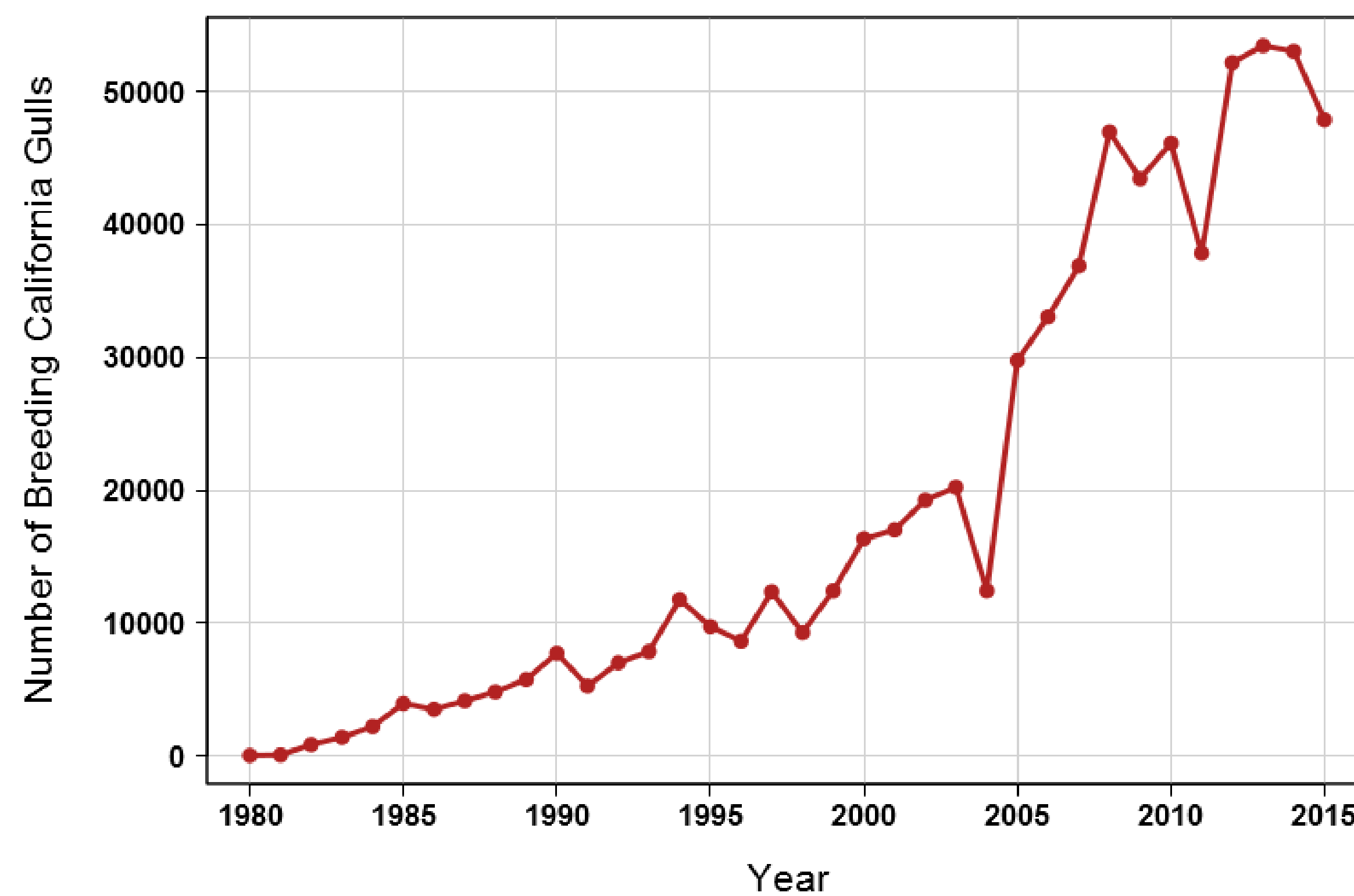
Coastal Ecosystems Institute
of Northern California

California Gull Population Growth and Response to Restoration in South San Francisco Bay

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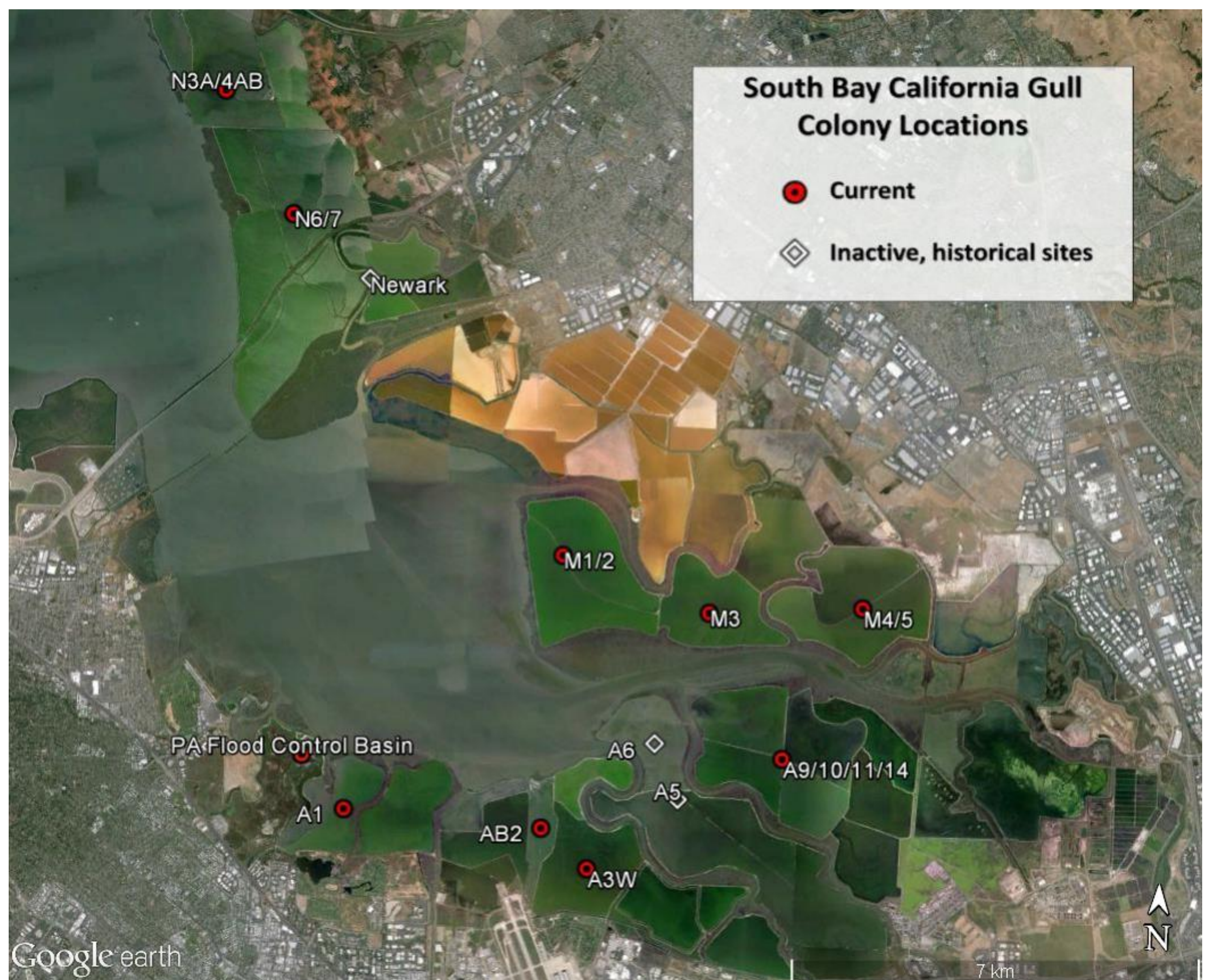
Background & Methods

- California Gulls (*Larus californicus*) nest in colonies on pond bottoms, levees and islands of the South Bay Salt Ponds
- During peak incubation, we walk through each colony once and tally all active nests to estimate breeding population

Population Growth

- In 1980, 24 birds first nested at pond A6
- In 2015, 48,000 nested at 10 colonies (4 in South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project footprint)
- Currently largest colonies are at A9/10/11/14 and the PA Flood Control Basin (PAFCB)

| Year | A6 | A9/10/11/14 | PAFCB |
|------|-------|-------------|-------|
| 2010 | 23108 | 0 | 1704 |
| 2011 | 0 | 11956 | 4478 |
| 2012 | 0 | 18328 | 9200 |
| 2013 | 0 | 15900 | 14014 |
| 2014 | 0 | 14414 | 14264 |
| 2015 | 0 | 13204 | 13784 |



Ecological Impacts

- California Gulls consume eggs and chicks of terns and shorebirds
- Initiate nests prior to other species and use the same nesting locations, displacing other species

Response to Restoration

- In 2010, pond A6 (formerly holding on average 76 % of the South Bay population) was restored to tidal
- Colony growth and band re-sighting data show that the majority of the A6 nesting gulls moved to the A9/10/11/14 and PAFCB

Research & Management Recommendations

- Continued gull monitoring and hazing to detect and prevent new/expanding colonies, particularly following restoration events
- Continued monitoring of waterbirds affected by gull predation and colony encroachment
- Further research on gull nest success and gull movements in San Francisco Bay

Acknowledgements

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