

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## OSPREY CHICK HATCHES ON TOP OF MARITIME CRANE, IN SAN FRANCISCO'S FIRST DOCUMENTED OSPREY BIRTH

SAN FRANCISCO – If Ospreys were songbirds, this chick might be singing “Home on the Crane.”

A pair of Osprey have given birth to a chick in a nest on top of a Bayview/Hunter’s Point crane, in the first documented birth of a young Osprey in the city of San Francisco.

The crane and nest are located on Pier 80 adjacent to the Port of San Francisco’s Pier 94. Several industrial and construction-related businesses are located at Pier 94, but the Port has also preserved five acres along the waterfront for salt marsh habitat and an buffer zone between nature and industry. For ten years, this small marsh has been the focus of habitat restoration efforts by volunteers from Golden Gate Audubon Society.

“It’s incredibly inspiring to see Osprey breeding on a site that used to be a dump filled with trash, old furniture and tires,” said Noreen Weeden, Volunteer Coordinator for Golden Gate Audubon. “It shows that even small patches of urban wetlands can have benefits for wildlife if we make a commitment to protect and restore them.”

Golden Gate Audubon began restoration of Pier 94 on Earth Day 2002, with money from an oil spill mitigation fund. In 2006, the Port removed tons of asphalt,

concrete, tires and other debris from the marsh, graded the shoreline and cut channels to improve circulation. Golden Gate Audubon subsequently worked with the Port to place clean sand along a portion of the shoreline to buffer wave impact. Over the years 1,000 volunteers put in 2,400 hours -- planting over 500 native plants, removing 80 cubic yards of non-native weeds, and removing 1,500 gallon bins filled with trash and material for recycling.

The year after the constructed improvements to the marsh, birds started to nest there. The site also became the first place in San Francisco with a self-propagating stand of *California Sueda* (California Sea Blight), a native plant that had been eradicated from the city but was re-introduced with seeds from Morro Bay.

The marsh at Pier 94 remains surrounded by a heavily industrialized area. But this spring, Golden Gate Audubon staff noticed the Osprey building a nest on the crane and notified the Port. Port officials enthusiastically agreed to accommodate the birds – halting use of the maritime crane, and educating workers so they wouldn't disturb the nest.

In early June, Weeden noticed that their efforts had paid off and the nest was now home to a live chick. This appears to be the first documented instance of Ospreys breeding in the city of San Francisco.

Osprey populations plummeted in the 1950-70s due to the pesticide DDT, but their populations recovered once DDT was banned. Osprey dive for fish but also occasionally eat rodents, crustaceans and birds. The young remain in the nest for 48-59 days before they are ready to fly.

Members of the public are invited to view the Osprey nest during Golden Gate Audubon's next work day at Pier 94 – **Saturday July 7<sup>th</sup>, from 9 am to 12 noon.** GGAS will have a spotting scope available to help people view the nest. It will also have gloves and tools available for people to help continue restoration of Pier 94 to benefit wildlife. For information on joining the volunteer day, see <http://www.goldengateaudubon.org/conservation/wetlands/pier-94/> or email [volunteer@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:volunteer@goldengateaudubon.org).

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*NOTE TO MEDIA: Golden Gate Audubon naturalists are available to meet media at Pier 94 to help identify the nest and provide information on the ecosystem at Pier 94. The best time to view and photograph the nest is during the afternoon, on days when it is not windy.*

*To arrange an interview/visit, contact Ilana DeBare at (510) 301-5573 or [idebare@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:idebare@goldengateaudubon.org).*

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