COLONY SITE ACCOUNTS
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Individual colony site accounts are organized by subregion. Regional and subregional distribution maps indicate the locations of all known heronries that were active in one or more years from 1991 to 2005. Each subregional map is accompanied by a table listing each heronry, by name, county location, the species known to have nested at the site, the most recent year of nesting activity, and the page number of the colony site account. To facilitate the use of this information in regional conservation and planning, the data reported in the maps and colony site accounts are available from the authors in tabular form and in shape files suitable for geographic information systems (GIS).

Colony site accounts include information on ownership, nesting habitat, proximity to wetlands, human land use, historical trends, reproductive performance, nest disturbance, conservation concerns, and management recommendations. The land use category, “protected natural area,” includes local, state, and federal parks, state and federal wildlife refuges and ecological reserves, National Forest, Bureau of Land Management lands, and privately owned sanctuaries. We report known sources of nest disturbance and predation, as well as evidence of potential nest predators or other sources of disturbance based on published accounts from other areas (e.g., Smith and Callopy 1995, Frederick and Callopy 1989b). To illustrate historical changes in the sizes of individual heronries, we report the peak number of active nests as an annual estimate of the number of breeding pairs.

In accounts for most heronries, we report two components of annual reproductive success based on the performance of individual nests: (1) annual nest survivorship and (2) the annual number of young produced in successful nests (see Methods). Figures illustrating these estimates include standard error (SE) bars, which indicate approximately half of the upper 95% confidence intervals of the estimates. Many of the error bars are small or absent because the estimates are very precise whenever most or all of the nests in a colony are monitored. However, some estimates with small or absent standard errors may not accurately reflect mean colony values because of the occasional lack of variation within very small samples. Therefore, estimates based on fewer than ten nests that represent less than half of the colony are indicated by an asterisk. The figures also indicate a few cases where annual error measurements were absent because only a single nest was measured.

In accounts for heronries in the South Bay, Santa Clara Valley, the Outer Pacific Coast south of San Francisco, and the southern portion of the Interior East Bay, we report only the peak number of young observed annually (summed over all nests). This number provides a rough index of overall productivity of each colony but is sensitive to annual differences in colony size and unmeasured differences in overall fledging success. Most importantly, the peak number of young observed annually does not represent per capita reproductive success and should therefore be interpreted with considerable caution.