CSUCI enters Cooperative Agreement with MMS to Study Coastal Bird Populations

Camarillo, Calif., Nov. 13, 2007-California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) and the U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) are working together on a project that involves the inventory of shorebirds at 14 beaches in Ventura County. The project began in July 2007 and will culminate in 2010.

Students of CSUCI's Environmental Science and Resource Management Program are conducting a three-year field-study to measure and characterize the seasonal populations of various shorebirds at beaches in Ventura County. Ten years ago, the MMS conducted a similar shorebird inventory for Ventura County. Data collected during the next three years by CSUCI students will be compared to data collected through the MMS inventory.

"Shorebirds are fairly long-lived and are a good barometer of changing conditions in coastal regions," explained Donald Rodriguez, Associate Professor of Environmental Science and Resource Management (ESRM) at CSUCI. Angela Chapman, a Lecturer in Biology at CSUCI, also is a co-principal investigator on the project research team.

The shorebird project is a cooperative agreement between the MMS and Cal State Channel Islands. Under the agreement, CSUCI undergraduate students will assist the MMS scientists by conducting the shorebird surveys. The development of a long-term data set on shorebird populations will provide useful information in assessing possible impacts to Ventura County's coastal regions.

This is CSUCI's first partnership with any U.S. Department of the Interior agency.

"The MMS is excited to partner with CSUCI on these coastal bird observations along Ventura County beaches," said Ellen Aronson, MMS Pacific Region Manager. "Information from this current study will be useful to the MMS and other organizations in understanding the health of local shorebird populations and, on a larger scale, the overall health of our local coastal communities."

The methodology for observing the shorebird populations was developed by the MMS scientists in collaboration with the CSUCI researchers. Recent Cal State Channel Islands ESRM graduate Chris Kahler helped refine sampling methods as part of his senior capstone project last spring. The project is being continued by Garrick Thompson, a CSUCI senior majoring in ESRM. Thompson is examining the historical data of the shorebird inventory for his capstone project. When the spring semester at CSUCI begins in January, another undergraduate student will be phased in to work for another year on the project.

CSUCI faculty, and students and the MMS science staff will continue with field-study work at Ormond Beach in Oxnard in late November.

For more information about the shorebird inventory project contact Donald Rodriguez, Associate Professor of Environmental Science and Resource Management at CSUCI, 805-437-8494 or donald.rodriguez@csuci.edu.

For media inquiries about the shorebird inventory project contact Ceal Potts, Communications Specialist at CSUCI, 805-437-8940 or cecilia.potts@csuci.edu.

For additional information on regional MMS environmental studies go to http://www.mms.gov/omm/pacific/

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CSU Channel Islands is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

The Minerals Management Service is responsible for managing the Nation's offshore energy and mineral resources and the collection and disbursement of revenues associated with energy and mineral resource production from Federal and Indian lands. Under authority of Section 388 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the MMS will regulate alternative energy projects on the Outer Continental Shelf. Alternative energy includes wind, wave, and ocean current and solar.