



Preventing Extinctions

630 Water St, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 831-359-4787 www.islandconservation.org

November 27, 2023

Letter of Support for the Catalina Island Restoration Project

To Whom It May Concern,

Island Conservation would like to express our full support for the Catalina Island Restoration Project led by the Catalina Island Conservancy (Conservancy). Island Conservation's mission to prevent extinctions by removing invasive species from islands has been the cornerstone of our actions since 1994. With our partners, we have successfully restored 71 islands worldwide, benefiting hundreds of at-risk populations and species. With this experience, we recognize the profound importance of the work the Catalina Island Conservancy is undertaking. The Conservancy's plan to remove the non-native mule deer population from the island is a crucial step towards protecting Catalina's unique biodiversity and delicate ecosystem.

The continued presence of these invasive ungulates threatens the native plant and animal species that call Catalina home, including over 60 species that are found nowhere else on earth. Due to their direct negative impact on native vegetation, mule deer are contributing to the loss of native habitats, increased soil erosion, and decreased water capture on Catalina. The removal of the non-native deer is necessary to address these issues as part of the Catalina Island Restoration Project.

The method proposed by the Conservancy to complete the removal effort, including the use of highly skilled hunters in helicopters, has been proven globally to be an effective and efficient solution. This method was used to complete the removal of goats from Galapagos Islands between 1997 and 2006, pigs from Santa Cruz Island between 2005 and 2007, deer and elk from Santa Rosa Island between 2011 and 2015, and many other successful island restoration efforts. The removal of non-native ungulates allowed for the natural recovery of these ecosystems and for land managers to take more meaningful actions to support recovery, just as the Conservancy plans to do with the development of landscape scale restoration and long-term monitoring plans for Catalina following the removal of deer.

Island Conservation supports the Catalina Island Conservancy's full initiative to restore Catalina Island, a process that must start with the removal of the mule deer to achieve full benefits to the ecosystem. The success of this project will help to create a more resilient Catalina Island and will serve as an inspiration to the field of conservation.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "PAB", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Penny Becker
Vice President, Conservation
Island Conservation
