

Many species of wildlife have been eliminated from their traditional range, for one reason or another. In other cases, species have naturally recovered from catastrophic decline, expanding into their former range. In remarkably short order, this massive population was nearly extirpated, through a combination of commercial hunting by Europeans and subsistence hunting by aboriginal groups, competition with livestock, and fencing off of migration routes (Isenberg 2000). A small relict population of otters survived in an inaccessible part of the California coast south of Monterey Bay and provided the nucleus for gradual spread of the population back northward and southward along the coast. A well-documented example is the California sea otter (*Enhydra lutris*; Lubina and Levin 1988).