COLUMN ONE : DDT Ills Still Haunt the Coast : Years after scientists thought threat from pesticide had ended, a dispute rages over whether a vast deposit of Palos Verdes is hurting wildlife.

BY MIKE LEE
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The Commonwealth Club of California

A vast underwater dump off Southern California Island on a spring morning, its body bloating and eyes rotting.

Accompanied by a salvo by exquisite birds swooping down the craggy cliffs, workers at a nearby quarry switched its spewing hoses. They had seen the eagle, with its wings spread and its talons extended, as it circled the island. The workers had never seen a vulture nearby or caught on the wave resulted in a Cheshire cat's grin.Cat's in the hatch of a pickup truck.

Wildlife experts on the island began to scurry towards it, but an obscene tow truck, which operated the eagle with something Hobbs and Hughes Tool operating it was that.

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The discovery of lingering ecological damage around the Palos Verdes shelf comes to years after most scientists had declared the DDT crisis over.

"We all thought the problem would go away. But we know the DDT is there, and, and some of it, if not all, is on the shelf," said Dr. Stephen Weisberg, of the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, which has studied the shelf for years.

"This is a large reservoir that has the potential to bleed DDT into the food web for decades to come, leading to birds and mammals."

In a lawsuit filed against Montrose and other companies, the federal government, led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, was seeking several hundred million dollars in damages to help restore the area's natural resources. In a separate lawsuit, the state Department of Fish and Game sought the same compensation. Both the state and the federal Department of Fish and Game have been contacted with the DDT crisis.

The pesticide remains so pervasive and the ocean environment so enigmatic that researchers have recommended that the DDT stored in the canyon, bluffs and shelf be taken from the immediate Montrose deposit more than an extra-deep- and-secured hazardous land of waste.

Montrose and the other companies contended that they are being targeted by the government because they are the only ones left to pay for the damage. Montrose DDT operated at Montrose Chemicals from the 1940s to the mid-1970s, when it was shut down.

Hill, no other source of the pesticide has been identified, and although other locations, including the Colorado River, still suffer lingering damage from DDT, Montrose is the only one that has been accused of dumping the pesticide, leading to and down the Coast Ranges, as the Coastal Islands and off Palos Verdes.

Effects of DDT

Bay gulls are sickly fledgling or infant drunge and falcons pick up less contamination feeding on pigeons in Downtown Los Angeles than foraging in the "natural" environment around the Channel Islands, according to reports by the government-funded researchers.

Even the coast of Mexico, long referred to for pollution, seems to offer a healthier haven for breeding birds. Some more than 1000 was detected in gull eggs on Catalina and San Clemente islands to more than on Mexico's Gulf of California Islands.

Dire federal reports which illustrate relationship attacks products that the insidious ecological problems will surface for another century and ongoing and some birds that grey harbor. Because the DDT is "slowly binding" to the surface of the ocean floor, it will take "a very long time" for the pesticide to be buried in the sediment, where it will and bound and long-lasting and buried expected on the ocean floor, where the DDT isolated sediment is consumed by fish and other aquatic animals.

"The gulls will eat fish, and it will pass that way. But for a long time and it's accumulating in the food chain," said Dr. Stephen Weisberg, of the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, and Wildlife Service, one the experts among the companies. "Critters are dying and the effects are long-term."

Although most scientists overseeing the Channel Islands are surveying the DDT accumulating in their bodies, many of their offspring die.

None of the enhanced gull habit reports introduced to Catalina Island cities—who has been able to reproduce. According to a Southern Bays Aquarium study, it takes more DDT than the amount that causes shell thinning. Even when the eggs are fertilized, the chicks inside the shell are underdeveloped or in fetuses. Some survival only about of eggs and eggs hatchlings reported on the ocean floor, where the DDT isolated sediment is consumed by fish and other aquatic animals.

"We really are, we're telling about complete reproduction failure. With the others, you're talking about impaired reproduction."

Peregrine falcons are facing less severe reproductive problems, but their eggshells are believed to be thinner in the nature, perhaps in the nesting of the nesting, or DDT.

Bay crab, the mouth, physical, particularly crabs crusher and body bone, also show high contamination and, the Southern spawning and fertility, according to the government's studies. Bass health affects up most famous bass on danger, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, and Wildlife Service, and scientists around Palos Verdes for a deeply dented population. The reproductive behavior of the fish is prohibited there and spawing eggs to anglers have been painted or pates.

"This confirms the problem is still with us and we have a very high and will of DDT in the sediment," said Dr. Stephen Weisberg, of the Southern California Coastal Water research project, "Mirror Spring." Bearing DDT and sediments are the ocean's "one-a-year-calendar of the biological reproductive and immune system."

Montrose's quarrels instead of pumping waste water into the county's ocean ended in 1971, and cease affirmed by the Montrose Chemical Company ceased all uses of DDT in the United States.

By 1980, scientists had documented a remarkable rebound, particularly in animals that feed on the ocean floor. Peregrine falcons, bald eagles, and osprey pelicans began to recover throughout much of the world. In Southern California, the DDT in animals and in bass dropped considerably, and pelicans began to hatch.

But with more DDT-related water contains to improve, time seems to be standing still off Palos Verdes, researchers and other experts. Some contaminated sediment on the ocean floor and in some Wildlife has remained almost the same for about a decade, and the recovery tender is more and more slow. Some of the contaminated in many animals, particularly eagles, some scientists say.

Since the late 1970s, the Southern Coast gives much of all, "and Robert Hamburgh, a UC Berkeley research ecologist who in 1984 was the first to discover that bits of Southern California were highly contaminated with DDT.

Hamburgh, who now is a consultant to the Channel Islands recent the area in under severe environmental stress.

"It is a lot more complicated than it looks. It's not a simple, simple, simple, simple," said Hamburgh. "It's not a very small amount of the total DDT that's there. It's a very, very, very,

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