

Evaluating the Habitat Impact of Nutria within Union Bay

BACKGROUND

Nutria (*Myocastor coypus*) are beaver-like mammals native to South America. Many were illegally released, and have established populations around Puget Sound. They have eaten their way through marshes across King, Skagit, and Thurston Counties.

There is a population of nutria in Union Bay, but the number and location of the animals is unknown.

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OBJECTIVES

- Map the current nutria population.
- Determine their diet in Union Bay.
- Figure out if they're selecting for any kind of habitat.
- Find what might be affecting their habitat choices.
- Create a set of management guidelines for nutria control and landowner education.

METHODS

- By canoe and on foot, map active nutria burrows in Union Bay.
- Place motion sensitive cameras by burrows and nutria trails to record population count and information on feeding behavior.

Measure:

- Type of vegetation consumed/damage
- Distance from burrows
- Habitat type



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