Western Snowy Plover
From Eggs and Fragile Chicks to Release

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In 2010, 2 Western Snowy Plover chicks and 11 eggs were abandoned and then salvaged at the Bolsa Chica Wetlands Ecological Reserve. They were hatched, reared and released. This is their story.
Western Snowy Plover – Pacific Population
(Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus)
Listing Status: Threatened

Adult Male Incubating Eggs

Russell Wilson
Sea and Sage Audubon
Adult Female

James R. Gallagher
Sea and Sage Audubon
Juvenile Resting in a Footprint

James R. Gallagher
Sea and Sage Audubon
Egg Incubator
with Turning Mechanism and Motor

Ross Griswold
Egg and Incubator Care
Chick Hatching Sequence
Animal Intensive Care Incubator
Food

...and live crickets!
Less than One Hour Old
Mirrors and Stuffed Animals make life a little less stressful for the little ones.
They usually do not eat until ~24 hrs old. First Food is in a Very Shallow Dish.

Dried bloodworms in very shallow water and ground cat and trout chow on the substrate.
One – Two Days Old

More food items are added
The Chicks are Moved to Terrariums at 2-3 Days of Age
The plovers are banded with a USFWS band as well as plastic color bands.
Color tape is put over all of the bands, so they actually have two color bands on each leg.

The plastic bands and tape are heat sealed.
Each individual has its own unique color combination so that identifications of live birds can be made in the field.
Example: The four color bands are read from the left leg to the right leg, top to bottom.

This one reads yellow buckskin : green blue, or yn:gb
yellow (y) over buckskin (n) on the left leg
green (g) over blue (b) on the right leg
Colors used:
Aqua = a
Black = k
Blue = b
Green = g
Lime = l
Orange = o
Pink = p
Red = r
Violet = v
Yellow = y
White = w
Buckskin = n
Silver (metal service band)=s

1. Read left leg bands first, top to bottom, then right leg bands, top to bottom
2. Colors can fade – Aqua & Pink may fade to white
3. Important to note the date, color band combination, exact location and if the bird is alive or dead. You may use the name of the color. If bird is dead report metal band numbers as well as color bands.
4. Report color banded Snowy Plovers found in Orange or San Diego Counties to: Cheryl Egger at: dc.egger@verizon.net
5. Report color banded Snowy Plovers found elsewhere to the BBL (Bird Banding Lab) at: http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/
Moved to Outdoor Aviary at 20-25 Days

Killdeer are raised in the same aviary. The two species can be reared together if they are similar in age and size.
Release Box 2010

Designed and built by Peter Knapp
Adjusting to their New Environment
Peter Knapp Opening the Doors
Released Juvenile
yn:br (yellow over buckskin, blue over red)

~35 days old
Although it is best for them to be successful breeders in the wild, in 2010, 13 Western Snowy Plovers are back into the wild that would not have survived without human intervention!