Identification

California Least Tern
Endangered
9-10”
Nests in colonies
Dives from air for fish
Parents feed young
Nesting colony can be fenced

Western Snowy Plover
Threatened
5-7”
Nests in loose colonies or singly
Feeds on invertebrates at wrack line
Parents do not feed young
Nesting area cannot be fenced
History of the Natural Preserve

- Established in 1973
  - Location: At the mouth of the Santa Ana River at Huntington State Beach
  - 1st fully protected (fenced) Least Tern colony in California
  - At that time there were only 600 nesting pairs in California
  - As of 2008 there were ~7,400 nesting pairs in California
- The reserve was originally ~1.5 acres
- Now it is close to 13 acres total
Least Tern Preserve
8.9 acres

Front Yard
3.25 acres

Parking Lot

TALBERT CHANNEL

Wet Sand Line

PCH

SANTA ANA RIVER
California Least Tern

- Listed as Endangered in 1970
- Historically nested along west coast beaches from Monterey, CA to southern Baja
- Currently 5 nesting areas in OC
  - Huntington State Beach Natural Preserve
  - Seal Beach NWR
  - Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve
  - Burris Sand Pit
  - Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve
California Least Tern at the Natural Preserve

- **Success**
  - 7 pairs nested in the early 1970s
  - 445 pairs nested in 2008

- **Disruptions**
  - Predation and disturbances caused variations in breeding success, year to year
CA State Parks and the Natural Preserve

- **Maintain the Natural Preserve**
  - Non-native plant removal
  - Plant native plants
  - Maintain fencing
  - Move sand and remove debris and trash

- **Provide Protection**
  - Enforce regulations
  - Predator management

- **Snowy Plover/Least Tern Project**
  - Lead Project
  - Provide orientations for Monitors
  - Provide manuals and supplies
  - Work with USFWS
Current Success of CLTs at the Preserve

- CLT nest counts at the Preserve
  - 2005 ~ 310 nests
  - 2006 ~ 420 nests
  - 2007 ~ 485 nests
  - 2008 ~ 454 nests

- Actual Production
  - Counting of fledglings is difficult
    - Disperse quickly
    - Migratory
Western Snowy Plover
(Pacific Population)

- Listed as Threatened in 1993 under Endangered Species Act
- Historically nested at the SARM and along west coast beaches from southern Washington to southern Baja
- Separate population from interior nesters
- Only current Orange County nesting is at Bolsa Chica Reserve
- Only ~1500 birds total remain in the U.S. and population is declining
LEAST TERN PRESERVE
8.9 acres

FRONT YARD
3.25 acres

Snowy Plover Area

Great Habitat, Poor Success
Current Success of WSPs at the Preserve

- No nesting at the Preserve
  - Beach is heavily used during their breeding season
  - Popular surfing spot
  - State Parks must balance public recreation with protection of the birds
  - Not enough room
    - Not colonial nesters like terns
    - Only enough space for 2.5 nests at the Preserve

- WSPs **do** use the beaches during the winter
  - Not migratory, but do disperse
  - WSPs found at preserve or beaches may not be local Bolsa Chica breeders
  - Helpful to report color bands
Monitoring Project Begins in 2005

- In 2005, USFWS and CA State Parks hoped to develop a safe and desirable area for the WSP to nest at the Natural Preserve while maintaining the success of the Least Terns.
- In partnership with Sea and Sage Audubon, the volunteer Monitoring Project was created for the 2005 breeding season.
Volunteer Monitoring of the Preserve by Trained Docents
Monitoring; A tough job, but someone has to do it!

R. Griswold
Predators and Problems at The Natural Preserve

American Crow
Sea Rocket (introduced)

Beach Primrose (native)
California Ground Squirrel
American Kestrel

Loggerhead Shrike

Great Blue Heron
And other Herons and Egrets
Red-tailed Hawk
Gull-billed Tern
Predated CLT chicks in San Diego County in 2009 and SNPL chicks in Orange County in 2009
Beach Activities & Recreation

R. Griswold
Dogs (on or off leash)
Tampering/Destruction of Signs - 2007
2009 Event

International Surfing Day
Huntington State Beach
at the Santa Ana River Jetty

Time: 8 am to 1 pm (booth setup—7 am)

The annual observance, now in its fifth year, was established to inspire waveriders everywhere to take a day to share and acknowledge their mutual love of surfing and our beach and ocean environments.

- Surfrider Foundation Beach Clean-Up

*Be a part of this annual day of observance* Setup your BOOTH and be recognized... no cost, just your commitment

For Details Contact: Tony Soriano 949-355-4571 or email: agsacs2@aol.com
Still, the terns return, court, mate, nest, and raise their young.
Both have bands - from another colony

G. Price
Other interesting scenes and birds as seen and photographed by monitors.
Inside the preserve counts - using blinds
Dodo sighted at the Preserve in 2007!

B. Seabourn
Snowy Plovers come back to the Preserve area July/August and stay through the winter months.
They breed at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve

Photo: Sam Hung
In 2009, nine rescued Snow Plover chicks were successfully raised and released by the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center.
Snowy Plover chicks, ~ 2 weeks old

C. Egger
Chicks were banded before release

C. Egger
A Snowy Plover chick at release in 2009. HB Released SNPL have been seen locally at Bolsa Chica Reserve, and at San Diego, and Santa Barbara.
Thanks to all the monitors, volunteers and staff.
We have had 5 years of a successful program.

Keep watching for Snowy Plovers!

Photographers
Cheryl Egger
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Robert Harrington
Cyndie Kam
Nicole Peltier
Glenn Price
James Salywoda