

# Audubon Adventures

## Sharing our Shores



Mike Baird

### Western Snowy Plover

*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*



Our summer playground  
is an important habitat for many species,  
including the threatened western snowy  
plover.



Delisted

Western snowy plover

Endangered

Brown pelican

California least tern

# Objectives

- Why are the western snowy plovers threatened with extinction?
- What can we do to help nesting plovers and their chicks?





# Western Snowy Plover

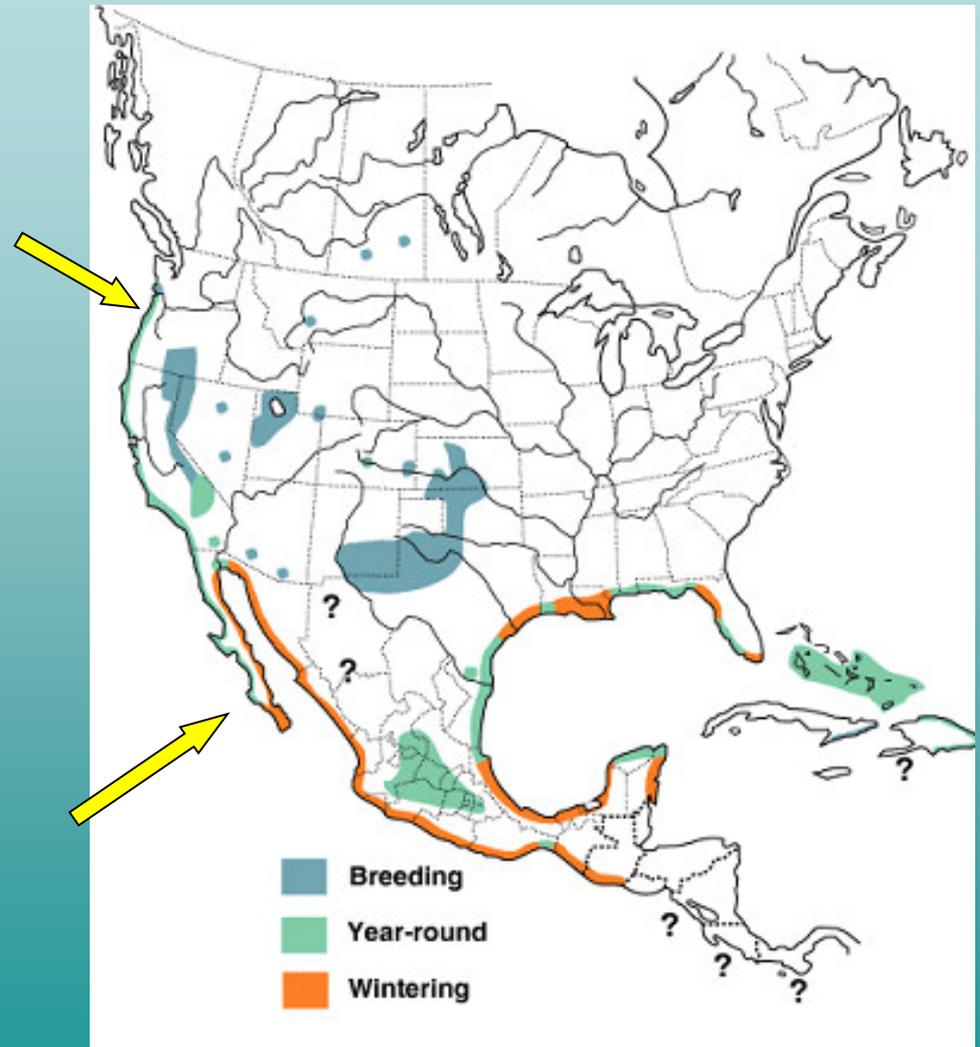
*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*

- Sand colored
- White underside
- Black beak
- Black patches
- Average life span is 3 years



# Distribution

- Pacific coast population nests from Washington State to the Baja California peninsula
- San Diego has year round residents and migrant birds



# Habitat

- Sandy beaches
- Flat, open coastal beaches, in dunes, near stream mouths



# Nests

- Nesting season mid-March through September
- Males make multiple scrapes on flat, dry sand



- Nest are lined with beach debris
- Usual clutch size is 3 eggs
- Males and females incubate the eggs for 26-31 days

# Raising their young

- Hatching occurs April through August
- Males care for the brood
- Fledging occurs 28-33 days



Photo credit: Callie Bowdich

# Food

- Forage for food between the kelp
- Eat invertebrates that feed on kelp





# Threats to western snowy plovers



Photo credits: raccoon: , crow: , seagull: Henryk Kotowski-wikicommons, coyote: Manfred Werner-wikicommons, skunk: Tom Friedel- wikicommons)

# How do they avoid predators?

Camouflage

Safety in numbers

Distractions



# Other threats to western snowy plovers



# Other beach residents

- California Least Tern- Endangered





# California Least Terns

*Sterna antillarum browni*

- Habitat- similar to WSP
  - Scrapes on sandy beaches
- Food- different to WSP
  - Fish

Endangered



# Ways scientists are helping

- Protecting critical coastal habitats
- Recording scientific data about the birds
- Monitoring the beaches during nesting season



# How can we help?

Brainstorm ways we can help protect coastal birds

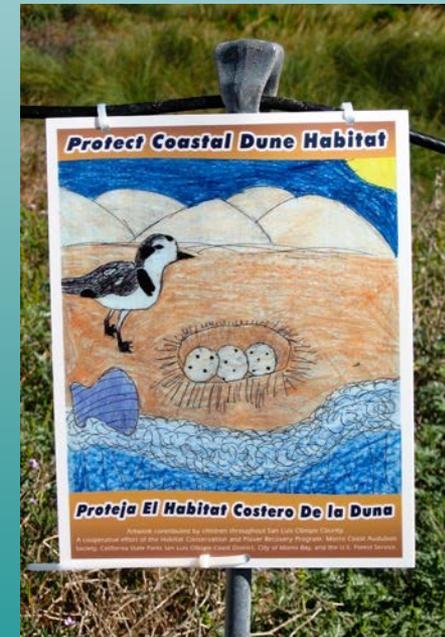
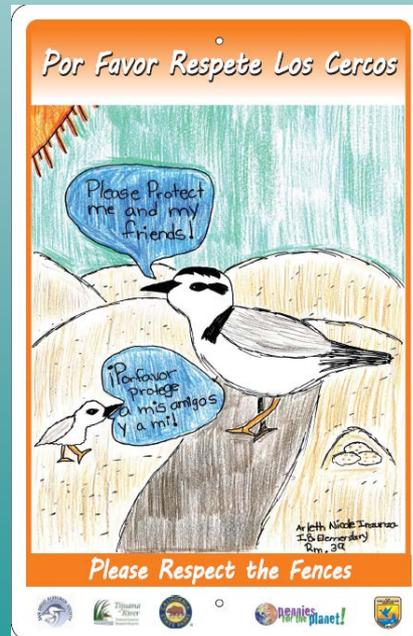
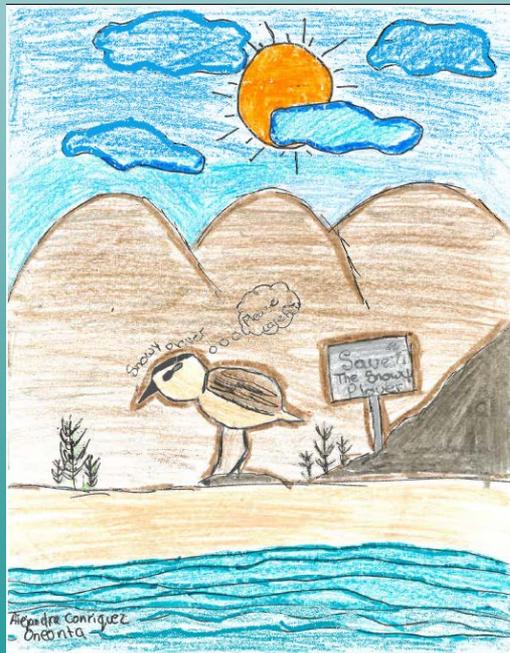


# Educate the public!

- Keep out of restricted bird nesting areas.
- Keep your dog on leash.
- Walk, jog, or ride your horse on the wet sand away from the nests
- Dispose of garbage properly to avoid attracting predators.
- Leave kelp and driftwood on the beach

# Coastal Stewardship Project

- Create signs to teach the public about sharing the shore with coastal birds



# Tips for Creating a Great Beach Sign

- Write your first name and school name at the bottom of the page.
- Keep your message Positive!
- Keep your message short and your text easy to read.
- Fill the whole page with your design.
- Use bright, attractive colors.

