

Hollywood Beach Summary 2020 Nesting Season

By Debra Barringer

Hollywood Beach was busier than in recent years in the nesting area. The snowy plovers started out establishing nests in surprising areas (first one between trash maintenance truck tire tracks). In fact, I had to construct 4 large rope and stake polygons this year as plovers tested new nest sites. It was stressful (for me and no doubt the birds) when the County Sheriff decided to use ATVs to patrol social distancing practices near the polygons. Once California least terns began arriving, plovers ramped up their breeding attempts and ended up with 10 nests, twice the number from recent years. All but one nest hatched 2 or 3 chicks. Unlike recent years when crows took all chicks under 1 week of age, this year I was able to observe chicks from 8 of the nests, and at least 3 chicks from 3 broods made it to 18 days old. They reached fledgling age right when a large number of adults and fledges from other beaches arrived - over 90 WSPs counted by August 17th.

Least terns returned to nest at Hollywood Beach after a 5-year break and attempted 21 nests. Monitors were able to observe 2 new hatchlings but no chicks survived after that. The two resident American crow families took advantage of the small tern colony size and were able to depredate eggs and chicks when adults were away foraging. After wiping out all CLT nests, the crows seemed to take a break to pester beach tourists, which allowed the plover chicks to get much closer (and hopefully to) fledgling stage this year.



NO DRIVING



Chick Xing



