

## Our Sensitive Species

As many of you who live near or visit beaches in our area know, we are fortunate to have very rare (in fact federally listed under the Endangered Species Act) bird species that have nested on bare beach sand for thousands of years.

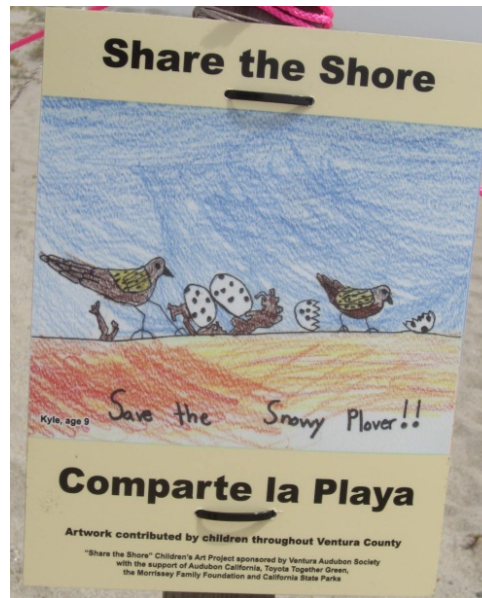


Our year-round species is the western snowy plover (WSP, above). Seaweed from the region's giant kelp forests that is washed ashore is known as "wrack." Snowy plovers completely depend upon wrack for the insects it harbors for their food supply. Other types of beach vegetation are important too, especially for plovers to hide their chicks.

The California least tern (CLT) arrives in spring and nests only in the Bay area and on southern California beaches – nowhere else in the world! They prefer wide expanses of flat sand, much like you and your family when you visit the beach.

## Our Beaches

Hollywood, Ormond, McGrath and San Buenaventura are important beaches for the WSP and the CLT. Volunteers need to place fences around the plover and CLT nesting areas because they are wild animals and can be frightened off brooding their nests very easily by people and dogs, leaving the eggs vulnerable to hot, cold and windy conditions and predators such as gulls. The *Share the Shore* program was started to remind people that the beaches are for animals as well as people. Children helped by providing the artwork for many of the signs we use to alert the public to nesting areas. Please respect these fences and signs as you enjoy the beach and observe from a distance.

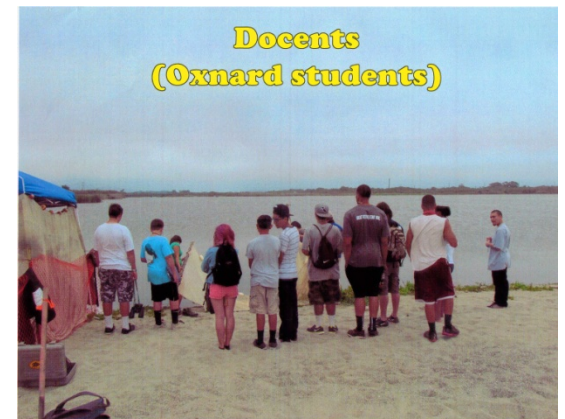


For more information on Ventura Audubon, to volunteer or to donate to help support this endangered species monitoring effort see:

<http://www.venturaaudubon.org>

## Other Facts & Things You Can Do

- ❖ Metal cages (called exclosures) are used around the snowy plover nests to help keep predators such as crows and ground squirrels from eating eggs. We can't use these for least tern nests so there are usually many more nests than you can see inside the fences.
- ❖ If you encounter a chick on the beach, move away from it carefully as a parent will return soon.
- ❖ It is especially important to keep your cats indoors at night and dogs on leashes near nesting areas. Shorebirds see dogs as their natural predators even when not being chased and can hurt themselves or their eggs when frightened off.
- ❖ Kites, paragliders and drones can also be seen as predators. Don't fly at fenced beaches.
- ❖ Please dispose of trash properly as it attracts predators such as crows and gulls.
- ❖ Permitted monitors are trained to find, label, and protect the nests and will be present at least once per week.
- ❖ Audubon and CA State Parks plan to enlist the help of docents again this year to be out near the nest areas to answer beach-users questions.







Typical snowy plover enclosure protecting a nest



Do you see the plover nest? Not easy to find, right?



Typical edge of fenced nesting area

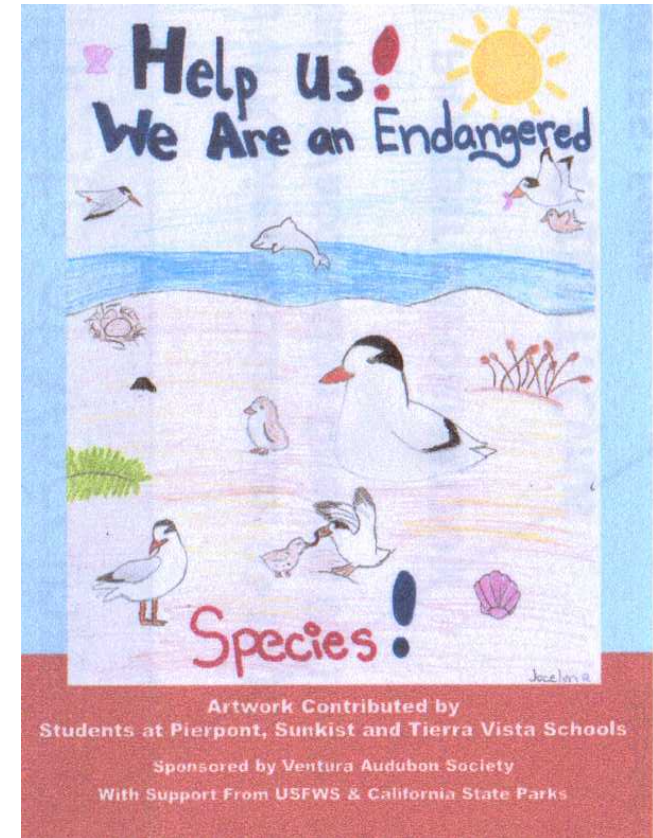


California least tern adult



Nest monitor on the job at Hollywood Beach

## A Few Facts About Snowy Plovers and California Least Terns on Local Ventura County Beaches



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