



# THE OBSERVER

WHITTIER AREA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 76, Issue 9

May 2019

Visit our website [www.whittieraudubon.org](http://www.whittieraudubon.org)

## From Audubon California: About the Western Snowy Plover

*The Western Snowy Plover is listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act.*



Western

Snowy Plovers are sensitive to disturbances along the California coast. Photo: Mike Baird

The Western Snowy Plover is a threatened small shorebird, approximately the size of a sparrow. During the breeding season, March through September, plovers can be seen nesting along the shores, peninsulas, offshore islands, bays, estuaries, and rivers of the United States' Pacific Coast from Oregon to California. Plover nests usually contains three tiny eggs, which are camouflaged to look like sand and barely visible to even the most well-trained eye. Plovers will use almost anything they can find on the beach to make their nests, including kelp, driftwood, shells, rocks, and even human footprints.

Snowy Plovers have natural predators such as falcons, raccoons, coyotes, and owls. There are also predators that humans have introduced or whose populations they have helped to increase, including crows and ravens, red fox, and domestic dogs. Humans can be thought of as predators

We are a chapter of National Audubon



# Audubon

### Candidates for next year:

President: Larry Schmahl  
1<sup>st</sup> VP: Cathy Fricker  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP: Linda Oberholtzer  
Treasurer: Kathleen Barry  
Recording Sec: Steve Huber  
Corresponding Sec: Jim McNamara

too, because people drive vehicles, ride bikes, fly kites and bring their dogs to beaches where the western snowy plover lives and breeds. All of these activities can frighten or harm plovers during their breeding season.

Energy is very important to this small bird. Every time humans, dogs, or other predators cause the birds to take flight or run away, they lose precious energy that is needed to maintain their nests. Often, when a plover parent is disturbed, it will abandon its nest, which increases the chance of a predator finding the eggs, sand blowing over and covering the nest, or the eggs getting cold. This can decrease the number of chicks that hatch in a particular year. Did you know that a kite flying overhead looks like a predator to a plover? A kite over a nesting area can keep an adult off the nest for long periods of time. (continued on Page 2, See Snowy Plover)

### KIDS SPACE

#### Birding in a Box

All our proceeds from the Conservation Dinner go towards educational outreach.

**New this year!** Cathy Fricker and Jennifer Schmahl are designing BIRDING IN A BOX to present to teachers or afterschool staff to enhance the Audubon Adventures experience. In the Box: we have designed a journal for teachers/leaders to use as a guide, a set of kid sized binoculars, a set of owl pellets to dissect, kits to build either a birdhouse or a bird feeder and a set of

- **Elections Preview**
- **Helping Western Snowy Plovers**
- **Using Rainwater Wisely**
- **Kids Space: Sponsor Birding in a Box**
- **Field trips: Sycamore Canyon and Overnight to Morro Bay**

Audubon Adventures. This is meant for Out Of School or Afterschool programs or to enhance Post-Testing school programs. We are setting up a Donate option on our website to sponsor a classroom Box.

## GENERAL MEETING AND PROGRAM

May 16, 2019 at 7:30 pm

Thursday, May16 Community Center, 7630 Washington Ave., Whittier, CA. at the corner of Washington Ave.(not to be confused with Washington Blvd.) and Mar Vista St. The event is free and light refreshments will be served.

### MAY Field Trips

#### Beginnng Bird Walk, Sycamore Canyon:

Every second Saturday of the month (except July and August,)

May 11, 2019 7:00am

#### Sycamore Canyon Beginning Bird Walks

Meet at the Sycamore Canyon Trailhead. The trail is located adjacent to Rose Hills Cemetery gate 17. Rain or recent cancels the Canyon Walk, but we will

choose another location. **Leader Steve Huber.**

## OVERNIGHT TO MORRO BAY. Jay Oberholtzer leads.

Our May, 2019 Field Trip is a weekender to Morro Bay. The dates are Saturday, May 18 through Sunday, May 19, 2019. We will meet at the parking lot of the "Best Western El Rancho" at 2460 Main Street, Morro Bay 93442. (844-365-0122) We will leave the parking lot at **7:00 a.m.**

This trip will include a bit of every kind of habitat. Of course, we will stop at Morro Rock and hopefully find nesting Peregrine Falcons along with (hopefully) White Throated Swifts and Canyon Wren. We will work our way to the marsh near Morro Bay State Park and also hit the marsh at Sweet Springs. Willets, Curlews, Godwits, Sandpipers and Dowitchers are on the menu. The Elfin Forest is always good for chaparral birds. Montana de Oro State Park is generally reliable for Pigeon Guillemots this time of year. Watching them dive off the cliffs, into the crashing sea, flashing their bright red feet is worth the trip.

Saturday, after birding, we will re-hydrate at our traditional "Wine and Cheese Party" in my room at the "Best Western El Rancho".

Sunday, the plan is to head back, taking the "scenic route" via Highway 58 and the Carrizo Plain. The Western end of Highway 58, east of Santa Margarita, is good for Yellow-Billed Magpies. We will stop at a couple of spots along Highway 58, then head down Soda Lake Road, hoping for Golden Eagle, Merlin, Pronghorn, Tule Elk and other such birds that we typically think about along the Soda Lake Road.

Some of this plan may change after I make my scouting run, so watch the website for updates. Please let me know if you are going so I can let you know of any last minute adjustments. Bring your usual birding stuff, lunches for Saturday and Sunday, survival junk food and your contribution to the Saturday Wine and Cheese Party. The weather should be pretty mild. You probably will not need anything heavier than a sweater. Scopes and radios will be very handy. The only dirt road will be the last half of the Soda Lake Road. Ordinarily, normal passenger cars are fine there. If that changes, I will let you know.

Please let me know if you plan on coming. Email me ([tvulture@earthlink.net](mailto:tvulture@earthlink.net)) or telephone my office (562 945 2838).

## APRIL TRIP REPORT Hansen Dam by Steve Huber

Despite a mostly overcast day, it was very pleasant and we saw a lot of birds. Noisy Common Ravens greeted us as we arrived. The lake is rather low and hidden by trees, but Linda LeRoy spotted Mallard, Ruddy Duck and Canada Goose. Cathy Fricker found a Great Blue Heron and we eventually saw Great and Snowy Egrets and Black-crowned Night Heron. Walking along the trees by the lake, we found yellow warblers and Edwin Menendez found Mourning Doves on a nest. The other side of the path yielded several good birds: Rebecca Menendez found a female Blue Grosbeak and soon after we saw female Lazuli Buntings. Great looks at Lawrence's Goldfinch mixed in with Lesser Goldfinches as well. All Moreno spotted a Red-shouldered Hawk flying overhead while Jim McNamara was getting some good pictures of a Wren Tit. Kathleen Barry spotted swallows such as Northern Rough-winged, Barn and Violet Green. As we were working the willows along the lake to try to spot the singing Bell's Vireos, Al finally saw the Yellow-breasted Chat that we were hearing in the background. After lunch, we drove over to the picnic area near the dam. Steve spotted a Downy Woodpecker in a Sycamore tree and Rebecca found a Nuttall's Woodpecker. A walk up to the path leading to the dam we saw several new birds including Yellow-rumped Warblers, Western Bluebirds and Northern Mockingbird. Jim found a Western Kingbird and Linda found a Chipping Sparrow. Although a fly-over by a Sharp-shinned Hawk quieted things down, our last bird was a nice male American Robin. We ended up with just over sixty species for the day.

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**Snowy Plover** (continued from Page 1) There are many key things YOU can do to help save the western snowy plover! Allowing these small birds to remain in their breeding area, undisturbed, throughout the breeding season is most important. People should be able to recreate on the beaches AND there should be room for plovers to nest too. The idea is to "Share the Shore." This means having fun while protecting our natural environment at the same time.

The Western Snowy Plover has been living on the Pacific Coast for thousands of years, but was listed by the federal government as threatened in 1993, due to low population and decreased habitat. Let's help ensure the plovers' success! Remember that when a species goes extinct, it is gone forever! We are privileged to be able to be stewards of the beach, its habitat, and its occupants, including the western snowy plover. Protect your beach and the plants and animals that use it and most importantly, share your knowledge with friends and family. Get the word out; we can make a difference and that difference starts with you.

### How You Can Help:

Western Snowy Plover breeding season is ramping up on California beaches. While this bird is [making a comeback](#), it is still listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act because of the many challenges its small population faces. You can help by taking some of the following steps:

1. Respect the fences and signs, and stay outside of areas roped off for breeding Snowy Plovers
2. Keep dogs on leash, or away from the beach. Or consider a dog-friendly beach.
3. Organize a trash cleanup or just pick up trash! Participate in annual Coastal Clean up Day.
4. Do not release balloons.
5. Avoid use of loud or large flying things that snowy plovers perceive as predators: drones, fireworks, kites, etc.
6. [Volunteer with your local coastal Audubon chapter.](#)
7. Grab your scope or binoculars and enjoy watching Western Snowy Plovers scurrying along the beach searching for insects or tending their young
8. Educate others about these amazing birds and encourage people to Share the Shore with birds