

Eco-Tip for 5-7-17

Protect Birds During Nesting Season on Local Beaches

By David Goldstein, Ventura County PWA

Two rare species of birds nest on Ventura County beaches at this time of year, and Ventura County's Channel Islands Harbor Department requests the public's help with wildlife protection.

Snowy plovers and least terns nest on the beach. Beyond the camouflage of blending into the sand and gravel of the beach, they and their eggs have little protection. For the first time, this year harbor staff and volunteers have replaced "symbolic" fencing with more durable barriers to protect the birds. They also use protective cage "exclosures" to keep predators (such as other birds and people) away.

To help the birds, people need to cooperate by keeping dogs, bicycles, and all-terrain vehicles out of breeding areas. Only authorized vehicles are allowed on the beach, and only trained, permitted monitors are allowed to enter fenced areas. Even staying outside the fence and observing can be a problem if you move or make noise. When birds are disturbed, they sometimes abandon nests.

Use binoculars and keep your distance when bird watching. The western snowy plovers and the California least tern are rare enough to be categorized as "threatened" species, and their survival depends on our cooperation.

On the net:

www.venturaaudubon.org

<http://www.ventura.org/harbor>