

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office
1655 Heindon Road
Arcata, California 92251
Phone: 707/822-7201
Fax: 707/822-8411
<http://www.fws.gov/arcata/>

News Release



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Contact: Matt Baun (530)841-3119

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE RECOVERS PLOVER EGGS TAKEN FROM CLAM BEACH LAST MONTH

Arcata, Calif – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recovered the Western Snowy plover eggs that were taken from a nest on Clam Beach last month. Snowy plovers are a federally protected species and it is unlawful to remove eggs from their nests. Research cameras set up to monitor natural predation on this particular nest, captured footage of the two individuals who removed the eggs.

The Service was able to identify the individuals who took the eggs and the investigation is now closed. The individuals responsible for taking the eggs are juveniles and they will not be prosecuted.

“I wish to thank the public, especially the mother of one of the juveniles who came forward and turned in the snowy plover eggs,” said Randy Brown, Acting Field Supervisor for the Service’s Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office. “Because of that, we are hopeful that the surviving eggs can be incubated and hatched.”

Tips for the Public

The following tips can help protect the Western Snowy Plover.

From March 1 through September 30 (Breeding Season)

- Stay out of the signed nesting areas.
- Leave Pets at home or keep them on a leash.
- Keep vehicles on sand wetted by the last tide cycle.
- Keep kites well away from signed areas as they mimic flying predators.
- Do not camp or have fires near snowy plover nesting areas.
- Keep the beaches litter free to discourage predators.
- Check for local restrictions at nesting areas, as they vary from site to site.

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Background Information on the Snowy Plover

- Snowy plovers historically nested on beaches along most of the Pacific coast. Now they are rarely seen.
- Plovers are small, lightly colored birds. They lay their eggs directly on dry sand areas of open beaches. They blend so well with their surroundings that they can be stepped on or run over.
- Snowy plover parents take turns sitting on the nest for up to 30 days before the eggs hatch. When a parent is startled, it leaves the nest. The eggs are then left at risk to predators, weather and blowing sand. After hatching, the chicks will spend another 30 days growing and learning to fly. During this period the chicks remain at risk to predators and disturbance by people and their pets.
- The Arcata FWO is working to recover snowy plovers and has undertaken a number of steps to help in the recovery effort. Some of the local Arcata FWO projects have included: working with County, State, Humboldt State University and others, to install symbolic fencing at Clam Beach around the area's most productive chick rearing area; funding a docent program with Friends of the Dunes to increase public awareness of the western snowy plover and beach habitats; and funding increased Sheriff's' patrols of County beaches where western snowy plovers nest.