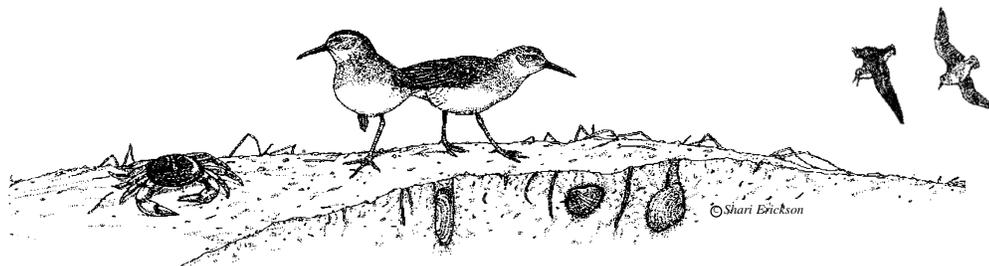




Planning Update



UPDATE #7

APRIL 1998

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMENTS

We appreciate all of your comments on the draft environmental assessment and land protection plan for the proposed South San Diego Bay Unit of San Diego National Wildlife Refuge. More than 100 people attended the public workshops held February 25 and 26 in the South San Diego Bay area, and we received comments from more than 70 people at these meetings. We left with a better understanding of concerns regarding the proposal, and we hope you received answers to your questions.

COMMENT PERIOD EXTENDED

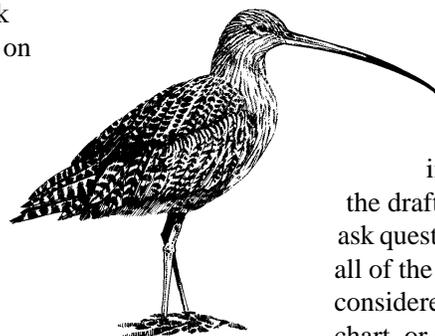
In response to requests, we have extended the comment period through **May 11, 1998**.

SUBMITTING COMMENTS

There's still plenty of time to ask questions and submit comments on this proposal. Please call one of the numbers on the "Who to Contact" list, or send us a letter or e-mail message. Make sure that we receive your comments by **May 11**, the end of the public comment period.

Please provide written comments to Charles J.

Houghten, Chief, Planning and Mapping Branch (ARW-RE), 911 N.E. 11th Ave., Portland, OR 97232-4181. Please send e-mail comments (with "South Bay" typed in the subject line) to r1planning_guest@fws.gov or complete the comment form available from our website at www.r1.fws.gov/planning/plnhome.html.



Long-billed curlew, USFWS,
Larry Eiffert

WHAT'S NEXT

After the comment period closes, we will send you another Planning Update that summarizes the comments received on the draft documents. Your comments and those of others will be considered in the development of the final environmental assessment and land protection plan, which will reflect comments, requests for information, and ideas that are within the scope of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service mission and the proposed action in South San Diego Bay. Please note that unless you have specifically requested a copy of the full final documents, we will be sending you only a summary.

A NOTE ON OUR MEETING FORMAT

The open house/public workshop format we used for our February meetings was new to many people. We now use this format for many of our public comment meetings because it allows us to receive comments, suggestions, and corrections from a greater number of people. Many people are uncomfortable speaking before large groups and are more willing to provide comments in a conversational setting. While projects are at the draft proposal stage, many other people may need to ask questions before forming opinions. We assure you that all of the comments we receive at the workshops are fully considered, whether they are spoken, recorded on a flip chart, or written on a comment sheet.

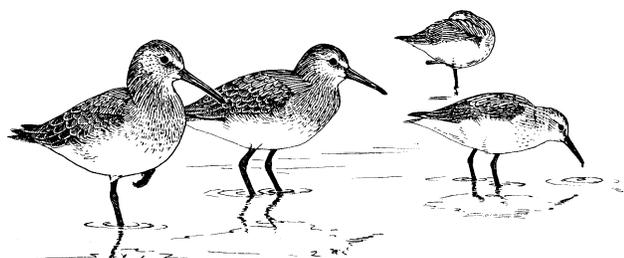
If you attended any of the workshops, we would like to thank you for participating. The environmental assessment will be much improved as a result of your comments.

IN THIS UPDATE . . .

Wildlife, Planning Schedule, Who to Contact

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SOUTH BAY

In April, diving waterfowl such as scaup and scoter are still numerous in the open waters of South San Diego Bay. Grebes are very abundant now. Look for three grebe species: western, eared, and horned. This month you are especially likely to see long-billed curlew, willet, whimbrel, sanderling, turnstones, blackbellied plover, and "peeps" (see below) feeding on the mudflats at low tide. Many gulls and terns that nest in South Bay have returned, and can be spotted in the open waters and in the salt ponds. A large flock of dabbling ducks, including shovelers and pintails, is still present in the salt ponds.



Dunlin, USFWS, Kendal Morris

WHAT MAKES A "PEEP"

Birders use the term "peep" to refer to shorebirds that they cannot identify. Some biologists use the term more specifically to refer to any of five species of sandpiper that belong to the genus *Calidris*. Many shorebird species are difficult to name at long distances because they are small, they move quickly, and they appear very similar. All peeps have a name, and if we can get close enough we can identify them.

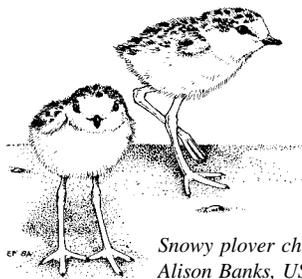
TERN WATCHER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Please help us protect the endangered and threatened birds that lay their eggs on the open beach at Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge. Tern Watcher

volunteers distribute flyers to beachgoers and tell them how to avoid stepping on nests, eggs, or hatchlings of the California least tern and the western snowy plover. The Tern Watcher program runs from

April through August (nesting season for both species). No experience is

necessary; we will train you. Call Barbara Simon at (619) 575-2704 or (619) 575-3613 if you're interested. Ask us about other volunteer positions!



Snowy plover chicks, Alison Banks, USFWS

PLANNING SCHEDULE

Formal comment period ends	May 11, 1998
Final Environmental Assessment and Land Protection Plan, Public Notice of Decision	Summer 1998

WHO TO CONTACT

Information on the Proposed South San Diego Bay Unit

Dean Rundle, Refuge Manager
 Andrew Yuen, Deputy Refuge Manager
 San Diego NWR Complex
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 2736 Loker Avenue West, Suite A
 Carlsbad, CA 92008
 (760) 930-0168, FAX (760) 930-0256

Rebecca Young, Refuge Manager
 Tijuana Slough NWR, Sweetwater Marsh NWR
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 301 Caspian Way
 Imperial Beach, CA 91932
 (619) 575-2704, FAX (619) 575-6913

Information on Refuge Planning and Compliance

Abbey Kucera, Fish and Wildlife Biologist
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 911 N.E. 11th Ave., 3rd Floor West
 Portland, OR 97232-4181
 (503) 231-6839 or (800) 662-8933, FAX (503) 231-6161

Information on Land Acquisitions

Jane Scott, Realty Specialist
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 2736 Loker Avenue West
 Carlsbad, CA 92008
 (760) 930-9209, FAX (760) 930-0256



Greater scaup, USFWS, Larry Eiffert