



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

# **San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge**

## **Sweetwater Marsh & South San Diego Bay Units**

*Planning Update 8, August 2006*

### **Greetings!**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to announce the release of the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS) for the San Diego Bay NWR. Over the past year, we have considered the comments received during the public comment period, which occurred between July 22 to September 19, 2005; prepared responses to more than 530 comments received in 38 individual comment letters; and made changes, as appropriate, to the CCP/EIS. Our responses to your comments are presented in Appendix P (Volume III) of the Final CCP/EIS. We wish to thank all of you who participated in the CCP process, particularly those of you who took the time to review the draft and provide comments.

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Caspian tern chicks on a levee in the San Diego Bay NWR  
Photo courtesy of South Bay Salt Works

### **Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement Now Available for the San Diego Bay NWR**

A Notice of Availability of the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS) has been published in the Federal Register. Copies of the Final CCP/EIS are available for viewing at the following locations:

- San Diego Refuge Complex - 6010 Hidden Valley Road, Carlsbad, CA
- Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center - 301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach, CA
- Chula Vista Public Libraries
  - Civic Center Branch - 365 F Street, Chula Vista CA
  - South Chula Vista Branch - 389 Orange Avenue, Chula Vista, CA
- Coronado Public Library - 640 Orange Avenue, Coronado, CA
- Imperial Beach Library - 810 Imperial Beach Blvd., Imperial Beach, CA
- National City Library - 200 East 12th Street, National City, CA
- City of San Diego Public Libraries
  - Central Library, Government Publications - 820 E Street, San Diego, CA
  - Otay Mesa - Nestor Library - 3003 Coronado Avenue, San Diego, CA

The Final CCP/EIS can also be viewed and downloaded online at:  
<http://sandiegorefuges.fws.gov>.

Refer to page 2 to find out how to obtain the Final CCP/EIS on a compact disc (CD).

## Final CCP/EIS Highlights

As described below, several revisions were made to the CCP/EIS between the draft and final version in response to comments received during the public review and comment period. Revisions within the Final CCP/EIS are indicated by underlined text.

The Final CCP/EIS consists of four parts: the Summary, Volume I, Volume II, and Volume III.

The Summary provides a concise description of the various management alternatives that were evaluated for both the Sweetwater Marsh and South San Diego Bay Units and includes summary tables that describe the potential effects of implementing each of the alternatives. In the Final CCP/EIS, new tables have been added to describe the habitat changes that would occur as a result of implementing the various alternatives.

Volume I contains the major sections of the CCP/EIS, including the purpose and need, the description of alternatives, the affected environment, and the environmental consequences of implementing the various alternatives. Revisions to Volume I include the addition of a more detailed description of the step-down planning process, particularly with respect to restoration proposals; and modifications to several CCP objectives and the addition of a few new objectives in response public comments. Revisions have also been made to some of the graphics in response to comments, and some data that became available between the draft and Final CCP/EIS has been added to the chapter on Affected Environment (Chapter 3).

Volume II includes background information to support the discussion in Volume I. Appendix D includes a discussion of CCP Implementation, which has been revised to address restoration phasing in greater detail. Volume II also contains the Final Predator Management Plan for the San Diego Bay NWR and the final Compatibility Determinations for the various public uses proposed on the Refuge.

Volume III contains Appendix P, Responses to Comments. All of the comments received and the corresponding responses to the comments are provided in this volume.

### How to Obtain Your Own Copy of the Final CCP/EIS on Compact Disc

Copies of the Final CCP/EIS are available on compact disc by contacting Victoria Touchstone, Refuge Planner, at:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
6010 Hidden Valley Road  
Carlsbad, CA 92011

Victoria\_Touchstone@fws.gov (e-mail)  
760-431-9440 extension 349 (telephone)  
760-930-0256 (facsimile)



**Black Skimmers at San Diego Bay NWR**  
Photo courtesy of South Bay Salt Works

## Refuge Purposes

The San Diego Bay NWR was established to protect, manage, and restore habitats for federally listed endangered and threatened species and migratory birds and to manage and protect fish and wildlife resources and native plants.

## Refuge Resources

The San Diego Bay NWR supports seven federally listed endangered and threatened species.

The endangered California least tern nests on the D Street Fill and the salt pond levees.

The endangered light-footed clapper rail is primarily found on the Sweetwater Marsh Unit, but can also occasionally be heard in the lower reaches of the Otay River on the South San Diego Bay Unit.

The endangered California brown pelican roosts on the salt pond levees.

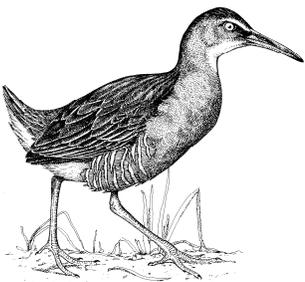
Salt marsh bird's beak is an endangered plant found in the Sweetwater Marsh.

The threatened western snowy plover nests on the salt pond levees and also forages on the Refuge throughout the year.

The threatened Pacific green sea turtle feeds on the eelgrass in the south bay.

The threatened California gnatcatcher is occasionally observed on Gunpowder Point.

The CCP includes actions that if implemented would benefit all of these species, and the productivity of some species such as the least tern, snowy plover, and light-footed clapper rail would be expected to increase as a result of habitat restoration.



Light-footed Clapper Rail  
Shari Erickson USFWS

## Next Steps

A final decision on the proposed action for this CCP will be made by the Service no sooner than 30 days after the Notice of Availability of the Final CCP/EIS is published in the Federal Register. The decision will be documented in a Record of Decision (ROD) and the ROD will be announced in a subsequent Planning Update.

The Service will also be submitting a request for a Coastal Consistency Determination for the Final CCP. This consistency determination will be considered at a public hearing before the California Coastal Commission and notice of the hearing will be included on the Refuge website when that date is known.

The Final CCP/EIS includes restoration proposals that if included in the ROD as part of the final

decision would require subsequent step-down plans. This step-down planning process would include a public involvement component similar to that provided for the development of the CCP. Step-down planning would be initiated once funding has been identified to complete this portion of the restoration process.

Implementation of the various proposals within the Final CCP will occur over the next 15 years and the CCP will be reviewed periodically to determine if any revisions are warranted. We encourage you to continue your involvement in the CCP process by providing input during implementation and by participating in the various public use opportunities available on the San Diego Bay NWR.

### Please feel free to contact us!

We are available to provide additional information about Refuge resources and visitor services and to answer any questions you might have about the planning process. You can contact us by phone, mail, or e-mail (see page 2).

If you did not receive this *Planning Update* through the mail and would like to be on our mailing list, please let us know. If you would like to be removed from the list or are receiving multiple copies of these notices, please contact the Refuge Planner.



White Pelicans on the South San Diego Bay Unit  
Photo courtesy of South Bay Salt Works



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San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
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Carlsbad, CA 92011**

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### **CCP Timeline**

<b>July 2005</b>	<b>Released Draft CCP/EIS for review and comment</b>
<b>September 2005</b>	<b>Public Comment Period Closed for the Draft CCP/EIS (September 19, 2005)</b>
<b>August 2006</b>	<b>Released Final CCP/EIS</b>
<b>September 2006</b>	<b>Record of Decision to be Signed</b>

You can review past Planning Updates by visiting our *CCP Webpage*.  
Go to: <http://sandiegorefuges.fws.gov>. You can also find information regarding other  
CCP planning efforts currently underway for Refuges within the San Diego NWR Complex  
by visiting our website.

Please pass this *Planning Update* along to anyone you think might be interested in the CCP  
for the San Diego Bay NWR. Thank you!