

Los Angeles & Orange County
Western Snowy Plover
Monthly Report for September 2015
Beachwide Survey

Prepared for

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Los Angeles County

During September 2015 Los Angeles Audubon Volunteers detected 193 snowy plovers during a beach-wide survey in Los Angeles County between September 20 and 26, 2015. This is slightly lower than the prior year (Table 1). Lower numbers were detected at Zuma, where only 16 were detected. At Zuma there have been several human-influenced disturbances noted, including the placement of a volleyball court, surf camps and the 2014-15 winter berm within the traditional plover roosting area west/north of Lifeguard Tower 9. Lower numbers were also seen at Malibu and Santa Monica. Once again this fall, there is heavy beach erosion at Malibu. At Santa Monica, the enclosure is smaller and placed south of its traditional location; the flock appears to be split between the new location and a point just north of the enclosure within the prior location.

Volunteers noted three vehicles that were moving over 10 mph out of a total of 42 encountered. These included lifeguard truck (1423326) at Santa Monica, lifeguard truck (1443206) at Dockweiler State Beach North immediately adjacent to the enclosure, and a red pick-up truck (lifeguard, no ID marks) at Dockweiler Central. Volunteers reported 22 dogs off leash on the beaches vs. 10 that were being walked on-leashes.

Table 1. Number of Snowy Plovers Observed in Los Angeles County

Location	Sept 2014	Sept 2015	Notes
Zuma Beach	39	16	Volleyball court in roost area
Malibu Lagoon	40	32	Heavy beach erosion
Santa Monica SB	64	40	Speeding lifeguard truck (1423326)
DSB 47	29	42	Speeding lifeguard truck (1443206)
DSB 58	0	3	Speeding red pick-up truck (lifeguard, no ID marks)
El Segundo/ Manhattan B	0	1	
Hermosa Beach	67	56	
Cabrillo Beach	NS	3	
Belmont Shore	4	0	
Total	243	193	

Orange County

In Orange County, Sea and Sage Audubon volunteers detected 134 plovers between September 20 and 26, 2015. Counts appear lower this fall compared to previous years. This is lower than the count in September 2014 (213). There were declines at all sites, except for Salt Creek, where 52 plovers were observed.

Volunteers observed 4 of 46 vehicles observed exceeding 10 mph. These included three State Parks vehicles (Table 2) and a Newport Beach Fire vehicle. The latter was observed driving through a flock of plovers at E Street in Balboa at approximately 30 mph. No plovers were observed to be struck, but this is the type of activity that has resulted in plover mortality at both Zuma and Malibu in Los Angeles Counties. Observers noted 42 dogs off-leash and 49 on-leash. The largest numbers of off-leash dogs were at Huntington City Beach, Newport Beach, Laguna Beach and San Clemente City Beach.

Between September 26 and 27, 2015, the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center received two sanderlings and one juvenile snowy plover with symptoms of avian botulism. The snowy plover was found at the Dog Beach at Huntington City Beach. The snowy plover and one of the sanderlings died, the other sanderling recovered and was released (C. Egger pers. comm.).

Table 2. Number of Snowy Plovers Observed in Orange County

Location	Sept 2014	Sept 2015	Notes
Seal Beach	0	0	
Surfside	14	1	
Bolsa Chica SB	45	11	Kelp at wrack line, Large surfing event.
Newport Beach	0	0	Berms being installed
Huntington SB	21	0	Speeding vehicle (Lic 148811). Large carnival between towers 4 & 5, lots of trash
Balboa	130	70	Speeding vehicle – Newport Beach Fire, drove through roosting plovers at E Street, none struck. Berm at Newport Pier, beach groomed
Crystal Cove	3	0	Speeding State Park ATV (gator)
Salt Creek	0	52	Lots of kelp on beach
Doheney	0	0	
Trestles/San Clemente SB	0	0	Speeding State Park (1448925)
Total	213	134	