

*To all the Volunteer Docents, Lana Nguyen & California State Parks, Susan Sheakley, & Nancy Kenyon, Sea & Sage Audubon Conservation, Tom Ryan, Ryan Ecological Consulting, Gabriela Ibarguchi, San Diego Zoo Global...here are some thoughts from my heart.*

## ***When They Return***

***If you haven't seen them, you may not believe your eyes! If you haven't heard them, you may not believe your ears!***

***Hundreds of graceful fluttering tiny terns feeding each other in courtship; nesting and feeding their tiny yellow chicks.***

***Back and forth they fly; foraging for fish after fish; fiercely mobbing and chasing away avian predators many times their size; raising their young and then...their young are over the fence and on the beach!***

***Fledglings!***

***Beautiful yet soft colors! Flying, bathing and learning to dive for fish!***

***So soon another season of the Least Terns comes to an end and they begin their southward migration with their young.***

***We wait... April. When will the first terns arrive? Who will see them first?***

***We hear them first and then look up high! Listen, look! There they are! My heart jumps! They have returned!***

***Come to the Preserve! Listen. Watch.***

***Cheryl Egger, Volunteer Coordinator 2005-2017  
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Huntington State Beach Least Tern Natural Preserve***

Thank you for observing, researching, studying, protecting and being ambassadors to these tiny, fragile, beautiful, yet fierce and tenacious avian wonders! Thank you, Loren Hays, Peter Knapp, Ross Griswold, Dave Pryor and Lena Hayashi for opening my eyes, ears, mind and heart to California Least Terns and Western Snowy Plovers forever!