

# *Plover Patrol 2018 Season Update*

In the second most productive breeding season for ***the federally threatened*** Western Snowy Plover on the Oregon Coast since 1993, 20 trained volunteers known as Plover Patrol assisted in monitoring Oregon's North Coast plover management areas. Recovery of plovers on Oregon's North Coast has been slow but is vital to provide connectivity between the Southern Oregon and Washington plover populations. This season we documented nest attempts in two new areas and a record four successful nests at a previously occupied site - a good sign for recovery efforts!



Scott Carpenter



## **WHY MONITOR PLOVERS?**

The Western Snowy Plover is a small shorebird that lives and nests on beaches from Washington to southern California. It was federally listed in 1993 as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Plover populations declined due to a combination of threats including loss of coastal dunes habitat from invasive grasses, human and pet disturbance from ever increasing beach use, and predation from ravens, crows and other beach scavengers.

With the help of designated management areas plover populations have been increasing. In Oregon, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department designated 15 Snowy Plover Management Areas, five of which are on the North Coast.

## WHAT IS PLOVER PATROL?

Plover patrol is a team of trained community scientists that assist Oregon Parks and Recreation staff monitoring plovers in Oregon's northern Snowy Plover Management Areas (SPMAs). In 2018, Portland Audubon expanded Plover Patrol to 20 trained volunteers who monitored five SPMAs from Astoria to Pacific City. Over 70 surveys between March and September were conducted. These intensive surveys last 4-6 hours and involve covering miles of sandy beach looking for tiny tracks and very camouflaged birds.



Vanessa Blackstone



Amelia O'Connor

### Western Snowy Plover Management Areas

Watch for seasonal restrictions during nesting season, March 15-Sept. 15

- Clatsop Spit
- Nehalem Spit
- Bayocean Spit
- Netarts Spit
- South Sand Lake Spit

Occupied\* (restrictions apply)

No restrictions yet

- Oregon State Parks
- US Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Other

\*"Occupied" means that breeding pairs have been established in the recent past



## 2018 SEASONS FINDINGS

Plovers were present at 4 of 5 SPMAs. We saw nesting attempts at Nehalem Spit and South Sand Lake Spit and, for the first time, at Clatsop Spit and Bayocean. South Sand Lake was the only SPMA to hatch chicks, from 4 nests we observed 10 chicks and confirmed at least 7 fledglings (chicks that can fly). These findings indicate an increase in usage on Oregon's North Coast that will help better connect adjacent plover populations.

## PLOVER WALKS

Portland Audubon led five educational plover walks to Clatsop, Netarts, and South Sand Lake. Walks provided the public a rare glimpse of these amazing birds. Participants included diverse groups from young families, to high school students, to grandparents. We reached out to more than 60 local community members, Portland visitors, and tourists from as far away as the UK.

**Get involved!** If you would like to join the Plover Patrol team or sign up for a plover walk contact Joe Liebezeit ([jliebezeit@audubonportland.org](mailto:jliebezeit@audubonportland.org))