

New Chicks Part of Aquarium's Snowy Plover Exhibit

NEWPORT, Ore. — The new Western Snowy Plover Exhibit opened July 11 at the Oregon Coast Aquarium. It includes four plover chicks that recently were incubated and hatched at the aquarium, which has been successful in past rehabilitation and release of western snowy plovers.

In addition, two more rescued chicks were brought to the aquarium in July and will be introduced into the exhibit when they are acclimated to the new environment. This means the exhibit is fully functioning as it was intended — to rehabilitate rescued plovers with the goal of releasing them back into their natural habitat. A total of seven birds were in the exhibit on opening day.

The snowy plover is a native shore bird that lives on the beach year-round. Recent counts indicate that only about 150 to 200 birds remain on the entire Oregon coast.

The main reason for their declining population is loss of habitat. Snowy plovers need flat continuous areas of sand with no grass. They used to inhabit Oregon's beaches up and down the coastline, but developments and beach grass have destroyed much of their habitat.

The Pacific coastal population of western snowy plovers is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act and all western snowy plovers in Oregon are listed by the state as threatened.

Historically, western snowy plovers were found along the entire Oregon and Pacific Coast region. Over the last century, the number of known nesting or wintering sites declined dramatically, from 21 to seven.

In 1990, an estimated 30 birds were found. Since then, recovery efforts have resulted in a population increase. In 2005, up to 158 western snowy plo-



Three snowy plovers in the new Western Snowy Plover Exhibit

vers were found at seven locations on the Oregon coast, the highest count since monitoring began. At least 104 plovers were known to have nested, producing a minimum of 77 young.

The new exhibit was designed and constructed in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Western Snowy Plover Working Team. The exhibit will inform the public about the threats facing the western snowy plover in Oregon and throughout the region, and will provide the opportunity for the public to observe snowy plovers in a natural setting.

The exhibit's goal is to educate and serve as a rehabilitation facility for abandoned or injured plovers. Aquarium curator of birds, Karen Anderson, said she hopes the exhibit will introduce people to this remarkable bird and show how we can restore its dwindling population.

"The birds do well when we give them a little room — they're very resilient," said Anderson, who has been involved in the rescue and rehabilitation of several other snowy plovers in the past two years. These are success stories that Anderson cites as the impetus for an ongoing project to rescue and rehabilitate snowy plovers at the new exhibit.

The new snowy plover exhibit is located in a sunny spot and is enclosed by a mesh that contains the birds, yet allows visitors to see them.

"Aviculture is a useful tool in helping to restore the population," said Anderson, who feels that with a little elbow room for habitat and by increasing our awareness about the snowy plover, the population can make a recovery and once again inhabit its native beaches of Oregon.

In an effort to reduce human disturbance to nesting snowy plovers and increase their population, seasonal restrictions are in place between March 15 and Sept. 15 along the Oregon coast.

Here's what the public can do to share the beach with these delicate birds and help the plover population



Two snowy plover chicks are in good health after hatching at the Oregon Coast Aquarium in Newport.

- Keep your distance from signed nesting areas.
- Leave your pets at home or keep them on a leash.
- Carry your trash from the beach. Garbage attracts predators, like raccoons and crows that can prey on adults, eggs, and chicks.
- Keep kites, balls, and frisbees away from nesting areas. These items can frighten birds off their nests and separate the adults from the chicks.
- Don't camp or build fires near nesting areas.
- If you find a plover nest in an unprotected area, notify the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service at 541-867-4558.

Land and wildlife managers strive to find a balance between wildlife conservation and human recreation on Oregon beaches. Beach restrictions are one of many management tools, along with habitat restoration and predator control, used by managing agencies for plover conservation.

Collaborative efforts between federal, state, and local agencies as well as public support make recovery of the western snowy plover an attainable goal.

For more information, contact the aquarium at (541) 867-3474 or visit www.aquarium.org.

Mill Casino Seeks Native Artisans for Salmon Celebration

Third Annual Event Features Canoe Races, Salmon Bake, Cultural Demonstration on Waterfront

NORTH BEND, Ore. — The Mill Casino • Hotel is looking for American Indian artisans and exhibitors to participate in the Third Annual Mill-Luck Salmon Celebration on Sept. 8-10, 2006.

Linked to a traditional observance marking the return of the salmon, the celebration began as a means of sharing the culture and traditions of the Coquille Tribe and other Pacific Northwest tribes with residents and visitors to Oregon's Bay Area.

Vendors Marketplace

Now in its third year, the festival is seeking American Indian artisans to participate in the waterfront Vendors Marketplace, which will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sept. 9 and again from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sept. 10.

Qualifying exhibitors can select from booths ranging in size from 10'x10' to 20'x20' with fees discounted for registered tribal members.

In addition to the Vendors Marketplace, the Mill-Luck Salmon Celebration also features the fast-paced action of canoe races, educational and entertaining cultural demonstrations, and the very popular Salmon Bake.

Canoe Races

Tribal canoe clubs and teams take note, The Mill Casino • Hotel is looking for the fastest pullers and paddlers in the Pacific Northwest to participate.

Based on the success of last year's inaugural races, The Mill again is seeking tribal canoe clubs and teams to race the one-mile Coos Bay course Sept. 9.

The three top teams in each of the three categories — men, women, and youth — will have a total prize pool of \$2,200, while all participants will receive a complimentary commemorative T-shirt.

Entry fees for this year's races are just \$50 per team.

To register a team or for more information, contact Anati Pierce at 541-756-8800, ext. 420.

This year's event also will feature two concerts by the renowned American Indian blues-rock band, Indigenous, at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 8-9 in The Mill Casino's Salmon Room.

For more information on participating in the Vendors Marketplace, contact Paula Springer at 541-756-8800, ext. 426.

Owned by the Coquille Indian Tribe, The Mill Casino • Hotel is located directly on the scenic Coos Bay waterfront in North Bend. It offers 24-hour, non-stop, Nevada-style gaming excitement along with live nightly entertainment, 112 hotel rooms, four restaurants, and a 102-space waterfront RV park, plus meeting and wedding facilities.

For more information or a complete calendar of upcoming events, visit its Web site at www.themillcasino.com or call 1-800-953-4800.

