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Nesting restrictions to aid plover recovery

REEDSPORT

Beachgoers are urged to help in recovery efforts of the threatened Western snowy plover by respecting nesting areas and beach restrictions now through Sept. 15. The plovers, a small shorebird, nest on open sand along Oregon's beaches.

During nesting season, they can become frightened easily by human disturbances and abandon their eggs.

"We're making great strides in reversing the downward slide of this species," said Cindy Burns, Siuslaw National Forest wildlife biologist. "It takes everyone's efforts, so we hope people will do their part in sharing the beach this nesting season."

Plovers are small and well-camouflaged and can be easily harmed by vehicles and dogs, often inadvertently. Last year plover monitors discovered tracks from an off-highway vehicle that had traversed across a closed area and crushed a nesting adult and its chicks.

Nesting areas are delineated by ropes and sign posts. Maps and signage at trailheads and



COURTESY PHOTO

Signs and ropes are posted designating plover nesting areas along local beaches.

parking lots also will alert visitors of nearby nesting areas.

Nesting areas are closed to all entrance. In addition, the dry sand surrounding the nesting areas are closed to the public.

During nesting season, some activities are also restricted on

the adjacent wet sand. Hiking and horseback riding, however, are permitted on all wet sand.

The following activities are prohibited around nesting enclosures and their beaches: Camping, bicycling, hiking and horseback riding (permitted on wet sand only), kite flying, rid-

ing motorized vehicles of any kind, or walking dogs on or off leash.

All restricted beach areas have nearby beaches that permit dogs on leash and kites. Oregon State Parks maintains online maps of dog-accessible beaches during shorebird nest-

ing seasons at www.oregonstateparks.org.

The Western snowy plover is a federally protected shorebird. Nesting areas within the Siuslaw National Forest include Baker and Sutton beaches, Siltcoos estuary south to within a 1 mile of Sparrow Park Road, which includes:

- Oregon Dunes Day Use beach
- Tahkenitch Creek estuary
- Ten Mile Creek estuary, starting from π mile south of the Douglas/Coos County line to the Coast Guard South OHV Trail

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed Western snowy plovers as a threatened species in 1993. Habitat loss from invasive European beachgrass, as well as human disturbances, including litter and discarded food scraps which attract predators, have contributed to the birds' decline.

Part of the Siuslaw National Forest and its partners' Dunes Restoration strategy is aimed at removing European beachgrass near nesting areas to improve habitat conditions.



NED HICKSON/SIUSLAW NEWS FILE PHOTO

Junior pitcher Heidi Jones struck out eight during Siuslaw's 5-3 softball season-opening win at Waldport on Thursday.

Softball from 1B

The Viks then went on to load the bases with consecutive singles from senior Anna Stonelake and junior Claire Waggoner, with senior slugger Taylor Dotson holding out for a bases-loaded walk that put Siuslaw ahead 1-0.

Next to the plate was Launius, who brought Waggoner and Dotson home with her double to right-center field.

The Irish managed to cut Siuslaw's lead to a single run after bringing two across the plate in the bottom of the third inning, thanks in part to four walks by Jones, whose curveball seemed to catch the umpire off guard.

In the top of the fourth, Siuslaw struck back with a pair of runs from juniors Chehalis Stinger and Auriel Hager-Tolle, both on Irish errors, to move ahead, 5-2.

Waldport threatened with the

bases loaded in the fourth inning but couldn't follow through, then left the tying runs on second and third in the bottom of the fifth inning — with both rallies ending on a relay off the ground from Jones to Waggoner at first base for the final outs.

The Vikings will host their

first game Monday, when they take on Philomath for a double-header beginning at 1 p.m.

Wednesday, Siuslaw will be on the road for another double-header, at Cottage Grove, then for a single game at Harrisburg on Friday.

Gem Walkers set April jaunt, meeting

The Coastal Gems Volkswalkers will host a group walk Tuesday, April 5.

The group will be repeating the Three Loops walk in Depoe Bay. Those who want to carpool to Depoe Bay can meet at the Commons in Yachats at 9 a.m., or be at the Sea Hag in Depoe Bay at 10:15 a.m. to register.

The 10K walk is rated 2B because of uneven footing on the forest path and a couple of minor hills. Walkers can mix and match the three loops to

create a shorter walk. The route would be difficult for strollers and wheelchairs.

As always, leashed pets are welcome on walks, but be sure to bring water and clean up materials. A sturdy 6-foot leash, not the retractable type, is required.

On Wednesday, April 6, the group will hold its monthly meeting in Yachats.

For more information or directions, call Maryann Brown in Waldport at 541-961-4279.

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