



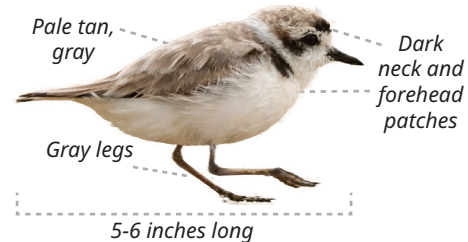
THREATENED SPECIES

Western Snowy Plover

WESTERN SNOWY PLOVER AND THEIR LOOKALIKES

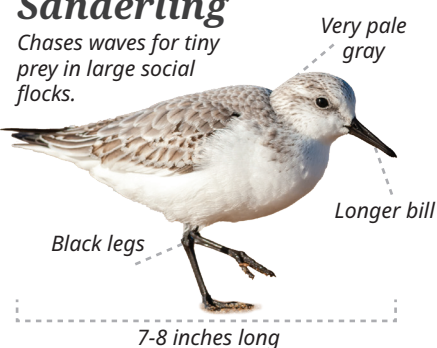
Western Snowy Plover

Runs, stops and pecks for food, often alone or in small groups.



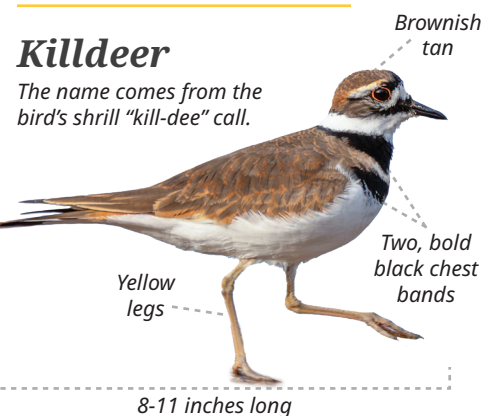
Sanderling

Chases waves for tiny prey in large social flocks.



Killdeer

The name comes from the bird's shrill "kill-dee" call.



YOUR NEIGHBOR AT THE BEACH

When you visit the coast, the western snowy plover can be hard to spot. Then, suddenly, a small shorebird darts across the beach, stopping abruptly to peck for insects and sand hoppers. In summer, tiny, sand-colored chicks follow their fathers along the dunes and shoreline in search of food and shelter.

Plovers are signs of a healthy beach that sustains many forms of life — where plovers survive, we all thrive. This little shorebird has long been a resident of California's coast, but coastal development and heavy beach use led to its listing as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act in 1993 and continue to threaten its survival.

SAVING PLOVERS SAVES BEACHES

People and plovers share our beaches year-round, with nesting season overlapping the busy summer season that brings more than 50 million visitors to state beaches. Although western snowy plovers are already protected by state and federal laws, everyone can help safeguard the species and in turn, the beach.

Support a Healthy Beach for People and Plovers

- ✓ **Respect Roped-Off Nesting Areas:** Keeping your distance is important. Camouflaged nests and chicks, as well as sensitive native plants, can be crushed by unsuspecting footsteps. Sitting, flying kites, walking dogs or riding horses nearby can scare plover parents off nests — leaving eggs vulnerable to predators and weather.
- ✓ **Protect the Dunes:** Roped-off plover nesting areas are often along sensitive dunes that need a chance to rebuild. Dunes safeguard against beach erosion and act as a sand "bank," helping maintain the coastline for everyone.
- ✓ **Secure Trash and Food:** Both people and plovers benefit from a trash-free beach. Properly disposing of litter and securing your food keeps ravens, gulls, skunks and other predators from being attracted to the beach, where they would be more likely to prey on chicks and eggs.
- ✓ **Share the Beach:** Plover flocks need rest in the winter to successfully nest in the summer — any disturbance can have an impact. When you share the beach and give all shorebirds space, they can help keep the beach healthy, including foraging on invertebrates and balancing insect populations like sand flies.

Over 40 California State Parks beaches are home for western snowy plovers.

State Parks beaches are some of the last remaining homes for western snowy plovers. We have the opportunity to share the beach and help both plovers and people thrive along the California coast for generations to come.



State Parks staff protect western snowy plovers by roping off nesting areas.

NESTING IN PLAIN SIGHT

March to September is nesting season. Female plovers lay speckled eggs in shallow nests in the sand. These nests are camouflaged to fool predators, but makes them easy for people to overlook and accidentally disturb. Both plover parents share nesting duties. Once the eggs hatch, males are the primary caregivers for vulnerable chicks until they can fly at 30 days. Females often go on to start new nests with other mates.



Camouflaged plover chicks

THE HIDDEN IMPACT OF DOGS

Dogs are beloved family companions, but the beach is not always the best place for them. Wildlife can expose dogs to harmful diseases, while dogs pose a serious threat to wildlife, especially plovers. Dogs can trample nests or chase, catch and kill birds. Even when leashed, dogs still appear as predators (e.g., coyote or fox), frightening away wildlife including plover adults, leaving eggs and chicks exposed. To keep all animals safe, on beaches where dogs are permitted, walk dogs on a leash and away from wildlife and posted nesting areas. In especially sensitive areas, some beaches are closed to dogs completely. Learn the rules of your local state beach and where to take your dog at parks.ca.gov/Dogs.

PROTECTING SNOWY PLOVERS

State Parks scientists track breeding snowy plovers and their survival, informing conservation strategies and plover recovery. Other ways State Parks protects plovers and the beach:

"Symbolic Fencing": Roping off nesting areas and sensitive habitat.

Beach Restoration:

- Removing invasive plants (e.g., ice plant and European beach grass)
- Planting native species
- Leaving kelp ("wrack") on the sand provides food and shelter for plovers and helps maintain a healthy beach

Outreach and Education: Raising awareness about how everyone can be a steward for California's beaches.



NATURAL RESOURCES INFORMATION

Visit parks.ca.gov/NaturalResources for more information on the protection and management of California's natural resources and statewide issues.

OUR MISSION

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

ACCESSIBILITY

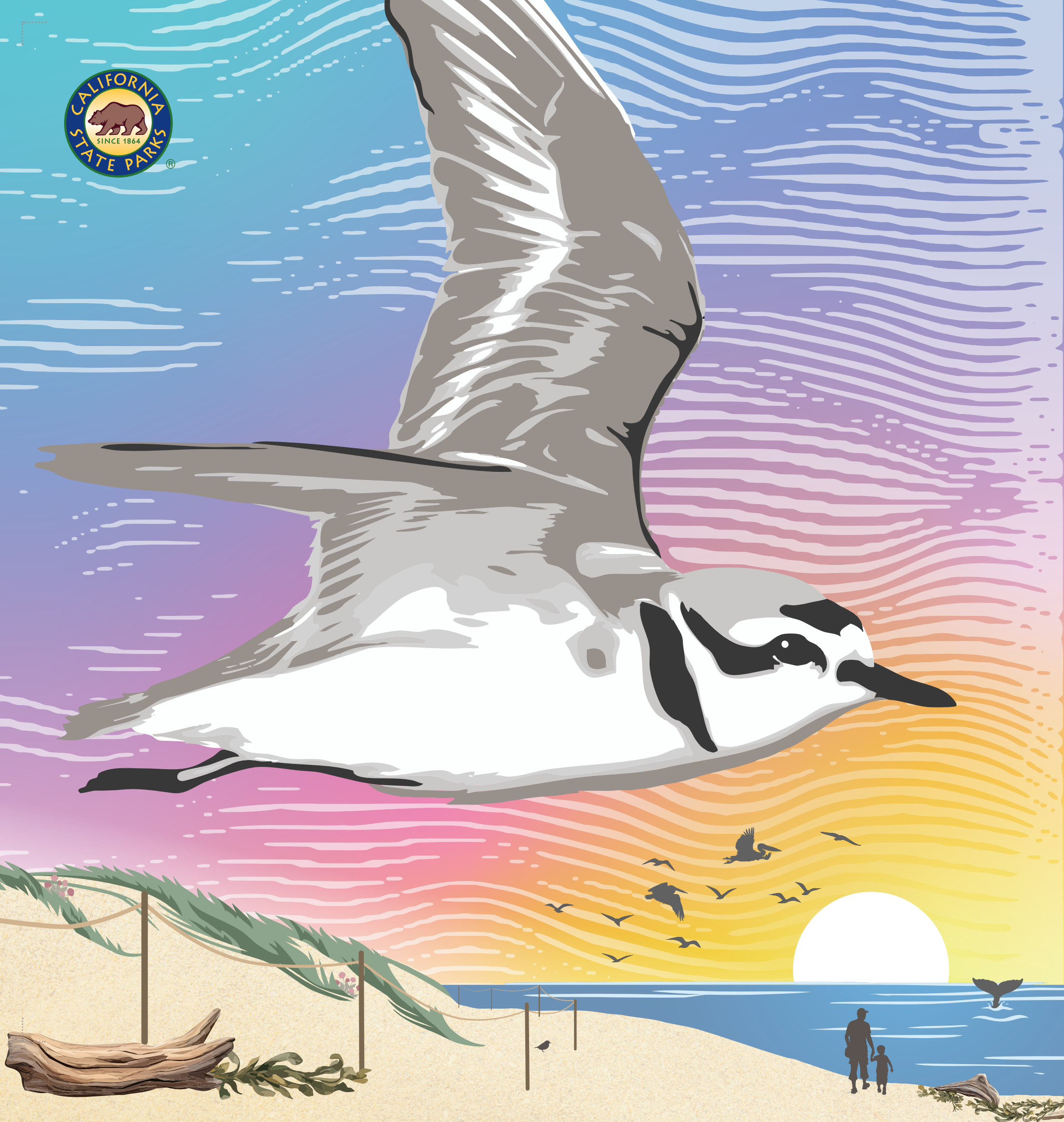
California State Parks supports equal access. For alternative formats, please contact NaturalResources@parks.ca.gov. For information about accessible features at any park, visit parks.ca.gov/AccessibleFeatures.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
parks.ca.gov/WesternSnowyPlover

WHERE TO TAKE YOUR DOG
parks.ca.gov/Dogs





Where Plovers Survive, We All Thrive

California State Parks beaches are home to more western snowy plovers than anywhere else in the state — an encouraging sign of a healthy coastal ecosystem. As a threatened species, plovers rely on the care and awareness of beach visitors.

How to Support Plovers



Give plovers space.

Stay alert for plovers and keep your distance from them and signed/roped-off areas that protect nests.



Explore dog-friendly parks.

Dogs can harm plovers on beaches. For information on places to go with your dog safely, visit parks.ca.gov/Dogs.



Experience nature in a different way.

Watch plovers from afar — bring binoculars to the beach!



Secure your food and trash.

Prevent ravens, crows, skunks and other plover predators from being attracted to the beach, where they would be more likely to prey on chicks and eggs.



Leave driftwood and kelp on the beach.

Part of the natural environment, this beach "wrack" provides cover and food for plovers.



Get involved!

Check with your local state beach for volunteer programs that support plovers.