



ARTICLE

Plover Numbers Strong on Golden Gate Beaches

Golden Gate National Recreation Area (<https://www.nps.gov/goga/>)

January 2018 - Last winter, National Park Service biologists observed record high numbers of federally threatened Western Snowy Plovers overwintering at Ocean Beach and Crissy Field in Golden Gate National Recreation Area. In an average survey, they counted about 60 plovers at Ocean Beach, and about seven plovers at Crissy Field. So far, the numbers this season are not quite as high, averaging about 50 plovers per survey at Ocean Beach and 2-3 plovers per survey at Crissy Field. Still, these numbers are significantly higher than average since [plover monitoring \(<https://www.nps.gov/articles/western-snowy-plover-monitoring-goga.htm>\)](https://www.nps.gov/articles/western-snowy-plover-monitoring-goga.htm) began in 1994—good news for plovers.

Biologists don't just count these fluffy shorebirds, they also add colorful bands to their legs for identification purposes. What's the advantage of banding in addition to the counts? The combination enables long-term tracking of specific individuals as well as the larger population. This provides a more nuanced picture of how the birds are doing. For example, biologists have continued to spot a plover banded with white, silver, and yellow, season after season. It turns out this bird was banded during the Cosco Busan oil spill of 2007, which means that it is at least 10 years old!



Because of its unique combination of colored leg bands, biologists know that this bird is a regular on Golden Gate beaches, and that it is at least ten years old!

NPS / Rebecca Acosta

Although protected wildlife sanctuary areas do exist at both beaches, biologists remain concerned about the proximity of human activities and unleashed dogs disturbing the birds. Compliance with leash regulations remains similar to recent years - over 70% of pets observed in surveys were off leash within protected areas at Ocean Beach. Visitors seem to be more aware of the Wildlife Protection Areas at Crissy Field, and compliance with keeping unleashed pets out of restricted areas is much higher.

Contact [Rachel Townsend \(https://www.nps.gov/common/utilities/sendmail/sendemail.cfm?o=5984D8B398DF90B7ABAF1CB8F704AEA342BD568E4EA2829A4D51A0970D9881B0D8&r=/articles/plover-numbers-strong-on-golden-gate-beaches.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/common/utilities/sendmail/sendemail.cfm?o=5984D8B398DF90B7ABAF1CB8F704AEA342BD568E4EA2829A4D51A0970D9881B0D8&r=/articles/plover-numbers-strong-on-golden-gate-beaches.htm) for more information.



golden gate national recreation area

sfan

san francisco bay area

blog

birds

western snowy plovers

monitoring

threatened and endangered species

Last updated: February 1, 2018

Was this page helpful?

☐ Yes

☐ No



An official form of the United States government. Provided by [Touchpoints \(https://touchpoints.app.cloud.gov/\)](https://touchpoints.app.cloud.gov/)