



Updates on California Least Tern Management at SDIA

SDMMP Meeting

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Airport / Airport Authority Facts

- 661 acres
- > 60,000 passengers per day + meeters/greeters/visitors + employees
- ~ 400,000 gallons of Jet Fuel moving around the airport per day
- First LEED Platinum Airport Terminal in the world
- Airport Authority is a Special Agency without property tax revenue
- **~ 20 acres of Endangered Species Habitat for CA Least Tern**

California Least Tern - Characteristics & Appearance

- Migratory Seabird found on West Coast
- West Coast range is from San Francisco Bay to Baja California, MX
- Smallest of the North American terns – adults average 1.6 oz with a 1 ft wingspan



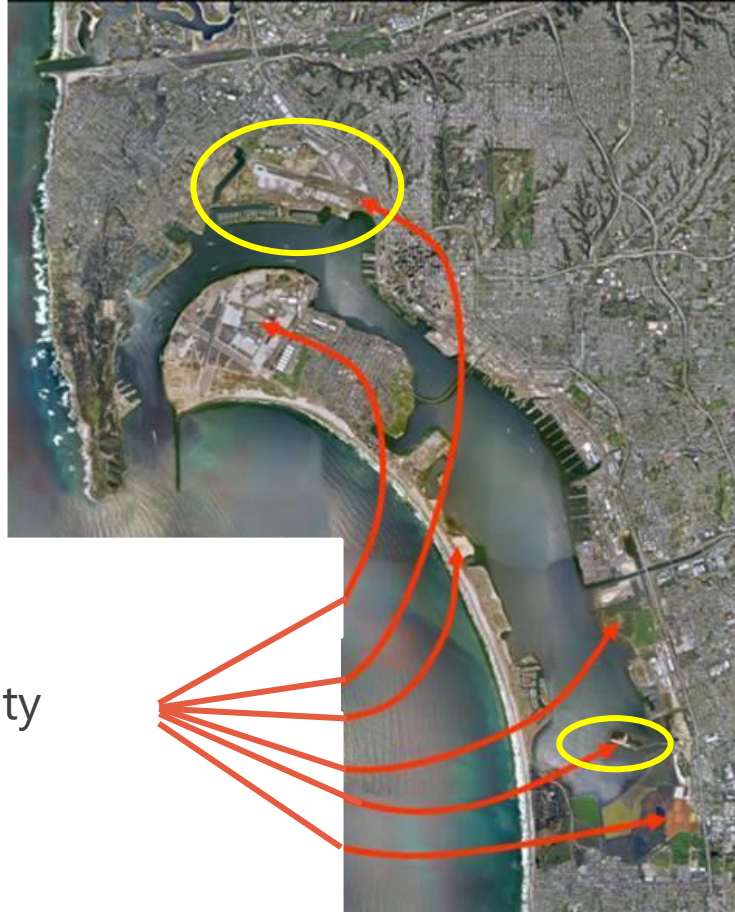
California Least Tern – Endangered Species

Listed under both Federal and California State Endangered Species Act since 1972.

Greatest impact on population caused by habitat loss due to increased urbanization/development.



California Least Tern Colonies Around San Diego Bay



6 Nesting Sites

2 sites are responsibility
of Airport Authority

Historic Least Tern Nesting at SDIA



Current Least Tern Nesting at SDIA



Management Obligations

1993 Biologic Opinion by USFWS in response to NEPA Formal Consultation for the construction of initial phase of Terminal 2 West and other improvements

- Approx. 20 acres of Least Tern Nesting Habitat on the southeast end of the runway/taxiway area must be preserved as Least Tern Habitat in perpetuity
- Chick Fence required to prevent chicks from reaching taxiway, runway, service roadway
- Points of ingress/egress to construction areas must be 1,200 ft from Habitat
- 6.2 acres of Habitat in south San Diego Bay must be maintained in perpetuity



Recent Updates to Management Obligations

Over the last 10 years or more, several development projects have resulted in Informal Consultation with the USFWS, resulting in several tighter restrictions.

- No Construction within 800 feet of the Habitat during nesting season.
- On-site biologist must observe work between 800 feet and 1,200 feet and has the authority to stop work if terns are being harassed.
- Nighttime construction lighting must be limited.
- Potential impacts to terns from Group V Aircraft on Twy B must be monitored for 2 yrs.

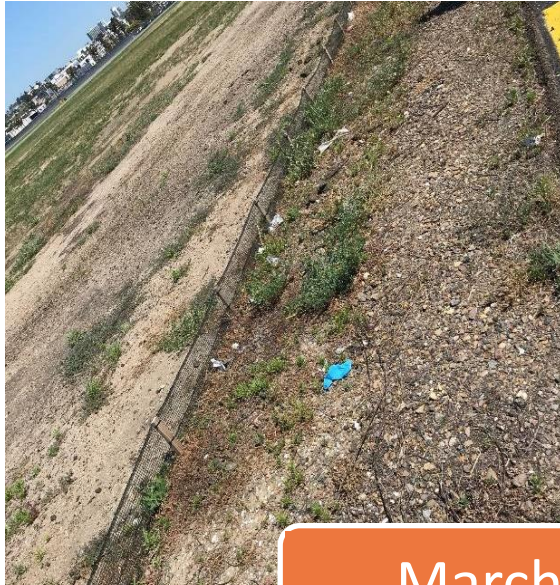
Biodiversity Plan Key Initiatives

- **Continue to ensure suitability of CLT habitat**
 - Maintain chick fencing before and during nesting season
 - Maintain visual screening along the adjacent roadway
 - Modify the habitat surface to vary topography
- **Maintain compliance with wildlife permits and regulations**
 - Wildlife Hazard Management Plan
 - Wildlife Rescue Plan
- **Use of Bird Deterrent Devices**

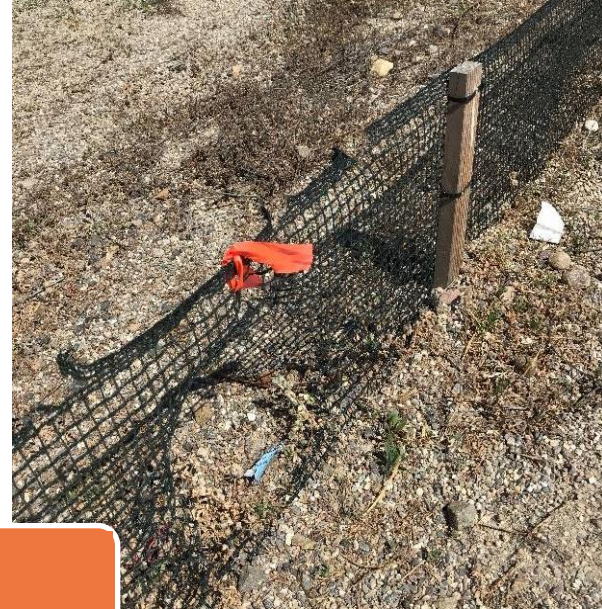


Nesting site preparation & maintenance

Herbicide review and application



Chick fence repairs



March and April

Chick Fence

10-inches high



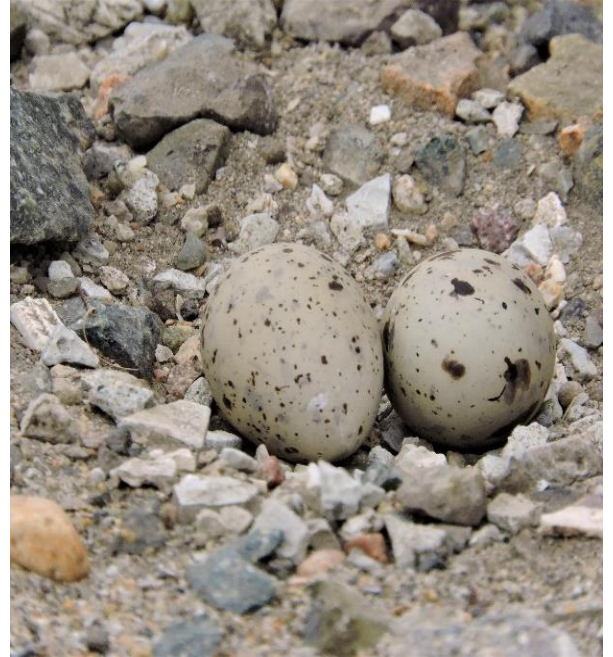
Least Tern Monitoring & Habitat Management

SDCRAA contracts with the San Diego Zoo to obtain the services of a biologist with expertise in Least Tern Management.

During Nesting Season, we reduce the speed limit on the Service Road and shut-off certain roadway lights.

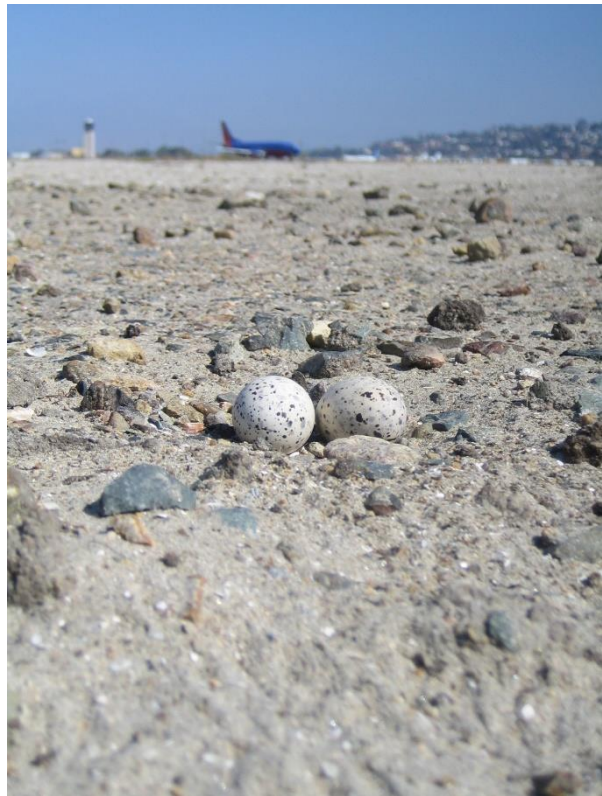


Weekly Monitoring



Started in April







Newly-hatched chicks weigh an average of 0.21 ounces



Least Terns are a precocial species –
born with feathers and able to run
and swim soon after hatching









Chicks have an average wing length of .41 inches



Least Tern Predators

- Ants
- Rats
- Gulls
- Corvids
- Peregrine falcons
- Kestrels
- Owls
- Raccoons
- Opossums



- ✓ USDA Wildlife Services is onsite to protect the Least Terns from predators

USDA

Predator Control



April through September

Least Tern Nests: San Diego International Airport - Chronological



2020 Nesting Season Highlights



- Addition of Sand Patches
- Weed control into early April
- 6 Pairs of CLT
- 6 Nests
- 4 Fledglings

Habitat Enhancement



Year-round weed abatement



2020 CLT Oval Weeding Activities



Vegetation (weeds) not suitable habitat

- Weed abatement was done in March and early April, prior to season
- Authority initiated trial weed control around oval signage using salt!

Pilot Salt Application – Weed Control



Salt Herbicide Trials



Results of Salt Trials

- It takes a lot of salt to suppress weeds!
- Application seemed to work better for pre-emergent weed control
- Best for small areas (great for near signage)



Questions?



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