

Fodder for the July Snowy Plover Docent Training Press release:

In the 1960s, the threatened Western Snowy Plovers abandoned their favorite Santa Barbara nesting site, Coal Oil Point Reserve (COPR), when it became open to the public. The plovers would only return during winter and would leave before spring to nest somewhere else. The reason: too much human disturbance. Observers found that on average, the birds were bothered every half an hour due to runners, surfers, dogs, and horseback riders.

The year 2000 marked the start of the Snowy Plover Docent Program (SPDP) to protect and restore the plovers and their habitat. Seven years later, after installing educational signs on the beach, fencing the plover habitat, implementing the program, and restoring the plover roosting area, the birds began nesting again. The main goals for COPR and SPDP are to protect the reserve, educate the public, and take the Western Snowy Plovers off the threatened species list. More than 200 plovers have successfully fledged (hatched and survived) since management efforts began.

Jennifer Stroh, Program coordinator says, “We are always looking for new docents, or volunteers, to protect the plovers, especially for summer. Volunteers are required to commit two hours per week. She explained, “The more docents we have, the better the chances for the recovery of the plover population at COPR and the species as a whole. If you are interested in becoming involved, but the "docent" work is not for you, please do not be discouraged. There are many other ways to help and we will find a way to get you involved.”

With a constant need for community outreach, office assistance, programming, design, and art, not to mention many other opportunities all offers to assist can be put to use.

More info can be found at <http://coaloilpoint.ucnrs.org/subpage1>