



**SAN DIEGO**  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

LET'S **GO.**

## Updates on California Least Tern Management at SDIA

**SDMMP Meeting**

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# San Diego International Airport



# 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



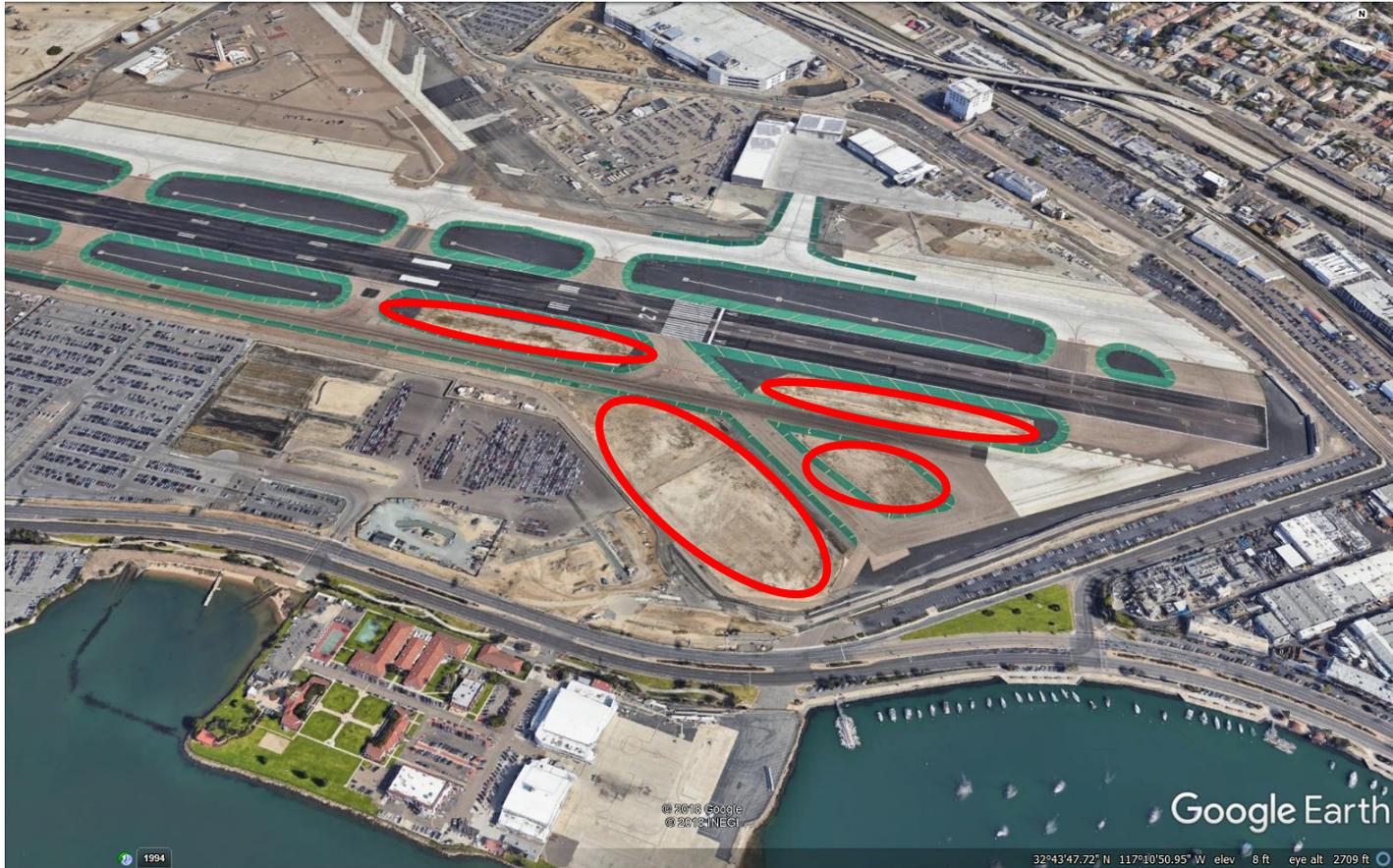
6 Nesting Sites

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.

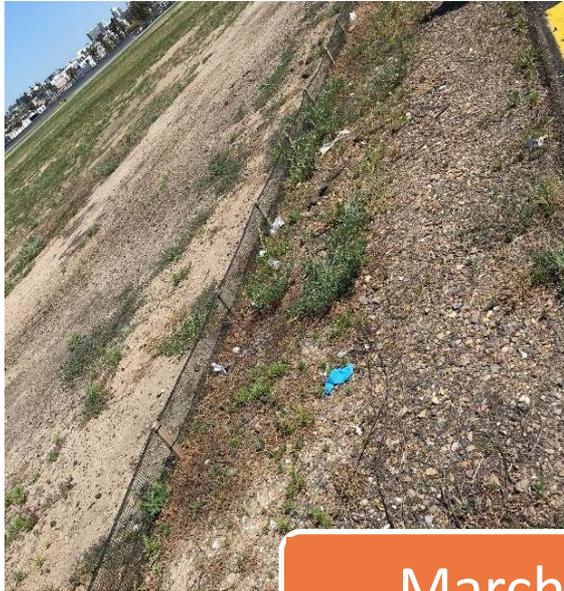
# Biodiversity Plan Key Initiatives

- **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.

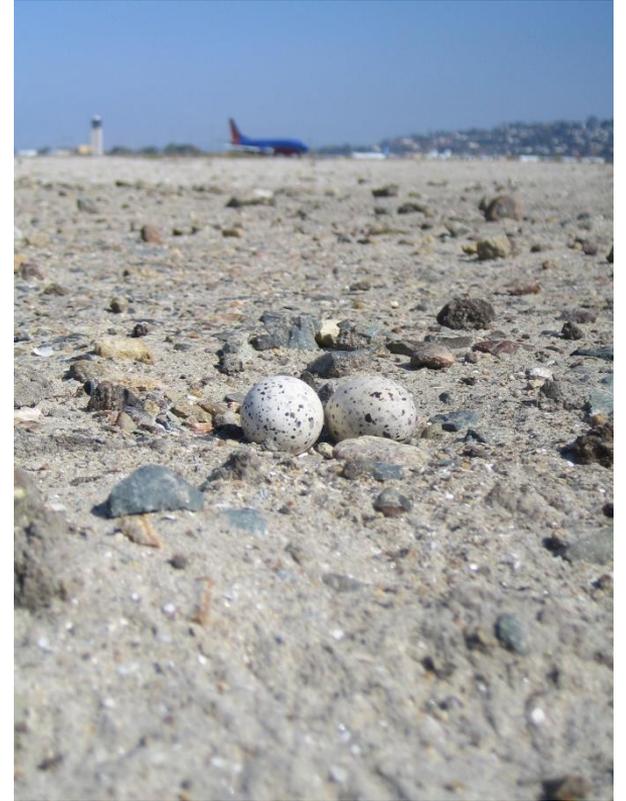


# Weekly Monitoring



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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