

# **TERN WATCH**

## **VOLUNTEER PREDATOR WATCH PROGRAM**

of the U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
and partnering with Golden Gate Audubon



### *For the protection of the California Least Tern*

We are looking for dedicated volunteers who love birds and want to help us protect a local endangered species from avian and mammalian predators at Alameda Point (the former Naval Air Station, Alameda - northwest end of Alameda Island). This Navy-owned land is closed to the public. Therefore, this is a rare opportunity to view an endangered species up close and personal.

**The California least tern**, a state and federally listed species, is the smallest American tern, about 9 inches (23 cm) in length. It is identified in spring and summer by a white forehead contrasting with a black crown and nape. Its body is slate grey above and white below, with the pointed wings and forked tail characteristic of most terns. The least tern will nest on unfrequented, open sandy or gravelly beaches close to estuaries, coastal embayments, open shoreline areas, upon dredge spoils and more rarely, inland on broad river valley sandbars. Since 1970, nesting sites have been recorded from San Francisco Bay to Bahia de San Quintin, Baja California. The California least tern is migratory, usually arriving in its breeding area by the last week of April and departing south again in August with fledglings in tow. Alameda Point is the largest least tern colony in Northern California with over 300 pairs and a huge contributor to the overall population of this species.

The least tern is vulnerable to a long list of predators, some of which are very abundant in urban environments, such as feral and wild mammals (cat, dog, fox, skunk, etc.) and birds (hawks, falcons, owls, crows, gulls, etc.). To protect least tern nest sites from disturbance, terrestrial predators are typically controlled by fences and trapping. However, avian predators are a big problem at Alameda Point and we need your help to curb and report the predators. Volunteer presence appears to deter many daytime predators from visiting the tern colony!

Each volunteer must participate in **one** of two 2.5 hour training sessions. Each volunteer must have and use his/her personal vehicle, binoculars and cell phone, and can use our scope to observe the tern colony for 3-hour periods from a safe distance to see any incoming predators and to prevent any disturbance to the tern colony. However, you are close enough to see and enjoy the tern behaviors seen by few people anywhere: courtship, aerial displays, mating, nesting, raising chicks to fledglings, feeding chicks and mates, and so much more. Each volunteer is asked to record predator and least tern activities on our forms. It's fun, easy, and you'll learn a lot about the least terns and predators.

Volunteer information and training sessions: Only **ONE** training session per year is required per volunteer.

- 1. Tuesday, May 3, 2011** Alameda Free Library, 1550 Oak Street, Alameda (510) 747-7777 (Meeting room on first floor in back, left of indoor café). Late registration and refreshments start at 5:30pm. Training will start promptly at **6:00pm and go to 8:30pm.**
- 2. Saturday, June 4, 2011** Alameda Free Library, 1550 Oak Street, Alameda (510) 747-7777 (Meeting room on first floor in back, left of indoor café). Late registration and refreshments start at 9:30am. Training will start promptly at **10:00am and go to 12:30pm.**

**RSVP required:** call Susan Euing @ 510 521-9624 or email [susan\\_euing@yahoo.com](mailto:susan_euing@yahoo.com). Registration materials will be sent to you by email

Please feel free to share this flyer with other bird enthusiasts/clubs who might be interested.

