

Bolsa Chica

Surfing

While our ancestors didn't surf, they did rely heavily on trade of the Pacific Ocean. We utilized plank canoes for boats, called Ti'ats (the Chumash called theirs a Tomol), to travel from our coast to our Channel Islands. We would also travel north and south along the coast to trade with our neighboring tribes. To waterproof these vessels, they were lined by asphaltum. Oil was a rich resource of this specific area of Bolsa Chica. Surfing will reconnect our spirits with those of our ancestors in respecting the endless resources of our coast.



Painting by artist Robert Thomas



A Chumash plank canoe built for ethnographer JP Harrington in 1912

Alto California Governor Pedro Fages, in 1795, granted to Manuel Perez Nieto (a soldier from the Presidio of San Diego) whose son later married a Gabrieleno woman. These ranchos were managed by our ancestors who were called "gentiles" who were non-Christian. It was the largest of all the land grants of the time with some 360,000 acres. Its boundaries extended from the Los Angeles River to the west and the Santa Ana River to the east. El Camino Real formed the northern border and the Pacific Ocean formed the southern border. This rancho included what is now Huntington Beach, Bolsa Chica, Seal Beach, Long Beach, Los Alamitos, Gardena, Los Coyotes, Bellflower, Norwalk, Santa Fe Springs, and Whittier.

Land grant

He gave a portion to his nephew, Juan Antonio Perez, which was known as Paso de Bartolo (1956 Temple letter, Wikipedia) which is in the now current cities of Montebello, Whittier and Pico Rivera. Juan Antonio was also mayordomo (manager) of Mission San Juan Capistrano and Mission San Gabriel. Juan Antonio Perez had Gabrieleño mistresses - our Kizh Gabrieleño grandmothers, Cristovala Romero and Gregoria Villa, who were sisters. Cristovala (born 1824) became the daughter-in-law of Victoria Bartolomea Reid. Juan Crispin's grandson, Jose de Jesus Perez married Angustias Ochoa Gradias in 1862. She was the Kizh Gabrieleño granddaughter of Nicolas Joseph who led the 1785 revolt with Toyupurina against the European powers at Mission San Gabriel. Some current tribal members are direct descendants of the union of José and Angustias. Other tribal members of this petition are direct descendants of Cristovala. Manuel, Juan Crispin and his son Juan Crispin were a family well documented in the history of California royalty. It's because of these men's social status that our Kizh Gabrieleño grandmothers were provided protection from the turmoil of secularization. This is how we, as a tribal entity, were able to survive the Mexican genocide. In order to sustain survival and avoid extinction, the Kizh hid within the new culture by intermarriage and providing children.

Rancho Los Cerritos still stands today (National Historic Landmark No 93). It was originally built by pioneer Jonathan Temple in 1843 as headquarters for his cattle ranch. It was the largest of the adobes built during the Mexican period. He later sold it to Flint, Bixby and Company in 1866 who converted it to a sheep ranch. One of the company's founder's brothers, Jotham Bixby, who was known as the "father of Long Beach," later purchased the property.



Rancho Los Cerritos

Povuu'nga and the Creation legend

Povuu'nga was a very large village site of this area. The name translates to "en la bola." There is some argument as to what that translates to. Some say "in the ball," "in the pouch," or "in the crowd." The bays and inlets of the area were referred to as "las bolsas." Many archaeological sites and, unfortunately, human remains have been found and desecrated in this area.

There is a Gabrieleno legend about a great gathering where people had to sleep outside the limits of the village. The Gabrieleno Creation Myth. In the beginning, it was always dark. Man was the bringer of light, which was the sun. Earth birthed six elements including earth and sand, rocks, trees and shrubs, medicinal herbs and grasses, animals and Wiyot, a non-human entity who ruled the people for a long time. His sons chose to poison him. Wiyot's mother had prepared an antidote in a shell, but Coyote kicked it over. Coyote wanted to devour Wiyot's body but he was distracted initially but returned just in time to jump on the burning funeral pyre and was able to eat a portion of Wiyot's shoulder. In another version, Coyote stole the heart of his father. Some say Wiyot died near Lake Elsinore, some say at Big Bear Lake. When he died, white and blue beads came out of the water as it cried, All the pines on top of the mountains used to be people who turned to trees when Wiyot died. Ancestors used to go to the lake, sing and weep and throw beads in to the water.

San Pedro bay was named the "Bay of Smokes" by Cabrillo. He named it so because he saw numerous fires along the coast as he sailed along the coastline.

Bolsa Chica wetlands & natural resources

The Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve (almost 1,500 acres) is one of the largest remaining saltwater marshes along the California coast. These local wetlands are a critical habitat for endangered and threatened species, as well as a nursery and year-round home for many species of aquatic creatures and fish. It is home to many shorebirds that are threatened due to habitat destruction.

The Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*) is a small shorebird. They use the beach for feeding on tiny crustaceans, mollusks, marine worms and some insects including flies and beetles. Their nest sites are on open ground usually next to a clump of grass or piece of driftwood. The nests are lined by shell, grass, pebbles and other debris. Humans and pets disturb these nests. The Snow Plover is listed as a threatened species in 1993.



Snowy Plover



Snowy Plover nest

The California least tern (*Sternula antillarum browni*) migrates from its winter locations along the Pacific Coast of South America to its breeding grounds here in April. Nesting occurs from mid May to mid June. Their nests are also on low vegetation areas near water in the sand. They dive into the water to find food such as anchovy, smelt, silversides, shiner surfperch and small crustaceans. The birds are preyed on by owls, American kestrels

and domestic cats. Humans and their pets disturb their nests. The California least tern was placed on the endangered species list in 1970.



California least tern



CA least tern nest

The Belding Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi*) lives year round in Southern California's salt marshes. Their nests are built in the vegetation at the outer edge of the marshes. They forage for seeds and insects in shrubs and low trees and catch insects in mid-air. It was placed on the endangered species list in 1974.



Belding savannah sparrow



Belding savannah sparrow nest

The Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotia*) migrates from . It feeds on insects in the air, lizards and small crabs but don't dive for fish from the water like other terns. They also prey on chicks of other species like the California least tern and the Snowy Plover. The US Fish and Wildlife Service destroyed eggs at the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge to spare the terns and plovers from predation of their chicks. But a petition was filed to protect all terns. These birds migrate from Encinada to Bolsa Chica. Human disturbance and loss of habitat have threatened their livelihood.



Gull-billed tern



Gull-billed tern nest

The coast and its wetlands also provide a nursery for sharks, including Great Whites, and rays. It provides feeding grounds for juveniles and breeding grounds for adults.

Salt marsh bird's beak (*Cordylanthus maritimus* spp. *Maritimus*) was placed on the federally endangered species list in 1978. It is also listed as Endangered on the Endangered Species Act as well as the National Environmental Policy Act. This plant acts like a parasite in that its roots latch onto a host plant (like saltgrasses, Beard Grass, Pickleweed, Fleshy Jaumea and Sunflower) where it gets its water and nutrients. The plant actually secretes salt. This plant is threatened by loss of habitat, pollution, human recreational activities and invasion of non-native plants (especially Algerian Sea Lavender). This plant is native to the California coast, so if it we lose its habitat, it will become extinct.



Bird' beak in a salt marsh habitat

Ancient burial ground gets national designation

By [CINDY CARCAMO](#) | Orange County Register
August 6, 2009 at 3:00 a.m.

A site that is widely regarded as an ancient American Indian burial ground at the Bolsa Chica Mesa has received national historic designation, exciting preservationists who say the move grants the area slightly more protection against future development. Federal officials last month determined the “cogged stone” site at Bolsa Chica as eligible for listing with the National Register of Historic Places. The area was named after the hundreds of carved stone disks – cogged stones – found on the site. The disks were possibly used for sacred rituals. “We value the property as a significant resource,” said National Register of Historic Places historian Paul Lusignan. “There was a tremendous amount of information about the prehistoric site and distinction for the fact that it has the cogged stone site, which is a unique archeological feature found in very few other locations.” The designation makes the cogged stone site the only archeological spot along the Orange County coast to receive such an honor. The area captures some of the land within the Hearthside Homes development and an estimated six acres of unincorporated land owned by Don Goodell that the city of Huntington Beach is proposing to annex. Only four other archeological sites in the county have received the distinction. The honor is just the latest chapter in a decades-long battle among preservationists, tribal members and developers.

In 2008, tensions reignited after an announcement about the unearthing of 174 ancient American Indian remains, half of them found over an 18-month period on a site slated to become a community with more than 300 homes. The land was once shared by the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians and the Gabrieleno-Tongva. The discovery of hundreds of mysterious cogged stones and human bone fragments that are up to 8,500 years old confirmed the decades-long rumors that the Brightwater Hearthside Homes site was an ancient burial ground of international importance, Native American officials have said. The site would have ultimately been listed with the National Register of Historic Places. However, the land owners — Hearthside Homes and Goodell — opposed the official listing, Lusignan said. Ed Mountford, senior vice president of Hearthside Homes, did not say in a written statement why they opposed the listing. He said they did not have more information to change their position at this time. Regardless, the listing is simply a technicality, Lusignan explained. The eligible status still affords the area the same protection as an official listing.

While the national designation is more of an honorary distinction, he said it carries a lot of weight, enough to be taken into consideration during environmental reviews. In addition, the designation makes it much harder for local governments to issue a “mitigated negative declaration.” The issuance declares that a project does not have enough of an environmental impact to warrant an in-depth study. The new historic designation changes some things for the cogged stone site, which is largely in the process of being developed. It deems the site a significant resource and therefore does not allow the city to skip an environmental impact report for development, said Susan Stratton, an archeologist who supervises a team at the California Office of Historic Preservation. “I don’t see how you can mitigate for this,” Stratton said. “Let’s say you completely destroy a building. How are you going to compensate for the destruction? Maybe you build a replica. But in this case you have an archeological site and it’s a non-renewable resource so whatever remains of this particular site, it’s forever. It will never be duplicated. You can’t build a replica of this.”

GOODELL PROPERTY MOST AFFECTED

That’s why preservationists contend the city of Huntington Beach will now have to re-evaluate the proposed annexation of the Goodell property. In the past, city officials have said they could skip the environmental impact report for the undeveloped 6.2 acres, saying the annexation would not have enough of an environmental impact to warrant an in-depth study.

Patricia Martz, a professor of anthropology and archeology at Cal State Los Angeles who spent about a decade preparing the application for the national designation, said she plans to meet with city planners soon about a re-evaluation. However, Jennifer Villaseñor, the city’s Planning Department manager, said the city can move forward without the environmental review at this stage in the annexation process and still be in compliance with state standards laid out in the California Environmental Quality Act.

“We have a cultural report that shows that it’s eligible for listing on the national register,” she said. “We didn’t exempt it from CEQA and we’re going through the CEQA process.”

“It’s sort of like the first step in a long series of steps. This is just looking at the pre-zoning designations,” she said. “There’s nothing right now that tells us (a development) would be proposed.”

NO EFFECT ON HEARTHSIDE HOMES

As for Hearthside Homes? Martz says it’s too late. “Unfortunately that site has been almost totally destroyed except for buffer areas. If we’d got the site listed sooner it would have applied for this as well,” she said.

Mountford said it essentially would not have made a difference. “...Eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places does not change the way (the site) has been treated by the landowner or the regulatory agencies,” he said.

The developer said he plans to rebury the last set of human remains and associated grave goods in about a month.

Mountford added that the area had already been recognized in 1983 by the State Office of Historic Preservation.

However, Stratton who works at the state office, said the National Register bears a lot more weight, especially in the realm of public opinion. “It’s hard to see whether it will grant more protection than 1983,” she said. “However, it plays into public opinion. You have the groups out there that will say ‘Oh my gosh. We are going to destroy a national registered site.’ It doesn’t mean you’ll be able to keep it from being destroyed, but in terms of how it’s going to play out there in the public? Who knows.”



NATIVE AMERICANS SEEKING TO PROTECT ANCESTORS BURIED AT BOLSA CHICA GET NO RELIEF . . . YET

[MATT COKER](#) | POSTED ON [NOVEMBER 20, 2008](#)

Boned Again

Native Americans seeking to protect ancestors buried at Bolsa Chica get no relief . . . yet

Kids who dream of growing up to become California Coastal Commissioners should keep in mind that the appointed positions do not solely involve such glamorous perks as reviewing site plans, staying in different hotels every month and becoming intimate with the daises of various city-council chambers. No, every so often, you also get to be dressed down in public by a 92-year-old woman who'd need to be dripping wet and have rocks in her pockets to weigh a buck even.

"Are they going to build a house over the tombs of these Indians?" a frail Eileen Murphy asked incredulously, voice cracking, tears streaming, to stone-faced commissioners beating a hasty retreat to a break room adjacent to the Long Beach City Council chambers the afternoon of Nov. 13. As Murphy spoke, the nine commissioners were simultaneously showered with heartier screams of "Ghouls!" "Shameful!" and "Haven't changed a bit!" from younger lungs.

The commission earned the emotional response for voting unanimously against revoking the coastal-development permit they granted in June 2006 for the Brightwater Hearthsides Homes project on the mesa above the ecologically sensitive Bolsa Chica Wetlands Preserve near Huntington Beach. The California Cultural Resources Preservation Alliance, 20 American Indians from various tribal groups and the Bolsa Chica Land Trust—which includes Murphy as its director emeritus—sought the revocation because they say artifacts and human remains from people who lived on the land as much as 8,500 years ago are being mishandled by the developer.

The steady pressure applied by activists over the years has led developers to sponsor Native American-monitored archaeological digs, where artifacts and human and animal "bone concentrations" have been unearthed and turned over for reburial ceremonies on undisclosed portions of the Brightwater project area. Those seeking permit revocation contend that a bait-and-switch—or, as Murphy put it, "playing hide and seek with bodies they have found there"—has been going on whereby soil is dug up and stored until permission to build is granted by various regulatory agencies, at which time the county coroner and Native American monitors are informed human remains have been suddenly discovered.

It makes no sense to the protesters that of 174 ancient American Indian remains discovered in the past 30 years residential development has been debated, started and stopped at Bolsa Chica, half were unearthed in the past 27 months at what one speaker labeled "the most morally and financially misguided housing project in Orange County."

“This action is an attack on our culture and considered a hate crime,” said Anthony Morales, of the Gabrielino-Tongva Mission Indian group.

Members of the Gabrielino-Tongva and Juaneño-Acjachemen tribes say Bolsa Chica has always been known in their families as an ancient village complete with burial grounds and is therefore sacred. Rebecca Robles, the daughter of Lillian Robles, a tireless Bolsa Chica preservation activist and Juaneño who died in 2001 and is memorialized with a marker at the preserve, told the commission once again that local Indians never felt a need to protect the land until developers took an interest in building homes there in the 1970s. “We are going to keep coming back until someone listens,” she said, fighting back tears.

Jan Vandersloot, a Newport Beach dermatologist and Bolsa Chica Land Trust member, asked commissioners, “If you’d known about bone concentrations, would you have voted the way you did?” But that was not the question before them. The commission can’t revoke a permit simply because they were supplied inaccurate, erroneous or incomplete information at the time of their original decision. They must find they were “intentionally” misled, a narrow distinction no commissioner said had been proven.

Hearthside Homes vice president Ed Mountford, who contended his project is “one of the most regulated in California,” told commissioners that remains unearthed recently were discovered when old roads, pipelines and other structures were removed, often outside the approved building zones. He went on to show, on a slide projected overhead, all the hearings over the years at which activists have tried to stop the project, the concessions that were made to appease the concerns of Indian groups and the ultimate votes of approval by various panels, including the commission.

Morales did receive one concession earlier in the hearing, during the public-comments section in the morning, when it was revealed that 6,000 bags of soil samples have been stored in trailers at Bolsa Chica and in Temecula for two years despite the original coastal-development permit indicating items must be processed “in a timely manner.”

“Mr. Mountford is holding our ancestors hostage,” Morales said.

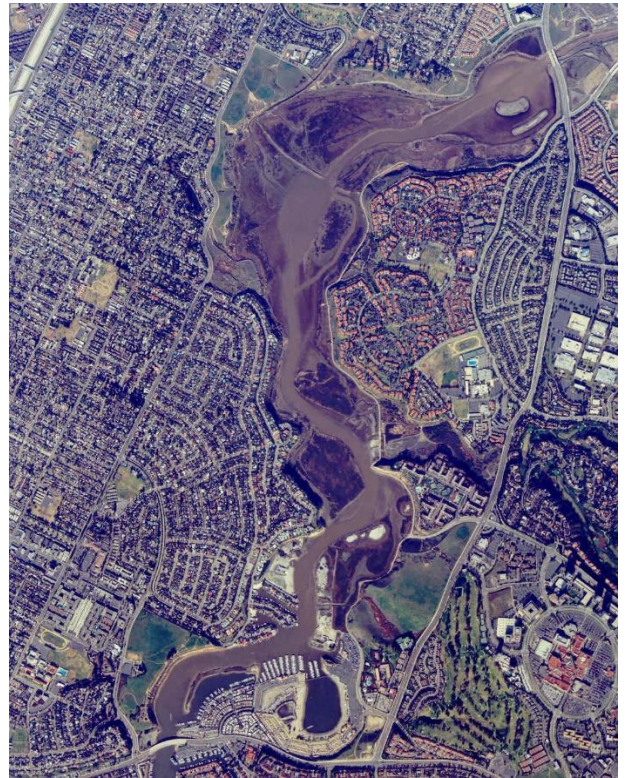
Called to face the panel, Mountford explained items in those bags still need to be documented before they can be turned over for reburial. He agreed to step up the work after commission chairman Patrick Kruer said he’d rather have Mountford show up every month to give a progress report on the bags instead of Morales.

It is long, tedious and expensive work. Hearthside’s hired archaeologist, Nancy Wiley, famously pegged the cost of the sifting operations at \$15 million. As Patricia Martz, a Cal State Los Angeles anthropology professor, told the commission, it would have been cheaper for Hearthside to build a park over the remains and keep them buried.

Still stunned by the commission’s revocation decision as he exited the chambers, Morales said the last hope “for dignity” is in the hands of California’s Native American Heritage Commission, which is scheduled to hear the Bolsa Chica matter Dec. 12 in San Juan Capistrano. Asked if that panel has the teeth to stop the project until his concerns are met, Morales said, “I think they do. I hope so.”

Newport Bay

Precious coastal wetlands such as Newport Bay were numerous at one time. Human development of the coastline into ports, marinas and housing resulted in the loss of over 90% of the original coastal wetlands between Santa Barbara and the Mexico border. In 1975, the Upper Bay became an Ecological Reserve that is managed by the California Department of Fish and Game. Now, the County of Orange manages the Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve which also includes more land along the bluffs and Big Canyon totaling about 1.5 square miles. It is a natural estuary (a place where freshwater mixes with ocean water), which there are very few remaining.



Culture

Our tribal villages of Kengaa and Lupukungna were located in the Upper Newport Bay area. The back bay is unique because the Santa Ana River to the north funneled fresh water from the Santa Ana Mountains and Anaheim/San Joaquin Hills into estuary bays which were store houses for foods like various roots, corms, bulbs, vegetables and a multitude of animals. This bay was also the last bay within the southern portion of our traditional tribal territory.



Our ancestors utilized many ocean-based food resources in this area such as shellfish, rays, sharks, fish, marine plants and seaweeds. Trade and transportation were abundant along the currents from Newport Beach to Catalina Island. These same corridors are still being used today by the Catalina transportation companies.

Our Tribe has assisted the City of Newport in restoring Big Canyon which is a riparian habitat that was overrun with non-native vegetation with poor water quality. The restoration project's goals are to restore the watershed with native plants, remove invasive plant species and improve water quality in the Big Canyon Wash.

Chairman Salas' grandfather, Ernie Teutimez, drove 16-mule wagon trains transporting sugar beets across the LA basin with a main stop in Irvine ranch. There, he would visit the Back Bay to collect shellfish and hunt ducks and geese. He would also harvest Yerba mansa for food and medicine. After collecting a few birds and cockles, he would head inland with his wagon stopping in Chino and Rancho Cucamonga to drop off the beets and trade for wine.

PLANTS

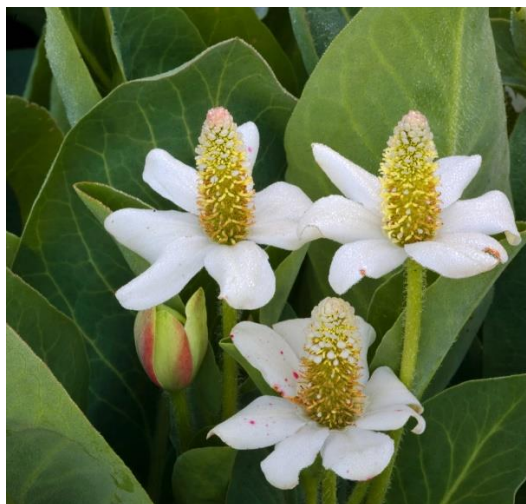
Cordgrass (*Spartina* species)

This important plant is primarily in the lower tidal areas. It grows underwater in the saltwater mostly. Is a halophyte (salt lover). It is essential for the survival of Main one to talk about. Essential for survival of Ridgway's Rail.



Yerba mansa or lizard tail (*Anemopsis californica*)

This herb grows in freshwater springs that used to be abundant in the marsh area. It is known to our people as a "cure for all" in treating such ailments as inflammatory diseases, bacteria infections, viruses, fungal infections, cancer and diseases of the respiratory system. It simply knows what is "abnormal" and what is "normal" to heal abnormal conditions of the body. It can be used topically or made into a tea or just simply consumed.



Pickleweed (*Salicornia virginica*)

Its stems have a pickle-like appearance, and it tastes salty

The plant is a halophyte, succulent, and a perennial plant

This plant stores salt in its cell membranes and when they're full the cells die and that segment turns red and falls off. This is an important plant for Belding's Savannah Sparrows who use it to build their nests

Its ashes are used to make soap and glass – its stems are used for seasoning or as a vegetable



Sea Lavender (*Limonium californicum*)

This plant is a halophyte (salt loving) and is an herbaceous perennial

These plants are hermaphroditic – both female and male reproductive organs occur on the same flower.

The leaves and flowers can be made into tea used to purify/cleanse/thin the blood and treat urinary tract infections & venereal diseases.



Alkali Heath (*Frankenia salina*)

A halophyte that grows low, woody subshrub
Prefers very alkaline soil and is a favorite nesting substrate for Forster's terns.



Fleshy Jaumea (*Jaumea carnosa*)

Can be boiled for a tea for fevers or cooked and eaten as a vegetable



Saltmarsh bird's-beak (*Cordylanthus maritimus*)

This annual herb is native to California salt marshes and a decoction used as an emetic and venereal diseases.

It has purple stems and white flowers with yellow tips and blooms from May to October

Grows to 15 inches in length

It secretes salt and grows near freshwater sources

is both a state and federal endangered plant since 1978

habitat loss, hydrological changes, human recreation and non-native plants are its threats

It is like a parasite where its roots latch onto a host plant where it gets its water and nutrients

Some of its hosts are Saltgrasses, Beard Grass, Pickleweed, Fleshy Jaumea and Sunflower



REPTILES

African clawed frog (*Xenopus laevis*)

This invasive species can change its appearance to match its background (from light to dark, from one color to mottled). They were initially imported from Africa into North America in the 1940s for aquariums and their scientific role in human pregnancy testing. But, with time, they were dumped into the wild and have become invasive species within our coastal estuaries. These frogs were used in pregnancy testing up till the 1960's because early researchers discovered that urine from pregnant women would induce egg production in the frogs within 8-12 hrs of exposure. So these frogs were used as the first simple and reliable rapid pregnancy test.



BIRDS

This area is an important stop for migrating birds from Canada and Alaska down to South America. It is also an overwinter home for many migrating species of birds, bats, and insects.

Ridgway's rail (*Rallus obsoletus*) formerly known as Light Footed Clapper Rail

The Clapper Rail is one of the most endangered birds in California. This species needs a lot of tall cord grass to build its nest. Its nest is floating in the marsh areas that are flooded at high tide. The nest is like a platform, where the bird weaves grass between and around the grass stems in such a way that the nest can rise and fall with the tides. The nest also has a canopy that provides protection from predators. This bird doesn't fly well and hides under the cover of the grass and other vegetation. In the morning, it comes out to look for snails, crabs and insects. It is a near-threatened species.



California least tern (*Sterna antillarum browni*)

The California least tern (*Sterna antillarum browni*) migrates from its winter locations along the Pacific Coast of South America to its breeding grounds here in April. Nesting occurs from mid May to mid June. Their nests are also on low vegetation areas near water in the sand. They dive into the water to find food such as anchovy, smelt, silversides shiner surfperch and small crustaceans. The birds are predated on by owls, American kestrels and domestic cats. Humans and their pets disturb their nests. The California least tern was placed on the endangered species list in 1970.



California least tern



CA least tern nest

Belding's savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi*)

The Belding Savannah Sparrow lives year round in Southern California's salt marshes. Their nests are built in the vegetation at the outer edge of the marshes. Their nest is a perfectly shaped cup. They forage for seeds and insects in shrubs and low trees and catch insects in mid-air. It was placed on the endangered species list in 1974.



Belding savannah sparrow



Belding savannah sparrow nest

Least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*)

It has been on the endangered species list since 1980 due to habitat loss and predation by the brown-headed cowbird. They winter in Baja California and migrate to Southern California mid-March. Riparian habitat



Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*)

The Snowy Plover is a small shorebird. They use the beach for feeding on tiny crustaceans, mollusks, marine worms and some insects including flies and beetles. Their nest sites are on open ground usually next to a clump of grass or piece of driftwood. The nests are lined by shell, grass, pebbles and other debris. Humans and pets disturb these nests. The Snow Plover as listed as a threatened species in 1993.



Snowy Plover



Snowy Plover nest

Black skimmers (*Rynchops niger*)

This bird has a unique uneven bill. It flies/skims along the surface of the ocean plowing the water and snapping their bill shut when it contacts a fish. Their eyes are also unique where their pupils are verticals so they can be constricted to narrow slits to help with the glare of the water and white sands. – will nest on some of the islands, they honk, fly low (skimmers), only here for breeding season



MAMMALS

The bobcat, coyote, raccoon and various small rodents call Newport Bay their home. Many predators will prey on the eggs and young of the many birds that nest at the Back Bay. The red fox is an invasive species (as opposed to the native grey fox) that is known to prey on the endangered least tern and clapper rail populations.



Red fox



Grey fox