

Actions You Should Take

There are many ways to share Washington and Oregon beaches and help protect the Western snowy plover.

From March 15 through Sept. 15:

- Stay out of the signed nesting areas.
- Leave pets at home or keep them on a leash.
- Keep vehicles and horses out of signed nesting areas.
- Keep kites well away from signed areas. Kites mimic flying predators.
- Do not camp or have fires near snowy plover nesting areas.
- Keep the beaches litter-free to discourage predators.

AND PLEASE: Check for local restrictions at nesting areas, as they vary from site to site.



Washington
Department of
FISH and
WILDLIFE



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Portland District



Oregon Parks and
Recreation Department



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE
SERVICE

For more information or to volunteer, contact:

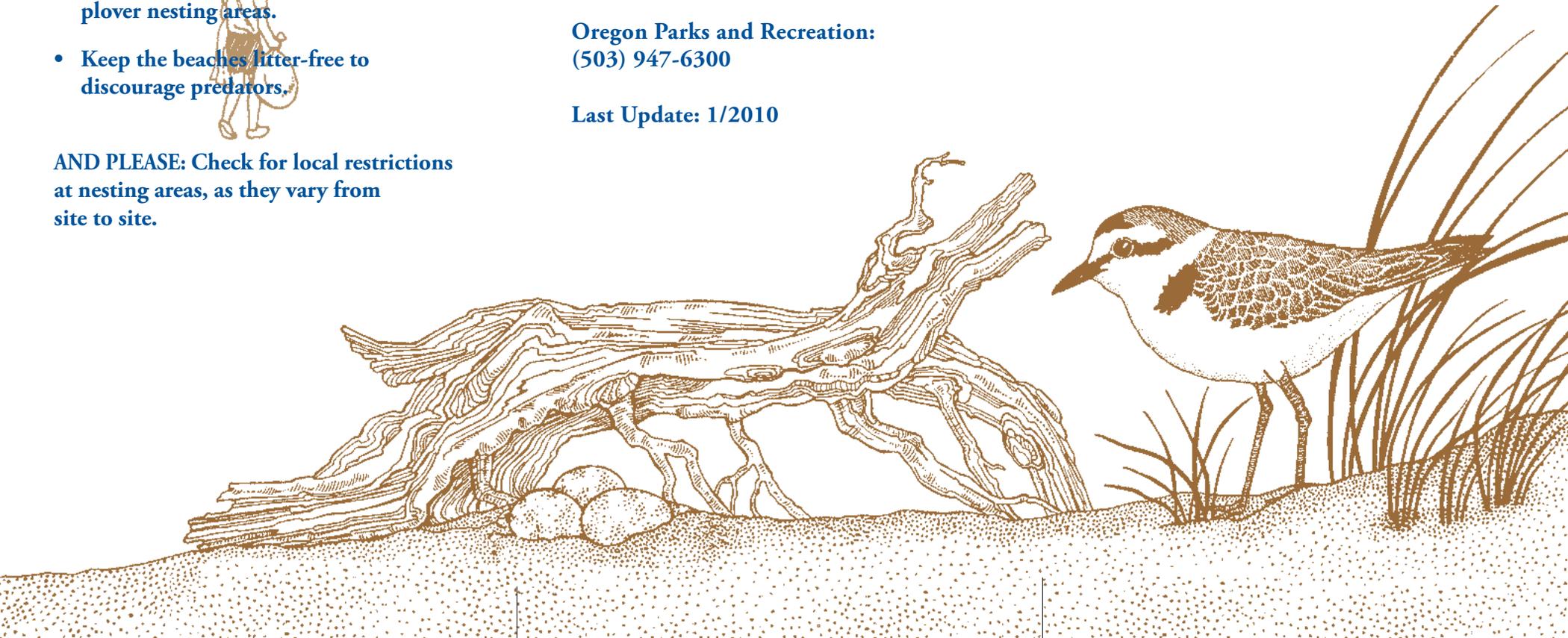
Washington State Parks:
(360) 956-4800

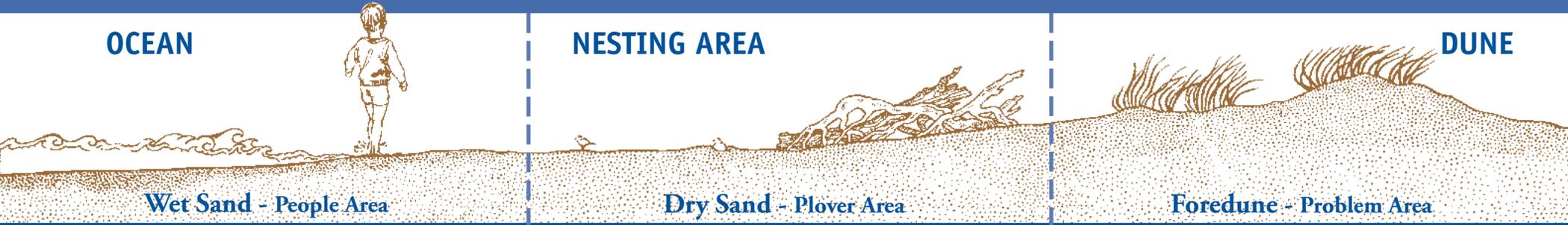
Oregon Parks and Recreation:
(503) 947-6300

Last Update: 1/2010

Sharing the Beach

How you can help the Western Snowy Plover





People

You can join others in helping to save this coastal treasure.

If just one person or a dog enters a nesting area, a parent bird will likely leave the nest. Without the parent's protection, eggs and chicks may die.

By staying out of the signed nesting areas and keeping your activities to the **wet sand** away from these sites, you are helping plovers survive.

Plovers

These small, lightly colored birds lay their eggs directly on **dry sand** areas of open beaches. They blend so well with their surroundings that they are easily stepped on or run over.

Historically, snowy plovers nested on beaches along most of the Pacific coast. Now they are rarely seen.

Problems

Snowy plover populations have drastically declined due to:

- Habitat loss from spreading European beach grass which creates a **foredune** and shrinks the plover's sandy beach habitat;
- Predators such as skunks, raccoons and crows preying on chicks and eggs. They use beach grass as cover;
- Accidental and careless disturbance by people and their pets.

Nesting Challenges

Snowy plover parents take turns sitting on the nest for up to 30 days before the eggs hatch. When a parent is startled, it leaves the nest. The eggs are then left at risk to predators, weather and blowing sand. After hatching, the chicks will spend another 30 days learning to feed and fly. During this period the chicks remain at risk to predators and disturbance by people and their pets.

Recovery Strategies

The Western snowy plover has been listed as a threatened species, one that needs protection now. Therefore, public use at some Washington and Oregon beaches is restricted from **March 15 to Sept. 15**. Other recovery strategies include removal of European beach grass, research, fencing nests and educational programs.

Challenges

Time to share