



District Policy to Protect Endangered Species at Risk of Predation by Free-Roaming Cats

**Board of Directors
June 15, 2021**

Recommendation



Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*)
Jerry Ting, flickr.com

Adopt the proposed Free-Roaming Cat Management Policy as an update to the Park District's current program.

Stakeholder Engagement

- **Natural & Cultural Resources Committee Feb 25, 2021**
- **Collaboration with animal service agencies**
- **Meetings with community members**
- **Consultation with subject experts**
- **Discussions with wildlife agencies**



Successes to Date

- Over 45 cats trapped and delivered to shelters
- Over 200 hours of staff and volunteer time spent trapping
- Three colonies removed from areas near sensitive habitats
- Communication channels established with shelters
- New signage and public information messages developed
- Fence repairs completed
- Observation cameras installed



Protection of Species at Risk of Extinction

- Required by Federal and State law
- Mitigate habitat loss from airport expansion, development
- Protect unique species for healthy, biodiverse ecosystems
- Add resiliency to species threatened by climate change
- Protect public investments in habitat restoration



Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*) Jerry Ting, flickr.com

The Bay Area: A Biodiversity Hotspot

Large-flowered fiddleneck (*Amsinckia grandiflora*)
CDFW



“preserve a rich heritage of natural and cultural resources”

-EBRPD Mission Statement, Master Plan 2013



Alameda Whipsnake
(*Masticophis lateralis euryxanthus*)



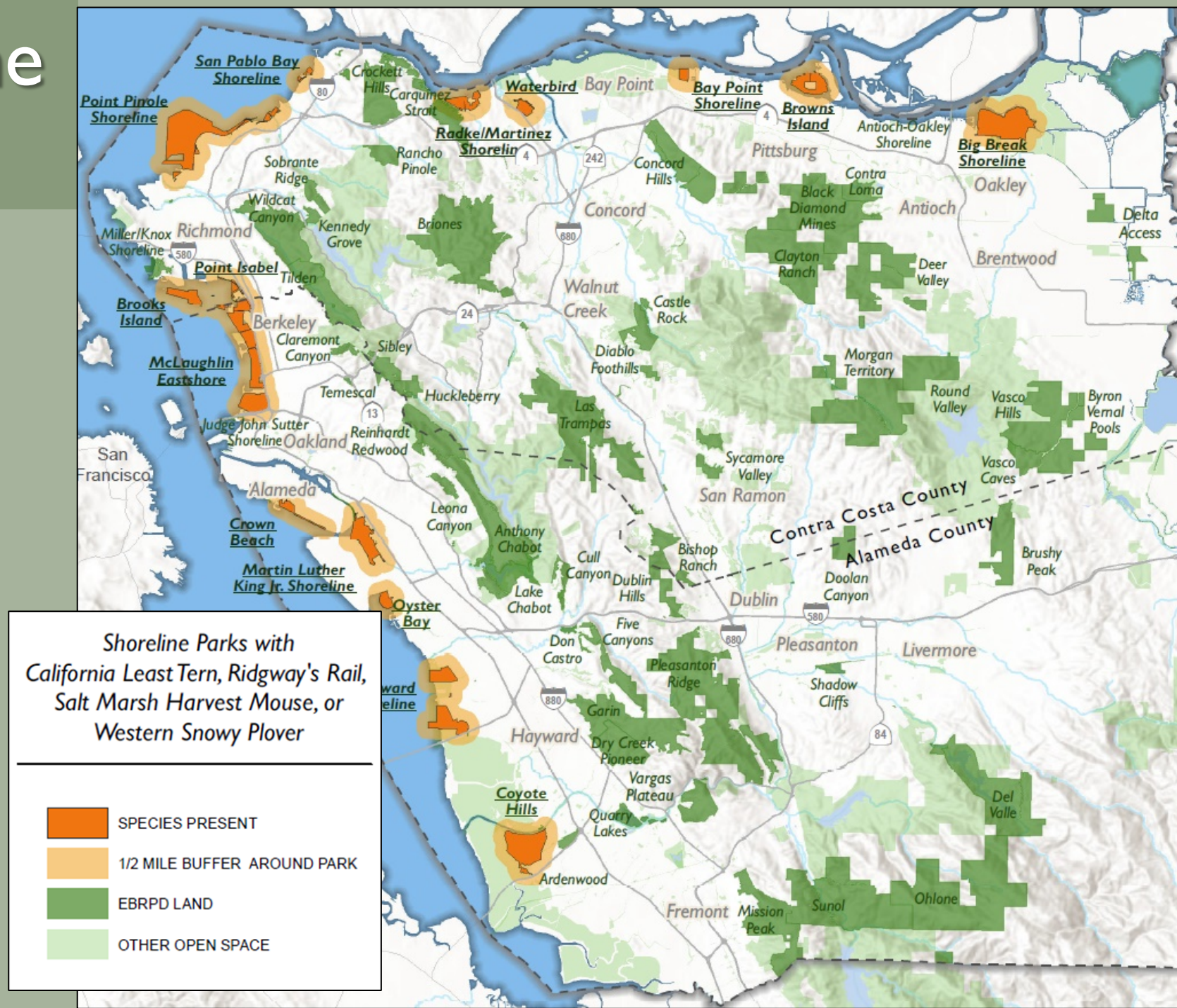
Northern Pintails (*Anas acuta*) in the Pacific Flyway
USFWS

Sensitive Shoreline Parks

Only 5% of historic shoreline habitat remains

Regional shoreline parks provide islands of habitat

Within these parks, only very small areas provide breeding or foraging habitat



California Ridgway's Rail (*Rallus obsoletus obsoletus*)

- Federally and State Endangered
- Formerly “California Clapper Rail”
- Live only in salt or brackish marshes
- Subspecies occurs only in SF Bay
- Total population just over 1,000
- Population at MLK Jr. is critical to the recovery of this species

Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline
Jerry Ting, flickr.com



Jerry Ting, flickr.com

Western Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*)

- Federally Threatened
- Nesting habitat at Hayward Shoreline's Least Tern Island
- Use shoreline parks as wintering habitat
 - Crown Beach
 - Brooks Island



California Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum browni*)

- Federally and State Endangered
- Smallest North American tern
- Only 2 breeding colonies left in all of Northern California:
 - Hayward Regional Shoreline
 - Alameda Point



David L. Riensche

Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse (*Reithrodontomys raviventris*)

- Federally and State Endangered
- One of most endangered animals in East Bay
- Loss of 95% of historical habitat
- Mice in smaller marshes are at greater risk of extinction
- Live on tiny margins of shoreline, threatened by sea-level rise



Tammy Lim

Public Investment in Habitat Restoration

Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline

- 678 volunteers
- 3,714 total volunteer hours
- \$50,000 invested; \$750,000 planned

Hayward Regional Shoreline - Least Tern Island

- 5,750 volunteers
- 30,500 volunteer hours
- \$1 million invested



Public Investment in Restoration: Hayward Marsh

- Protect bird nesting habitat for terns, snowy plovers, skimmers
- Reduce habitat fragmentation by connecting adjacent marshes
- Allow for flexible marsh management to benefit species
- Resiliency to sea level rise



Park District Stewardship Staff

- 20 professionals including biologists, restoration ecologists
- Recognized leaders in the field
- Recipients of numerous awards and competitive grants
- Published in peer-reviewed journals
- Teachers and collaborative researchers with top universities

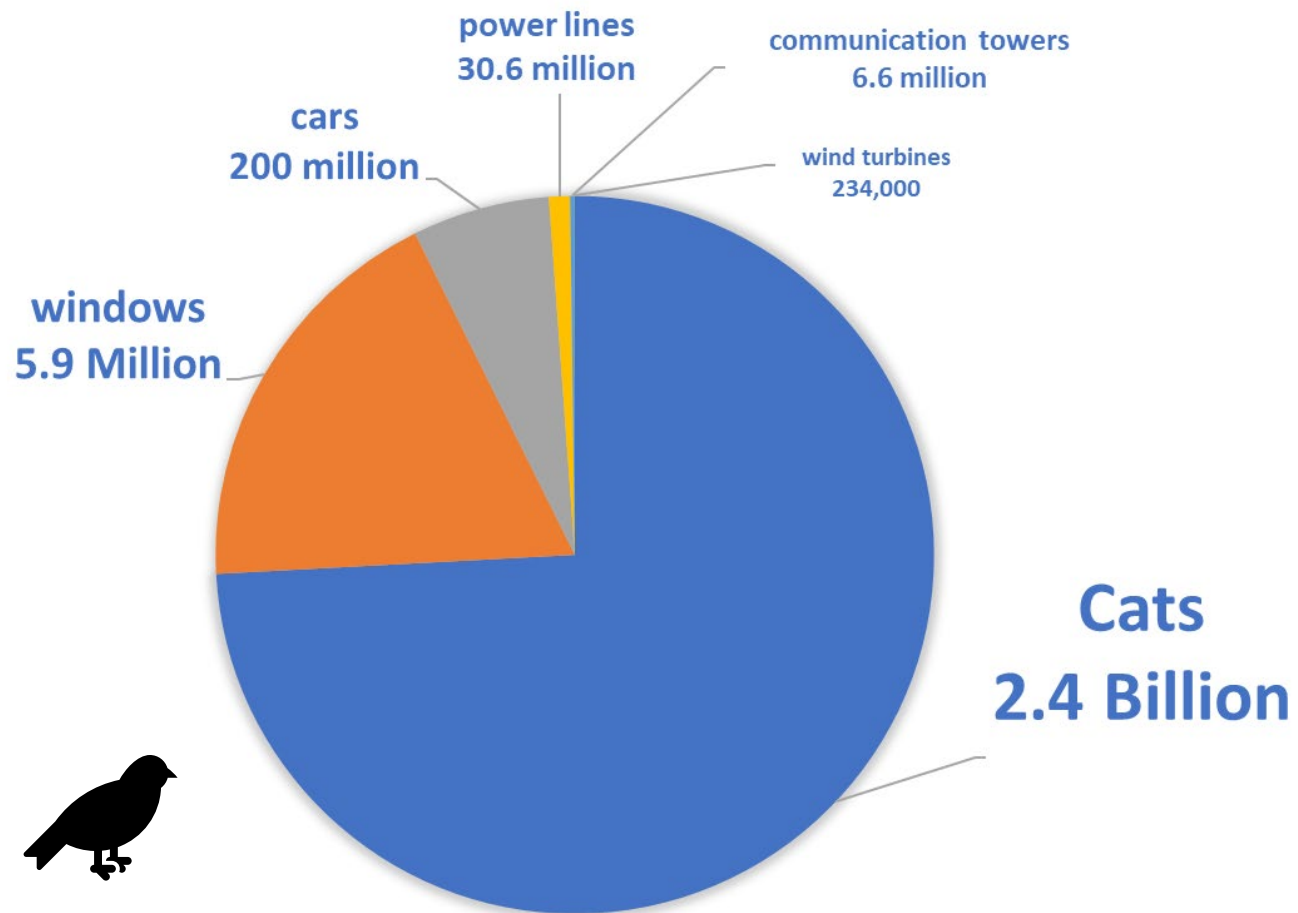


Snowy Plover Research

- District collaborates with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory to study snowy plovers
- Track movements to improve habitat protection



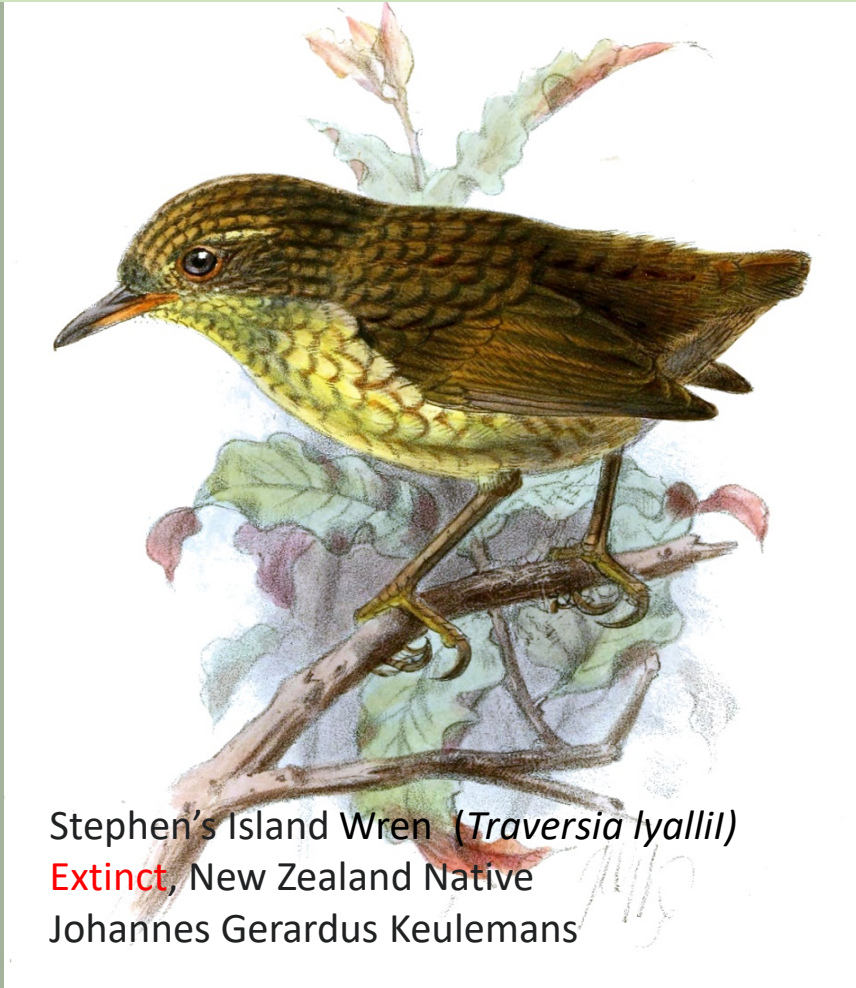
Cause of Bird Deaths Per Year in United States



Extinct Species Around the World

Cat predation has been linked to the extinction of 63 reptile, bird, and mammal species.

(Doherty et al. 2016)



Stephen's Island Wren (*Traversia lyallii*)
Extinct, New Zealand Native
Johannes Gerardus Keulemans



Key Largo woodrat (*Neotoma floridana smalli*)
Federally Endangered
Clay DeGayner

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) 1997 Resolution

“NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies recognizes cat predation as an important inimical factor affecting wildlife that resources agencies are charged to manage”

https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/3015/1492/1223/Feral_Cat_Resolution_1997-05-08.pdf



Ben Campbell,
Yellow-rumped warbler
(*Setophaga coronata*)

Current Feral Cat Management Program

- Natural Cultural Resources Committee approved 1999
- Work with volunteers to trap cats
- Signage on abandonment and feeding
- Lethal control as last resort to protect endangered species
- Park staff consults with Stewardship

“The lethal removal of cats will not be permitted unless requested by State or Federal Wildlife Management Agencies, or in extreme cases where endangered or sensitive species are at risk and multiple attempts to remove cats have failed.”

- EBRPD, 1999



Updated Free-Roaming Cat Management Policy

- Increased focus on education and prevention
- Partnership with animal services agencies
- Improved systems for locating and tracking colonies
- Improved transparency and reporting
- Clarification of lethal control as last resort



Education and Prevention

- Additional signage, multiple languages
- Increased educational programs
- Updated websites
- Messaging shared values
 - Reduce abandonment to protect wildlife
 - Provide better outcomes for pets
 - Inform park users about animal shelter resources
- Commitment from Regional Parks Foundation of annual funding for education and signage



**Endangered Species
Live in This Park**
Help us protect these species.



**Never abandon cats
in or near parks.**

**Never feed cats
found in parks.**

Contact Oakland Animal Services
who assist EBRPD in trapping
abandoned cats for rehoming
Call 510-535-5602

East Bay 
Regional Park District

Partnership with Animal Services Agencies

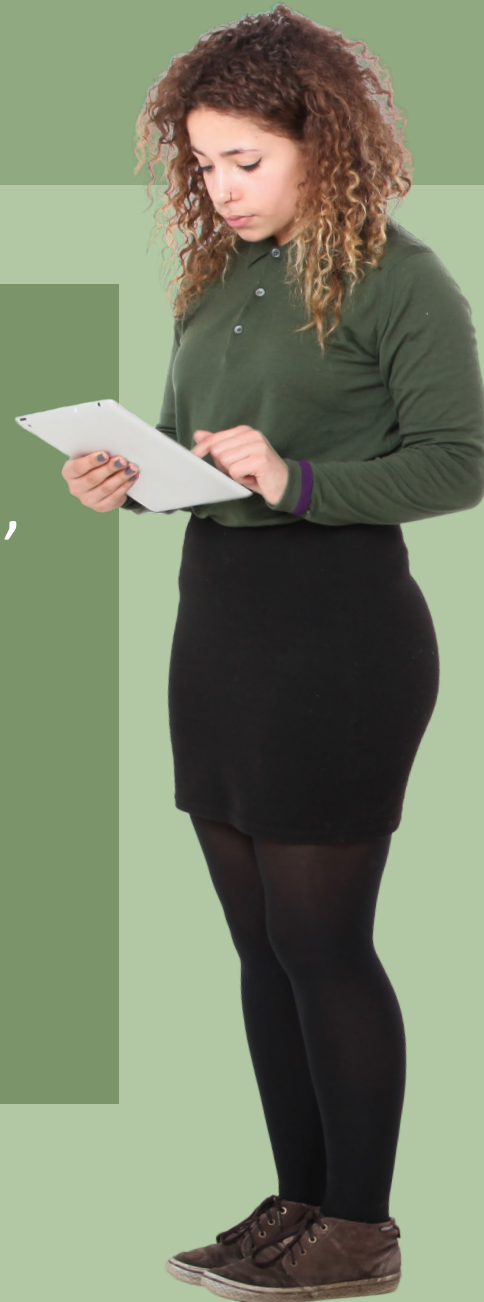
- Develop long-term cooperative agreement
- Monthly meetings with Park District
- Coordination with caretakers and volunteers
- Collaborative trapping and removal efforts
- Education and information campaigns



Methods and Tracking Cats

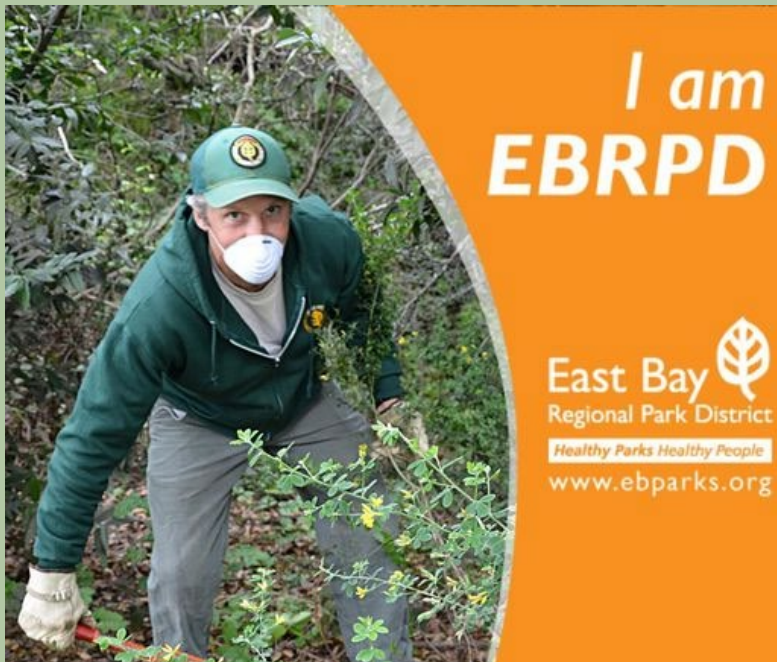


- Establish a shared spreadsheet and maps to track cats, colonies, and trapping efforts
- 7 camera trapping stations at 3 parks to catalogue and identify cats
- All trapped cats are recorded



Infrastructure and Deterrence

- Repair and maintain existing fencing, install new fencing where feasible
- Upgrade garbage cans to reduce food sources
- Install and maintain observation cameras
- Consult with shelters and scientists to identify additional infrastructure



Capture and Removal



Over 45 cats have been trapped and removed from shoreline parks this year

Lethal Control as a Last Resort

- Education, prevention, and collaboration provide safeguards to make need for lethal control unlikely
- Restricted to areas where protected species are known to be at risk of cat predation
- Requires coordination with animal services agencies to undertake all reasonable trapping efforts
- Would be conducted by certified external agency partners not Park District staff
- Requires management approval
- Must comply with AVMA guidelines



Ridgway's Rail (*Rallus obsoletus*)
Jerry Ting, flickr.com



Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*)
Jerry Ting, flickr.com



California Least Tern
(*Sternula antillarum brownii*)



Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse
(*Reithrodontomys raviventris*)

Enforcement

- Park District Ordinance 38
 - Prohibits any dog, cat, or other animal in wetlands, marsh
 - Prohibits abandoning animals
 - Prohibits feeding animals
- Local ordinances also prohibit feeding
- State law prohibits abandonment
- Cats are required to be licensed in Alameda County



Transparency and Reporting



Photo: Tony Iwane, flickr.com
Ridgway's rail, MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline

Annual Report to include updates on:

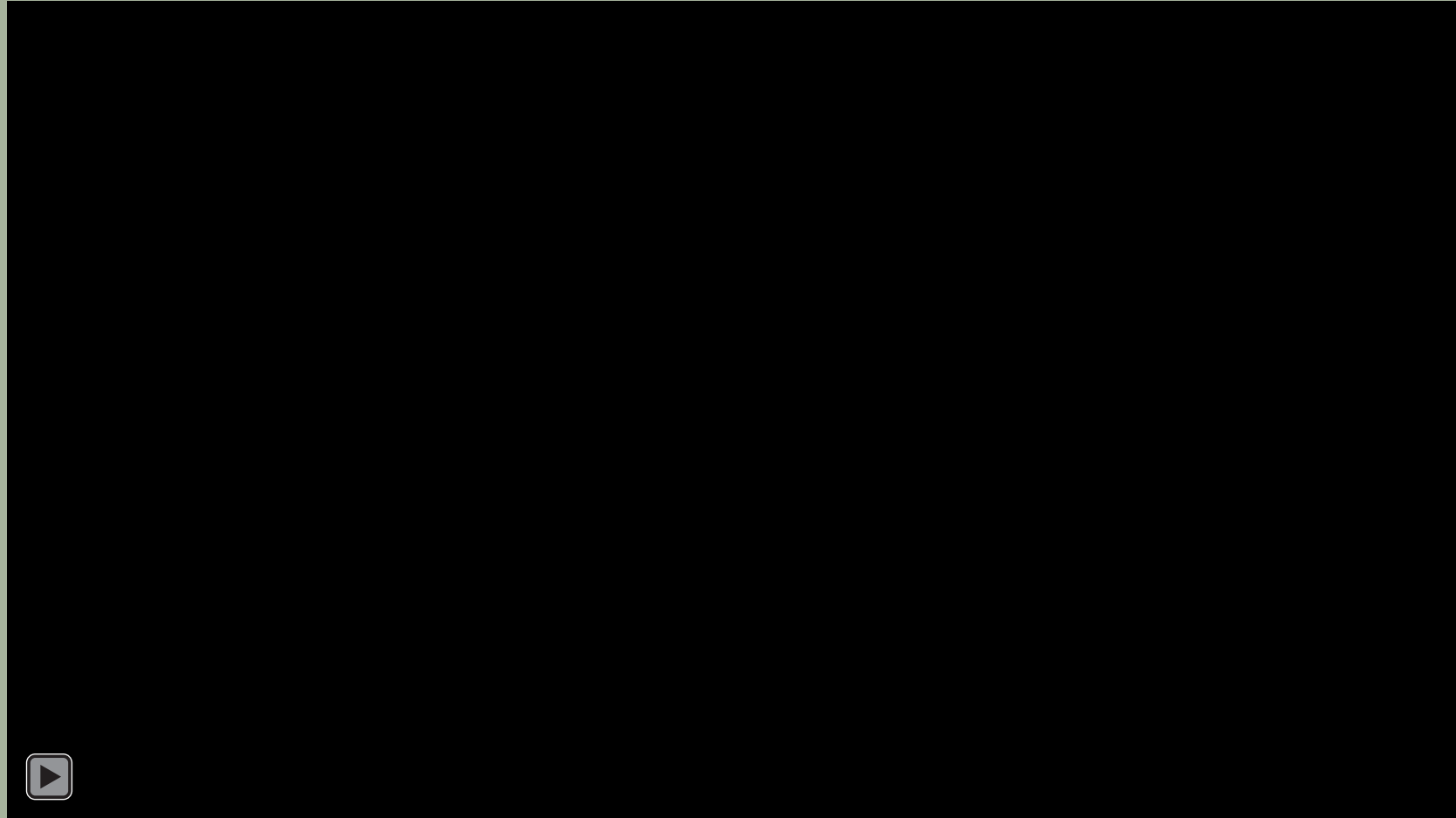
- Education and abandonment prevention campaigns
- Regional parks where cat management occurred
- Extent of trapping efforts and number of cats were trapped
- Any lethal control conducted

Policy review:

- Effectiveness to be reviewed over time
- Board to review policy at least every five years

Ridgway's Rail

Ridgway's rail, MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline
Tony Iwane, flickr.com



Video: Matthew Graul



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**Board of Directors, General Meeting
June 15, 2021**