



MEDIA CONTACT:
Nina Thompson
619-372-0916
nthompson@sdhumane.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEB. 5, 2026

Rare Snowy Plover Returns to the Wild Following Collaborative Rescue and Rehabilitation Effort

SAN DIEGO, CA — A Western Snowy Plover, a species of special concern in San Diego County, has returned to the wild following a successful rehabilitation at San Diego Humane Society’s Pilar & Chuck Bahde Wildlife Center. The bird’s journey is a testament to the power of local conservation partnerships, involving SeaWorld San Diego and the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (SDZWA).

The female plover’s story began in 2020 when she was rescued as an egg from a high-risk area. To ensure her survival, she was transported to SeaWorld for specialized rearing. After hatching and reaching maturity, she was banded and released into the wild, where she has been closely monitored by SDZWA researchers for the past four years.



On Jan. 20, 2026, the plover was brought into the care of San Diego Humane Society after being found with a leg injury in Coronado by a San Diego Zoo Wildlife biologist. Following expert veterinary treatment and time to recover, she was cleared for release on Thursday, Feb. 5, 2026.

“This bird represents the incredible synergy between San Diego’s conservation organizations,” Dr. Alexis Wohl, Wildlife Veterinary Manager at San Diego Humane Society. “From her start as a rescued egg at SeaWorld to years of monitoring by the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, and finally her recovery here at San Diego Humane Society, her story shows what we can achieve when we work together to protect our region’s most vulnerable species.”

The Western Snowy Plover is a small shorebird that faces significant threats from habitat loss and human disturbance. Because they nest directly on the sand, their eggs and chicks are particularly vulnerable. The bird is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

San Diego Humane Society’s Project Wildlife program is the leading resource for wild animal rehabilitation and conservation education in San Diego County, giving more than 10,000 injured, orphaned and sick wild animals a second chance each year. **To learn more, visit sdhumane.org/wildlife.**

Photos and B-Roll of the Snowy Plover’s care and release for media use can be downloaded here:

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/RvRuYGA1xp>

Photo/video credit: San Diego Humane Society

About San Diego Humane Society:

San Diego Humane Society’s scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, please visit sdhumane.org.



About San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance

San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, a nonprofit conservation leader, inspires passion for nature and collaboration for a healthier world. The Alliance supports innovative conservation science through global partnerships and groundbreaking efforts at the world-famous San Diego Zoo and San Diego Zoo Safari Park, both leading zoological institutions and accredited botanical gardens. Through wildlife care expertise, cutting-edge science and continued collaboration, more than 44 endangered species have been reintroduced to native habitats. The Alliance reaches over 1 billion people annually through its two conservation parks and media channels in 170 countries, including San Diego Zoo Wildlife Explorers television, available in children's hospitals across 14 countries. Wildlife Allies—members, donors and guests—make success possible.

About SeaWorld

SeaWorld is a leading marine life theme park and accredited zoo and aquarium that provides experiences that matter while educating and inspiring guests of all ages to care about marine life. Welcoming millions of guests every year, the parks offer fun and enriching experiences from up-close animal encounters and year-round educational programs to award-winning marine-life themed rides and attractions, special events and exciting entertainment. For more than 60 years SeaWorld has advanced the conservation of marine life in and outside its parks through science, education, and exceptional animal care that is Humane Certified by American Humane and accredited by the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. SeaWorld is one of the largest marine animal rescue organizations in the world, helping more than 42,000 animals to date. The SeaWorld Conservation Fund, a non-profit foundation established in 2003, has provided more than \$20 million to nearly 1,400 organizations to advance critical research on every continent. A portion of park proceeds goes toward supporting these longstanding conservation commitments. SeaWorld parks are in Orlando, San Antonio, San Diego and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE). SeaWorld is part of the United Parks & Resorts (NYSE: PRKS) portfolio of theme park brands. For more information, visit us at SeaWorld.com.

###