

Central Coast Black Oystercatcher Monitoring Program

Black Oystercatchers are an important intertidal bird species along the California Coast. Considered a “Special Status Species” by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service due to limited distribution, Black Oystercatchers are extremely vulnerable to disturbances. Black Oystercatcher pairs are territorial and will guard their nests or potential nesting sites from other birds and any other potential threat.



Two to three eggs are laid during the spring and incubated for 24-29 days, with chicks fledging after 35-40 days. Adult Black Oystercatchers don't generally start breeding until they are about 5 years old.



An active group of citizen science volunteers help monitor each stage of the breeding season to measure yearly reproductive success and sources of disturbance.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Drone Usage

- Drones should not be flown along the California coast during nesting season, which runs from March to August. Disturbance can cause adults to abandon nests leaving eggs vulnerable to predators.
- Always utilize **Environmentally Conscious Operations**: follow ECO-Drone best practices (<http://ECO-Drone.org>).
- Use the B4UFLY mobile app.
- Disturbing nesting birds is a violation of state and federal regulations.



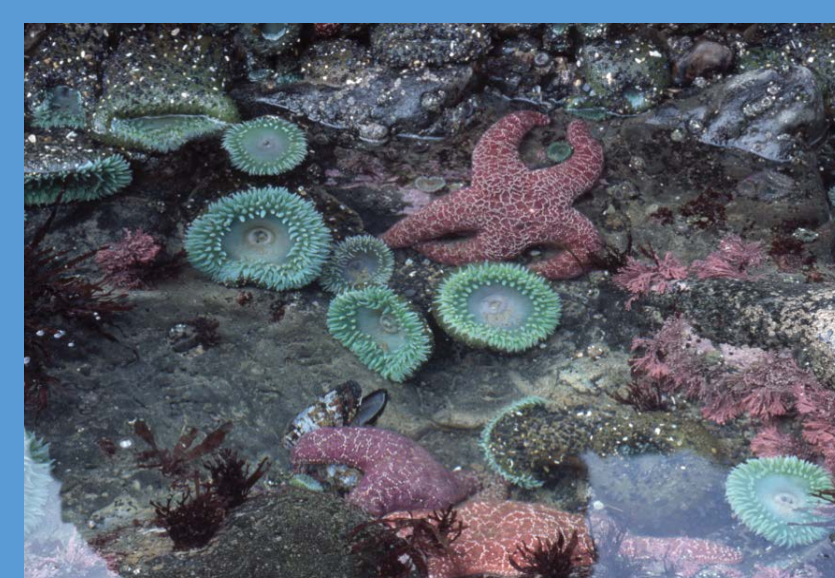
Ropes and Signs

- Temporary signs and ropes are placed around critical nesting sites to reduce disturbance to Black Oystercatchers and beachgoers should avoid such areas as much as possible.



Intertidal Etiquette

- Walk with care to avoid stepping on living organisms (plants and animals).
- Leave all organisms in their native habitat.
- Be very gentle when touching any organism.
- Enjoy anemones without prodding them, they will squirt but this can kill them, as they need this water to survive until the next tide covers them.



Wildlife Etiquette

- Do not feed wildlife, including squirrels, Canada Geese and gulls. Feeding animals artificially increases their abundance, putting pressure on local species, including Black Oystercatchers, whose eggs are often targeted prey items.
- Do not attempt to touch or get close to any wild animal, as this can change their natural behavior and can transmit disease.
- Dogs should be on leash at all times.

