



San Nicolas Island, Mugu Lagoon Home to Rare and Endangered Species

Mugu Lagoon and San Nicolas Island (SNI), both of which are incorporated into Naval Base Ventura County, are home to some unique, threatened and endangered species that the Navy is committed to protecting and helping thrive.

At Mugu Lagoon, there are five federal- and state-protected species in the wetland environment four birds and one flowering marsh plant.

The plant is the Salt Marsh Bird's Beak, a purplish plant known to be found in only four locations in the world. It is a hemi-parasite, meaning its roots attach to the roots of the host plant, but the host does not die. Flags in the marshes or along the road mark the plant's boundaries and are to be avoided.

The birds are the Light-footed Clapper Rail, the California Least Tern, the Western Snowy Plover and the Belding's Savannah Sparrow. Until recently, the Brown Pelican was also on the list, but the species that was nearly wiped out due to pesticides has made a comeback and was delisted in 2009.

SNI is home to two protected species: the Island Fox and the Island Night Lizard. It is illegal to collect, harass or harm them or keep them as pets. Harassment includes feeding them.

The adult Island Fox weighs about 4 pounds, and as of 2008, there were only about 2,000 on the six Channel Islands where they are found 400 of them on SNI.



This adult island fox is one of the protected species found on San Nicolas Island.

The Island Night Lizard is found only on San Clemente and Santa Barbara islands and on SNI. Misnamed, as they are active in the daytime, they are unique in that they bear live young.

SNI is also a major breeding ground for harbor seals, northern elephant seals and California sea lions.

A small population of southern sea otters lives offshore.