

# UC Santa Barbara

## Newsletters

### Title

NCOS News - September 2018

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7bq6p0v1>

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### Publication Date

2023-06-07

# UC SANTA BARBARA

## North Campus Open Space Restoration Project

**NCOS NEWS**

*September 2018*



Aerial image of NCOS on September 4 by Bill Dewey, looking across the site from east to west.

### UPDATES & EVENTS

***United Way Day of Caring @ NCOS THIS SATURDAY - September 15th***



**Saturday, September 15th**

**9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

This year's United Way Day of Caring features the North Campus Open Space Restoration Project! This event will also serve as this month's "Second", or in this case technically the Third Saturday planting

day. If you haven't signed up and would like to join, please email [ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu](mailto:ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu) to RSVP. We will meet at the Parking Lot at 6975 Whittier Drive.



### ***Creek Week Tour - September 21st***

As part of Santa Barbara County's 19th annual [Creek Week](#), we will be hosting a [tour of NCOS](#) on Friday, September 21, at 5:15 pm. The tour is open to the public. Meet at the parking lot on Whittier Drive. For more information or to RSVP, please email [ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu](mailto:ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu)

### ***Opening Events Next Month***

UCSB, CCBER, and other groups, organizations and individuals involved with the NCOS project are getting ready and excited to open up the NCOS trail and bridges next month. We are kicking off the opening with a couple of events:

- **Bike to School Day - Wednesday October 10:** The NCOS trail will open the morning of Wednesday, October 10th, and we'll join groups of Isla Vista School students, and any other walkers, joggers or cyclists going to school or work as part of Bike to School Day. More information will be sent out prior to the event in the October NCOS Newsletter.
- **NCOS "Open House", Kids Bird Festival, and Second Saturday - October 13, 9:00 - 1:00:** Come join us on Saturday, October 13th for an "open house" of the open space restoration project! This multi-part event is co-sponsored by the Santa Barbara Audubon Society and includes the [First Annual NCOS Kids Bird Festival](#) (see flyer below for more information)! More details about the Open Space Open House will be sent out in the October NCOS Newsletter. Stay tuned!

# NCOS Kids Bird Festival

Saturday, Oct 13th  
9:30-11:30am

**FREE  
Event!**

Join CCBER and the Santa Barbara Audubon Society in the 1st annual NCOS Kids Bird Festival!

A morning of birding basics designed for kids with a responsible adult.

Learn about birds with hands-on activities!

- Binocular Boot Camp - borrow ours or bring your own
- A guided walk around the newly restored Devereux Slough with experienced naturalists
- Record and tally bird species observed
- More feathered fun!

Please RSVP:  
[lanes@ccber.ucsb.edu](mailto:lanes@ccber.ucsb.edu)

Meet at the NCOS parking lot  
6975 Whittier Dr., Goleta

Water & sun protection suggested



## ***Monitoring Season - An abundance of Fish (and Egrets)***

Mid to late summer is when much of the annual vegetation and wildlife monitoring usually takes place, and we at CCBER are close to wrapping up the first season of this monitoring at NCOS. Last month we conducted the first post-restoration fish monitoring of the upper arms (NCOS) and lower portion of Devereux Slough - we found out what's attracting all of the Egrets that have been hanging around lately when our nets pulled in many Longjaw Mudsuckers and Killifish.



CCBER staff drag a seine net for sampling fish as part of annual wildlife monitoring at NCOS.

### ***Pampas Grass Excavation***

The California Natural Resources Agency, through the Environmental Enhancement program, is funding the management of invasive weeds in the ungraded area of NCOS to the southwest. We have been taking on mustard, fennel and most recently, Pampas grass, which requires a little more horsepower than two arms and a shovel.



An excavator recently used to help remove Pampas Grass, a large weed that is difficult to remove by hand.

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## FEATURE STORY

### *Keeping Tabs on NCOS Birdlife*



**A Great Blue Heron and several Great and Snowy Egrets foraging at NCOS.**

At NCOS, CCBER has been collaborating with local ornithologists to conduct systematic monthly surveys of birds on the project site. This month marks one year since the NCOS bird surveys began, and we've tallied up the numbers to see what the trends are so far. [Read more](#) about the types of birds visiting and inhabiting NCOS, and to view an interactive map of bird observations as well as an NCOS Bird List.

[This feature story is continued on page 10.](#)

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## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**



### **Second Saturdays at NCOS**

**SATURDAY - September 15th**

Be a part of this year's United Way Day of Caring by helping to restore NCOS. Meet at 6975 Whittier Drive at 9:00 am. Bring water, sunscreen, and wear a hat, clothes and shoes suitable for garden work. Please RSVP to

[ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu](mailto:ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu)

### **Group Volunteer Opportunities**

**We gladly welcome local business, non-profit, school and other community groups to come out to**



NCOS to help with planting and other activities. For more information, please send an email to [ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu](mailto:ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu).



### Thursdays - CCBER Greenhouse Associates

Come help transplant seedlings of native plants with the CCBER team from 9:00 - 12:00. To join, please send an email to [ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu](mailto:ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu).

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## COMMUNITY PHOTOS

### ***Egrets galore, and a blue-eyed gem***

CCBER Restoration staff member, Jeremiah Bender, captured images of the flocks of Great and Snowy Egrets recently congregating and feasting on fish at NCOS, sometimes along with Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons.





Mark Bright frequently shares some gems with us, such as this Blue-eyed Darner dragonfly.



Have a plant, wildlife, or other photo of the NCOS project site you'd like to share? We welcome submissions of photos of the project site and/or the adjacent Ellwood-Devereux area to share with NCOS News readers. Please email a photo you would like to share along with a brief description to [ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu](mailto:ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu).

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North Coast Open Space Restoration Project, [Click here](#), or email [ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu](mailto:ncos@ccber.ucsb.edu)**

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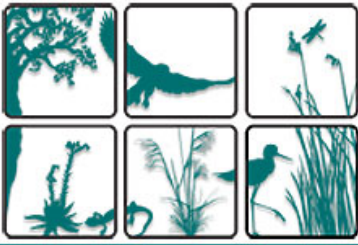
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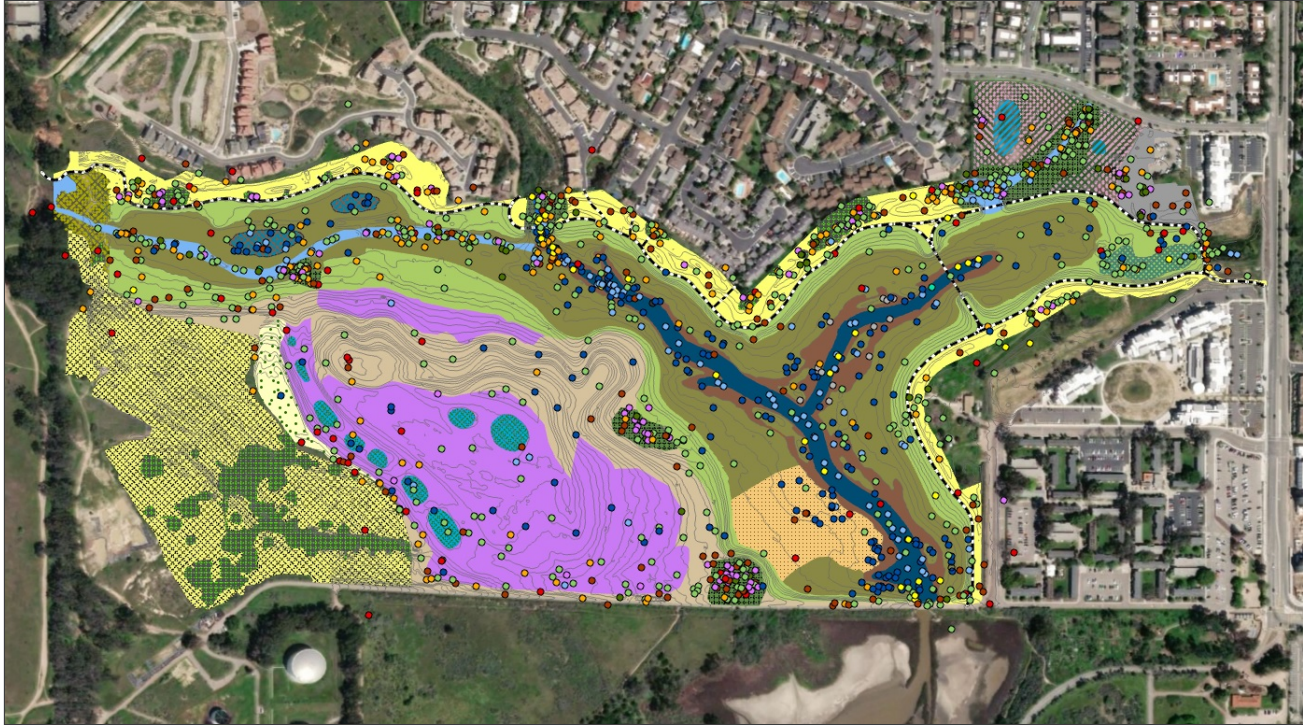
## KEEPING TABS ON NCOS BIRDLIFE



A Great Blue Heron and several Great and Snowy Egrets foraging at NCOS.

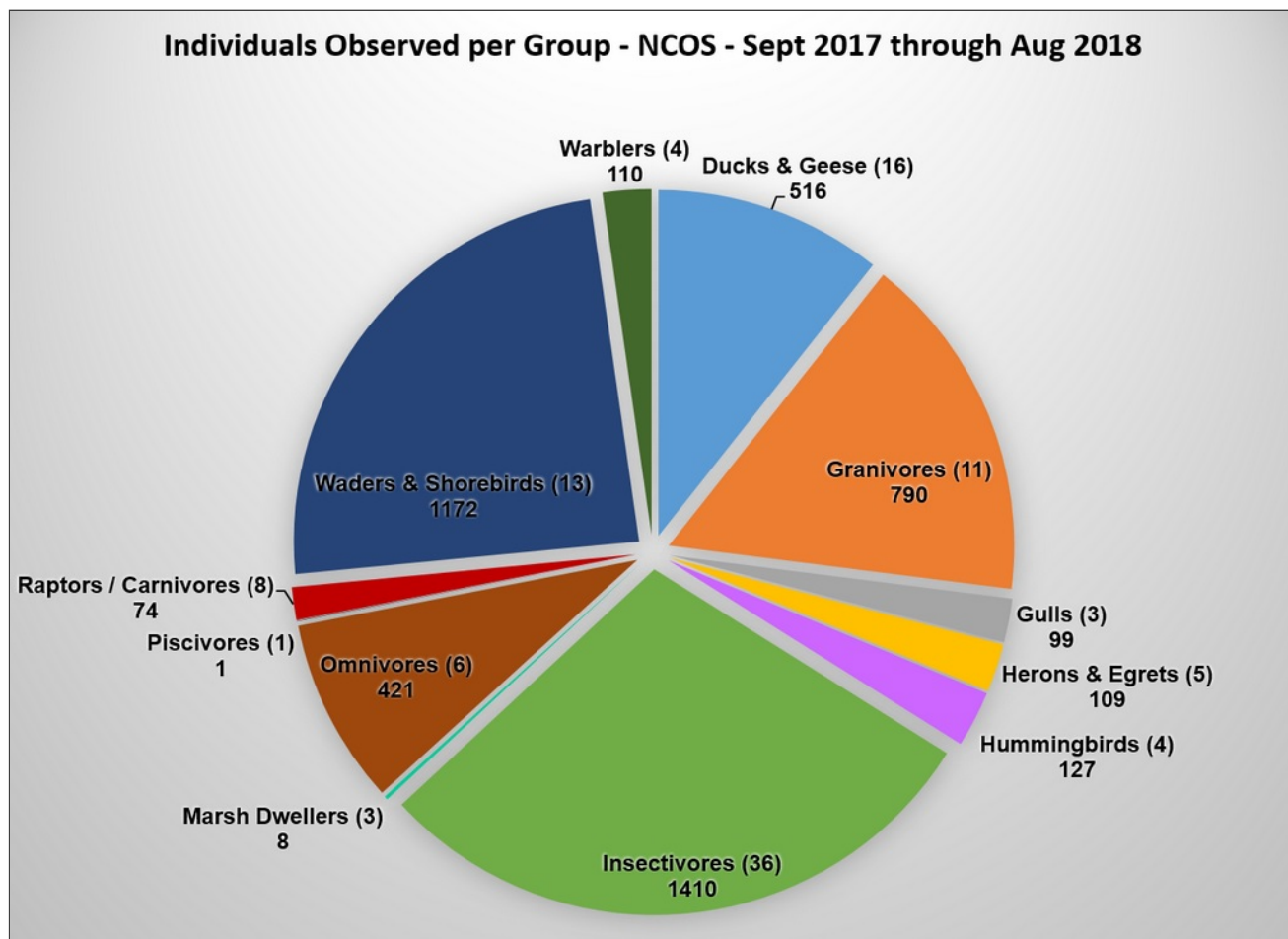
At NCOS, CCBER has been collaborating with local ornithologists to conduct systematic monthly surveys of birds on the project site. These surveys are a key element of the monitoring plan of the restoration project since the types and numbers of birds inhabiting or visiting a site like NCOS can be an important indicator of the health of a habitat or ecosystem, including its ability to support biodiversity and ecological functions. In addition, NCOS is an extension of Devereux Slough, which is an important habitat for many resident and migratory birds, and consequently a very popular birding spot. Therefore, Devereux Slough and Coal Oil Point Reserve are a key reference site for most of the types of birds that are expected to be seen at NCOS as the restoration progresses.

This month marks one year since the NCOS bird surveys began, and we've tallied up the numbers to see what the trends are so far and compared the numbers with data from similar monthly surveys conducted at Devereux Slough and Coal Oil Point Reserve (COPR). We've also compiled a list of all species observed during the monthly surveys, and created an interactive map where you can view some of the information collected for each observation. More information about the NCOS Bird List and interactive map are available on the [NCOS page](#).

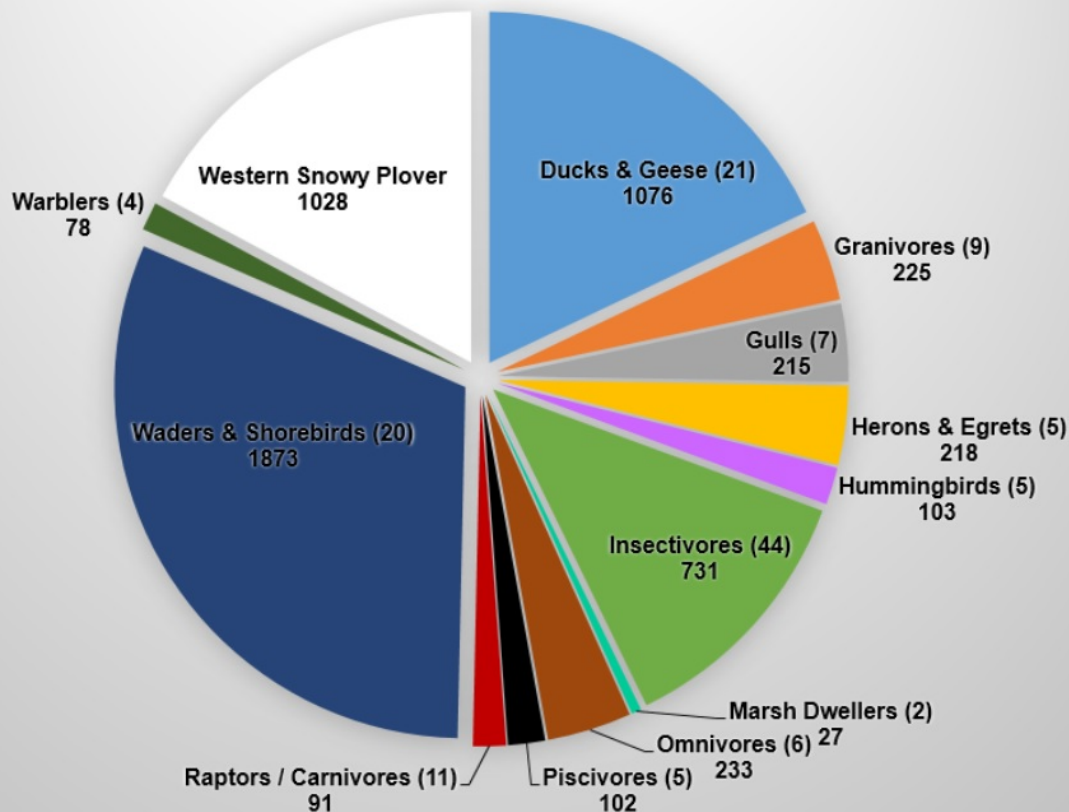


A map of observations from monthly bird surveys at NCOS from September 2017 through August 2018. The points on the map are color coded by guild. Visit the [NCOS page](#) for more information.

As of the August 2018 survey, 106 species have been observed on NCOS during the monthly surveys. The most abundant and diverse groups, or guilds, of birds observed include Insectivores (e.g. Swallows, Phoebes, some Sparrows, and Woodpeckers), Waders & Shorebirds (e.g. Plovers and Sandpipers), Granivores (e.g. Finches and Pigeons), and Ducks & Geese. These same groups were also the most abundant at Devereux Slough/COPR, yet the abundance of Ducks & Geese and Waders & Shorebirds was twice that at NCOS, while Granivores and Insectivores were more abundant at NCOS than at COPR (view a list of the species grouped by guild for [NCOS here](#), and click here for a [COPR list](#)).



## Individuals Observed per Group - COPR - Sept 2017 through Aug 2018

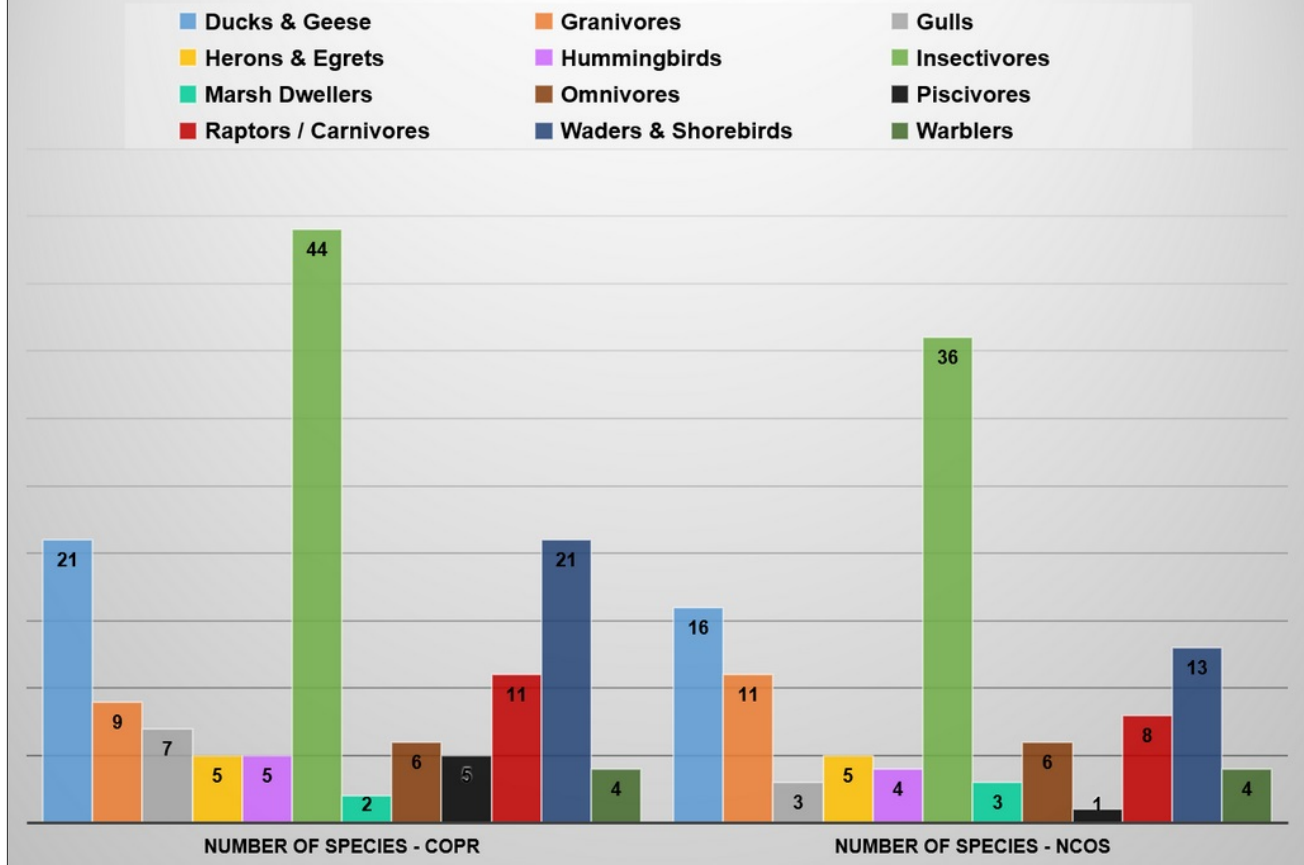


Pie charts showing the proportion of bird observations by guild for monthly surveys from September 2017 through August 2018 at North Campus Open Space (top) and Coal Oil Point Reserve (bottom). The numbers in parenthesis next to each guild name are the number of species observed in that guild, and the numbers below the guild name are the total individuals counted across all surveys.

One reason for the greater abundance of Waders & Shorebirds at COPR is the beach habitat, where Western Snowy Plovers and other beach associated species, such as Sanderlings, are highly abundant. We may see some of these species at NCOS, but not near the numbers that inhabit the beach at the mouth of Devereux Slough. The high numbers of Granivores on NCOS is a response to the erosion control measures implemented in September 2017, when 30 acres were hydroseeded with a sterile wheat seed. We expect Granivore numbers to drop now that those seeds have been consumed or have germinated.

The amount of open water habitat is another factor that likely influences the diversity and abundance of some species groups. When water levels are higher following winter rains, the acreage of open water in the lower Devereux Slough can reach 40 acres, while NCOS (a.k.a Upper Devereux Slough) can have around 15 acres. The greater availability of open water may explain the greater diversity and abundance of Ducks & Geese and Waders & Shorebirds seen in the Devereux Slough surveys, as well as the presence of more Gulls and Piscivores, such as the Belted Kingfisher and a few Tern species.

## Number of Species per Group - COPR and NCOS - Sept 2017 through Aug 2018



Bar chart comparing the number of species observed in each guild at North Campus Open Space (NCOS) and Coal Oil Point Reserve (COPR) during monthly surveys from September 2017 through August 2018.

The substrate, or habitat type that birds are observed on is also being recorded for the NCOS surveys. Over the past year, it is not surprising that more birds were recorded on "Bare ground" than any other substrate type. This might explain the high numbers of Killdeer, which were the most abundant and observed most often at NCOS. Killdeer prefer open areas with short grassland vegetation, so we expect their numbers may change over time as more restored vegetation becomes established.

This synopsis does not account for incidental observations such as the copulating pair of Western Snowy Plovers seen in May, or occasional visits by Peregrine Falcons. As the restoration project continues, and the landscape evolves, NCOS will likely support different species over time. Perhaps at this time next year we will present a different, possibly more diverse or dynamic picture of the birdlife at NCOS.

**Date:**

Tuesday, September 11, 2018 - 11:00

**File:**

[NCOS\\_Bird\\_Guilds.pdf](#)

[COPR\\_Bird\\_Guilds.Pdf](#)

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