***Animal Project Pt I:***
***Hannah Cai***

# Western Snowy Plover

***Prompt: Choose an animal from your hometown and reuse discarded plastic to construct its form. Emphasis on volume, shape, and repurposing already designed work for your own vision.***

## *Research*

california condor*
*spotted owl
*san joaquin kit fox*
southern sea otter/california sea otter
salt marsh harvest mouse*
passenger pigeon
*marbled murrelet
delta smelt
california tiger salamander*
pacific pond turtle
red-legged frog
green sea turtle

I decided to start my research by looking through all the endangered animals in the Bay Area, because although I live in San Jose, there aren't a lot of endangered animals specifically in San Jose. However, after making this list, I realized that I didn't have a direct connection with any of the animals I had found. I didn't feel like I'd have as much passion for the project if I lacked that connection, so I broadened my search to include threatened species. Eventually, I found the Western Snowy Plover, a bird I had actually encountered and photographed during a trip to the beach with my family (New Years, January 2016). Thinking of that trip brings back fond memories.

To the left are some of the photos I took. These birds in particular are probably juveniles, because they lack the dark markings adults have; however, they're still identifiable as Western Snowy Plovers because of their dark grey/black legs.

*Some sketches and studies in preparation for building the model.*

# *Basic Model*

I got a pretty good initial body shape using a coke bottle. Because I only had one of them, I mostly just kept building off of and trying variations of it, rather than building many iterations.


*Experimenting with head/neck shape*

*Final of Iteration 1 (Crit 1)*

# *Modifications*

Aspects of my basic model that I wanted to improve in my final:

—Wings are too bulky

—Avoid using "stuffing" (Texture is distracting from form.)

—Modify tail

—Add more realistic color; make it look like a Western Snowy Plover, not just any bird

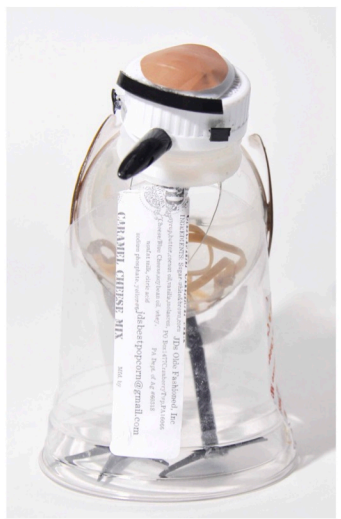
—Add interaction (In the first iteration, the legs would already move somewhat realistically if you shook the bird, but I wanted a more tangible way of making the model "run.")

Finally found black straws (at The Porch!); re-did legs; added interaction and some facial markings.

# *Final Model*

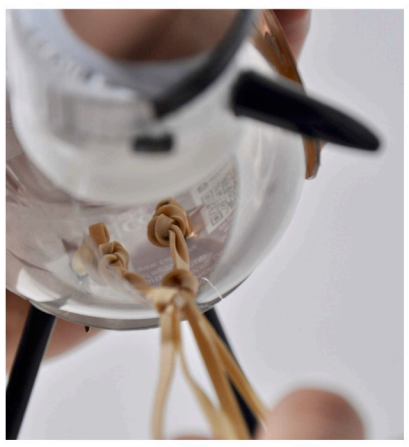
*In some pictures, a stand is shown because the model can't stand by itself.






***Interaction 1:*** *Head can be rotated*


***Interaction 2:*** *"Running"*

# *Conclusion/Reflection*

Main takeaways and thoughts about this project:

—Remembering to document, and documenting well, is a lot more difficult that I expected. For example, I went through tons of variations with the head, especially with the facial details. However, in my focus and pressure to finish the model, I completely forgot to take photos to show that process. Also, most of the process pictures I did take looked really trashy, because they were taken with my phone while I was working. I'm not sure how to balance capturing good process and maintaining my workflow. I'll have to pay more attention to that in future projects.

—I surprisingly really enjoy working with tangible materials. I didn't realize I would have so much fun with it, or find it so natural, because the majority of the work I've done before is purely 2d visual stuff.

—I kind of regretted choosing a small animal and trying to build it at scale. Though my model is roughly at scale (the actual birds are a few inches smaller) and is relatively successful in that aspect, the size really limited my choices in material. I had collected a lot of interesting big bottles and cans that I ended up not being able to use simply because of scale. I feel like my ability to experiment with many forms was somewhat compromised.

—Starting early really helped with this project. Because I already had a pretty good idea of the form I wanted by the first crit, I had more time to focus on developing my interaction for the final.

—Additionally, thinking ahead was really beneficial. I started my project with the vision of making a small bird that would somehow be able to run, and that thought was in mind throughout my entire process. If I hadn't known what was coming next, I probably would have chosen a stiff plastic for the legs instead of straw for the first iteration, and lost the insight I gained from making bendable legs early on. I was not able to think ahead often during the first semester (and still am not able to in visualizing this semester, to be honest), due to the next steps often being shrouded in mystery. So I really, really appreciate the design instructors' clarity and forwardness this semester.  Shoutout to Wayne, Daphne, and Q! :)