

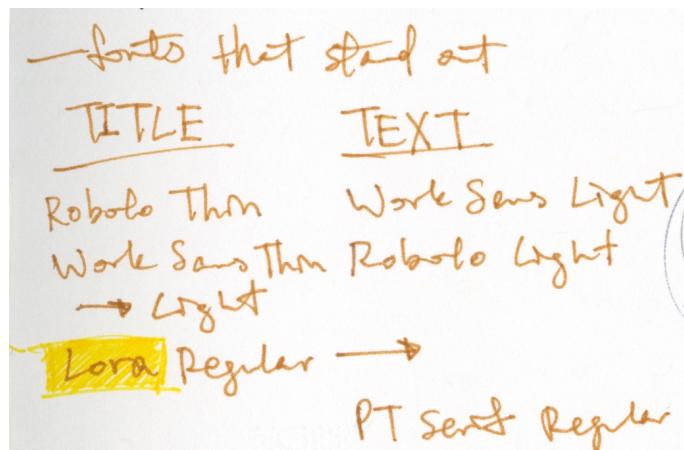
Animal Project Pt II:

Hannah Cai

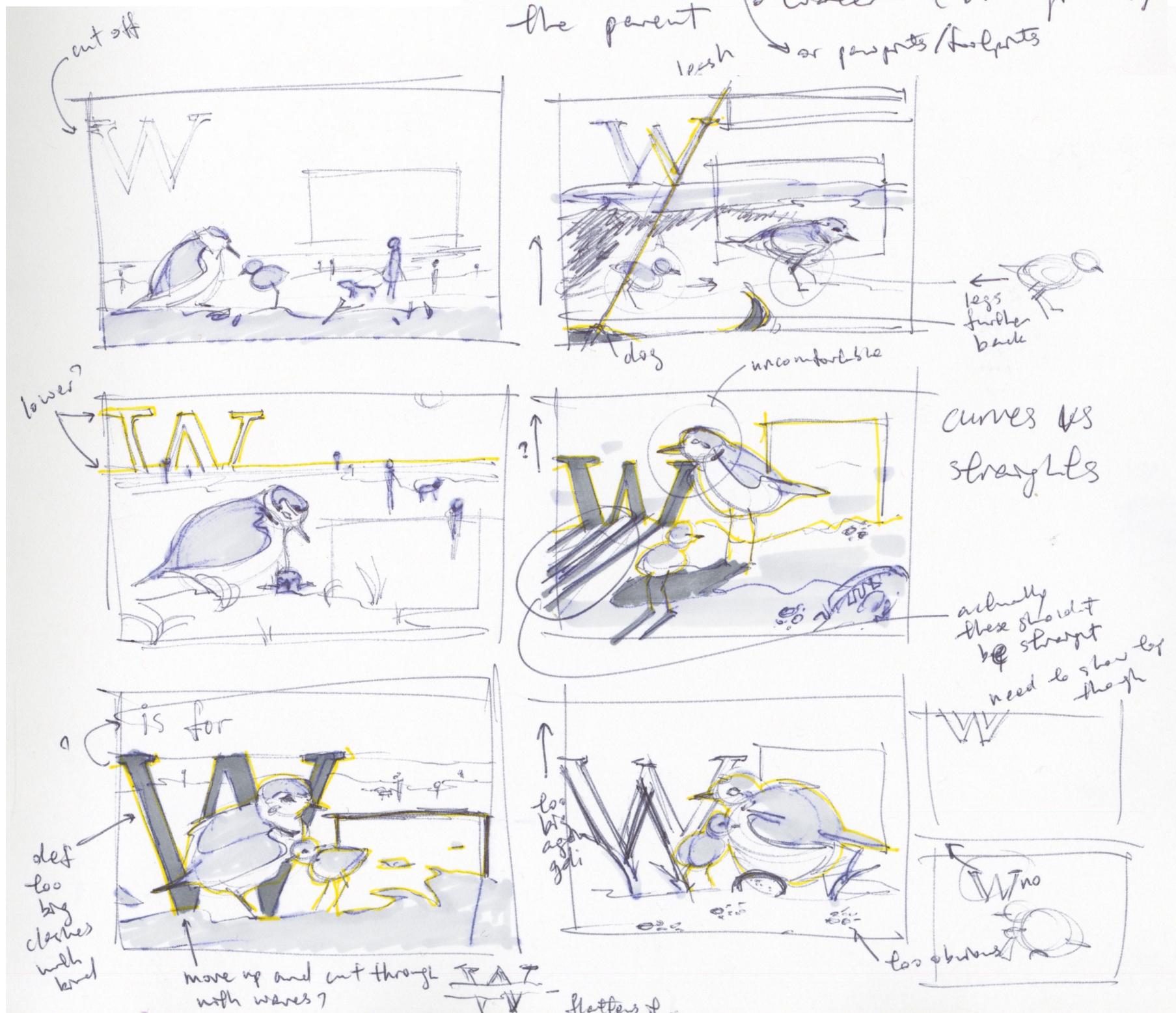
Western Snowy Plover

Prompt: Design a poster with the animal you chose in Pt I. The poster must incorporate a tagline with the first letter of your animal's species, along with a short description. Both the description and the graphics in the poster itself should reflect reason(s) why your animal is endangered.

Sketches/Research



Rough composition sketches

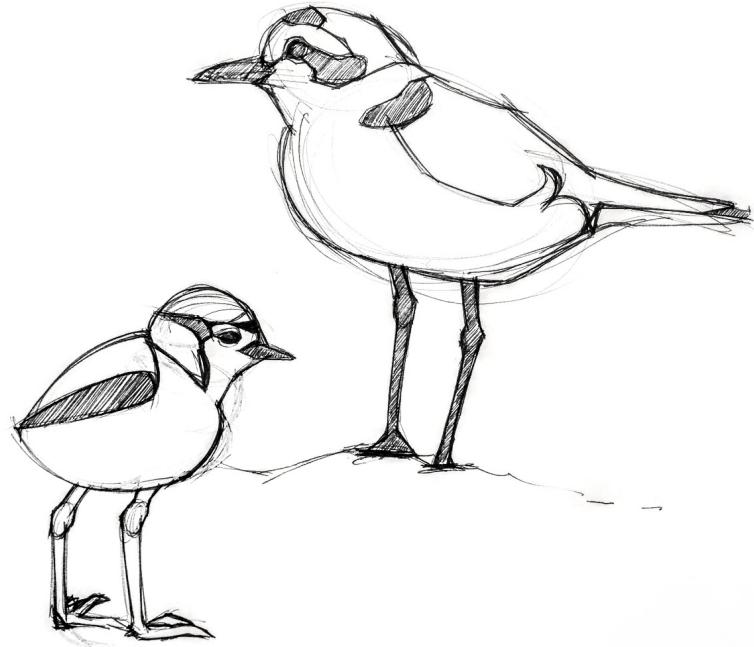


In these sketches, I experimented a lot with the scale of the letterform, as well as its integration into the composition. I only learned that we weren't supposed to do that after the first crit (unless it was on a much smaller scale, and didn't distract from the animal). I worked on my iterations afterwards with that in mind.

*Things highlighted in yellow are things I liked and wanted to move forward with.

Iteration 1: Paper-cut

Sketching



I had a lot of problems with the form of the baby plover and with the anatomy of the birds' legs and feet. In hindsight, I really should have just switched to a reference photo that showed the feet. Instead, I kept struggling and trying to "guess" the forms. I kept failing to get realistic feet, and ultimately just hid the larger plover's feet in a sand dune.

I didn't do a lot of iterations with the paper-cut, though I did spend a lot of time rearranging the objects around until I found a composition I liked for the final.



In terms of impact, I'd previously explored several ideas in my sketchbook for showing why Western Snowy Plovers are threatened. These were all focused on the presence of pet dogs on beaches.

1. dog walkers on the beach in the background
2. dog footprints on the sand in the foreground
3. a dog being walked on a leash, very close in the foreground.

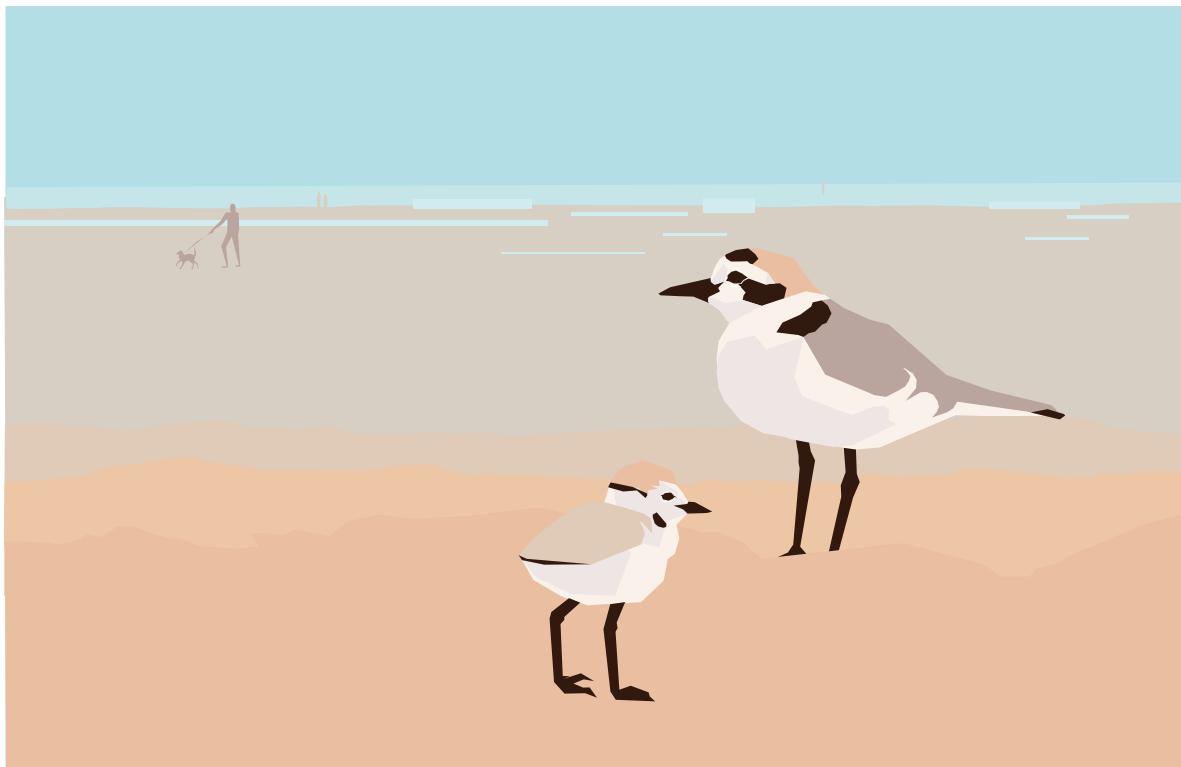
For this iteration, I chose to go with the second idea, because I liked the idea of a subtle and less literal "story."

Final



Iteration 2: Illustrator Iterations (3)

Basic Schematic



(Left:) Basic schematic of the composition I wanted. All of the iterations below were variations of this. I chose to switch my portrayal of human impact from dog prints on the beach to various human figures in the background (with emphasis on the dogwalker).

1



+ color palette
+ prominent letterform

- letterform too big?
- ocean color unrealistic—should be less bright
- composition not very dynamic

2



+ letterform (unintentionally) resembles a bridge, reflecting another human impact [W]
+ diagonal composition more dynamic than composition of first iteration

- letterform too big and slightly hard to read
- huge empty spot in the sand

3



+ colors more accurate than previous iterations
+ relatively dynamic composition
+ perspective more accurate [Q]
+ letterform sized better

- letterform hard to read, doesn't link well to tagline
- the dune the dog walker is standing on is confusing
- birds somewhat hard to distinguish from background

Modifications

Aspects of my first iterations that I wanted to improve in my final:

1. Perspective is confusing because the birds seem to be in profile, which means the horizon should be below them [W].
2. The adult plover's head coincides too much with the horizon/beach; moving it down would help [W]
3. Feet of the birds should be pointing outwards from the body, not flatly pointing in one direction [W]
4. Cut down on the description and increase the leading for better readability [Q]
5. Make sand in the foreground very slightly more saturated [Q]
6. Work more on showing the form of the birds [D]
7. Make the baby plover more visible.
8. Add more texture to the sand to show form and perspective.

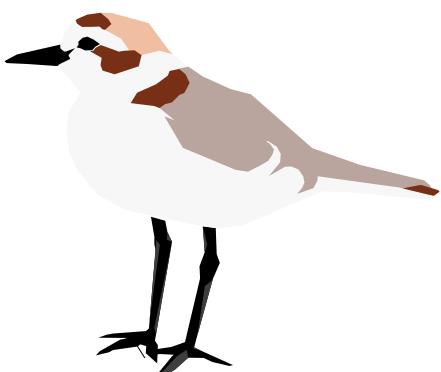
Solutions

2. I wanted to move the adult plover down; however, I couldn't do that without its legs looking unnaturally cut off by the sand dune layer it was behind. I tried to construct feet for it so I could move it in front of the sand dune, but the feet I made (see above) kept looking off. To compromise, I moved the bird down so it looked like it was nesting; this hid the legs and feet.

3. I also tried to adjust the feet for the baby plover, but felt like nothing I did successfully made them look realistic in regards to the perspective. Additionally, since I'd already hidden the legs and feet of the adult plover, the contrast of the baby plover's legs was way too high with everything around it. So, I decided to also hide the baby plover's feet in the sand. As much as I hated it, I didn't see anything else I could've done without changing the whole composition, and I was running out of time at this point.

4/5/7/8. These were easily modified.

6. Reconstruction of shading on the plover, focusing more on form:



...I realize just now, as I'm writing this, that for #1, I could have simply moved the horizon line/beach/etc lower, close to the line of the foreground sand dune. Damn.



These look a lot better. :(
Oh well, too late now.

Final



W

is for the Western Snowy Plover

This delicate seabird lives on beaches along the West Coast. Beachgoers and their pets often frighten (or even chase) plovers, which disrupts the birds' feeding and resting cycles. This is especially stressful for plovers during breeding season, when parents must feed both themselves and their young.

Conclusion/Reflection

Main takeaways and thoughts about this project:

—Picking good reference images is REALLY important.

—I think I should have experimented more with compositions and concepts after I realized how many flaws mine had, but I was too scared to do so because I didn't think I'd have enough time (and I initially thought my composition had already been pretty good). It's easy for me to get so involved in the details of and aesthetics of my work that I forget to look at the big picture as a composition. In hindsight, I don't think I thought enough about my composition as a whole.

—I really enjoyed learning and using Illustrator, and it was really cool to see what everyone else was doing with it, even though many of us came with little to no experience on how to use Illustrator.

—I liked that we had to do a paper-cut before we did Illustrator, because the project wouldn't have had much point if each of us just traced photos on Illustrator. At the same time, I think I stuck a little too much to my paper-cut version.

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—To summarize, I enjoyed picking up new skills in Illustrator during this project, but wasn't satisfied with my final product. I definitely didn't think enough about my process and composition as a whole. Perhaps that was partially due to the quicker deadline, which led me to rush things and just get it finished. But even if the deadline hadn't been as tight, I think I'd still have struggled a lot with perspective and depth, especially with such a flat illustration. I'd actually been totally oblivious to my errors in perspective until Wayne and Q pointed them out. I'll try and keep that weakness in mind during my future projects.

Extras

These were some experiments I did with my final composition that I thought looked pretty cool.

