



# News Release

**For Immediate Release**

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## Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center, Imperial Beach **Budget Shortfall May Force Reduction in Hours**

The Visitor Center at the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve has been open to the general public five days per week: Wednesday through Sunday, from 10am to 5pm. The current financial crisis in the state has slated a dramatic reduction in hours: **the Visitor Center is scheduled to be closed during weekdays, remaining open only on Saturday and Sunday.**

The decision was made by Acting State Parks District Superintendent Clay Phillips (who is also the Reserve Manager). "We're making painful reductions throughout the San Diego region. We're forced to strategically choose where to spend our limited funds. Though weekends are certainly busier than weekdays, it's still painful to realize that we'll be excluding many locals and tourists from visiting the Center. The Visitor Center is the best place for the general public to understand the significance of the Tijuana River Estuary, arguably the most important environmental jewel of the region."

For now, the Visitor Center remains open on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, thanks to the efforts of the Friends of San Diego Wildlife Refuges, a non-profit partner with California State Parks. They have been able to generate funds to keep the Center open on weekdays through the middle of September. They are now on a capital campaign to raise funds to keep the Reserve open to the public for five days a week so that families, tourists and nature enthusiasts can enjoy the southern California destination. (If you would like to help support the visitor center, go to <http://friendsofsdrefuges.org/>)

The Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center serves as the headquarters of both the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve. Managed in partnership by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Refuge and Reserve will continue to provide educational programs for local schools on a daily basis. In addition, the Refuge and Reserve will continue to perform research, restoration, and protection of the sensitive estuary environment

The parking lot off Caspian Way will be open 7 days per week to allow daily access to the trail system that runs throughout the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge.

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