

**GRADUATE THESIS DEFENSE AND LECTURE SERIES**  
**The SJSU Environmental Studies Department**  
**Presents Aidona Kakouros**  
**Environmental Studies Graduate Student**

**EFFECTS OF CALIFORNIA GULLS ON NESTING FORSTER'S**  
**TERN BEHAVIOR**

**When: Tuesday, November 8, 2006, 4:30pm to 6:00pm**

**Where: Hugh Gillis Hall 122 (next to Martin Luther King Library on San Fernando)**

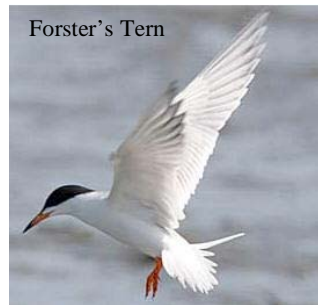


**About Aidona Kakouros**

Aidona was born and raised in Northern Greece. She attended Aristotle's University of Thessaloniki and earned a degree in Forest and Natural Environment studies with an emphasis in Resources Management. She strongly advocates adopting a holistic approach in the study of the environment. Specifically, she is interested in linking urban ecology with natural habitats conservation. Her thesis research involved the study of the interaction between two seabird species and how this interaction was related with landfills. The results of the study may be useful to the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project.

She has worked in the field of environmental education in urban areas, vegetation mapping, and forest management.

**Abstract:** Nest defense is a vital aspect of parental care that involves physical risks and disruption of nesting activities. I examined patterns of nest defense in Forster's tern (*Sterna forsteri*) colonies with respect to California gull (*Larus californicus*) intrusions at three different salt pond sites with Forster's



tern colonies with and without other species of nesting shorebirds. In addition, I performed a spatial analysis of the dispersion of California gull colonies, Forster's tern colonies, and landfills in the South San Francisco Bay area to investigate factors contributing to variability in gull activity. Forster's terns and the co-nesting shorebirds ignored overflying gulls in 61% of cases. They responded more aggressively to "attacking" California gulls that attempted landing on the island as compared to gulls that exhibited less aggressive passive flight behavior, in which gulls were zigzagging or scanning above the tern colonies. California gull activity rates and time spent in defense by

terns, especially during California gull attacks, differed significantly between the three salt pond sites. The spatial analysis suggested that flight paths potentially used by California gulls to travel to landfills for foraging may explain the differences in the California gull activity and tern defense patterns at the three salt pond sites.

