

SPECIES AT RISK in New Brunswick



Piping Plover

Scientific name: *Charadrius melodus melodus*

N.B. Status: Endangered

Piping Plover

Description & Biology

The Piping Plover is a small migratory bird. The adults have orange-yellow legs, a black band over their forehead, as well as a black collar around their neck. These features are more distinguished on the males than the females.

The Piping Plover relies on camouflage for protection against predators. Its body is the colour of pale sand which helps it blend in with its habitat. The black speckled eggs are also well camouflaged; blending in with the beach environment. The female typically lays four eggs, which are then incubated by both parents and hatch in a month.

Habitat & Survival

In New Brunswick, the Piping Plover chooses gravel-sand beaches on which to nest and feed. Their nests are remarkably simple, consisting of a few scratch marks in small depressions in the sand. The nests are invariably located among pebbles, pieces of driftwood and other debris from the beach, which aid in hiding them.

Piping Plovers feed on small crustaceans, marine worms, sea fleas and fly larvae that they find on mud flats and intertidal zones.

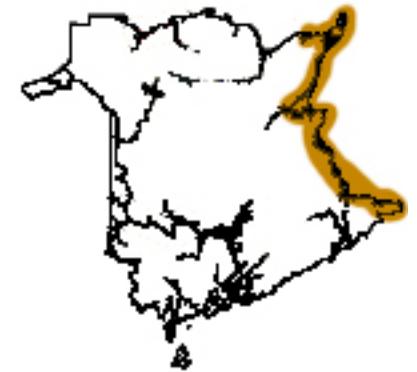
We can do a lot to help this species by taking some simple precautions, such as avoiding beaches where Piping Plovers nest. In many cases, the areas where we should be most careful are indicated by signs or symbolic fencing. By staying close to the water line and moving through these areas quickly we reduce our potential impact on the bird.

Distribution

In New Brunswick, Piping Plovers nest on beaches along the Northumberland Strait. The largest numbers can be found on the shores of the Acadian Peninsula. Historically, they were also known to nest on beaches along the Bay of Fundy and Grand Manan Island.

They migrate south at the end of summer, and winter along the Atlantic shores between North Carolina and Florida. They return to their nesting grounds in the Atlantic Provinces from the end of March through the beginning of May.

There are two newly recognized subspecies of Piping Plover. The eastern subspecies *Charadrius melodus melodus* breeds in Atlantic Canada. The western subspecies, *Charadrius melodus circumcinctus* breeds along the Great Lakes and in the prairies.



NB Distribution of
Piping Plover