

# Nantasket Beach Piping Plover Information

Last summer for the first time, to our knowledge, a pair of piping plovers and their four chicks nested on Nantasket Beach in the Kenberma to Coburn area.

**Piping plovers are listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act; this means the population would continue to decline if not protected.** A key reason piping plovers are vulnerable is that the chicks begin foraging for food, day and night, as soon as they hatch. But, for their first 30 days or so, they cannot fly. They are vulnerable to being crushed by people or vehicles, or killed by dogs, cats and other predators. In addition, plover nests blend in with the beach; during the incubation period it is easy to mistakenly step on a nest. Fortunately, once the chicks have fledged (learned to fly) further protection is not needed.



*Adult Piping Plover* Photo, Richard Kuzminski

Last summer, with the help of outreach from volunteers, warning signs, and roped protection areas, we successfully shared the beach with the plovers. Simply by being attentive, it was easy to enjoy the beach in close proximity to the birds. We do not know if piping plovers will return to Nantasket Beach, but it is certainly possible. Piping plovers generally return to New England beginning in April. As we did last year, the Town of Hull has contracted with Mass Audubon to provide guidance and support in monitoring and protecting the piping plovers. Starting in April, MA Audubon will make weekly visits to the beach and set up necessary signage. If plovers are present they will provide additional monitoring and support.



*Piping Plover chick* Photo, Lucy Wightman

## How can you help?

- Let us know if you see piping plovers on the beach. If a plover nest is disturbed the pair will re-nest, which extends the time the nest and chicks need protection further into the summer.
- Respect plover warning signage and obey the dog regulations. Unleashed dogs are a particular danger to piping plover chicks. Violators, and property owners who refuse to cooperate with protective efforts, or otherwise violate the law, can be subject to significant penalties (see opposite page).
- Help visitors to Nantasket Beach learn how to share the beach with piping plovers. If piping plovers nest on the beach this summer, we will provide orientation for the volunteer "Plover Ambassador" program. Let us know if you would like to participate.

For more information on piping plovers: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/pipingplover/> or check the link from the Town of Hull, Conservation Department webpage. With questions, or to volunteer, contact Conservation Administrator Anne Herbst at [aherbst@town.hull.ma.us](mailto:aherbst@town.hull.ma.us) or 781-925-8102.

**Federal penalties for the “take” of a piping plover adult, chick or egg under the Endangered Species Act include the following: Criminal: Up to 6 months imprisonment and/or Up to a \$25,000 fine. Civil: \$12,000 – for a knowing violation and \$500 – for a strict liability violation.**

Take means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. Harass means an intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding or sheltering. Harm means an act that actually kills or injures wildlife. Such act may include significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavior patterns including breeding, feeding or sheltering.



*Juvenile Piping Plover*

*Photo, Sheila Connor*

### **Why Save Endangered and Threatened Species?**

The preamble to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 recognized that endangered and threatened species of wildlife and plants “are of esthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people.” No one knows how the extinction of organisms will affect the other members of its ecosystem, but the removal of a single species can set off a chain reaction affecting many others.

For more on saving endangered and threatened species see:

<http://www.fws.gov/nativeamerican/pdf/why-save-endangered-species.pdf>



*Piping Plover chick*

*Photo, Lucy Wightman*