

Piping Plover Protection Wins Cape Cod NS Worldwide Recognition

Cape Cod National Seashore recently gained international recognition for outstanding efforts to protect piping plovers, a federally listed species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In September 1993, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) named Cape Cod NS to its Piping Plover Registry, making Cape Cod one of 13 sites in the U.S. and Canada approved as part of the Network.

The piping plover is a small shorebird that nests and feeds along sandy beaches. It has suffered greatly from increased development and recreational use of beaches on the Atlantic Coast since World War II, and habitat loss in the Northern Great Plains and Great Lakes regions. Despite its listing under the U.S. ESA in 1986, the bird has not shown strong signs of recovery. A 1991 survey by the USFWS Piping Plover Recovery Team came up with only 5,482 adult birds in an exhaustive search of 10 countries.

The WHSRN initiated the Piping Plover Registry to highlight the critically important roles played by individuals, public agencies, and non-profit groups who work to protect this bird. The Registry also will help facilitate information exchanges among sites working to improve conservation efforts.

Cape Cod NS has registered success in protecting piping plovers on the Seashore's beaches by working to minimize disturbance of nesting birds, conducting public education programs, and fencing nests from predators. Nesting success is closely monitored.