



**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
South Carolina Field Office**

*Piping Plover Coastal Migration and Winter Range
Habitat Management Recommendations*

1. Conduct a site assessment to understand the effectiveness of current site management for piping plovers and other shorebird species. For an example of a site assessment tool, go to <http://www.whsrn.org/tools>.
2. Protect shorebird roosting habitat and areas of high concentrations of foraging shorebirds.
 - 2.1. Seasonally close piping plover roosting areas and areas where other shorebirds concentrate at high tide.
 - 2.1.1. Post a 25 meter buffer around roosting areas with closure signs connected by string from July 1 through May 15.
 - 2.1.2. Relocate closures as habitat conditions change.
 - 2.1.3. Maintain closures by replacing washed out signs or broken string.
 - 2.2. Prohibit dogs year round within designated critical habitat boundaries, within known occupied shorebird habitat, or within one mile of an inlet.
 - 2.3. Prohibit recreational off road vehicles including cars, trucks, 4 wheelers, golf carts year round within designated critical habitat boundaries, within known occupied shorebird habitat, or within one mile of an inlet.
 - 2.4. Do not remove wrack located within designated critical habitat boundaries, within known occupied shorebird habitat, or within one mile of an inlet. Trash may be removed by hand, but natural material should remain. Prohibit beach raking/cleaning within designated critical habitat boundaries.
3. Conduct surveys to determine the distribution, abundance, and seasonality of piping plovers where data is lacking in order to determine site use.
 - 3.1. Recommended piping plover survey protocol

Piping plover abundance and distribution should be determined through three intensive surveys per month for at least one full season in order to determine site use. Surveys should be conducted ten days apart (weather and tide permitting, no surveys should be

conducted if winds exceed 15 mph) beginning July 1 and ending May 15. Surveys should be scheduled within 3 days of the 5th, 15th, and 25th of each month, which is consistent with the International Shorebird Survey protocol. Surveys should be conducted between mid and high tide when piping plovers are more concentrated. Re-sighting bands will be easier a few hours before or after high tide when birds are no longer roosting.

If banded birds are observed during a survey, the band combinations should be recorded and verified through a spotting scope. Band combinations should be noted in the following order: Upper Left (UL), Lower Left (LL): Upper Right (UR), and Lower Right (LR). The following abbreviations can be used to record band combinations:

X: metal	b: light blue	C: Atlantic Canada color metal
f: flag	G: dark green	T: Other (describe)
R: red	g: light green	/: split band
Y: yellow	L: black	//: triple split
O: orange	W: white	N: no band seen (area not visible)
B: dark blue	A: gray	–: no band
P: pink	U: purple	

Example: A piping plover with: (UL) orange flag band, (LL) light blue band over a black over orange over black triple split band, (UR) metal band, (LR) light green band would be noted Of,bL/O/L:X,g. A comma separates the upper and lower leg and a colon separates the legs from each other.

- 3.2. Report band combinations to piping.plover@usace.army.mil.
4. Post interpretive signs that inform site users about the importance of shorebird conservation particularly for the piping plover.
 - 4.1. Interpretive signs should be designed in order to relay the message to the general public. Photos or graphics should be used wherever possible to convey the message. Text should be limited and written in simple terms.
 - 4.2. Interpretive signs should depict and explain any signs site users may encounter on the beach. For example, if an area has seasonal closures, visitors will be more likely to recognize the closure signs and understand why the area is closed.
5. Provide outreach programs and materials to promote shorebird conservation with emphasis on the piping plover.
 - 5.1. Create a site steward program and have staff or volunteers set up a spotting scope outside of closures to allow people to see the birds while being educated about shorebird conservation.
 - 5.2. Offer guided birding trips.
 - 5.3. Provide shorebird identification classes and educational workshops.
 - 5.4. Develop site specific outreach materials about shorebird conservation.