

## Protecting Nests and Nesting Sites

Starting in April, sites along Long Island Sound with appropriate habitat are surveyed to locate nesting Piping Plovers. Once a nest is found, it is protected by placing a wire enclosure over the nest and string fencing around the general area. This provides protection from predators, while allowing the adult plovers to come and go. Signs are posted to inform people to keep their distance. If birds are calling “peeplo” or giving a broken wing display, you are too close.

## Monitoring the Population

Nests are checked at a distance a few times each week so that biologists can track survival of adults and chicks. Additionally, threats to plover habitat and nesting success are recorded. This information is used to manage and protect the population.

## Environmental Affects

Many environmental conditions affect Piping Plovers. Each season, strong storms and particularly high tides wash away nests. Water levels, beach erosion, and the density of vegetation can affect the amount of suitable nesting habitat available. Climate change is another factor that may have a significant impact on plover distribution and habitat availability in the future.

## Unleashed Dogs

Some people walk on beaches with their dogs, often letting them roam unleashed. Dogs chase plovers causing them to leave their nests; this exposes eggs and chicks to weather extremes and predation. Dogs will also chase and catch chicks and adults, resulting in death or injury.

## Photographing Shorebirds

Photography of shorebirds on Connecticut’s beaches is a popular activity, but it can be dangerous for the birds, especially when they are nesting. Do not enter the posted areas, never get close enough to cause the bird to leave its nest, and don’t exceed 10 minutes photographing a nest or chicks.

## Predators

Predators that eat Piping Plover eggs and chicks can have a major impact on the population. Gulls, rats, feral cats, foxes, and raccoons are the most common predators although other species also pose a threat. Human activity near plover nests can attract predators when food scraps and other litter are left on the beach.

**To report Piping Plover activity or problems, please contact the following organizations:**

To report harassment or “take” of Piping Plovers or other wildlife, call:

**CT DEEP EnCon Police, 860-424-3333**

To report a new nest or damage to fencing or signs, email:

**CT DEEP, [Laura.Saucier@ct.gov](mailto:Laura.Saucier@ct.gov) or**

**Audubon Alliance, [ctwaterbirds@gmail.com](mailto:ctwaterbirds@gmail.com)**



Photo: Melissa Groo/Audubon Photography Awards

## The Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds

Audubon Connecticut  
[ct.audubon.org](http://ct.audubon.org)

Connecticut Audubon Society  
[ctaudubon.org](http://ctaudubon.org)

Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History  
[rtpi.org](http://rtpi.org)

For more information, visit our blog:  
**[ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com](http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com)**

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# Piping Plover



The Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) is a small migratory shorebird that breeds on beaches in Connecticut from late March through August.

The federally and state threatened bird lays 3–4 eggs in a small depression in dry sand and cobble and incubates them for about a month. The chicks grow quickly and are able to fly in only four weeks.

Unfortunately, fewer than 60 pairs nest in Connecticut each year. **Learn more about what you can do to help increase their population.**

## Why are Piping Plovers threatened?

Many activities affect Piping Plover population. Coastal development, sea-level rise, and human disturbance can reduce the amount of available nesting habitat. People who walk too close to nests or dogs that chase adults can cause birds to abandon their nests. Predators stress both young and adult birds and will eat chicks or eggs. Beach erosion and high tides can also impede their nesting success.

## #ShareTheShore with beach-nesting birds!

Learn more about how you can Share the Shore at [ct.audubon.org/sharetheshore](http://ct.audubon.org/sharetheshore).



Photo: Ewa Prusak



Piping Plover nest and eggs. Photo: Katerina Gillis

# Help keep Piping Plovers safe by following these tips when on the beach.

**1. Stay away from nest enclosures and posted Piping Plover breeding areas.** When nest sites are observed, walk along the wet sand close to the water's edge.

**2. Always keep dogs leashed.** Perceived as predators, even leashed dogs can stress plovers. Please respect local laws that restrict or prohibit the presence of dogs.

**3. Carry out your food waste and garbage** to avoid attracting predators and scavengers that will eat Piping Plover adults, chicks and eggs.

**4. Do not operate vehicles on beaches with nesting Piping Plovers.** Vehicles, including ATVs and bicycles, can disturb Piping Plovers, destroy nests, crush chicks, and damage beach and dune habitat.



String fencing to protect nesting areas. Photo: Beth Amendola

**5. Report the location of Piping Plovers** and their nests to CT DEEP, Audubon Alliance staff, or official volunteers. Use the email addresses listed in this brochure.

**6. Leave driftwood and algae on the beaches.** Piping Plovers and their chicks find food in algae and use driftwood for protection from predators and as shelter.

**7. Report people or pets disturbing Piping Plovers.** These birds are protected by law. Report disturbances to Piping Plovers or their nests to local police or animal control, or CT EnCon Police at the number listed in this brochure.

**8. Learn more** about what you can do to help Piping Plovers and other coastal waterbirds on our beaches by visiting our blog at <http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com>.



Piping Plover hatchlings. Photo: Chandler Wiegand