

# Training for volunteer beachnesting bird monitors set May 14

**LEWES** – Volunteers who want to help protect Delaware's endangered piping plovers and other beachnesting birds by joining DNREC's monitoring team are invited to a training session from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, May 14, at Cape Henlopen State Park's Biden Environmental Training Center, 15099 Cape Henlopen Drive, Lewes, DE 19958.

"With the strong storms that hit Delaware's beaches over the winter, a lot of new habitat for beachnesting birds has opened up. It will be more important than ever that we have volunteer assistance in protecting their nesting habitat so that they can take full advantage of this opportunity to further increase their populations," said Wildlife Biologist Matthew Bailey of the Division of Fish & Wildlife's Beachnester Monitoring Program.

The training session will begin with a slideshow followed by a discussion on the monitoring program and how volunteers can help to ensure that beachnesting shorebirds are not disturbed while rearing their chicks.

Weather permitting, the group will finish the session by venturing out to the Point at Cape Henlopen to look for piping plovers and other shorebirds likely to be feeding on the tidal flats. Birding scopes and binoculars will be available for use, but volunteers are encouraged to bring their own optics if they have them.

"Volunteers are critical to our protection efforts. When stationed at the boundaries of the nesting areas, volunteers can help explain facts to passersby about the breeding birds and the importance of keeping closed areas free of human

disturbance,” Bailey said. “Without volunteers to supplement the coverage our staff provides, many people might never have the chance to better understand how humans can make a difference in the breeding success of beachnesting birds.”

Preregistration for the training is encouraged, but attendees also will be accepted at the door. Park entrance fees will be waived for volunteers attending the training by notifying the fee booth attendant. For more information on the training, beachnesting birds or monitoring efforts, please contact Matthew Bailey at 302-382-4151 or email [matthew.bailey@delaware.gov](mailto:matthew.bailey@delaware.gov).

### ***About the piping plover***

*The piping plover was listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1986, and the Division of Fish and Wildlife is responsible for its protection in Delaware. Under a binding agreement and species management plan that DNREC made in 1990 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – the federal agency with oversight of this ESA-protected species – piping plover nesting areas at Cape Henlopen State Park are closed annually to the public to protect the shorebirds from disturbance during their nesting season from March into September. The closure, which includes the Point and smaller areas around Gordon’s Pond and with both feeding habitat and nesting areas protected, has been successful, increasing the number of piping plover nesting pairs from a low of two pairs to a high of nine pairs. Piping plovers feed on small invertebrates that inhabit the intertidal zone near their nesting territories. Chicks are not fed by their parents, but rather are led to the shoreline to forage while the adults keep watch for potential threats. Allowing pedestrian traffic in the intertidal zone adjoining nesting areas would disturb the vital link between nesting and foraging habitat and risk adverse stress or mortality to the chicks.*

Media Contact: Joanna Wilson, DNREC Public Affairs,

302-739-9902

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