

# Piping Plovers Nesting in Delaware Reach New High Number

*Over 50 Fledglings for Third Record Year, Above Species Recovery Goal*

For the third consecutive year, Delaware recorded a new all-time high number of nesting piping plovers, small beach nesting birds on Delaware's state endangered list. DNREC's piping plover monitoring program tracked 21 nesting piping plover pairs that produced approximately 51 fledglings, young birds that can fly. This productivity rate of 2.4 fledglings per pair is well above the long-term goal of 1.5 fledglings per pair for piping plover recovery established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Aiding in the recovery of threatened or endangered species, like the piping plover, is a key component of DNREC's wildlife conservation mission," said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. "With a third record-breaking year for piping plover fledglings, these small endangered beach nesters are on their way to becoming one of Delaware's conservation success stories."

Five pairs of piping plovers nested at the Point at Cape Henlopen State Park and 16 pairs nested at Fowler Beach on Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge. For the fourth year in a row, piping plovers did not nest at Gordons Pond within Cape Henlopen State Park, possibly due to the combined factors of encroaching vegetation limiting sandy nesting habitat and the availability of more attractive nesting habitat at Fowler Beach.

The piping plover is a federally-listed threatened species and a Delaware state-listed endangered species. Recovery of the

species involves partnerships between DNREC's Division of Fish and Wildlife and Division of Parks and Recreation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services.

In other beach nesting bird updates, two pairs of American oystercatchers nested at the Point at Cape Henlopen State Park and two pairs nested at Delaware Seashore State Park, but none successfully hatched chicks. Fifty-nine least tern nests were found, 24 at Cape Henlopen State Park and 35 at Fowler Beach on Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge that collectively produced eight fledglings.

During beach nesting bird monitoring this year, the Division of Fish and Wildlife implemented COVID-19 safety precautions to protect staff and the public while working to conserve Delaware's wildlife.

For more information, visit [piping-plovers and other beach nesting birds](#).

#### **About DNREC**

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state's natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities and educates Delawareans about the environment. The Division of Fish and Wildlife conserves and manages Delaware's fish and wildlife and their habitats, and provides fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing and boating access on nearly 65,000 acres of public land. For more information, visit the [website](#) and connect with DNREC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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