

# Piping Plover

## Shore Bird at Risk



Wha...? A nine-legged Plover???  
It's actually a mother keeping  
her kids warm.

*Photo Credit: Michael Milicia/solent*

It's Latin name is:

**Charadrius melodus**

That just blew your mind.

The Piping Plover is a small bird of lakeshores, river sandbars, and ocean coasts. With its head and back the colour of dried sand, the Piping Plover blends well into its beach surroundings, helping it hide from predators.

Except when it's flying, this species is exclusively a beach bird, living its life between the water's edge and sand dunes. The Piping Plover's habitat is influenced by water levels, plant growth, drought, precipitation, and lake storm surges. It lays its eggs directly on the beach in what amounts to a shallow, scraped out area in the sand.

It is an endangered bird, and is protected by federal and provincial laws.

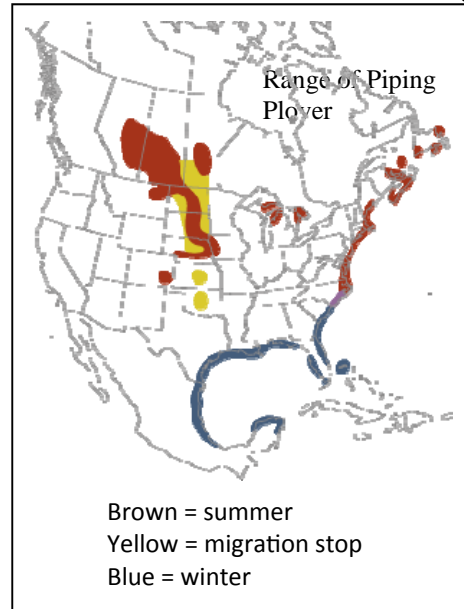
Plovers disappeared from Ontario's Great Lakes shores in the 1970s and didn't appear back until 2007 when it nested at Sauble Beach, Oliphant and Wasaga Beach. It has come back every year since then at Sauble

and Wasaga Beaches.

Plovers feed on invertebrates, including fly larvae, beetles, crustaceans, and molluscs, which they capture with their short bills by alternately running and pecking or probing along the shore. Young Piping Plovers learn to feed themselves while following and observing their parents.

Plovers need to live on wide sandy beaches, and this is the same place people like to have fun. If these birds are going to survive, people need to get along with these little birds and share some beach space. Lots of people have volunteered at Sauble and Wasaga Beaches to guard over the nests and give them a better chance of survival.

Predators such as the red fox, raccoon, and ring-billed gull are some of the other threats that make this bird's life very challenging. Once the young birds fledge, they have a long dangerous journey to their winter grounds on the beaches of the Gulf of Mexico.



This totally awesome information on the Piping Plover has been brought to you by:

### **The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation**

74 Hamilton St.  
Goderich, Ontario  
N7A 1P9  
(226) 421-3029

[www.lakehuron.ca](http://www.lakehuron.ca)