

Piping Plover Conservation Recommendations

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The piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) is a small shorebird that uses gravelly and sandy beaches along the Missouri River/Lake Sakakawea and alkali wetlands in the prairie pothole region of North Dakota. The Northern Great Plains population segment of this species typically breeds in the great plains, including North Dakota, during the summer months and migrates south to the gulf coast to overwinter.

Conservation Recommendations

- During the piping plover nesting season from **April 15-August 15**, avoid direct effects to nesting habitat, which includes sand and gravel beaches, alkali flats, gravel shorelines, and river sandbars.
- If effects to suitable piping plover habitat are proposed during the nesting season, surveys are recommended to determine species presence. We recommend the following when conducting surveys:
 - If suitable habitat is present, conduct presence surveys for piping plovers within a 0.5-mile radius of the proposed project in suitable habitat.
 - Surveys should be conducted by a qualified biologist daily, starting seven (7) days prior to construction activities.
 - Conduct surveys primarily in the morning when there is adequate light to detect and identify birds. From a good vantage point, survey areas using a binoculars or spotting scope for a minimum of 20 minutes in each 0.5-mile direction. Monitoring from several different viewing areas may need to occur, moving areas until the entire 0.5-mile radius is surveyed. Focus specifically for bird movements along sandbars in the middle of the channel, along the shoreline, and on recently formed floodplain sand deposits.
 - If no birds are observed, project activities can commence with no additional surveys.
 - If birds are present foraging or nesting, contact us for recommendations to avoid effects to the species.
- If at any time, an active nest, chick or adult bird is observed within 0.5 miles of the project:
 - Do not attempt to disturb or remove the birds or nests.
 - Do not start or continue construction activity within 0.5 miles of the adult, chick, or nest until piping plovers or their nests are no longer present within 0.5 miles of the project, or it is determined by the USFWS that there is no risk for disturbance.

Additional Information

- USFWS 2025f. Piping Plover. <https://www.fws.gov/species/piping-plover-charadrius-melodus> Accessed March 2025.