



PIPING PLOVERS AND KITESURFING

Best Practices for Kitesurfing on Sandy Beaches in Eastern Canada

This document is part of a series of fact sheets and best practices that have been developed for people who use, own and manage sandy beaches for work or play in Eastern Canada.

Why are best practices needed for sandy beaches?

On Eastern Canada's coastal beaches, endangered Piping Plovers breed on the open sand between the dunes and high tide line. About 250 plover pairs remain in Eastern Canada, well below the recovery target (325 pairs) needed for a sustainable population.¹ Piping Plovers, as well as other wildlife and plants, depend on healthy beach ecosystems for their survival. Kites have been shown to disrupt plover breeding activities,² thus careful timing and location of kitesurfing is vital. Federal and provincial legislation protect the plover and its habitats from destruction and disturbance.

What are best practices?

- Practical tips for any person to conserve wildlife and habitat
- General guidelines that can be adapted to local conditions
- Science-based

You can help keep beaches healthy and safe for Piping Plovers and other wildlife:

- Use these best practices
- Share this information with others
- Learn more and become involved

How can kitesurfing disturb or harm Piping Plovers and beach habitat?

Piping Plovers need areas of dry open sand to find a mate, make a nest, lay and tend eggs, and raise their flightless chicks (see Resource B). Trampling and disturbances by people and their pets or equipment in or near sensitive nesting areas (see illustration below) can disturb these vital breeding activities. Piping Plovers have been found to be highly disturbed by kites.² This is likely due to their inability to distinguish a kite from a predatory bird flying overhead.³

Setting up and dismantling kites often occurs on open, dry sand, which is also the sensitive nesting area for Piping Plovers. Trampling and disturbance of sensitive nesting areas effectively limits the available space for plovers to safely breed and may force them to breed in lower quality habitat.

Trampling of habitat and disturbances from people and kites can cause:

- Death or injury of eggs, chicks or adults by trampling
- Abandonment of nests, chicks or beaches due to excess disturbance
- Less time tending nests, exposing eggs to cold or hot temperatures and to predators like crows or gulls
- Less time feeding, making chicks and adults weaker
- Separation of chicks from their families and exposure of chicks to weather and predators^{1,2}

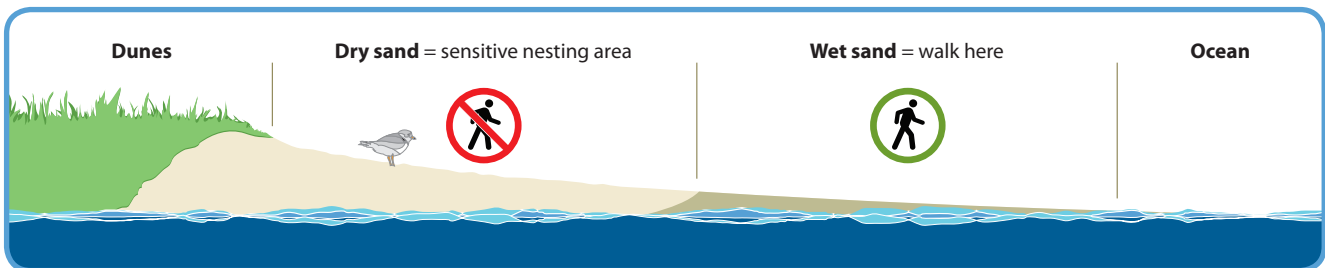


Illustration: Bird Studies Canada

Setting up and dismantling kites often occurs on open, dry sand, which is also the sensitive nesting area for Piping Plovers.

Best Practices for Kitesurfers

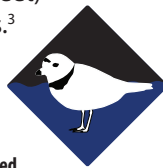
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
			Piping Plover period on beaches in Eastern Canada								

1. Kitesurf on beaches where Piping Plovers are not found.

- This is the best option to avoid any potential disturbance to breeding plovers.
- Contact an Environment Canada or provincial biologist or non-government program to learn which beaches to avoid (see Resource E).

2. On beaches where Piping Plovers breed:

- Kitesurf when Piping Plovers are not present. Avoid mid-April through September (see calendar above).
- Kitesurf no closer than 200 metres (656 feet) to breeding Piping Plover adult or chicks.³
- Piping Plover adults and chicks are difficult to see, so watch for signs on beach marking sensitive nesting areas.



This symbol is often used on beaches where Piping Plovers breed.

3. Keep pets on leash and under control.

- Many beaches in Eastern Canada have leash laws. Avoid potentially causing harm or disturbance to plovers and other wildlife by leashing pets, and avoid the fines.

4. Walk around rather than through resting and feeding birds.

- Causing birds to fly can reduce their valuable energy reserves.

5. Protect natural beach features and processes.

- Beach plants and wildlife need natural features, such as washovers, blow outs and seaweed.
- Stay on marked trails and boardwalks to avoid trampling plants or damaging dunes.
- Plan beach cleanup events carefully: 1) cleanups should occur when plovers are not present; 2) leave healthy components of beach habitat (such as kelp and driftwood).
- Leave driftwood flat to avoid creating unnatural perches for predatory birds, like falcons.

6. Reduce predator- attracting garbage and food on and around beach.

- Safely dispose of garbage and food at home or within closed containers at the beach.
- Do not feed wildlife, such as gulls, crows and foxes.

7. Learn more and get involved.

- Join the hundreds of Canadians who help conserve Piping Plovers and beach habitat.
- Visit www.pipingplover.ca to learn more about conservation efforts in Eastern Canada.
- Contact a Piping Plover conservation program in your province (see Resource E).



Feeding areas

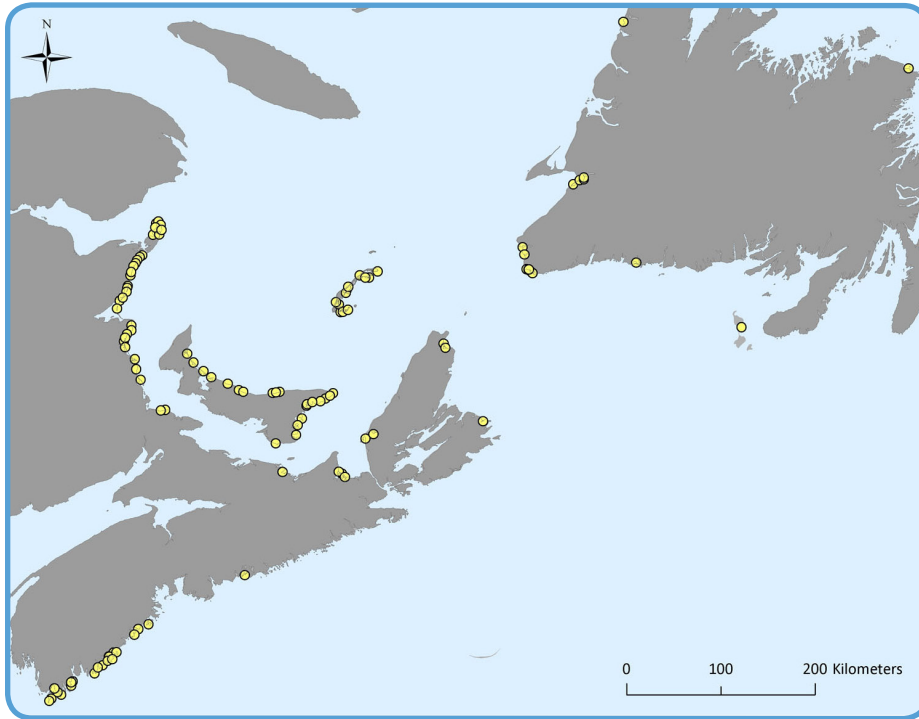
Piping Plover adults and chicks need wet sand for feeding. Walkers and dogs off-leash can disturb birds during feeding and cause them to fly or run away. This can reduce their valuable energy reserves and disturb feeding.

References

1. Environment Canada. 2012. Recovery Strategy for the Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus melodus*) in Canada. Species at Risk Act Recovery Strategy Series. Environment Canada, Ottawa. v + 29 pp.
2. Hoopes, E.M. 1993. Relationships between human recreation and piping plover foraging ecology and chick survival. M.Sc. Thesis. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts. 106 pp.
3. US Fish and Wildlife Service. 1994. Guidelines for managing recreational activities in Piping Plover breeding habitat on the U.S. Atlantic Coast. (www.fws.gov/northeast/pipingplover)
4. US Fish and Wildlife Service. www.fws.gov/northeast/pipingplover

Resources

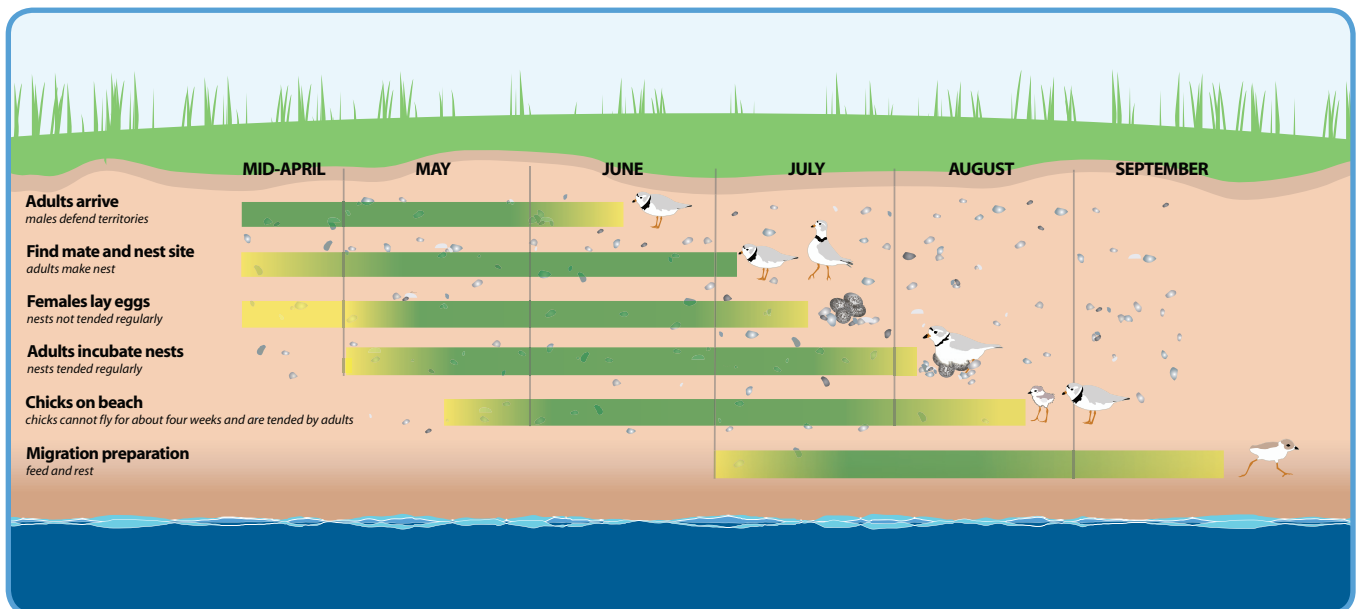
A. Distribution of Piping Plover Beaches in Eastern Canada



B. Timing of Piping Plover Breeding and Migration Activities on Beaches in Eastern Canada.

LEGEND

	peak activity
	off-peak activity



C. Identification of Piping Plovers, Nests and Chicks

Adult Piping Plover, chick and nests.



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D. Identification of Other Similar Shorebirds

Many other shorebirds use beaches for feeding and resting and are commonly mistaken for Piping Plovers.



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Killdeer are larger, robin-sized, darker plovers with two breast bands.



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Semipalmated Plovers are similarly sized to Piping Plovers, but have dark facial markings and chocolate-brown upperparts.



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Sanderlings have black legs and a slim, black bill that is longer than a plover's.

E. Beach and Piping Plover Contacts in Eastern Canada

Province	Environment Canada	Provincial Departments	Piping Plover Conservation and Volunteer Programs	Links to Provincial Regulations
Newfoundland and Labrador	Krista Baker 709-772-3739 krista.baker@ec.gc.ca	Emily Herdman Dept. Environment and Conservation 709-637-2423 emilyherdman@gov.nl.ca		www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/department/legislation.html
Nova Scotia	Karen Potter 902-426-2578 karen.potter@ec.gc.ca	Mark Elderkin Dept. Natural Resources 902-679-6091 eldermkf@gov.ns.ca	Sue Abbott Bird Studies Canada 902-426-4055 nsplovers@gmail.com	www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/laws/actsregs.asp
New Brunswick	Jen Rock 506-364-5078 jen.rock@ec.gc.ca	Kevin Connor Dept. Natural Resources 506-453-2440 kevin.connor@gnb.ca	Lewnanny Richardson Nature New Brunswick 506-395-3500 pluvier@nb.aibn.com Boucoute and area: Kent Watershed Coalition (506) 576-2118 research-dune@hotmail.ca	http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/natural_resources/wildlife.html
Prince Edward Island	Jen Rock 506-364-5078 jen.rock@ec.gc.ca	Rosemary Curley Dept. Environment Energy and Forestry 902-368-4807 frcurley@gov.pe.ca	Jackie Waddell Island Nature Trust 902-892-7513 plover@islandnature.ca	www.gov.pe.ca/envengfor/index.php3?number=78037
Quebec (Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	François Shaffer 418-649-6864 francois.shaffer@ec.gc.ca	Claudiel Pelletier Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune 418-763-3301 ext. 246 claudiel.pelletier@mrfn.gouv.qc.ca	Catherine Denault Attention Fragiles 418-986-6644 action@attentionfragiles.org	www.mrfn.gouv.qc.ca/lois/lois-faune.jsp

ISBN 978-1-100-20196-2
Cat. No. CW66-306/3-2012E-PDF

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