

2007 Piping Plover Activity Summary

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The 2007 season for breeding Piping Plovers (*Charadrius melodus*) in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore began with the installation of two nesting exclosures in late May. The exclosures were adapted from the management techniques of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The exclosures replaced the previous technique of closing of large areas of the beach to the public. The exclosures were used in conjunction with an individual who monitored the progress of the plovers, preformed public education, and stayed on site from Friday to Tuesday. Monitoring began on June 1st and was completed on July 31st.

The two original nests were located on Long Island along the beach on the east side of the island. The nests will be referred to as PPLO05 (*northern most*) and PPLO06 (*preceding south*). PPLO05 contained four eggs and sustained no disturbance resulting in a loss of eggs or abandonment of the nest. The nest resulted in one viable chick that was hatched between June 17th and June 21st. The three remaining eggs were collected on June 25th and were sent to be analyzed. This chick was banded on July 2nd (X,G/O/G:O,-) and survived the season and will potentially become a breeding adult for next season. The chick joined with another nest early in the season and was accepted by the adult and raised with other chicks. The reason for early abandonment by the parent is unknown.

PPLO06 contained four eggs and sustained no disturbance resulting in a loss of eggs or nest abandonment. Four viable chicks were hatched between June 17th and June 21st and banded on July 2nd. These chicks survived the season and will potentially become breeding adults for next season.

PPLO07 is the third nest to be discovered and was located south of PPLO06 outside of NPS property. The nest was discovered on June 9th and an exclosure was erected on June 12th. The nest contained four eggs, which hatched four viable chicks between June 17th and June 21st. These chicks were not banded. All of the chicks from this nest survived the season and will potentially become breeding adults for next season.

PPLO08 is the fourth nest discovered south of PPLO07 on the Johnson property. The nest was discovered on July 7th and contained two newly hatched chicks and two eggs. No enclosure was erected. Three chicks were confirmed to hatch, however the following week the nest was empty and only one chick was foraging with adults. There were extensive signs of human and dog use within the nesting area. The fate of the three chicks is unknown, but it assumed they perished. By June 15th both the adult and the chick had been extirpated and this nest can be deemed unsuccessful.

There were sightings of additional Piping Plovers and chicks, but no confirmed nest locations. The first is an adult and two chicks sighted at the southern end of the Johnson property on July 21st. These chicks grouped together with chicks from the northern nests and will potentially become breeding adults for next season. There was an adult with two chicks on the sand spit of Outer Island. These chicks are younger than the Long Island chicks, but they are flying and potentially will fledge successfully.

Piping Plover breeding success and band summary:

- PPLO05 – 2 Adults (-O:X,g and unbanded) 1 chick (X,G/O/G:O,-)
- PPLO06 – 2 Adults (-,O:X,G and unbanded) 4 chicks (X,G/O/G:O,-)
- PPLO07 – 2 Adults (Xg:O- and GX:--) 4 chicks (unbanded)
- PPLO08 – 2 Adults (O,-:X,R and O,-:X,g) 0 chicks
- Long Island – 1 Adult (unbanded) 2 chicks (unbanded)
- Outer Island – 1 Adult (unbanded) 2 chicks (unbanded)

While stationed on the island I was able to contact 120 people who were visiting the island over the weekend and in the vicinity of the nests. These contacts were informal, but provided the visitors with reasoning behind the restrictions as well as general knowledge of the Piping Plovers. The signs on the enclosures provided information and dissuaded many more people from inadvertently creating a potentially negative disturbance to the nest sites.