

# Piping Plovers and Least Terns in Maine



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MAINE   
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# Piping Plover



Small, sandy colored shorebird.

Nests from Carolinas to Canada



Least Tern



Both are *beach*  
*habitat specialists*



**They rely on CAMOUFLAGE**





# Mobile Specialists

**Nesting: Dune to beach transition**  
**Feeding: Intertidal areas**

Least Terns are *endangered* in Maine, not listed federally



Piping Plovers are *endangered* in Maine, *threatened* federally

# Nesting cycle

- Arrive March-May
- Nest (28 day incubation)
- Raise chicks (25-30 days)



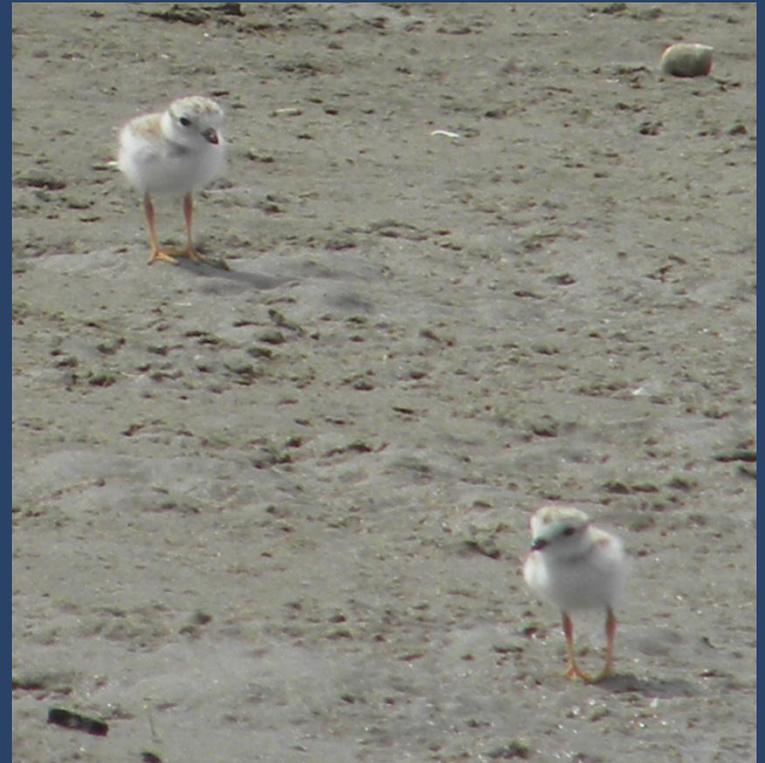
# Chicks

Chicks feed themselves— “Precocial”  
(most vulnerable time for plovers)

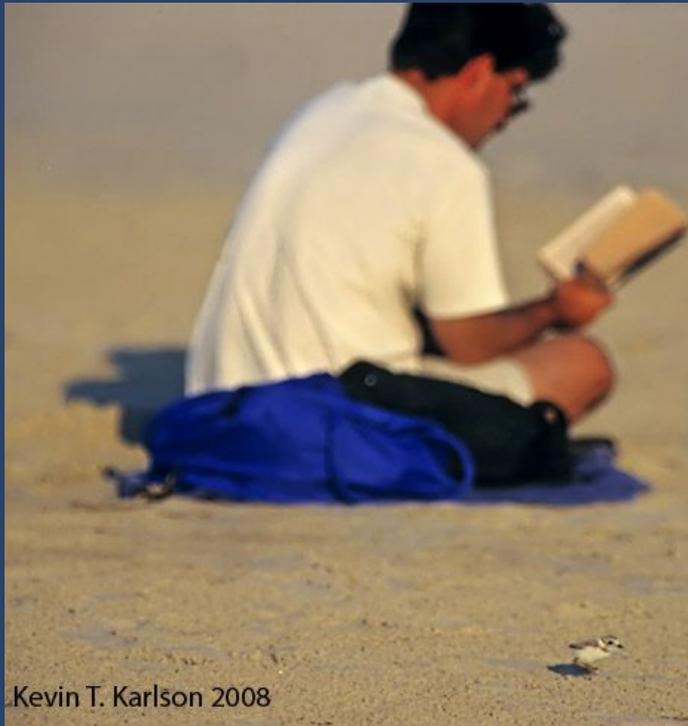


# Chicks move

- From waterline to dune
- Not always with adults
- “Freeze” when scared
- Broods can cover great distances- 1+ miles!
- Makes managing and protecting challenging



# Threats



- Habitat Loss: development
- Predators: foxes, crows, gulls, dogs, cats
- Human disturbance
- Tides and sea level rise



# What we do

- Monitoring
- Management
  - Stake and twine
  - Predator exclosures
  - Predator control
  - Work with beach owners/managers



# What we do

- Education
  - Tables at events, beach entrances
  - On the beach while working



# What we do

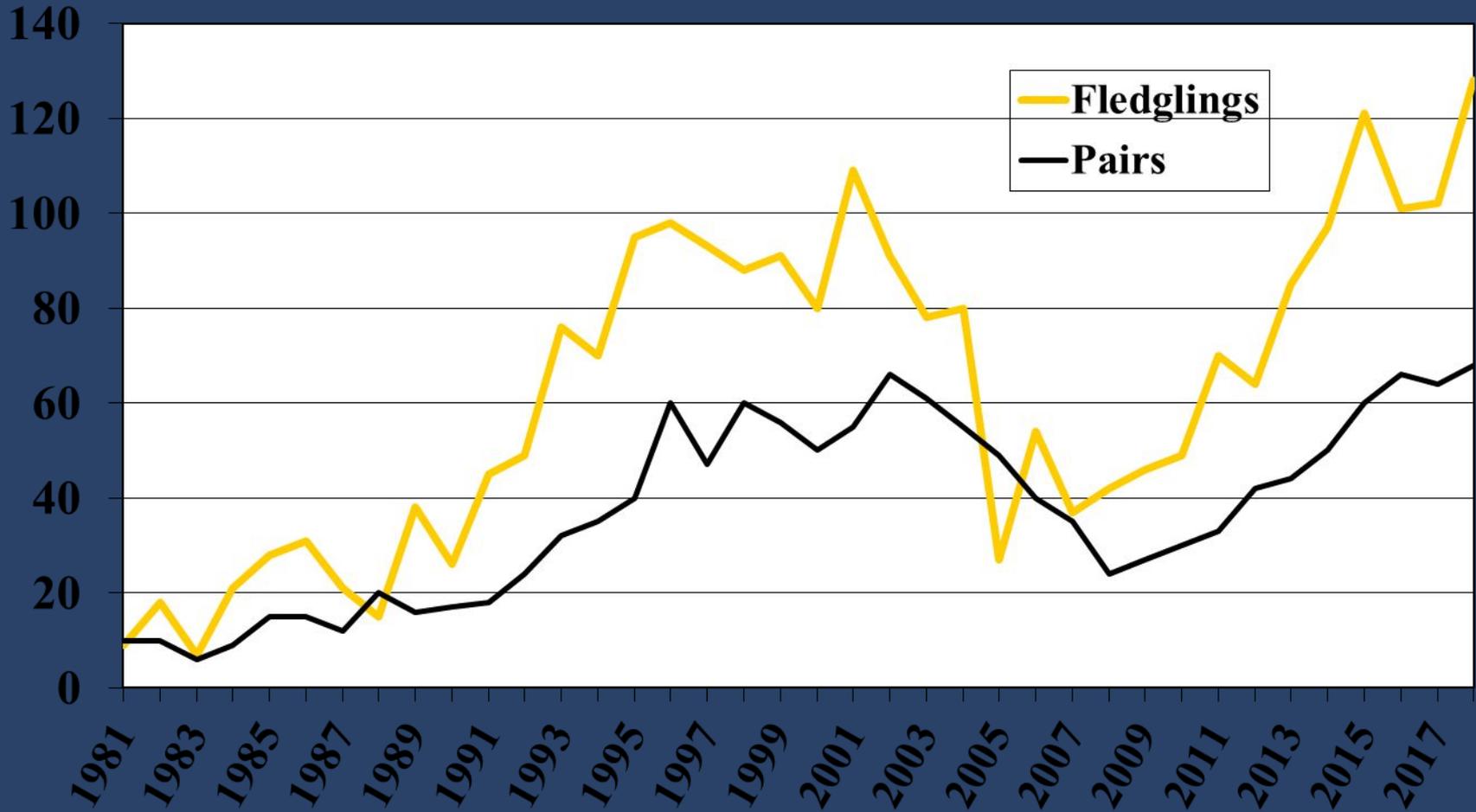
- Cultivate & encourage volunteer programs
- Train lifeguards, seasonal police, public works, etc.
- Relationships!



# Our efforts are paying off for plovers



# Number of Piping Plover Nesting Pairs and Fledglings in Maine, 1981-2018



# Managing for plovers and terns

- Great for the beach
- Generally supported
  - Access concerns?
  - Insufficient beach?



# Managing for plovers and terns

- Restrictions on driving on the beach and raking on the beach
  - Driving on the beach compacts sand and inhibits dune growth
  - Beach raking removes essential nutrients from the beach, damages growing vegetation, removes sand



# Managing for plovers and terns

- WRACK
  - People often seem to hate it
  - Essential for dune growth and a healthy beach



# What do our beaches need?



# Beach and Dune Best Management Practices ("Low Hanging Fruit" Strategies)

- Continue to monitor erosion
- Dune fencing and signage
- Seaweed management
- Washoversand management
- Dune path management
- Dune restoration planting
- Driftwood and litter



Taking a look at  
things:

What plovers need  
is what the beaches  
need too!



Please help us spread the word



Happy plovers = happy beach = happy beach-loving humans



# Thank you!



- Private Landowners
- Town Officials: Ogunquit, Wells, Kennebunkport, Saco, Old Orchard Beach, Scarborough...
- Maine Department of Conservation, State Parks
- Municipal Support: Public Works, Lifeguards, Fire/Rescue, Police, Animal Control Officers
- Countless Volunteers

*Beach visitors, tourists, you.*

