

PROTECTED SPECIES OF WALLOPS ISLAND



Sea Turtle Crawls

Since most sea turtles near our beach, with the exception of the Kemp's Ridley, nest very late at night or early in the morning hours, you will most likely not see an actual turtle, just the evidence that they have been on the beach from the sea turtle crawl tracks they leave behind.



Loggerhead Sea Turtle



Leatherback Sea Turtle



Atlantic Green Sea Turtle



Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle

Stranded Marine Mammals

If you see a stranded marine mammal or sea turtle please notify the Security Island Gate 757-824-2780 IMMEDIATELY!

- Dolphins
- Seals
- Whales
- Sea Turtles







Piping Plover

Piping plovers breed only in North America in three geographic regions: the Atlantic Coast, the Northern Great Plains, and the Great Lakes.

Atlantic Coast plovers nest on coastal beaches, sandflats at the ends of sand spits and barrier islands, gently sloped foredunes, sparsely vegetated dunes, and washover areas cut into or between dunes.



Piping Plover migratory and breeding season starts in mid-March and ends the beginning of September. During this timeframe the northern portion of Wallops Island is closed. No one is allowed passed the barrier without permission from the Environmental Office.

What to look for:

- Entrance tracks
- Exit tracks
- Nest mound
- Tracks have been likened to an ATV coming up out of the ocean

Notify: Security Island Gate IMMEDIATELY (refer to Listed Species Reporting System Box) 757-824-2780

- Wind can erase tracks in a matter of a few hours or less
- Do NOT walk on or over nest mound
- Note general location of nest mound by placing an obvious marker near (not on) the potential nest.




Piping Plovers Protected

Piping plovers became protected under the Endangered Species Act in 1986.

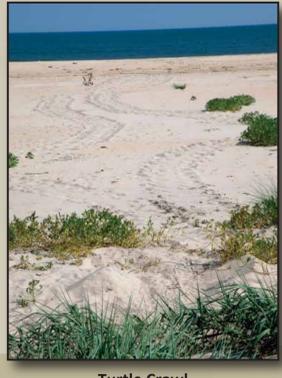
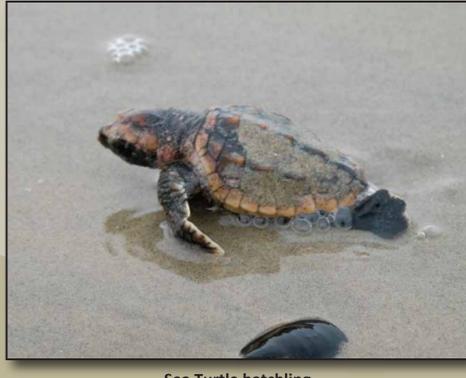
- Atlantic Coast plovers are "threatened"
- Currently < 2000 breeding pairs

Several Factors for Decline:

- Development reduces coastal habitat
- Human disturbance
- Domestic animals and predators
- Storm tides

By managing the population on Wallops Island we are helping to increase the number of successful breeding pairs, and increasing the piping plover population as a whole.





Listed Species Reporting System:

Anyone who observes listed species, the potential occurrence of listed species, or a stranded marine mammal or sea turtle should call the Protected Services Division (Security) at the following number:

Wallops Island Gate (757) 824-2780

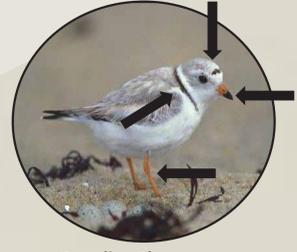
Security will immediately notify the Environmental Office.

Piping Plover Identification

Piping plovers (*Charadrius melodus*) are small shorebirds

- approximately seven inches long
- sand-colored plumage on backs and crown with white underparts

Breeding birds have a single black breastband, a black bar across the forehead, bright orange legs and bill, and a black tip on the bill.

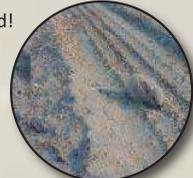


Breeding Plumage

Please Remember to "Tread" Lightly

- Drive Along the Intertidal Zone Only!
- Avoid Driving in Soft Sand!

Birds and chicks have an affinity for tire tracks so please drive slowly and be vigilant.



Baby plover resting in tire tracks



Adult plover walking in tire tracks



Plover eggs right next to tire tracks



Adult plover blending into its habitat



Plover chicks camouflaged in the sand

Birds, chicks and eggs can be very difficult to see in soft sand.