

1987

Shorebird Studies: 1986-1987 Report

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PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: VIRGINIA

PROJECT TITLE: NONGAME AND ENDANGERED SPECIES INVESTIGATION PROJECT NO.: W-77-R-4

STUDY TITLE: SHOREBIRD INVESTIGATIONS STUDY NO.: VIII

JOB TITLE: SHOREBIRD STUDIES JOB NO.: A-D

PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 1986 - June 30, 1987

JOB VIII-A OBJECTIVE: To determine and monitor piping and Wilson's plover populations along the barrier islands and Tidewater, Virginia.

JOB VIII-B OBJECTIVE: To determine reproductive success of the Plovers as possible.

JOB VIII-C OBJECTIVE: To determine flushing distances of the plovers.

JOB VIII-D OBJECTIVE: To determine habitat requirements of Piping and Wilson's plovers on the barrier island beaches.

SUMMARY:

Piping plover nesting surveys on the barrier islands and at Grandview Beach located 82 pairs and a minimum of 35 nests. Habitat analyses are currently being conducted. Sixteen adult plovers were trapped, banded, and color marked.

JOB VIII-A - To determine and monitor piping and Wilson's plover populations along the barrier islands and in Tidewater Virginia.

Two complete surveys of nesting piping plovers were conducted in the summer of 1986. These surveys resulted in the location of 84 pairs and 56 nests. Because of the time interval between surveys coupled with island washovers, it is likely that some of these pairs and nests represented renestings.

In 1987, a single survey was conducted of the barrier islands in early June by the same personnel involved in the 1986 survey except for Cedar and Metomkin Islands. A second survey was not conducted in order to avoid the confusion of pair shifts and renesters. Results of this survey are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of piping plover nest survey on the barrier islands and at Grandview Beach, June 1, 1987.

<u>Island</u>	<u>Pairs</u>	<u>Singles</u>	<u>Nests</u>	<u>Eggs</u>	* <u>Young</u>
Smith	6	0	1	4	2
Myrtle	5	1	4	4,4,4,4	0
Cobb	7	0	4	3,3,1,1	0
Hog	3	2	0	0	0
Cedar	3	0	2	4,1	0
Cedar Sand Bar	3	0	3	4,3,4	0
Metomkin	16	0	15	4,4,4,3,4,2,2,3 3,4,4,4,2,3,+ 2 shells	2
Assawoman	4	0	2	1,4	0
Wallops	2	0	2	4	3
Grandview Beach	4	0	3	4,4,4	0
Chincoteague	30	**	**	**	**
Totals	<u>52</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>7</u>

* Young represented in this column were discovered in addition to eggs and are not related to the hatching success of any eggs located.

** Data being compiled.

The data in Table 1 would appear to suggest several differences from the 1986 survey results.

The apparent declines since 1986 consist of a reduction of 14 pairs on Metomkin Island and 4 pairs on Cedar Island. Metomkin and Cedar Island were each visited on four occasions in 1986. All pairs and nests in new locations were recorded on a map. There was no way to account for renestings by the same pairs. Another notable difference was the results of Chincoteague Island. In 1986, due to an incomplete survey by refuge staff, only 9 pairs were recorded. Results from 1987 indicate a population of about 30 breeding pairs. Although there are many variables involved in a census of this type, it is believed that the barrier island population is conservatively 80

breeding pairs. A repeated survey in 1988 should lend credence to this more conservative count.

JOB VIII-B - To determine reproductive success of plovers as possible.

All fifteen nests at Metomkin Island were monitored closely through the season. Data from this breeding season are still being collected at the present time for Metomkin Island. The four pair at Grandview Beach were followed closely and apparently fledged 5 young for a reproductive rate of 1.25 per pair.

A total of 19 adults were banded and color marked on Metomkin Island.

JOB VIII-C - To determine flushing distances of plovers.

Adults on Metomkin Island were observed through the summer and flushing distances recorded. Data are being compiled and will be included in the next annual report.

JOB VIII - To determine habitat requirements of piping and Wilson's plovers on the barrier island beaches.

Detailed habitat measurements are being taken at all active nests on Metomkin Island. These data are being analyzed at this time.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION: Continuing

STATUS OF PROGRESS: On Schedule

SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS IN PROGRESS: None

RECOMMENDATIONS: Continue Study

COST THIS SEGMENT: FEDERAL 4,835 : STATE 1,612 : TOTAL 6,447 :

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