



## ANIMAL SECTION – BIRDS

### PIPING PLOVER

#### ABOUT

The Piping Plover is a small, stocky, sandy-colored bird. The adult has yellow-orange legs, a black band between the eyes, and a black ring around its neck. It runs in short bursts and when still blends into the background of its sandy habitat on outer beaches where it feeds and nests. This bird returns to its breeding grounds in the spring. Once it has established its nesting territory and performed courtship rituals, a pair of Piping Plovers form a depression in the sand close to the dunes. They sometimes line the nest with small stones or fragments of shell. Four eggs will be laid and hatch in 25 days. The young soon follow their parents in foraging for marine worms, crustaceans and insects found in the sand and are flying 30 days from hatching.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The current decline of Piping Plovers is due to several factors, like human activity and development decreasing the size of their coastal habitat where they nest and feed. Disruption of nesting sites by foot or vehicular traffic, also take their toll. Developments near beaches provide food that attracts increased numbers of predators like raccoons and skunks amongst other things. The nests are also vulnerable to storm tides that inundate nests. Along the Atlantic Coast this bird is designated as threatened and became a protected species in 1986.

For more detailed information visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)

#### TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

What do Piping Plovers sometimes line their nest with?

- a) Small stones or shell fragments
- b) Feathers
- c) Pine needles
- d) Dried seaweed

Answer is A.

