



MAINE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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For Immediate Release

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IFW To Host Informational Meeting Concerning Endangered Piping Plover and Least Tern Management Activities on Popham and Scarborough Beaches

AUGUSTA, Maine – Next week, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) is holding two public informational meetings regarding piping plover and least tern management activities planned for the 2018 nesting season.

The first meeting will be held at the Bath City Hall on Monday, June 24th at 5:00 pm and the second at the Scarborough Town Hall on Thursday, June 27th at 5:00 pm.

Both piping plovers and least terns are on the state endangered species list. Once down to only seven nesting pairs in the state, piping plovers rebounded to 68 nesting pairs in 2018. Least tern nesting pair numbers dropped to 39 in 1982 but have slowly climbed to over 200 nesting pairs statewide. Habitat loss and lack of undisturbed nest sites are two of the primary factors jeopardizing populations of piping plovers and least terns. Protection of nesting sites and plover and tern chicks are one of the keys to fledgling success.

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands beaches support 15-20% of Maine's nesting population of piping plovers. Least terns nest at only 4-5 sites in Maine, which includes Popham Beach on some years. In 2018, Popham Beach had 6 pairs of nesting piping plovers, however the survival of nests and chicks was well below the state average most likely because of impacts from beachgoers, predators, and/or environmental conditions.

In order to increase nesting and fledgling success, IFW and its partners protect nesting sites by installing temporary fencing directly around the nesting site. Nests are also monitored by staff and volunteers, keeping people and pets away from the nesting sites. IFW also oversees a predation management program on the beach that removes foxes, raccoons, skunks and other predators through regulated trapping.

Predation management at Popham in 2015 and 2016 was conducted throughout the nesting season beginning in May and continuing through August when the last piping plover brood fledged. Predation management was not conducted in 2017-2018 which may have contributed to the low production of fledged plover chicks.

Over the past 11 years, this predation management program has helped reverse a population decline and subsequently rebuild Maine's piping plover population. Productivity rates (number of fledglings per nesting pair) on beaches with predation management (2.05 fledglings/nesting pair) have substantially surpassed the productivity rates on beaches where no predation management was conducted (1.50 fledglings/nesting pair). Increased productivity is the foundation for recovering the piping plover population and, consequently, predation management efforts contributed to the statewide increase in nesting plover pairs from 24 pairs in 2008 to 68 pairs in 2018.

To hear more about Maine's piping plovers and least terns and our efforts to protect and sustain these Endangered Species please join us at either meeting.

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