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From: [Mike Murray](#)
To: [James Harris](#)
Cc: [Cyndy_Holda@nps.gov](#)
Bcc: [Doug McGee](#)
Subject: Re: plovers at the point
Date: 06/04/2009 09:12 AM

Hey Jim,

We try not to attribute human characteristics to wildlife behavior, but you ask an interesting question about the number of PIPL observations at Cape Point. The Resource Management staff prepares the weekly report (Cyndy just distributes it), so I asked Doug McGee about it. Your math (# pairs vs. # nests, etc.) is correct, but the reason the count seems low is that the bio-techs record only the total number of PIPLs that they can see at any one time. For example, if the tech walking through or scoping an area observes 10 plovers at various places throughout the closure, but can only see five at one time, then they record the maximum number for that day as five. Reason: PIPLs are prone to moving around an area and one cannot be certain one is not double-counting the same individual bird that has moved from one place to another during the counting process. Occasionally, we can deploy several monitors in an area to do a synchronized count (i.e., to count all the birds they can see at the same time from several vantage points) and the count may be higher on those days.

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To ""Mike Murray"" <Mike_Murray@nps.gov>,
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cc

06/01/2009 12:25 PM

Subject plovers at the point

Mike, I have been following Cyndy's reports on the plover activity at the point. Are you sure she is not writing a script for Jerry Springer?
Consider;

**Cape Hatteras National Seashore
Resource Management Weekly Field Summary for May 21 – May 27,
2009
(Bodie Island, Hatteras and Ocracoke Districts)**

Piping Plover (PIPL):

Observations	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds
	5/21	5/22	5/23	5/24	5/25	5/26	5/27
Oregon Inlet	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Cape Point	5	5	5	5	5	6	5
South Beach	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
Hatteras Inlet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hatteras Overwash	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N. Ocracoke	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
S. Ocracoke	2	2	2	2	3	2	2

PIPL Update:

Bodie Island:

Very minimal PIPL activity observed this week. No territorial or breeding behavior documented.

Hatteras Island:

Nests are being monitored at dawn and dusk for signs of hatching. There continues to be at least three unpaired male PIPLs on territories.

Ocracoke Island:

The last incubation of Nest 4, a four-egg nest, was observed on 5/20. On 5/22 a female PIPL was observed at the nest chasing away a male PIPL. As of 5/27 there were new scrapes in that territory.

Nests/Expected hatch dates:

Nest 1 – Four-egg nest at Cape Point. Expected hatch date - 6/2.

Nest 2 – Four-egg nest at Cape Point. Expected hatch date - 5/30.

Nest 3 – Lost.

Nest 4 – Abandoned.

Nest 5 – Four-egg nest at Cape Point. Expected hatch date – on or before 6/3.

Nest 6 – Three-egg nest at Cape Point. Expected hatch date – on or before 6/7.

Nest 7 – Four-egg nest at South Point (Ocracoke). Expected hatch date – 6/12.

Nest 8 – A four-egg nest at Cape Point. Expected hatch date - 6/18.

Nest 9 – A two-egg nest found at South Point (Ocracoke) on 5/22. The enclosure was installed on 5/26 since incubation was observed, even though it remained a two-egg nest. Expected hatch date - 6/22.

There are 5 plover nests on Cape point, nest 1, nest 2, nest 5, nest 6 and nest 8. In biology, I learned it takes 2 parent birds per nest. That would be 10 (ten) plovers, 5 female, 5 male.

There are 19 plover eggs laid in these 5 plover nests.

According to the chart for this week, the most plovers seen this week are 6 on Tuesday May 26. The average is 5 on any other day.

How do these 5 possibly 6 plovers manage to do so much with so little. Since the laws of nature are not the same as laws of man, adoption and virgin birth are out as explanations, so are same sex couples.

Any thoughts on the missing 4 or 5 plovers.

If a nest containing eggs only has one bird adult brooding these eggs the chicks will be lost. Why not get those single parent eggs, finish the incubation, and raise the chicks at the hand of man, not nature.

Nests are being monitored at dawn and dusk for signs of hatching. There continues to be at least three unpaired male PIPLs on territories."

The three "unpaired males" along with 5 nests with 19 eggs sounds like a "Jerry Springer Show" in the making.

Are these plovers getting too much observation? Is that what is causing the nesting pairs to split up?

Are these bachelor plovers (unpaired males) mating and fleeing responsibility? Thus dooming any nesting success.

Who could ever have predicted that plovers would start acting like "Liberal Democrats" within months of the elections?

If the plovers start giving "parenting and nesting success 101" classes to colony nesters and oyster catchers!

From 2008 Appendix to piping plover Annual Report

This appendix is comprised from field notes of the dates: nests were discovered, exclosure installations, weekly exclosure checks, daily observations for hatching during the hatch window

and daily observations of PIPL broods.

Nest 1, Pair 1

Cape Point

4/25/2008

I look forward to reading the 2009 Annual Report Appendix; it's going to be spicy.

Jim Harris

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