



# beachbird

## Nova Scotia's Piping Plovers in 2016

In 2016, the number of endangered Piping Plover pairs in NS increased slightly to 48 pairs compared to 2015 (see graph on page 4). Across the province a total of 46 monitored pairs produced 67 fledglings, which equates to 1.5 fledglings per pair - below the annual 1.65 productivity target. Productivity between regions varied greatly. Plovers in northern NS had their most successful breeding season since 2007 (2.3 fledglings per pair). In contrast, southern NS had another year of poor breeding success (1.1 fledglings per pair) with lower than average chick survival.

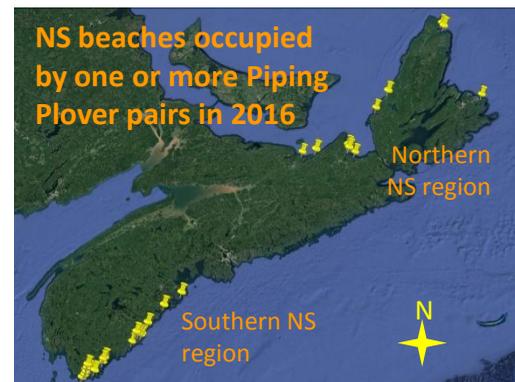
### Summary of Piping Plover population and breeding success in Nova Scotia in 2016

Region of Nova Scotia	Year-end population				Nest success % nests hatched (n=# nests of known fate)	# Fledglings (# young 20 days old)	Productivity (# fledglings per monitored pair)
	# Pairs	# Singles	# Adults	# Pairs monitored			
Southern NS*	33	6	72	32	47% (n=43)	35	1.1
Northern NS	15	1	31	14	76% (n=17)	32	2.3
<b>Total NS</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>55% (n=60)</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1.5</b>

\* Includes results from Kejimikujik Seaside National Park (data collected by Parks Canada Agency).

### Distribution of Piping Plover pairs on NS beaches in 2016

A total of 29 beaches in NS were occupied by one or more pairs, which is higher than the 11-year average (25 beaches). Plovers nested successfully on two beaches with no prior breeding records in 2016. A pair nested at a small privately-owned beach in Port Joli Bay, Queens Co. and produced two fledglings (see page 2). A pair nested at Ogden Pond beach, Antigonish Co. and produced two fledglings (see page 3). For a sixth year, there were no known breeding pairs on Halifax Co. beaches.



## 2016 Regional Update: Eastern Canada & St. Pierre et Miquelon, France



Julie Zickefoose

Unfortunately, the regional population remains far below the long-term recovery target (310 pairs) identified in the [Recovery Strategy for Piping Plovers in Canada](#). In 2016, an estimated 176 pairs were recorded across Eastern Canada and St. Pierre & Miquelon, France. This represents a small decline compared to 2015. Regional Piping Plover productivity was slightly below the annual target (1.65) at 1.4 fledglings per pair (based on 155 monitored pairs).

## On the Beach: Stewardship Stories



This family helped set up signs at Cherry Hill beach. *Photo BSC.*

Thank you to our volunteers and partners who helped on and off the beach in many different ways in 2016:

- 74 volunteers spent 1,031 hours surveying beaches, monitoring plovers, protecting habitat, and educating beachgoers.
- Tremendous support was received from our partners: Friends of Kejimikujik Coop. Assoc., Parks Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), Nature Conservancy of Canada, NS Environment, NS Nature Trust and ACAP-Cape Breton. Special thanks to Karen Potter (CWS) and these NS Natural Resources staff who provided extra help: Don Anderson, Duncan Bayne, Pious Chisholm, Kim George, Pam Mills, Shavonne Myer, Terry Power, Mark Pulsifer, Jeremy Smith and several seasonal technicians.



Mateus, Thomas and Shelley Adamo. *Photo BSC.*

### >> Harbour Breeze, Port Joli, Queens Co.

It's always exciting to receive reports of Piping Plovers from the public, especially from a beach with no prior records of nesting. In June 2016, Shelley Adamo called to report a pair of plovers on a small beach in front of their cottage on Port Joli Bay, Queens Co. We confirmed nesting on 25 June.

With two rental cottages on the beach, we decided it was best to set up signs and rope to reduce trampling and disturbance around the nest site. All three eggs hatched on 20 July – the last nest to hatch in NS! Cottage renters helped monitor chicks. Two of the young fledged. We thank the Adamo family for their support as fantastic first-time plover stewards!

### >> Inverness Beach, Inverness Co., Cape Breton Island

Inverness Beach lies along the stunning coast of western Cape Breton Island. In 2014, Mollie MacGregor spotted a plover pair with chicks in late summer – a first breeding record for this beach! We heard about the news after the summer so it was too late to confirm the fate of the plover family, but not too late to meet Mollie and learn more.

Mollie was a Piping Plover Guardian for many years in the past and keen to get back involved at Inverness Beach. In 2015, Molly monitored a single plover whom she nicknamed “Sgt. Pepper” because he remained unmated (and lonely hearted) all summer. In June 2016, Molly confirmed a pair, “John and Yoko,” in the same spot on the beach. In late June, John and Yoko’s nest hatched and the couple produced one fledgling (photo below).

We’re optimistic about this beach as a successful breeding plover site. With Mollie’s help, we’ll work on improving beach stewardship through better signage and outreach to local landowners and businesses.



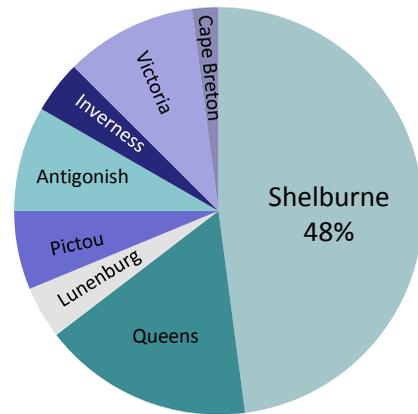
Inverness plover dad, “John,” and his fledgling. *Photos Mollie MacGregor.*

## On the Beach: Stewardship Stories

### Collaborating towards healthy beaches for people and wildlife in Shelburne County

More Piping Plovers nest on Shelburne County, NS beaches than in any other part of the province (in 2016, 23 pairs or 48% of pairs), making their health especially critical to plovers’ recovery.

The Shelburne County Beach Stewardship group is a collaborative project guided by Bird Studies Canada staff, local municipalities and Shelburne County Tourism Association. With help from NS Departments of Natural Resources and Environment, the group has been developing a framework for wise stewardship of county beaches. In 2014, guided by its vision ‘Healthy Beaches for People and Wildlife in Shelburne County,’ the group compiled a set of beach best practices and since then has been focusing on communication with residents and visitors. Beach updates are regularly included in the Municipality of Barrington’s and the Municipality of the District of Shelburne’s (MDS) newsletters. The Outdoor Active Living Guide, a project of the Physical Activity Strategy of the Towns of Shelburne and Lockeport and the MDS, now includes beach best practices.



**Proportion of Piping Plover pairs in 2016 by Nova Scotia county.**



“Healthy Beaches for People and Wildlife” sign was developed by MDS. Photo Sue Deschene.

The MDS has included beach stewardship education and communication in its updated ICSP Action Plan, and last spring installed signs at Roseway and Louis Head beaches that share the group’s vision and let beachgoers know how they can help. Plovers have successfully nested at both these busy beaches in recent years although in 2016 four chicks hatched at Roseway and did not fledge, and there were no nesting pairs at Louis Head.

Also in 2016, the group collaborated with Shelburne County Tourism Association in the creation of a [beaches brochure](#) in the ‘Beyond the Ordinary’ series, which has been well received by residents and visitors alike. In addition to highlighting the features of 11 county beaches, it includes stewardship best practices and information about endangered Piping Plover and beach ecology.

### What’s next for Shelburne County Beach Stewardship?

This spring, the Shelburne County Beach Stewardship group is launching the Shelburne County Beach Champion project, a celebration of community members who are passionate about the county’s beaches and help support the group's vision.

To find out more about the Shelburne County Beach Stewardship work, contact Chris Curry (chriscurrys.mail@gmail.com).

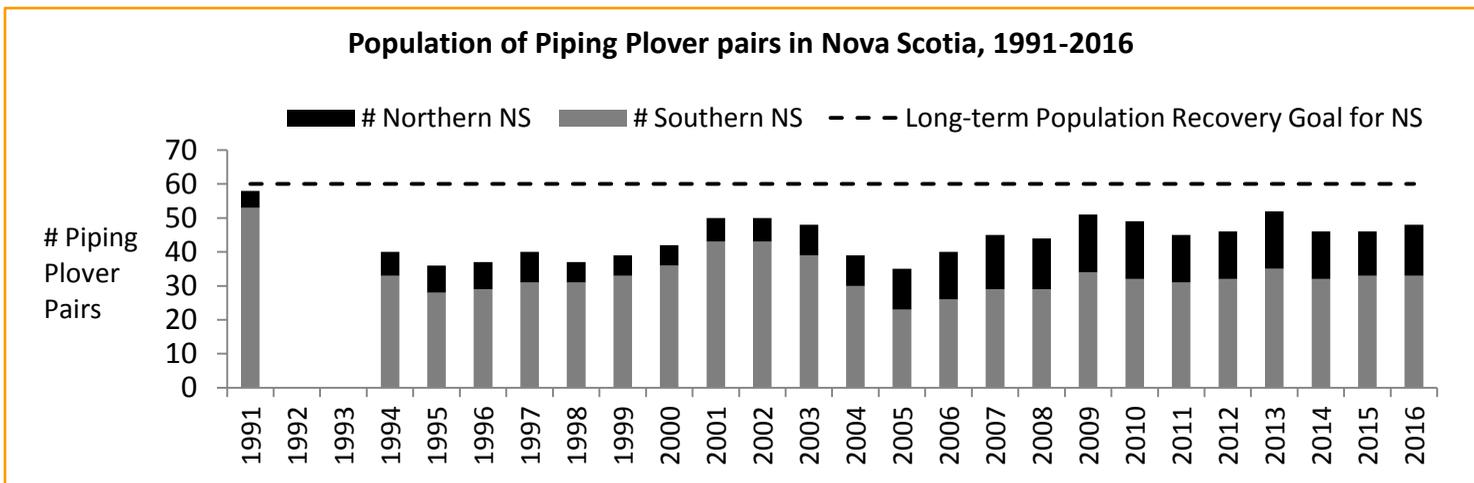


Johnsons Pond is an important plover nesting beach in Shelburne County with great local support. BSC photo

## A look at historic Piping Plover population numbers in Nova Scotia

In their 1980 [article in \*American Birds\*](#), Dr. Ian McLaren and Winifred Cairns estimated Nova Scotia’s Piping Plover population to be about 70 pairs in the 1970s. Province-wide surveys in 1991 documented 58 pairs, marking a 17% decline. With the exception of two years in the early 1990s, population monitoring has occurred annually allowing us to track changes and assess the status of recovery efforts over the past 25 years.

The most recent population peak was in 2013 when we documented 52 pairs. However, it’s fair to say that the population has remained stubbornly below the provincial recovery goal of 60 pairs over the last 25 years. The good news is that we’ve tracked a 37% increase since the provincial population reached a low point of 35 pairs in 2005. This gives us hope that further gains can be made, especially as we continue our work with land managers and private landowners to ensure beaches remain safe and healthy for breeding plovers.



## White HE “Hemeon”

Atlantic Piping Plovers spend winters feeding and resting in coastal areas from N. Carolina to the Caribbean. In 2014, as part of Environment and Climate Change Canada’s five-year banding study, an adult male was banded with the flag HE at Black Point beach (Hemeon’s Head) in Shelburne County. Known as “Hemeon,” he’s been seen during fall migration on the coast of New Jersey each year since. He returned to nest at Black Point beach in the spring of 2015 and Roseway beach in 2016. On January 25, 2017 he was spotted on the north shore of Grand Bahama Island in The Bahamas, his first winter sighting! We’ll be watching for him and other Piping Plovers as they return this spring.



HE, “Hemeon,” at his Roseway beach nesting site on 10 May 2016. *Photo BSC.*

## Program Support

Financial support: Government of Canada’s Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk; Env. & Climate Change Can.’s Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS); Friends of Keji Coop. Assoc.; Sage Env. Fund; NS Econ. & Rural Dev.; NS Env.; and individual donors. We also thank 2016 project staff (Luke Ehler, Shayla Nickerson, Colton Smith and Chris Curry) as well as support from our many volunteers and partners.

## Learn more • Get involved

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