



Rare Great Lakes Piping Plovers at Montrose Beach

WHY IS THIS SO EXCITING?

In June, 2019, a pair of Great Lakes Piping Plovers (GLPIPL) began nesting at the Montrose public beach. This is a first for Montrose and an exciting development for this federally endangered species. Nearly extinct from the Great Lakes region in the early 1980s, the pair represents one of approximately 70 breeding pairs of Piping Plovers in the entire Great Lakes region. This is a major milestone in their recovery, increasing from a low of just 13 pairs!

Since there are likely less than 200 Great Lakes Piping Plovers, having a pair nest at Montrose Beach is an extremely rare treat! It is important to provide them with the space they need to survive, nest, and reproduce at this special Chicago site.

ABOUT PIPING PLOVERS

Piping Plovers typically lay 4 eggs, which hatch in about 30 days. Chicks can walk and feed soon after hatching but rely on their parents for protection and warmth. Chicks can fly well about 30 days after hatching..

- Piping Plovers are small, slightly larger than a sparrow, but smaller than a robin.
- GLPIPLs have bands on their legs for identification.
- GLPIPLs eat insects, spiders, and other small invertebrates.
- They migrate to warmer areas in late summer and fall (Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, and Texas).

HOW DO WE PROTECT THEM?

Great Lakes Piping Plovers are an endangered species and are federally protected by the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) administers the Endangered Species Act, and protects the Montrose GLPIPLs, in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the Chicago Park District (CPD), and volunteers from Chicago Ornithological Society (COS), Chicago Audubon Society (CAS), and Illinois Ornithological Society (IOS), who have named the pair Monty and Rose.

Working with the Chicago Park District, the USFWS and IDNR have roped off

the nesting area and will place a cage around the nest to protect the eggs from predators and other dangers. Rose and Monty can freely move in and out of the protective cage, and they take turns sitting on the nest while the other parent feeds on the beach. This is their 2nd nest

this year. The first nest of four eggs quickly became threatened by rising water, at which point the eggs were removed for captive-rearing on June 12.

Monty and Rose share Montrose Beach with the many other birds who use it year round, for nesting and breeding in the summer, and/or as an important stopping off point during Spring and Fall migrations.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Keep out of the USFWS roped-off area
- Keep pets on leashes and out of “No Pets” area on the beach
- Report any pets off-leash or in restricted areas to local monitors or local law enforcement
- Clean up any garbage left on the beach
- Don’t feed gulls, crows, or other wild animals
- Fly kites and kite-boards away from plover nesting areas
- Report illegal fireworks at the beach to local monitors or local law enforcement



LEARN MORE

- Great Lakes Piping Plover Research: <https://www.greatlakespipingplover.org>
- Chicago Ornithological Society: Plover Watch blog at chicagobirder.org
- Like and follow the Facebook pages of the volunteer organizations for current news and pictures:
 - Chicago Ornithological Society
 - Chicago Audubon Society
 - Illinois Ornithological Society

Thanks to all of the organizations for their partnership in helping this special pair of Great Lakes Piping Plovers!

