

**Final Report to
NS Department of Natural Resources
Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF)**

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Project Title: Piping Plover Poster Contest

Project Goal:

The long-term goal is to improve beach habitat quality for Endangered Piping Plovers and other beach-dependent plant and wildlife in southern Nova Scotia. The short-term goal is to build appreciation among youth for beach habitat conservation, engage youth in beach stewardship within their communities, and build better understanding among community members about how to be better stewards.

Project Objectives:

1. Increase awareness among youth and educators in southern Nova Scotia about the importance of beaches as wildlife habitat, particularly for Endangered Piping Plovers, and the value of beaches as special places for local communities.
2. Encourage and involve youth in being stewardship leaders in their communities.
3. Promote best stewardship practices in coastal communities near high priority beaches for Piping Plovers using youth artwork.

Work Completed:

1. Educated students and teachers at elementary schools in Shelburne, Queens, Lunenburg and Halifax Counties through interactive presentations.

In total 524 elementary students, 75% of whom were in grades two-three, and 30 staff participated in Piping Plover presentations at 10 schools (see Addendum). Taking about 45 minutes each, the presentations included a slide demonstration (developed with the Cape Sable Important Bird Area) and discussion with the students. Key messages about the value of beaches, how to be good stewards, and why southern Nova Scotia Beaches are important were reinforced with slides and questions to the students, and used as guidelines for the creation of artwork for the Poster Contest.

2. Engaged students and staff in the creation of artwork with clear stewardship messages, and in stewardship outreach in their communities.

Seven of the 10 schools participated in the Poster Contest (225 students and 11 staff). Students created 8.5 x 11 pictures representing the key messages learned during the presentations. Once completed, a board member of the Shelburne County Arts Council and two DNR Conservation Officers judged the entries and the posters were created showing selected pictures. One poster was created for Shelburne County (printed by DNR) and one for Queens and Lunenburg Counties (printed by Seeblick Printing). Each participating school received several copies to be distributed by students and teachers in

their local communities. To further support bird and habitat education in classrooms, we provided field guides to birds of Nova Scotia to each teacher who participated in the contest.

3. Displayed posters at community events and libraries throughout the summer.

Throughout the summer, the posters were part of the Bird Studies Canada Piping Plover display that was either at local libraries (Shelburne, Barrington), the Crescent Beach Centre in Lockeport, or at special events including Lockeport July 1, Shelburne Founders Days, Nova Scotia Nature Trust's Passport to Protection in Pleasant River, and the Cherry Hill Fun Run. Through these activities, the public was engaged in learning about the Poster Contest, and students who participated were excited to see the artwork of their friends displayed. The electronic poster formats were sent to some of the schools so that they could print additional copies if they wished and share students' work on their school web site. We shared information and results of the poster contest and highlighted HCF's support to thousands of people through Bird Studies Canada's electronic newsletter, "Latest News" (see page 3 of attached newsletter).

Achievements and Lessons Learned:

An adaptable, high quality presentation was created that was engaging, educational, and uncomplicated. Without exception, teachers responded positively to the content and the students' enthusiasm was evident by the number of ideas they shared and questions they asked.

The two posters are attractive and include the key stewardship messages. The schools that received posters were extremely happy with them and each winning student received a small copy to take home. Schools appreciated receiving PDF copies. We also received notes and comments of appreciation for the field guides from teachers.

All teachers were keen to participate again in 2010 and some commented that they had been disappointed that there was no contest in 2008. One of the schools that received the presentation but did not participate in the contest will take part in 2010 as will another school that was not able to take part at all in 2009.

Scheduling presentations earlier in the spring will help relieve end of school year schedule conflicts and make it possible for more schools to take part. Since teachers are very busy at the end of the school year, finishing the program before June would facilitate the distribution of posters in the communities.

Acknowledgements:

We are grateful to NS DNR's Habitat Conservation Fund for supporting this project. We would like to extend our thanks to all the students and staff who participated in the poster contest. Pat Hudson, executive director of Cape Sable Important Bird Area, helped coordinate and deliver presentations in the Barrington area. We thank Wayne Burt (NS DNR) for printing the large format posters. In addition, we'd like to acknowledge the Peter MacDonald (NS DNR) for his continued support and commitment to Piping Plovers and youth education on the South Shore.

Addendum: Schools reached through the 2009 Piping Plover Poster Contest

Participating School	County	Town	Closest Active Piping Plover Breeding Beach	Grade Level	Number Students	Number Staff
Evelyn Richardson Memorial Elementary	Shelburne	Woods Harbour	Stoney Island & Daniels Head (Cape Sable Isl.)	2-3	30	2
Clarks Harbour Elementary	Shelburne	Clark's Harbour		2-3	38	2
Forest Ridge Academy	Shelburne	Barrington		2-3	50	3
Hillcrest Academy	Shelburne	Barrington		2-3	40	2
Lockeport Elementary	Shelburne	Lockeport	Lockeport	2-3	20	1
Dr. John Wickwire Elementary	Queens	Liverpool	Ragged Harbour	2-3	140	7
North Queens Elementary	Queens	Caledonia		2-3	40	2
Mill Village Consolidated	Queens	Mill Village	Cherry Hill	2-3	18	1
Petite Riviere Elementary	Lunenburg	Petite Riviere		2-3	18	1
Atlantic View School	Halifax	W. Lawrencetown	Conrads	1-6	130	10
Total					524	31