



State Agencies Partner Beyond their Borders to Help Recover the Atlantic Coast Population of the Piping Plover

The piping plover is an iconic part of U.S. coastal imagery. A migratory bird, the piping plover winters in the Southeastern U.S. and Caribbean and migrates along the eastern U.S. coastline to Canada and the Northern U.S. to breed. It is listed as either endangered or threatened in the U.S. states where it is found and has seen past population decreases due to human disturbance, predation, habitat loss and is susceptible to extreme weather events. With a total estimated global population of 8,024 individuals the population is now on the rise. Helping the piping plover population recover is a priority for both Southern Wings as well as our partners working in the Bahamas.

Southern Wings has been a proud contributor to National Audubon Society's efforts in the Bahamas from 2013-2020, where up to 50% of the piping plover population winters. This is a key area of intervention, as the wintering grounds and migratory routes are the largest areas of population loss for piping plovers.

Managing migratory bird species requires year-round conservation action in critical sites in order to achieve recovery.

National Audubon Society and the Bahamas National Trust, with the support of Southern Wings, has had success in addressing piping plover conservation in the Bahamas. In 2006, they conducted the first survey in the Bahamas. It highlighted three key areas for piping plovers— Berry Island (about 7% of wintering population), Andros/Joulter Cays (about 10-15% of the population), and Long Island (1-2% of the population). With high concentration of piping plovers, protection of these areas could have a significant impact on the overall health of the global population.

Audubon has taken several approaches to protecting piping plovers in the Bahamas. Using science and data, monitoring (actions supported by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission) made it possible to **designate 92,000 acres of the Joulter Cays a national park**. This not only protects piping plovers, but other shorebird species as well. In 2018 recommendations were made to the Bahamian Government for new protections, including the Berry Islands IBA (7% piping plover population). Banding and MOTUS tower data have been critical investments for conservation actions on the ground.



Banding, Motus tracking and resight work has clearly demonstrate connectivity to the Atlantic coast, which can be seen at <http://arcq.is/1QY4yir>

Through research and monitoring we now believe that at least half of the Atlantic population of the endangered Piping Plover winter in the Bahamas

Vision: Healthy and sustainable populations of migratory birds throughout the Western Hemisphere that are enjoyed for generations to come.

Mission: Encourage and facilitate state fish and wildlife agency participation in conservation projects for shared priority birds in Mexico, Central America, South American and the Caribbean

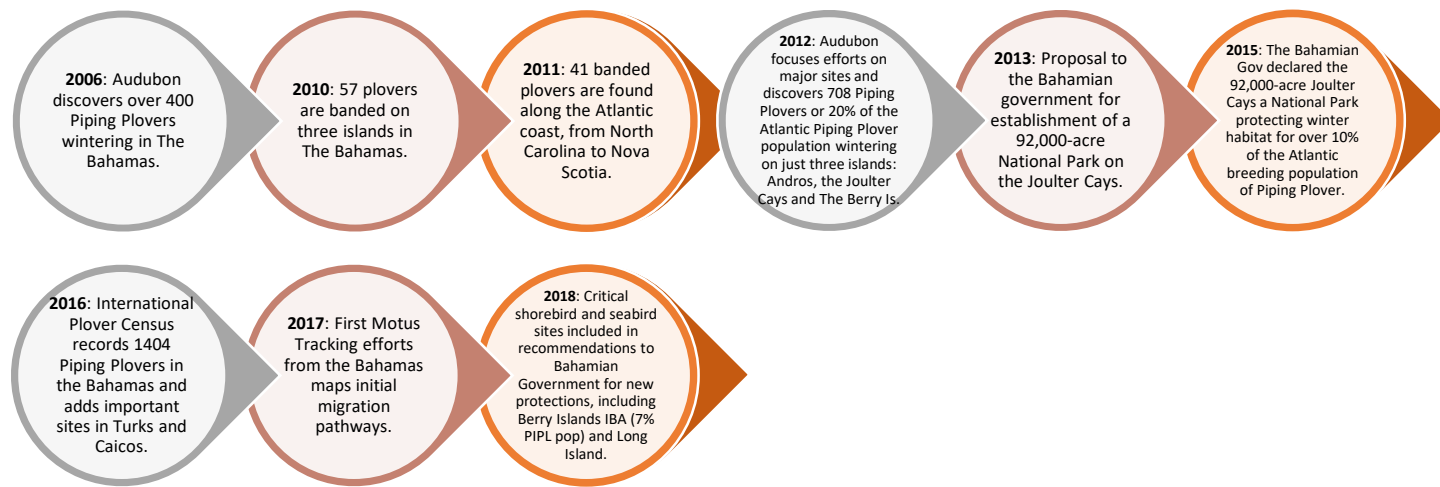
Piping Plover



This high return for investment in conservation also works hand in hand with local communities. Community members see benefits from sustainable fishing and ecological tourism from these protections. Additionally, educational programs across the country have engaged children in learning about the importance of biodiversity and engaged them in shore-ecosystems. Involving the local community aids in protecting wintering sites that are not protected by the government and helps ensure long-term success of conservation actions.

Project Goal:
Protect 20-25% of the wintering population in the Bahamas by 2020.

Timeline



Where do we go from here?

There is still a critical need for funding to protect piping plovers in the Bahamas. Contact Southern Wings for the latest information on the project and to learn how you can complement your in-state investment in piping plovers by working with partners in vital wintering ground locations.



Partners on the Ground

National Audubon Society
Bahamas National Trust: A Non-Governmental Organizations with a government mandate to protect and manage parks and other ecological concerns.

State Fish and Wildlife Agency Partners

Northeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries