

Wilson

Table 1. Piping Plover sightings at IPL settling ponds in 1983.

Date	Details	Observers
May 12	2 adults	WRS, BLW
May 19	2 adults	WRS, BLW
May 22	2 adults	L & BP
May 24	1 adult	L & BP
✓ June 2	2 adults	BLW
June 4	2 adults	L, BP
June 6	Territory 1: 2 adults, 1 on nest; 2+ eggs	BLW
June 8	Territory 1: 2 adults, 1 on nest	BP
June 9	Territory 1: adult on nest	BP, TB
	Territory 2: 2 adults	
June 11	Territory 1: 2 adults, 4 eggs, 3rd bird dead	L & BP
	Territory 2: adult on nest	
June 16	Territory 1: 2 adults, neither near nest; eggs in nest	
	Territory 2: 1 adult, not on nest	L & BP
June 19	Territory 1: 4 eggs, no adults	L & BP
	Territory 2: 1 adult	
June 22	Territory 2: 1 adult on nest while a 2nd adult chases a 3rd away from 2 downy young. 4th adult in territory 1.	
June 23	3 adults in territory 2; 1 with the 3 downy young, another chasing away Killdeer	L & BP
June 24	Territory 2: 2 adults, 3 downy young	BLW
July 1	3 adults, 3 young	L & BP
July 2	5 adults, 2 young	WRS
July 4	9 adults, 2 young	L & BP
July 7	12 adults outside Territory 2	TB, BP
✓ July 7	17 plover	WRS
July 8	10 adults, 1 young	BLW
July 9	7 adults, 1 young	L & BP
July 12	7 adults, 1 young	L & BP
July 12	none in midafternoon	BLW
July 14	1 adult, 1 young	L & BP
July 19	1 adult	L & BP
July 21	1 adult, 1 young	BH
July 23	1 plover	J, SK
July 30	no birds	BLW

6, BP
July 5 13 adults, 3 young

Observers: Tanya Bray, Bob Howe, Loren & Babs Padelford,
W Ross Silcock, Barbara L Wilson, Jim & Sandy Kovanda.

Piping Plover Nests in Pottawatomie County.--The Piping Plover has always been a rare breeder in Iowa. Except for one 18th century record at Grinnell (Cooke, 1888, cited in Brown, 1971), all nesting records are in the Missouri River area, and the earliest is from 1940. (The plovers may have bred in western Iowa before 1940, as the western part of the state was not heavily birded until recently.) However, subsequent channelization of the Missouri River allowed vegetation to cover what once were sand bars and beaches and the plover's habitat disappeared. Dinsmore (1981) lists the Piping Plover as an extirpated breeder in Iowa, with the last nest record at Desoto National Wildlife Refuge in 1973.

There were two 1982 sightings suggestive of breeding. A pair of Piping Plover was discovered at Louisville Oxbow Lake in Monona County June 4 - 19, but no nest could be located (Kent, 1982). Adults found at Iowa Power and Light Company settling ponds July 10 - 18 may have been migrants, but no one checked the ponds in June, so breeding can not be ruled out.

This year, two Piping Plover nests were discovered at the Iowa Power and Light Company settling ponds south of Council Bluffs, for the first Iowa breeding record in ten years. At least two adults were seen beginning May 12. The first nest, found June 6, held four eggs but was abandoned by June 16. The second nest, belonging to a different pair, was found June 11 and hatched three young on June 22. At least one of these chicks survived long enough to fledge, as it was last seen on

July 21. See the accompanying table for details of Piping Plover sightings at the ponds.

The plover habitat consisted of bottom ash from the boilers at the power plant. This substance, like sand or gravel in consistency, is mixed with water and pumped as a slurry into the ponds, where it settles out to form a beach. It is bare of vegetation except for a row of small willows down the center which apparently formed the boundary between the two plover territories and may have provided shade for the downy young. Both nests were located ~~out on the bare bottom ash, far~~^{far} from any cover, as is typical for Piping Plover.

Fall migrant Piping Plovers were first observed at the settling ponds July 4 (7 birds). They peaked at 15 on July 7, and by July 14 all had gone. They were concentrated to the south of the willows, separate from the remaining breeding pair and their young, which were usually found on the north side. We hypothesized that this influx of plovers resulted from increased flows from Gavins Point dam, which would flood the sand bars below it. That could not have been the case, however, as the water release was kept low until July 6.

Birders seeing Piping Plovers at the ponds in future years are requested to send sightings to the authors. We also request that birders stay on the road and keep summer visits short to minimize disturbances to the birds. --Barbara L. Wilson (Rt. 1, Box 41, Hastings, IA⁵¹⁵⁴⁰) and Loren and Babs Padelford. (1405 Little John Road, Bellevue, NE⁶⁸⁰⁰⁵).

LITERATURE CITED

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