

[From Spring 2000]

Here We Go Again!

In anticipation of the upcoming plover season at Chincoteague NWR, staff is making plans to continue the monitoring effort of last year's successful season. A formal review of the CNWR plover program is under way, and barring any major roadblocks, the refuge will continue the plover program similar to last year.

Like last year, the biology staff will conduct intensive monitoring of nesting plovers in the Overwash area adjacent to the Off Road Vehicle Zone (ORV). Five interns and a seasonal Biological Technician will be brought on board to help monitor the Overwash area for around sixteen hours each day. The nesting area will be posted with new informational signs and roped off to help prevent disturbance to the nesting birds. Also like last year, if plover chicks cross within 50 meters of the closed area border, the ORV zone will be closed to vehicles for two days in the area where the plovers were observed.

Unlike last year, pedestrians will be allowed to walk through the intertidal zone during vehicle closures as long as the plover chicks are not feeding at the waters edge. It may sound a little confusing, but this effort will allow the continued use of the area by the public while protecting the plover chicks. The results of this years monitoring effort may have a significant impact on public use and management of piping plovers here at CNWR. It is often difficult to strike a balance between public use and protection of a threatened species like the piping plover, but with this plan in place, we feel we can accomplish both.

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