

[From Fall 2003]

## **2003 One of the Most Successful Piping Plover Seasons Ever!**

The 2003 piping plover nesting season has concluded. An estimated 72 pairs of piping plovers nested on Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (CNWR). Nesting areas included Assateague and Assawoman Islands and parts of Cedar and Metompkin Islands. A total of 147 chicks fledged, or reached 25 days in age and could sustain flight, for a productivity ratio of 2.04 chicks per nesting pair. This is the Refuge's most successful fledge rate ever and a vast improvement from 1.25 chicks fledged per pair in 2002. It is anticipated that the Refuge will have the highest productivity for nesting plovers of any refuge on the Atlantic Coast!

Refuge staff continued intense monitoring and predator control within the piping plover nesting areas. Six interns and refuge staff participated in monitoring the Refuge's piping plover population from sunrise to sunset seven days a week this year. A Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' biologist monitored nesting activity and provided fledging success data for Metompkin and Cedar Islands. This year's successful results were well worth all of the effort.

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