

[From Fall 1995]

### **Piping Plover Nesting Disappointing**

The piping plover nesting season has concluded for this year. The total number of chicks fledged on the Assateague Island portion of the refuge this season was twenty two, 58% less than last year, for a fledge rate of 0.79 fledged/pair. The lower islands fared better with 10 pairs of plovers on Assawoman Island producing 10 fledglings (1.0 fledged/pair). NASA Wallops Island's three pair of plovers fledged a total of six chicks (2.0 fledged/pair) and Metompkin Island had the highest fledge rate, with nine chicks from four pair, or 2.25 chicks/pair. The refuge overall fledgling success was 1.04 fledged/pair, down from the 1994 season of 1.66 fledged/pair.

Of particular interest this year were the two pair of plovers which successfully nested on the overwash area adjacent to the off road vehicle zone. The two pair fledged a total of four chicks. The volunteers who helped refuge staff monitor the broods, prior to their fledging, deserve a special thanks. Their efforts assured the broods were not disturbed while feeding along the Cove shoreline.

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