



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Assateague Island  
National Seashore

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## Assateague Island National Seashore

## News Release

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For Immediate Release

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### PROTECTION OF BEACH BIRDS BEGINS AT ASSATEAGUE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

**Berlin, MD.**-The waterfowl have moved from the Eastern Shore back to the Arctic for their breeding season, while southern birds, such as Piping Plovers, arrive on Delmarva for their nesting needs. Assateague Island is once again hosting an influx of the threatened Piping Plovers, a small rare shorebird, which will be raising young along the beach this summer.

“Piping plovers that use the few remaining breeding sites along Delmarva are dependent on weather to make or break the raising of chicks each year”, reports Trish Kicklighter, Superintendent of Assateague Island National Seashore. Winter storms that create shorebird habitat have eluded the peninsula in recent years. A late flooding event last spring and a relatively dry summer resulted in a poor breeding season for plovers in 2008. While the plovers wait for better weather to increase breeding success, it is important that the Park Service and its visitors do everything they can to improve the Plover’s chance at nesting success.

As necessary, plover breeding beaches on Assateague Island will be temporarily closed to visitor access in order to increase the chance that chicks survive until the fall migration. The interior portions of Assateague Island, between the Ocean City Inlet and the Assateague State campground will be closed to visitors from mid April until the fall migration occurs, usually in late August. Closed areas will be marked with signs, while the ocean beach, inlet and some bay landing sites will remain open.

A few plovers are also expected to raise young along portions of the over-sand vehicle corridor, the 12 mile long recreational beach. Beach drivers should expect to find portions of that area closed while plovers are actively breeding. Park staff will monitor the area daily and open areas to public use as soon as the birds vacate the beach.

The Seashore’s mission calls for a balance between resource preservation and recreational opportunities. Piping plovers represent some of the more fragile resources on the beach that need protection. It is hoped that visitors appreciate all that Assateague has to offer and the work that the National Park Service staff does to satisfy both nature’s needs and visitor expectations.



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Assateague is one of the few publicly accessible coastal environments in the densely populated northeastern United States where people experience clean water and beaches, unspoiled bays and marshlands, natural sounds, quiet, clear night skies, and solitude. Superintendent Kicklighter encourages everyone to visit the Seashore and learn more about the Piping Plover while enjoying the Island's pristine resources.

For more information on Assateague Island National Seashore, visit [www.nps.gov/asis/](http://www.nps.gov/asis/).

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