

2019 Wallops Island Protected Species Monitoring Report

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Wallops Flight Facility
Wallops Island, Virginia



Introduction

NASA Goddard Space Flight Center's Wallops Flight Facility (WFF) is submitting this report summarizing the Calendar Year (CY) 2019 protected species monitoring program. This report was prepared in conformance with the terms and conditions associated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Project # 2015-F-3317, Biological Opinion for WFF Proposed and Ongoing Operations and Shoreline Restoration/Infrastructure Protection Program.

WFF owns and manages Wallops Island in Accomack County, Virginia. The site of WFF's launch range, Wallops Island is a barrier island providing habitat to a variety of wildlife including state and federally listed protected species. In early 2010, the WFF Environmental Office developed the Protected Species Monitoring Plan (Plan) to monitor listed species on Wallops Island. The Plan was submitted to the USFWS Gloucester, Virginia Field Office for review and was revised to incorporate comments from the Field Office and USFWS personnel at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (CNWR). Monitoring efforts described in the Plan began in March of 2010. The Environmental Office annually reviews the Plan and incorporates any new developments or Terms and Conditions.

Scope of Monitoring

WFF monitored the following species:

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) Federally Listed Threatened

American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) Virginia Species of Greatest Conservation Need, Tier II

Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*) Virginia State Listed Endangered

Colonial Nesting Waterbirds (e.g., terns) USFWS requested

Red Knot (*Caladris canutus rufa*) Federally Listed Threatened

Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) Federally Listed Threatened

Seabeach Amaranth (*Amaranthus pumilus*) Federally Listed Threatened - One survey for seabeach amaranth was conducted in August on the entire length of the beach.

Results

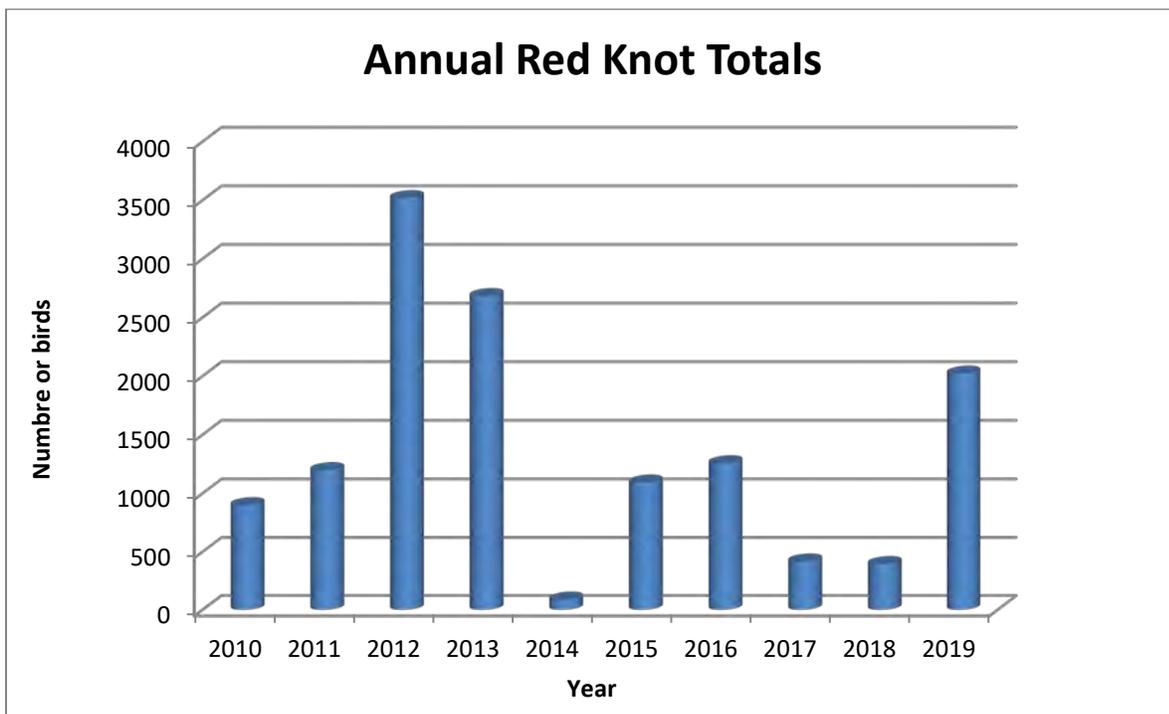
Piping plover

PAIRS	CHICKS FLEDGED	PRODUCTIVITY RATE
4	5	1.25

Four piping plover nests were monitored on Wallops Island. The first four nests all failed due to predation. Three of the original four pair of plovers renested. From the three renests, five chicks successfully fledged. Nesting locations for 2019 were mere yards away from 2018 nesting locations. Figures 1 and 2, below depict piping plover nest locations on Wallops Island in 2019 and since monitoring began in 2010.

Red Knot

The graph below illustrates the presence of red knots on the north end of Wallops Island during their May spring migrations since 2010. The 2019 season total was 2,020 birds including 3 banded birds.



American Oystercatcher

Two territories with one pair per territory were monitored, but no eggs were found. Oystercatcher nests have a 0% success rate on Wallops Island since monitoring began in 2010.

Colonial Nesting Waterbirds

No colonial nesting waterbird nesting activity has been observed on Wallops Island since monitoring began in 2010.

Seabeach Amaranth

No evidence of seabeach amaranth has been observed on Wallops Island since monitoring began in 2010.

Loggerhead Sea Turtle

No sea turtle activity for any species was observed in 2019.

Wilson's Plover

No Wilson's Plover nesting activity was observed in 2019.

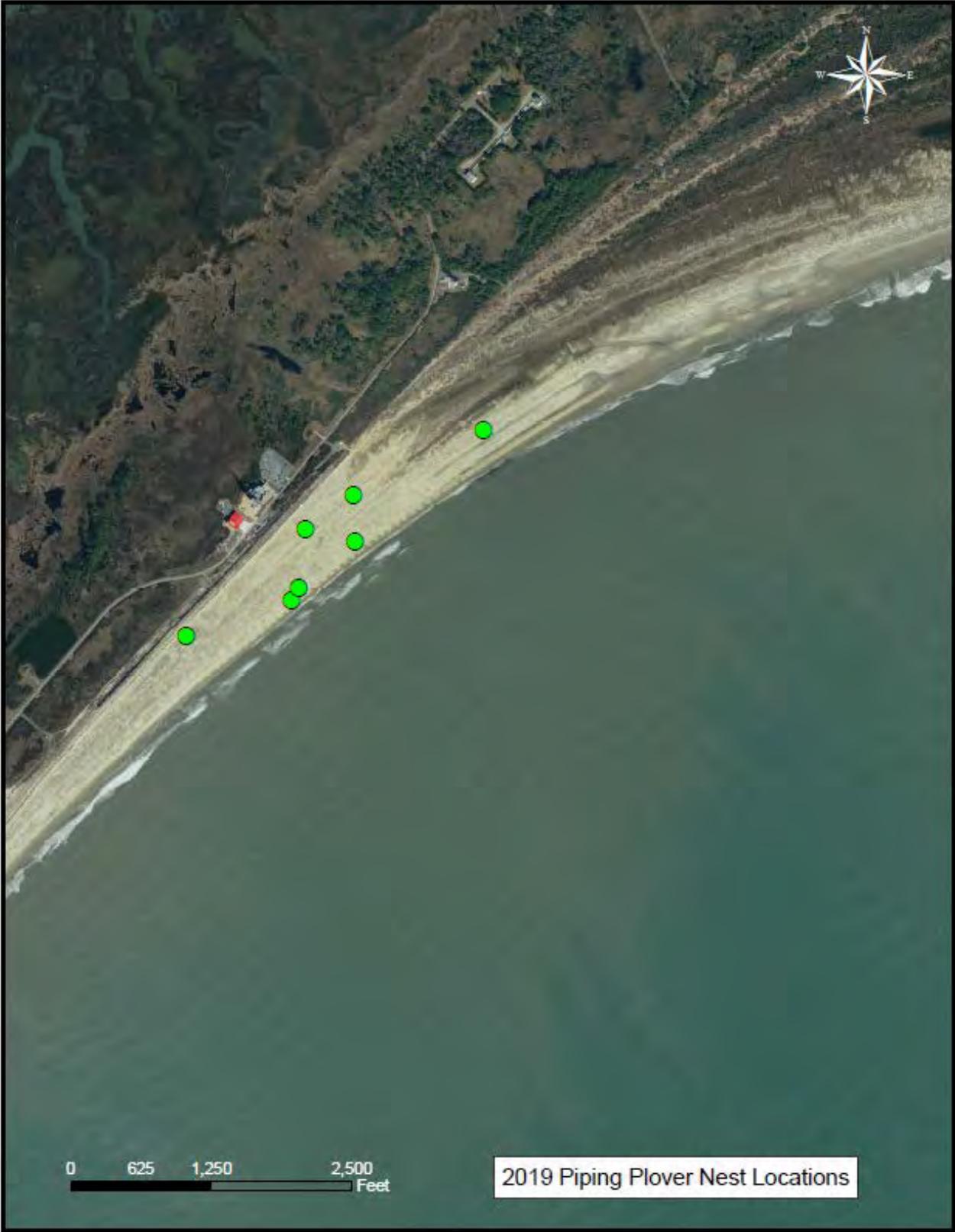


Figure 1: 2019 Piping Plover Nest Locations



Figure 2: Piping Plover Nest Locations 2007 - 2019