

Parents Move Pine Point Chicks to Old Orchard Beach!

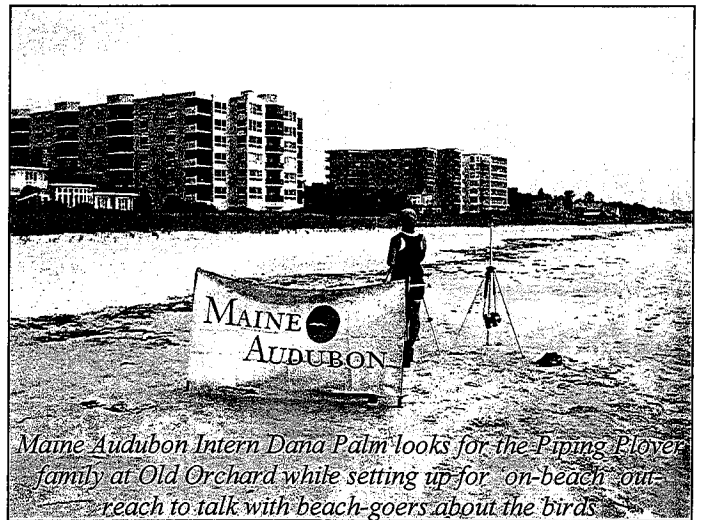
Old Orchard Beach has been a draw for tourists for hundreds of years. It is one of Maine's busiest beaches, complete with a pier and ocean-side amusement park, receiving hundreds of thousands of visitors every summer. In addition to attracting tourists, the seven miles of beach provide potential nesting habitat and sections of the beach are listed as Essential Habitat under Maine's Endangered Species Act.

Piping Plovers successfully raised two young at Old Orchard Beach in 2007, and nested again in both 2008 and 2009 without success.

This summer, a pair of plovers nested on **Pine Point** in Scarborough just north of Old Orchard. About a week after the nest hatched, crews in Old Orchard noticed adults tending young plover chicks in the lower dune during their routine cleaning of trash barrels. Liz Copeland of Extreme Cleaning alerted others of the surprising observation, and Public Works staff quickly discovered the brood during their beach raking.

The crews were carrying out responsibilities outlined in the Beach Management Agreement (see sidebar) and were driving slowly looking for plover chicks, even though birds had not been observed nesting there all summer. The brood from Pine Point had left the nesting area and traveled over three-quarters of a mile south along the beach to raise their young at a relatively quiet spot on Old Orchard.

The plover brood stayed in Old Orchard until the one remaining chick fledged in late July. The plovers on Old Orchard became minor celebrities as they were highlighted in the Portland Press Herald and other local newspapers. The town of Old Orchard Beach completely embraced these feathered visitors--not only did they continue to carry out protective measures outlined in the Beach Management Agreement, but the town posted information about the presence of the endangered birds on their website and asked people to keep their distance to minimize disturbance of the birds. As Maine's recovery



efforts continue and more birds appear on beaches where they have been absent for years, we hope all communities are as welcoming and supportive as Old Orchard Beach!

Beach Management Agreements

What do the towns of Wells, Ogunquit, Old Orchard Beach, and Scarborough have in common besides nesting plovers? These four communities and the Bureau of Parks and Lands have negotiated and signed Piping Plover Beach Management Agreements with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Maine Audubon. The purpose of Piping Plover Beach Management Agreements is to provide landowners and municipalities with guidelines for beach management that will allow recreational use of their beach and at the same time prevent potential harm or "take" of Piping Plover adults, chicks, or eggs. Specific guidelines regarding beach cleaning, placement and daily pickup of trash barrels, non-emergency vehicle use on the beach, and recreational activities such as beach parties, kite flying, parasailing, and fireworks are described in the agreement. We would like to extend our thanks and recognition to these four communities for cooperating with us on these Beach Management Agreements – we are seeing an increased number of Piping Plovers on beaches with such agreements and believe they are playing a major role in helping to protect and recover this endangered species in Maine.