

# Protecting Piping Plovers



## Engage and Reflect

Watch *Virtual Vitamin Z - Zoo Educational Lesson: Saving Piping Plovers*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMqu6O8gVkg>



## Skills

- Communicating



## NGSS Science and Engineering Practices

- Asking questions and defining problems



## Experience

- Time varies
- 1 or more people

Animal care staff at the Detroit Zoological Society monitor Great Lakes piping plover nests during breeding season. If they find nests with eggs that have been abandoned, they collect the eggs and care for them. Adults abandon nests for many reasons, they could be killed by a predator, an unleashed dog may scare them off or a storm may cause them to seek shelter elsewhere. By warning beach-goers that birds are nesting on the shores, many nests could be better protected. You can help by designing a sign to alert people that shorebirds are nesting.



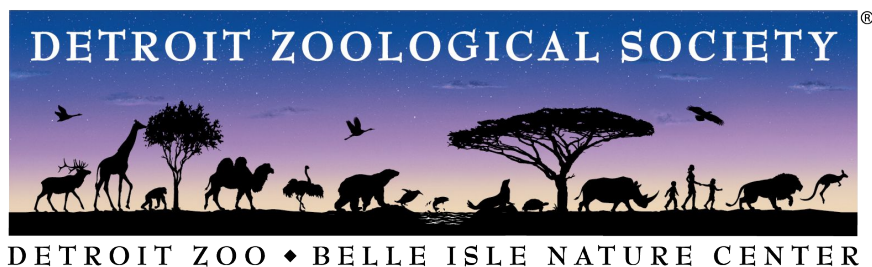
## Celebrating and Saving Wildlife

The Detroit Zoological Society staff care for the eggs they collect, and the hatchlings, until they are ready to migrate south. These efforts have led to more than 230 Great Lakes piping plovers being raised and released back into the wild population.



## Take Action

Next time you visit a beach, especially in northern Michigan, take care where you step and keep any companion animals with you and on a leash. Shorebirds' nests blend into the sand really well and could be accidentally crushed or the parents scared off if people get too close.



# Protecting Piper Plovers

## Tools

Paper/Drawing materials

-or-

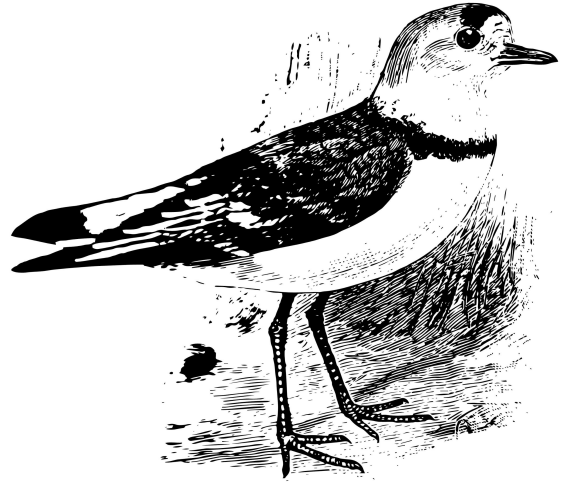
Computer

*1 or more people*

## Directions

### Make a Sign

- Shorebirds' nests blend into the sand and are hard to spot. Beachgoers need to be warned what to look for and how they could accidentally scare away adult birds guarding nests or destroy a nest.
- Think about what you would say to someone before they walked on the beach, keep it short and concise.
- How could you catch someone's attention and get them to read the sign you create?
- What pictures or drawings could you include to share your message?
- Share your sign with us by emailing it to [education@dzs.org](mailto:education@dzs.org), we may be able to use some designs to post on piping plover beaches!



Notes - For more information about Piping plovers, read our blog at:

<https://detroitzoblog.org/2017/10/06/notes-from-the-field-tiny-shorebirds-get-new-chance-at-survival/>