

**IMPORTANT BIRD
AREAS OF CANADA**



**LES ZONES IMPORTANTES
POUR LA CONSERVATION
DES OISEAUX AU CANADA**

POINTE À BOULEAU IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

**Tracadie-Sheila,
New Brunswick, Canada**

Conservation Concerns and Measures



October 2000



A Natural Legacy 2000 program • Un programme de La nature en héritage 2000

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1 Introduction

The Pointe à Bouleau Important Bird Area (IBA) supports a nationally significant population of the endangered Piping Plover. An average of 6 pairs have used this island over the last five years. The Pointe à Bouleau IBA is a 3.5 km sandspit that is 500m wide, situated on the northeastern coast of New Brunswick near Tracadie-Sheila. The low-lying sand dune system is broken by several major breaches with extensive wash-overs that often cover parts of the 'Île au Cheval' saltmarsh.

In 1985, the Piping Plover was declared endangered federally. Increased beach visitation and all-terrain vehicles (ATV) threaten the survival of Piping Plovers in Canada. Vehicles can crush eggs and young. Human disturbance reduces chick survival and may cause adults to divert energy away from chick rearing, foraging, and brooding. Although Point à Bouleau receives no vehicle traffic and limited human disturbance, the potential for increased human disturbance is an increasing possibility. Measures need to be taken to ensure that the birds and people can both use the site without negative impacts to the birds (Bourgeois 1999-2000).

The Pointe à Bouleau IBA is part of a network of sites that has been identified through national and international criteria as being significant for certain bird populations. The role of the Maritime Important Bird Areas Program, which commenced in 1999, is to provide interested groups and organizations with tools to protect, conserve, or monitor sites of importance to birds that are identified as Important Bird Areas under the national program (please refer to Section 6.2 for more information). The main objective of the program is to provide tools and ideas for protecting bird species and their habitats. The program promotes conservation, encourages action, carries out education, and helps groups to develop their own approaches to bird conservation at sites which they are interested

in. IBA conservation plans (documents that outline conservation concerns and measures at a site) are written with and for the major stakeholders.

The lead group at the site, the Piper Project / Projet siffleur (a special program of the New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists) has had an effective Guardian Program at this site for the last 5 years. This program aims at reducing disturbance to the birds through the installation of symbolic fences and education of beach users.

When a channel was dug to connect two rivers on either side of this island, a Roundtable composed of government and non-government people was established to monitor the impact this project might have on the nesting Piping Plovers, Common Terns, and the surrounding ecosystem. Out of this process, an Environmental Protection Plan was developed to minimise impacts from the new channel (Roy Consultants Group 1998).

The goal of this conservation plan is to highlight this site as one in need of protection and as a site that is nationally important to the conservation of Piping Plover in North America. This document will increase the profile of the site and point out specific management activities that are needed to ensure the survival of this species in the area. This plan complements the recovery actions listed for the endangered Piping Plover as outlined in the Revised Canadian Piping Plover Recovery Plan (Goossen 2000).

Conservation measures are recommended to help ensure the long-term protection of the Pointe à Bouleau IBA. Some of these measures include:

1. To continue education programs in schools and the Coastal Guardian program on the beach.
2. To continue to work with the Roundtable towards the implementation of the Environmental Protection Plan.
3. To maintain contact with the private landowner; and carry out a title search with the possibility of purchasing the dune.
4. To encourage the construction of an eco-centre to promote the protection of plovers and the dune, and to promote sustainability.

2 IBA Site Information

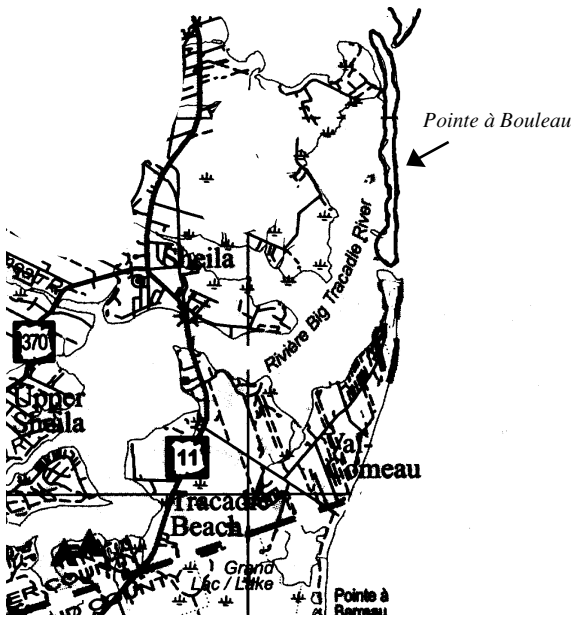
IBA site identification number: CANB028

2.1 Site Description

The Pointe à Bouleau IBA is a 3.5 km sandspit that is 500m wide, situated on the northeastern coast of New Brunswick near Tracadie-Sheila, New Brunswick. This barrier beach has two swift flowing channels: to the north, the Tracadie gully, and to the south, the Val Comeau gully. Part of a newly created channel (in 1999) runs parallel to the Pointe à Bouleau sandspit. The new channel uses the Val Comeau gully to access the sea, which is located at the southern end of the sandspit. The low-lying sand dune is broken by several major breaches with extensive wash-overs, which function as ideal plover habitat. These wash-overs cover parts of the saltmarsh.

The community of Tracadie-Sheila has wharves on two separate river systems. Access to sea by fishers from both rivers has traditionally been challenged by the dynamic nature of the barrier beach system, as established gullies fill in with sand. Since 1964, continuous effort was placed in the dredging of the Tracadie and Val Comeau gullies (Roy Consultants Group 1997). A breakwater was built at the Val Comeau gully to stabilise the adjacent embankments in 1995. During the 1999 winter season, a channel was dredged through the McLaughlin Lagoon and a 1 km long canal was cut through a prominent piece of land extending out to the barrier island at Pointe à Bouleau.

2.2 Map of the Area



2.3 IBA Species Information

Pointe à Bouleau supports a nationally significant population of the endangered Piping Plover. During the 1996 International Piping Plover census, 14 birds were recorded, which represented about 3.3% of the Atlantic Canada Piping Plover population. For the 11-year period, between 1987 to 1997, an average of 13.4 adult Piping Plovers was found at this site. To meet threshold requirements (minimum numbers of Piping Plover needed to qualify as an IBA), four Piping Plover have to be present at the site consistently over a five-year period. The Pointe à Bouleau sand dune has one of the highest numbers of Piping Plovers found on the Acadian Peninsula (in relation to its size). 12 % of the Acadian Peninsula's population resides on this dune based on 1999 figures (for more information on Piping Plovers, please refer to Section 6.1).

Table 1. Piping Plover data for Pointe à Bouleau, 1979 to 2000

Year	No of birds
1979	12
1987	11
1988	18
1989	14
1990	17
1991	13
1992	12
1993	13
1994	12
1995	12
1996	14
1997	12
1998	12
1999	12
2000	12

(Based on Bourgeois, 1999-2000)

2.4 Other Elements of High Conservation Value

The Pointe à Bouleau area stands out due to its relatively wild nature so close to the town of Tracadie-Sheila. Species diversity is excellent (see Section 6.7), and the site is representative of coastal ecosystems of the northeastern shore of New Brunswick.

Beachgrass (*Ammophila breviligulata*) and Sea-Lyme Grass (*Elymus mollis*) dominate the vegetated dune, in association with Beach-Pea (*Lathyrus japonicus*), and Scotch Lovage (*Ligusticum scoticum*). Breaches, dredge piles, and other relatively exposed areas are sparsely vegetated with Beach Wormwood (*Artemisia stelleriana*) and Sea Rocket (*Cakile edentula*). The beach is not accessible to vehicles.

The saltmarsh behind the dune is an excellent example of a good-sized marsh characteristic for the northeastern shore. This marsh, known as the 'Île au Cheval' saltmarsh, borders

approximately half the dune and covers a surface of 0.54 km² (Roy Consultants Group 1997). Behind the saltmarsh are other rich and diverse habitats composed of Eelgrass communities and mudflats. In spring through to the fall, nesting and migrating birds use the various habitats. Cordgrasses (*Spartina alterniflora* and *Spartina patens*) are found in the marsh mixed with rushes (*Juncus sp.*). In addition, other characteristic flora such as Sea Lavender (*Limonium carolinianum*), Seaside Goldenrod (*Solidago sempervirens*), and Seaside Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*) can be found. The Île au Cheval marsh has been identified as a potential site for the provincially endangered and nationally vulnerable Gulf of St Lawrence Aster (*Aster laurentianus*), which has been located in a nearby coastal marsh (Bourgeois, 1999-2000).

Over 3000 birds of 46 species were observed in the Pointe à Bouleau area during a 1999 bird survey of the lagoon, marsh, and beach. Many of these were seabirds or water obligate birds. Interesting sightings included Bonaparte's Gulls in the estuary of the Petite Rivière de Tracadie and Black-crowned Night Herons near the southern end of the Île au Cheval saltmarsh. During spring migration, Brant also feed in the McLaughlin Lagoon and the saltmarsh. Great Blue Herons feed in the lagoon throughout the summer. Willets probably nest in the southern part of the Île au Cheval saltmarsh, a rare species for the Acadian Peninsula.

Shorebirds visit the saltmarsh and the adjacent mudflats that provide rich feeding ground during migration. Species such as Semipalmated Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover, White-rumped Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstones, Whimbrels, Willets, and other shorebirds can be observed. Various species of waterfowl, such as teals, mergansers, and geese use the area. Ospreys regularly feed in the area (a complete list can be found in the appendix in Section 6.7).

The shallow Eelgrass lagoon is used by an abundant number of non-commercial fish species as well as some commercial fish (Roy Consultants Group 1997). Eelgrass beds function as nurseries and feeding areas for flounder, stickleback, mummichogs, and other fish.

2.5 Land Ownership and Use

The beach is mainly privately owned, except for the northern and southern ends of the dune, which were bought by the federal government (Fisheries and Oceans) for depositing dredge spoils, and building a breakwater. The saltmarsh has unclear ownership at this time. The provincial government has indicated that the adjacent mudflats are within their jurisdiction.

The beach used to be quarried for sand. In the 1960's, a causeway was built to gain access to the island. During the first part of the last century, the saltmarsh was used for grazing of horses and cattle. The former gully that is situated today in the middle section of the dune was filled in with old car bodies in the mid-sixties. A new channel was then dug which is the present-day Val Comeau channel.

Public Works Canada has used the north and south portions of the dune to deposit dredge spoils. Channels tend to fill in very quickly along the coast, and they have to be dredged frequently to allow access for the fishing boats.

The main use of the island today is for recreational purposes and for conservation and research work carried out by the Piper Project.

During the 1999 winter season, a channel was dredged through the McLaughlin Lagoon and a 1 km long canal was cut through a prominent piece of land extending out to the barrier island at Pointe à Bouleau. The link between the two rivers provides the boats docked at the Tracadie-Sheila wharf with access to the ocean through the Val Comeau gully. The passage also

provides a safe navigational route for pleasure boaters. It also makes access to the beach by boat easier for people.

Some commercial clamming occurs on the lagoon side of the island (Bourgeois 1999-2000).

3 Conservation Concerns

Throughout its range, the major threats to Piping Plover are recreational activities. Increased beach visitation by people and all terrain vehicles threatens the survival of Piping Plovers (Goossen et. al. 2000). All-terrain vehicles can crush eggs and young. Flemming et. al. (1988) and Strauss (1990) clearly demonstrated that increased human disturbance to plover chicks reduces their survival and may cause adults to divert energy away from chick-rearing, foraging, and brooding.

Since the development of the new channel, vehicle access is impossible. However, increased boat traffic may result in more people visiting the dune. Unchecked development adjacent to the site such as campgrounds and restaurants may increase the number of people wanting to visit the dune. Development pressures may push people to request a bridge access to the beach. Unchecked eco-tourism activities such as kayaks, sea-does, etc., might increase disturbance on the dune. Predators such as gulls and foxes can take the occasional egg or young. Human garbage left on the beach, especially near plover breeding sites, can increase predation.

4 Conservation History

The Piper Project and its employees have consistently monitored Pointe à Bouleau since 1988. Surveys have been undertaken on the beach itself and the adjacent mainland to compile species lists. A Coastal Guardian Program was active in 1995, and from 1997 to 2000. The program was co-ordinated by the Piper Project. The area has been surveyed on a yearly basis for Piping Plovers since 1987 (Bourgeois, 1999). The Coastal Guardian Program grew out of a need in all three Maritime Provinces to address the high level of human disturbance near Piping Plover breeding sites. A clear success can be noted in the fledging success at Pointe à Bouleau because of the Guardian Program.

Table 2 *Fledging success and activities at Point à Bouleau*

Year	Pairs	Fledging success*	Management measures
1989	6	1.17	Monitoring program
1990	8	1.63	Monitoring program
1991	6	1.67	Monitoring program
1992	6	1.5	Monitoring program
1993	6	0.83	Monitoring program
1994	6	1.5	Monitoring program
1995	6	2.67	Coastal Protection Program
1996	6	not observed	Monitoring program
1997	6	1.8	Coastal Protection Program
1998	6	2	Coastal Protection Program
1999	6	2.3	Coastal Protection Program
2000	6	2.2	Coastal Protection Program

**Young are considered fledged when they are 20 days or older.*

In 1998, 1999 and 2000 small numbers of Piping Plover were banded in co-operation with the Canadian Wildlife Service.

In 1991, the idea of developing a nature centre on the mainland adjacent to the Pointe à Bouleau dune was first proposed (Arbour et Assoc. 1991). A development plan for the mainland has been written, outlining the following mandate: to educate people about the ecology of the two rivers' ecosystem and to ensure protection and monitoring of the Piping Plover on the Pointe à Bouleau dune (SenPAq Consultants et. al. 1999).

Pointe à Bouleau receives some recreational beach use during the summer months. Nesting Piping Plovers are sensitive to disturbance and such recreational activities can result in nest abandonment and reduced productivity. During the winter of 1999, a channel was dredged to link the two rivers up. The 'Two Rivers Link Channel Project' is part of a larger tourism strategy for the Tracadie-Sheila region (SenPAq Consultants 1999). As required under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, HRDC, assisted by the 'Corporation du Développement des Deux Rivières de Tracadie Inc.' (CDDRT), a comprehensive environmental assessment report on the Two Rivers Link Channel Project was developed. One of the conditions under of the approval by the Minister responsible for the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act was to develop an environmental monitoring and protection plan for migratory birds, especially the Piping Plover and the endangered Gulf of St. Lawrence Aster. A plan was put in place in May 1999 to meet these requirements. This plan includes the following points:

1. A survey of Pointe à Bouleau and Val Comeau to locate and map the provincially endangered and nationally vulnerable Gulf of St. Lawrence Aster (*Aster laurentianus*).

2. Monitoring and restoration of the historical population of Common Terns to the dune.

3. Monitoring and protection of the Piping Plover.

4. Carry out population surveys of other migratory species. (Roy Consultants Group 1998).

A nature centre was to be constructed on the mainland to educate people using the site (Roy Consultants Group. 1998). The project is still expected to go ahead within a year or two. The mandate of the centre would be to promote the protection of the area while at the same time ensuring long-term employment benefits and economic spin-offs.

5 Conservation Measures

Piping Plover can be considered as an indicator species for the health of our coastal ecosystems. Their sensitivity to human disturbance during their breeding cycle points to the fragility of our coasts. A lot of work has gone into the recovery of this endangered bird all across North America and successes have been reported from the U.S. and some in the Maritimes. Work to date has also shown that the recovery of this species is possible when people can agree to share the beach in a non-destructive manner.

Objective 1 **To continue yearly monitoring of species and fledging success.**

Monitoring can give a clear indication how well a species is doing. It also helps to explain and understand the dynamics of the population. Most of the Atlantic Provinces undertake surveys and a certain degree of monitoring. Fledging success is an excellent indicator of the productivity of a species. For Piping Plover, it is estimated that 1.5 young raised and fledged per pair is needed to keep the population stable (Goossen et. al. 2000). Work carried out on the Acadian Peninsula has shown that fledging success is almost double on breeding sites with little disturbance or with guardian protection (Piper Project 1999).

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Yearly surveys and monitoring.	On-going, Piper Project
2. Monitor fledging success.	On-going, Piper Project
3. Participate in International Census.	2001, Piper Project, Club de naturalistes de la Péninsule acadienne (CNPA)

Objective 2 **To continue banding of Piping Plovers.**

It is difficult to understand the dynamics of population movements and survival of young without adequate information of their movements, survival rates, and their wintering areas. CWS is presently undertaking banding of Piping Plovers in Atlantic Canada and at Pointe à Bouleau. Banding should be re-assessed.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Banding adults and young.	On-going, CWS
2. Re-assess banding	CWS, Piper Project

Objective 3 **To carry out research in the wintering grounds.**

We have a fragmented understanding of where birds that breed in Atlantic Canada winter. In addition, we do not know all the threats that the species faces in the south and that could endanger their survival in their wintering habitat. Presently the Canadian Wildlife Service (Francois Shaffer, Québec CWS) is undertaking banding and research in Cuba. Continued research and expanding the wintering studies to other areas will give biologists a clearer indication about what actually happens there.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Wintering areas & banding.	On-going, CWS, US Fish & Wildlife Service, CWS & BirdLife International (Ian Davidson)
2. Encourage biologists to report wintering areas.	On-going, CWS, US Fish & Wildlife Service, CWS & BirdLife International (Ian Davidson)
3. Lobby CWS to encourage research on where wintering grounds actually are.	On-going, CWS, US Fish & Wildlife Service, CWS & BirdLife International (Ian Davidson)
4. An International Piping Plover committee should be formed to apply for funding under international trade agreements to do plover censuses, education and research in wintering areas.	As soon as possible, CWS, US Fish & Wildlife Service, CWS & BirdLife International (Ian Davidson)

Objective 4 **To carry out education in schools of the Acadian Peninsula.**

Education is a long-term approach to achieve attitude change and a change in behaviour. Through awareness raising activities and presentations, students learn about this endangered bird and thus become more willing to accept and support protection or conservation measures.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Organize school presentations.	On-going, Piper Project
2. Encourage N.B. Department of Education to include PP in curriculum.	On-going, Piper Project, other naturalist organizations in N.B.
3. Link local Acadian schools with francophone schools in Louisiana & other Acadian schools in U.S.	2001/2002 CNF, IBA Program, Piper Project & schools

Objective 5 **To carry out education of the public and beach users.**

It is important to educate adults as well, particularly people that use beaches. Most visitors do not know about the vulnerability of Piping Plovers to disturbance. Once awareness is raised through education in schools and the communities, people usually co-operate very well and respect low-lying fencing (symbolic fencing) and signs. This type of education is very time-consuming and intensive, but it is on-site and can incorporate showing the birds to the visitors.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Continue meetings and collaboration with the Roundtable members.	On-going, Piper Project, HRDC, CDDRT, Town of Tracadie-Sheila
2. Potential developers need to be made aware of the presence of Piping Plover.	On-going, Piper Project, Roundtable members

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Carry out the Coastal Guardian Program.	On-going, Piper Project
2. Distribute Pamphlets.	On-going, Piper Project
3. Posters	On-going, Piper Project
4. On-site education (Coastal Guardian Program).	On-going, Piper Project

Objective 6 **To continue the Roundtable Partnership.**

The Roundtable Partnership was created as a result of the Environmental Impact Assessment for the dredging of the Two Rivers Link Channel. This group advises on the environmental monitoring aspect of the channel project and supports the Coastal Guardian Program at the site. Members include the Town of Tracadie-Sheila, Corporation du Développement des deux Rivières Tracadie Inc. (CDDRT), Human Resources and Development Canada (HRDC), provincial departments such as Crown Lands and Fish and Wildlife (Department of Natural Resources and Energy, DNR&E), Roy Consultants Group, and others.

Objective 7 **To enforce existing acts.**

Using law enforcement is seen as a last resort if people fail to listen and cause serious harm to the birds. Only a few conflicts have occurred in the past. The Piping Plover is listed and protected under the New Brunswick Endangered Species Act. Fines can be up to \$ 100, 000 for a first offence and \$250,000 for a second offence.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Ensure a policy is in place to be able to react to infractions to the N.B. Endangered Species Act.	On-going,, DNR&E Fredericton
2. Ensure the Migratory Birds Act is enforced when necessary	On-going,, CWS

Objective 8 **To officially designate the site as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) site.**

A designation of Pointe à Bouleau as a WHSRN site has no legal protection, and requires permission from the landowner. Such a designation can raise the profile of the area considerably, on a national and international level.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Continue contact with the landowner.	On-going, Piper Project, Roundtable
2. Explore the possibilities of a designation with the landowner.	2001, Piper Project, Roundtable

Objective 9 **To continue the Coastal Guardian Program.**

The successes of the Guardian Program have clearly shown that an active protection program with zones and signs together with education of beach users can increase fledging success of Piping Plovers (Goossen et. al. 2000). This program is crucial to the survival of the species. It not only protects the birds during breeding, it is also non-invasive and non-confrontational. Guardians can either be trained volunteers or trained hired staff.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Secure funding for a co-ordinator and the program.	On-going, Piper Project, HRDC, CDDRT
2. Ensure Guardians are present at key times.	On-going, Piper Project
3. Co-ordinate efforts throughout province.	On-going, DNR&E, CWS, Piper Project

Objective 10 **To maintain landowner contact.**

Stewardship possibilities or acquisition of the property should be explored as options.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Carry out a title search to determine ownership & surface area.	Done, (DNR&E)
2. Independent Land Assessment.	Done, Nature Conservancy of Canada, CWS
3. Land survey of the dune.	2001, N.B. DNR&E,
4. Possible purchase of sand dune.	2001?, Nature Conservancy of Canada,

Objective 11 **To support eco-tourism initiatives that do not negatively affect the nesting birds.**

Encourage the development of the eco-centre, as a tool for ensuring that the mainland is developed in a way that does not affect negatively on the habitats of the island. At the same time, guidelines need to be established to ensure that no landings on the beach during nesting season.

Actions	Target date, Key contact
1. Encourage and support the construction of the eco-center.	Spring 2001, Piper Project, Town of Tracadie-Sheila, CDDRT
2. Monitor eco-tourism projects in the area.	On-going, Piper Project, Roundtable
3. Develop guidelines with eco-tourism operators.	Long-term, Piper Project, Town Tracadie-Sheila, Roundtable

6 Background Information

6.1 IBA Species Account

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

Description:

The Piping Plover is a sand-coloured, sparrow-sized shorebird that nests and feeds along coastal sand and gravel beaches. The adult has yellow-orange legs, a black band across the forehead from eye to eye, and a black ring around the neck. It runs in short starts and stops. When still, the Piping Plover blends extremely well with open, sandy beach habitats. The bird's name is derived from its call notes, plaintive bell-like whistles that are often heard before the birds are seen.

In Eastern Canada, Piping Plovers breed exclusively on beaches along the seashore. They prefer flat beach areas with sand and cobble substrate above the high tide line. Areas used by Piping Plovers generally have little vegetation, however occasionally nests will be built in Marram Grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*).

Distribution and abundance:

The species is only found in North America. The plovers migrate south in late summer to winter in Cuba, the Bahamas, Mexico, and the United States along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts. Little is known about Piping Plovers in their wintering grounds.

Life cycle:

Piping Plover return to their nesting areas from mid-April to early May. They establish nesting territories and form pairs. The pair makes a depression in the sand, which they may line with small, white pieces of shell.

Usually four eggs are laid. After about 28 days of incubation by both adults, the young hatch. Within hours, the downy young leave the nest and follow their parents in search of marine worms, shrimp-like creatures, and insects, which they find in the sand. Both the eggs and young blend in so well with their surroundings that they might go unnoticed. When predators or other intruders come close, the young squat

Table 1 Piping Plover Census Results 1989 to 2000

Province	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
New Brunswick	178	177	203	132	150	145	160	146	139	159	186	172
Newfoundland	8	10	7	15	14	17	24	27	35	27	32	27
Nova Scotia	120	120	113	54	50	82	71	79	96	76	78	64
Prince Edward Is	90	90	110	70	50	60	47	66	60	81	87	87
Quebec*	70	78	76	88	92	96	106	104	90	72	88	76
Saint P&M			4			2		6	2	5	4	2
Total	466	475	513	359	356	402	408	429	422	420	475	428

(Adapted from: Amirault, D. 1999 Annual Report: Status of the Piping Plover in Eastern Canada. Canadian Wildlife Service, Sackville, New Brunswick. Please note that data for years other than the International Census Years of 1991 and 1996 may be incomplete.)

motionless on the sand while the parents attempt to attract the attention of the intruders, often by feigning a broken wing. Young are able to fly in about 30 days. Plovers often gather in-groups on undisturbed beaches before their southward migration. By the end of July the first Piping Plovers, usually adults, will leave for their wintering areas.

Feeding:

Piping Plover feed on minuscule crustaceans, shore flies, and marine worms that they find along the sandy beach and the mud and sandflats.

6.2 The IBA Program

The IBA program is an international initiative co-ordinated by BirdLife International, a partnership of member-based organizations in over 100 countries seeking to identify and conserve sites important to all bird species worldwide. The Canadian BirdLife co-partners are the Canadian Nature Federation (CNF) and Bird Studies Canada (BSC). In the Maritime Provinces the Prince Edward Island Natural History Society, the New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists, and the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists sponsor the Important Bird Areas Program.

Through the protection of birds and habitats, they also promote the conservation of the world's biodiversity. There are currently IBA programs in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas.

The Canadian IBA program is part of the Americas IBA program which includes the United States, Mexico, and 17 countries in Central and South America.

The goals of the Canadian IBA program are to:

- ▶ Identify a network of sites that conserve the natural diversity of Canadian bird species and are critical to the long-term viability of naturally occurring bird populations;
- ▶ Determine the type of protection or stewardship required for each site, and ensure the conservation of sites through partnerships of local stakeholders who develop and implement appropriate on-the-ground conservation plans; and
- ▶ Establish ongoing local involvement in site protection and monitoring.

IBAs are identified under one or more of the following internationally agreed-upon categories:

- 1) Sites regularly holding significant numbers of an endangered, threatened, or vulnerable species.
- 2) Sites regularly holding an endemic species, or species with restricted ranges.
- 3) Sites regularly holding an assemblage of species largely restricted to a biome.
- 4) Sites where birds concentrate in significant numbers when breeding, in winter, or during migration

6.3 Information on the Lead Organizations of the IBA Program

Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island

The Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island is a naturalist group that is particularly interested in natural history issues and conservation. They record natural events on the island, maintain a bird check list, offer bird identification courses, field trips, conduct bird counts and record unusual or rare sightings.

New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists

The New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists (NBFN) is a non-profit organization formed in 1972 to encourage the understanding of nature and the environment, and to focus concern for the natural heritage of New Brunswick. The NBFN represents the concerns of twelve local naturalist clubs throughout the province. That represents over eight thousand members (website: <http://personal.nbnet.nb.ca/maryspt/NBFN.html>).

Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists

The Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists (FNSN) furthers communication and co-operation among naturalists in Nova Scotia. The Federation promotes enjoyment and understanding, encourages the establishment of protected natural areas, defends the integrity of existing sanctuaries, promotes funding and research, and encourages and engages in the protection of endangered and threatened species and their habitats (website: <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Environment/FNSN/>).

BirdLife International:

A pioneer in its field, BirdLife International (BL) is the first non-government organisation dedicated to promoting world-wide interest in

and concern for the conservation of all birds and the special contribution they make to global biodiversity. BirdLife operates as a worldwide partnership with one or, in Canada's case, two lead organizations in each country. These organizations provide a link to on-the-ground conservation projects that involve local people with local expertise and knowledge. Since 1993, lead organizations from more than 40 countries have become full BirdLife partners.

For further information about the BirdLife International Program, check the following web site: <http://www.birdlife.net/>.

The Canadian Important Bird Areas Program has been undertaken by a partnership of two lead agencies. The Canadian Nature Federation and Bird Studies Canada are the Canadian BirdLife International partners.

The Canadian Nature Federation (CNF):

The Canadian Nature Federation is a national conservation organisation with a mission to be Canada's voice for the protection of nature, its diversity, and the processes that sustain it. The CNF represents the naturalist community and works closely with provincial, territorial and local affiliated naturalists organizations, to directly reach 100,000 Canadians. The strength of this grassroots naturalists' network allows working effectively and knowledgeably on national conservation issues that affect a diversity of ecosystems and human populations in Canada. The CNF also works in partnership with other environmental organizations, government and industry, wherever possible. The approach is open and co-operative while remaining firm in the goal of developing ecologically sound solutions to conservation problems. CNF's website is: <http://www.cnf.ca>.

Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) and Bird Studies Canada (BSC):

Founded in 1960 to monitor bird migration, the Long Point Bird Observatory was the first observatory of its type in North America and is still the only one with year-round staff in Canada. LPBO is committed to involving Canadians in the conservation of birds and their habitats. LPBO conducts its national and international programs through Bird Studies Canada.

Since its founding, LPBO's program has grown and developed considerably. Its principle focus is still bird population monitoring and research on bird migration but the Observatory now runs many other programs as well, including education and province-, nation- and continent-wide surveys of bird populations. Amongst these are the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, Project FeederWatch and educational and site survey work in Latin America, Ivory Coast, and Malaysia. In addition, LPBO conducts research into other aspects of natural history and applied conservation management. The Observatory has a special interest in promoting the participation of amateurs and volunteers in research, believing that many people working together can accomplish a great deal more than could a few professionals working alone.

These philosophies made the CNF and LPBO/BSC the logical choice to become BirdLife International's Canadian partners in September 1993.

6.4 Information on Groups and Organizations

A partnership Roundtable was formed last spring to ensure adequate protection measures are put in place in the context of the Two Rivers Link project.

Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) As the responsible authority for the Two Rivers Link project they have to ensure that the Environmental Protection and Monitoring Plan is carried out. They have a commitment to the protection and monitoring of Piping Plover and other species on the island.

The Canadian Wildlife Service is responsible for the conservation and management of migratory birds, including the endangered Piping Plover. They are also responsible for issuing permits to band migratory birds and staff are participating in a Piping Plover banding project in Atlantic Canada and Québec (website:<http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/hww-fap/endoranger/table.html>).

N.B. Dept. of Natural Resources & Energy

The Piping Plover is listed as a provincially endangered species. The N.B. Endangered Species Act protects the birds and their habitat. The department is interested in this site as it is identified as a core Piping Plover site for New Brunswick.

Fisheries and Oceans, Canada

Fisheries and Oceans are involved in monitoring the impact of the Two Rivers Link project. They also own at least one piece of land on the island where dredge spoils have been deposited in the past.

Administration Portuaire de Tracadie

Private group who manages the wharves.

Town of Tracadie-Sheila

The Town of Tracadie-Sheila is very interested in tourism development for the region. They are committed to the development of the Nature centre.

Piper Project

The Piper Project is a special program of the New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists. Its objectives are to protect and educate the public about coastal ecosystems, especially Piping

Plover habitat. The Piper Project has been completing annual Piping Plover surveys at this site for twelve years. These surveys have led to the identification of Pointe à Bouleau as a 'Core Site' in the New Brunswick Piping Plover Atlas. Core sites are those areas 'that need to be protected to ensure the continued survival and recovery of Piping Plovers in New Brunswick' (Amirault et. al. 1997). The Piper Project undertakes the following projects: Coastal Guardian Project, Monitoring and protection programs, conservation and education, wildlife inventories, and eco-tourism projects (web site: www.francohone.net/pluvier).

Corporation du lien des deux Rivières de Tracadie Inc (CDDRT)

The proponent the 'Corporation du lien des deux Rivières de Tracadie Inc.' first proposed a passageway for boats between the Pointe à Bouleau dune and the mainland in 1996. This project is part of a larger tourism strategy that includes a waterfront development (already completed), a farmer's market (already finished), a cottage cluster on the west side of the Tracadie Bay (almost finished), the improvement of the Val Comeau Provincial Park, a Fisheries Interpretation Centre, a Day Adventure -Centre in the down town area and an Outdoor Recreation Centre along the upper Big Tracadie River (SenPAq Consultants et. al. 1999).

Club de Naturalistes de la Péninsule acadienne

The 'Club de Naturalistes de la Péninsule acadienne' is a naturalist club with close to 100 members. The club promotes appreciation, understanding, and conservation of our natural history and is very interested in the protection of our coastal zone and its inhabitants (website: <http://www.francohone.net/cnpa>).

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6.7 Appendix

List of bird species observed at Pointe à Bouleau

American Robin	Merle d'Amérique	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
American Crow	Corneille d'Amérique	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
American Bittern	Butor d'Amérique	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>
American Wigeon	Canard d'Amérique	<i>Anas americana</i>
American Black Duck	Canard noir	<i>Anas rubripes</i>
Bank Swallow	Hirondelle de rivage	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Belted Kingfisher	Martin-pêcheur d'Amérique	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>
Black-bellied Plover	Pluvier argenté	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Black-capped Chickadee	Mésange à tête noire	<i>Parus atricapillus</i>
Black-crowned Night Heron	Bihoreau gris	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Bonaparte's Gull	Mouette de Bonaparte	<i>Larus philadelphia</i>
Brant	Bernache cravant	<i>Branta bernicla</i>
Common Loon	Plongeon huard	<i>Gavia immer</i>
Common Snipe	Bécassine des marais	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
Common Tern	Sterne Pierregarrin	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Double-crested Cormorant	Cormoran à aigrettes	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>
Great Black-backed Gull	Goéland marin	<i>Larus marinus</i>
Great Blue Heron	Grand Héron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Greater Yellowlegs	Grand Chevalier	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>
Greater Scaup	Fuligule milouinan	<i>Aythya marila</i>
Herring Gull	Goéland argenté	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Horned Lark	Alouette hausse-col	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>
Hudsonian Godwit	Barge hudsonienne	<i>Limosa haemastica</i>
Killdeer	Pluvier kildir	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>
Least Sandpiper	Bécasseau minuscule	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>
Lesser Yellowlegs	Petit Chevalier	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>
Merlin	Faucon émerillon	<i>Falco columbarius</i>
Northern Pintail	Canard pilet	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Northern Harrier	Busard Saint-Martin	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
Northern Gannet	Fou de bassan	<i>Morus bassanus</i>
Northern Shoveler	Canard souchet	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Osprey	Balbuzard pêcheur	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Piping Plover	Pluvier siffleur	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>
Red Knot	Bécasseau maubèche	<i>Calidris canutus</i>
Red-breasted Merganser	Harle huppé	<i>Mergus serrator</i>
Ring-billed Gull	Goéland à bec cerclé	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	Tournepierrière à collier	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Sanderling	Bécasseau sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
Savannah Sparrow	Bruant des prés	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>
Semipalmated Plover	Pluvier semipalmé	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Bécasseau semipalmé	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>
Short-billed Dowitcher	Bécassin roux	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>
Spotted Sandpiper	Chevalier grivelé	<i>Actitis macularia</i>
Whimbrel	Courlis corlieu	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
White-rumped Sandpiper	Bécasseau à croupion blanc	<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>
Willet	Chevalier semipalmé	<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>

