

BREEDING RECORD FOR THE SEMIPALMATED PLOVER AT OCEAN SHORES, WASHINGTON

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On 23 June 1973, at Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor County, Washington, Eugene Hunn and I observed an adult Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) in breeding plumage calling incessantly and diving at us as close as 15 feet. The bird seemed to be defending a territory in a flat sandy area covered with pebbles and broken seashells, surrounded by sand dunes, and situated near the tip of a mile-long sand spit extending from the southern tip of the Ocean Shores peninsula into the mouth of Grays Harbor. We searched for eggs and young but found none.

On 1 July 1973, I returned to the same location and found two adult Semipalmated Plovers defending the same territory. In the center of the flat sandy area stood one downy young Semipalmated Plover, which immediately ran into the dune grass as I approached. I watched the young plover for approximately 15 seconds with 10 power binoculars from 30 feet. Within one hour after this sighting, I made a rough sketch of the young plover from memory. Joseph R. Jehl Jr. has examined this sketch and agreed with the identification. Eighty yards from this first pair of adult Semipalmated Plovers, I observed another pair of adults defending a similar territory, but I could not find eggs or young.

On 7 July 1973, I returned with Glen Hoge to confirm my previous findings. We observed the first pair of adults and their one downy young at the same location. We also observed the second pair of adults defending the same territory as previously, but this time we observed one downy young Semipalmated Plover there also. We estimated that the downy young of this second pair was approximately one week older than the downy young of the first pair. It would have been possible for more than one downy young per pair of adults to have been present, since the young were difficult to see amid the dune grass and the gravel. However the maximum number of young observed was two, one for each pair of adults.

Also breeding on the mile-long sand spit were approximately three pairs of Snowy Plovers (*C. alexandrinus*) and one pair of Killdeer (*C. vociferus*). The coloration of the two downy young Semipalmated Plovers precluded any possible confusion with the downy young of these other two species of breeding plovers. The brown upperparts of the downy Semipalmated Plovers distinguished them readily from pale-backed downy Snowy Plovers, which both Glen Hoge and I have seen in the area. The downy young Semipalmated Plovers also lacked a black stripe around the neck and a long downy tail characteristic of downy Killdeer (Gabrielson and Lincoln, *The Birds of Alaska*, 1959).

This is the first breeding record for the Semipalmated Plover in Washington. Larrison (*Washington Birds, Their Location and Identification*, 1968) records the Semipalmated Plover as a migrant and a non-breeding summer resident in Washington. The A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds (1957) records the southernmost breeding range in western Canada as the Queen Charlotte Islands and northwestern British Columbia. Godfrey (*Birds of Canada*, 1966) cites a breeding record for south-central interior British Columbia. An extralimital breeding record for the Semipalmated Plover for Vancouver, British Columbia in 1967 is described by Campbell (*Murrelet* 53:11-12, 1972).

In late June 1974 I returned with Glen Hoge to check the sand spit for breeding Semipalmated Plovers. Numerous dune-vehicle tracks were discovered through both previous nest sites. No Semipalmated Plovers were found.