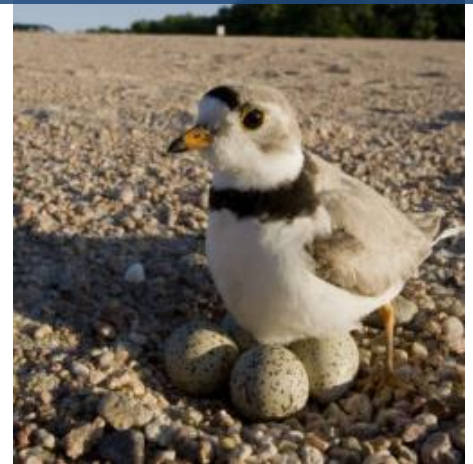


Our Neighbors on the River

We who live in the Bismarck-Mandan area have one of the greatest natural resources in the United States, the Missouri River and her numerous sand bars. The Missouri River is a great recreation area which we have the privilege to use, but we need to share this valuable resource with nature's creatures. Those creatures vary from the great bald eagle to the common carp. The point is... we are all competing for the use of the Missouri River's great resources.



There are two very special creatures that need our help in keeping their homes safe; the **Least Tern** and the **Piping Plover**. These two birds' summer homes are the un-vegetated sand bars of the Missouri River. They nest and raise their young on the sand bars; big or small.



The **Piping Plover** is a small, stocky bird that is distinctly pale, matching the beaches where it lives. They have a black band across the upper forehead and another across the upper breast. The bands are faint in the young and become faint on all piping plovers during winter months. North Dakota is the most important state in the U.S. Great Plains for the piping plover's nesting. Plover chicks are able to walk and feed within hours of hatching and feed on insects and crustaceans on the open beaches.

The **Least Tern** is the smallest member of the gull and tern family at approximately 9" in length. They are predominately gray and white, with black streaking on the head. Least terns have a forked tail and narrow pointed wings. Their young have less streaking and less of a forked tail. They feed on small fish and reside on barren river beds.

If you see these birds when you are enjoying the Missouri River this spring and summer, please give them room and respect their homes as you would your own. These creatures need our help to survive.



Thanks

for your help in protecting an important part of North Dakota's natural heritage.

This and other information can be found at:

http://www.fws.gov/northdakotafielddoffice/endspecies/species/piping_plover.htm
http://www.fws.gov/endangered/map/ESA_success_stories/ND/ND_story1/index.html
http://www.fws.gov/northdakotafielddoffice/endspecies/species/least_tern.htm

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