

Seney

National Wildlife Refuge

Whitefish Point Unit

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Partners at the Point

Recovery of the Great Lakes piping plover population is a cooperative effort by individuals, government agencies, universities and conservation organizations.

Michigan Audubon Society

Michigan Audubon Society (MAS), founded in 1904, manages nearly 4,000 acres of bird habitat statewide, including a total of 83 acres on the Whitefish Point peninsula. The mission of MAS is: Connecting birds and people for the benefit of both through conservation, education, and research programs. MAS maintains a grassroots network of 35 local chapters, with more than 2,500 members supporting efforts to broaden the understanding and appreciation of birds in Michigan. Visit michiganaudubon.org for more information.



Whimbrel
 © Skye Haas

Whitefish Point Bird Observatory

The mission of the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory (WPBO), an affiliate of Michigan Audubon, is to document the distribution and abundance of birds in the Great Lakes region, with special emphasis on migration. Research focuses on assessing the status of bird populations and movements. Data is used to increase knowledge of bird migration, encourage public awareness of birds and their environment, and to further conservation of birds and their habitats. Visit wpbo.org to learn more.



Long-eared Owl
 © Sigurd Utych

Coastal Program - Great Lakes

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program - Great Lakes provides financial and technical assistance to partners for the conservation and restoration of priority coastal fish and wildlife habitats including wetlands, shorelines, streams, and uplands.



GREAT LAKES
SHIPWRECK
 HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Whitefish Point
 Lighthouse
 © Kathy Maskus/
 Natural Solitude

Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society

The mission of the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society is to collect, preserve, study and interpret the material culture of the Great Lakes. Primary emphasis is on maritime history as it relates to the U.S. Lifesaving Service, U.S. Lighthouse Service, U.S. Coast Guard and ships and travelers who fell victim to the perils of maritime transport. Established in 1978, the Society operates the Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point, the Whitefish Point Light-Station and the Historic Weather Bureau Building in Sault Sainte Marie, MI. Visit shipwreckmuseum.com for more information.



Sharp-shinned Hawk, © Sigurd Utych



Pixie Cups
 Sara Giles, USFWS

Please Obey These Special Rules

- Daylight use only.
- Dogs allowed on a leash.
- Do not enter closed areas - these areas are meant to protect the endangered Piping Plover.
- No camping or overnight parking.
- Do not feed the wildlife.
- Fires, rock collecting, and off road vehicles, including snowmobiles, are not permitted.

After a 25-year absence, the Great Lakes population of piping plovers returned to nest on Whitefish Point in 2009. Successful in raising their young,

the plovers seem to be responding well to conservation efforts, bringing hope for this Federally-endangered species.



Indian Pipe
Sara Giles, USFWS



Sanderlings
© Laura Wong



Beach Pea
© Dawn Marsh



Dunlin
©Larry McGahey



Piping Plover
Incubating Eggs
©Roger Eriksson

Whitefish Point Unit

The Whitefish Point Unit of the Seney National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1998 with the transfer of 33 acres from the U.S. Coast Guard to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Eight acres were transferred to the Shipwreck Society and two acres to the Michigan Audubon Society. A management plan was adopted in 2002 which guides the management and development at the Point.

John Helstrom Addition

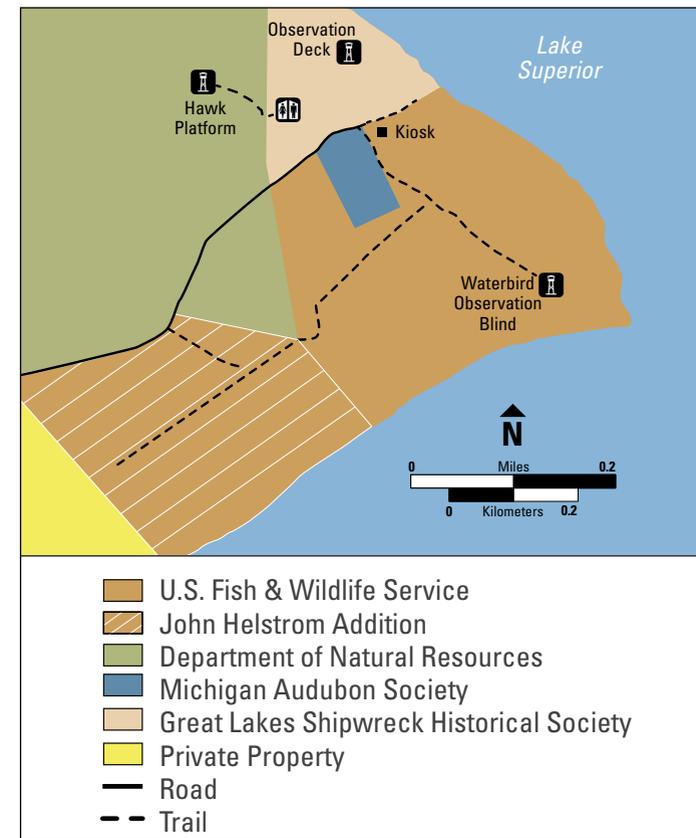
In 2012 a 20-acre parcel of land, including 1,000 feet of Lake Superior shoreline, was purchased and added to the Whitefish Point Unit. Now, protected in perpetuity, the land will serve as a breeding ground for resident wildlife including the piping plover. The purchase of the land was made possible by generous donations from the John J. Helstrom Memorial Fund and other contributors.

Important Bird Area

The Whitefish Point Unit is a stop-over for birds migrating to and from Canada. The Whitefish Point region is renowned for its concentrations of birds during migration. Each year thousands of raptors, passerines and water birds funnel through the point to cross Lake Superior. The unit's primary natural features are gravel beaches, sandy beach dunes and stunted jack pine-dominated forest.

Great Lakes Piping Plover

The Great Lakes population of the piping plover was at a perilously low level with just 12 breeding pairs in 1983. Intensive conservation efforts have helped the numbers increase slowly to 58 pairs in 2012, expanding the breeding range from Michigan into Wisconsin, Canada and Illinois.



Visitors in the months of May to August will notice that a large portion of the beach is closed due to the nesting plovers. This is to protect the well camouflaged bird and its young. Piping plovers are ground nesting birds that lay their speckled eggs in small depressions lined with rocks or shells. Although the tiny chicks are born ready to walk they cannot fly until they are about a month old. During that time the birds are vulnerable. Please help us save the plovers by respecting the closures and keeping your dog on a leash.

