

The Wrack COMMUNITY

The wrack is stuff cast ashore by the sea. Much of this once grew in the sea, like seaweeds and seagrasses. These marine castaways foster protective dunes and support a unique natural community that brings life to the beach.

Beach Wrack Life



- 1 Currents and winds transport marine plants and other floating material onto the beach.
- 2 As wrack ages, it provides for the growth of fungi and other organisms.
- 3 Small animals like insects and beach-hoppers feed on fungi growing in the wrack, as well as on the marine creatures that wash ashore.



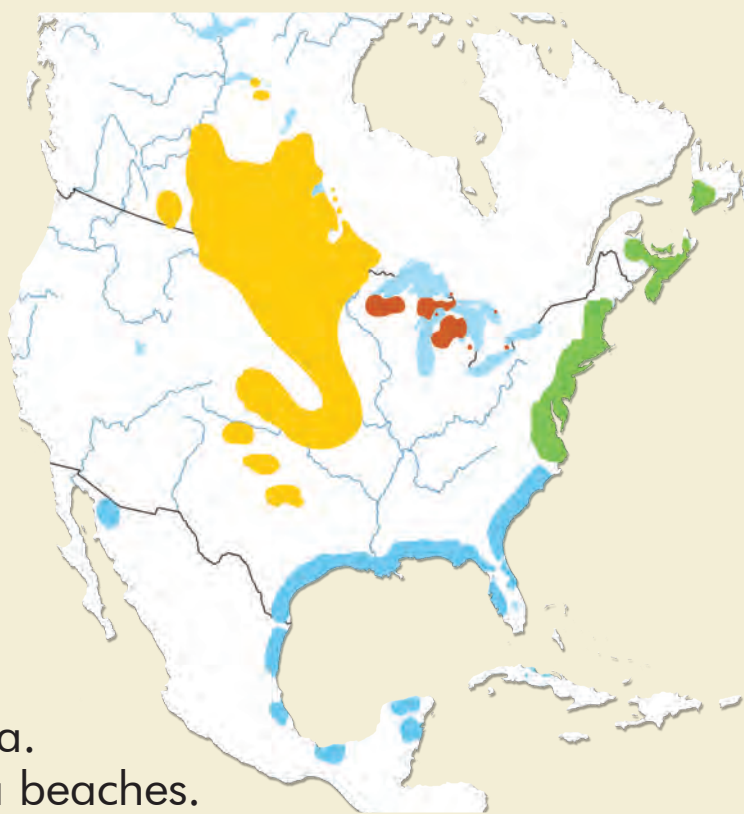
- 4 The smaller animals in the wrack provide food for shorebirds, which rely on this sustenance to fuel their long-distance migrations.



- 5 Clumps of old wrack provide wind shadows that begin to collect wind-blown sand and tumbling plant seeds on the upper beach.
- 6 Sprouting plants grow more quickly through their vulnerable period thanks to nutrients provided by the decaying wrack.
- 7 Some clumps grow into low dunes out on the upper beach. If left undisturbed, these small dunes can grow into substantial mounds capable of protecting upland property from storm erosion.

The Threatened Piping Plover

- Northern Great Plains Population
- Great Lakes Population (Endangered)
- Atlantic Coast Population
- Wintering Range (all populations)



The Piping Plover is federally protected and designated a threatened species. They nest in the northern U.S. and Canada. Many winter along Florida beaches.



Piping Plovers Need Natural Beaches

Piping Plovers are small, sand-colored birds with a white collar and orange legs. Breeding birds have a black forehead, dark breastband, and a dark orange bill with a black tip. Birds not in breeding plumage lack the dark markings on the head and breast, and can have a black bill.

Piping Plovers can be found on Florida beaches during spring and fall migrations and throughout the winter. These birds rest on the upper beach and forage for insects and worms with other shorebirds in the wrack and swash zone, and on nearby mudflats.

Let birds feed and rest



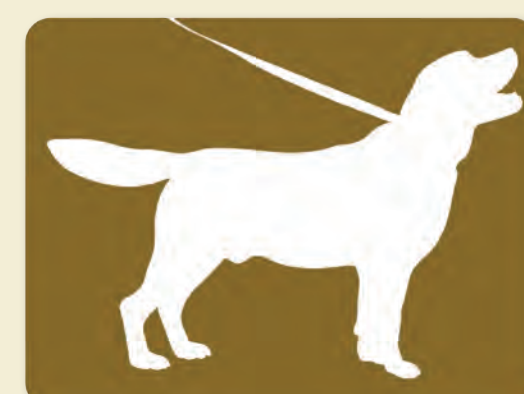
If birds take flight, you are too close. For migratory birds, feeding and resting on our beaches is key to their survival.

Respect posted nest areas



Keep out of posted areas. Disturbances to birds cause nests or entire colonies to be abandoned.

Obey pet regulations



Even leashed dogs on the beach scare birds. Frightened birds are forced to leave eggs and chicks unprotected.

Protect dune vegetation



Dune plants build and stabilize the beach, and provide cover and food for wildlife.

Pick up trash



Picking items by hand makes it unnecessary to rake the beach in ways that remove wrack and uproot sprouting plants.



Threats to the Wrack Community

Some of our efforts to "clean" the beach include the mechanized removal of wrack from the beach. Unfortunately, the barren shores left by beach cleaning and grooming machines are not hospitable to beach life. Without wrack, some of the most interesting attributes of a beach are also absent.



US Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District