

SPECIES PROFILE

Purple Sandpiper

Calidris maritima

Federal Listing: Not listed

State Listing: Not listed

Global Rank: G5

State Rank: SNA

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ELEMENT 1: DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

1.1 Habitat Description

Purple sandpipers breed in tundra and rocky shores and overwinter on coastal islands (Payne and Pierce 2002). Breeding areas include mossy areas near the shoreline and coastal barren flats with abundant insects and seeds (Payne and Pierce 2002). Wintering grounds include rocky coasts and jetties and coastal islands where crustaceans, mollusks, and other invertebrates are plentiful (Payne and Pierce 2002).

1.2 Justification

The North Atlantic coast is one of the heaviest populated areas in the United States and is undergoing rapid development. The purple sandpiper uses New Hampshire's rocky shores and islands as wintering grounds.

1.3 Protection and Regulatory Status

The purple sandpiper is protected under the Migratory Bird Act and various non-government coastal shorebird programs (Bird Conservation Regional plans, The United States Shorebird Conservation Plan, Waterbird Conservation for the Americas).

1.4 Population and Habitat Distribution

In North America, purple sandpipers breed primarily on islands in the Canadian Arctic and overwinter

on the coast from Quebec to South Carolina (Payne and Pierce 2002). In New Hampshire, the purple sandpiper winters along the rocky coastlines of Rye, Hampton, and Seabrook, and on the Isles of Shoals (New Hampshire Bird Records (NHBR)). It forages off the mainland coast from October to April, and on the Isles of Shoals as late as August (NHBR). The heaviest concentrations of wintering purple sandpipers in New Hampshire have been observed at Rye Harbor State Park, the rocks at Hampton Harbor, and the Isles of Shoals (NHBR). Population sizes are unknown because access to these areas is limited (Morrison et al. 2001). The United States Shorebird Conservation Plan (2000) estimates populations of wintering purple sandpipers in North America to be around 15,000.

1.5 Town Distribution Map

Not completed for this species.

1.6 Habitat Map

Not addressed for this species.

1.7 Sources of Information

Birds of North America, NHBR, and the United States Shorebird Conservation plan.

1.8 Extent and Quality of Data

Little is known about the status of the purple sandpiper in New Hampshire. Published information regarding North American breeding and wintering grounds is minimal, with most research taking place outside North America (Payne and Pierce 2002).

1.9 Distribution Research

- Identify and monitor important wintering areas

- Conduct surveys to estimate wintering population size
- Determine factors limiting population size and habitat use
- Coordinate research and monitoring activities with other countries that support purple sandpipers

ELEMENT 4: CONSERVATION ACTIONS

See Coastal Islands Habitat Profile.

ELEMENT 5: REFERENCES

5.1 Literature

- Brown, S., C. Hickey, and B. Harrington, editors. 2000. The United States shorebird conservation plan. Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Manomet, Massachusetts, USA.
- Morrison, R.I.G., R.E. Gill, Jr., B.A. Harrington, S. Skagen, G.W. Page, C.L. Gratto-Trevor, and S.M. Haig. 2001. Estimates of shorebird populations in North America. Occasional Paper No. 104. Canadian Wildlife Service. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- Payne, L.X., and E.P. Pierce. 2002. Purple sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*). In The Birds of North America, No 706, A. Poole and F. Gill, editors. The Birds of North America, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

5.2 Data Sources

New Hampshire Bird Records. New Hampshire Audubon, Concord, New Hampshire, USA.