

Stewardship and science: a case study of the Piping Plover and Harlequin duck recovery in Newfoundland and Labrador

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In Newfoundland and Labrador, recovery efforts for the Harlequin Duck (eastern Canadian population - Special Concern) and the Piping Plover (Atlantic population - Endangered) have been on-going since the mid 1980s. Both species continue to make population gains in Newfoundland and Labrador. However, due to the life history of each species, recovery strategies differ significantly. The Piping Plover program includes monitoring efforts, an education campaign within local schools and communities, and most recently, stewardship agreements with local land owners. Harlequin Duck recovery efforts focus more on determining population structure, as well as determining and curbing threats to the population. The primary reason for using two somewhat different approaches is based on life history differences between the species. Harlequin Duck breeding is widespread over large and generally remote areas of both Newfoundland and Labrador, overlapping few private or community lands, while wintering and moulting individuals are found along isolated sections of coastline. Piping Plovers nest on generally accessible beaches where they compete with human beach users, and winter outside the region. As a result, effective recovery of the Harlequin Duck requires a greater emphasis on science and monitoring as we continue to learn their sensitivities at various times during their life history. Piping Plover recovery necessitates a greater interaction with competing land users. To properly conserve and recover these two populations, adaptive management approaches and programs are essential.