

# Attention Birders!



## Special Mountain Plover Viewing Guidelines

### ***Why special guidelines?***

In Colorado, declining populations of mountain plover have resulted in its listing as a 'species of special concern.' Plovers are particularly sensitive to disturbance during the spring nesting season. Getting too close or flushing the birds can endanger the youth.

### **You can:**

#### ***Always watch from a distance.***

Plovers are sensitive and can be easily disturbed. Researchers have found that plovers may react to your presence from as far as ½ mile away—before you even see them! Keep at least 500ft between you and the birds. Plan to scan the prairie with binoculars and to use a 40-60 power spotting scope.

#### ***Watch from the road—you will minimize your impacts and may be more successful at finding birds.***

County roads provide ideal viewing conditions for both you and the plover. Using your vehicle as a blind, or staying in it, can actually improve your chances of observing plovers. Plovers will often tolerate the presence of vehicles and continue natural behaviors. Safety note: watch for other drivers and wildlife watchers.

*If you are hiking on the prairie and come upon a plover nest—walk away.*

Don't be tempted to stay close, take photos or examine a nest or nestlings. When adult birds are flushed, even a brief exposure to the heat of the spring sun can be deadly for eggs and chicks. Back off—let the adult return to the nesting area.

*Learn before you go.*

Learning more about the natural history, management practices and sensitivities of plovers, or any birds, can help you have a more rewarding and responsible experience.

*Avoid trespassing.*

Be sure to watch from public roads. Protect both the resource and community cooperative relationships by learning about land ownership *before* you visit.

*Postpone your prairie visit until later in the summer and reduce your impacts.*

Plover are less sensitive in summer than they are during nesting season. By the end of July or early August, Mountain Plovers are beginning to gather together in groups, preparing for migration. You'll find it easier to find them and can enjoy observing flocking behavior.

*Follow birding ethics.*

The American Birding Association (ABA) Principles of Birding Ethics provide useful guidelines for watching birds. If you participate in a guided viewing, be sure your guide follows the ABA's Birding Ethics as well. To learn more about the ABA's Ethics, go to:

<http://www.americanbirding.org/abaethics.htm>



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