

REINCUBATION OF FLOODED SNOWY PLOVER *Charadrius alexandrinus* NEST

by Ralph S. Widrig

Natural mortality of the exposed nests and precocial chicks of the Snowy Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* is often high, and renesting frequently takes place. The devotion of the parent birds of this species to their nests and young is extraordinary. On June 20, 1978, the nest of a Snowy Plover containing three eggs was found at Leadbetter Point, on Willapa Bay, Washington. The female was incubating. During the night one of the highest tides of the year flooded the nest site. On June 21 the three eggs were found near the high water mark, scattered between 5 and 10 metres from the flooded nest. Fresh plover tracks indicated an adult had located all 3 eggs and possibly attempted to incubate one of them where it lay stranded on the wet sand. Fresh plover tracks were also in and around the scrape, but no plovers could be seen. I retrieved the eggs, which were warm from the sun, and placed them back in the scrape. At this point I heard the plaintive call of a plover nearby. I walked north about 75 metres and glanced back at the nest site. The female had immediately settled on her eggs in the nest as though nothing had happened.

I returned the next morning, but the high tide during the night had again flooded the nest, which was empty. A few fresh plover tracks were at the scrape, but no adults could be seen or heard. The eggs were found 20 metres away and were cold, but the incident illustrates the tenacity which these plovers show for their nests.

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TERRITORIAL BEHAVIOUR IN AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHERS *Haematopus palliatus*

by M. Cadman

The barrier islands of coastal Virginia consist of an ocean beach behind which is a row of dunes followed by upland salt marsh (though some islands have a central region of trees), then lowland salt marsh. The American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) breeds in the dunes and upland marsh areas but feeds primarily in the lowland salt marsh on the banks of small creeks. Large channels penetrate the marshes between the islands and upland salt marsh is formed in patches along the banks, creating more nesting habitat.

On my study area on Wallops and Assawaman islands, 16 pairs of Oystercatchers maintained vigorously defended breeding territories which were almost contiguous along some stretches of beach and large channels (see Figure 1). Four pairs fed entirely within their nesting territory, seven held completely separate feeding territories and five fed on their nesting territories plus distant feeding territories. The territories of all pairs which fed entirely on their breeding area contained a large patch of lowland salt marsh and a small creek. Those pairs which fed entirely on separate feeding territories had breeding areas containing no low salt marsh and the closest lowland salt marsh was in the possession of other pairs. These birds were forced to fly several hundred metres to their feeding territories but did not defend any land between the two territories.

