

**MOUNTAIN PLOVER**  
(*CHARADRIUS MONTANUS*)

**Navajo/Federal Statuses:** NESL G4 / MBTA; not listed under the ESA.

**Distribution:** Breeding range includes most of MT, WY, eastern CO, central to northern NM, and OK and TX panhandles. Wintering range includes central CA, southern parts of AZ, NM and TX, and northern Mexico. Known breeding on Navajo Nation occurs only in NM. Grasslands between the Chuska Mountains and Black Mesa and southwest of Black Mesa to Little Colorado River are potential habitat.

**Habitat:** Typically nests in flat ( $\leq 2^\circ$  slope) to slightly rolling expanses of grassland, semi-desert, or badland, in an area with short, sparse vegetation, large bare areas (often  $\geq 1/3$  of total area), and that is typically disturbed (e.g. grazed); may also nest in plowed or fallow cultivation fields. Nest is a scrape in dirt often next to a grass clump or old cow manure pile. Migration habitat is similar to breeding habitat.

**Similar Species:** Killdeer has 2 black breastbands and rufous rump.

**Phenology:**

- e.MAR-l.MAR: arrival to breeding areas, courtship, nest building
  - e.APR-m.JUN: egg-laying and incubation<sup>1</sup> (28-31 days)
  - e.MAY-m.JUL: hatching, young leave nest within 3-24 hours
  - e.MAY-m.AUG: young travel with 1 parent, fledge 34 days post-hatch
  - e.JUL-l.AUG: migration from breeding area
- <sup>1</sup>multiple-clutching possible – female lays 2 clutches, male incubates 1st

**Survey Guidelines:** 3 visual surveys, each separated by 14 days, from stationary vehicle within 0.2 km ( $1/8$  mi) of proposed project from 1 MAY-15 JUN.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. 1999. Mountain Plover survey guidelines. Unpublished document.

**Avoidance:** No ground-disturbance activities within occupied habitat during 1 APR-15 JUL; when nest is found, delay project for 37 days, within 0.2 km ( $1/8$  mi) of active nest with eggs, or delay 7 days if brood of flightless chicks observed (per U.S. Fish & Wildlife, 1999).

**References:**

- Craig, T.H. and E.H. Craig. 1985. Recent nesting and sighting records of mountain plovers in northwestern New Mexico. *Southwestern Naturalist*, 30:451-452.
- Graul, W.D. 1975. Breeding biology of the mountain plover. *Wilson Bulletin*, 87:6-31.
- Knopf, F.L. 1996. Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No.211 (A.Poole and F.Gill, eds.). The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA, and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C. (description p.2)