

Pacific Golden Plovers *Pluvialis fulva* preferably nest close to landmarks

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In this study we investigated whether Pacific Golden Plovers *Pluvialis fulva* breeding in the high-arctic tend to locate their nests near conspicuous objects (landmarks) like rocks and caterpillar vehicle tracks. We compared the median distance between plover nests and nearest landmarks with the median distance between random points in suitable plover habitat and nearest landmarks. Landmarks found nearest to nests were caterpillar-vehicle tracks (57%), rocks (29%), wood (11%), and vegetation edge (4%). On average, plover nests were located more often near landmarks than near random points, and the distance between a nest and a landmark rarely exceeded 10 m. Plovers did not selectively nest near a specific type of landmark. Whether nesting close to a landmark increased the rate of clutch survival was uncertain. Possible reasons why plovers nest near landmarks are discussed.

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