

**American Golden-Plover**  
*Pluvialis dominica* (Müller)

ORDER CHARADRIIFORMES

FAMILY CHARADRIIDAE

**B-AGPL**

**TAXONOMY**

Prior to 1993, *P. fulva* and *P. dominica* were considered subspecies of the Lesser Golden-Plover (Johnson and Connors 1996). There are no recognized subspecies of *P. dominica*.

**STATUS**

**Global Rank:** G5

**COSEWIC:** Not Addressed

**Provincial Rank:** S3S4B, SZN

**Provincial listing:** Blue List

**GLOBAL RANGE**

**Breeds:** from n. Alaska, n. Yukon, n. Mackenzie, Banks, Bathurst, Devon and n. Baffin islands south to nw. British Columbia, c. Mackenzie, s. Keewatin, ne. Manitoba and n. Ontario (Cannings 1998).

**Winters:** in South America from Bolivia, Uruguay and s. Brazil south to n. Chile and n. Argentina (Cannings 1998).

**ECOPROVINCES**

NBM

**BIOGEOCLIMATIC ZONES**

AT

**BIOLOGY**

In the arctic, American Golden-Plovers nest in relatively dry tundra uplands, ridges, and knolls using shallow depressions lined with pieces of lichen. The only known breeding site in British Columbia is on a sparsely vegetated alpine tundra plateau at 1800 m. The species is known for occasionally nesting in montane tundra situations (Godfrey 1986; Campbell et al. 1990b; Johnson and Connors 1996).

American Golden-Plovers forage on various types of tundra, but prefer areas where plant cover is short or absent. Breeding birds use open well-drained sites with low vegetation initially, but after the young hatch tend to move to wetter sites that include more cover in the form of low shrubs and grasses interspersed with openings.

American Golden-Plovers are mainly insectivorous, feeding mostly on terrestrial invertebrates, but also some aquatic and marine species. Berries are also an important food source in the spring and fall; and seeds and leaves are also ingested (Johnson and Connors 1996).

Habitats used in migration in British Columbia include lagoon shores, sandspits, and tidal mudflats along the coast, and short-grass fields, golf courses, flooded pastures, and lakeshores in the interior (Campbell et al. 1990b).

Spring migration occurs primarily in May and although fall migration begins in late July it does not peak until the juveniles migrate in September (Campbell et al. 1990b).

The clutch size is almost invariably four eggs and the incubation period is approximately 26–27 days (Godfrey 1986; Johnson and Connors 1996).

**GLOBAL RANKING**

**Rank:** G5

**Comments:** Widespread and globally secure. Populations have rebounded following major declines at the turn of the century attributed to unregulated market and sport hunting. Most breeding ranges are intact and relatively unexploited by humans, whereas winter ranges and migratory routes are less secure and under pressure from human development (Johnson and Connors 1996).

**PROVINCIAL RANKING**

**Rank:** S3S4B, SZN

**Comments:** This species is only known to breed in one area, but is likely more widespread. The habitat is not immediately threatened.

**Range in British Columbia:** U

The only confirmed breeding record is from Spatsizi Plateau, although it is suspected to breed in alpine areas of the Itcha Mountain Range as well (Campbell et al. 1990b). Migrates throughout the province. Likely more widespread as a breeding species than available records indicate.

**Estimated occurrences: B**

Only confirmed breeding site is near Kliweguh Creek on the Spatsizi Plateau. Other undiscovered breeding sites are expected to occur.

**Abundance: A**

Population size is not yet determined but likely small.

**Trend: U**

There is not enough information available to determine population trend.

**Protected occurrences: BC**

The one confirmed breeding site is within Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Park.

**Threats: C**

No particular threats other than being generally susceptible to random environmental events due to small population size. Baker and Strauch (1988) speculate that excessive hunting in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is the cause of the very low genetic variation seen in the species today. Greater threats likely to migratory staging areas.

**CONSERVATION NEEDS**

**Inventory:** Survey suitable alpine habitats in northwestern British Columbia to determine range, population size, and breeding status. Interview guide-outfitters within sus-

pected breeding range for knowledge of occurrence during the breeding season.

**Management and Stewardship:** There are no management issues with the breeding habitat of this species at present.

