**UMD Seminar title:** On the Road to Recovery? The Endangered Great Lakes Piping Plover Population

**Abstract**: In 1986, the population of Piping Plovers in the North American Great Lakes was listed as “Endangered” by the U.S. government; it was estimated at 12-17 breeding pairs. Over > 30 years, an intensive recovery effort, spearheaded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, other federal, provincial and state agencies, non-profits, universities and private citizens, has increased the breeding population to as high as 76 pairs and expanded its distribution beyond Michigan to include Wisconsin, New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Ontario. This presentation reviews the recovery process, and research behind it, to describe successes and challenges and identify future efforts needed to delist this still vulnerable population.

**Hawk Week Evening Lecture title**: There and Back Again: Studying Piping Plover Migration the “Old Fashioned” Way

**Abstract**: Current technology (e.g. geolocators; GPS tags; GPS collars) allows for immediate and precise tracking of the movements of many species of vertebrates, especially birds. But use of these devices is expensive and risky, especially for small and potentially vulnerable species like the Piping Plover. For these reasons, no major study has attempted to use these tracking devices on this species. However, knowledge of where plovers nest, their migration routes and wintering sites, along with associated behavior and survival, is critical to delisting the 3 populations of Piping Plovers in North America. This presentation summarizes the extensive information obtained through “old fashioned” methods of observation and reporting that have been relied on to identify where individual birds from the Great Lakes population travel and reside during their annual cycle. It also summarizes insights into plover behavior and challenges they face during the breeding and non-breeding seasons.

**Cuthbert Biography**: Dr. Francesca J. Cuthbert received her PhD in Ecology at the University of Minnesota and is currently a Professor in the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and a Scientific Investigator at the University of Michigan Biological Station. For the past 30 years her research has focused on three topics in avian biology and conservation: recovery of federal or state listed species (especially piping plovers); ecology and population dynamics of colonial nesting waterbirds; and ecology and management of abundant species (especially double-crested cormorants). Most of her research involves working closely with federal and state agency biologists to facilitate conservation and management in the Great Lakes Region. She has advised more than 40 MS and PhD students. Dr. Cuthbert is a past President of the Waterbird Society, Member of the Waterbird Conservation Council of the Americas and a Fellow in the American Ornithological Society. In 2009 she was honored as a Recovery Champion by US Fish and Wildlife Service for her career-long contributions to the conservation of the Great Lakes population of the Piping Plover.

**Publications suggested for undergrad students**:

E. A. Roche, Arnold, T. W., and F. J. Cuthbert. *2009*. Apparent nest abandonment as evidence for breeding season mortality in Great Lakes Piping Plovers. Auk. 127: 402-410.

LeDee, O., K.C. Nelson, and F.J. Cuthbert. 2010. The challenge of threatened and endangered species management in coastal areas. Coastal Mgt Journal. 38: 337-353*.*