

Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) and Piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

Description: The least tern is the smallest North American tern. Least terns have a black-capped crown with a white forehead patch and a black-tipped, orange or yellow bill during the breeding season. Least terns also have a black border along their pointed wings and a forked tail. Male birds have orange colored legs, while females have yellow legs. The piping plover is also a small bird. The back of the bird is a sandy color. They have a white rump, breast and belly. Breeding adults possess a black forehead patch, orange legs, a short black-tipped orange bill, and a black breast band, which may be complete or incomplete.

Status: The least tern is Federally and Kansas listed as endangered. The piping plover is Federally and state listed as endangered. Both species are uncommon on Fort Riley, and use the installation as a migration area.

Habitat: Both birds utilize unvegetated sandbars and islands along wide, river channels. Both birds prefer larger sandbars. This type of habitat can be found along the Kansas and Republican Rivers on Fort Riley.

Conservation Goal for Fort Riley: To protect individual birds from “takings” while they are present on the installation.

Actions taken by Fort Riley:

- Protect existing least tern and piping plover habitat from human disturbance.
- Perform annual surveys to document least tern and piping plover use of Fort Riley and create maps for existing least tern and piping plover habitat.
- Review all new, replacement or modified aerial transmission line projects to ensure “avian friendly” features are incorporated, as appropriate.