

spent most of the preceding days photographing the Hermit Thrush nest in Dawson City, and I was eager to vary my experiences with a shorebird. After a careful search of the lower slopes of the mountain where David had seen the birds, I heard a familiar plaintive cry. I could see my first plover of the year perched on a small tussock of tundra. As I approached, it darted away and flew a short distance, indicating that a nest was indeed nearby. I had to criss-cross the tundra for over 30 minutes before I spotted the four eggs nestled among the lichens in a small depression.

American Golden Plover eggs are large, about the size of a golf ball, but with a conical end on one side. Invariably, the parents seem to arrange the pyriform eggs so that they rest with their conical ends pointed inwards. Perhaps this keeps the eggs most efficiently packed in the nest. I always seem to find them neatly organized but very camouflaged. With a ground colouring of olive-buff and large black splotches, the eggs are invisible from afar. Coupled with the vigilance of the parents, predators such as foxes and jaegers are kept at bay until the young have a chance to look after themselves.

I spent the rest of that day photographing the Wilson's Snipe nest, intending to come back in a week or so to shoot the plovers, which would hopefully be closer to hatching. When I returned on June 21, I spent the morning photographing a Semi-palmated Plover nest I had found in a gravel pit near kilometre 95 of the Dempster Highway. It wasn't until 3 P.M. that I was able to complete my set-up and begin shooting the Golden Plover nest.

I was delighted with the results. The colours I had captured on slide film in 2003 seemed that much more vivid with the addition of strobe lighting, and I was able to shoot with a much greater depth of field, revealing the hidden details of the tundra. I recall two tiny white flowers near the nest that seemed to perk up the whole frame; I doubt they would have been so vivid with natural light. After a couple of hours of photography I had to return to Dawson for an engagement. On the way back, I found a Spotted Sandpiper nest with four eggs near kilometre 91. The area was also crawling with Semi-palmated Plovers, Least Sandpipers, and a vocal pair of Lesser Yellowlegs. I was grateful for such a plethora of birds in an incredibly vast and isolated land.

June 25 was sunny and warm, so I travelled up the Dempster yet again to shoot the plovers. This day they had just begun to hatch, and I was ecstatic to see three small young and a pipped egg. Fully feathered with a warm downy coat and eyes open as they emerge from the egg, plover young usually leave the nest within a few hours of hatching. As I set about the day's activities, I was able to capture the parent interacting



Snapping at a gnat, a male Golden Plover broods three newly hatched chicks and incubates the remaining egg.