

Press Release re: Duxbury Beach

May 28, 2015

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Duxbury Beach – Piping Plover Update

In keeping with the commitment made by the Town Manager to the public with regard to sharing information pertaining to the presence of Piping Plover on Duxbury Beach, the Town of Duxbury is providing periodic updates on the status of nesting pairs currently inhabiting the beach and the potential impacts that may be experienced by beach patrons. This information is being provided by the Endangered Species Officer in conjunction with the Duxbury Harbormaster's office.

As of May 28, 2015, there are now 21 Piping Plover nests in a number of areas on the beach and 22 established pairs of birds. Further, the eggs have begun hatching and as result, there are now restrictions in place and limitations to beach access. Of the approximately 11,000 linear feet available in the Off Road Vehicle (ORV) corridor, approximately 2,500 linear feet have been restricted. Additionally, approximately 1,000 feet of pedestrian beach have been restricted. Areas restricted to motor vehicles and pedestrians have been fenced off with symbolic fencing (orange string and posts, along with "Area Closed" signage). Bayside/back road areas adjacent to these closures may also be posted with speed limits not to exceed 5 MPH in accordance with the Duxbury Beach Management Plan.

In prior years, the maximum 500 vehicle count (250 non-resident vehicles and 250 resident vehicles) in the ORV corridor has been periodically reduced due to unfledged piping plover chicks. As has been done in the past, if any nests hatch within the ORV corridor (1st and 2nd crossovers), bayside areas adjacent to the ORV corridor, Pedestrian Beach (Northern & Southern Resident Beach), Duxbury Beach Park, or any other areas of Duxbury Beach, access will be restricted as mandated by state and Federal law and the Duxbury Beach Management Plan. We are committed to doing the very best we can to enable safe and appropriate access to occur.

PLEASE NOTE: We anticipate that severe restrictions will be in place on or about June 20th the timing of which coincides with the eggs hatching in several nests along the beach. As a result, the restrictions that may be instituted could limit the number of off road vehicles to approximately **80 TOTAL**. Specifically, limitations could be reduced to **40 resident vehicles and 40 non-resident vehicles**. Once the eggs have hatched and while the birds are still unfledged, these limitations may be in place for at least 30 days. **Since these are wild birds in an open and often unpredictable natural environment, it is important to keep in mind that the number of nests, paired birds, access limitations and beach restrictions could all change at any given time.**

There are also nests located near the Blakeman's restaurant building which are due to hatch on or about June 1st through June 4th. As a result there will be restrictions imposed that will impact the front beach, bayside beach, the parking lots in between these two areas as well as restrictions for the dinner lot (immediately south of and adjacent to the building) due to the proximity of the nest. The right of way which passes through these areas will be posted down to the mandated speed limit of 5 MPH. There will be access to the building and limited parking for employees and some beach patrons.

Typically, as a result of higher demand, non-resident beach access can be limited between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. which can last until approximately 2:00 or 2:30 p.m. Once limitations on the beach are in place as a result of the presence of Piping Plovers, and higher demand for access is created as a result of warmer weather, earlier arrival times by beach patrons may help to ensure access (i.e., well in advance of 9:00 a.m. as noted above). We hope that this information will help to illustrate the importance of arriving early since access is provided on a first come, first served basis and can matter greatly if the weather is favorable for beach-going conditions.

This information will be updated if conditions change or as new information becomes available. For further information about Duxbury Beach, please visit the Town of Duxbury Harbormaster's website at: <http://www.duxburyharbormaster.org> or call (781) 934-2866 Ext. 5 for beach information. The most up-to-date information pertaining to beach conditions including restrictions and access limitations may be found by following the Duxbury Harbormaster's Twitter feed at https://twitter.com/Dux_HM