

Press Release re: Duxbury Beach

June 12, 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.

In prior years, the maximum 500 vehicle count (250 non-resident vehicles and 250 resident vehicles) in the Off Road Vehicle (ORV) corridor has been periodically reduced due to unfledged piping plover chicks. As has been done in the past, as 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 is 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.

As of June 12, 2015, there are now 25 Piping Plover nests in a number of areas on the beach and 25 established pairs of birds. Further, the eggs have begun hatching in several nests along the beach and as result, there are now severe ORV restrictions in place and limitations to beach access. **Of the approximately 11,000 linear feet available in the ORV corridor, all but 600 linear feet 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 have been posted with speed limits not to exceed 5 MPH in accordance with the Duxbury Beach Management Plan.

At this time, the number of off road vehicles allowed on Duxbury Beach has been limited to 80 TOTAL. Specifically, these limitations allow for only 40 resident vehicles and 40 non-resident vehicles. Once the eggs have hatched and while the birds are still unfledged, these ORV access restrictions may be in place until approximately July 25th however they may be lifted incrementally as conditions change. 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. As conditions change, additional information will be provided to the public.

As has been noted previously, there are also nests located near the Blakeman's restaurant building which were due to hatch on or about June 1st through June 4th. As a result there are restrictions that have been imposed which impacts 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