

**Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge
Comprehensive Conservation Plan – Questions and Answers
April 2013**

1. What is a comprehensive conservation plan?

A comprehensive conservation plan, or CCP, is a strategic plan that guides how we manage a national wildlife refuge for a period of 15 years. The Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge CCP includes direction for conserving wildlife, protecting habitat and offering opportunities for recreational uses on the refuge.

2. What are the most important management decisions in the CCP?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has adopted a management approach for Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge that emphasizes protecting habitat and managing for wildlife that are at risk. It also calls for a balance between managing for wildlife and offering recreational opportunities on refuge lands. The Service will work with partners to protect habitat and wildlife resources throughout all of Nantucket, to maintain a flexible system of closures to allow maximum public use, and to increase land protection where possible. This approach was evaluated and available for public review as Alternative B in the draft CCP.

3. Please describe the new zone system that will identify where people can go and what they can do on the refuge.

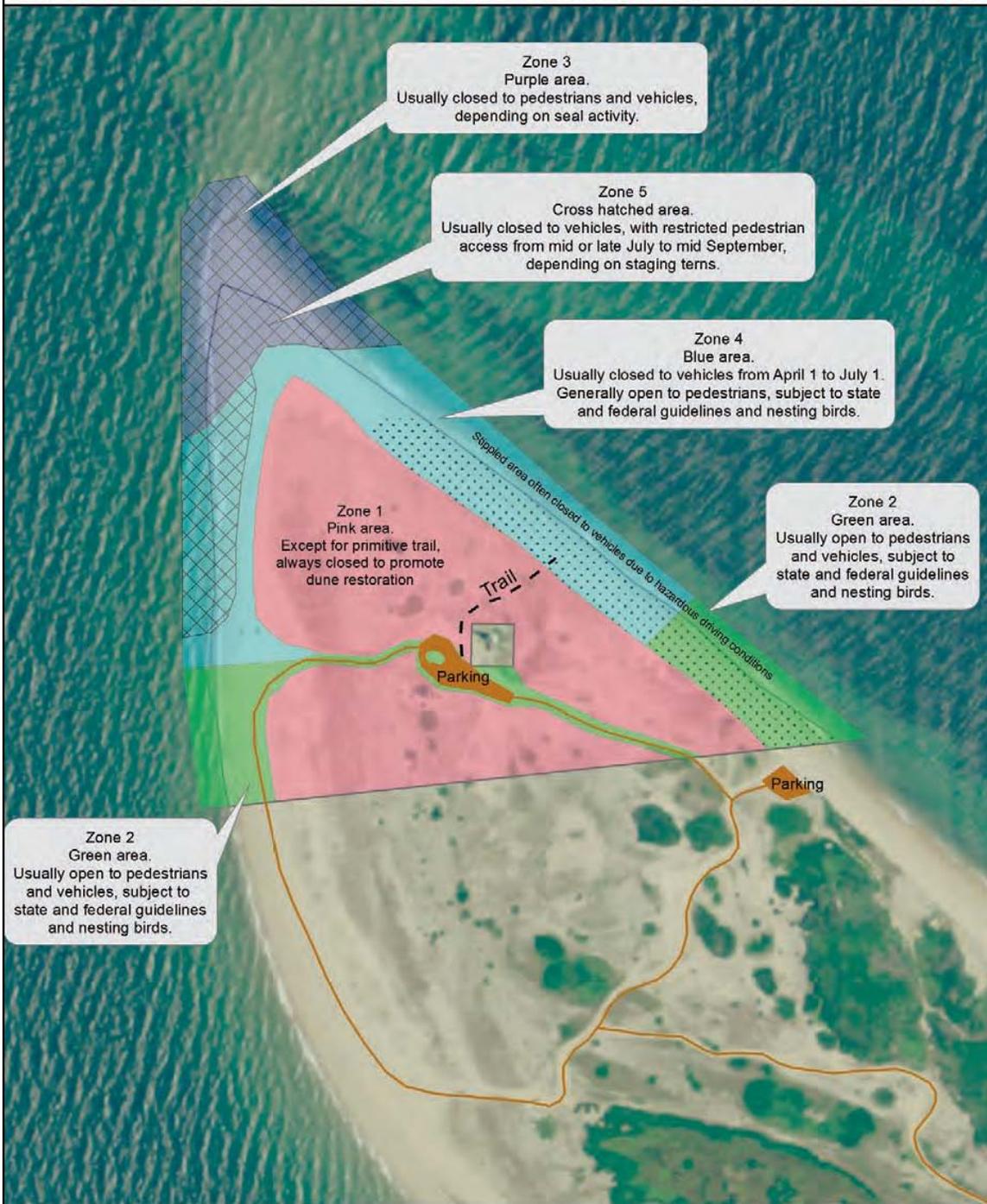
The Service will establish zones on the refuge that will help us manage for wildlife that are at risk. There will be five zones and signs will indicate what areas may be closed to over-sand vehicles (OSVs) and/or pedestrian traffic at certain times of the year to protect nesting birds, for example.

You can find a map of the zones on the next page. Zone 1 will be closed to promote dune restoration, except for some trails. Zone 2 will usually be open, but is subject to state and federal guidelines and the presence of nesting birds. Zone 3 will usually be closed to pedestrians and vehicles, depending on seal activity. Zone 4 is usually closed to vehicles from April 1 to July 1, but generally will be open to pedestrians, subject to state and federal guidelines that protect nesting birds. Zone 5 will usually be closed to vehicles, with restricted pedestrian access from mid- or late July to mid-September, depending on when terns are staging for migration.

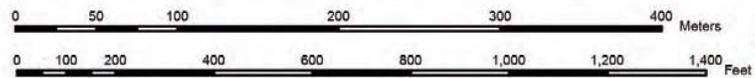


Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge - Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Public Use Zones



Sources:
Refuge roads, trails and boundaries from USFWS.
Basemap 2008 NAIP Imagery



4. Why did the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service close the tip of Great Point?

We must maintain a 150-foot buffer around all seals to be in compliance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act. We must also meet state and federal guidelines that protect piping plovers and terns that are present at Great Point during certain times of the year.

In addition to meeting those requirements, the Service closed the tip of Great Point in 2008 to protect visitors as well as the seals. Visitors were putting themselves at risk by getting too close to the seals, which can be aggressive when approached.

5. Do buffers and zones really help terns and piping plovers?

Yes, the buffers reduce the chances that the birds will be disturbed, which increases the chance that young plovers and terns will survive and fledge. With less disturbance, they will forage more effectively and build up better fat reserves to sustain them during migration to their wintering grounds.

6. Will the public be able to fish and have access to the beach?

Yes. There will be areas along the shore to fish, and the public will have beach access. These areas will be located outside of the buffer zones for seals, terns and piping plovers.

7. Does the high seal population decrease the numbers of fish stock, impacting fishing opportunities in the area?

We do not have specific diet information for seals that are using Nantucket Refuge as a feeding and haul-out site. Seals are opportunistic feeders and consume a wide variety of prey, focusing on abundant species of fish.

8. Does the Service plan on increasing fishing access so that traditional fishing will continue to take place?

We support and will maintain fishing access as much as possible and wherever we can. Fishing is a priority public use of the National Wildlife Refuge System and we want to provide as much access to fishing as possible on our refuges.

9. Will there be vehicular and over-sand vehicle access to the lighthouse parking area year-round?

The Service intends to allow OSV access to the lighthouse parking area throughout the year. However, during the piping plover nesting season, the Trustees of Reservations typically close areas of their property to OSVs to protect nesting birds, preventing public access to the refuge. We have received funding to explore ways of using alternative forms of transportation, such as boats, to provide access to the refuge during these months in the spring and early summer.

10. Does the Service intend to acquire more land?

Yes. The CCP includes a land protection plan that expands the former land protection boundary for Nantucket Refuge. Our planners consulted with numerous partners and expanded the boundary to include 2, 036 acres of biologically significant land in the area. Within this boundary the Service may acquire property from willing sellers to expand Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge. The Service acquires land in many ways, through fee title, conservation easements and donations, for example.