

Protecting Habitat on Sandy Point Island

Striking a Balance Between Public Use and Wildlife



Roseate Tern

History

Sandy Point Island (Island) is an ecologically fragile, barrier island in Little Narragansett Bay. Most of the thirty-five acre Island is in Westerly, RI, but the northern-most five acres are in Stonington, CT. The Island was given to Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc. (ALC) by the Gildersleeve family in 1982 to be protected and managed as a nature preserve. The Island provides important nesting and feeding areas for a variety of migratory birds.

The Island has long been a popular destination for recreationists. Unfortunately, the period of high recreational use coincides with bird migration and nesting. In an effort to meet the wishes of the donors and achieve a balance between public access and the needs of wildlife, ALC is working in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, and Southern New England Coastal Program.

Wildlife

Islands such as the Sandy Point Island provide very important habitat for wildlife, especially migratory birds. Species such as the least tern, roseate tern, and the piping plover use the Island to nest, rear young, feed, and stage

during migration. Terns and plovers were once common along the New England coast. Increased development and recreational use of the remaining barrier beach and island habitat have contributed toward the decline of shorebird populations. Some species, such as the roseate tern and piping plover, have dwindled to dangerously low numbers.



Bill Majoros

Sandy Point Island provides important habitat for the American Oystercatcher.

Recreation

The following recreation activities are permitted in designated areas from ½ - hour before sunrise to ½ - hour after sunset: wildlife observation, fishing, photography, environmental education, and interpretation. Other forms of permissible recreation are: swimming, sunbathing, walking, and small self contained cooking fires. "Take nothing but your experience, pictures and trash and leave nothing but your tracks."

Important Public Use Guidelines for Sandy Point Island

All visitors must obtain an Island Permit from the Stonington Community Center, 28 Cutler Street (PO 286), Stonington, CT 06378. They also may be reached via telephone at 860/535-2476 and on line at www.thecommo.org. Visitors are expected to stay out of all vegetated, fenced, and posted areas. Please do not approach or linger near shorebird nests, fly kites, possess or use fireworks, ignite or tend open fires, camp, or bring pets. For additional regulations please refer to

applicable local government, state, and federal laws and the information kiosks located on the island.

Reporting a Violation

For more information or to report a violation please call the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge at 860/399-2513.

The Partners

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides the federal leadership to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitat for the continuing benefit of the American people. Visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at www.fws.gov.

Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc. is a land trust dedicated to the acquisition and conservation of natural areas for the benefit of wildlife, for present and future generations. Visit Avalonia on the web at www.avalonialandconservancy.org.

For additional information contact:

Richard Potvin, Refuge Manager
Stewart B. McKinney Refuge
733 Old Clinton Road
Westbrook, CT 06498
860/399-2513
860/399-2515 (fax)
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/mckinney/>

Federal Relay Service
for the deaf and hard-of-hearing
1 800/877-8339
March 2010



USFWS

The eggs of terns and plovers are difficult to spot as they blend into the sandy beach areas that are used by recreators.



Sandy Point Island



This map is designed for refuge management
is not intended for use as a land survey or
a representation of land for conveyance or tax purposes.
For more information visit the USFWS Northeast Region GIS
website at <http://northeast.fws.gov/gis/>

