

News Release



Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PARTIAL BEACH CLOSURES AT ELIZABETH A. MORTON AND AMAGANSETT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES TO PROTECT NESTING BIRDS

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will temporarily close most of the Jessup's Neck peninsula at the Elizabeth A. Morton National Wildlife Refuge in Sag Harbor, as well as the beach above the mean high tide line at Amagansett NWR in Easthampton to protect nesting shorebirds. These partial beach closures are an annual management action at Morton and Amagansett and will be in effect from April 1 to August 31. Public access to Morton's Wild Birds Nature Trail and a portion of the beach will still be permitted. The closed areas will be clearly marked with signs, fencing and rope.

Nesting shorebirds at Morton and Amagansett National Wildlife Refuges include the federally threatened piping plover and the state threatened least tern. Last season, Morton provided habitat for two pairs of piping plovers and seven pairs of least terns. One pair of piping plovers and 14 pairs of least terns nested at Amagansett NWR in 2015. The partial beach closures help to increase nest success and protect the birds from a variety of disturbances. The public can assist these efforts to protect wildlife and their habitats by respecting closed areas, keeping the refuge beaches and trails clean and avoiding activities that may disturb wildlife, including landing watercrafts on the beach.

The principle threats to endangered and threatened birds like the piping plover include human disturbance, predators and loss of habitat. Beach closures provide undisturbed nesting, foraging and resting habitats for these species. Public compliance in previous years has resulted in increased nesting success for plovers, terns and other breeding migratory birds such as osprey. Continued success depends on the support of the visiting public. To follow the status of the 2016 nesting season, please visit the refuge web site www.fws.gov/refuge/elizabeth_a_morton for current updates.

For further information on the beach closures, contact the Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex Headquarters at Wertheim NWR, located at 340 Smith Rd., Shirley, NY 11967, or by phone at 631-286-0485.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.