

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 (Morton) National Wildlife Refuge in Sag Harbor, as well as the beach above the mean high tide line at Amagansett National Wildlife Refuge 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. Exact dates may vary depending on shorebird nesting activity. Refuge visitors will still be able to access Morton's Wild Birds Nature Trail and a portion of the beach. Refuge staff will clearly designate closed areas with signs, fencing and orange twine.

Nesting shorebirds at Morton and Amagansett National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) include the federally threatened piping plover, the state threatened least tern and the American oystercatcher, a species of conservation concern. Even though the 2018 season was challenged with predation and weather, Morton NWR provided nesting habitat for 2 pairs of piping plovers, one pair of American Oystercatcher and approximately 50 pairs of least terns. Two pairs of piping plovers and 17 pairs of least terns also nested at Amagansett NWR.

The principal threats to these endangered and threatened shorebirds include human disturbance, predators and loss of habitat. Beach closures provide undisturbed nesting, foraging and resting habitats, which can help to increase the reproductive success of these birds. The public can assist with these efforts to protect wildlife and their habitats by: 1) respecting closed areas, 2) keeping refuge beaches and trails clean and free of trash and 3) avoiding activities that may disturb wildlife, including landing watercraft on the beach. For more information, contact the Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex Headquarters at Wertheim NWR, located at 340 Smith Rd., Shirley, NY 11967, by phone at 631-286-0485 or visit our website at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/longislandrefuges>.

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.