

Duxbury Beach Access Update

May 17, 2018

Contact: Duxbury Harbormaster Coastal Natural Resources Department
(781) 934-2866 Ext. 5 / <http://www.duxburyharbormaster.org>

The Town of Duxbury provides periodic updates on the status of nesting pairs of Piping Plovers currently inhabiting the Duxbury Beach and the potential impacts their presence may have on beach patrons. Since beach stickers are non-refundable, we provide this information to the public as soon as it becomes available so that individuals may plan accordingly in terms of whether or not they decide to make a purchase. This information is being provided by the Endangered Species Officer in conjunction with the Duxbury Harbormaster's office.

Beach Status

As of May 15, 2018, there are 11 active plover nests on Duxbury Beach. As a means of comparison, there were 17 active plover nests at this same time last year with a total of 27 pairs and 46 nest attempts for the year. In 2016, there were 22 pairs with 29 nest attempts. Since it is still early in the season, it is important to understand that additional plovers may continue to arrive to the beach. Plovers are still considered a Threatened Species (the level just below Endangered) by Federal and State Fish and Wildlife, and their protection is mandated by both State and Federal laws.

Beach Access

The location of some of these plover nests will impact beach going patrons and impede their ability to use the drive-on beach for extended periods of time. It is predicted that the eggs in the nests will hatch on/about June 2nd. Once hatched, the birds take +/-35 days to fly (more specifically, they need to be able to fly 50' feet, continuously). During this period, pedestrian and vehicular access near the chicks is restricted from these areas. As a result, there is a very strong possibility that should the eggs hatch and the chicks remain in these areas, some area of the beach could be severely restricted or closed for an extended period of time beginning on June 2nd past the 4th of July holiday.

It is important to note that these are wild animals and therefore are unpredictable and susceptible to tidal over wash, predation, and mortality from exposure to severe weather, as well as unpredictable movements throughout their habitat on the beach. ORV and Pedestrian restrictions for plover chicks last until they are able to fly for 50' feet, continuously (which can be more than 35 days), meaning these restrictions may or may not be incrementally altered. Also important to note is that many of these restricted areas may overlap to an extent in both space (area) and timing (time until chicks can fly) and may change based on movement of the chicks.

Where to Find Updated Information

Please continue to check for the latest updates as conditions and circumstances can change with little or no advance notice based on activities of wild animals. This information will be updated if conditions change or as new information becomes available. For further information about Duxbury Beach conditions, please visit the Town of Duxbury Harbormaster's website at:

<http://www.duxburypolice.org/beach-unit/pages/current-beach-conditions>.

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

Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we continue to maintain as much pedestrian and ORV access as possible while managing protected species.