

Closure Memo

Date: 4/16/2015

Project: Conserving Coastal Birds through Stewardship and Outreach (CT)

Number: 1401.13.039576

Grantee: National Audubon Society, Inc.

Project Description: National Audubon Society will train 135 people to steward beach nesting bird sites, monitor fenced areas and serve as docents during busy beach days. Trained stewards will lead bird walks to allow people to experience the beauty of the birds first-hand. The project will provide an Audubon education program that teaches students in 30 classrooms about priority birds and habitats in Bridgeport and Greenwich, CT and Westbury, Hempstead, and Roosevelt, NY schools. The lessons culminate with students designing signs for bird nesting areas some of which will be installed to alert beach-goers of nesting areas and to reduce disturbance to birds. Signs will provide a Quick Response code that allows visitors to access the “Be a Good Egg” website and then requests that they take a pledge to reduce threats to these birds and sign electronically. Two-hundred beach goers will be asked to take the “Be a Good Egg” pledge. Ultimately, the project will protect 130 acres of beach-nesting bird habitat at 9 sites supporting 55 breeding pairs of Piping Plovers and ~425 pairs of Least Tern. It aims to improve 11 beach-nesting bird sites through education and outreach by decreasing human disturbance; and to educate 10,000 people about sharing the shore with coastal waterbirds. Piping Plover nesting and hatching success is projected to increase from 1.21 to 1.5; and Least Tern from 0.23 to 0.5. The project will post monthly blogs and prepare Facebook posts three times a month linked to website.

Final Products:

- This project will train 135 people to steward beach nesting bird sites, monitor fenced areas and serve as docents during busy beach days.

443 volunteers were involved in this project and assisted with the protection and monitoring of nesting birds and educated students and beach-goers about their conservation needs. Audubon held “string fencing days” where volunteers learned about beach-nesting birds and then assisted in installing protective fencing at 7 beaches helping to protect roughly 6 miles of beach.

Staff and volunteers participated in the Town of Oyster Bay harbor clean-up at Centre and Stehli Beach. Staff and volunteers picked up trash and monitored nesting birds and nesting areas during the clean-up. Staff and volunteers educated about 40 people about beach-nesting birds at this event.

- The project will provide an Audubon education program for students in 30 classrooms. Students will design signs for bird nesting areas.

Audubon staff taught lessons to 30 elementary school classes reaching a total of 487 students. Students designed and installed over 180 signs at 12 beach nesting sites across the Sound.

- This project will ask 200 beach goers to take the “Be a Good Egg” pledge. 10,000 people will be educated about sharing the shore with coastal waterbirds.

“Share the Shore” messaging reached over 32,000 people via traditional, online and social media outlets, including the “Be a Good Egg” campaign. 17 volunteers attended 3 training workshops to participate in “Be a Good Egg” outreach. Staff and 80 volunteers conducted 31 “Be a Good Egg” outreach days at 7 beaches in CT and NY to raise awareness about beach-nesting birds and collected 1,673 pledges from beach-goers.

Fact sheets, messaging, and other outreach materials were created to be used at “Be a Good Egg” and other outreach events. Beach activities were offered to families and kids during the “Be a Good Egg” outreach days to further engage children and families.

- 130 acres of beach-nesting bird habitat will be protected at 9 sites supporting 55 breeding pairs of Piping Plovers and about 425 pairs of Least Tern. 11 beach-nesting bird sites will be improved through education and outreach by decreasing human disturbance. Piping Plover nesting and hatching success is projected to increase from 1.21 to 1.5; and Least Tern from 0.23 to 0.5.

11 Audubon staff and about 50 volunteers monitored and protected beach-nesting birds at 20 sites that provide approximately 340 acres of beach nesting bird habitat and support 55 pairs of Piping Plovers and close to 250 pairs of Least Terns. Audubon monitored nesting Piping Plover adults and young as well as Least Terns at least twice a week at each site. Monitoring and stewardship efforts resulted in a productivity of 2.25 for Piping Plovers and about .2 for Least Terns.

Audubon installed, or assisted with the installation, of predator exclosures at nest locations to reduce predation. Audubon also installed 2 trail cameras to better document predators at a site with suspected predator issues to help inform management. Based on the trail camera data, management recommendations are being made to the site manager for the 2015 season.

- The project will post monthly blogs and prepare Facebook posts three times a month linked to website.

Audubon posted 68 blog entries and made 176 Facebook posts to recruit volunteers, update followers about project work, and provide general information. Audubon reached well over 30,000 people through social media, articles, radio interviews, trainings, beach outreach days, and newsletters engaging volunteers, students, beach-goers, Facebook users, and wxedge.com readers in shorebird conservation.

LISFF award: \$69,744.01

LISFF funds spent: \$69,744.01

LISFF Match requirement: \$62,286.00

LISFF Match spent: \$116,673.98