

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
 LI Sound Futures Fund 2013 - Clean Water, Habitat Restoration, and Species Conservation - Submit Final Programmatic Report (New Metrics)
 Grantee Organization: National Audubon Society, Inc.
 Project Title: Conserving Coastal Birds through Stewardship and Outreach (CT)

Easygrants ID: 39576
 NFWF Project ID: 1401.13.039576

Project Period	1/01/2014 - 1/15/2015
Project Location	Centre Island Town Beach (Bayville); Stehli Beach(Lattingtown), NY and Fairfield, New Haven, Middlesex and New London counties, CT.
Description (from Proposal)	
Project Summary (from Proposal)	Mobilize cadre of 135 beach stewards, outreach to 30 classrooms and 10,000 members of the general public to reduce human disturbance, and protect 130 acres of habitat for Piping plover and Least tern.
Summary of Accomplishments	Overall, this project was a huge success and Audubon exceeded a significant majority of the project goals. Through this project, Audubon monitored and stewarded beach-nesting birds at 20 sites that provided more than 340 acres of habitat that supported 55 pairs of Piping Plover and up to 250 Least Terns. Monitoring and stewardship efforts, which included fencing and predator exclosures, outreach, and education, resulted in a productivity of 2.25 for Piping Plovers and about .2 for Least Terns, which was an increase from the previous year. “Share the Shore” messaging reached over 32,000 people via traditional and social media outlets, including a “Be a Good Egg” campaign that was implemented at 13 sites across the Sound and resulted in 1,673 people signing a “share the beach” pledge. Hundreds of students were also engaged in shorebird conservation, many through designing and installing over 180 signs at beach nesting sites. 443 volunteers were involved in all aspects of this project and assisted with the protection and monitoring of nesting birds and educated students and beach-goers about their conservation needs.
Lessons Learned	Strong partnerships increase reach and impact. We protected more sites and birds, and reached more beach-goers than any one partner alone. Partners shared ideas and resources so we were more efficient and successful. Partners increased available personnel who could assist with stewardship and threats, sometimes without much advance notice, which was needed. Partnerships provided an opportunity for professional development across organizations. Each organization has its own capacities and interests, so some level of flexibility in the ways partners participate is beneficial. Work with schools with an established relationship to increase the probability of participation. Engage multiple professionals within a school to make project more interesting and meaningful (e.g., library media specialists, science curriculum coordinators, and art teachers). Get the students out to experience first-hand the birds and habitats we are trying to protect--a powerful experience. Face-to-face engagement during the Be a Good Egg outreach days was successful. We talked with fisherman about how their activities impact birds. Volunteers reported seeing fisherman removing trash from the beach and the town indicated that more people were maintaining the habitat. When working with the environment and wildlife, there are multiple threats that may prevent us from reaching our ultimate goals—some out of our control. For example, despite our efforts, terns had low productivity and we believe this was a prey issue.

Activities and Outcomes

Funding Strategy: Capacity, Outreach, Incentives

Activity / Outcome: LISFF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # of edu signs installed

Description: Enter the number of educational signs installed by project

Required: Recommended

of edu signs installed - Current: 150.00

of edu signs installed - Grant Completion: 330.00

Notes: These are signs created by schoolchildren and installed on beaches to educate the public about avoiding behaviors that harm beach nesting birds. 279 signs created and 179 signs installed, 100 to be installed in 2015. We worked with students to design more than the targeted number of signs, and in CT have additional signs to install at sites in 2015.

Funding Strategy: Capacity, Outreach, Incentives

Activity / Outcome: LISFF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people reached

Description: Enter the number of people reached by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities

Required: Recommended

people reached - Current: 1880.00

people reached - Grant Completion: 30000

Notes: 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.

Funding Strategy: Capacity, Outreach, Incentives

Activity / Outcome: LISFF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # workshops, webinars, meetings

Description: Enter the number of workshops, webinars, and meetings held to address project activity

Required: Recommended

workshops, webinars, meetings - Current: 0.00

workshops, webinars, meetings - Grant Completion: 3

Notes: We held three workshops and assisted with two additional workshops. These included 3 Be a Good Egg training workshops and 1 shorebird identification workshop. We assisted partners with 2 Piping Plover monitor training workshops.

Funding Strategy: Capacity, Outreach, Incentives

Activity / Outcome: LISFF - Volunteer participation - # volunteers participating

Description: Enter the number of volunteers participating in projects

Required: Recommended

volunteers participating - Current: 80.00

volunteers participating - Grant Completion: 443

Notes:

Funding Strategy: Capacity, Outreach, Incentives

Activity / Outcome: Number of classrooms--18 at the start of the project, 30 by the end of the project

Description: Other Metric

Required: Optional

Other Metric - Description: Number of classrooms--18 at the start of the project, we met our goal of working with 30 classrooms by the end of the project.

Notes:

Funding Strategy: Capacity, Outreach, Incentives

Activity / Outcome: # of blog and facebook posts: increase from 0 to 24 blog posts and from 0 to 72 facebook posts over the project period

Description: Other Metric

Required: Optional

Other Metric - Description: # of blog and facebook posts: increase from 0 to 24 blog posts and from 0 to 72 facebook posts over the project period. We exceeded our goals with posting 68 blog entries and made 176 posts to facebook.

Notes:

Funding Strategy: Species-specific Strategies

Activity / Outcome: Productivity-Piping Plover 1.21 average across sites and we hope to increase this to 1.5;

Least Tern .23 average across all sites and we hope to increase this to .5

Description: Other Metric

Required: Optional

Other Metric - Description: Piping Plover productivity was 1.18 (NY) and 2.29 (CT) with an overall productivity of 2.25 at the sites we were working at, which was an increase from the previous year and exceeded our goal. Least Tern productivity was about .29 in CT, which, although below our goal of .5, is an increase over the 0.16 productivity the previous year. Unfortunately in NY, Least Terns at the site we steward had a productivity of 0, which we feel predators are contributing to and are in discussions on how we might improve the situation in future years.

Notes:

Funding Strategy: Habitat Conservation

Activity / Outcome: Number of pledges signed-0 as a result of outreach on Long Island Sound, 200 by the end of the project

Description: Other Metric

Required: Optional

Other Metric - Description: We well exceeded our goal of an additional 200 pledges. 1,673 pledges were signed!

Notes:

Funding Strategy: Habitat Management

Activity / Outcome: LISFF - BMP implementation to mitigate recreational disturbance - Acres with reduced disturbance

Description: Enter the number of acres with disturbance reduced to a minimum threshold

Required: Recommended

Acres with reduced disturbance - Current: 0.00

Acres with reduced disturbance - Grant Completion: 340

Notes:

The following pages contain the uploaded documents, in the order shown below, as provided by the grantee:

Other Documents
Other Documents
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Photos - Jpeg
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Other Documents
Final Report Narrative - Standard

The following uploads do not have the same headers and footers as the previous sections of this document in order to preserve the integrity of the actual files uploaded.



Final Programmatic Report Narrative

Instructions: Save this document on your computer and complete the narrative in the format provided. The final narrative should not exceed ten (10) pages; do not delete the text provided below. Once complete, upload this document into the on-line final programmatic report task as instructed.

1. Summary of Accomplishments

In four to five sentences, provide a brief summary of the project's key accomplishments and outcomes that were observed or measured.

Overall, this project was a huge success and Audubon exceeded a significant majority of the project goals. Through this project, Audubon monitored and stewarded beach-nesting birds at 20 sites that provided more than 340 acres of habitat that supported 55 pairs of Piping Plover and up to 250 Least Terns. Monitoring and stewardship efforts, which included fencing and predator exclosures, outreach, and education, resulted in a productivity of 2.25 for Piping Plovers and about .2 for Least Terns, which was an increase from the previous year. "Share the Shore" messaging reached over 32,000 people via traditional, online and social media outlets, including a "Be a Good Egg" campaign that was implemented at 13 sites across the Sound and resulted in 1,673 people signing a "share the beach" pledge. Hundreds of students were also engaged in shorebird conservation, many through designing and installing over 180 signs at beach nesting sites. 443 volunteers were involved in all aspects of this project and assisted with the protection and monitoring of nesting birds and educated students and beach-goers about their conservation needs.

2. Project Activities & Outcomes

Activities

- *Describe and quantify (using the approved metrics referenced in your grant agreement) the primary activities conducted during this grant.*
- *Briefly explain discrepancies between the activities conducted during the grant and the activities agreed upon in your grant agreement.*

Outcomes

- *Describe and quantify progress towards achieving the project outcomes described in your grant agreement. (Quantify using the approved metrics referenced in your grant agreement or by using more relevant metrics not included in the application.)*
- *Briefly explain discrepancies between what actually happened compared to what was anticipated to happen.*
- *Provide any further information (such as unexpected outcomes) important for understanding project activities and outcome results.*

Activities:

Stewardship

- 11 Audubon staff and almost 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.
- Audubon held "string fencing days" where volunteers learned about beach-nesting birds and then assisted Audubon and agency staff in installing protective fencing at 7 beaches helping to protect roughly 6 miles of beach.
- Audubon installed or assisted with the installation of predator exclosures at nest locations when appropriate to reduce predation.
- Audubon installed two trail cameras (Centre Island) 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.

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

Outreach

- Audubon staff taught shorebird lessons to 30 elementary school classes, including two underserved districts in New York, reaching 487 students and received hundreds of designs for signs encouraging people to share the shore with beach nesting birds. Over 180 winning signs were installed at twelve sites across the Sound. Activities engaging children included:
 - Audubon implemented For the Birds! (FTB!) Long Island in two underserved districts in NY. FTB! is a multi-session, hands-on, environmental education program targeted to elementary-age children. Nearly all lessons feature shorebirds and were tailored to focus on shorebird species of concern and the threats facing them. In connection with these lessons, the FTB! students designed signs to be installed at nesting sites. The course ended with a field trip to a nesting site to learn more about the birds, observe them first-hand, and install the signs (see uploaded photos).
 - Audubon worked with two local chapters (Huntington Oyster Bay Audubon and North Fork Audubon) to conduct two additional school programs to teach students about shorebirds and to design and create signs for beach-nesting bird sites.
 - Audubon educators introduced approximately fifty students to the plight of our endangered coastal nesting birds at Stamford's STEMfest. As a result, many of these elementary school students created "Be a Good Egg" signs.
 - At an International Migratory Bird Day event held at Audubon Greenwich on Saturday, May 10, school-aged visitors were encouraged to join the effort and created signs.
 - Students from Springdale Elementary School in Stamford, Brunswick School and Western Middle School in Greenwich participated in after-school programs associated with our Schoolyard Habitat Program. One lesson was devoted to the completion of new signs for nesting areas. Additionally, at Springdale Elementary School, Audubon CT enlisted the help of an art teacher on the Schoolyard Habitat Stewardship team in creating additional signs.
 - Teachers at Riverside Elementary School in Greenwich and at Silvermine Elementary School in Norwalk were sent packets to enable them to teach a coastal nesting bird lesson and engage their students in sign production.
 - On June 5th, approximately seventy (3 classes) 4th grade students from Old Greenwich Elementary School attended an Audubon Greenwich school program at Greenwich Point Park. One of the 4 field study stations taught the students about the Piping Plover, conservation efforts, history, etc. and then to share the shore with beach nesting birds.
- Seventeen volunteers attended three training workshops to participate in "Be a Good Egg" outreach on the beach.
- Audubon staff and 80 volunteers conducted 31 "Be a Good Egg" outreach days at seven beaches in CT and NY to raise awareness about beach-nesting birds and collected 1,673 pledges from beach-goers to "share the beach" by staying out of nesting areas, picking up trash, and not bringing dogs to the beach (see uploaded BGE messages, fact sheets, brochure, and beach activities).
- Audubon posted 68 blog entries (Be a Good Egg blog <http://www.goodeggny.org/blog> and Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds blog ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com) and made 156 Facebook posts to recruit volunteers, update followers about our work, make followers aware of action alerts, and provide general information about beach-nesting birds and other shorebird species.
- Audubon published four articles to www.WXEdge.com (see below links) generating 6,476 hits:
 - 3/11/14 - http://www.wxedge.com/articles/20140311volunteers_needed
 - 4/3/14 - http://www.wxedge.com/articles/20140403helping_birds_and_people
 - 5/22/14 - http://www.wxedge.com/articles/20140522share_the_shore_this_holiday_weekend
- Audubon was interviewed by WSHU Public Radio just prior to Memorial Day Weekend (<http://wshu.org/post/start-beach-season-coincides-nesting-threatened-water-birds>).
- Audubon coastal bird work, including the Be a Good Egg, was covered in additional newspaper and other articles (see uploads).
- Created fact sheets, messaging, and other outreach materials (see uploads) to be used at Be a Good Egg and other outreach events.

- Created beach activities (see uploads) that were offered to families and kids on the beach during the Good Egg outreach days to further engage children and families.

Outcomes:

- **Outcome Goal:** 262 signs installed on beaches to educate the public about avoiding behaviors that harm beach-nesting birds.
End of Grant: 279 signs created and over 180 signs were installed as part of this project (150 signs had been installed in previous years).
 We worked with students to design more than the targeted number of signs, however, we did not install as many as we created because the sites we had permission to install signs were adequately covered with the signs we did install (over 180 signs). We plan to install the additional 100 signs that were created in 2015.
 - **Outcome Goal:** 10,000 reached by outreach and training
End of Grant: 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.
 - **Outcome Goal:** Hold two workshops to address project activities.
End of Grant: We held three workshops and assisted with two additional workshops. These included 3 Be a Good Egg training workshops and 1 shorebird identification workshop. We assisted partners with 2 Piping Plover monitor training workshops.
 - **Outcome Goal:** Recruit 135 volunteers to participate in the project
End of Grant: We recruited 443 volunteers who participated in the monitoring, stewardship and outreach activities associated with this grant.
 - **Outcome Goal:** Disturbance reduced to a minimum threshold on 130 acres at 11 beach-nesting bird sites through education and outreach.
End of Grant: 20 beach-nesting bird sites providing over 340 acres of habitat were improved by decreasing human disturbance through education and outreach
 - **Outcome Goal:** 9 sites supporting 55 breeding pairs of Piping Plovers and ~425 pairs of Least Tern will be protected and monitored.
End of Grant: Audubon staff and volunteers steward 20 sites that provided over 340 acres of habitat supporting 55 breeding pairs of plovers and over 200 Least Terns.
- This year fewer Least Terns returned to our nesting sites than in previous years, so our number of Least Terns is lower than originally anticipated. This parallels a decline in Least Tern numbers across NY and throughout much of the Northeast. We are discussing potential contributing factors and feel predators and a reduced prey base are major contributing factors. We plan to discuss predator management with landowners and are considering other strategies such as habitat restoration and attractant methods to increase tern numbers in future years. The prey base issue needs further research.
- **Outcome Goal:** A piping plover productivity of 1.5 fledglings per pair and Least Tern Productivity of .5 fledglings per pair.
End of Grant: Piping Plover productivity was 1.18 (NY) and 2.29 (CT) with an overall productivity of 2.25 at the sites we were working at, which was an increase from the previous year. Least Tern productivity was about .29 in CT, which, although below our goal, is an increase over the 0.16 productivity the previous year. Unfortunately in NY, Least Terns at the sites we steward had a productivity of 0, which we feel was a result of predators and are in discussions on how we can improve the situation in future years.
 - **Outcome Goal:** 200 pledges will be signed.
End of Grant: 1,673 pledges were signed.

- **Outcome Goal:** Our target is to reach 30 classrooms with Be a Good Egg programming.
End of Grant: We worked in 30 classrooms.
- **Outcome Goal:** Publish 24 blog posts and 72 facebook posts.
End of Grant: We posted 68 blog entries and made 176 posts to facebook.

3. Lessons Learned

Describe the key lessons learned from this project, such as the least and most effective conservation practices or notable aspects of the project's methods, monitoring, or results. How could other conservation organizations adapt their projects to build upon some of these key lessons about what worked best and what did not?

Through this project, we observed that committed and focused participation of staff and well trained, coordinated volunteers can be effective in reducing human disturbance and improving Piping Plover productivity. Plover productivity exceeded our original goal. However, we did see that even with reduced human disturbance, Least Terns were not productive, and we believe this was a result of reduced populations of preferred fish foraging and predation. Further observations and research of lower prey are needed. Committed long-term management coupled with research to better inform management are necessary if we want to stabilize or increase beach nesting bird populations, especially since they are competing for a resource that is heavily used by people.

We also found the face-to-face engagement during the Be a Good Egg outreach days to be successful in modifying behaviors on the beach. For example, at one of the sites where we work, fisherman used to clean their catch on the beach, leaving fish heads and entrails behind. Fishing line was also frequently found on the beach. Through the on-the-beach Be a Good Egg outreach, we were able to talk directly with the fisherman about how their activities might impact birds. Volunteers reported seeing fisherman removing trash from the beach and the town indicated that more people are taking an interest in maintaining the habitat at this site. We find face-to-face contact in addition to our other outreach efforts (e.g., web, media, brochures) are establishing a robust communication and community engagement campaign for our shorebirds.

Another very important lessons learned during the duration of this grant was the importance of strong partnerships. The partnership among NYC Audubon, Audubon CT, and Audubon NY allowed us to expand our programs to have a regional reach. This was very evident in our "Be a Good Egg" outreach work. By forming this partnership we were able to work at more sites and reach many more beach-goers than any one partner could have done alone and many more than what we anticipated at the start of the grant. Partners shared ideas and resources, which allowed us to be more efficient and successful during the grant period and for future years.

In addition to the three main partners on the grant, we furthered leveraged our work by partnering with additional outside partners that are critical to the protection of shorebirds. We have a long standing partnership with USFWS, NY and CT state agencies, municipalities and other NGOs (e.g., The Nature Conservancy, Roger Tory Peterson Institute, and Audubon chapters) that this project strengthened further. For example, we worked with USFWS to steward two additional beach-nesting bird sites on Long Island Sound (increasing the sites and acreage we originally set out to impact), which benefited both organizations and ensured quality stewardship of beach-nesting birds at the sites. The network of partners allowed us to respond to threats on the beach in ways we wouldn't have alone. For example, if one of the Audubon volunteers noticed tracks from quad/all-terrain vehicle at an important nesting beach, the network of partners allowed for quick response time. When this occurred, we contacted the state and USFWS, who then sent a conservation officer to investigate rapidly, which is what is needed to adequately address certain threats. Another example of our partnerships improving impact was with the installation of fencing and predator exclosures; both activities benefit from an increase in available personnel who can assist, sometimes without much advance notice, which is what is needed to effectively install the exclosures.

Additionally, we were also able to reach more students and beach-goers by partnering with local Audubon chapters on some of our education and outreach efforts. The Be a Good Egg program has been a very attractive program for land managers and partners. A lesson learned with working with other organizations on the outreach work is that each organization has its own capacities and interests, and some level of flexibility in determining ways that additional partners can participate allows for greater success. For example, in New York, the FTB! education program involves going into the classroom multiple times during the year and ends with a field trip to the beach to install the signs. One of our partners, North Fork Audubon, an all-volunteer organization, wanted to participate but could not commit to multiple

classroom visits so we worked with the chapter to modify the program to fit their capacities. This partnership expanded the education portion of this program and was a significant step forward as we were not only able to expand our reach, but also provide professional development services to additional educators.

When working with schools and students, we recommend that organizations try to work with a school that they already have a relationship with to increase the probability of buy-in. We also recommend engaging multiple professionals within a school to make projects more interesting and meaningful. Significant contributions were made to this project by a variety of school personnel, such as library media specialists, science curriculum coordinators, and art teachers. Another important component of this project was getting the students outside to experience first-hand the birds and habitats we were trying to protect. Unfortunately, it is difficult to schedule trips and transportation costs are expensive. This project allowed us to give the kids that powerful experience. We often share these lessons learned with other conservation organizations that are developing similar projects, including Audubon chapters and NJ Audubon.

4. Dissemination

Briefly identify any dissemination of lessons learned or other project results to external audiences, such as the public or other conservation organizations.

We disseminated information on our project through a variety of means, including facebook, blogs, tweets, newspapers, radio, newsletters, and public presentations (see uploads and outcome section).

We posted about our work on our “Be a Good Egg” Facebook page, Audubon’s Facebook pages, and Coastal Waterbird page. On our Facebook pages we posted broadly about beach-nesting birds, and also include updates about our stewardship work, work with school groups, and special events that we hold pertaining to beach-nesting birds (e.g. volunteer string fencing day) that were a part of this grant.

Additionally, we were invited to speak at the Long Beach Library as part of a lecture series, at a South Shore Audubon Society chapter meeting, and at NYC Audubon’s Harbor Herons meeting. In these presentations, we presented all of our coastal work, including our stewardship and outreach work on Long Island Sound supported by this grant. We also attended the Long Island Audubon Chapter Council Meeting in the fall and gave updates about this project and encouraged participation and expansion for the upcoming year.

Furthermore, we were able to disseminate the knowledge we gained from this project in 2014 at the Late Winter Waterbird Meeting/Municipal Training and at Piping Plover Monitor Training in March 2015. At the Late Winter Waterbirds Meeting, we were able to share the results of our work with colleagues across New England and the tri-state area and disseminate best management practices to municipal officials from towns with significant beach-nesting bird areas. Also, we have been working closely with NJ Audubon, sharing lessons learned, and materials to conduct Be a Good Egg outreach work there.

Finally, both the Municipal Training and Piping Plover Monitor Training were recorded and will soon be available online for others to view.

5. Project Documents

Include in your final programmatic report, via the Uploads section of this task, the following:

- 2-10 representative photos from the project. Photos need to have a minimum resolution of 300 dpi and must be accompanied with a legend or caption describing the file name and content of the photos;
- Report publications, GIS data, brochures, videos, outreach tools, press releases, media coverage;
 - Be a Good Egg (BGE) Beach-nesting Bird (BNC) Brochure
 - Be a Good Egg Bird Fact Sheet
 - Sample of kids signs that were installed on beaches
 - Be a Good Egg (BGE) Messages
 - Be a Good Egg (BGE) Outreach Activities
 - Be a Good Egg dog messages
 - Be a Good Egg Pledge Card
 - Be a Good Egg Pledge Sheet
 - Map showing Where we Worked

- Be a Good Egg Movie
 - Eight Photos and word document with captions for photos
 - Various press, online and magazine articles from NY and CT
 - Dogs on Beach Message document
 - Media tip sheet
- any project deliverables per the terms of your grant agreement.

POSTING OF FINAL REPORT: *This report and attached project documents may be shared by the Foundation and any Funding Source for the Project via their respective websites. In the event that the Recipient intends to claim that its final report or project documents contains material that does not have to be posted on such websites because it is protected from disclosure by statutory or regulatory provisions, the Recipient shall clearly mark all such potentially protected materials as “PROTECTED” and provide an explanation and complete citation to the statutory or regulatory source for such protection.*



















Nature Times



FLORA & FAUNA

Be A Good Egg!

JULY 15, 2014 | NYSPARKS | LEAVE A COMMENT

Audubon New York (<http://ny.audubon.org/>), the state's largest bird conservation organization has teamed up with New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to launch the 2014 "Be a Good Egg" campaign: A community engagement initiative to protect threatened and endangered beach-nesting birds. The goal of the Be a Good Egg (<http://www.goodeggnjny.org/>) project is to help people learn more about birds like Least Terns, Piping Plovers, and American Oystercatchers that nest and rest on the beaches of New York and New Jersey every spring and summer.

Between April and August every year, thousands of birds nest on the bare sand of New York beaches and inlets, including 30% of the Atlantic Coast Piping Plover population and many other migratory shorebirds that rest and refuel on the New York and New Jersey coastlines on journeys as long as 9,000 miles.

These hardy little birds are threatened by predators, extreme weather conditions, and humans. When a person or dog walks through a nesting area, the adults run or fly off in fear. During the nesting season, this exposes the eggs or chicks to fatally high temperatures and drastically increases the risk of predation. The survival and recovery of these species is dependent upon being able to nest and raise their young in an undisturbed environment.

Audubon New York, State Parks, and other partners are reaching out to visitors at New York beaches and asking them to pledge to “be a good egg” and share the beach with our native birds. As part of this project, volunteers are helping us reach out to people at beaches where Audubon is working with the local community to protect hundreds of nesting and migrating birds. To date, nearly 2,000 beach-goers have signed the “Be a Good Egg” pledge. Volunteers are an important part of this campaign and more are needed to help outreach events and shorebird surveys. To take the pledge, and to get more information about Be A Good Egg, including dates of the outreach events, visit

www.goodeggnjny.org
(<http://www.goodeggnjny.org/>)

The featured image is a nesting Least Tern. Photo by New York Audubon.



(<https://nysparksnaturetimes.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/piping-plover-chick-credit-patrick-comins.jpg>)

Piping Plover Chick, photo by Patrick Comins



(http://nysparksnaturetimes.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/oystercatcher-chick-lonely_audubonny-e1404329452104.jpg)

An Oystercatcher chick, photo by New York Audubon.

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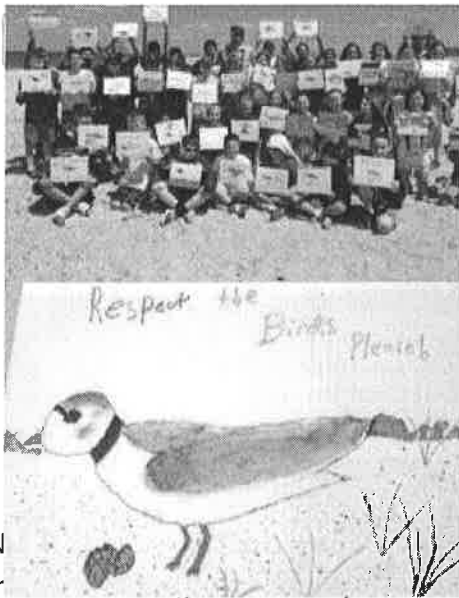
86°



News | Schools

Students and Cub Scouts Team Up to Protect Beach Nesting Birds

Posted by Elizabeth Fasolino , June 03, 2014 at 12:12 PM



More

The North Fork Audubon Society, Ms. Sara Campbell's class at the New Suffolk Common School, Ms. Sarah Maine's 5th Grade Science Students-Cutchogue East Elementary School, and Ms. Lynne Nyilas' Pack 39-Cub Scouts will be putting up signs on Wednesday, June 4th at 4 pm. Email northforkaudubon@mac.com or call Diana Van Buren at 917-623-5373 for more information.

The North Fork Audubon Society, Ms. Sara Campbell's class at the New Suffolk Common School, Ms. Sarah Maine's 5th Grade Science Students-Cutchogue East Elementary School, and Ms. Lynne Nyilas' Pack 39-Cub Scouts will be putting up signs on Wednesday, June 4th at 4 pm. Email northforkaudubon@mac.com or call Diana Van Buren at 917-623-5373 for more information.

As piping plovers and least terns begin their nesting season on North Fork beaches, local students have pitched in to help beach-goers remember that they must share the beach with endangered migratory birds by making colorful educational signs to be installed near nest sites.

This spring, local students and scouts learned about the needs of beach-nesting birds with the help of educators from Audubon New York, North Fork Audubon, their school teachers and Pack leader.

Their goal is to help beach-goers respect the boundaries around least tern and piping plover nesting areas and increase the productivity of the nests.

Some signs have been or will be installed at these beaches:

- Breakwater Beach, Mattituck
- Kenny's and McCabe's Beach, Mattituck
- Haywater Beach, Cutchogue
- South Harbor Beach, Cutchogue
- Gull Pond Beach (Norman Klipp Park), Greenport
- Orient Beach State Park

From the Web

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FLORA & FAUNA

Be A Good Egg!

JULY 15, 2014 | NYSPARKS | LEAVE A COMMENT

Audubon New York (<http://ny.audubon.org/>), the state's largest bird conservation organization has teamed up with New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to launch the 2014 "Be a Good Egg" campaign: A community engagement initiative to protect threatened and endangered beach-nesting birds. The goal of the Be a Good Egg (<http://www.goodeggnjny.org/>) project is to help people learn more about birds like Least Terns, Piping Plovers, and American Oystercatchers that nest and rest on the beaches of New York and New Jersey every spring and summer.

Between April and August every year, thousands of birds nest on the bare sand of New York beaches and inlets, including 30% of the Atlantic Coast Piping Plover population and many other migratory shorebirds that rest and refuel on the New York and New Jersey coastlines on journeys as long as 9,000 miles.

These hardy little birds are threatened by predators, extreme weather conditions, and humans. When a person or dog walks through a nesting area, the adults run or fly off in fear. During the nesting season, this exposes the eggs or chicks to fatally high temperatures and drastically increases the risk of predation. The survival and recovery of these species is dependent upon being able to nest and raise their young in an undisturbed environment.

Audubon New York, State Parks, and other partners are reaching out to visitors at New York beaches and asking them to pledge to “be a good egg” and share the beach with our native birds. As part of this project, volunteers are helping us reach out to people at beaches where Audubon is working with the local community to protect hundreds of nesting and migrating birds. To date, nearly 2,000 beach-goers have signed the “Be a Good Egg” pledge. Volunteers are an important part of this campaign and more are needed to help outreach events and shorebird surveys. To take the pledge, and to get more information about Be A Good Egg, including dates of the outreach events, visit

www.goodeggnjny.org
(<http://www.goodeggnjny.org/>)

The featured image is a nesting Least Tern. Photo by New York Audubon.



(<https://nysparksnaturetimes.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/piping-plover-chick-credit-patrick-comins.jpg>)

Piping Plover Chick, photo by Patrick Comins



(http://nysparksnaturetimes.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/oystercatcher-chick-lonely_audubonny-e1404329452104.jpg)

An Oystercatcher chick, photo by New York Audubon.

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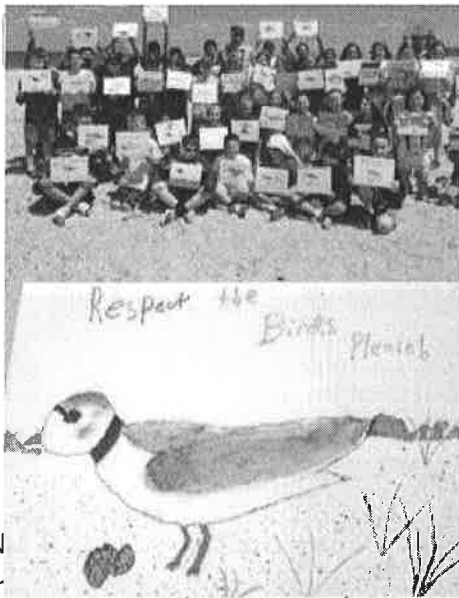
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News | Schools

Students and Cub Scouts Team Up to Protect Beach Nesting Birds

Posted by Elizabeth Fasolino , June 03, 2014 at 12:12 PM



More

The North Fork Audubon Society, Ms. Sara Campbell's class at the New Suffolk Common School, Ms. Sarah Maine's 5th Grade Science Students-Cutchogue East Elementary School, and Ms. Lynne Nyilas' Pack 39-Cub Scouts will be putting up signs on Wednesday, June 4th at 4 pm. Email northforkaudubon@mac.com or call Diana Van Buren at 917-623-5373 for more information.

The North Fork Audubon Society, Ms. Sara Campbell's class at the New Suffolk Common School, Ms. Sarah Maine's 5th Grade Science Students-Cutchogue East Elementary School, and Ms. Lynne Nyilas' Pack 39-Cub Scouts will be putting up signs on Wednesday, June 4th at 4 pm. Email northforkaudubon@mac.com or call Diana Van Buren at 917-623-5373 for more information.

As piping plovers and least terns begin their nesting season on North Fork beaches, local students have pitched in to help beach-goers remember that they must share the beach with endangered migratory birds by making colorful educational signs to be installed near nest sites.

This spring, local students and scouts learned about the needs of beach-nesting birds with the help of educators from Audubon New York, North Fork Audubon, their school teachers and Pack leader.

Their goal is to help beach-goers respect the boundaries around least tern and piping plover nesting areas and increase the productivity of the nests.

Some signs have been or will be installed at these beaches:

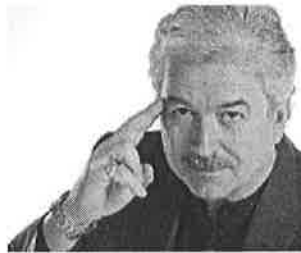
- Breakwater Beach, Mattituck
- Kenny's and McCabe's Beach, Mattituck
- Haywater Beach, Cutchogue
- South Harbor Beach, Cutchogue
- Gull Pond Beach (Norman Klipp Park), Greenport
- Orient Beach State Park

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<http://wxedge.com/2014/03/11/volunteers-needed-to-help-coastal-waterbirds/>

Volunteers Needed to Help Coastal Waterbirds



By Patrick Comins Published: March 11, 2014, 9:35 pm



Volunteers are needed to help steward and monitor Piping Plovers and other coastal waterbirds this spring and summer. Spend your summer days at the beach and help protect a federally threatened species!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its partners are seeking volunteers to monitor piping plovers and other shorebirds from early April until late August at beaches across our state. A training and orientation session for new volunteers will be held on **Saturday, March 15th 2014** from 10:30am to 12:00noon at the **Kellogg Environmental Center** at 500 Hawthorne Ave. Derby, CT; past volunteers will be offered a refresher from 9:00 to 10:15am. The sessions will review the following: biology of the piping plover, how to monitor breeding pairs and chicks, volunteer organization and logistics, and law enforcement information.

Help Wrap Up a Successful Shorebird Season!

<http://wxedge.com/2014/08/16/help-wrap-up-a-successful-shorebird-season/>



By Patrick Comins Published: August 16, 2014, 2:03 am

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It is looking like we are going to have a great year for Piping Plover productivity in Connecticut, but there is one last bit of work that needs to be done to wrap up a successful season...removing the fencing and signage at the key nesting areas. We are pretty short-handed this year, so any help we can get would be much appreciated.

There are three string fencing removal dates set by CT DEEP. The Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds would appreciate any volunteers who could help us out at these locations and times:

Monday, August 18th at 10:30AM – Long Beach in Stratford

Wednesday, August 20th at 10:00AM – Sandy/Morse Points in West Haven

Tuesday, August 26th at 10:00AM – Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford

Assisting not only helps AAfCW but it also greatly aids those at CT DEEP who have extremely limited time. It also limits the stress on young, feeding and migrant birds. Please remember that taking down fencing in August can be physically demanding because of the potential heat and humidity, and those who join us should remember a few things:

- wear sunscreen
- drink plenty of water or sports drink
- do not attempt to carry too many stakes, (hopefully) there will be enough volunteers and staff members so that no one should overexert themselves
- anyone who needs to limit physical exertion should stick to winding up string rolls
- take as many breaks as needed

In general we look for everyone we can to help out even if you are not a past monitor or volunteer – the more the merrier. It also makes for a more pleasant morning of bird watching and discussions on the beach. Please email us at ctwaterbirds@gmail.com if you can join us on any or all days, and thank you!

—

Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds

<http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com>

You never know what you will find while out helping the birds. It has been a great year for Black Skimmers along the coast of Connecticut. The above picture bird was seen at Sandy (Morse) Point in West Haven a few weeks back.

Patrick Comins is Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Connecticut.

<http://ct.audubon.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/AudubonCT>

The Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds is a partnership between Audubon Connecticut, and the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History and is proud to continue our active conservation, education and outreach work for a third season with our state and federal partners due in part to funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Long Island Sound Futures Fund and the generous support of people like you!

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Audubon-Alliance-for-Coastal-Waterbirds/168520783251234>

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<https://give.audubon.org/Giving/Page/67/1/67>

<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/grants/lis-futures-fund/>



What it's All About

People and shorebirds can successfully share the shore so long as we give them some respect and some space. It is too early to say for sure, but this year may be among the most successful ever in Connecticut for nest success by the federally threatened Piping Plover. This is in large part due to dedication and efforts of our many volunteers. Thank you to you all.

It's not too late to play a part in this breaking success story by contacting us at ctwaterbirds@gmail.com if you can join us on any or all days, and thank you!

—

Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds
<http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com>

The above Piping Plover chick was photographed at Milford Point in Milford, one of many sites our volunteers help to steward along the coast of Connecticut.

[More stories](#) by Patrick Comins



Great Year for Rare Birds

Our staff and volunteers have been enjoying some great sights this summer. Volunteering for the Audubon Alliance is a great way to enjoy some beautiful places, see some great birds, help our threatened beach-nesting birds and help to ensure continued public access at key nesting sites by minimizing conflict between the birds and beach-goers.

Please email us at ctwaterbirds@gmail.com if you would like to become part of the team.

Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds

<http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com>

White-faced Ibis at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison from late June. There has also been an immature White Ibis being seen along the Connecticut shore this summer.



An Exciting Challenge

We were recently afforded with the opportunity to study up on one of the toughest identification challenges in North American Birding when a Long-billed Dowitcher showed up at the Leete's Island Marsh on the boundary of Guilford and Branford. Dowitchers can be easy to tell apart if they both species are side by side, or if you are seeing juvenile birds, or if the birds vocalize. A solitary adult bird can present quite a challenge though.

At this time of year 99.99% of dowitchers you find in Connecticut are Short-billed Dowitchers. Occasionally, an adult Long-billed, which would normally migrate through the central flyway, gets blown off-course and shows up in our area. The later in the fall you get, the less likely a Short-billed Dowitcher will be seen in the state. At some point in say October, Long-billed Dowitchers become the more likely choice. We don't often get the chance to see adult birds in breeding plumage, but we were even more fortunate because the sighting came on the heels of a less uncommon find at the same location, an adult Short-billed Dowitcher of the inland (*hendersonii*) subspecies.

Bill length can be a good clue, but often these birds will have their bill buried in the mud as they actively feed and angle of view can also be deceptive. Below is the same bird, but at a slightly different angle, showing it's amazingly long bill.

Most adult Short-billed Dowitchers that we encounter in Connecticut will be straightforward to identify, as they tend to be much plainer in color than Long-billed, but there are exceptions. The

more brightly colored inland race of Short-billed Dowitcher is a great mimic, but tends to be smaller, shorter billed and more strongly marked than a Long-billed. For more tips on this identification challenge, please see the link below.

If seen together the challenge of separating these two species can evaporate pretty quickly because of the larger size of Long-billed Dowitchers.

For much more information on this fun challenge: <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~ctlee/LeeBirchDowitcher.pdf>



Another Treat from the Central Flyway.

We do see a few Stilt Sandpipers each year (in most years at least), but most of these birds take an inland route similar to that of the Long-billed Dowitcher.

The Leete's Island Marsh on the Branford/Guilford line offers a rather unique habitat type in Connecticut. It is a sunken marsh. A combination of man-made tidal flow restrictions and our slowly rising seas has caused this marsh to become a series of shallow-water pannes, rather than the typical expanse of marsh grasses that are typical of our tidal marshes. While the marsh grasses are critical to the health of Long Island Sound (and important barriers to the effects of storms and tidal flooding), the sunken marsh has become the perfect rest stop for these long-distance migrants.

Late July offered an opportunity to see not just one Stilt Sandpiper, but several at this location and the marsh recently hosted as many as 150 Lesser Yellowlegs, three Red-necked Phalaropes and an American Avocet. The latter two species are rare in Connecticut, but the Lesser Yellowlegs is a species facing big conservation challenges. It has faced shocking population declines in the past forty years and now may be at risk of extinction in the coming decades if we can't reverse the trends. One cause of this may be unregulated hunting in their Caribbean wintering grounds, but habitat loss in the migration pathways is also a concern. If the birds don't have adequate places to fatten up for their long journeys, they may not be able to reach their destinations. Thankfully, Connecticut is playing its part with our great migratory rest stops.



Terns of a Different Sort

Identification of terns can be intimidating, but at times it is an unwarranted fear. This isn't the greatest photo of a Roseate Tern, but I chose this one on purpose to show how distinctive they can be. No other tern has such a long tail and bright white color and with practice you can pick one out in flight from nearly a mile away. Some Roseate Terns have been seen recently at Sandy Point in West Haven. Seeing one of these birds anywhere in North America is a treat. Who says Connecticut doesn't have exciting wildlife viewing opportunities! Maybe we will see one next Wednesday in West Haven?

For more information on identifying Roseate Terns, please see:

The Roseate Tern, **19**:108-115 in *The Connecticut Warbler*

<http://www.ctbirding.org/Warbler/CTWarblerVolume19.pdf>

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Please email us at ctwaterbirds@gmail.com if you can join us on any or all days, and thank you!

—

Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds

<http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com>



Successfully Sharing the Shore

Thank you to everyone who helped to make this nesting season a success! Thanks to your efforts, the plovers had a great nesting season. A pair of Piping Plovers even successfully nested at Bridgeport's Pleasure Beach for the first time since 2011. We had worked with the City of Bridgeport and the Student Conservation Association to help ensure successful nesting by these federally threatened species. This year the beach was opened to the public for the first time in over ten years and we all worked together to prove that birds and people can successfully share the shore!

For more information on these efforts, please see:

<https://www.facebook.com/BridgeportWildlifeGuards>

It's not too late to play a part in this breaking success story by contacting us at ctwaterbirds@gmail.com if you can join us on any or all days, and thank you!

The above adult Piping Plover was photographed at Pleasure Beach in Bridgeport on the opening day for the return of public visitation.

—

Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds

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You never know what you will find while out helping the birds. It has been a great year for Black Skimmers along the coast of Connecticut. The above picture bird was seen at Sandy (Morse) Point in West Haven a few weeks back.

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Audubon-Alliance-for-Coastal-Waterbirds/168520783251234>

Audubon relies upon the generosity of people like you who care about birds and their conservation. It's safe and easy to make a tax deductible donation to support our conservation work in Connecticut with our online donation button.

<https://give.audubon.org/Giving/Page/67/1/67>

<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/grants/lis-futures-fund/>

We'd also like to thank Patagonia of Westport for their generous support of our bird conservation efforts in the Norwalk Islands.

Please thank them for helping the birds if you find yourself shopping there! https://www.patagonia.com/us/store/patagonia-westport_87-post-road-east-westport-ct-06880

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<http://wxedge.com/2014/04/03/helping-birds-and-people/>

Helping Birds and People



By Patrick Comins Published: April 3, 2014, 10:00 pm

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More than one dozen volunteers helped to get Sandy and Morse Points ready for the nesting season and least six Piping Plovers were already there to greet us. Piping Plovers are listed as “threatened” under both the federal and state Endangered Species Acts. They lay their eggs directly on the sand, which can make them quite vulnerable to trampling by unsuspecting beachgoers or susceptible to predators that do just fine in our human influenced landscape.

The good news is that with proper management, there is room for both people and birds at most nesting areas in the state. Our efforts to delineate nesting areas means that access does not need to be restricted across the board.

There is more work to be done though, we have work parties scheduled at several other key nesting sites for beach-nesting birds in the coming weeks:

<http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com/2014/03/april-fencing-dates.html>

Or you can email

ctwaterbirds@gmail.com

If you want to find out what else you can do to help!

The Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds is proud to continue our active conservation, education and outreach work for a third season with our state and federal partners due in part to funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Long Island Sound Futures Fund and the generous support of people like you!



The Heart of the Operation

Volunteers are the heart of our efforts to conserve coastal waterbirds in Connecticut. We simply could not do all that is needed if not for the more than 100 volunteers who help us out by being our eyes and ears on the beach and serving as ambassadors for these threatened birds. Thank you to all of you!

Helping Birds and People



By Patrick Comins Published: April 3, 2014, 10:00 pm

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Let Sleeping Oycs Lie

American Oystercatchers are listed as threatened on the State Endangered Species Act. They are spectacular birds, but can be quite skittish when faced with humans at close range. Bring your binoculars when you come to the shore so you can get a better view of these spectacular birds while maintaining a safe distance between you and them.

Helping Birds and People



By Patrick Comins Published: April 3, 2014, 10:00 pm

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Bonus Birds

We almost always see interesting birds while we are out putting up or removing the string fencing. Today's work party was no exception. Volunteers were treated to close up views of two Red-throated Loons that were feeding close to shore.



Big Cousin

Common Loons are another possibility, as large numbers of both loon species move through Long Island Sound in migration. The above bird is in non-breeding plumage, but soon they will be acquiring their more familiar elaborate breeding plumage.



A Family Affair

Volunteering can be fun for the whole family and is a great way to get outdoors while helping maintain beach access while sharing the shore with birds in need of a little help. To see a list of upcoming work parties, please see:

<http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com/2014/03/april-fencing-dates.html>



Side Benefits

Some birds, like this Least Sandpiper, don't nest anywhere near Connecticut, but only pass through in spring and fall migration. The nesting areas benefit these hungry travelers by offering a place to roost undisturbed while the tides are too high to fatten up for their long journeys. The availability of such high tide roosting spots have been found to be a limiting factor in whether shorebirds can use an area successfully as a migratory stopover site.

Helping Birds and People



By Patrick Comins Published: April 3, 2014, 10:00 pm

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You Never Know What You'll See

The areas that are important to beach nesting birds also serve a wide variety of wildlife. You never know what you'll see when your out volunteering to help these birds. Last fall, a White M Hairstreak, a rare butterfly that only occasionally visits Connecticut from the south, showed up while we were removing fencing and signs at Sandy Point, offering some of the volunteers a rare sight. This butterfly is named after the sideways white "M" on its under-wing. The upper-wings are brilliant metallic blue, but that is generally only seen when they are in flight.

[More stories](#) by Patrick Comins



You Never Know What You'll See 2

Snowy Owls are still being seen along the coast of Connecticut and often frequent the same wild areas that are important to our beach-nesting birds. Will we see a Snowy Owl on one of our work parties this year?



Where the River Meets the Sound

Griswold Point is a critical nesting area for Least Terns, Piping Plovers and American Oystercatchers. It is also a spectacular natural area where the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound meet. We are having a work party there next week. For a list of all opportunities, please see:

<http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com/2014/03/april-fencing-dates.html>



Semi-Important

Connecticut's beaches and tidal marshes provide critical habitat for some species that are in big trouble. Semipalmated Sandpipers nest in Arctic Canada and Alaska and winter in the Caribbean and South America. Without places like Sandy Point, Long Beach, Milford Point and Griswold Point, these birds could not fatten up for their long journey to their Arctic breeding grounds to arrive in prime condition to nest. Several sites along the shores of Connecticut have been submitted for consideration as Globally Important Bird Areas for the numbers of migrating Semipalmated Sandpipers that stop over to rest and feed in migration.

Most of the "rocks" on the beach above area actually Semipalmated Sandpipers.



Long Beach Coming Up

Long Beach, Stratford is an area where the beach birds face a lot of challenges in raising their young, from predatory pressures, to dogs (illegally) running through the nesting areas. Long Beach also lives up to its name. Many hands can make light work though, so please consider coming out when we get ready for the nesting season on Long Beach, Thursday April 10th at 10:00AM, with a rain date of Friday April 11th at 10:00AM. We will meet in the parking area.



More than Birds Benefit

Healthy barrier beaches are not only important to birds like Piping Plovers, Least Terns and migratory shorebirds, they also provide key buffers for coastal communities against the ravages of storms and provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, including diamond-backed terrapins.

For more information, please see:

<http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com/2014/02/volunteers-needed-for-shorebird.html>

Patrick Comins is Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Connecticut.

<http://ct.audubon.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/AudubonCT>

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work in Connecticut with our online donation button. Every donation of \$25 or more includes a membership to Audubon and a subscription to the award winning Audubon Magazine:

<https://give.audubon.org/Giving/Page/67/1/67>

<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/grants/lis-futures-fund/>

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<http://wxedge.com/2014/04/14/rock-to-rock-for-the-birds/11/>



Improving the Resource

Improving habitats in the watershed will also benefit water quality in New Haven Harbor by providing better buffers along the river and stream corridors that drain eventually into the harbor. Who knew that improving habitat for migrating songbirds could help Piping Plovers as well!

Audubon is also working to improve things for plovers more directly at Sandy Point through the Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds. The Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds is proud to continue our active conservation, education and outreach work for a third season with our state and federal partners due in part to funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Long Island Sound Futures Fund and the generous support of people like you!

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Share the Shore This Holiday Weekend

<http://wxedge.com/2014/05/22/share-the-shore-this-holiday-weekend/>



By Patrick Comins Published: May 22, 2014, 1:19 pm



Memorial Day Weekend is the traditional start of beach season, but it is also a critical time for our coastal waterbirds that call those beaches home. Piping Plovers and American Oystercatchers are at the peak of nesting and Least Terns are currently scouting out the best areas to set up colonies this summer.

The good news is that there is plenty of room for both people and birds on the shore! The plover and tern nesting areas are marked off with string fencing and signs indicating the presence of these state-threatened birds. Simply respecting these closed areas and especially local laws regarding where dogs are not allowed will give these struggling birds a break at this critical time of year.

To learn more about eight easy steps you can follow to help these birds, please see:

<http://rtpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/PIPL-brochure.pdf>

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<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/grants/lis-futures-fund/>



Oystercatchers Need Your Help Too

American Oystercatchers are a little more flashy than Piping Plovers. These large shorebirds are about the size of a chicken and their bold black and white markings and bright red/orange bill make them unmistakable.

But you don't even need to see them to know that they are around. They are quite vocal and once you learn their calls you can know when to pull out your binoculars to get a better look.

<http://www.larkwire.com/library/bird-sounds/400/American-Oystercatcher-songs-and-calls>

In addition to beaches, oystercatchers also nest on offshore islands, where they lay their eggs directly on the ground. If you are visiting any islands this weekend be mindful of their presence and take care to avoid disturbing them. Remaining below the high water mark whenever traveling along the shore will ensure that you don't inadvertently trample their eggs.

Here is a fact sheet about American Oystercatchers from Biodiversity Works if you would like to learn more about these species and what you can do to share the shore with them:

<http://biodiversityworksmv.org/beach-nesting-bird-protection/american-oystercatcher-fact-sheet/>



Travelers Too

Our locally nesting birds aren't the only ones using Connecticut's shoreline at this time of year. It is also an important time for migrating shorebirds. Some of these birds are fresh back from South America or the Caribbean. Be mindful of roosting flocks of migrant shorebirds on our beaches and islands and try to give them a wide berth. High tide is a particularly important time for them to rest up so they can forage for food when lower tidal levels exposes their feeding grounds.

Above, two Ruddy Turnstones at Sandy Point in West Haven



Shorebirds aren't just at the Shore

Some shorebirds you are more often found away from the shore. Birds like the Solitary Sandpiper prefer freshwater prey such as mosquito larvae. The best place to look for them are the shores of small ponds or especially in rain puddles on farm fields.

The above Solitary Sandpiper was photographed at Wethersfield Meadows along the Connecticut River.



Tern Sunrise

Sunrise over Little Gull Island recently as hundreds of Common Terns return to Great Gull Island for the first time since September. Some of our staff helped out with rebuilding tern blinds on the island last weekend. The island will need more help next weekend (May 30th and June 1st). You can contact Helen Hays at the American Museum of Natural History if you'd like to help locate and mark tern nests for a weekend.

hays@amnh.org

Terns are just setting up territories now and in many cases haven't decided where the best spot will be to nest this year.

Photo by Ewa Holland

Great Gull Island is the largest colony of endangered Roseate Terns in the Western Hemisphere.



Uplanders

You can occasionally find migrating Upland Sandpipers at the shore, as was the case with this bird photographed by Keith Mueller at Hammonasset Beach State Park. But at this time of year you will only find them at two places in Connecticut, Rentschler Field in East Hartford and at Bradley International Airport. Upland Sandpipers are creatures of the open prairie and require large expanses of grassland habitat to nest.

Photo by Keith Mueller

<http://www.oldhickory-ct.com/Keith%20Mueller.html>



Will This be the Year?

Black Skimmers haven't nested in the state in several years, but there have been several reports of them along the coast recently. They are really amazing birds. Keep an eye out along the coast and you might be treated to a show as they skim along the water in search of fish.



What is That!

Glossy Ibis are striking birds, with their glossy feather coat and large curved bill. Ibis are related to herons and egrets. They nest on offshore islands and only visit the mainland to forage for fiddler crabs and other invertebrates in our coastal marshes. Be mindful of disturbing nesting wading birds on any undeveloped vegetated island in the Sound.



Some Chicks Already

Aside from being tremendously cute, shorebird chicks are independent little critters. They are on their own for finding food from the moment they hatch. The main service the parents provide is to keep an eye out for danger and warn the chicks when a predator is near.

Excessive disturbance can force them to hide so often that they can't find enough food to fuel their quickly growing bodies. Like all birds, they attain their full adult size in just a few weeks and then never grow any larger.

The above Killdeer chick was photographed recently in Guilford.



Good Time to See Rare Birds

With the pending inclement weather leading up to the weekend it could be a good time to check ponds, lakes and puddles for rare visitors. The above bird is a Red-necked Phalarope found over the course of last weekend's Big Weekend Bird-A-Thon. These birds rarely come ashore except in their Arctic nesting grounds. They spend the winter far out at sea and then return to the Arctic, where it is the male birds that brood the eggs and watch after the quickly growing chicks. Females play no role in nest care once they have laid their eggs.



Injured Bird?

If you see what appears to be an injured plover making a racket and flapping its wings, it may not be injured at all. It may be trying to lead you away from its nest or chicks. This is a good time to watch your step and try to give the birds a little more space.

To learn about a year in the life of a Piping Plover:

<http://www.audubon.org/plover>

Patrick Comins is Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Connecticut.

<http://ct.audubon.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/AudubonCT>

The Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds is a partnership between Audubon Connecticut, and the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History and is proud to continue our active conservation, education and outreach work for a third season with our state and federal partners due in part to funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Long Island Sound Futures Fund and the generous support of people like you!

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Audubon-Alliance-for-Coastal-Waterbirds/168520783251234>

Audubon relies upon the generosity of people like you who care about birds and their conservation. It's safe and easy to make a tax deductible donation to support our conservation work in Connecticut with our online donation button.

<https://give.audubon.org/Giving/Page/67/1/67>

<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/grants/lis-futures-fund/>

For more information, please see:

<http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com/2014/02/volunteers-needed-for-shorebird.html>

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<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/grants/lis-futures-fund/>



Not Just Plovers

Volunteers are essential for the conservation of Piping Plovers and other coastal waterbirds, including the state-threatened Least Tern.

Please note that there will be two training sessions, one for past monitors and one for new volunteers, and that the location has changed from previous years. If you previously volunteered as a monitor you will be contacted by the USFWS for more information about the refresher session soon.

<http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com/2014/02/volunteers-needed-for-shorebird.html>

Adult Least Tern with mummichog at Sandy Point in West Haven. Photo by Marc Rivadeneyra.

The Audubon Alliance is proud to continue our active conservation, education and outreach work for a third season with our state and federal partners due in part to funding from the NFWF Long Island Sound Futures Fund.



Experience the Splendor of Shorebird Migration

The spots that support beach-nesting birds in Connecticut are also great places to see migratory shorebirds as they pass through Connecticut on their way to and from nesting grounds in the Arctic and wintering areas to our south. Some shorebirds even spend the winter on our shores like the above pictured Sanderling, which is seen hunting an Atlantic slipper shell.



A New Partner this Year!

The Audubon Alliance is thrilled to welcome a new partner in our efforts to conserve coastal waterbirds this year, the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History (RTPI).

The [Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds](#) (Alliance), now in its third season is an active conservation, education and outreach project that provides stewardship and survey efforts. Volunteers and staff from the Alliance help federal and state officials in an innovative collaborative initiative along Connecticut's beaches, islands, and other coastal areas to monitor waterbirds like the Piping Plover, American Oystercatcher, Least Tern and many more.

RTPI's President & Executive Director Twan Leenders and Conservation & Outreach Coordinator Scott Kruitbosch were a part of the Alliance's creation during their time in Connecticut working for The [Connecticut Audubon Society](#) and are thrilled to be back on board! RTPI will be handling volunteer coordination this season.

Photo of Roger Tory Peterson by Noble S. Proctor, courtesy of RTPI|
<http://rtpi.org/>

For more information, please see:
<http://rtpi.org/rtpi-audubon-alliance-for-coastal-waterbirds/>

For more information about the Connecticut Audubon Society, please see:
<http://www.ctaudubon.org/>

For more information about Audubon Connecticut, please see:
<http://ct.audubon.org/>



You Never Know What You'll Find

Helping to monitor and steward Piping Plovers and Least Terns is a great way to get out to the shore and see some amazing birds while using your free time to help endangered shorebirds. You never know what you'll come across.

Black Skimmers, a type of tern sometimes attempt to nest along our coast in the midst of tern colonies. They have not successfully nested in many years, but pioneer scouts are spotted nearly every year. Will you be the first to help document nesting by this rare species in Connecticut this year?



Hone your ID Skills

Shorebird identification can be intimidating to beginning birders, but the best way to learn is to get out there and observe shorebirds or join the Audubon Alliance for one of our shorebird identification seminars. The above bird is a juvenile White-rumped Sandpiper, an uncommon migrant, which can be found in Connecticut in both spring and fall migration.

Please check our blog for any upcoming seminars or other events where you can learn about shorebirds:

<http://ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com/>



Why Do Plovers Need Help?

Piping Plovers are listed as “threatened” under both the State and Federal Endangered Species Acts. Piping plovers were common along the Atlantic coast during much of the 19th century, but commercial hunting for feathers nearly wiped them out. They recovered after the passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, but began to quickly decline again after the 1940’s.

Piping Plovers and other beach nesting birds don’t build nests, but rather lay their eggs directly on the beach (or in a small scrape in the sand). They rely on camouflage and distracting predators away from the nest by acting like they have a broken wing. The eggs are very vulnerable to trampling by unwary beach-goers. Additionally, coastal development has decreased the amount of available nesting habitat, making them more vulnerable to flooding from monthly “spring” tides. Piping Plovers were listed as federally threatened along the Atlantic Coast in 1986. Populations have recovered to a degree, but they are still not meeting federal recovery goals.

The danger does not end with the hatching of the eggs. The young birds are what are known as precocial chicks, meaning that from the moment they are hatched they are on their own to find food and hide from danger. The only role the parents play from then on is alerting them to danger and trying to lure predators away through their broken wing distraction.

To learn more about what you can do to help as a beach-goer, please see:

<http://rtpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/PIPL-brochure.pdf>

To learn more about Piping Plovers in Connecticut, please see:
<http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?A=2723&Q=326062>

Piping Plover chick, photo by Marc Rivadeneyra.



An “umbrella” Species

Coastal beaches and dunes provide critical habitat for more than just Piping Plovers, but plovers are a great indicator of the health of a barrier beach system. By ensuring that Piping Plovers have a safe place to raise their young we also help a whole ecosystem to remain healthy. Barrier beaches that support nesting plovers are also important barriers against the ravages of tidal flooding and coastal storms, and help to buffer human communities from the effects of these events.

Above is a Hairy-necked Tiger Beetle – *Cicindela hirticollis*, a state species of special concern, photographed at Sandy Point in West Haven



Ambassador of the Shores

Perhaps our most charismatic nesting coastal waterbird is the spectacular American Oystercatcher. Oystercatchers are listed as state threatened due to very low reproductive rates. As many as 53 pairs of oystercatchers nested on Connecticut's coast in 2013, but they only produced 36 chicks in total. This is actually an improvement and the highest level of productivity since we began monitoring this species activities in 2011. Our intensive stewardship of this species may be paying off. Audubon Connecticut's efforts to conserve American Oystercatchers is in large part due to the generous support of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and caring individuals like you.

<http://www.nfwf.org>



Be a Good Egg!

As part of our efforts this year, we are teaming up with Audubon New York to get beach-goers to sign our “Be a Good Egg Pledge”. To learn more about the pledge please see this website, which will be updated to include Connecticut this year:

<http://www.goodeggnjny.org/>

Patrick Comins is Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Connecticut.

<http://ct.audubon.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/AudubonCT>

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<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/grants/lis-futures-fund/>

Audubon Advocates For Coastal Waterbirds

September 26, 2014

Post-Journal

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Beaches are popular summer destinations for humans, but they are essential breeding habitats for a number of coastal birds.

At the next First Friday Lunch Bunch on Oct. 3, those interested can learn about a conservation project to protect threatened birds when Scott Kruitbosch, Roger Tory Peterson Institute conservation and outreach coordinator, talks about the Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds.

At the 11 a.m. event, Kruitbosch, an award-winning writer and photographer will show how, through collaborative action and an extensive outreach and education effort, humans and birds can indeed share the beach successfully. The Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds, in partnership with Audubon Connecticut and RTPI, is an active conservation, education and outreach project. It provides stewardship and scientific monitoring initiatives by volunteers and staff to support conservation efforts of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to protect beach-nesting birds.

The primary focus of this partnership is the continued protection of several at-risk bird species, including the federally threatened Piping Plover and the federally endangered Roseate Tern. Connecticut state-listed species such as American Oystercatcher, Common Tern and Least Tern are included in this initiative and additional data is collected on other waders and shorebirds.

Every day from early April through September more than 100 trained volunteer shorebird monitors and field staff visit more than 50 of Connecticut's busy beaches, islands, and other coastal areas - including several of Roger Tory Peterson's favorite areas. They document beach-nesting birds, help to erect string fencing around nest sites and educate beachgoers about the importance of these conservation initiatives. They report daily to Kruitbosch, who coordinates the monitoring efforts and organizes follow-up actions in collaboration with the appropriate authorities and landowners.

Kruitbosch hails from Stratford, Conn., and received his bachelor's degree from Fairfield University. He has been involved with numerous conservation initiatives in the past decade, serving as a board

member for the Connecticut Ornithological Association, co-captain of the ornithological team in multiple Yale Peabody Museum BioBlitzes, member of the International Rusty Blackbird Technical Working Group, and coordinator of the Boothe Park Hawk Watch, among others.

Following the program, coffee and tea will be provided for a bring-your-own brown bag lunch. The fee for attending is \$8 or \$6 for Friends of the Nature Center. Reservations are not required.

The Audubon Center & Sanctuary is at 1600 Riverside Road, a quarter-mile east of Route 62 between Jamestown and Warren. For more information, call 569-2345 or visit www.jamestownaudubon.org.

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Island project gets a big lift



A Connecticut Army National Guard CH-47G Chinook helicopter from Bravo Company 2/104 Aviation Regiment lowers a pallet of lumber to the ground on Great Gull Island on Friday. Go to www.theday.com to view a photo gallery of the airlift. Sean D. Elliot/The Day [Buy Photo](#)

Published April 26, 2014 4:00AM

By [Judy Benson](#)

Publication: The Day

[8](#)
[2](#)

At around 2:30 Friday afternoon, Helen Hays was watching the third and final load of lumber being lowered off a CH-47G Chinook helicopter onto a spot at the western end of Great Gull Island, the culmination of a unique mission by the Connecticut Army National Guard.

"It's very exciting," said Hays, speaking by cellphone from the 17-acre bird sanctuary located about 7 miles offshore in Long Island Sound, where she has been manager since 1968. "It went very quick. It was very well organized."

At the request of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Guard agreed to airlift 28,000 pounds of pressure-treated 2-by-12-inch and 2-by-4-inch lumber from Groton-New London Airport to the island, owned by the American Museum of Natural History. The island is a "supercolony" for federally endangered roseate terns and common terns, providing nesting areas for more than 10,000 pairs. Volunteer carpenters will use the lumber to build hillside terraces

that will serve as new nesting areas for the terns and will also build about 20 bird blinds to replace those destroyed by Superstorm Sandy in 2012.

Suzanne Paton, fish and wildlife biologist with the Fish & Wildlife Service, said about \$60,000 in grant funds was used to purchase the lumber and pay the National Guard for the fuel used in the airlift. Those funds were supplemented with \$10,000 from Connecticut Sea Grant, located at the Avery Point campus of the University of Connecticut in Groton.

The airlift was originally scheduled for last Tuesday but had to be postponed because of high winds and additional paperwork requirements.

"We have a little bit of time to get the supplies in there where we won't be disturbing the birds," said Paton, adding that the terns are expected to start arriving during the first full week of May.

Lt. Col. Mark Strout said the National Guard unit has done missions for other federal agencies such as the Coast Guard, but this was the first time it was asked to help the Fish & Wildlife Service. Strout added that he was enthusiastic about Friday's airlift both because it would benefit a critical nesting area for endangered birds and because of his fondness for the museum that owns the sanctuary. He said he visits the New York City institution at least three times a year.

"And this is good training for us, because these are nonstandard-sized loads," he said as crews ratcheted cargo straps tight and fixed slings around the loads in preparation for the airlift.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Matthew McCullough, one of two pilots aboard the helicopter, said the National Guard unit has conducted many airlifts, carrying tractors, armored vehicles and other equipment and supplies to a number of locations, including Afghanistan last September. "We do tons of this kind of thing overseas," he said.



An air crew from the Connecticut Army National Guard's Bravo Company 2/104 Aviation Regiment rig three loads of lumber for lifting by one of the unit's CH-47G Chinook heavy-lift helicopters Friday at Groton-New London Airport in Groton. The lumber was bound for a U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service project on Great Gull Island in Long Island Sound. The island's dock and bird blinds were washed away by Superstorm Sandy in 2012. Sean D. Elliot/The Day [Buy Photo](#)

On Great Gull Island, six volunteers and Hays awaited the arrival of the lumber, which was offloaded in two locations. Because the dock on the island was destroyed in Superstorm Sandy, the airlift was the only practical means of getting the lumber there.

Hays said nine carpenters, including several from Electric Boat recruited by New London resident Bud Bray, have agreed to volunteer their services on the island May 3 to build the terraces and blinds.

"We've got a good crew," she said.

j.benson@theday.com

- [Next Article](#)

You must be [a member](#) and be logged in before you can post comments.

READER COMMENTS

gfpj

Posted 11 months ago

And rainbows and lollipops...

HipsterG

Posted 11 months ago

Thank you, Judy, for your informative piece. I was wondering what the big chopper was out there for!

You never know what you'll see on the Thames... Friday, it was that huge Chinook, this morning a giant green cargo ship on its way back out to sea... subs now n then carrying our brave sailors to and from the four corners of the world... curious pleasure boaters... coast guard maneuvers with synchronized fast moving boats proving we have plenty reason to feel safe round these parts... and soon, hopefully, we'll be seeing water taxis start to find ways to move people around the emerging Thames River Heritage Park... the Eagle looks great at her HOME on City Pier. Looking forward to the Charles W. Morgan (I call it the Captain Morgan) visiting soon and the pier coming alive. I never imagined living on a port could be so cool!



Be a Good Egg

Share the beach with nesting birds.

Beach-nesting Birds and Nests

Piping Plover:



American Oystercatcher:



Least Tern:



Common Tern:



Black Skimmer:





About Beach-nesting Birds:

Each summer beach-nesting birds return to the beaches of Long Island to nest. These species lay their eggs directly on the sand and raise their chicks right on the beach! The eggs and chicks of these ground-nesting birds are vulnerable to human disturbances, predators, and weather. Due to various threats many beach-nesting species are listed as endangered or threatened. “Be a Good Egg” encourages beach-goers to share the beach with nesting birds so the birds can successfully nest and raise their young.

Threats to Beach-nesting Birds:

- Habitat loss from human development
- Disturbance from recreation
- Dogs on the beach (especially off leash)
- Feral and outdoor cats
- Introduced and native predators
- Trash left on the beach
- Off-road vehicles

What you can do to help:

- Stay out of posted or fenced nesting areas
- Respect “no dog” signs and local leash laws
- Pick up your trash
- Keep cats indoors
- Respect off-road vehicle closures
- Volunteer!

Pledge to Share the Beach!

Visit **WWW.GoodeggNY.org** or scan below to learn more about beach-nesting birds, volunteer opportunities, and to pledge to share the beach with nesting birds!



Audubon NEW YORK



NEW YORK CITY AUDUBON

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Be a Good Egg

Share the beach with nesting birds.

Basic Beach-nesting Bird Biology:

- Breeding season for most beach-nesting birds is April through the end of August
- Beach-nesting birds lay eggs directly on sand in a small scrape and incubate for 3 - 5 weeks depending on species
- Eggs and chicks are well camouflaged to stay hidden from predators
- Beach-nesting birds lay 1-5 eggs depending upon species
- Chicks can walk and run within hours of hatching, but cannot fly for 3 – 5 weeks
- Piping Plover chicks are able to feed themselves as soon as they hatch
- Tern chicks are fed by parents until they are able to fly, while oystercatcher chicks are fed by parents until their bills fully develop.

Cool Facts:

- Both males and females incubate the eggs and take care of the chicks
- A large proportion of Piping Plovers over winter in the Bahamas, which is over 1,000 miles away
- Terns dive head first into the water to catch fish
- Piping Plovers will pretend to be injured by feigning a broken wing to lure predators away from their nests and chicks
- American Oystercatchers use two foraging techniques: hammering and stabbing
- Male terns will court females by offering her a fish. They can often be seen waving a fish in front of a female during the breeding season

Threatened and Endangered Species Information:

- Due in part to threats such as habitat loss from development, human disturbance, and predators, many of these species are listed as threatened or endangered
- The Piping Plover is a federally threatened species and also a Connecticut State threatened species
- Least Terns and American Oystercatchers are Connecticut State threatened species
- The Common Tern is a Connecticut State species of special concern





Be a Good Egg

Share the beach with nesting birds.

General Be a Good Egg Messages:

- Did you know there are birds nesting on this beach? These birds (pictures) nest on this beach.
- Successfully laying eggs and raising young is what allows these birds to survive as well as maintain and sometimes grow their populations.
- You can help these birds while you're at the beach today. By staying out of nesting areas, picking up your trash, and leaving your dogs at home you can help these threatened birds to survive.
- Would you be willing to pledge to help these birds?

How your pledge helps the birds:

- Staying out of fenced areas prevents eggs from being stepped on—look how camouflaged the eggs are, really hard to see (show pictures of eggs)—and reduces disturbances to adults that are tending to eggs and young chicks.
- Keeping dogs off the beach means that adult birds are not scared away from protecting their eggs and young chicks. When adult birds are undisturbed they can protect their eggs from bad weather and predators.
- By picking up your trash you make beaches less attractive to predators and more attractive to people. Less predators on the beach means that more eggs and chicks survive.

Why disturbance is bad for beach-nesting birds:

- By entering fenced areas eggs and chicks can accidentally be stepped on
- Disturbances, including dogs on the beach and/or people within fenced areas can scare adult birds away from nests.
- Unattended nests are vulnerable to predators and extreme temperatures leading to egg and chick loss
- Trash left on the beach can attract predators to nesting areas

Why protect these birds?

- It's the law. These species are protected by both federal and state laws.
- They are rare species and with a little help from you their future is more secure.
- We want generations to come to have the opportunity to enjoy these species on our beaches
- Fencing that protects these species also helps preserve habitat for diamondback terrapins and plants such as the state endangered beach needlegrass. Fencing also helps to protect sensitive dune systems.
- When these birds are successfully breeding on our beaches it means our beaches are healthy places for them and us.



Be a Good Egg Example Activities:

Note: These activities are best for small family groups or individuals.

- Egg Sidewalk Chalk Art: Encouraged children and adults to draw portraits of native birds and other wildlife. In chalk eggs scattered throughout area, include Be a Good Egg pledge commitments. The art was visible for several days and beach goers that did not stop to talk would often read the chalk.
- Giant Chalk Egg Nest: Every time someone signs the pledge to Be a Good Egg, they added their egg to the nest.
- Egg Decorating: Using recycled materials, young beachgoers decorated their own "eggs" to take home with them. Many of the supplies were very showy and brightly colored, but there was also the choice of using sand and glue. We would then compare the crafted egg to a real egg. Which one would be easier to notice? Introduced the idea of camouflage and asked why would a bird want camouflaged eggs? What would camouflaged eggs mean for people sharing the beach with nesting shore birds (hard to see, might step on them)?
- Can you Spot the Nest: Using images of real, well camouflaged nests on beaches, challenged beach goers to try and find nests. I talked to beach goers about always being aware and looking out for nests in and out of marked nesting areas.
- Can you ID me- Identification guessing game: Using poster board, pictures of native birds, and tape, constructed a board with picture that when lifted up show the name of the species. It was a fun way for beach goers to quiz themselves about the birds they often saw when visiting local beaches.
- Bird Fact jeopardy: Created a stack of interesting bird related questions and asked beachgoers if they wanted to quiz themselves. Very simple and fun activity!
- Best Beak for the Job: Young beachgoer investigate how bird beaks are adapted for consuming different food sources. Supplies Used: tweezers, clothespins, spoons,

straws, small flat stones, cooked spaghetti, uncooked rice, raisins, birdseed, plastic worms, cup, water, and data sheet

Introduction

1. Ask if they have ever noticed that different species of birds have differently shaped beaks. Show pictures of birds with different types of beaks, and have students speculate on the task each type of beak performs.
2. Tell them that they will be investigating how birds' beaks are adapted to perform different jobs.

Procedure

3. Allow them to explore the materials and "eat" food with the different types of beaks.

Observations and Conclusions

4. Ask the following questions
 - What type of beak is best for tearing meat? (Sharp and curved)
 - How do these beaks compare to the sharp teeth of meat-eating animals?
 - Why might a liquid-sipping beak like the straw gradually change to a beak that not only sips but can also chew? (This might occur if the bird's supply of liquid begins to disappear, necessitating a change in diet for the bird's survival.)
- Make a nest and what do we do around nests: Young beachgoers created a nest for the model oystercatchers and practiced proper beach protocol around nesting sites. I tried to get young children and their parents to think about disturbances from a bird's perspective and how we can unintentionally impact nesting birds in significant ways. If families were too busy to create a nest of their own, we practiced modeling with either example nest or a chalk nest.

Supplies Needed: 1) Either use recycled materials like cardboard, twine, tape, glue, something round to resemble an egg etc OR 2) Find natural materials on site.

What to do about Dogs on Beaches

If there is an unruly dog owner with an unleashed dog on the beach, call the town constable or local animal control to report the incident. SEE BELOW FOR LOCAL ORDINANCES.

Westbrook (Town Beach)
Town Constable
860-399-7304
Animal Control
860-790-1075

West Haven (Sandy Pt)
Animal Control
203-937-3642

Stratford (Long/Short Beach)
Animal Control
203-385-4068

WHAT TO REPORT TO ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS (what info to include in your message):

- Exact location of incident
- Time of incident
- Description of action
- Description of person, vehicle, license plate number, any other pertinent information
- Your contact information for any follow-up questions they may have

Remember that while the officer may not be able to respond to the incident in a timely manner, leaving a message creates a record that there is an issue at this particular site. The officer may be able to follow up and catch chronic offenders if he/she can establish patterns of the offense with information that you have provided.

State of Connecticut Dog Laws:

Roaming Dogs

The Connecticut General Statutes do not mandate that dogs be leashed at all times but a dog's owner/keeper must not allow it to roam on another person's land or on public highways (including sidewalks) if it is not under his control. The methods of "control" are not defined in the statutes therefore it is a gray area as to whether a dog can be under "voice control" by its owner. Violating the state roaming law is an infraction punishable by a fine of \$92 (CGS § 22-364).

In addition to the state's roaming dog statutes, there is a statute that gives local governments the power to create leash ordinances. See below for the town ordinances for dogs in the towns that piping plovers breed in. Additionally, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection requires that owners keep their dogs leashed in state parks at all times. Some parks have a seasonal restriction for dogs being allowed on beaches.

Town and City Dog Laws:

Please keep in mind that above mean-high tide is private or municipal property and below is public land. Many of these ordinances are aimed at public and town-owned property only. Beach dog ordinances usually DO NOT trump private property (that is beach) rights.

Westbrook:

Dogs prohibited on town-owned beaches between May 1-September 30.

Section 2-10 Use of Town Properties (c) Horses, Other Livestock, Dogs and Other Pet Animals: In no event shall any horse, other livestock, dog (except as set forth herein) or other pet animal be permitted, either leashed or unleashed, walked or ridden, on any park, athletic field, playground or beach, except in such areas and at such times as may be designated by the Board. Dogs shall be permitted on any beach between October 1 and April 30, provided they shall be properly leashed.

Stratford:

Beaches: Long Beach, Short Beach

Dogs prohibited on beaches from April through November.

152-17(a) Town of Stratford Beach Law

Dogs are not permitted on any portion of any town beach. This includes, but is not limited to, all of Short Beach Park, Long Beach, Long Beach West and the beach at The Sea Wall.

§ 83-15 Leash required; removal of feces; violations and penalties.

No owner or keeper of any dog, whether licensed or unlicensed, shall allow such dog to roam at large upon the land of another and not under the control, by leash or similar restraint, of the owner or keeper or agent of such owner or keeper, provided that nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or prohibit the legal use of hunting dogs during the open hunting or training season. The unauthorized presence of any dog on the land of any person other than the owner or keeper of such dog or any portion of a public highway, street or sidewalk or any other Town property when not under the control, by leash or similar restraint, of the owner or keeper, shall be prima facie evidence of a violation of the provisions of this article. Any person who violates this article shall pay a fine of \$25 for the first offense and \$50 for the second offense, and for any subsequent offense, the same shall be a misdemeanor in violation of C.G.S. § 22-363, Nuisance, and a court appearance would be required.

West Haven:

Beaches: Sandy Point

Dogs prohibited from April 1-September 1.

Per West Haven Shoreline Regulations.



Be a Good Egg

Share the beach with nesting birds.

I pledge to:

1. Stay out of marked or fenced areas where birds are nesting.
2. Keep the beach clean by using proper trash receptacles or carrying out my trash.
3. Obey "no dogs allowed" signs by not bringing my dog to the beach.

Name _____ **Email** _____

Address _____

Signature _____

Check here if you would like to receive emails about other Audubon NY events _____

Check here if you would be willing to participate in a short follow-up survey _____



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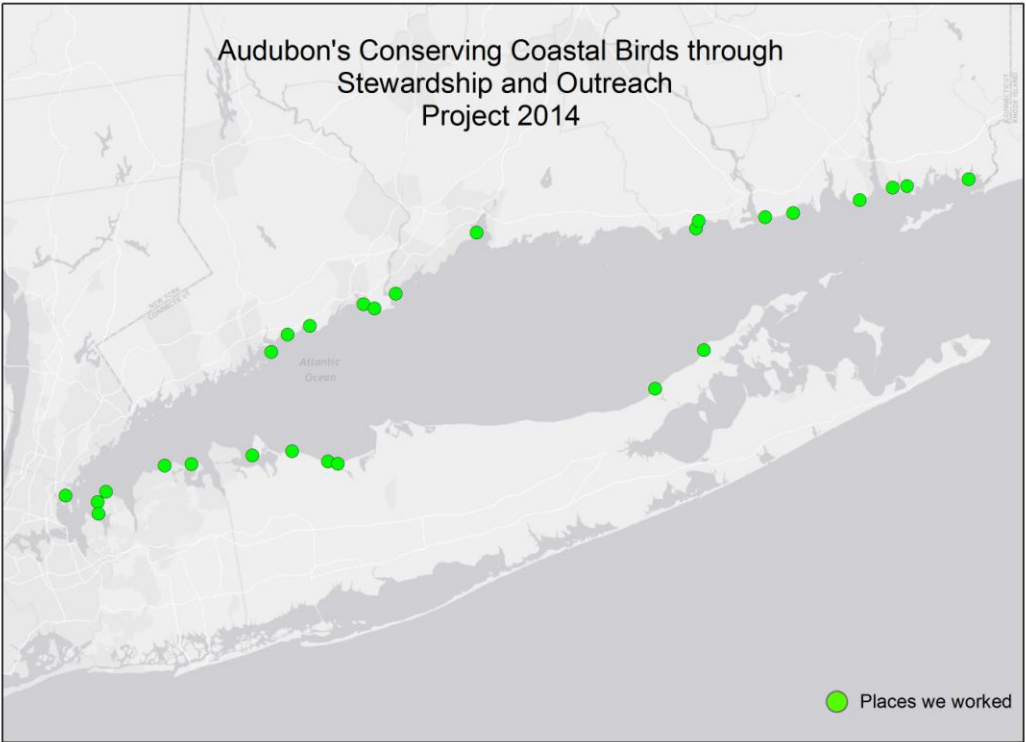
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[illegible]



Photos for Grant 1401.13.039576
Audubon's Conserving Coastal Birds through Stewardship and Outreach

"Kidsfieldtrip.jpg" Students from Roosevelt School District participate in the Audubon FTB! Education program and visit the beach nesting bird site where the signs they designed will be installed to encourage people to share the beach with shorebirds.

"kidsign" Drexel student stands next to a sign she designed that has been installed on the beach to encourage people to share the shore with nesting shorebirds.

"Pipingplover" The Piping Plover is a target species for Audubon's coastal bird stewardship and outreach work.

"pledge" Audubon held "Be a Good Egg" outreach days on busy beach days to encourage people to sign a pledge to commit to sharing the beach with nesting shorebirds.

"predatorexclosures" As part of Audubon's beach stewardship work, staff and volunteers installed predator exclosures around Piping Plover nests to help protect against predators.

"Roosevelt Sign Contest Winners" The Roosevelt students whose signs were selected to be installed at beaches where birds nest to encourage people to share the beach with nesting birds.

"schoolfieldtrip" As part of the Audubon FTB! program, students visited beaches where priority coastal birds nest to see the habitat and birds first hand.

"stringfencing" As part of Audubon's beach stewardship work, staff and volunteers installed string fencing around nesting habitat to help reduce disturbance to nesting birds.

"1401.13.039576 BGE display" Beach visitors take their picture behind a Piping Plover display.

"1401.13.039576 posters" Posters created for display during Be a Good Egg outreach events.