



Summary

The Trustees protect and manage 26 miles of coastal beaches that provide critical habitat for a wide range of both listed and non-listed wildlife species, especially birds. Unlike listed species (e.g., piping plover and least tern), non-listed bird species with similar habitat needs do not receive the same level of regulatory protection and as a result, typically receive less on-the-ground protection and are more vulnerable to disturbance. However, non-listed species face the same threats as listed species and are often equally as rare in Massachusetts as listed species dependent on beach habitat. To ensure non-listed bird species remain part of the beach experience and maintain viable populations the Trustees has developed this policy.

Species covered under this policy include birds which nest on Trustees coastal beaches but do not receive protection under the Federal Endangered Species Act or the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. Species include American oystercatchers, willets, great black-backed and herring gulls (breeding pairs with nests/chicks), black skimmers and migratory and staging terns and shorebirds. All of these species except black skimmer are Species of Greatest Conservation Need for Massachusetts and the black skimmer is at its northern range with 12 or fewer pairs breeding annually. Many of these species including American oystercatchers and migratory shorebirds are included in national conservation plans due to population declines and concerns for the species future security.

Protection of Nests:

- Nests will be symbolically fenced following the guidelines for listed species to limit disturbance to nesting birds and the risk of nest destruction by pedestrians or OSVs
- Signage will be placed marking the area as a nesting area and foot and vehicle traffic prohibited from fenced area.
- If alternative routes exist prohibit OSV use not including Trustees Essential OSVs.
- If alternative routes are not available, symbolic fencing placement will maximize the buffer around nests while allowing passage for OSVs and pedestrians following The Trustees OSV guidelines and Beach Management Plans.

Protection of Chicks:

- When alternative routes are available The Trustees will restrict non-essential OSVs from where unfledged chicks are present and reroute traffic away from unfledged chicks.
- When alternative routes are not available, and areas are not currently closed to OSVs due to listed species:
 - Signage and speed-restricting fencing should be placed in areas of unfledged chicks and maintained until chicks have fledged or moved to other areas.
 - OSV operators and permit holders will be informed via social media reminding people of the presence of unfledged chicks in specific areas.

Feeding/Staging Grounds:

- When alternative routes for OSVs are available The Trustees will restrict non-essential OSVs from where migratory birds and newly fledged chicks congregate*.
- When alternative routes are not available The Trustees will leave fencing up and/or expand to reduce disturbance
- Signage will be erected in these areas delineating their boundary and communicating the importance of undisturbed feeding and staging areas for increased survival during migration.

*Important feeding, loafing and staging sites are typically well known and monitored, but bird use can vary from year to year as habitat conditions change requiring annual review and modification of protection efforts.

References

Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative: Business Plan

<https://atlanticflywayshorebirds.org/about/>

Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/state-wildlife-action-plan-swap>

Atlantic Coast Joint Venture: Bird Conservation Region 30 (New England) Priority Species

https://www.acjv.org/BCR_30/BCR30_June_23_2008_final.pdf

Trustees Properties (no change)

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