



**Natural Heritage
& Endangered Species
Program**

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

**Sanderling
*Calidris alba***

State Status: **None**
Federal Status: **None**

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: The Sanderling is a relatively small (7 to 8 inches in length), active sandpiper of the outer beaches. Birds in spring are bright rusty about the head, back, and breast. Fall and winter birds are very pale, with pale gray back, white underparts, and black shoulder. Sanderlings have bold white wing stripes in both plumages.

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE: Sanderlings are a common migrants and common wintering birds in Massachusetts. The Monomoy islands and South Beach in Chatham support the largest numbers of migrating Sanderlings, although peak numbers have declined since the 1950s. This species breeds on the Arctic tundra and winters from Massachusetts to southern South America. NHESP does not track occurrences of Sanderlings in Massachusetts.

HABITAT DESCRIPTION Sanderlings inhabit sandy coastal beaches, sandspits, and intertidal flats in Massachusetts. The birds run along the lower beach, feeding on marine invertebrates.

THREATS: Disturbance associated with human recreation on beaches, including off-road vehicle use and dog-walking; loss or degradation of sandy beach habitat caused by human development or construction of hard structures, such as seawalls, jetties, armored coastal banks; and oil spills are all threats to Sanderlings in Massachusetts.

REFERENCES:

- MacWhirter, B., P. Austin-Smith, Jr., and D. Kroodsmma. 2002. Sanderling (*Calidris alba*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 653 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
- Veit, R., and W.R. Petersen. 1993. *Birds of Massachusetts*. Massachusetts Audubon Society, Lincoln, Massachusetts.

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A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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