

# Massachusetts Habitat Conservation Plan for Piping Plover

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2025 Annual Report

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

*February 13, 2026*



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I. Executive Summary

On July 8, 2016, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued a 26-year Incidental Take Permit (ITP) to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) in accordance with Section 10(a) (1) (B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1539 (a) (1) (B). Pursuant to the ITP, MassWildlife is responsible for administering the Massachusetts Statewide Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The HCP identifies covered activities that are authorized by the ITP that could expose Piping Plovers (*Charadrius melodus*) to “take.” Incidental Take coverage can be extended by MassWildlife to approved landowners and beach managers through Certificates of Inclusion (COIs).

During the 2025 beach season, nine beach operators held valid COIs encompassing ten permit-sites. Covered activities were carried out at seven beaches:

1. Curley Community Center, South Boston (“Curley Center”);
2. Duxbury Beach Reservation, Duxbury (“Duxbury Beach”);
3. Horseneck Beach State Reservation, Westport (“Horseneck Beach”);
4. Plymouth Long Beach, Plymouth (“Plymouth”);
5. Sandy Neck Beach Park, Barnstable (“Sandy Neck”); and
6. Wollaston Beach, Quincy (“Wollaston”). There were no covered activities carried out at other beaches included in the same COI, which are: Revere Beach State Reservation, Revere; Winthrop Shore Reservation, Winthrop; Nahant Beach State Reservation, Nahant; Carson Beach, South Boston; M St. Beach, South Boston, and Pleasure Bay, South Boston;
7. Wychmere Beach Club, Harwich (“Wychmere”).

Statewide, 32 pairs of Piping Plovers, including 78 chicks, were exposed to covered activities:

- *Use of Roads and Parking Lots in the Vicinity of Unfledged Chicks* – 19 pairs;
- *Oversand Vehicle (OSV) Use in the Vicinity of Unfledged Chicks* – 1 pair;
- *Recreation and Beach Operations* – 13 pairs;
  - *Reduced Fencing Around the Nest* – Nine pairs;
  - *Reduced Proactive Symbolic Fencing* – Seven pairs; and
- Multiple covered activities –Three pairs were exposed to both *Reduced Fencing Around the Nest* and *Reduced Proactive Symbolic Fencing*. These pairs are included above in each of those categories but counted only once each in Recreation and Beach Operations. One pair was exposed to both *Reduced Fencing Around the Nest* and *Use of Roads and Parking Lots* and is included and counted in each of the above categories.

Intensive impact avoidance and minimization measures were implemented at sites where the HCP was implemented this year. Required HCP compliance and effectiveness monitoring were carried out by both MassWildlife and COI-holders.

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- The 32 pairs exposed to covered activities fledged 38 chicks (1.19 fledglings per pair).
- Of the 19 broods exposed to use of roads and parking lots, 13 fledged at least one chick for a total of 22 fledglings (1.16 fledglings/pair). *(Note one pair is also counted in “reduced fencing around the nest,” below.)*
- The one brood exposed to OSV use fledged two chicks (2.0 fledglings per pair).
- Of the seven pairs exposed to reduced proactive symbolic fencing, at least three fledged at least one chick for a total of ten fledglings (1.43 fledglings per pair). Outcome was unknown for one pair. *(Note three pairs are also counted in “reduced fencing around the nest,” below.)*
- Of the nine pairs exposed to reduced fencing around the nest, four fledged at least one chick for a total of 12 fledglings (1.33 fledglings per pair). *(Note three pairs are also counted in “reduced proactive fencing” and one in “roads and parking lots,” above.)*

Participation in the HCP expanded recreational opportunities at all seven permit-sites where covered activities were implemented.

1. **Curley Center.** Reduced fencing and nesting deterrence allowed 0.25 acres of additional beach to remain open to recreation throughout the season.
2. **Duxbury Beach.** The Duxbury Beach Reservation operated roads, parking lots, and an OSV corridor, contributing to 149 days of recreational activity on Duxbury Beach.
3. **Horseneck Beach.** Reduced fencing around nests allowed for 0.8 acres of additional recreational and operational beach activities.
4. **Plymouth Long Beach.** The Town of Plymouth allowed recreational vehicle access and unescorted essential vehicle access to a road and parking areas for 83 days this summer. The HCP was implemented for Piping Plovers for 76 days and Least Terns for 66 days (59 overlapped with plover implementation and 7 were for Least Terns only).
5. **Wollaston.** Reduced fencing around nests allowed for 0.7 acres of additional beach to be open to recreation.
6. **Sandy Neck.** The OSV beach remained open for 16 days when there likely would have been a full beach closure absent implementation.
7. **Wychmere.** Reduced fencing and nesting deterrence allowed for an additional 0.44 acres of beach area available for recreational activities and scheduled events (e.g., weddings).

On-site/internal mitigation (*i.e.*, implemented by COI-holders) consisted of selective predator management designed to increase productivity and more than offset any harm resulting from exposure to the covered activities. Three off-site mitigation projects occurred in 2025. In all, 258 breeding pairs of Piping Plovers benefited from selective predator management under the HCP, substantially more than the minimum benefit of 89.5 pairs required pursuant to the HCP. This report documents compliance with the HCP and provides information about other state-listed species, Least Terns, and Diamond-backed Terrapins, which may be exposed to take by covered activities.

## II. Annual Report Requirements

This annual report summarizes HCP implementation activities during 2025 and has been prepared by MassWildlife in accordance with the requirements of the HCP. The goals of the annual report are:

- To provide the information and data necessary for MassWildlife to demonstrate to the USFWS and the public that the HCP is being implemented properly.
- To disclose any problems with HCP implementation and the corrective measures planned or implemented to address the problems.
- To identify administrative or minor changes to HCP components required to increase the success of conservation actions.
- To identify the results and/or need for adaptive management and changed circumstances, and whether any HCP or ITP changes may be subsequently proposed as a result pursuant to Chapter 3.3.3. of the HCP.

A bulleted list of the required contents of the annual report is provided on pages 5-9 to 5-10 of the HCP. To facilitate review by the USFWS and the public, the remainder of this report systematically addresses each item on the list. Supporting documentation and data are included in the Appendices, which are available upon request.

### II.1 Description of all covered activities implemented during the reporting period by activity type and location.

Thirty-two pairs of Piping Plovers were exposed to three activities covered under the HCP. **Tables 1a, 1b, and 1c** provide details of permits and implementation at each site, including duration of covered activities and nest productivity of exposed pairs.

- *Use of Roads and Parking Lots in Vicinity of Unfledged Chicks.* Nineteen broods were exposed.
  - **Duxbury Beach.** Twelve broods were exposed to recreational traffic while crossing Gurnet Rd. or parking lots. Of these, three were exposed to barriers, three were herded, and one was also exposed to *Reduced Fencing Around the Nest*. Thirty-four chicks were exposed to recreational traffic; 11 fledged.
  - **Plymouth Long Beach.** Seven broods were in the vicinity of Ryder Way and parking lots. Five broods crossed the road and the other two were exposed to barriers. Eleven of 26 exposed chicks fledged.
- *Oversand Vehicle Use in Vicinity of Unfledged Chicks.* One brood was exposed.
  - **Duxbury Beach.** On one occasion, 22 OSVs were escorted off the beach when a brood approached within 60 m (65 yd) of a vehicle crossover. Two chicks fledged.
- *Recreation and Beach Operations.* Thirteen pairs/broods were exposed.
  - *Reduced Proactive Fencing of Habitat.* Seven pairs/broods were exposed.
    - **Curley Center.** An area of nesting habitat totaling 0.25 acres was left unfenced. Beach raking by hand (twice) across 0.05 ac was conducted to deter one pair from nesting in the unfenced area. The pair relocated nearby and nested inside the fencing. This nest was then exposed to *Reduced Fencing Around the Nest*; four chicks fledged.
    - **Duxbury Beach.** One territorial pair was exposed to reduced proactive fencing with deterrents. Deterrents included raking (51 times, from 4/7/25 to 5/28/25), 900 pallets, and 1,500 wooden stakes with flagging across 1.82 ac of unfenced habitat to deter them from nesting near an OSV access trail. They were deterred from the area

and likely nested elsewhere on Duxbury Beach, although they could not be identified.

- **Sandy Neck.** In all, 2.44 acres of nesting habitat were impacted. Proactive symbolic fencing was initially established close to the base of dune through the 0.8-mile mark in the Recreation Zone (RZ), but portions of it (0.5 – 0.8-mile mark and 0.35 – 0.5-mile mark) were expanded to the dimensions recommended in the Guidelines to allow two pairs to settle in areas that did not impede use of OSV trails in the RZ. Beach raking (144 times) over 2.21 acres and 3,508 linear ft (0.23 ac or 9,884 ft<sup>2</sup>) of coverboards (pallets and landscape fabric) and flagging were used to deter three pairs from a portion of the RZ. Two pairs nested elsewhere at Sandy Neck: one fledged 2 chicks, the other lost its first nest to overwash and its second to predation and did not renest a third time. A third pair was present through May 18 and is not known to have nested later.
- **Wychmere.** An area of nesting habitat totaling 0.44 acres was left unfenced. Beach raking (approximately 86 times) was used in an unsuccessful attempt to deter two pairs.
- *Reduced Fencing Around the Nest.* Nine pairs were exposed.
  - **Curley Center.** Fencing was reduced around one nest for a pair that had already been exposed to *Reduced Proactive Fencing* to keep an area open for recreation. This nest hatched and four chicks fledged.
  - **Duxbury Beach.** Fencing was reduced around nests of three pairs located close to vehicle crossovers. Four chicks fledged from two of the pairs and one pair did not raise any chicks to fledging.
  - **Horseneck Beach.** Two nests were exposed. Both nests were likely lost to predation; gulls and crows were observed to be problematic for these pairs.
  - **Wollaston.** One nest was exposed. It failed due to unknown causes; dog, crow, and human tracks were at nest site. The pair left the site and did not return.
  - **Wychmere.** Two pairs and their five nests were exposed. One of these pairs laid three nests, two of which were lost to predation and one was lost either to predation or territoriality from neighboring plovers and Least Terns. The other pair lost its first nest to overwash, but four chicks hatched and fledged from its second nest.
- *Nest Moving.* Not implemented.

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**Table 1a.** Covered activities permitted (X) and implemented (gray shading) in 2025.

Location	Covered Activities			Specific Permissions					
	Roads & Parking Lots	Rec. & Bch. Ops.	Oversand Vehicle Use	Reduced proactive symbolic fencing	Reduced symbolic fencing around nests	Nest moving	Barriers	Chick herding	Deterrents (incl. raking)
Cape Poge Wildlife Refuge, Leland Beach, and Wasque Reservation, Edgartown (The Trustees of Reservations)		X	X	X	X				X
Curley Community Center, South Boston		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Horseneck Beach State Reservation, Westport (DCR)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
North (Nauset) Beach, Chatham		X	X	X	X				
Nauset Beach, Orleans			X						
Plymouth Long Beach, Plymouth	X		X				X	X	
Revere Beach State Res., Revere; Winthrop Shore Res., Winthrop; Nahant Beach State Res., Nahant; Carson Beach, M St. Beach, & Pleasure Bay, S. Boston; Wollaston Beach, Quincy; (DCR)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sandy Neck Beach Park, Barnstable		X	X	X					X
Wychemere Beach Club, Harwich		X		X	X	X	X	X	X

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**Table 1b.** Take exposures permitted and implemented, productivity, and habitat affected in 2025.

Location	Description of Covered Activity Implementation	No. permitted take exposures	No. take exposures used	% of total pairs exposed	Productivity, exposed pairs (fledglings/pair)	Productivity, unexposed pairs (fledglings/pair)	Overall site productivity (fledglings/pair)	Nesting habitat affected (acres - reduced proactive fencing only)
Cape Poge Wildlife Refuge, Leland Beach, and Wasque Reservation, Edgartown (The Trustees of Reservations)	None	3	0	0	n/a	0.68	0.68	0
Curley Community Center, South Boston	Proactive fencing was reduced, raking occurred, and fencing around nests was reduced to keep areas open for recreation.	2	1	25	4	2	2.5	0.25
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Roads and parking lots were open to non-essential vehicles. Proactive fencing was reduced and raking, flagging, and pallets were used to deter birds from nesting. Fencing was reduced around nests. OSVs were escorted near unfledged chicks. Occasional use of herding and barriers.	24	16	29.6	1.13	0.89	0.96	1.82
Horseneck Beach State Reservation, Westport (DCR)	Fencing around nests was reduced to keep areas open for recreation and operations	5	2	25	0	0	0	0
North (Nauset) Beach, Chatham	None	2	0	0	n/a	1.59	1.59	0
Nauset Beach, Orleans	None	2	0	0	n/a	0.65	0.65	0
Plymouth Long Beach, Plymouth	Ryder Way and parking areas were open to non-essential vehicles and unescorted essential vehicles. Two barriers were used along the roadway.	8	7	14	143	1.83	1.78	0
Revere Beach State Res., Revere; Winthrop Shore Res., Winthrop; Nahant Beach State Res., Nahant; Carson Beach, M St. Beach, & Pleasure Bay, S. Boston; Wollaston Beach, Quincy; (DCR)	On Wollaston: Reduced symbolic fencing around nests was installed to allow for continued recreational and operational activities	15	1	2.4	0	1.23	1.2	0
Sandy Neck Beach Park, Barnstable	Proactive fencing was reduced, beach raking was conducted, and flagging, landscape fabric, posts, and coverboards were installed to deter nesting and keep a recreational area open.	3	3	5	0.67	1.02	1	2.44
Wychmere Beach Club, Harwich	Proactive fencing was reduced in an area prioritized for recreation. Fencing was reduced around nests. Raking was used as a deterrent.	3	2	50	2	0	1	0.44

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**Table 1c.** Details of take exposures in 2025.

Location	Description of Covered Activity Implementation	Pair identifier	No. chicks exposed	No. fledged from exposed pairs	Start of implementation	End of implementation	No. days pair/ brood exposed to covered activity	Age of chicks when first exposed (days)
Curley Community Center, South Boston	Recreation & beach operations: reduced proactive symbolic fencing (raking) & reduced fencing around the nest	3	4	4	4/1/2025	7/6/2025	97	0
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing)	1	3	1	5/23/2025	6/25/2025	33	4
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing and herding)	6	1	0	7/7/2025	7/31/2025	24	1
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Recreation and beach operations: reduced fencing around the nest	9	2	1	5/3/2025	7/3/2025	61	n/a
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (barriers)	12	3	3	6/1/2025	7/2/2025	31	0
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Recreation and beach operations: reduced fencing around the nest	19	3	3	6/30/2025	7/30/2025	30	0
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing); Recreation and beach operations: reduced fencing around the nest	20	3	0	5/8/2025	7/7/2025	60	n/a
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing and barriers)	24	4	2	7/3/2025	7/28/2025	25	2
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing and herding)	29	3	2	6/3/2025	7/6/2025	33	n/a
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	OSV use in the vicinity of unfledged chicks	31	2	2	7/1/2025	8/8/2025	38	0
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing)	32	3	0	6/10/2025	6/21/2025	11	0
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing and herding)	33	2	1	7/17/2025	8/28/2025	42	1
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing)	35	3	0	6/1/2025	6/22/2025	21	n/a
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing)	36	3	1	7/4/2025	8/15/2025	42	1
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing)	44	4	1	7/3/2025	8/6/2025	34	0
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (barriers)	48	2	0	6/29/2025	7/5/2025	6	0
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury (Duxbury Beach Reservation)	Recreation and beach operations: reduced proactive symbolic fencing (deterrence)	UN01	0	0	4/1/2025	8/11/2025	132	n/a
Horseneck Beach State Reservation, Westport (DCR)	Recreation & beach operations: reduced fencing around nests	HNB 05	0	0	5/13/2025	5/31/2025	18	n/a
Horseneck Beach State Reservation, Westport (DCR)	Recreation & beach operations: reduced fencing around nests	HNB 07	0	0	5/16/2025	6/9/2025	24	n/a
Plymouth Long Beach, Plymouth	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (barrier)	1A	4	0	5/29/2025	6/7/2025	9	0
Plymouth Long Beach, Plymouth	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing)	14B	2	2	7/14/2025	8/12/2025	30	0
Plymouth Long Beach, Plymouth	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing)	20B	4	1	6/11/2025	7/12/2025	32	0
Plymouth Long Beach, Plymouth	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing)	21A	4	1	6/1/2025	7/1/2025	31	0
Plymouth Long Beach, Plymouth	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (barrier)	24A	4	3	6/3/2025	7/8/2025	36	0
Plymouth Long Beach, Plymouth	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing)	25A	4	2	5/28/2025	6/30/2025	34	0

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Location	Description of Covered Activity Implementation	Pair identifier	No. chicks exposed	No. fledged from exposed pairs	Start of implementation	End of implementation	No. days pair/ brood exposed to covered activity	Age of chicks when first exposed (days)
Plymouth Long Beach, Plymouth	Use of roads & parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (crossing)	38A	4	2	5/31/2025	6/29/2025	30	0
Revere Beach State Res., Revere; Winthrop Shore Res., Winthrop; Nahant Beach State Res., Nahant; Carson Beach, M St. Beach, & Pleasure Bay, S. Boston; Wollaston Beach, Quincy; (DCR)	Recreation & beach operations: reduced fencing around the nest	WOL 06A	0	0	5/13/2025	5/24/2025	11	n/a
Sandy Neck Beach Park, Barnstable	Reduced proactive symbolic fencing with raking, flagging, and coverboards	36	3	2	4/1/2025	7/10/2025	61	n/a
Sandy Neck Beach Park, Barnstable	Reduced proactive symbolic fencing with raking, flagging, and coverboards	SS1	0	0	4/1/2025	7/10/2025	55	n/a
Sandy Neck Beach Park, Barnstable	Reduced proactive symbolic fencing with raking, flagging, and coverboards	UNK	n/a	n/a	4/1/2025	7/10/2025	16	n/a
Wychmere Beach Club, Harwich	Reduced proactive symbolic fencing, with deterrence; Reduced fencing around the nest	1	0	0	4/4/2025	7/23/2025	111	n/a
Wychmere Beach Club, Harwich	Reduced proactive symbolic fencing, with deterrence; Reduced fencing around the nest	4	4	4	5/20/2025	8/10/2025	82	0

### II.2 Summary of annual take exposure.

The total allowable take exposure for a given year is based on a three-year rolling average of the statewide Piping Plover breeding population (**HCP Table 3-1**). The average breeding population size for 2022 – 2024 was 1,134.7 breeding pairs, based on the Adjusted Total Count, resulting in an allowable exposure to covered activities of 7%, or a maximum of 79 territories, pairs, nests, and/or broods that could be exposed to covered activities statewide (**Table 2**). During 2025, 32 territories/pairs/nests/broods were exposed to covered activities, and exposure at three sites was >15% of the breeding population size at that site (**Tables 1abc, 4**).

Under a formal Section 7 consultation in 2010 with the Cape Cod National Seashore (CACO), the USFWS issued an incidental take statement for the exposure to take of up to three pairs of Piping Plovers to flexible management. The USFWS completed a second formal consultation with the CACO in 2021 for additional flexible management actions and locations at which the management could be implemented. Annually, up to five Piping Plover pairs may be exposed to take beginning in 2022. Although take exposure for recreational activities on federal properties is not associated with the Massachusetts Piping Plover HCP, MassWildlife is required to subtract these authorizations from the total allowable statewide take exposure available to HCP participants each year.

**Table 2.** Abundance of breeding Piping Plovers in Massachusetts, 2022-2024, and allowable and actual take exposure for 2025 under the Massachusetts Piping Plover HCP and the National Park Service’s flexible management program at the Cape Cod National Seashore.

	YEAR		
	2022	2023	2024
<b>MA breeding pairs (adjusted total count)</b>	1033	1178	1193
<b>MA adjusted total count, 3-year average (2022 – 2024):</b>	1134.7		
<b>Maximum allowable 2025 Exposure (7%):</b>	79 territories/pairs/nests/broods		
<b>Maximum allowable exposure, statewide HCP</b>	74 territories/pairs/nests/broods		
<b>Maximum allowable exposure, Cape Cod National Seashore</b>	5 territories/pairs/nests/broods		

**II.3 Summary of the annual mitigation implemented and any mitigation credits or deficits outstanding from previous years.**

**Offsite mitigation.** MassWildlife partially funded two organizations to conduct three offsite mitigation projects (selective predator management) during the 2025 season. HCP mitigation plans were available for review by the New England Field Office of the USFWS.

1. The Town of Plymouth, contracting with USDA-Wildlife Services, conducted selective predator management at Plymouth Long Beach. This benefitted 49 pairs of plovers (all 49 credits accrued to the state).
2. Mass Audubon, contracting with USDA-Wildlife Services and EcoGeek Pest Control, conducted selective predator management at Allen’s Pond Wildlife Sanctuary. This benefitted 21 pairs of plovers (17.3 credits accrued to the state).
3. Mass Audubon, contracting with USDA-Wildlife Services and EcoGeek Pest Control, conducted selective predator management at Dead Neck-Sampson’s Island. This benefitted 27 pairs of plovers (16.4 credits accrued to the state).

**Onsite/internal mitigation.** Three COI-holders used their own resources to offset take exposures. In all cases, USDA APHIS Wildlife Services carried out selective predator management. This work was not cost-shared with MassWildlife. HCP mitigation plans were available for review by the New England Field Office of the USFWS.

1. **Department of Conservation and Recreation.** Onsite and offsite internal work benefitted 57 pairs of plovers at: Horseneck Beach, Westport; Revere Beach, Revere; Winthrop Shore Res., Winthrop; Nahant Beach, Nahant; Demarest Lloyd State Park, Dartmouth; Sandy Point State Reservation, Ipswich; and West Island, Fairhaven.
2. **Duxbury Beach Reservation.** Work onsite at Duxbury Beach benefitted 54 pairs of plovers.
3. **The Trustees of Reservations.** Work offsite at Crane Beach benefitted 50 pairs of plovers.

COI-holders implemented more than enough selective predator management to meet the 2025 mitigation requirements. Therefore, there is a mitigation credit that carries forward (**Table 3**). At the mitigation ratios of 2.5:1 (OSV Use and Reduced Fencing) and 3:1 (Roads and Parking Lots), selective predator management was required to benefit 89.5 pairs to mitigate for exposures that occurred during

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2025. In fact, selective predator management benefitted 258 pairs: COI-holders implementing on-site/internal mitigation benefitted 161 pairs while the portion of offsite mitigation funded through escrow benefitted 97 pairs. Including unexpired credits carried forward from previous years (2022 – 2024), at the end of 2025 there were 116.17 credits statewide and an additional 289.67 credits allocated to individual sites (*i.e.*, because the COI-holder directly funded mitigation activities). A total of 9.19 statewide credits from 2022 expired after 2025; therefore, 106.98 statewide credits carry into 2026. Similarly, 2.5 individual site credits (Orleans) expired after 2025, yielding 287.17 individual site credits carrying into 2026. In total, 394.15 site credits carry into 2026. **Tables 3 a-c** provide additional detail on mitigation requirements, deficits, and credits.

**Table 3a.** Predator management mitigation requirements and credits for COI-holders under the Massachusetts Piping Plover HCP in 2025.

2025 COI Site	No. authorized exposures	No. actual exposures, 2025	Selective predator management mitigation, required credits	Site credits gained, 2025 <sup>a</sup>	Annual site credit balance, 2025 <sup>ab</sup>	Total site credit balance, end of 2025 <sup>ac</sup>	Non-expired credits carrying into 2026 <sup>a</sup>	Year credits will expire <sup>d</sup>
Sandy Neck Beach Park	3	3	7.5	5	-2.5	0	0	2026
North (Nauset) Beach, Chatham	2	0	0	0	0	5	5	2026
Curley Center	2	1	2.5	5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2027
Revere/Winthrop/Nahant/Carson/MSt./Wollaston	15	1	2.5	*same as Horseneck	*same as Horseneck	*same as Horseneck	*same as Horseneck	2027
Horseneck	5	2	5	57	49.5	107.5	107.5	2027
Duxbury	24	16	46	54	8	58	58	2027
Nauset Beach, Orleans	2	0	0	2.5	2.5	5	2.5	2028
Plymouth Long Beach	8	7	21	0	-21	11	11	2026
Cape Poge, Leland, Wasque (Edgartown)	3	0	0	50	50	98.2	98.2	2027
Wychmere Beach Club	3	2	5	5	0	2.5	2.5	2026
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>89.5</b>	<b>178.5</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>289.67</b>	<b>287.17</b>	

<sup>a</sup> From selective predator management or escrow/mitigation fund only

<sup>b</sup> Annual site credit balance includes site credits and take exposures from the current season only; it does not include credits or deficits from previous years

<sup>c</sup> Total site credit balance includes site credits or deficits from previous years in addition to the current season

<sup>d</sup> Credits from a previous permit term expire in the first year of a subsequent, consecutive term.

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**Table 3b.** Predator management mitigation programs and credits under the Massachusetts Piping Plover HCP in 2025.

2025 Mitigation site	Total cost	HCP cost (COI-holder or grant awardee)	HCP cost (State)	HCP cost-share (COI-holder or grant awardee)	Actual pairs benefitting	Site credits gained (selective pred. mgmt. only)	Site credits gained (escrow)	State credits gained (selective pred. mgmt. only)	Site credits used	Location(s) of credit use
Allen's Pond	\$ 18,154.72	\$ 3,156.72	\$14,998.00	0.17	21	n/a	n/a	17.35	n/a	n/a (offsite mitigation)
Dead Neck-Sampson's I.	\$ 23,873.55	\$ 9,408.55	\$14,465.00	0.39	27	n/a	n/a	16.36	n/a	n/a (offsite mitigation)
Plymouth Long Beach	\$ 5,714.00	\$ -	\$ 5,714.00	0.00	49	n/a	n/a	49	21	n/a (offsite mitigation)
Duxbury Beach	\$ 16,684.84	\$ 16,684.84	\$ -	1.00	54	54	n/a	0	46	Duxbury Beach
Horseneck, DemLloyd, Sandy Pt, Revere, Winthrop, Nahant, West I.	\$ 23,034.63	\$ 23,034.63	\$ -	1.00	57	57	n/a	0	7.5	Horseneck, Revere, Winthrop, Nahant, Carson, Wollaston, Pleasure Bay, M St.
Crane Beach	\$ 1,777.63	\$ 1,777.63	\$ -	1.00	50	50	n/a	0	0	Cape Poge, Leland, and Wasque
<i>Subtotal, mitigation sites</i>	<i>\$89,239.37</i>	<i>\$54,062.37</i>	<i>n/a</i>		<i>258.0</i>	<i>161.0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>82.71</i>	<i>74.5</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>Subtotal, State &amp; escrow sites</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>\$35,177.00</i>				<i>17.5</i>	<i>-17.50</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>17.5 escrow credits from Barnstable (5), Curley Center (5), Orleans (2.5), &amp; Wychmere (5) are subtracted from 'State credits gained' so that they are not double-counted when the State funds mitigation.</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$89,239.37</b>	<b>\$54,062.37</b>	<b>\$35,177.00</b>		<b>258.0</b>	<b>161.0</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>65.21</b>	<b>89.5</b>	

**Table 3c.** Statewide predator management net mitigation credits under the Massachusetts Piping Plover HCP in 2025.

2025 Credit Type	Credits, end of 2024	Credits gained, 2025	Credits used, 2025	Net credits, end of 2025	Credits expiring, 2025	Credits carrying into 2026
Credits Allocated to Individual Sites (includes escrow credits)	200.67	161	89.5	289.67	2.5	287.17
Credits Available Statewide	50.96	17.5	n/a <sup>a</sup>	116.17	9.19	106.98
<b>TOTAL NET CREDITS</b>	<b>251.63</b>	<b>178.5</b>	<b>89.5</b>	<b>405.84</b>	<b>11.69</b>	<b>394.15</b>

<sup>a</sup> Statewide (escrow) credits used are accounted for under credits allocated to individual sites.

**II.4 Summary of exceptions to the restrictions on the number or territories/nests/broods affected (15% vs. 75%) and habitat impacts (2 acres/10% vs. 4 acres/20%) employed for the covered activities (as provided for in the Plan).**

- *Restriction on the number of territories/pairs/nests/broods affected (15% vs. 75%)* – The limit on the number of pairs that can be affected is calculated based on the number of pairs present during the previous breeding season (HCP Section 3.2.2.2., p. 3-9). Up to eight sites annually may exceed 15%. In addition, sites with six or fewer pairs may impact one pair.
  - **Number of exceptions.** Based on the number of authorized take exposures and the 2024 population size, seven sites had potential to exceed 15% of pairs affected, although only three did so in 2025 (**Table 4**).
    - **Duxbury Beach.** Sixteen of 54 pairs (30%) were impacted.
    - **Horseneck Beach.** Two of eight pairs (25%) pairs were impacted.
    - **Wychmere Beach Club.** Two of four pairs (50%) were impacted.
- *Restriction on habitat impacts (2 acres/10% vs. 4 acres/20%)* – This restriction refers specifically to the covered activity *Recreation and Beach Operations-Reduced Proactive Symbolic Fencing* (HCP Section 3.2.2.2, pp. 3-8 – 3-9). Up to five sites annually may exceed 2 acres or 10% of habitat impacted, whichever is less, up to a maximum of 4 acres or 20%, whichever is less.
  - **Number of exceptions.** Three sites exceeded 10%/2 acres (**Table 4**).
    - **Curley Center.** One pair was impacted across 0.25 ac (13%).
    - **Sandy Neck.** Three pairs were impacted across 2.44 acres (<4%).
    - **Wychmere Beach Club.** Two pairs were impacted across 0.44 acres (20% of nesting habitat).

**Table 4.** Percent of pairs and nesting habitat impacted by covered activities, 2025. Shaded cells indicate authorized and actual exceptions to standard restrictions.

Permit-site, 2025	No. PIPL take exposures permitted	Authorized for >15% of pairs based on take exposures permitted and #pairs in previous year (n/a to sites with 1-6 pairs impacting 1 pair)	No. take exposures (actual), 2025	No. PIPL pairs, 2025	% PIPL pairs exposed (actual), 2025	Implemented exception to % pairs exposed, 2025	Authorized for exception to "Reduced proactive symbolic fencing": acreage or % habitat impacted	Implemented exception to "Reduced proactive symbolic fencing": acreage or % habitat impacted, 2025
Cape Poge, Leland, Wasque	3	Y	0	19	0.0	N	N	N
Curley Center, Boston	2	Y	1	4	25.0	N	Y	Y (13%; 0.25 ac)
Duxbury Beach	24	Y	16	54	29.6	Y	N	N
Horseneck Beach	5	Y	2	8	25.0	Y	Y	N
Nauset, Orleans	2	N	0	43	0.0	N	N	N
North (Nauset) Beach, Chatham	2	N	0	22	0.0	N	N	N
Plymouth Long Beach	8	Y	7	49	14.3	N	N	N
Revere, Winthrop, Nahant, Carson, M St., Wollaston	15	Y	1	41	2.4	N	Y	N
Sandy Neck Beach Park	3	N	3	59	5.1	N	Y	Y (<4%; 2.44 ac)
Wychmere Beach Club	3	Y	2	4	50.0	Y	Y	Y (20%; 0.44 ac)

**II.5 Year-to-date cumulative summary (i.e., from the start of the permit term) of temporary impacts to Piping Plover habitat resulting from covered activities (Table 5).**

**Table 5.** Annual and cumulative temporary impacts to Piping Plover habitat under the activity *Recreation and Beach Operations - Reduced Proactive Symbolic Fencing*

Year	Temporary habitat impacts <sup>a</sup> (ac)	Cumulative temporary habitat impacts <sup>a</sup> (ac)	Description
2016	0	0	Covered activities were confined to existing roads, parking lots, and OSV corridors, and, therefore, did not result in any additional impacts to habitat.
2017	1.8	1.8	Reduced proactive fencing and beach raking to deter plovers at 2 sites: Winthrop Shore (0.6 ac) and Sandy Neck Beach Park (1.2 ac).
2018	11.66	13.46	Reduced proactive fencing and beach raking to deter plovers at 3 sites: Sandy Neck Beach Park (1.2 acres), Revere Beach (0.96 acres), and Horseneck Beach (9.5 acres). To deter Least Terns only: Winthrop Shore (0.44 acres).
2019	2.1	15.56	Reduced proactive fencing, beach raking, and/or coverboards to deter plovers at 3 sites, Sandy Neck Beach Park (1.2 acres), Revere Beach (0.6 acres), and Horseneck Beach (0.3 acres). To deter Least Terns only: Horseneck Beach (5.7 acres).
2020	4.92	20.48	Reduced proactive fencing, beach raking, and/or physical deterrents (coverboards, tarps, flagging) at 3 sites: Horseneck Beach (0.3 ac), Sandy Neck Beach Park (3.12 ac), and Duxbury Beach (1.5 ac in a gravel parking lot).
2021	1.55	22.03	Reduced proactive fencing, beach raking, and coverboards to deter plovers at Sandy Neck Beach Park (1.55 ac).
2022	1.618	23.648	Reduced proactive fencing, beach raking, and coverboards to deter plovers at Sandy Neck Beach Park (1.618 ac).
2023	6.75	30.398	Reduced proactive fencing, beach raking, and coverboards to deter plovers at Sandy Neck Beach Park 2.31 ac). Reduced proactive fencing, beach raking, and streamers to deter plovers at Wychmere Beach Club (0.44 ac). Proactive fencing was reduced, raking occurred, and fencing around nests was reduced to keep areas open for recreation at Horseneck Beach (4 ac).
2024	6.66	37.058	Reduced proactive fencing, beach raking, and coverboards to deter plovers at Sandy Neck Beach Park (2.33 ac). Reduced proactive fencing, beach raking, and pallets to deter plovers at Duxbury Beach (1.9 ac). Reduced proactive fencing and beach raking to deter plovers at the Curley Community Center (0.24 ac). Reduced proactive fencing and beach raking to deter plovers at Wychmere Beach Club (0.44 ac). Reduced proactive fencing and beach raking to deter plovers at Horseneck Beach (1.75 ac).
2025	4.95	42.008	Reduced proactive fencing, beach raking, and coverboards to deter plovers at Sandy Neck Beach Park (2.44 ac). Reduced proactive fencing, beach raking, and pallets to deter plovers at Duxbury Beach (1.82 ac). Reduced proactive fencing and beach raking to deter plovers at the Curley Community Center (0.25 ac). Reduced proactive fencing and beach raking to deter plovers at Wychmere Beach Club (0.44 ac).

<sup>a</sup>For Piping Plovers only, under the activity *Recreation and Beach Operations - Reduced Proactive Symbolic Fencing*

**II.6 Year-to-date and cumulative (i.e., from the start of the permit term) quantification of exposure to incidental take of Piping Plover individuals for the purpose of demonstrating compliance with the authorized level of take on the ITP (Table 6).**

**Table 6.** Annual and cumulative quantification of Piping Plover take exposure under the Massachusetts Piping Plover HCP, 2016 – 2025.

Year	No. Pairs/ Territories/ Nests/ Broods Exposed	Total Statewide Allowable Take Exposures	% of Statewide Allowable Exposure	Cumulative No. Pairs/ Territories/ Nests/ Broods Exposed
2016	3	47	6.4	3
2017	5	46	10.9	8
2018	19	46	41.3	27
2019	19	46	41.3	46
2020	22	48	45.8	68
2021	14	51	27.5	82
2022	16	58	27.6	98
2023	25	65	38.5	123
2024	20	74	27.0	143
2025	32	79	40.5	175

**II.7 Description of all experimental vegetation management actions implemented during the reporting period including a year-to-date and cumulative summary of the extent and location of land cover types enhanced through vegetation management.**

To date, two experimental habitat management projects have been implemented, both in 2017.

1. **Duxbury Beach.** Vegetation in five experimental plots was scraped or buried, creating and maintaining five areas of potential nesting habitat totaling approximately 0.77 acres. Two pairs nested in the replicated habitats in both 2017 and 2018. Duxbury Beach maintained these sites by burying vegetation in February 2019, and three pairs subsequently nested within the experimental plots. In 2020, two pairs nested and each fledged three chicks. In 2021, one pair nested and fledged one chick. In 2022, three pairs nested and fledged nine chicks. In 2023, three pairs nested and fledged seven chicks. In 2024, three pairs nested and fledged 11 chicks. In 2025, three pairs nested; no chicks fledged.
2. **Winthrop Shore Reservation.** Cobble was removed from the southern portion of the shorebird nesting area, where two pairs of Piping Plovers and 20-25 pairs of Least Terns nested in 2017. Plovers and terns continued to nest in this area annually through 2025.

**II.8 Assessment of the efficacy of vegetation management actions in achieving performance objectives and recommended changes to improve the efficacy of the methods.**

Piping Plovers continued to nest in the experimental habitat areas at both Duxbury Beach and Winthrop Shore in 2025. In ~2021, MassWildlife recommended cessation of vegetation management in habitat areas at Duxbury, as plovers in these areas are immediately adjacent to the road and presumably at higher risk of mortality.

**II.9 List of all plan participants and activities authorized for take coverage.**

See Table 1.

**II.10 Accounting of all mitigation funds collected from plan participants during the previous year, and any unspent funds from previous years (Table 7).**

**Table 7.** Accounting of Offsite Mitigation Funds, 2025.

<b>Statewide Mitigation Funds Balance (end of 2025)</b>	
<i>Balance from Previous Years</i>	
\$93,568.91	Unspent funds, reported at end of 2024
<i>Income</i>	
\$11,600.00	Barnstable escrow
\$11,600.00	Boston - Curley Community Center escrow
\$5,800.00	Orleans escrow
\$11,600.00	Wychmere escrow
<i>Expenses</i>	
\$5,714.00	Predator Management at Plymouth Long Beach, 2025 (Town of Plymouth)
\$14,465.00	Selective Predator Management at Dead Neck Sampson's Island, 2025 (Mass Audubon)
\$14,998.00	Selective Predator Management at Allen's Pond Wildlife Sanctuary, 2025 (Mass Audubon)
\$11,600.00	Education and Outreach at Duxbury Beach, 2025 (Duxbury Beach Reservation)
<i>Unspent Funds, end of 2025</i>	
\$87,391.91	

**II.11 If appropriate, any updates to the mitigation fee as described under the adjustment process in Section 5.2.2.1 and an updated annual budget for MassWildlife’s plan implementation.**

No adjustments to the mitigation fee or MassWildlife implementation budget are required at this time.

**II.12 If available at the time of the annual report, evidence that MassWildlife’s needed funding has been assured for the coming year by the State legislature, and the funds have been earmarked or segregated for their intended purpose within MassWildlife’s accounting system.**

Funding for Massachusetts Fiscal Year 2025 (ending June 30, 2026) has been secured and funding for Fiscal Year 2027 (beginning July 1, 2026) has been requested (**Appendix A**).

**II.13 Accounting of the cost of all mitigation measures implemented in the previous fiscal year and the expected cost of mitigation measures in the upcoming fiscal year.**

## Massachusetts Habitat Conservation Plan for Piping Plover

An accounting for the costs of all mitigation measures implemented in 2025 is provided in **Table 3b**. Additional information on off-site mitigation is provided in **Table 5**. The cost of onsite/internal mitigation is expected to be similar in 2026. MassWildlife has begun establishing contracts totaling ~\$65,000 for offsite mitigation activities in 2026, including selective predator management and education and outreach.

### **II.14 Record of any grants and Plan implementation contracts awarded to plan participants, other landowners, or implementation partners.**

None. See “II.3 Offsite mitigation.”

### **II.15 Description of the adaptive management process used during the reporting period, if applicable.**

No adaptive management took place during the 2025 reporting period.

### **II.16 Summary for the reporting period of the monitoring program objectives, techniques, and protocols, including monitoring locations, variables measured, sampling frequency, timing and duration, and analysis methods.**

The monitoring program documented implementation of covered activities, compliance with the Guidelines, and mitigation programs. COI-holders kept required logs of initiation dates of covered activities; number of broods and chicks exposed; locations of exposed broods and any impacts to the broods associated with the covered activity; and monitoring frequency. MassWildlife was notified at least 24 hours in advance of implementing the covered activities and subsequently conducted COI compliance site visits at each site implementing a COI. Compliance with the impact avoidance and minimization protocols was documented in logs and summarized in the COI-holder final reports. Final reports and invoices also document implementation of required mitigation, which was also reported by USDA APHIS.

The monitoring program also aimed to assess the impacts of covered activities and effectiveness of impact minimization measures and mitigation programs. Effectiveness monitoring consisted of documenting pair behavior, chick behavior, road-crossing frequency, and nesting and fledging success at the covered activity implementation sites. Measures of reproductive success were also collected at the selective predator management implementation sites. Monitoring information was provided to MassWildlife in HCP annual site reports and through the PIPLODES online database. MassWildlife coordinated the synthesis of 2025 Piping Plover data by cooperators, performed quality control, and is currently finalizing the 2025 index count, adjusted total count, and productivity of breeding Piping Plovers for Massachusetts.

### **II.17 Assessment of the efficacy of the monitoring and research program and recommended changes to the program based on interpretation of monitoring results and research findings, if applicable.**

#### ***Compliance monitoring.***

Compliance monitoring occurred at all sites that implemented covered activities in 2025.

**Effectiveness monitoring.** Making inferences about the effectiveness of mitigation measures and impacts of covered activities on productivity is methodologically challenging and will require larger sample sizes and possibly other methods, such as establishment of predator management control sites. There are no recommended changes to the monitoring program currently.

**II.18 Description of all Plan-directed studies undertaken during the reporting period; a summary of study results; and a description of integration with monitoring, assessment, and compliance elements.**

No Plan-directed studies were undertaken in 2025.

**II.19 Description of any actions taken or expected regarding adaptive management and/or changed circumstances, including remedial actions resulting from any Plan or permit amendments granted in the prior years, if applicable.**

No actions were taken or expected regarding adaptive management and/or changed circumstances in 2025.

**II.20 Description of any unforeseen circumstances that arose and responses taken, if applicable.**

The Town of Plymouth was issued emergency authorization to install two additional barrier fences along the roadway to protect Least Tern chicks.

**II.21 Summary of any administrative changes, minor modifications, or major amendments proposed or approved during the reporting year (see Section 5.3.3, *Modifications to the Plan*). Any information about mitigation measures other than selective predator management, the associated funding, and monitoring is being provided for informational purposes only, as the USFWS has indicated that these activities do not count as mitigation to offset take associated with the ITP.**

None.

**II.22 Other state or federally listed species affected by HCP implementation**

**Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*)**

COI-holders at covered sites developed impact minimization and mitigation plans for Least Terns and obtained Conservation and Management Permits (CMP) to ensure Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) compliance. Status of implementation at sites with coverage for take of Least Terns during 2025 is shown in **Table 8**.

**Table 8.** 2025 implementation status for covered activities affecting Least Terns at sites with Least Tern coverage.

Site with Least Tern coverage	Take exposure in 2025?
Cape Poge, Leland, and Wasque	No
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury	Yes
Horseneck Beach, Westport	Yes
Nauset Beach (North Beach), Chatham	No
Nauset Beach, Orleans	No
Plymouth Long Beach, Plymouth	Yes
Sandy Neck Beach Park, Barnstable	No
Revere; Winthrop; Nahant; Carson; M St.; Pleasure Bay; and Wollaston (DCR beaches)	No
Wychmere Beach Club, Harwich	Yes

- **Sites with take exposure.** At the four sites where take exposure occurred, the COI-holders conducted on-site mitigation (three sites) or contributed to offsite mitigation (one site).
  - **Duxbury.** There were 23 take exposures; many of these pairs or broods were exposed to multiple covered activities.
    - *Recreation and beach operations.* Twenty-three pairs were exposed.
      - *Reduced proactive fencing.* Nineteen pairs were exposed to reduced fencing and deterrence. Nine of these were later exposed to reduced fencing around nests.
      - *Reduced fencing around the nest.* Twelve pairs were exposed, including nine already exposed to reduced proactive fencing.
    - *Use of Roads and Parking Lots in the Vicinity of Unfledged Chicks.* Three pairs were exposed due to proximity to a vehicle crossover, two of which had already been exposed to reduced fencing and were later exposed to barriers.
    - *OSV Use in the Vicinity of Unfledged Chicks.* One chick was exposed due to proximity to the OSV, but escorting was not conducted as vehicles did not pass by the chick, which was later exposed to *Roads and Parking Lots* due to proximity to a crossover.
    - Onsite mitigation in the form of selective predator management benefitted 291 pairs. DBR entered 2025 with a credit balance of 385, 34.5 of which were used for implementation in 2025, leaving a balance of 641.5 credits. None expired after 2025, so all carry into 2026.
  - **Horseneck Beach.** There were six take exposures.
    - *Recreation and beach operations – Reduced fencing around the nest.* Fencing around six Least Tern nests was reduced to 10 yd to preserve space for operational and recreational activities. This impacted 1.1 ac of habitat (0.4 ac of which was shared with Piping Plover reduced fencing around a nest) over about 3 weeks. Only one nest hatched and neither of the two exposed chicks fledged.

## Massachusetts Habitat Conservation Plan for Piping Plover

- Onsite and offsite mitigation in the form of selective predator management benefitted 151 pairs. DCR entered 2025 with a credit balance of 121, nine of which were used for implementation in 2025, leaving a balance of 263 credits. None expired after 2025, so all carry into 2026.
- **Plymouth Long Beach.** There were 80 pairs with 150 chicks were exposed to take.
  - *Use of Roads and Parking Lots in the Vicinity of Unfledged Chicks.* Two silt fence barriers were installed along Ryder Way adjacent to the Lot O/Day Parking (79 pairs with 148 chicks) and Fishermen’s Turnaround (one pair with two chicks) Least Tern colonies to prevent chicks from accessing the road. In the Lot O/Day Parking colony, 51 of 148 exposed chicks fledged. Chick loss may have been caused by coyote predation, gull predation, and extreme weather conditions. In the Fishermen’s Turnaround colony, zero of two exposed chicks fledged. One chick was killed by a non-essential vehicle that sped past a check-point, violating night-time vehicle restrictions on non-essential vehicles, and the other was likely predated. No negative impacts of silt fencing were observed.
  - On-site predator management benefitted 196 pairs of Least Terns. Broods from 80 pairs were exposed to covered activities (160 debits). Going into 2025, Plymouth had a credit balance of 100. No credits expired after 2025. Therefore, 136 credits from on-site predator management in 2025 will carry into 2026.
- **Wychmere.** There were six take exposures.
  - *Recreation and beach operations – Reduced proactive symbolic fencing.* Fencing reductions affected six Least Tern territories and scrapes.
  - *Recreation and beach operations – Reduced fencing around the nest.* Fencing reductions around nests affected the same six pairs, which relocated and nested within symbolic fencing. No Least Tern nests hatched on site this year because of intense predation and overwash.
  - Wychmere Beach Club provided funds for offsite mitigation of Least Terns.

### Diamondback Terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*)

- **Sites with coverage for take of Diamondback Terrapins.** COI-holders for these sites developed impact minimization and mitigation plans, including nest protection, for Diamondback Terrapin and obtained CMPs to ensure MESA compliance: Sandy Neck Beach Park, Barnstable; Nauset Beach, Orleans. The Nauset Beach CMP covered limited exposure of terrapins, which sometimes cross the OSV corridor to nest. The Sandy Neck CMP also covered limited exposure of terrapins, which are sometimes found crossing or nesting within the Marsh Trail used by essential vehicles and campers.
- **Sites with no take exposure.** Sandy Neck Beach Park and Nauset Beach, Orleans.
- **Sites with take exposure.** None.

# Massachusetts Habitat Conservation Plan for Piping Plover

## Appendix A. MassWildlife FY2026 and FY2027 Director's and CFO's Funding Letter.



### DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581  
p: (508) 389-6300 | f: (508) 389-7890  
MASS.GOV/MASSWILDLIFE

January 14, 2026

Audrey Mayer  
Supervisor – New England Field Office  
US Fish & Wildlife Service  
Northeast Region – Ecological Services  
70 Commercial St., Suite 300  
Concord, NH 03301

RE: Funding assurances for implementation of the Massachusetts Statewide Piping Plover Habitat Conservation Plan in 2026 and 2027 per conditions L. and M. of the USFWS Incidental Take Permit TE01281C-0

Dear Ms. Mayer:

We are writing to confirm that the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) has secured adequate funding to fulfill its Statewide Piping Plover Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) obligations for Fiscal Year 2026 in accordance with the budget presented in the Final HCP.

Additionally, MassWildlife has requested from the legislature adequate funding to fulfill its HCP obligations for Fiscal Year 2027, in accordance with the budget presented in the Final HCP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Everose Schlüter".

Everose Schlüter, Ph.D.  
Acting Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin D. McCarthy".

Kristin D. McCarthy  
Associate Director, Chief Fiscal Officer

cc: Karen Dolan, MassWildlife Finance and Projects Administrator, NHESP  
Carolyn Mostello, MassWildlife Coastal Waterbird Biologist, NHESP  
Jesse Leddick, MassWildlife Assistant Director, NHESP  
Margaret Harrington, USFWS

MASSWILDLIFE