

## **Massachusetts Habitat Conservation Plan for Piping Plover**

### **Emergency Request for Additional Take Exposure**

Town of Plymouth - Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs

June 3, 2022

The Town of Plymouth has a current Certificate of Inclusion (COI) in the statewide Habitat Conservation Plan for Piping Plover (HCP) that authorizes up to five take exposures. The five take exposures were requested for use in up to two covered activities: Use of Roads and Parking Lots in the Vicinity of Unfledged Piping Plover Chicks and Oversand Vehicle (OSV) Use in Vicinity of Unfledged Chicks. Since receiving a COI in 2016, a maximum of 4 take exposures have been used in any one season.

This season, there are five pairs that have already nested along Ryder Way and a sixth nest in the dunes adjacent to the small parking area at the end of the road. In addition, there are two areas where plover activity has been observed, as shown on the attached map.

The Town would like to request two additional emergency take exposures in anticipation of additional nests laid along Ryder Way. Adding two take exposures would bring the total to 7, which is 18% of the number of breeding pairs in the prior year. This exceeds the standard site-specific take exposure limit of 15%, however, the HCP allows the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to increase the allowable exposure to 75% at a limited number of sites per year.

Since the Town of Plymouth is requesting an exception to the site-specific take exposure limit, the HCP requires impact avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation that meets or exceeds the minimum standards. The onsite mitigation at Long Beach has consistently benefitted well over the required 3 pairs of piping plovers per take exposure for "Use of Roads and Parking Lots in the Vicinity of Unfledged Piping Plover Chicks". A mitigation credit of 54 pairs was carried forward from the 2021 season, and the mitigation being conducted this season is benefiting 40 pairs that already have nests at Long Beach and several more pairs that are expected to lay soon. The Town is not proposing any changes to the impact minimization measures or monitoring and reporting requirements but has in practice regularly implemented avoidance and minimization measures (e.g., chick monitoring) that exceed the minimum standards required by the HCP and the site-specific IAMP as demonstrated in reports submitted annually.

The additional take exposures will be used to implement the covered activity "Use of Roads and Parking Lots in the Vicinity of Unfledged Piping Plover Chicks" as described in the Town of Plymouth's Request for Certificate of Inclusion submitted in December 2019.

Additional staff will be needed to carry out the required monitoring. Up to approximately \$10,000 will be needed to fund the additional shorebird monitors. These positions will be funded as necessary through the contingencies line item in Plymouth Long Beach Revolving Fund.

Implementation of the covered activity Use of Roads and Parking Lots in the Vicinity of Unfledged Piping Plover Chicks requires that 3 pairs of plovers benefit from mitigation. Use of two additional take exposures would increase the mitigation requirement for the season to 21 pairs of plovers. Only a portion of the 54 pair credit described above would fulfill this requirement, in addition to the pairs benefitting this season.



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Feet  
Nearmap 2022 aerial provided  
for representational purposes only

# Plymouth Long Beach Request for Addtional Take Exposure June 2022

