

## Share Duxbury Beach, Gurnet, & Saquish with Beach-Nesting Birds

Duxbury Beach, from the mainland through Gurnet and Saquish, is home to Piping Plovers and Least Terns. With ever-growing demands on our beaches, there are fewer places like this for these birds to raise families, feed, and rest. These rare species are protected by federal and state laws.



*Piping Plover adult with chicks and egg. (MassWildlife)*

Plovers and terns nest on sandy and gravelly beaches above the tide line and in bare patches within dune systems. They lay eggs directly on the sand in shallow scrapes (nest bowls), which they may decorate with pebbles or shells.



*Young chicks, like these Least Terns, rely on their parents to keep them warm and dry. (MassWildlife)*



*These four Piping Plover eggs blend in well with the sand, providing protection from predators. (MassWildlife)*

Eggs hatch after 3-4 weeks. Chicks leave the nest within hours of hatching. Plover chicks are especially mobile. They range hundreds of yards along the beach and tidal flats in their search for food, which consists of invertebrates like marine worms. Tern chicks move shorter distances and their parents deliver fish and other foods to them. It takes plover and tern chicks about a month to fledge (fly).



*A 10-day old Piping Plover chick feeds undisturbed on the tidal flats, allowing it to fuel up for growth. (MassWildlife)*

## Plovers & terns are at-risk on the beach & road

- Eggs are so well-camouflaged with the sand that they can easily be trampled.
- Chicks are tiny, flightless, and blend into the sand. They sometimes hide in tire tracks, which are similar to nest scrapes where chicks hatched. You could run one over without knowing it.
- Plovers, especially, are exposed to vehicles when they cross and travel along the road to move between feeding areas on the oceanside and bayside.
- Trash attracts predators of plovers and terns, including gulls, crows, and skunks.
- Dogs and cats chase and kill beach-nesting birds.
- Disturbances that cause parents to leave their chicks can threaten their survival.



*Can you find the newly hatched plover chick? Imagine trying to spot it from your vehicle! (MassWildlife)*



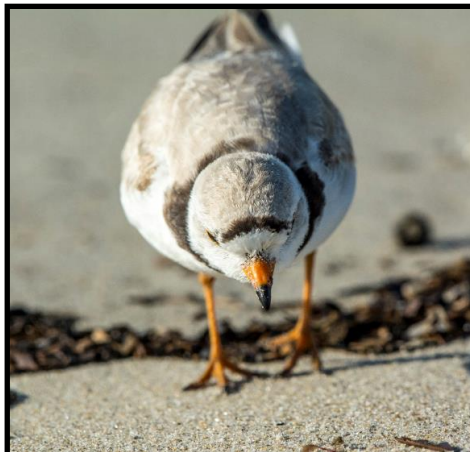
*A Piping Plover adult is ever alert to intruders into its territory. (MassWildlife)*

## What You Can Do

You are an important partner in plover and tern recovery and play a critical role in supporting wildlife conservation. Each bird makes a difference. Please encourage your community and visitors to become bird-friendly beachgoers and drivers. **Please take the following steps to protect birds on the beach and the road.**



*Piping Plover families must stay together for the protection and survival of the chicks. (MassWildlife)*



*Invertebrates in the wrackline, the accumulation of seaweed at the tide line, are an important source of food for Piping Plovers. (MassWildlife)*

## On the Beach...

- **Follow the guidance on signs and respect all fenced or posted areas.** They are there for the protection of wildlife.
- **Keep cats indoors.** They are notorious bird predators.
- **Follow dog rules.** Even good dogs scare birds, and they may chase and kill them. In some areas dogs are prohibited and in others they must be leashed.
- **Keep the beach clean and do not feed wildlife.** Remove trash, food scraps, and fishing bait, which attract predators of birds and their eggs. Carry out fishing line, which can entangle birds and other wildlife.
- **Keep your distance and do not chase birds.** Keeping disturbance to a minimum allows bird families to stay together, which improves survival. If birds fly or run away from you, you're too close.

## On the Road....

- **Reduce driving as much as possible.** Carpool or walk whenever you can and avoid multiple trips.
- **Respect and follow the instructions of beach staff managing road traffic.** They are there to protect the birds.
- **Limit your guest list and encourage guests to carpool.** Keep your guest list updated and get a free vehicle sticker/tag from the Gurnet Saquish Corp.
- **Give yourself a little extra time to get to your destination.** You may have to wait for chicks to cross the road.
- **Keep your eyes open for birds in the road.** Plovers and terns are really hard to see!
- **Drive slowly.** Go no faster than 5 mph in "chick zones."
- **Keep vehicles off the tidal flats.** Vehicles damage habitat and can harm or kill plovers and terns.
- **Make sure guests, renters, and contractors understand the "rules of the road."** Everyone has a role in protecting the birds.
- **Report trespassers to police.** This helps to reduce excess vehicle travel.

Thank you!



The communities of  
Gurnet & Saquish,  
Plymouth



**DUXBURY  
BEACH  
RESERVATION, INC.**