



**Natural Heritage
& Endangered Species
Program**

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

**Whimbrel
*Numenius phaeopus***

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

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: Whimbrels are large, 15 to 19-inch, gray-brown shorebirds, with a long (2.75 to 4-inch) down-curved bill and striped crown. Its vocalization is 5 to 7 short rapid whistles: *ti-ti-ti-ti-ti*.

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE: Whimbrels occur in Massachusetts only during migration. They are uncommon in the spring and locally common during fall migration (late July through September), especially in the vicinity of the Monomoy islands and South Beach in Chatham. It breeds in subarctic regions of Canada and winters from Virginia south to Florida and the Gulf Coast and south to South America. NHESP does not track occurrences of Whimbrels in Massachusetts.

HABITAT DESCRIPTION: The habitats of Whimbrels in Massachusetts include coastal mudflats, sand flats, and salt marshes.

THREATS: Destruction or degradation of coastal wetlands, human disturbance during migration, and oil spills are all threats to this species. On wintering areas south of the United States, hunting and exposure to environmental contaminants (cadmium, for example) are also threats.

REFERENCES:

- Skeel, M. A., and E. P. Mallory. 1996. Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 219 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA, and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.
- Veit, R., and W.R. Petersen. 1993. *Birds of Massachusetts*. Massachusetts Audubon Society, Lincoln, Massachusetts.

Updated 2015

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

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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