

**SUMMARY OF 2011 CENSUS  
OF AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHERS IN MASSACHUSETTS**



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## INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes data collected during a coastwide census of American Oystercatchers (*Haematopus palliatus*) in Massachusetts conducted during the 2011 breeding season. This census was conducted by observers affiliated with a statewide network of cooperating agencies and organizations.

The American Oystercatcher is a large, strikingly colored shorebird. Along the Atlantic Coast, it nests on coastal beaches from Florida to Nova Scotia. The expansion of its breeding range northward and increased abundance in New England over the past 50 years likely represent a recolonization of formerly occupied habitat (Forbush 1912, Griscom and Snyder 1955). On a continental scale, the American Oystercatcher is one of the most uncommon species of breeding shorebirds in North America and is designated a *Species of High Concern* in the United States Shorebird Conservation Plan (Brown et. al. 2001).

## METHODS

Data on American Oystercatcher abundance, distribution, and reproductive success were collected by a coast-wide network of full-time and seasonal biologists and coastal waterbird monitors, beach managers, researchers, and volunteers. These cooperators also conduct annual censuses of Piping Plovers and terns in Massachusetts (Melvin 2012, Mostello 2012).

Observers censused adult oystercatchers during or as close as possible to a designated census period of 22 - 31 May 2011, in order to minimize double-counting of any birds that moved between multiple sites during the breeding season. The 2011 census period was the same as in 2005-2010 and was intended to coincide with the peak of oystercatcher nesting activity, when breeding pairs might be most accurately censused. Abundance was reported for each site both as total number of adults (pairs, single birds, or groups of apparently unpaired birds) and as number of breeding pairs (pairs of adult birds with nests or chicks or that exhibited territorial, courtship, or distraction behavior at a site). Birds were not tallied as “pairs” at frequently monitored sites if there was no evidence of nesting or sustained territorial or courtship behavior. Instead, such birds were tallied in “Total adults”.

Cooperators were asked to report number of young fledged for each pair, if known. For purposes of this census, fledglings were defined as chicks that survived to  $\geq 30$  days of age or were able to fly, whichever occurred first. We also asked observers to report, if available, data on clutch size, number of eggs hatched, causes of egg loss and nest failure, and causes of chick mortality. From these data we calculated mean clutch size, observed nest success (proportion of nests that hatched  $\geq 1$  egg), observed hatching success (percentage of eggs laid that survived to

hatching) and observed fledging success (percentage of chicks hatched that survived to fledge). Cooperators were also asked to report numbers, locations, and dates observed for assemblages of post-breeding oystercatchers.

## RESULTS

Observers reported totals of  $\geq 418$  adults and  $\geq 202$  pairs of American Oystercatchers at 110 sites in Massachusetts in 2011 (Table 1), from a total of 276 sites surveyed (Tables 1, 2). The discrepancy between total number of adults and number of adults comprising pairs is due to observations made during or near the time of the census period of single adults and groups of 2 to 6 adults that appeared to be unpaired or for which pairing status could not be determined, as well as several nests that were attended by 3 adults.

The largest numbers of breeding pairs were reported from Martha's Vineyard (39 pairs exclusive of Nomans Land Island), Lower (Outer) Cape Cod (38 pairs), Nantucket (36 pairs exclusive of Tuckernuck and Muskeget islands), and the Boston Harbor Islands (22 pairs) (Tables 1, 2). Individual sites with the largest numbers of pairs were the Coskata-Coatue area of Nantucket (22 pairs); Tuckernuck Island (12 pairs); South Monomoy Island, Chatham (9 pairs); North Monomoy Island, Chatham (8 pairs); Eel Point, Nantucket (8 pairs); Minimoy Island, Chatham (6 pairs); Ram Island, Mattapoissett (6 pairs); Penikese Island, Gosnold (5 - 7 pairs); Snake Island, Winthrop (5 pairs); South Beach, Chatham (5 pairs); and Norton Point Beach, Edgartown (5 pairs) (Table 1).

Data sufficient to calculate nest success were reported for 174 nests in 2011. Of these, 80 (46%) were successful, *i.e.*, hatched at least 1 egg.

Complete data on numbers of eggs laid (clutch size), eggs hatched, and chicks fledged were reported for 146 nests. Mean clutch size was 2.63 eggs (range = 1-5); this included 3 nests with 4 eggs and 1 nest with 5 eggs. Observed hatching success was 42% (162 eggs hatched of 384 eggs laid) and fledging success was 38% (62 chicks fledged from 162 eggs hatched).

Statewide, 86 chicks were reported to have fledged from 176 pairs for which number of chicks fledged could be determined, for an overall productivity of 0.49 chicks fledged per pair.

Information that we deemed adequate for attributing cause of nest loss was reported for 94 unsuccessful nests (*i.e.*, nests at which no eggs hatched) (Table 3). Of these, 53 nests (56%) were reported taken by predators, the most important being Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) (14 nests), Eastern Coyote (*Canis latrans*) (12 nests), "gull" (7), "crow" (3), and "fox" (2). Eleven of 12 nests reported taken by coyotes were on Cape Cod, while all 14 nests reported depredated by skunks were at sites on Martha's Vineyard. Another 11 nests (12%) were reported depredated by unknown predators. Nine nests (10%) were lost to high tide flooding, 4 nests (4%) were abandoned, and 18 nests (19%) were reported lost to unknown causes.

At 26 successful nests (*i.e.*,  $\geq 1$  egg hatched), 1 or 2 eggs failed to hatch. These included 9 nests where 1 egg was abandoned; 2 nests where 2 eggs were abandoned; 1 nest where 2 of 3

eggs disappeared on different days to unknown causes; 1 nest where 1 egg was observed eaten by a Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*); 1 nest where 2 of 3 eggs were believed depredated by either crow, skunk, rat, or gull, perhaps facilitated by human disturbance; 1 nest where 1 of 3 eggs disappeared and 1 egg was abandoned; 1 nest where 1 egg was stepped on by a person; 1 nest where 2 of 3 eggs were taken by a crow; and 9 nests where no information was reported to explain incomplete hatching of the clutch.

As usual, few causes of chick mortality could be reliably determined. At Minimoy Island, Chatham, observers reported that a chick died after being attacked by Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*). At Ram Island, Mattapoisett, all 3 chicks in a brood were found dead near the nest cup at 2-4 days of age. On Penikese Island, single chicks from 2 different nests were observed being depredated by gulls, 1 by a Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*), and 1 by a Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*). A chick found dead at Chilmark Pond on Martha's Vineyard was believed to have been depredated by a raptor, most likely a Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). A chick was found dead on Little Beach in Edgartown after several days with heavy rain. Gull predation was suspected as the cause of loss of single chicks from 2 broods at Coskata-West on Nantucket and 6 chicks from 4 broods on Tuckernuck Island.

Reports of post-breeding concentrations of oystercatcher adults and fledged chicks included 35 birds at North Beach Island, Chatham, on 26 September; 21 birds at Tern Island, Chatham, on 9 August; and 11 birds at Allens Pond, Dartmouth, on 21 July.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As always, we extend our sincere thanks to the many biologists, seasonal shorebird monitors, beach managers, landowners, and volunteers who participated in monitoring and protection efforts for American Oystercatchers and other coastal waterbirds in Massachusetts in 2011. This work was carried out by cooperators from state and federal agencies, municipalities, private conservation groups, a local land bank, and a college (Table 1). We especially thank the many individuals who collected and submitted the data that are summarized in this report. Special thanks also to John Van de Graaff for providing the cover photo.

## LITERATURE CITED

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**Table 1. Abundance, distribution, and reproductive success (chicks fledged) of American Oystercatchers breeding in Massachusetts in 2011.**

Location	Total adults <sup>a</sup>	Total pairs <sup>a</sup>	No. chicks fledged <sup>b</sup>	No. pairs with fledge data <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
<b>NORTH SHORE</b>					
Salisbury Beach - North, Salisbury <sup>e</sup>	0	0	0	0	DCR
Salisbury Beach - South, Salisbury <sup>e</sup>	0	0	0	0	DCR
Woodbridge Island, Newburyport	nd <sup>f</sup>	nd	nd	nd	nd
Plum Island town beaches, Newburyport/Newbury	0	0	0	0	FWS
Parker River NWR, Newbury/Rowley	0	0	0	0	FWS
Sandy Point State Res., Ipswich	0	0	0	0	FWS
Crane Beach, Ipswich	0	0	0	0	TTOR
Coffin's Beach, Gloucester	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Wingaersheek Beach, Gloucester	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Good Harbor Beach, Gloucester	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Ram Is., Manchester	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
North Gooseberry Is., Salem	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Coney Is., Salem	2	1	nd	0	J. Berry, S. Schulte
Cat Is., Salem	2	1	nd	0	J. Berry, S. Schulte
Revere Beach, Revere	0	0	0	0	MAS
Winthrop Beach, Winthrop	0	0	0	0	MAS
Yirrell Beach, Winthrop	2	1	2	1	MAS
<b>BOSTON HARBOR</b>					
Snake Is., Winthrop	10	5	5	5	C. Trocki / NPS
Logan Airport, Boston	4	2	nd	0 <sup>g</sup>	MAS
The Graves, Hull	0	0	0	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Green Island, Hull	0 <sup>h</sup>	0	0	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Little Calf Is., Hull	0 <sup>i</sup>	0	0	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Calf Is., Hull	2	1	1	1	C. Trocki / NPS
Outer Brewster Is., Hull	2	1	1	1	C. Trocki / NPS

Location	Total adults <sup>a</sup>	Total pairs <sup>a</sup>	No. chicks fledged <sup>b</sup>	No. pairs with fledge data <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
Middle Brewster Is., Hull	2	1	1	1	C. Trocki / NPS
Great Brewster Is., Hull	4	2	nd	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Little Brewster Is., Hull	0 <sup>j</sup>	0	0	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Shag Rocks, Hull	0 <sup>k</sup>	0	0	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Lovell Is., Boston	2	1	0	1	C. Trocki / NPS
Gallops Is., Boston	2	1	1	1	C. Trocki / NPS
Georges Is., Boston	0	0	0	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Rainsford Is., Boston	4	2	0	2	C. Trocki / NPS
Spectacle Is., Boston	0	0	0	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Thompson Is., Boston	0	0	0	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Hangman Is., Quincy	2	1	nd	0	C. Trocki, NPS
Peddocks Is., Hull	0	0	0	0	C. Trocki, NPS
Sheep Is., Weymouth	5	2	1	2	C. Trocki / NPS
Grape Is., Weymouth	0	0	0	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Slate Is., Weymouth	0 <sup>l</sup>	0	0	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Bumpkin Is., Hingham	2	1	nd	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Langlee Is., Hingham	0	0	0	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Ragged Is., Hingham	0	0	0	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Sarah Is., Hingham	2	1	nd	0	C. Trocki / NPS
Button Is., Hingham	2	1	nd	0	C. Trocki / NPS
<b>SOUTH SHORE</b>					
The Glades, Scituate	2	1	0	1	MAS
Third Cliff, Scituate	0	0	0	0	MAS
Fourth Cliff, Scituate	0	0	0	0	MAS
Humarock Beach, Scituate	0	0	0	0	MAS
Rexhame Beach, Marshfield	0	0	0	0	MAS
Duxbury Beach, Duxbury/Plymouth	2	1	0	1	MAS, Duxbury

Location	Total adults <sup>a</sup>	Total pairs <sup>a</sup>	No. chicks fledged <sup>b</sup>	No. pairs with fledge data <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
Saquish, Plymouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Plymouth Long Beach, Plymouth	2	1 <sup>m</sup>	0 <sup>m</sup>	1 <sup>m</sup>	Plymouth
Ellisville, Plymouth <sup>n</sup>	0	0	0	0	MAS
Sagamore Beach, Bourne and Sandwich	0	0	0	0	MAS
Scusset Beach State Res., Sandwich	0	0	0	0	MAS, DCR
<b>UPPER CAPE</b>					
Mashnee Dike, Bourne	0	0	0	0	ACOE
Bassetts Island, Bourne	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Wild Harbor River, Falmouth	2	1	0	1	I. Nisbet
Little Island Beach, Falmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Chappaquoit Beach, Falmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Black Beach/Sippewisset, West Falmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Woodneck Beach, W. Falmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Devil's Foot Island, Falmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Acapeskett Beach, Falmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Menauhant Beach, Falmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Menauhant Yacht Club Beach, Falmouth	0	0	0	0	WBNERR
Washburn Island, Falmouth	2	1	0	1	WBNERR
South Cape Beach, Mashpee	0	0	0	0	WBNERR
New Seabury, Mashpee	0	0	0	0	WBNERR
Rock Landing/Maushop Village, Mashpee	0	0	0	0	MAS
Popponeset Spit, Mashpee	0	0	0	0	MAS
Town Neck Beach, Sandwich	0	0	0	0	MAS
Springhill Beach, Sandwich	0	0	0	0	MAS
East Sandwich Beach, Sandwich	0	0	0	0	MAS
Scorton (Neck) Creek, Sandwich	0	0	0	0	MAS
Scorton Shores, Sandwich	0	0	0	0	MAS



Location	Total adults <sup>a</sup>	Total pairs <sup>a</sup>	No. chicks fledged <sup>b</sup>	No. pairs with fledge data <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
Sandy Neck, Barnstable	0	0	0	0	Barnstable
Mussel Point, Barnstable	2	1	0	1	MAS
Sampson's Is.-Dead Neck, Barnstable	2	1	0	1	MAS
Bone Hill Road, Barnstable	0	0	0	0	MAS
Dowse's Beach, Barnstable	0	0	0	0	Barnstable
Long Beach, Barnstable	0	0	0	0	MAS
Craigville Beach, Barnstable	0	0	0	0	MAS
Squaw Island and Causeway, Barnstable	0	0	0	0	MAS
Sea St. / Keyes Beach, Barnstable	0	0	0	0	MAS
Kalmus Park, Barnstable	0	0	0	0	Barnstable
Lone Tree Creek, Yarmouth	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Gray's Beach, Yarmouth	2	1	0	1	MAS
Great Island, Yarmouth	2	1	0	1	MAS
Seagull Beach / Radio City, Yarmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Bass River Beach, Yarmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
West Dennis Beach, Dennis	0	0	0	0	Dennis
South Village Beach, Dennis	0	0	0	0	Dennis, MAS
Miramar Beach (Swan River), Dennis	0	0	0	0	MAS
Chapin Beach, Dennis	0	0	0	0	Dennis
Mayflower Beach, Dennis	0	0	0	0	MAS
Corporation Beach, Dennis	0	0	0	0	MAS
Howes St. Beach, Dennis	0	0	0	0	MAS
Cold Storage Beach, Dennis	0	0	0	0	MAS
Sesuit Harbor Beach, Dennis	0	0	0	0	MAS
Coles Pond / Crowes Pasture/Quivett Neck, Dennis	0	0	0	0	Dennis, MAS
Wings Island, Brewster	0	0	0	0	MAS
Paine's Creek, Brewster	0	0	0	0	MAS
Mant's Landing, Brewster	0	0	0	0	MAS

Location	Total adults <sup>a</sup>	Total pairs <sup>a</sup>	No. chicks fledged <sup>b</sup>	No. pairs with fledge data <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
Robbins Hill Beach, Brewster	0	0	0	0	MAS
Saint's Landing, Brewster	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Breakwater Landing, Brewster	0	0	0	0	MAS
Point of Rocks Landing, Brewster	0	0	0	0	MAS
Town Beach, Brewster	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Ellis Landing Beach, Brewster	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Linnell Landing Beach, Brewster	0	0	0	0	MAS
Crosby Landing Beach, Brewster	0	0	0	0	MAS, DCR
Bank St. / Merkel Beach / Wychmere, Harwichport	0	0	0	0	MAS
Red River Beach, Harwich	0	0	0	0	MAS
Allens Harbor, Harwich	0	0	0	0	MAS
Saquatucket Beach, Harwich	0	0	0	0	MAS
<b>LOWER CAPE</b>					
Forest Beach, Chatham	0	0	0	0	MAS
Chatharbor Lane, Chatham	0	0	0	0	MAS
Cockle Cove / Ridgevale Beach, Chatham	0	0	0	0	MAS
Pleasant St. Beach, Chatham	0	0	0	0	MAS
Harding Shores, Chatham	0	0	0	0	MAS
Harding Beach, Chatham	0	0	0	0	MAS
Harding Beach Point, Chatham	0	0	0	0	MAS
North Monomoy Island, Chatham	16	8	4	8	FWS
South Monomoy Island, Chatham	18	9	0	9	FWS
"Minimoy Island", Chatham	12	6	4	6	FWS
South Beach, Chatham	10	5	1	5	MAS
Morris Is. dredge spoil, Chatham	0	0	0	0	MAS
Tern Island, Chatham	2	1	0	1	MAS
Linnell Lane, Chatham	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd

Location	Total adults <sup>a</sup>	Total pairs <sup>a</sup>	No. chicks fledged <sup>b</sup>	No. pairs with fledge data <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
North Beach Island, Chatham	6	3	0	3	Chatham
North (Nauset) Beach, Chatham	2	1	0	1	Chatham
North (Nauset) Beach, Orleans	0	0	0	0	Orleans
Nauset Spit (Heights), Orleans	2	1	0	1	Orleans
New Island, Eastham	2	1	0	1	Orleans, NPS
Skaket Beach, Orleans	0	0	0	0	Orleans
Rock Harbor (north side), Orleans	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Coast Guard Beach, Eastham	0	0	0	0	NPS
Nauset Light Beach, Eastham	0	0	0	0	NPS
First Encounter Beach, Eastham	0	0	0	0	MAS
Boat Meadow, Eastham	0	0	0	0	MAS
So. Sunken Meadow Spit, Eastham	2 <sup>o</sup>	0 <sup>o</sup>	0 <sup>o</sup>	0 <sup>o</sup>	MAS
Marconi Beach / LeCount Hollow, Wellfleet	0	0	0	0	NPS
Lieutenant Island - SW, Wellfleet	2 <sup>o</sup>	1 <sup>o</sup>	0 <sup>o</sup>	1 <sup>o</sup>	MAS
Lieutenant Island - NW, Wellfleet	2 <sup>o</sup>	0 <sup>o</sup>	0 <sup>o</sup>	0 <sup>o</sup>	MAS
Indian Neck / Field Point, Wellfleet	0 <sup>p</sup>	0	0	0	MAS
Jeremy Point/Great Island, Wellfleet	4	2	0	2	NPS
Duck Harbor, Wellfleet	0	0	0	0	NPS
Bound Brook, Wellfleet	0	0	0	0	NPS
Ryder Beach, Truro	0	0	0	0	NPS
Fisher Beach, Truro	6 <sup>q</sup>	0	0	0	MAS
Pamet Harbor-South, Truro	0	0	0	0	MAS
Pamet Harbor-North / Corn Hill Beach, Truro	0	0	0	0	MAS
Pond Village Beach, Truro	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Pilgrim Beach / Beach Point, Truro	0	0	0	0	MAS
Ballston Beach / Newcomb Hollow, Truro	0	0	0	0	NPS
Longnook Beach, Truro	0	0	0	0	NPS
Highland Beach, Truro	0	0	0	0	NPS

Location	Total adults <sup>a</sup>	Total pairs <sup>a</sup>	No. chicks fledged <sup>b</sup>	No. pairs with fledged data <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
High Head / Head of the Meadow, Truro	0	0	0	0	NPS
Race Point - South, Truro / Provincetown	0	0	0	0	NPS
Race Point - North, Provincetown	0	0	0	0	NPS
Long Point/Wood End, Provincetown	0	0	0	0	NPS
Provincetown Harbor	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
<b>BRISTOL COUNTY</b>					
Stony Point Dike, Wareham	2	1	0	1	ACOE
Long Beach Point, Wareham	nd <sup>r</sup>	nd <sup>r</sup>	nd	nd	MAS
Little Harbor Beach, Wareham	0 <sup>s</sup>	0 <sup>s</sup>	0	0	MAS
Cedar Island, Wareham	2	1	1	1	MAS
Ram Island, Marion	2	1	0	1	MAS
Little Island, Marion	2	1	2	1	MAS
Gravel Island, Marion	2	1	1	1	MAS
Haskell Island, Marion	2	1	0	1	MAS
Planting Island, Marion	0	0	0	0	MAS
Stewarts Island, Marion	0	0	0	0	MAS
Rock Is., Sippican Harbor, Marion	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Bird Island, Marion	8	4	5	4	DFW
Strawberry Pt./Angelica Pt., Mattapoissett	2	1	0	1	MAS
Ram Island, Mattapoissett	12	6	2	6	DFW
South Shore Marshes WMA / Mirey Neck, Fairhaven	2	1	0	1	DFW, MAS
Wards Rock, Fairhaven	2	1	0	1	DFW, MAS
Dyers Cove Is., Fairhaven <sup>t</sup>	4	2	0	2	MAS
Pea Islands, Mattapoissett	2	1	0	1	DFW, MAS
Fish Is., Fairhaven	0	0	0	0	DFW
Round Is., Fairhaven	0	0	0	0	DFW
West Is. - Northeast Pt., Fairhaven	2	1	nd	0	LCE

Location	Total adults <sup>a</sup>	Total pairs <sup>a</sup>	No. chicks fledged <sup>b</sup>	No. pairs with fledge data <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
West Is. - North Pt., Fairhaven	2	1	nd	0	DFW, LCE
West Is. - Northwest Pt., Fairhaven	0	0	0	0	DFW
Stony Cove, Fairhaven	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
West Island - Southeast (DCR and Town), Fairhaven	2	1	nd	0	LCE
Long Is. (Hoppy's Landing), Fairhaven	1	0	0	0	LCE
Winsegansett Heights, Fairhaven	2	1	0	1	LCE
Angelica Rock, Fairhaven	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Fort Phoenix St. Res., Fairhaven	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
New Bedford Harbor, New Bedford	2	1	nd	0	DFW
Nonquitt, Dartmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Round Hill Beach, Dartmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Salters Pond, Dartmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Demarest Lloyd State Park, Dartmouth	0	0	0	0	LCE
Little Beach/Barney's Joy, Dartmouth	2	1	0	1	MAS
Allens Pond (Timmy's Rock), Dartmouth	0	0	0	0	MAS
Gooseberry Neck, Westport	0	0	0	0	LCE
Horseneck Beach, Westport <sup>u</sup>	0	0	0	0	LCE, MAS
Westport River	1	0	0	0	MAS
Acoaxet, Westport	0	0	0	0	TNC-RI
Cockeast Pond, Westport	0	0	0	0	TNC-RI
Richmond Pond, Westport	0	0	0	0	TNC-RI
Bay Point, Swansea	0	0	0	0	A. Waring
<b>ELIZABETH ISLANDS</b>					
Nonamasset Is., Gosnold	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Uncatena Island, Gosnold	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Naushon Island, Gosnold <sup>v</sup>	0 <sup>v</sup>	0 <sup>v</sup>	0	0	DFW
Weepecket Islands	2	1	nd	0	DFW

Location	Total adults <sup>a</sup>	Total pairs <sup>a</sup>	No. chicks fledged <sup>b</sup>	No. pairs with fledge data <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
Pasque Island-Robinson's Hole	0	0	0	0	DFW
Pasque Island-Cobbly	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Pasque Island-Quick's Hole	0	0	0	0	DFW
Nashawena Island-Quick's Hole	0	0	0	0	DFW
Nashawena Island – Barets Rock	2	1	nd	0	DFW
Nashawena Island-Canapitsit	0	0	0	0	DFW
Cuttyhunk Island, Gosnold	5	1	nd	0	DFW
Penikese Island, Gosnold	10-14	5-7	0	1	DFW
<b>MARTHA'S VINEYARD</b>					
Eastville Beach, Oak Bluffs	0	0	0	0	MAS
Harthaven, Oak Bluffs	2	1	1	1	MAS
Sylvia State Beach , Oak Bluffs <sup>w</sup>	0	0	0	0	MAS
Sylvia State Beach, Edgartown <sup>w</sup>	2	1	0	1	MAS
Sarson Is., Oak Bluffs	2	1	1	1	MAS
Little Gravel Island, Oak Bluffs	2	1	0	1	MAS
Big Gravel Island, Oak Bluffs	4	2	1	2	MAS
Haystack Island, Edgartown	0	0	0	0	MAS
Cow Bay, Edgartown	2	1	0	1	MAS
Yorke - Allen Pt., Edgartown	2	1	0	1	MAS
Eel Pond / Little Beach, Edgartown	4	2	2	2	BW
Lighthouse Beach, Edgartown	2	1	0	1	BW
Chappaquiddick Point Beach, Chappaquiddick	0	0	0	0	MVLB
Caleb Pond, Chappaquiddick	2	1	0	1	BW
Cape Pogue Bay, Pease Pond, Chappaquiddick	2	1	0	1	BW
Cape Pogue Bay, Potter/Cole, Chappaquiddick	2	1	0	1	BW
Cape Pogue Elbow/The Narrows, Chappaquiddick	6	3	0	3	TTOR
Little Neck, Chappaquiddick	6	3	0	3	TTOR

Location	Total adults <sup>a</sup>	Total pairs <sup>a</sup>	No. chicks fledged <sup>b</sup>	No. pairs with fledged data <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
Arruda's Pt./The Jetties, Chappaquiddick	2	1	0	1	TTOR
Leland/East Beach, Chappaquiddick	4	2	0	2	TTOR
Wasque, Chappaquiddick	0	0	0	0	TTOR
Norton Point Beach, Chappaquiddick <sup>x</sup>	0	0	0	0	TTOR
Norton Point Beach, Edgartown <sup>x</sup>	10	5	2	5	TTOR
South Beach, Edgartown	0	0	0	0	BW
Edgartown Great Pond, Edgartown	2	1	0	1	BW, MVLB
Jobs Neck/Crackatuxet, Edgartown	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Oyster Pond, Edgartown	2	1	0	1	BW
Watcha Pond, W. Tisbury	0	0	0	0	BW
Long Point, Chilmark	2 <sup>y</sup>	1 <sup>y</sup>	0	1 <sup>y</sup>	TTOR
Tisbury Great Pond / Quansoo, Chilmark	4 <sup>y</sup>	2 <sup>y</sup>	0	2 <sup>y</sup>	MAS, MVLB
Black Point Pond, Chilmark	2	1	0	1	BW
Chilmark Pond, Chilmark	2	1	0	1	BW
Lucy Vincent Beach, Chilmark	0	0	0	0	BW
Stonewall Beach	2	1	3	1	BW
Squibnocket/Long Beach, Chilmark	0 <sup>z</sup>	0 <sup>z</sup>	0	0	BW
Menemsha Beach, Chilmark	0	0	0	0	MAS
Nashaquitsa Pond, Chilmark	0	0	0	0	MAS
Edey's Island, Chilmark	2	1	1	1	MAS
Moshup Beach, Aquinnah	0	0	0	0	MVLB
Philbin Beach, Aquinnah	0	0	0	0	BW
Dogfish Bar, Aquinnah	0	0	0	0	BW
Lobsterville Beach, Aquinnah	2	1	1	1	MAS
Cedar Tree Neck, West Tisbury	0	0	0	0	BW
Lambert's Cove, West Tisbury	0	0	0	0	BWS
Great Rock Bight Preserve, Chilmark	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Sepiessa Point Reservation, West Tisbury	0	0	0	0	MVLB

Location	Total adults <sup>a</sup>	Total pairs <sup>a</sup>	No. chicks fledged <sup>b</sup>	No. pairs with fledge data <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
West Tashmoo, Tisbury	2	1	0	1	BW
East Tashmoo, Tisbury	0	0	0	0	MAS
Wilfred Pond Preserve, Vineyard Haven	0	0	0	0	MVLB
Mink Meadows, Vineyard Haven	0	0	0	0	MAS
Northern Pines Shores, Vineyard Haven	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Lagoon Pond / Maciel Marine, Tisbury	2	1	1	1	MAS
Nomans Land Is.	6	3	2	1	FWS
<b>NANTUCKET</b>					
Great Point	4	2	0	2	TTOR, MAS
The Galls	0	0	0	0	TTOR
Coskata-West Beach <sup>aa</sup>	6 <sup>bb</sup>	3 <sup>bb</sup>	4	3 <sup>bb</sup>	TTOR, MAS
Coatue	24	12	11	12	NCF
Coskata-East Beach <sup>cc</sup>	0	0	0	0	TTOR, MAS
The Glades / Coskata Pond	8 <sup>bb</sup>	4 <sup>bb</sup>	0	4 <sup>bb</sup>	TTOR, MAS
Coskata Inlet / The Haulover <sup>dd</sup>	4 <sup>ee</sup>	2 <sup>ee</sup>	0	2 <sup>ee</sup>	NCF
Conover	2 <sup>ee</sup>	1 <sup>ee</sup>	0	1 <sup>ee</sup>	TTOR
Wauwinet	0	0	0	0	MAS
Squam Pond	0	0	0	0	MAS, NCF
Quidnet / Sesachacha Pond	0	0	0	0	MAS
Low Beach	0	0	0	0	Nantucket
Surfside	0	0	0	0	Nantucket
Hummock Pond	0 <sup>ff</sup>	0	0	0	NCF
Madaket Beach	0	0	0	0	Nantucket
Smith Point/Esther Island	6	3	4	3	MAS, Nantucket
Eel Point	16 <sup>gg</sup>	8 <sup>gg</sup>	2	8 <sup>gg</sup>	NCF
Dionis Beach	0	0	0	0	Nantucket



Location	Total adults <sup>a</sup>	Total pairs <sup>a</sup>	No. chicks fledged <sup>b</sup>	No. pairs with fledge data <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
Jetties Beach	0	0	0	0	Nantucket
Ram Island, Polpis Harbor	0	0	0	0	NCF
Medouie Creek and Point	4	2	2	2	NCF
Quaise Point	2	1	1	1	Nantucket, MAS
Little Neck/Jackson's Pt., Madaket <sup>hh</sup>	0 <sup>hh</sup>	0	0	0	NCF
Monomoy Creeks, Nantucket	0 <sup>ii</sup>	0	0	0	NCF
Nantucket UMass. Field Station	0 <sup>jj</sup>	0	0	0	NCF
Tuckernuck- Bigelow Pt.	6	3	3	3	TLT
Tuckernuck- East Pond	6	3	1	3	TLT
Tuckernuck – North Lagoon	2	1	0	1	TLT
Tuckernuck- North Pond	4	2	5	2	TLT
Tuckernuck Island- Whale Point	6	3	5	3	TLT
Muskeget Island	9 <sup>kk</sup>	4 <sup>kk</sup>	1	1	MAS, R. Veit (CSI)
Minimus Island <sup>ll</sup>	0	0	0	0	MAS, R. Veit (CSI)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>418 - 422</b>	<b>202 - 204</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>176</b>	

<sup>a</sup> Observers censused adult oystercatchers during or as close as possible to 22 - 31 May 2011. *Total adults* includes pairs, single birds, and groups of apparently unpaired birds. *Total pairs* includes pairs of adult oystercatchers with nests or chicks or that exhibited territorial, courtship, or distraction behavior at a site.

<sup>b</sup> *Chicks fledged* are defined as chicks  $\geq 30$  days of age or observed in flight, whichever occurs first.

<sup>c</sup> *Number of pairs with fledge data* includes all pairs for which it was determined how many chicks fledged, including not only pairs that fledged chicks, but also pairs that did not nest, pairs that nested unsuccessfully, and pairs with broods from which no chicks fledged.

<sup>d</sup> Key to abbreviations of sources of census data: ACOE = U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Barnstable = Town of Barnstable; CSI = College of Staten Island; DCR = Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation; Dennis = Town of Dennis; Duxbury = Town of Duxbury; DFW = Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife; FWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; LCE = Lloyd Center for the Environment; MAS = Massachusetts Audubon Society; MVLB = Martha's Vineyard Land Bank; Nantucket = Town of Nantucket; NCF = Nantucket Conservation Foundation; NPS = National Park Service; Orleans = Town of Orleans; Plymouth = Town of Plymouth; TLT =

Tuckernuck Land Trust; TNC-RI = The Nature Conservancy - Rhode Island Chapter; TTOR = The Trustees of Reservations; WBNERR = Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

<sup>e</sup> Salisbury Beach-North is defined here as the length of beach from the Massachusetts/New Hampshire border south to the center of the town of Salisbury Beach; Salisbury Beach-South is the length of beach from the center of the town of Salisbury Beach south to the Merrimac River.

<sup>f</sup> nd = no data were reported

<sup>g</sup> At Logan Airport, Boston, 2 pairs of oystercatchers were observed with a total of 5 chicks, but information was not reported on how many chicks fledged.

<sup>h</sup> At Green Island, Boston Harbor, a single adult was observed feeding during surveys on 25 May and 26 July. Because of the likelihood that it was a member of a pair nesting on a nearby island, it is not tallied in *Total adults* for this site.

<sup>i</sup> At Little Calf Island, Boston Harbor, a single adult was observed feeding during surveys on 25 May and 26 July. Because of the likelihood that it was a member of a pair nesting on a nearby island, it is not tallied in *Total adults* for this site.

<sup>j</sup> At Little Brewster Island, Boston Harbor, a single adult was observed feeding on 25 May. Because of the likelihood that it was a member of a pair nesting on a nearby island, it is not tallied in *Total adults* for this site.

<sup>k</sup> At Shag Rocks, Hull, a pair with 1 fledged chick observed on 26 July likely had nested at Great Brewster Island or Calf Island, given that no oystercatchers were observed at Shag Rocks during surveys on 25 May, 20 and 28 June, and 6 and 19 July.

<sup>l</sup> At Slate Island, Weymouth, 1 adult was observed feeding on 31 May. Because of the likelihood that it was a member of a pair nesting on a nearby island, it is not tallied in *Total adults* for this site.

<sup>m</sup> The pair observed at Plymouth Beach from 17 May through 14 June did not nest.

<sup>n</sup> Ellisville includes both Ellisville State Park and the private beach along the south side of Ellisville Harbor.

<sup>o</sup> A banded oystercatcher RE (T5) and an unbanded bird were observed together at Lieutenant Island- NW and Lieutenant Island -SW in Wellfleet and South Sunken Meadow Spit, Eastham. They were observed at Lieutenant Island - NW on 27 April and 18 and 20 May, at Lieutenant Island - SW on 12 May, and at South Sunken Meadow Spit on 20 May. Oystercatcher scrapes were also observed at Lieutenant Island - SW on 11, 13, 20, and 23 May. These birds are assumed to represent a single pair; they are reported as being present at all 3 sites, but are tallied only once in regional and state totals for adults, pairs, and pairs with fledge data.

<sup>p</sup> At Field Point (Fox Island WMA) on Indian Neck, Wellfleet, one oystercatcher was observed on 20 April 2011.

<sup>q</sup> At Fisher Beach, Truro, 6 oystercatchers were observed flying offshore on 21 May 2011.

<sup>r</sup> No oystercatchers were observed at Long Beach Point, Wareham, during the only visit to that site on 7 June 2011.

<sup>s</sup> At Little Harbor Beach, Wareham, although no nesting pairs were reported, 2 adults were observed on 16 March (banded bird YE(H4) and an unbanded adult), and a volunteer monitor noted the presence of 2 birds at various times during the 2011 breeding season.

<sup>t</sup> Dyer's Cove Island, Fairhaven, is the same site that was referenced as "Unnamed Island, Fairhaven" in the 2010 census report.

<sup>u</sup> In this compilation, Horseneck Beach, Westport, includes all of the state, town, and privately owned sections of beach there.

<sup>v</sup> On Naushon Island, no oystercatchers were observed at the following beaches that were surveyed on 10 June 2011: Robinson's Hole, West Beach, Crescent Beach, and Kettle Cove.

<sup>w</sup> In this compilation, Sylvia State Beach includes both the ocean-side beach and the adjacent shoreline of Sengekontacket Pond along the west side of the Oak Bluffs-Edgartown road.

<sup>x</sup> Norton Point Beach formerly connected the main island of Martha's Vineyard with Chappaquiddick Island, but was breached on 17 April 2007. This report distinguishes between Norton Point Beach-Edgartown and Norton Point Beach-Chappaquiddick, which remained separated by a channel in 2011.

<sup>y</sup> A pair observed scraping at Long Point, Chilmark, on 23 May was believed to have subsequently shifted west and nested on Martha's Vineyard Land Bank property at Tisbury Great Pond - Quansoo. This pair is reported here for both sites, but is tallied only once in regional and state totals for adults, pairs, and pairs with fledged data.

<sup>z</sup> Although no oystercatchers were seen at Squibnocket and Long Beach, Aquinnah/Chilmark, during or near the 22-31 May census period, 3 adults were observed there on 29 July.

<sup>aa</sup> Coskata-West Beach refers to the beach along the Nantucket Sound side of Coskata, from the south end of The Galls south and west to Coatue.

<sup>bb</sup> Pair 3A at The Glades, Nantucket, (banded EO,F4) renested at Coskata-West Beach. This pair is reported for both sites, but is tallied only once in regional and state totals for adults, pairs, and pairs with fledged data.

<sup>cc</sup> Coskata-East Beach refers to the beach along the eastern shore of Coskata.

<sup>dd</sup> Coskata Inlet is the inlet from Nantucket Harbor into Coskata Pond.

<sup>ee</sup> The pair that nested unsuccessfully on the Conover property on Nantucket was believed to have moved north and renested as pair 2A at The Haulover. This pair is reported for both sites, but is tallied only once in regional and state totals for numbers of adults, pairs, and pairs with fledged data.

<sup>ff</sup> Although no oystercatcher nesting activity was observed at Hummock Pond, Nantucket, oystercatchers were observed there during pre- and post-breeding periods.

<sup>gg</sup> At Eel Point, Nantucket, 8 "pairs" of oystercatchers included 4 sets of 1.5 pairs (3 pairs for which 1 member of each pair repaired with a new mate and renested, and a fourth pair in which 3 birds tended an initial, unsuccessful nest and 2 of these birds attended a subsequent re-nest) and 2 pairs of 2 birds each, for a total of 16 adults. The only 2 chicks that were reported to have fledged at Eel Point in 2011 could only fly weakly at approximately 36 days of age. They were not observed again after that age, although their parents continued to be seen in the area.

<sup>hh</sup> Little Neck at Madaket on Nantucket is the north side of the entrance to Hither Creek. Oystercatchers that occasionally were seen here feeding along marsh and tidal flats before, during, and after the breeding season were believed to be birds associated with nesting pairs at Eel Point, Smith Point/Esther's Island, and Tuckernuck.

<sup>ii</sup> At Monomoy Creeks, Nantucket, oystercatchers that occasionally were seen feeding along marsh and tidal flats before, during, and after the breeding season were believed to be birds that nested on Coatue or at Polpis Harbor.

<sup>jj</sup> At the UMass-Nantucket Field Station, oystercatchers that occasionally were seen feeding along marsh and tidal flats before, during, and after the breeding season were believed to be birds that nested on Coatue or at Polpis Harbor.

<sup>kk</sup> At Muskeget Island, 1 of 4 "pairs" appeared to consist of 3 birds. Numerous oystercatcher tracks and scrapes observed elsewhere on the island suggested that the count of 4 pairs (9 adults) was likely an underestimate of the total number of adults present during the breeding season.

<sup>ll</sup> Minimusk is a small, low-lying island/shoal that lies approximately 0.2 miles southwest of the southwest corner of Muskeget Island.

**Table 2. Regional abundance of American Oystercatchers during the breeding season in Massachusetts, 2011**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Total adults<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Total pairs</b>	<b>Sites surveyed</b>	<b>Sites with oystercatchers<sup>a</sup></b>
North Shore	6	3	11	3
Boston Harbor	45	22	27	14
South Shore	6	3	11	3
Upper Cape	12	6	56	6
Lower Cape	82	38	43	14
Bristol Co.	58	28	38	21
Elizabeth Islands	19 - 23	8 - 10	8	4
Martha's Vineyard <sup>b</sup>	84	42	50	29
Nantucket, Tuckernuck, Muskeget Is.	105	52	32	16
<b>Totals</b>	<b>418 - 422</b>	<b>202 - 204</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>110</b>

<sup>a</sup> Includes both paired and unpaired adults.

<sup>b</sup> Includes Nomans Land Island.

**Table 3. Causes of egg loss reported for 94 unsuccessful nests (no eggs hatched) of American Oystercatchers in Massachusetts, 2011.**

<b>Cause of egg loss</b>	<b>Number (%) of unsuccessful nests</b>
Unknown	18 (19)
Striped Skunk	14 (15)
Eastern Coyote	12 (13)
Unknown predator	11 (12)
Gull	7 (7)
Gull or coyote	2 (2)
Crow	3 (3)
Fox	2 (2)
Common Grackle	1 (1)
Rat	1 (1)
Flooding	12 (13)
Abandoned <sup>a</sup>	4 (4)
Other <sup>b</sup>	7 (7)
<b>Total</b>	<b>94 (100)</b>

<sup>a</sup> Cause of abandonment was "unknown" for all 4 abandoned nests. At one of these, 1 egg had a hole in it.

<sup>b</sup> The 7 nests where eggs were lost to "other" causes included: 2 nests that were suspected to have been flooded by high tides; 2 nests where the eggs were found missing and a dead, scavenged adult was nearby, all after a 4-day coastal storm; 1 nest where 1 egg disappeared and the other 2 were subsequently abandoned; 1 nest where 1 egg disappeared, 1 egg was cracked, and 1 egg was "rotten"; and 1 nest that was suspected to have been depredated by gulls because of its location within a gull nesting colony.