



December 5, 2016

**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service

Wildlife Services

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Kerin McCall  
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Town of Plymouth  
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Mrs. McCall,

This letter is in regard to the management of beach predators at Plymouth Long Beach during the 2017 shorebird nesting season. The context of this proposal will be a comprehensive outline of Wildlife Services (WS) projected activities that should be conducted to reduce predation on shorebird populations at Plymouth Long Beach.

During the 2015 and 2016 nesting seasons, WS deemed five (5) wildlife species as "major predators". These species were American crow, red fox, Eastern coyotes, herring gull and black-crowned night-heron. These species have been labelled major predators because of confirmed predation. Each species has been responsible for shorebird predation at various times of the year and will require different management practices.

In 2017, WS proposes the use of mock piping plover exclusions baited with hard-boiled chicken eggs monitored by infrared cameras to monitor for avian predation. If American crows are observed WS recommends using DRC-1339 COR to control these predators that may "key in" on piping plover exclusions. Pre-baiting and mock exclusion setup will be conducted by WS staff. WS suggests constructing three (3) mock exclusions in similar locations as 2016. When WS staff observes 100% pre-bait uptake, WS will conduct a DRC-1339 application.

WS recommends The Town of Plymouth acquire a USFWS migratory bird depredation permit for the removal of black crowned night herons and for egg and nest treatment of the herring gull colony that exists on the tip of Plymouth Long Beach. The permit will be issued to the town and WS will need to be put on the permit as subpermitees. WS can then conduct night operations for the removal of black-crowned night-herons that are causing a negative effect on the current tern colonies. Removal of nests and eggs of herring gulls that are having negative effects on terns and piping plovers will be removed by the Town of Plymouth. It is very important that town employees take notes on predator activity while working on the beach. Dates, times, weather conditions and pictures of unknown tracks are all important data that should be recorded and relayed to WS during the nesting season.

In 2016 and in years prior, Eastern coyotes were responsible for a portion of the overall predation and need to be managed to alleviate predation. WS will conduct all site visits to conduct shooting activities with the use of suppressed rifles and/or shotguns with non-toxic shot. Red fox, a historic predator on Plymouth Long Beach, have been present during every nesting season since 2006. Attempts to remove red fox and Eastern coyotes should be conducted prior to nesting and should continue through the nesting season. WS will attempt to catch other mammal predators and young of red fox by use of box traps on Town of Plymouth property and any other property WS has been granted written permission.

WS will also assist The Town of Plymouth in renewing or modifying their new USFWS and MADFW depredation permits in order to conduct all listed activities in 2017.

All of the above activities listed are what WS believes need to be done to show a positive impact to nesting success of shorebirds on Plymouth Long Beach. Every year brings different weather patterns, habitat changes and predator activity and activities that need to be conducted to alleviate predation can change. This work plan is written to have flexibility to allow changes during the nesting season.

At your request, our office has developed this proposal for a program to conduct direct control of both avian and mammalian predators at Plymouth Long Beach. The cost for a Cooperative Service Agreement (CSA) providing six months of control, consisting of a minimum of twelve (12) control visits will be for a total of \$11,000. These visits can be used for any of the activities; trapping, shooting or DRC-1339 COR applications. Wildlife Services will schedule control visits and may increase or decrease visits during the agreement depending on predator presence and activity.

Wildlife Services will also provide The Town of Plymouth with a report of all activities conducted within the 2017 nesting season to include a qualitative assessment of how effective the effort was, unanticipated challenges that were encountered during the 2017 nesting season and preliminary recommendations for future efforts.

The start date for the proposed CSA drafted is 1 February, 2017 until 31 August, 2017. This date can be changed to any date agreed upon by both WS and The Town of Plymouth.

Thank you,

Erik S. Shaffer, Wildlife Specialist  
USDA, APHIS, Wildlife Services  
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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife  
Field Headquarters  
One Rabbit Hill Road  
Westborough, MA 01581

Subject: Permit Report for Plymouth Beach Predators (permit # 045.17LP)

Date	Method(s) Used & Approximate Man Hours				Number of hours for crow work excl/firearm	Species Observed	Number Taken	Number Dispersed
	Push	Spot	Call	Trap				
3/06/17	18	0	0	0	0/0	Red fox	0	1
3/21/17	18	0	0	0	0/0	n/a	0	0
4/10/17	6	0	0	0	4/0	AMCR	0	2
4/11/17	0	6	0	0	4/0	Red fox	1	0
4/18/17	0	0	0	6	4/0	Red fox	1	0
4/19/17	0	0	0	6	4/0	Red fox	2	0
4/20/17	0	0	0	6	4/0	n/a	0	0
5/1/17	4	0	0	0	4/0	n/a	0	0
5/3/17	0	7	0	0	4/0 1 <sup>st</sup> Toxicant	Red fox / American crow	1 / 3	0
5/10/17	8	0	0	0	4/0 2 <sup>nd</sup> Toxicant	n/a	0	0
5/18/17	0	0	0	0	6/0 3 <sup>rd</sup> Toxicant	n/a	0	0
5/25/17	0	0	0	0	6/0 end Toxicant	n/a	0	0
6/22/17	0	20	0	0	2/0	Eastern coyote	1	0
7/10/17	10	0	0	0	0/0	n/a	0	0
7/26/17	2	0	0	0	6/0	n/a	0	0
<b>Totals</b>								
15 visits	66 hours	37 hours	0 hours	18 hours	44 hours	Red fox	5	1
						Eastern coyote	1	0
						American crow	3	n/a

Push = Push/Walking  
Call = Calling

Spot = Spotlight/FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared)  
Trap = Trapping

WS used infrared remote cameras to monitor for predators from 3/6/17 through 7/26/2017. In 2017, an estimated 3 American crows were removed from Plymouth Long Beach using DRC-1339 COR. Attached is a diagram of the areas where WS removed all predators.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate in contacting our office.

Thank You,

Erik S. Shaffer  
Wildlife Specialist  
USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services  
MA, CT, RI Program



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