



Mass Audubon's Coastal Waterbird Program

For nearly three decades, Mass Audubon's Coastal Waterbird Program has monitored and protected Piping Plovers, Least Terns, American Oystercatchers, Roseate Terns and other coastal birds, and achieved significant success in the restoration of these endangered and threatened populations in Massachusetts. Our goals are to protect populations and habitats of rare and vulnerable coastal birds, and to extend protection to coastal ecosystems as well.

Our specific objectives are to recover self-sustaining plover and tern populations throughout the Commonwealth in accordance with abundance, productivity, and management practices set forth in the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Recovery Plan for Piping Plover¹, the Massachusetts Guidelines for Managing Recreational use of Beaches to Protect Piping Plovers, Terns and their Habitat in Massachusetts², and the Guidelines for Barrier Beach Management in Massachusetts³.

Mass Audubon:

- Monitors approximately 175 sites on 140 miles of Bay State coastline comprising 63% of all coastal bird nesting beaches in the state.
- Protects 40% of the state's federally threatened Piping Plovers,
- Protects 30-50% of Massachusetts Least Terns,
- Protects 25% of Massachusetts American Oystercatchers, and
- Works with partners to identify and protect critical sites for resting/staging pre-migratory Common and Roseate Terns.

The work of Mass Audubon's Coastal Waterbird Program is founded on the best available science-based information, including results from our own management research, which guides our on-the-ground, and highly successful, protection efforts.

We are strongly committed to sharing information and advocating for coastal bird protection through our public policy development.

In addition, we are committed to training the next generation of coastal wildlife managers and have trained nearly 1,000 shorebird monitors over the past three decades. Finally, the Coastal Waterbird Program works closely with coastal communities throughout the Commonwealth to further understanding of vulnerable coastal birds, their conservation, and habitat protection.

The Coastal Waterbird Program's long-term efforts in concert with state and federal conservation agencies, local communities and partners, have produced a nearly a five-fold increase the abundance of Piping Plovers in Massachusetts—from 126 pairs in 1987 to approximately 670 pairs in 2015. Additionally, there are three times more Least Terns in the state today, and American Oystercatchers number approximately 200 pairs, while 20-25 years ago they were extremely rare breeders in the state.

¹ <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/pipingplover/recovery.html>

² <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dfg/nhesp/species-and-conservation/ma-shorebird-management-guidelines.pdf>

³ <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/stormsmart/beaches/barrier-beach-guidelines.pdf>