



Annual Rare Species Awareness Briefing

Sea Girt NGTC

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Rare Species and the National Guard

Objectives:

- Overview of Sea Girt NGTC Natural Resources
- Overview of Rare Species Protection Measures





Sea Girt NGTC

Natural Resources Overview

- Wetlands – Approx. 5 acres



- Coastal Zone – Approx. 16 acres (Including Beach and Dunes)





Management Efforts

- Canada Goose Surveys
 - Hazing techniques
 - Screamers, lasers, remote-control cars, and sonic deterrent
 - Professional High-Powered Sidewalk Washing
- Wetland Restoration Project
 - Removing invasive plants
 - Area more accessible to public
- Habitat Quality Surveys
 - Macroinvertebrate study
 - Beach Vegetation Assessment
- Beach Nesting Bird Monitoring
- Rare Beach Plant Monitoring
- Predator Surveys
 - Collaring & Tracking Red Fox
 - Predator management
- Osprey Monitoring



Rare Species

- Piping Plover

- Federally Endangered

- Successful nesting for 3 consecutive years
 - After nearly a decade w/out nesting
 - “Joey” & “Hamlet” likely to return



- Least Tern

- State Endangered

- Small colony in NPA in 2020, no nesting since



- American Oystercatcher

- Species of Concern

- 1 Pair nested in NPA in 2020, no nesting since





Rare Species

- Osprey

- State Threatened

- 2 pairs nested in 2021

- Bald Eagle

- State Endangered

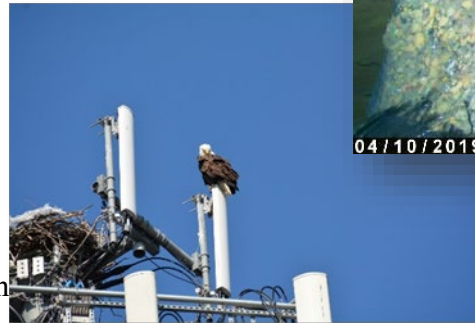
- Frequently sighted in the off-season

- Seabeach Amaranth

- Federally Threatened

- 4 plants in 2021
 - 6 plants in 2020
 - 39 plants in 2019
 - 6 plants in 2018 and 1 plant in 2017

*Other State-listed species include yellow and black-crowned night herons, black skimmer, horned lark, northern harrier, American oystercatcher, seabeach evening primrose, sea-milkwort, seabeach sandwort, seabeach purslane and Fowler's toad





Regulations

- AR 200-1 – Army Environmental Regulation
- Endangered Species Act
- Wetlands Protection Act
- Coastal Zone Management Act



NGTC Specific Documents

- Beach Raking Permit
- NJDEP Wetland Letter of Interpretation (2 Aug 2022)
 - Document that defines the location of all wetlands on site.
- Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (2018)
 - Overall document that describes how NJARNG/NJDMAVA will manage natural resources at the NGTC.



NGTC Beach and Protection Areas





Protection Measures

- In effect from 15 March to 1 December.
- Scope of protection measures are determined by the presence/absence of rare species.
- Protection area may change depending on location of species.
- USFWS and NJDEP performs regular surveys of entire NJ beaches to enforce protection measures (April 1 to August 31).
 - Delayed opening of the range until 0800 hours two days during the work week between 1 April and 31 August to allow NJDEP to conduct survey. This year it's Mondays and Thursdays but may change each year. This management practice will be suspended after July 1 if no piping plover or least tern nesting activity has been observed by that date.
- NJDMAVA and CWFNJ staff will monitor the beach on a regular basis between April and December.
- Legitimate emergency negates all protection measures.





Protection Measures: Level 1

General Measures Include:

- String and sign fence installation around protection areas in early April.
- No beach raking, vehicle use, or pedestrian traffic in the protection areas.
- No beach raking in front of the northern protection area (no rake zone).
- No pets on the beach.
- Predator prevention and litter/trash overflow control to reduce predators.
 - NJDEP and USFWS may conduct predator control this spring and summer.
 - Last year removed 9 red fox
- USFWS and NJDEP will continue weekly survey.
- Helicopters will not fly over or within 475 lateral feet of northern rare species protection area and achieve a minimum altitude of approx. 500 feet. Not applicable if safety is compromised - implemented at the pilot's discretion.



Protection Measures: Level 2

Measures when rare species nesting, but chicks not present (Level 2):

- All general protection measures in effect
- Vehicles (including beach rake) are not allowed to drive through the no rake zone. Vehicle buffer signs will be in place.
- Vehicles will be routed around the protection area via the “Range Road Driving Route”
- Depending on the location of nests, physical training on the beach may be moved or curtailed.





Protection Measures: Level 3

Protection Measures when chicks are present (Level 3):

- Continue with general procedures.
- **NO VEHICLE TRAFFIC WHATSOEVER IN THE NO RAKE ZONE.**
Vehicles will be routed around the protection area via the “Range Road Driving Route.”
- **NO ROUTINE VEHICLE TRAFFIC/RAKING WITHIN 300 FEET OF PROTECTION AREA** (subject to change based on brood dynamics – such as the mobile chick from 2009).
- Pedestrian activities (such as ball playing) and some beach access may be limited. Fishing area may be shifted or closed down depending on proximity to nests and chicks.
- Bona fide emergency negates protection measures. This does not include routine lifeguard or police patrols.
 - After an emergency, responders must prepare an After Action Report and forward it to NGTC and NJDMAVA (William McBride at william.mcbride@dmava.nj.gov) NLT 24 hrs after incident.



Protection Measures: Plants

Protection Measures when Protected Plants are Present:

- Continue with general procedures.
- Any plants growing outside the protection area will be fenced with a 3-meter buffer around each plant.





Protection Measures

Military Training

- All protection measures in effect.
- Conduct a briefing 1 month prior to training event with unit commander where a unit “rare species monitor” will be identified.
- Unit Rare Species Monitor will ensure that all protection measures are met.
- For sea survival skills, unit will launch life rafts/jet skis from outside protection area/buffer zone and keep vehicles in military parking area while on beach.



Conclusions

- Several rare species call Sea Girt NGTC home
- Sea Girt NGTC is required under several Federal, State, and Army Regs. to protect them.
- Compliance with regulations depend on YOUR actions. So please follow the rules.
 - If we get an enforcement action from USFWS or NJDEP we must report it to the US Army, so everyone knows when we've been bad.
- Contact NJDMAVA (William McBride at william.mcbride@dmava.nj.gov) in early planning stages if activities are planned on the beach that may impact rare species.
- Protection measures may change depending on annual life cycles of rare species.



QUESTIONS?

“I’m often asked, why bother saving a bird like the piping plover, what purpose does it really serve?.....To me, any case to be made for the “value” of a species like the piping plover ultimately comes down to defining what type of world we want to live in. If the beach is to be more than just a commodity...or simply a place to play out our recreational whims – I believe for most people the beach and oceans hold a deeper place in their psyches – then our native wildlife and plants must have an equal place in the equation.”

Todd Pover
Beach Nesting Bird Project Manager
Conserve Wildlife of New Jersey
New Jersey Audubon Society Magazine Spring/Summer 2008

