



Town of Plymouth, Massachusetts Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs

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March 25, 2014

PRESS RELEASE **For Immediate Release**

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Seasonal Dog Restrictions at Plymouth Long Beach Continue

The seasonal partial ban on dogs at Long Beach initiated by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) in 2010 will continue for the 2014 season. The ban is in effect from April 1 through September 30 and affects all Town properties north of the “Day Parking Area”, which is a 4x4 parking area located approximately one mile north of the main parking area. Leashed dogs will be allowed on Ryder Way and the beachfront from the main parking lot north to the Day Parking Area, excluding areas closed for shorebird nesting.

State regulations require that the Town comply with the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA). Under MESA, the Town is obligated to protect threatened and endangered shorebirds that use the beach for nesting and foraging. Plymouth Long Beach is a regionally significant area for nesting Piping Plovers, Least Terns, Common Terns, Arctic Terns, and Roseate Terns, which are all protected under state and/or federal laws. The Town’s obligation includes ensuring that these shorebirds are not negatively impacted by unleashed dogs.

In 2008, the DFW issued a conditional “No Take” determination for the Plymouth Long Beach Management Plan and required the Town to implement certain measures to prevent unleashed dogs on the beach, which included monitoring dog activity during the 2009 season. Based on the 2009 monitoring data, the DFW determined that modifications were necessary to prevent an adverse effect on nesting shorebirds by unleashed dogs, and required the Town to ban dogs from the most sensitive nesting areas to prevent a “take” under MESA, which is defined as “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, hound, kill, trap, capture, collect, process, disrupt the nesting, breeding, feeding or migratory activity or attempt to engage in any such conduct”.

As required, the Town has continued monitoring dog activity through the 2013 season. The data showed that only 14% of dogs observed were unleashed during the 2014 season, which is a significant reduction over past seasons. In past years, unleashed dogs have made up 22%, 32%, 24%, and 20% of total dogs observed during the 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 seasons, respectively. The number of dogs in restricted areas also decreased in 2014 to 17%. In prior seasons, the number of dogs in restricted areas has been as high as 48% in 2010, and decreased to 33% in 2011 and 28% in 2012.

While the statistics for 2014 demonstrate a decrease in dog-related violations, there is still room for improvement. In order to prevent further dog restrictions, and to create the possibility of lifting the current restrictions, the Town urges dog owners to comply with the partial ban and leash laws in allowable areas. Violations of the ban and/or the leash law can result in fines up to \$100.

For more information, contact the Town of Plymouth’s Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs at 508-747-1620 x201 or go to the Town website at www.plymouth-ma.gov.

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