



Town of Plymouth, Massachusetts

Department of Energy and Environment

26 Court Street, Plymouth, MA 02360 | 508-747-1620

March 25, 2024

Seasonal Dog Restrictions at Plymouth Long Beach Begin April 1

The seasonal dog restrictions at Plymouth Long Beach will resume on April 1. A partial dog ban initiated by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) in 2010 is in effect from April 1 to September 30 each year. When visiting Long Beach, dog owners are required to leash their dogs and remain in allowed areas.

The restrictions apply to all Town properties north of the "Day Parking Area", which is the 4x4 parking area located approximately one mile north of the main parking area. Leashed dogs are allowed on Ryder Way and on the beach from the main parking lot northward to the Day Parking Area, excluding areas closed for shorebird nesting and protection of fragile resource areas.

The Town is required to comply with both the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), which means that 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, and Common Terns, which are all protected under state and/or federal laws. It is also an important staging area for migrating shorebirds, including Red Knots. While all of the shorebirds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Red Knots have also been protected under the ESA since 2015. The Town's responsibility includes ensuring that these shorebirds are not negatively impacted by unleashed dogs.

In 2008, 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 banning dogs seasonally from the most sensitive nesting areas was necessary to prevent a "take" under the 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 each year during the nesting season. The level of compliance with dog restrictions has fluctuated over the years. To prevent further dog 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, and repeated violations can result in additional fines and revocation of Long Beach 4x4 stickers.

For more information, contact the Town of Plymouth's Department of Energy and Environment at 508-747-1620 x10127 or go to the Town website at <https://www.plymouth-ma.gov/493/Long-Beach-Information>.

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