**Attachment B:**

COASTAL FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT ASSESSMENT FORM

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|---|---|
| Name of Area: | **Parking Lot 9, Jones Beach State Park** |
| Designated: | **March 15, 1987** |
| Date Revised: | **December 15, 2008** |
| County: | **Nassau** |
| Town(s): | **Oyster Bay** |
| 7½' Quadrangle(s): | **West Gilgo Beach, NY** |

| **Assessment Criteria** | | **Score** |
|---|---|---|
| **Ecosystem Rarity (ER)–the uniqueness of the plant and animal community in the area and the physical, structural, and chemical features supporting this community.** | | |
| ER assessment: | Abandoned beach parking lot with sparse herbaceous vegetation; uncommon in Nassau County. | **9** |
| **Species Vulnerability (SV) – the degree of vulnerability throughout its range in New York State of a species residing in the ecosystem or utilizing the ecosystem for its survival. (E = Endangered, T = Threatened, SC = Special concern)** | | |
| SV assessment: | Piping plover (E, T-Fed) and least tern (T) nesting. Additive division: 36 + 25/2 = 48.5. | **48.5** |
| **Human Use (HU) – the conduct of significant, demonstrable, commercial, recreational, or educational wildlife-related human uses, either consumptive or non-consumptive, in the area or directly dependent upon the area.** | | |
| HU assessment: | No significant fish or wildlife related human uses of the area. | **0** |
| **Population Level (PL) – the concentration of a species in the area during its normal, recurring period of occurrence, regardless of the length of that period of occurrence.** | | |
| PL assessment: | No unusual concentrations of fish or wildlife species reside in the area. | **0** |
| **Replaceability (R) – ability to replace the area, either on or off site, with an equivalent replacement for the same fish and wildlife and uses of those same fish and wildlife, for the same users of those fish and wildlife.** | | |
| R assessment: | Man-made habitat; easily replaced by well understood techniques, and potential replacement sites exist in the vicinity. | **0.6** |

**Habitat Index: ( ER + SV + HU + PL) = 57.5** **Significance: (HI x R) = 34.5**

NEW YORK STATE
SIGNIFICANT COASTAL FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT
NARRATIVE

**PARKING LOT 9, JONES BEACH STATE PARK**

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT:

Parking Lot 9 in Jones Beach State Park is located south of the Ocean State Parkway, at the eastern end of the park. This area is owned by the Long Island State Park Commission, and is within the Town of Oyster Bay, Nassau County (7.5' Quadrangle: West Gilgo Beach, N.Y.). The fish and wildlife habitat consists of an approximately 15 acre area, including two abandoned parking lots and a section of barrier beach with maritime dune communities fronted by maritime beach, with scattered interdunal swales. Due to the dynamic nature of the Atlantic shoreline, the southern boundary of the Parking Lot 9 significant habitat will reflect the most current land forms, extending to mean low water. Maritime beach is a sparsely vegetated community dominated by beach grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*). Maritime beach occurs on unstable sand, gravel, or cobble ocean shores above mean high tide, where the shore is modified by storm waves and wind erosion. The community is an important nesting ground for beach nesting shore birds. The maritime dune community is comprised of grasses and low shrubs in a mosaic of vegetated patches dominated by beach grass and seaside goldenrod (*Solidago sempervirens*). This area receives considerable recreational use by people walking the beach and bathing.

Seabeach knotweed (T) (*Polygonum glaucum*) can be found on the beach and dunes of Parking Lot 9. The seabeach knotweed found growing in this habitat is a part of the larger population associated with the Jones Beach East significant habitat. Seabeach knotweed is rare in New York State with fewer than 35 occurrences, and only 21 to 100 plants occur globally. Seabeach amaranth (E, T-Fed) (*Amaranthus pumilus*), commonly associated with piping plover (E, T-Fed), has also been observed at this site, but has not been observed here since 1991. Seabeach amaranth (E, T-Fed) has been eliminated from two-thirds of its historic global range with typically fewer than 5 occurrences in New York State.

FISH AND WILDLIFE VALUES:

Parking Lot 9 is primarily a man-made wildlife habitat located within undeveloped barrier beach dunelands. This area comprises a somewhat rare ecosystem type in being one of only a few large, sparsely vegetated, and undisturbed areas among the dunelands in Nassau County. The parking lot serves as an important nesting site for least tern (T) and piping plover (E, T-Fed). Shorebird surveys estimate an annual average of 12 least tern (T) breeding pairs (27 in peak year) nesting in Jones Beach Parking Lot 9 from 1993-2005. Surveys conducted in 1993, 1997, 1998, 2004, and 2005 indicated an average of 2 pairs of piping plover (E, T-Fed) nesting in Jones Beach Parking Lot 9 (5 in peak year). Parking Lot 9 was one of 5 least tern (T) nesting sites in Nassau County from 1993-2003. Least terns (T) typically nest in simple scrapes built in sand or gravel, sparsely lined with small shells or other debris (e.g. seaweed). Least tern (T) breeding colonies may contain several hundred birds, including roseate (E), common (T), and gull-billed terns, along with black skimmer (SC). Least terns (T) feed by striking the water in

shallow dives, or skimming the surface for small fish. Common terns (T) have not been confirmed nesting at this site since 1997, however, given the continued presence of piping plover (E, T-Fed) and least tern (T) it is possible that common tern (T) could reoccupy the site in the future. There are no significant human use activities specifically associated with the wildlife resources at Parking Lot 9 in Jones Beach State Park. Sections of Jones Beach State Park also provide important access for mobile sportsfishermen who use off-road vehicles to reach the valuable surf fishery at this site.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Nesting shorebird species inhabiting the barrier beaches of Long Island are highly vulnerable to disturbance by humans from March 15 through August 15. Significant pedestrian traffic or recreational use of the uppermost beach area, dunes, and abandoned parking areas could easily eliminate the use of this site as a nesting area and should be minimized during this period. Reduction, or loss of the area presently utilized by nesting colonies could significantly affect the bird populations in this vicinity. Although nesting sites may change from year to year, human disturbance of the upper beach and dunes (above the spring high tide line) at Jones Beach State Park must be avoided in order to preserve these sites' value as a nesting habitat. Predation of chicks and destruction of eggs or nests by unleashed pets (e.g., dogs, cats) and natural predators may also occur, and predator control should be implemented where feasible. Introduction or attraction of mammalian predators to the area would also be detrimental to the populations of nesting birds. Appropriate placement of trash receptacles and signs promoting proper trash disposal would be beneficial to the habitat as beach lying trash may attract additional predators to sensitive populations. Fencing and/or annual posting of the bird nesting area should be provided to help protect the nesting bird species. Unregulated dredged material placement in this area would be detrimental to the habitat area, but such activities may be designed to maintain or improve the habitat, by setting back vegetative succession. Extensive revegetation of the site, whether by man or by natural processes, would reduce the suitability of the habitat for nesting least terns and piping plovers.

Construction of adjacent recreational facilities should be designed to minimize impacts to the nesting areas. Construction of new or maintenance of existing erosion control structures which interfere with natural coastal process should be carefully evaluated for need and where possible, non-structural solutions should be utilized.

HABITAT IMPAIRMENT TEST:

A **habitat impairment test** must be applied to any activity that is subject to consistency review under federal and State laws, or under applicable local laws contained in an approved local waterfront revitalization program. If the proposed action is subject to consistency review, then the habitat protection policy applies, whether the proposed action is to occur within or outside the designated area.

The specific **habitat impairment test** is as follows.

> In order to protect and preserve a significant habitat, land and water uses or development shall not be undertaken if such actions would:
>
> - destroy the habitat; or,
>
> - significantly impair the viability of a habitat.

*Habitat destruction* is defined as the loss of fish or wildlife use through direct physical alteration,

disturbance, or pollution of a designated area or through the indirect effects of these actions on a designated area. Habitat destruction may be indicated by changes in vegetation, substrate, or hydrology, or increases in runoff, erosion, sedimentation, or pollutants.

*Significant impairment* is defined as reduction in vital resources (e.g., food, shelter, living space) or change in environmental conditions (e.g., temperature, substrate, salinity) beyond the tolerance range of an organism. Indicators of a significantly impaired habitat focus on ecological alterations and may include but are not limited to reduced carrying capacity, changes in community structure (food chain relationships, species diversity), reduced productivity and/or increased incidence of disease and mortality.

The *tolerance range* of an organism is not defined as the physiological range of conditions beyond which a species will not survive at all, but as the ecological range of conditions that supports the species population or has the potential to support a restored population, where practical. Either the loss of individuals through an increase in emigration or an increase in death rate indicates that the tolerance range of an organism has been exceeded. An abrupt increase in death rate may occur as an environmental factor falls beyond a tolerance limit (a range has both upper and lower limits). Many environmental factors, however, do not have a sharply defined tolerance limit, but produce increasing emigration or death rates with increasing departure from conditions that are optimal for the species.

The range of parameters which should be considered in applying the habitat impairment test include but are not limited to the following:

1. physical parameters such as living space, circulation, flushing rates, tidal amplitude, turbidity, water temperature, depth (including loss of littoral zone), morphology, substrate type, vegetation, structure, erosion and sedimentation rates;

2. biological parameters such as community structure, food chain relationships, species diversity, predator/prey relationships, population size, mortality rates, reproductive rates, meristic features, behavioral patterns and migratory patterns; and,

3. chemical parameters such as dissolved oxygen, carbon dioxide, acidity, dissolved solids, nutrients, organics, salinity, and pollutants (heavy metals, toxics and hazardous materials).

Although not comprehensive, examples of generic activities and impacts which could destroy or significantly impair the habitat are listed in the Impact Assessment section to assist in applying the habitat impairment test to a proposed activity.

KNOWLEDGEABLE CONTACTS:

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Town of Oyster Bay
Division of Environmental Control
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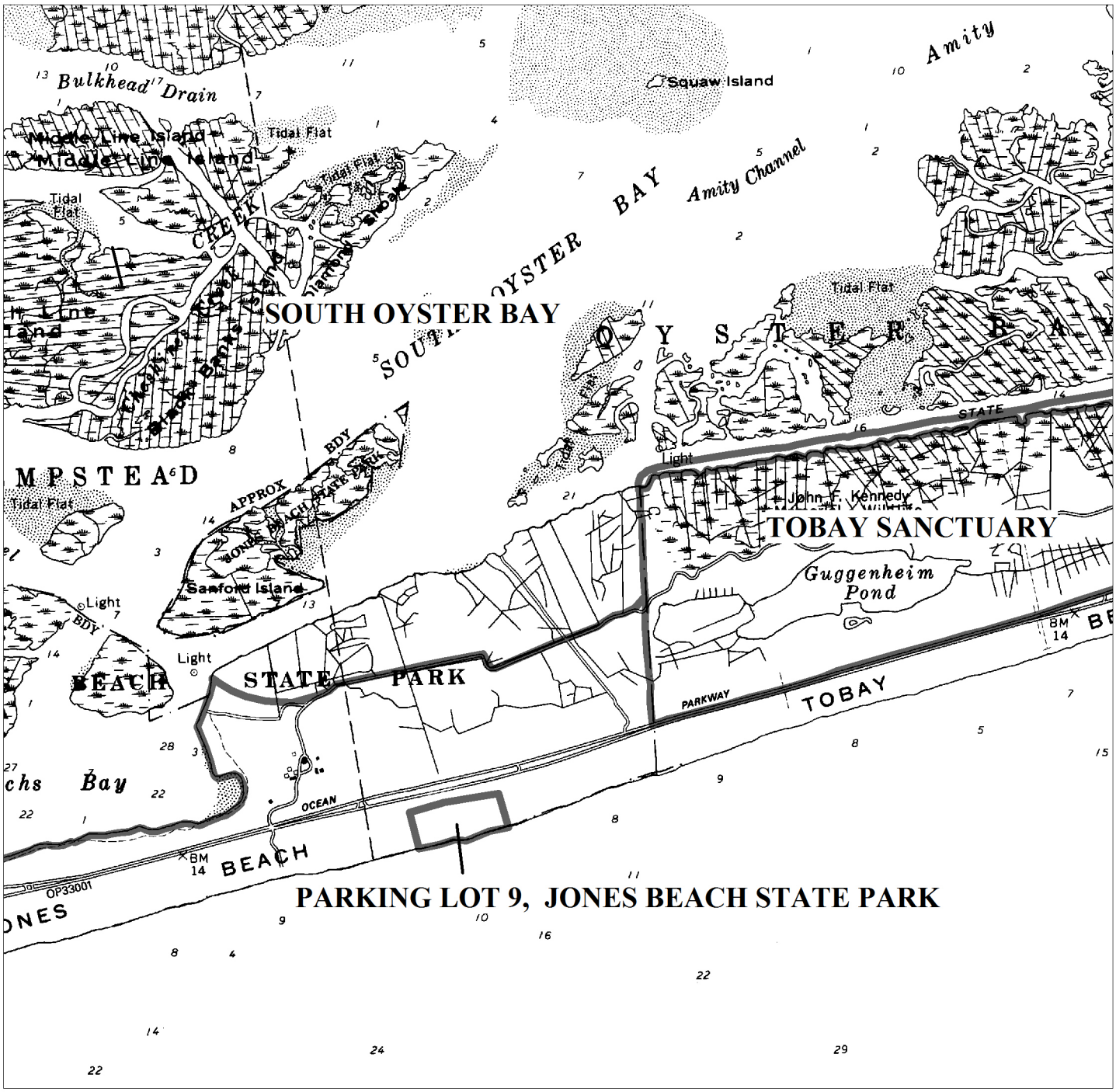


# Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats

New York State Department of State
Division of Coastal Resources

Parking Lot 9, Jones Beach State Park
South Oyster Bay (In Part)
Tobay Sanctuary (In Part)

N

0 2000
feet