

COASTAL FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of Area: **Port of Egypt Island**
Designated: **March 15, 1987**
Date Revised: **May 15, 2002**
County: **Suffolk**
Town(s): **Southold**
7½' Quadrangle(s): **Southold, NY**

Assessment Criteria

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: Small, sparsely vegetated sand island; not a rare ecosystem type. 0

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.

SV assessment: Common tern (T), least tern (T), piping plover (E, T-Fed), black skimmer (SC) and osprey (SC) nesting. Calculation: $36 + (25/2) + (25/4) + (16/8) + (16/16) = 57.75$

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: One of the largest common tern concentrations in Suffolk County. 4

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: Techniques for habitat replacement allow reasonable likelihood for success, but uncertain of ability to replace the population levels. 1.0

Habitat Index = [ER + SV + HU + PL] = 73.75

Significance = HI x R = 73.8

NEW YORK STATE
SIGNIFICANT COASTAL FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT
NARRATIVE

PORT OF EGYPT ISLAND

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT:

Port of Egypt Island is located approximately two miles east of the hamlet of Southold, on Shelter Island Sound, in the Town of Southold, Suffolk County (7.5' Quadrangle: Southold, NY). The fish and wildlife habitat is a narrow, sparsely vegetated, sand island, approximately 4 acres in size. This island is located at the mouth of Mill Creek, just offshore from an area that is heavily developed with marina and port facilities.

FISH AND WILDLIFE VALUES:

Port of Egypt Island is a very small sand island, similar in nature to many other areas around the Peconic Bays shoreline, but very important as a habitat for wildlife.

The island has served for many years as a major nesting site for common tern (T), least tern (T), piping plover (E, T-Fed), and black skimmer. Roseate terns (E) nested here sporadically prior to the 1980s, but have not been documented since that time. Common tern averaged 67 nesting pairs annually from 1987-1996. Peak pair numbers of 110-180 were reached in the late 1980s and have declined through 1996. Even these peak numbers have decreased from those in the mid-1980s, when 200-500 breeding pairs of common tern were documented at this site annually. The concentration of common terns at this site was historically among the largest on Long Island, of statewide significance. Least tern averaged 32 nesting pairs annually during the same period, with a peak number of 72 pairs in 1989 and gradually declining numbers since that year. During the 1987-1996 period, an average of 2 nesting pairs of plovers were observed on the island annually. During this same period, black skimmer (SC) nested sporadically on Port of Egypt Island, with a peak number of 7 pairs and an annual average of 2 pairs. Osprey (SC) nest at the western end of the island.

This area may provide important breeding habitat for horseshoe crab, but additional documentation is required. There are no significant human use activities associated with the wildlife resources at Port of Egypt Island.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Nesting shorebirds inhabiting the Port of Egypt Island are highly vulnerable to disturbance by humans, especially during the nesting and fledging period (March 15 through August 15). Significant pedestrian traffic or recreational vehicle use of the beach could easily eliminate the use of this site as a breeding area and should be minimized during this period. Recreational activities (*e.g.*, boat and personal watercraft landing, off-road vehicle use, picnicking) in the

vicinity of bird nesting areas should be minimized during this period. 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. Fencing and/or continued annual posting of shorebird nesting areas should be provided to help protect these species. Control of vegetative succession, through beneficial use of dredged material or other means may improve the availability of nesting habitat in this area.

Unrestricted use of motorized vessels including personal watercraft in the protected, shallow waters of bays, harbors, and tidal creeks can have adverse effects on aquatic vegetation and fish and wildlife populations. Use of motorized vessels should be controlled (*e.g.*, no wake zones, speed zones, zones of exclusion) in and adjacent to shallow waters and vegetated wetlands.

KNOWLEDGEABLE CONTACTS:

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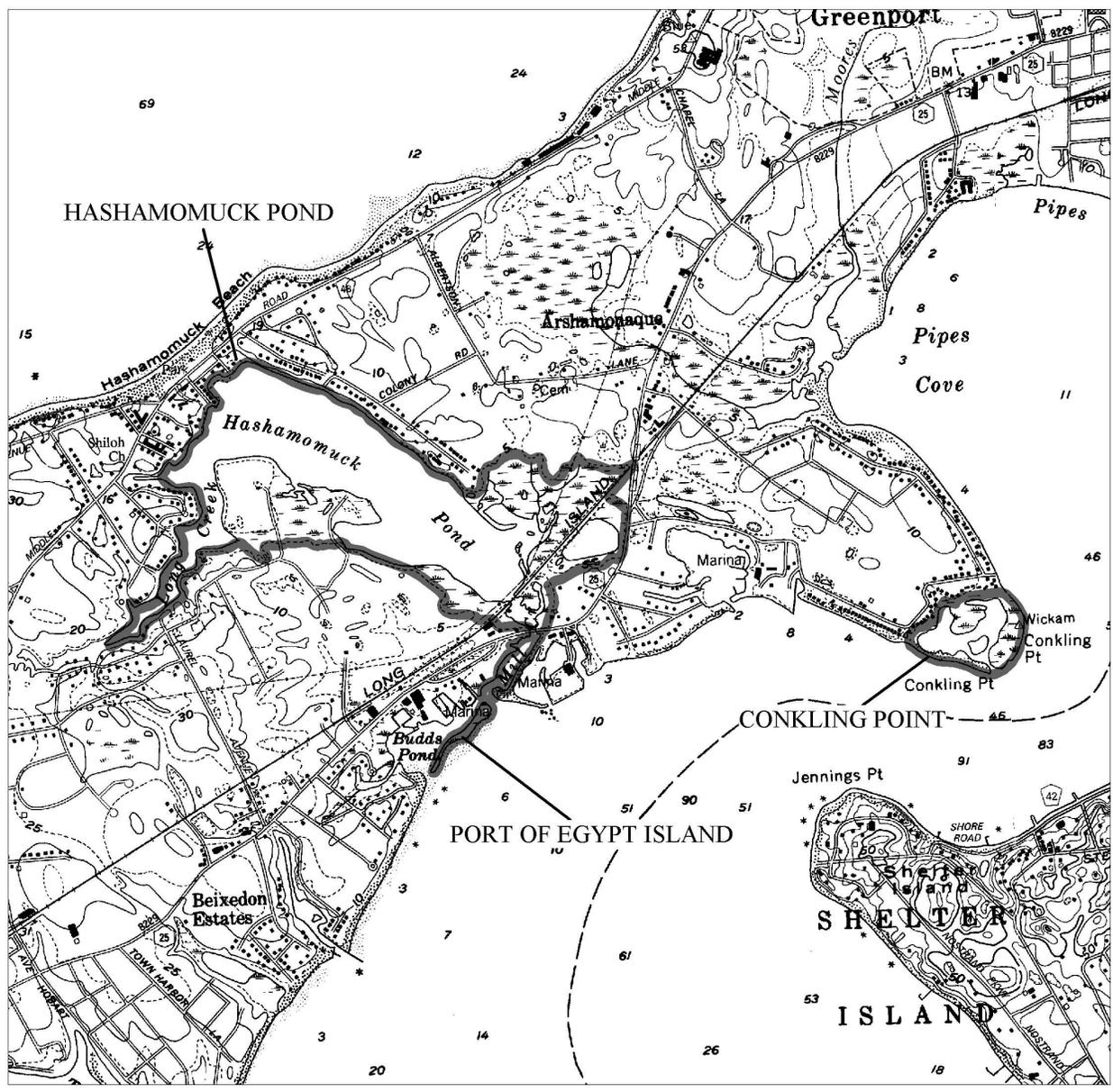
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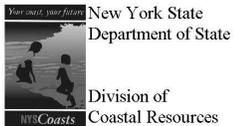
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Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats



Conkling Point
 Hashamomuck Pond
 Port of Egypt Island

