

COASTAL FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of Area: **Sebonac Neck**
Designated: **March 15, 1987**
Date Revised: **May 15, 2002**
County: **Suffolk**
Town(s): **Southampton**
7½' Quadrangle(s): **Southampton, 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: Heavily disturbed segment of sand beach and dredged material; 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: Least tern (T) and piping plover (E, T-Fed) nesting.
Calculation: $36 + (25/2) =$ 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: Nesting piping plover population of county-level significance. 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: Uncertain of ability to replace; potential replacement sites may not exist in the vicinity. 1.0

Habitat Index = [ER + SV + HU + PL] = 52.5

Significance = HI x R = 52.5

NEW YORK STATE
SIGNIFICANT COASTAL FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT
NARRATIVE

SEBONAC NECK

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT:

Sebonac Neck is located approximately two miles east of the Shinnecock Canal, on Great Peconic Bay, in the Town of Southampton, Suffolk County (7.5' Quadrangle: Southampton, NY). The fish and wildlife habitat is an approximate 15 acre area of sand and pebble beach and dredged material deposits. This area is located between Cold Spring Pond and Great Peconic Bay, on a narrow barrier beach peninsula which has been heavily developed for residential and recreational uses. Sebonac Neck receives considerable human disturbance, including recreational vehicle use, pedestrian traffic, bathing, and disturbance by free-roaming pets.

FISH AND WILDLIFE VALUES:

Sebonac Neck is a relatively small segment of unvegetated, and heavily disturbed, sand beach. Areas such as this are not rare in Suffolk County. However, Sebonac Neck is an important nesting site for least tern (T) and piping plover (E, T-Fed).

Both piping plover and least tern have nested continuously at Sebonac Neck since at least 1983. An annual average of 42 pairs of least tern nested at this site during the 1986-1996 period; a peak of 144 pairs occurred in 1986 but numbers have been declining since that time to under 10 pairs annually. An average of 3 pairs of piping plover nested at Sebonac Neck annually from 1986-1997; numbers have been increasing to peak values of between 4-6 pairs each year in the early and mid-1990s and are of county-level significance. In general, the populations of birds nesting in this area have been spread out over much of this long, narrow beach.

Osprey (SC) nest on a manmade platform erected in the marsh just outside the Sebonac Neck habitat boundary. This area may provide important breeding habitat for horseshoe crab, but additional documentation is required. The New York Natural Heritage Program has documented the rare plant species, seabeach knotweed (*Polygonum glaucum*), at Sebonac Neck.

There are no significant human activities associated with the wildlife resources of this habitat.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Any activity that would substantially degrade water quality in areas adjacent to Sebonac Neck would adversely affect biological productivity in the area. All species of fish and wildlife would be affected by water pollution, such as chemical contamination (including food chain effects resulting from bioaccumulation), oil spills, excessive turbidity, and waste disposal. The Town of Southampton has completed several road drainage improvement projects around Cold Spring

Pond to mitigate problems associated with road runoff.

Nesting shorebirds inhabiting Sebonac Neck 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.

KNOWLEDGEABLE CONTACTS:

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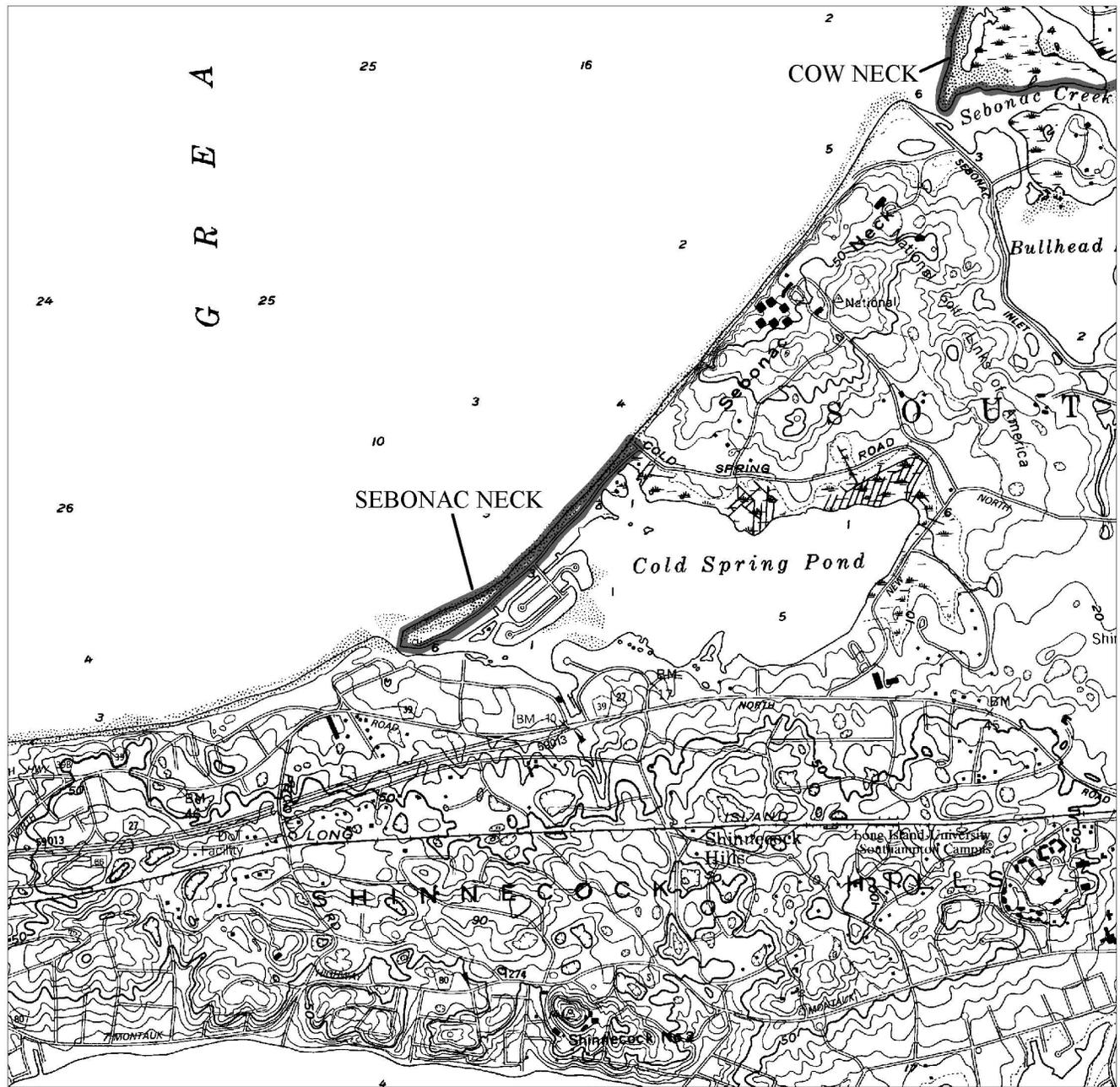
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Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats

Sebonac Neck
Cow Neck (In part)

