

**Attachment B:**

COASTAL FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT ASSESSMENT FORM

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Name of Area: **Storehouse, Jones Beach State Park**  
Designated: **March 15, 1987**  
Date Revised: **December 15, 2008**  
County: **Nassau**  
Town(s): **Hempstead**  
7½' Quadrangle(s): **Jones Inlet, NY**

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**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: Mid-succession shrubland and pine stands, relatively common in Nassau County.

**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. (E = Endangered, T = Threatened, SC = Special concern)**

SV assessment: Northern harrier (T) nesting.

**25**

**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: County-level significance for bird-watching and nature study opportunities.

**11**

**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: Historic concentrations of nesting egrets and herring gulls in the area have been among the largest and most consistent in New York State.

**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: Uncertain of ability to replace habitat or population level.

**1.0**

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**Habitat Index: ( ER + SV + HU + PL) = 36**

**Significance: (HI x R) = 36**

NEW YORK STATE  
SIGNIFICANT COASTAL FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT  
NARRATIVE

**STOREHOUSE, JONES BEACH STATE PARK**

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT:

The "Storehouse" area in Jones Beach State Park is located between Bay State Parkway and Ocean Parkway, east of the interchange with Meadowbrook State Parkway. This approximately 75 acre area is owned by the Long Island State Park Commission, and is within the Town of Hempstead, Nassau County (7.5' Quadrangle: Jones Inlet, N.Y.). The habitat includes the entire median area, which consists largely of a maritime shrubland on the sheltered backdunes of the Jones Beach Island barrier island. The maritime shrubland includes small scattered patches of shrub swamp. The tall shrub layer has 44% cover, of which the most abundant tall shrubs are winged sumac (*Rhus copallinum*) and northern bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*). The short shrub layer covers the rest of the landscape, where winged sumac, northern bayberry, and rugosa rose (*Rosa rugosa*) are most abundant.

FISH AND WILDLIFE VALUES:

Despite its location on a major barrier island, the Storehouse itself does not represent a rare ecosystem type. One pair of nesting northern harrier (SC) has been observed in this area annually since 1999. The habitat has historic significance as a nesting area by relatively large numbers of several species of herons and gulls. In 1977, Storehouse was the site of the largest nesting concentration of great egrets in New York State, with an estimated 140 pairs of birds observed. Also nesting in the area were an estimated 30 pairs of black-crowned night herons, and 2 pairs of glossy ibis. In recent years, these species have continued to nest here, along with snowy egrets, but population levels have declined. Unfortunately, no new empirical data is available, but the current New York State Breeding Bird Atlas initiative documents probable breeding in the Storehouse area for snowy egret, great egret, little blue heron, black-crowned night heron, and glossy ibis for the years from 2000 to 2004. This is the last remaining heron rookery on the Jones Beach barrier island up to the Captree Barrier Beach. In general, the rookeries have moved from near highways and other human use areas to a number of islands in the adjacent bays. Storehouse was one of the largest gull colonies on Long Island from 1982 to 1984, but the gull population may be decreasing as a result of vegetative succession in the nesting areas.

The unusual concentrations of wildlife at Storehouse attract occasional human use for birdwatching, photography, and nature study, of county-level significance. The beach, north of Bay Drive, provides a unique opportunity for seal watching. A haulout area, with approximately 150 harbor seals is located on Deep Creek Meadow, a marsh island in the East Hempstead Bay that lies just north of the Storehouse significant habitat. The Theodore Roosevelt Nature Center conducts regular seal-watching tours of the area for visitors.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

The Storehouse bird populations would be most adversely affected by habitat alteration, modification of public access to the area, or human intrusion. Reduction, or loss of the area presently utilized by nesting

colonies could significantly affect the bird populations in this vicinity. Extensive clearing of vegetation in the area, especially the pine stands, would probably eliminate the heron rookery. On the other hand, natural succession in open sandy areas would reduce the area suitable for gull nesting, although much other suitable habitat exists in the vicinity. Any significant disturbance of the birds nesting at Storehouse, including increased recreational use of the area, should be avoided during the nesting period, which extends from April 15 to August 15.

#### 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:

New York State Department of State  
Division of Coastal Resources  
Habitat Unit  
99 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12231  
Phone: (518) 474-6000

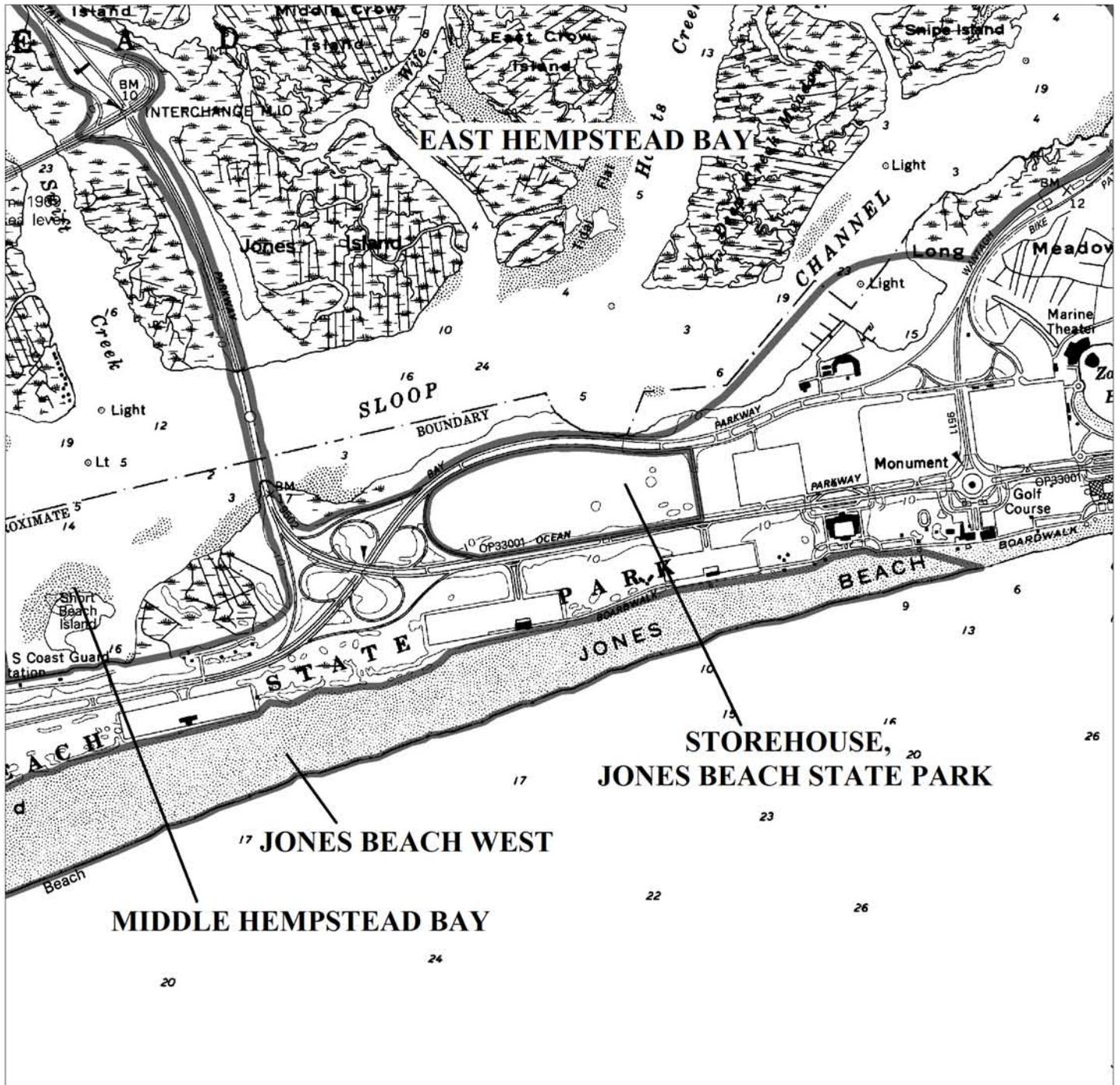
NYSDEC - Region 1  
State University of New York, Building 40  
Stony Brook, NY 11790  
Phone: (631) 444-0204

NYSDEC  
Bureau of Marine Resources  
205 N. Belle Meade Road, Suite # 1  
East Setauket, NY 11733  
Phone: (631) 444-0430

New York Natural Heritage Program  
625 Broadway, 5<sup>th</sup> floor  
Albany, NY 12233  
Phone: (518) 402-8935

Town of Hempstead  
Department of Conservation and Waterways  
Lido Boulevard  
Point Lookout, NY 11569  
Phone: (516) 431-9200

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation  
Agency Building 1  
Empire State Plaza  
Albany, NY 12238  
Phone: (518) 474-0409



## Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats

Storehouse, Jones Beach State Park  
 Middle Hempstead Bay (In Part)  
 East Hempstead Bay (In Part)  
 Jones Beach West (In Part)



New York State  
 Department of State  
 Division of  
 Coastal Resources

