

Early Migrations



This year the migratory species that visit Cape Cod, specifically Sandy Neck, arrived earlier than usual. This migratory behavior is dictated by the environment, and instinct. Typically ospreys arrive to the northeast in mid April, this year they were seen in Falmouth as early as March. These birds migrate from as far south as the Amazon rain forest in the winter, and return to Massachusetts to nest in the summer.

Another well known bird species of the area, the piping plover winters in the Caribbean and generally arrives on our beaches in late March. They were spotted in Massachusetts on March 15th and on Sandy Neck on March 19th. We have faced an increase in high intensity storms, and extreme weather driven by changes to our climate. With this in mind researchers are anxious to see the effect that these environmental changes will have on the osprey and the piping plover in the future.

WINDERS COTTAGE DEMO

This winter the Town of Barnstable removed the old Winders cottage located just east of Trail 2 on the Marsh Trail. The cottage had been uninhabited for some time and was an unsafe structure. DPW crews took two days to remove the old building. The only remaining evidence of the cottage are the cinderblocks and cement that once supported the structure.



Winders cottage prior to demo and debris removal.

Fat A\$\$ Marathon

This year the Frozen Fat A\$\$ ultra marathon was held on January 25th. The 63 brave athletes were greeted with temps in the upper 30s and rain. Sounds like great weather to run 33.3 miles in the sand (sarcasm intended)! The race is getting increasingly popular every year. The extreme terrain, and weather conditions keep these adventurous marathoners coming back for more.

Owls- Our Artic Friends



Sandy Neck the owl prior to being released on Sandy Neck Beach.

This winter the snowy owl migration has been well documented and thoroughly covered because of the huge influx of birds. At least six snowy owls inhabited Sandy Neck; all having traveled from their summer home in the Arctic. These regal birds could be spotted resting on the dunes or right on the beach. You may have heard the story of a very special owl tagged and released at Sandy Neck (appropriately name Sandy Neck). When she came to us, she was tagged with a GPS and was a very large, well-traveled, healthy female. She would regularly move from the Great Marsh at Sandy Neck to Duxbury, back to Sandy Neck, and out to Marthas Vineyard and Nantucket. Sadly, this owl succumbed to the harsh coastal weather during one of the last major storms we had in early March. We learned a great deal from this female and pay tribute to her delicate life. It is estimated that about 85% of the young raptors will die in their first year. With this in mind we remember the unique opportunity we have to witness these special birds.

Marsh Trail Repair

The annual Marsh Trail repair project is under way and making good progress. The Barnstable DPW is hard at work, raising the level of the marsh trail, to prevent flooding. Please pardon our construction, and the storage of maintenance materials in the lower parking lot as we complete this process.

Osprey Pole Rebuild...Again



Last year efforts were made by Sandy Neck and Audubon staff to rebuild the Osprey pole located near the gatehouse. While the efforts were well planned, unpredictable and unseasonable weather compromised the pole, preventing the birds from successfully nesting. This year, with the help of neighborhood volunteers, Sandy Neck staff came together to rebuild the osprey nesting pole. The pole was fixed in early March before the ospreys arrived from their winter homes in the south. We now proudly report a pair of ospreys, hard at work building a nest on their new pole. We look forward to osprey hatchlings at Sandy Neck this summer.

2014 ORV Stickers on Sale

Come by the gatehouse 7 days a week from 9AM to 4PM to purchase your 2014 sticker and to check out our new merchandise (designed by a local artist). Your 2013 ORV stickers are no longer valid (as of April 15, 2014).

WEATHER: COLD, MILD, and STORMY!

As the old saying goes...."If you don't like the weather in New England now, just wait a few minutes" (Mark Twain). This year in New England we faced a predictably, unpredictable winter. We managed uncharacteristic changes in the weather, with winter temperatures in the 50s and the next day recordings of -10. We battled blizzards only to face spring like weather in the very same week. Winter weather extremes have again taken their toll on Sandy Neck. The many blizzards of the season, combined with extreme high tides contributed to the loss of sand which was added to the dune in front of the Bodfish Beach parking lot. We are now testing different strategies for protecting the remaining dune, and trapping more sand in the area. A monitoring project has also begun to measure dune loss along the ORV corridor. Stakes were strategically placed at the top of the primary dune, behind the primary dune, and at the toe of the dune along the beach. GPS coordinates and measurements were taken for each location to give reference points to measure dune loss or accretion. Additional measurements will be taken throughout the year to quantify changes to the dune both from storm and human interaction. Please be respectful of signs, fencing, and requests from staff to stay out of all dune areas of Sandy Neck.

SANDY NECK BEACH PARK

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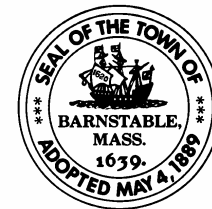
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For the latest Sandy Neck information
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www.sandyneckbeachpark.com



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All questions and comments are welcome.
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