

Limiting Disturbance from Fireworks in Hingham Harbor, MA



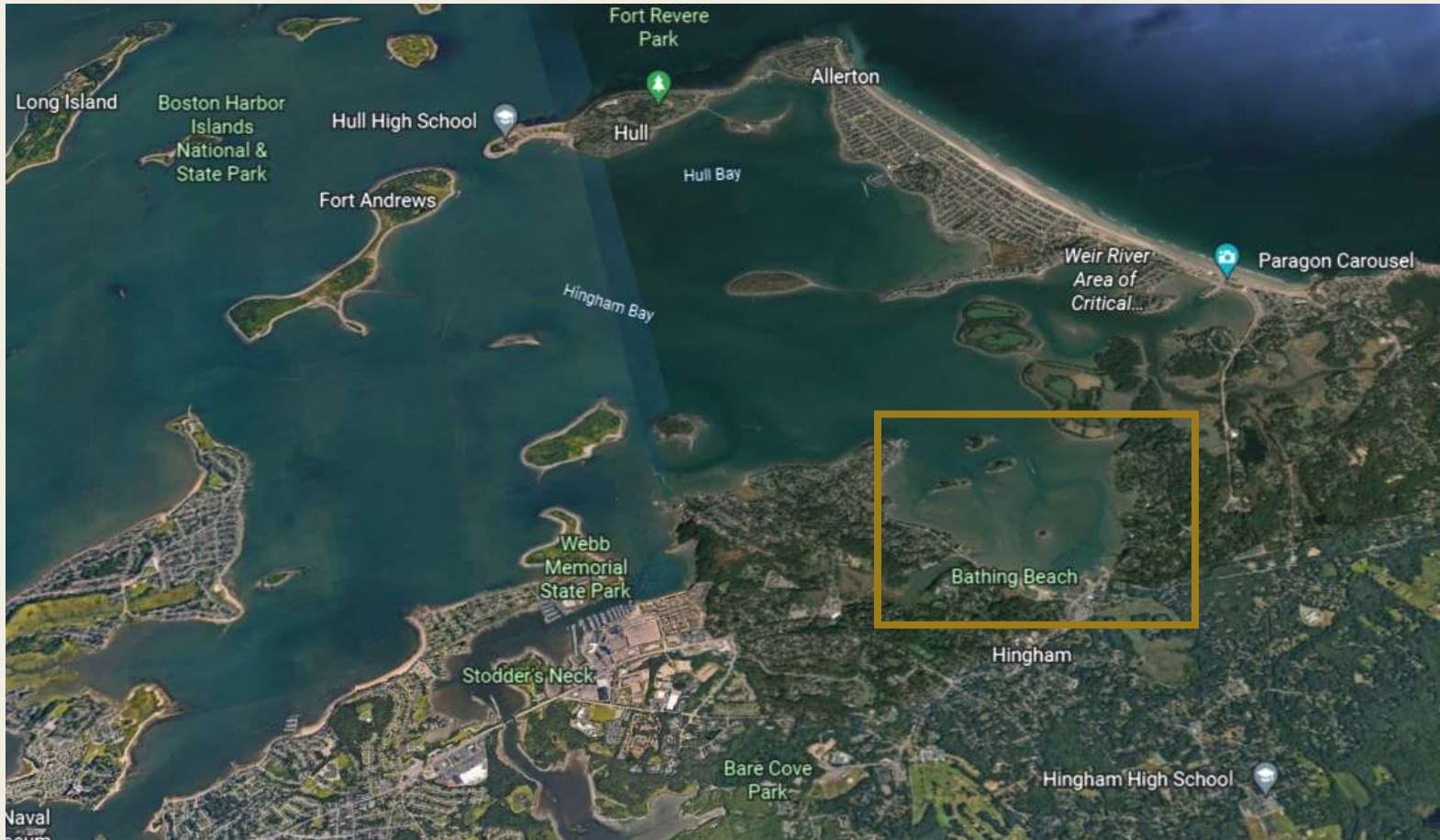
Lyra Brennan, Director
Coastal Waterbird Program

Presentation outline:

- Overview of Hingham Harbor
- Seasonal nesting activity
- Historical Firework disturbance
- Changes and approach in 2022
- Next Steps



Hingham Harbor



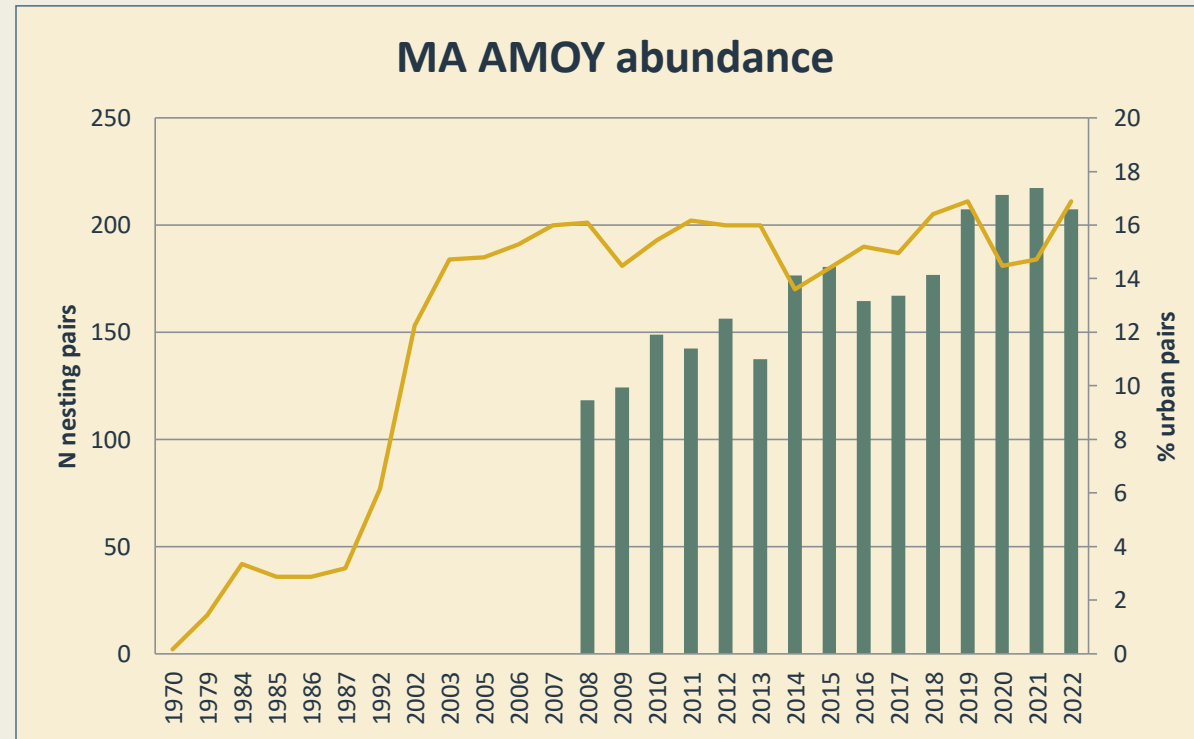
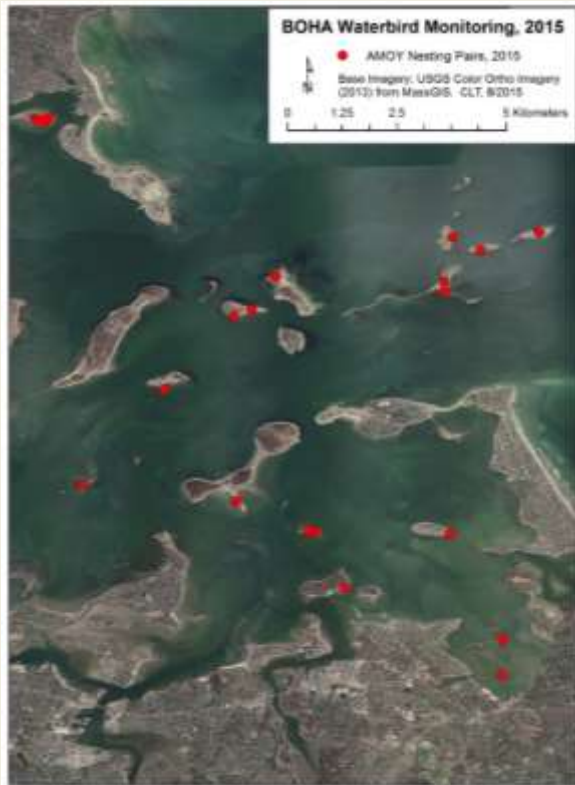
- Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park.
- Partnerships between Mass Audubon, NPS, townships, Boston, and DCR
- Mass Audubon monitors 15 islands within the park; NPS monitors remainder

Hingham Harbor

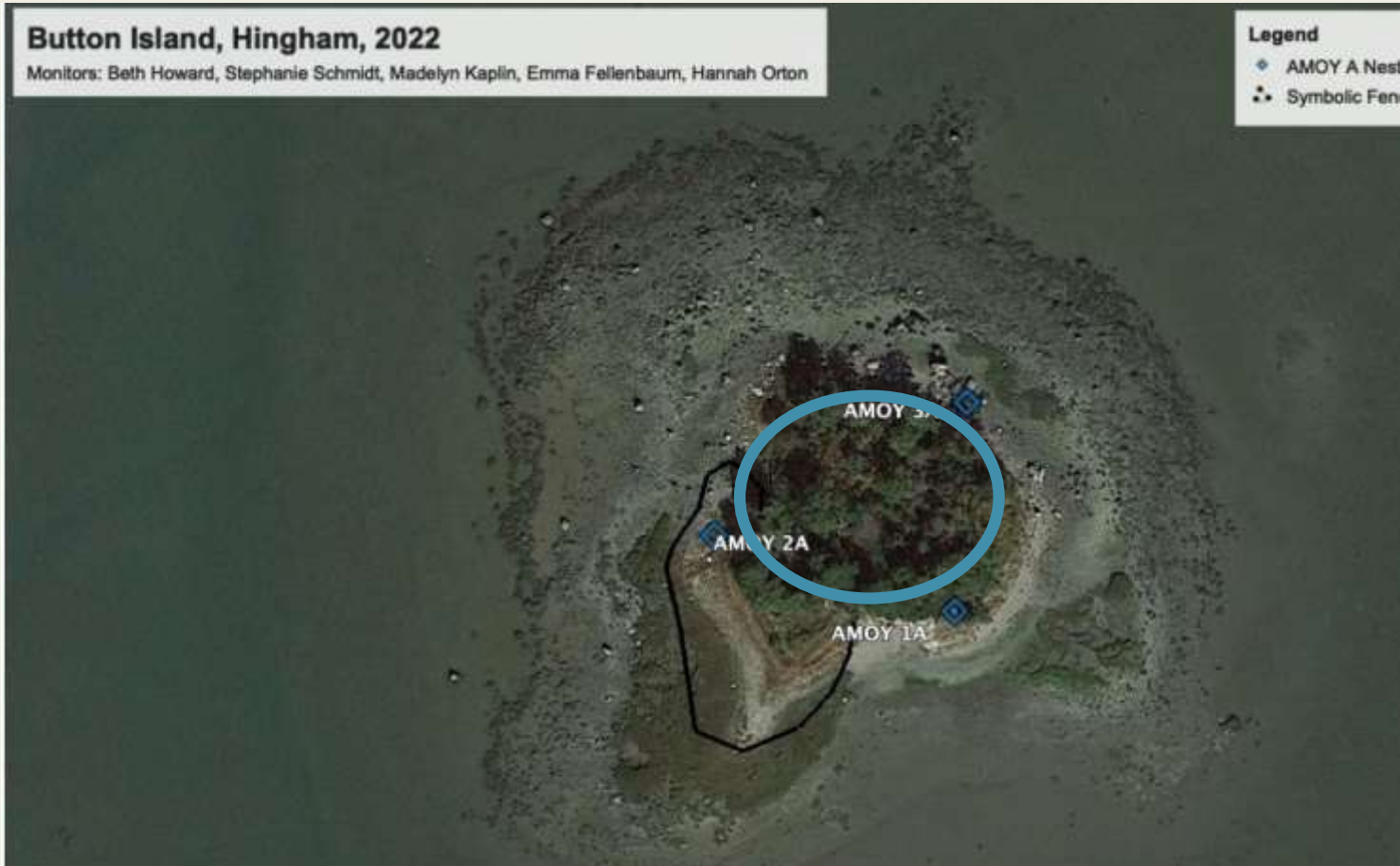


- Ease of access
- Extensive mudflats
- Small islands in close proximity

Urban American Oystercatchers

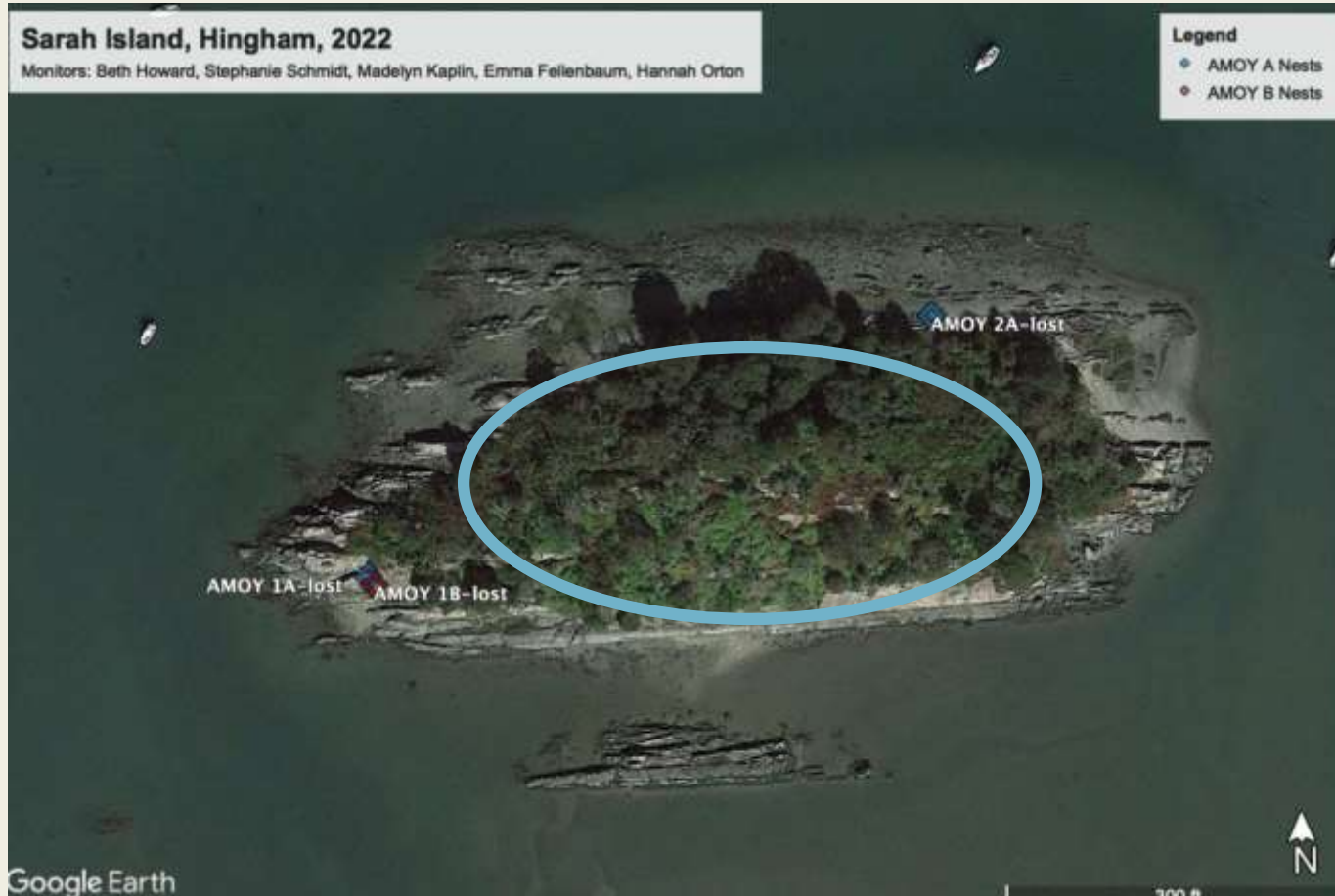


Button Island



- Under an acre in size
- AMOY pairs increased from 1 in 2018 to 3 in 2022
- Impacts timing/success of chicks
- Fireworks traditionally shot directly off of the island; extensive debris
- Town managed.
- Large Black-Crowned Night Heron colony (+35) detected in 2022

Sarah Island



- 2 AMOY pairs
- 4.6 acres
- Nesting gulls and Double-crested Cormorants
- Extensive historical Black-crowned Night Heron, Great Egret colony

Langlee and Ragged Islands



- At least one AMOY pair
- 4 acres
- Steep, rocky habitat



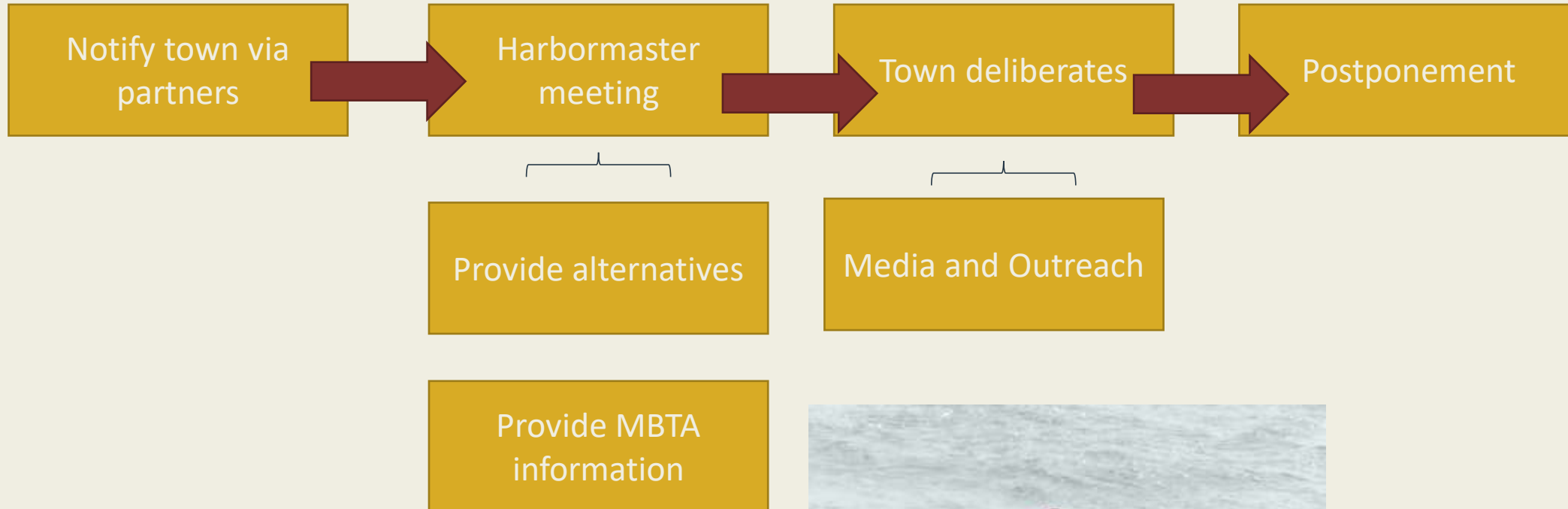
- No nesting in 2022
- Frequent foraging and staging area for AMOY

Fireworks Approach

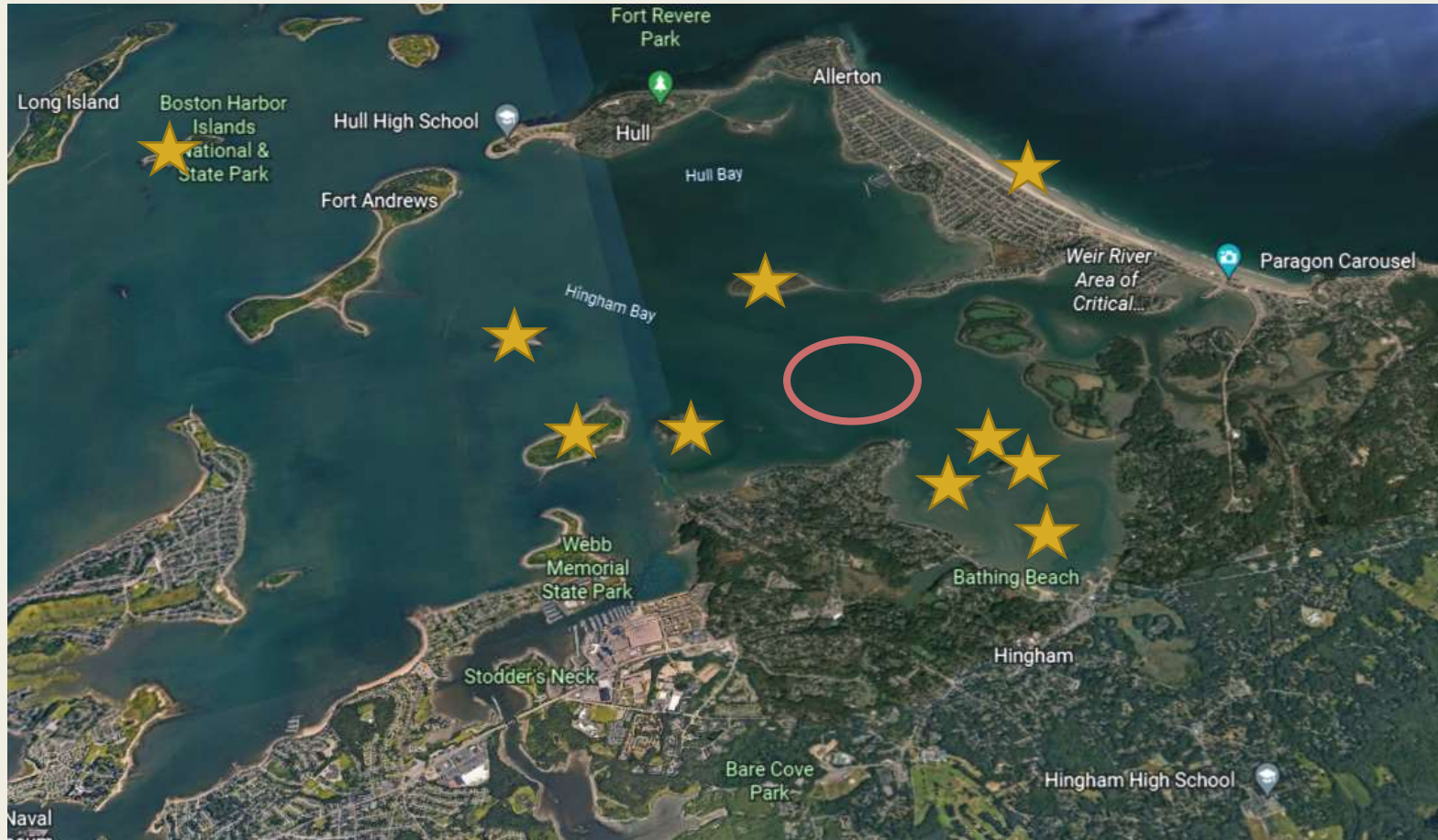


- Islands already subject to disturbance; private fireworks each year.
- Large wading bird colonies being intensively studied from 2012-2022
- Key partnership support

Fireworks Approach



Fireworks Approach



- Offered alternatives
 - 0.75 miles
 - Barge option
 - Enforcement on island landing

Migratory Bird Treaty Act



Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)

Elements:

- **Statute: 16 U.S.C. 707(a) Misdemeanor Offense**

- Any person, association, partnership, or corporation who
- Violates or fails to comply with any provisions or regulations of the MBTA
- Shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor

- **Statute: 16 U.S.C. 707(b) Felony Offense**

- Any person who
- Knowingly
- Takes any migratory bird
- With intent to sell, offer to sell, barter, or offer to barter
- Any migratory bird
- Shall be guilty of a felony

Fireworks Approach

ENVIRONMENT

Endangered piping plovers chase July 4 fireworks out of Barnstable beach

The fireworks celebration was pushed back to Labor Day weekend to protect the threatened shorebirds.



Hampton Beach fireworks shows called off. The reason? Piping plovers are nesting.

Max Sullivan | Portsmouth Herald
Published 12:09 a.m. ET May 28, 2022

[View Comments](#) [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) [r](#)



Piping plover chicks have been spotted at Hampton and Seabrook beaches. The babies are not much bigger than cotton balls and can be hard to see. Courtesy: Photo/N.H. Fish And Game

- Other precedents
- Other tools
 - Education on the ground
 - Outreach
 - Media/Press

Fireworks Approach

TOWN WORKING TO IDENTIFY NEW SITE TO LAUNCH 2022 FIREWORKS DISPLAY: 'MULTIPLE LOCATIONS ARE BEING CONSIDERED'

NEWS

Hingham Fourth of July fireworks pushed to September to protect endangered birds

The Patriot Ledger

Published 8:32 a.m. ET June 29, 2022 | Updated 9:34 a.m. ET June 29, 2022

Deferring to nesting birds, Hingham postpones Fourth of July fireworks until fall

By Johanna Seltz Globe Correspondent. Updated June 30, 2022, 8:00 p.m.



American Oystercatchers, a species protected in Massachusetts, are nesting on Bulton Island in Hingham Harbor - the launching site for Hingham's traditional Fourth of July fireworks, and the reason the fireworks won't take place until the fall this year. JAMIE INFANTI

Outcomes and Next Steps



- Successful colonies; final data being analyzed
- X AMOY chicks fledged from x pairs
 - Button: 2 chicks
 - Langlee: 3 chicks
 - Sarah: Y(4P):Y(4P)/X (unsuccessful)
- Next Steps:
 - Communications
 - Island tours
 - Hope for continued rescheduling

Questions?



*Photos: Beth Howard,
Jamie Infanti, Steph
Schmidt*

