

Human Disturbance at Rockaway Beach

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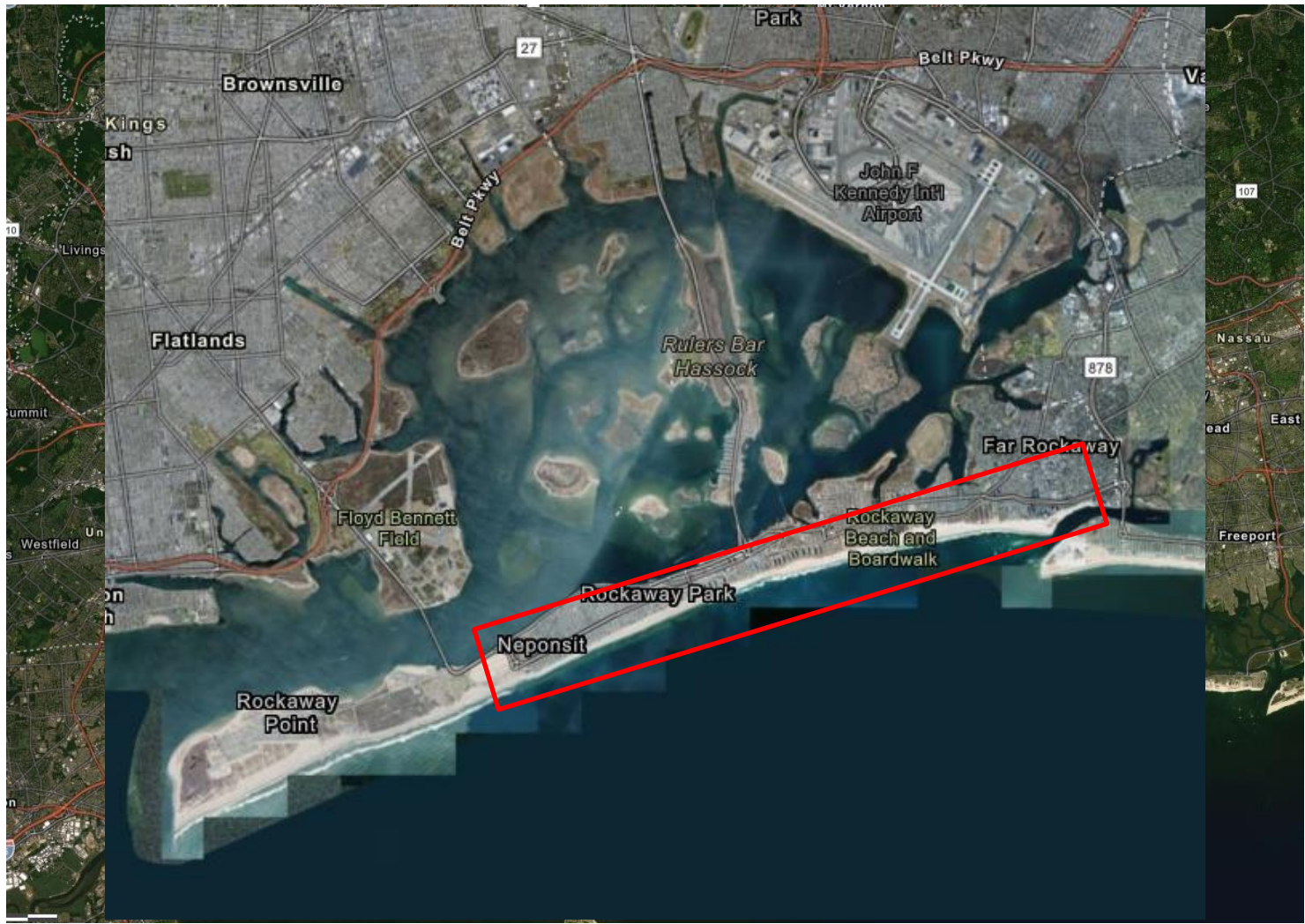
Parks

Introduction

- The Rockaway Beach Endangered Species Nesting Area (RBESNA) was established in 1996 as a response to the discovery of federal and state-listed piping plovers and other protected shorebirds nesting on Rockaway Beach, Queens
- Since 2017, the piping plover monitoring program has been managed by NYC Parks' Wildlife Unit



Overview of RBESNA



Overview of RBESNA



Birds of RBESNA

Federally Threatened and NYS Endangered Species

- Piping Plover

NYS Threatened Species

- Least Tern
- Common Tern

Species of Special Concern

- Black Skimmer

Species of Least Concern

- American Oystercatcher

Federally and NYS Threatened Plant Species

- Seabeach Amaranth



Protection Guidelines

Symbolic fencing is installed to prevent accidental destruction of nests and repeated flushing of incubating adults, and to provide an area where chicks can seek shelter when large numbers of people are on the beach

- Fence off main breeding area(s) with a minimum buffer of 50 meters for piping plovers
- Fence off any individual nests with a minimum buffer of 50 meters
- Maintain fencing until all piping plover chicks have fledged or perished and no further nesting is observed



2022 Results

Piping Plovers

- 21 pairs
- 90 eggs laid
- 46 chicks hatched
- 5 chicks fledged
- 0.24 productivity rate (chicks fledged/pairs)
- 51% of eggs hatched (chicks hatched/eggs)
- 10% of chicks fledged (chicks fledged/chicks)
- 90% mortality (chicks lost/chicks hatched)



2022 Results

American Oystercatchers

- 36 pairs
- 144 eggs laid
- 57 chicks hatched
- 36 chicks fledged
- 1.00 productivity rate (chicks fledged/pairs)
- 40% of eggs hatched (chick hatched/eggs)
- 63% of chicks fledged (chicks fledged/chicks)
- 37% mortality (chicks lost/chicks hatched)



Human Disturbance Events



Human Disturbance 5.15.22

Damages

- 19 missing American oystercatcher nests
- 1 missing piping plover nest
- 1 dead piping plover adult
- 2 killdeer nests





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RBESNA Vandalism and Take Incident

May 15, 2022



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

- PIPL take (adult plover)
- Sweatshirt (evidence)
- Vandalized PIPL nests
- Vandalized AMOY nests

- Remaining nests
- American oystercatcher (AMOY)
 - Piping plover (PIPL)
 - Symbolic Fencing

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 Data Sources: NYC Parks, NYC Parks' Wildlife Unit
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Human Disturbance 5.20.22

Damages

- 2 American oystercatcher nests disturbed



Human Disturbance 6.11.22

Damages

- 1 piping plover nest destroyed
- 1 American oystercatcher nest destroyed



Site changes made after disturbances

- Orange construction fence
- Field cameras set up in back of site
- Removed nest markers
- Locks placed on all boardwalk entrances around site
- Back of site snow fencing repaired or replaced



Thank You. Any Questions?



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