



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Outer Banks Group:

· Cape Hatteras National
Seashore
· Fort Raleigh National
Historic Site
· Wright Brothers National
Memorial

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Pedestrian Access Open to Cape Point

Superintendent Mike Murray announced today that the east side of Cape Point has reopened to pedestrian access, effective immediately, via a pedestrian access corridor that begins about 60 meters south of Ramp 44. Although the remaining piping plover chicks in the Cape Point area had fledged by last week, access to the Point has remained closed due to a resource protection closure for American oystercatcher (AMOY) chicks south of Ramp 44. The AMOY chicks, which are provided a 200 meter buffer under the consent decree, have now fledged and the access corridor has reopened to pedestrian access. Because young AMOY fledglings are relatively big birds and weak flyers, and are less capable of getting out of the way of moving vehicles or pets off leash than are the fledglings of smaller shorebird species, there is a two week waiting period after AMOY chicks fledge before an area is reopened to ORVs or pets. It is expected that the access corridor to the Point will reopen to ORV access and pets in about two weeks, provided no new resource closures occur in the area.

Under the consent decree, the prenesting areas are to remain in place “until the later of July 15 or two weeks after the last chicks within the area have fledged, as determined by two consecutive monitoring events.” Other closures, outside of the prenesting closures that were established based on observed shorebird breeding behavior, are to remain in place, depending upon the circumstances, until at least two weeks after a nest is lost to see if the birds reneest, or until all chicks have fledged. Colonial waterbird nests and chicks and American oystercatcher chicks are still present west of Cape Point and in the eastern portion of South Beach. The prenesting areas and other resource protection areas that were established in these locations earlier in the season will remain posted until nesting and chick rearing activity is completed and the prescribed reopening criteria have been met.

As a result of the reopening of pedestrian access to Cape Point, of 66.8 miles of Seashore beaches, approximately 24.7 miles are open to ORVs and pedestrians, 26.8 miles are open to pedestrians only, 4.2 miles have limited access for pedestrians only (i.e., “open” areas sandwiched between two closures), and 11.1 miles are fully closed to visitors to protect park resources. Currently, ramps 4, 30, 34, 38, 43, 44, 49, 55, 59, 67, 68, 70, and 72 are open; and ramps 23, 27 and 45 are closed.

Temporary resource protection areas are established to protect threatened and endangered species, including piping plovers and sea turtles, as well as state or federal species of concern, including American oystercatchers and colonial waterbirds (terns and black skimmers). For more information, call 252-473-2111 ext. 148.

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