



# EAST HAMPTON TOWN BEACH DRIVING GUIDE



*If You Drive on the Beach  
Respect the People  
Protect the Plants and Animals*

**EAST HAMPTON TOWN BOARD**

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## **BEACH DRIVING ORDINANCE**

DRIVING A VEHICLE ON THE BEACH IS A PRIVILEGE GRANTED BY THE EAST HAMPTON TOWN BOARD AND THE EAST HAMPTON TOWN TRUSTEES. THESE ARE THE BEACH DRIVING LAWS YOU **MUST** ABIDE BY IF YOU DRIVE ON THE BEACHES OF EAST HAMPTON.

*The law applies to anyone driving on the beaches of East Hampton outside the State and County Parks and the Villages of East Hampton and Sag Harbor. All vehicles must have a valid Town permit to access the beach. The permit must be displayed on the rear driver's side bumper.*

### **SEASONALLY PROHIBITED BEACH DRIVING AREAS:**

(Thursday before Memorial Day to September 15 from 10am to 6pm)

- ◆ Ocean beach at Atlantic Drive in Napeague
- ◆ Ocean beach in Amagansett between Indian Wells Beach and Atlantic Avenue Beach.
- ◆ Ocean beach in Wainscott between Town Line Road and the westerly boundary of East Hampton Village
- ◆ Ocean beach in Montauk between Camp Hero State Park and Hither Hills State Park
- ◆ Fort Pond Bay beach in Montauk

### **YEAR-ROUND PROHIBITED BEACH DRIVING AREAS:**

- ◆ The beach on the Accabonac Harbor side of Louse Point, except at the launching ramp
- ◆ The beach on the Gardiners Bay side of Louse Point, to a distance of 300 feet south of the Point.
- ◆ The Gardiners Bay beach at Maidstone Park, from the end of Flaggy Hole Road to the Three Mile Harbor jetty.

*You are exempt from seasonal restrictions if you are:*

- ◇ Actively engaged in traditional net fishing
- ◇ A handicapped driver with a handicapped parking permit
- ◇ Transporting people who are crabbing (with valid shellfish permits) to Georgica Pond by way of Beach Lane in Wainscott to and from the pond.

## **WHILE DRIVING ON THE BEACH:**

- The maximum speed limit is 15 mph.
- Proceed with consideration of other users
- Pedestrians always have the right of way.
- Be especially cautious of children and pets.
- Maintain a distance of no less than 50 feet seaward of the beach grass line, if possible.
- Avoid driving close to the water.
- Do not use a motorcycle, hovercraft, snowmobile, all-terrain vehicle, or any other similar vehicle for off-road travel.
- Do not operate your vehicle under the influence of alcohol – as defined by the Vehicle and Traffic Laws.
- You can never drive onto or off of the beach except by way of a designated access point.
- Do not block the designated vehicle access point when parking.
- Camping in your vehicle on the beach is forbidden.

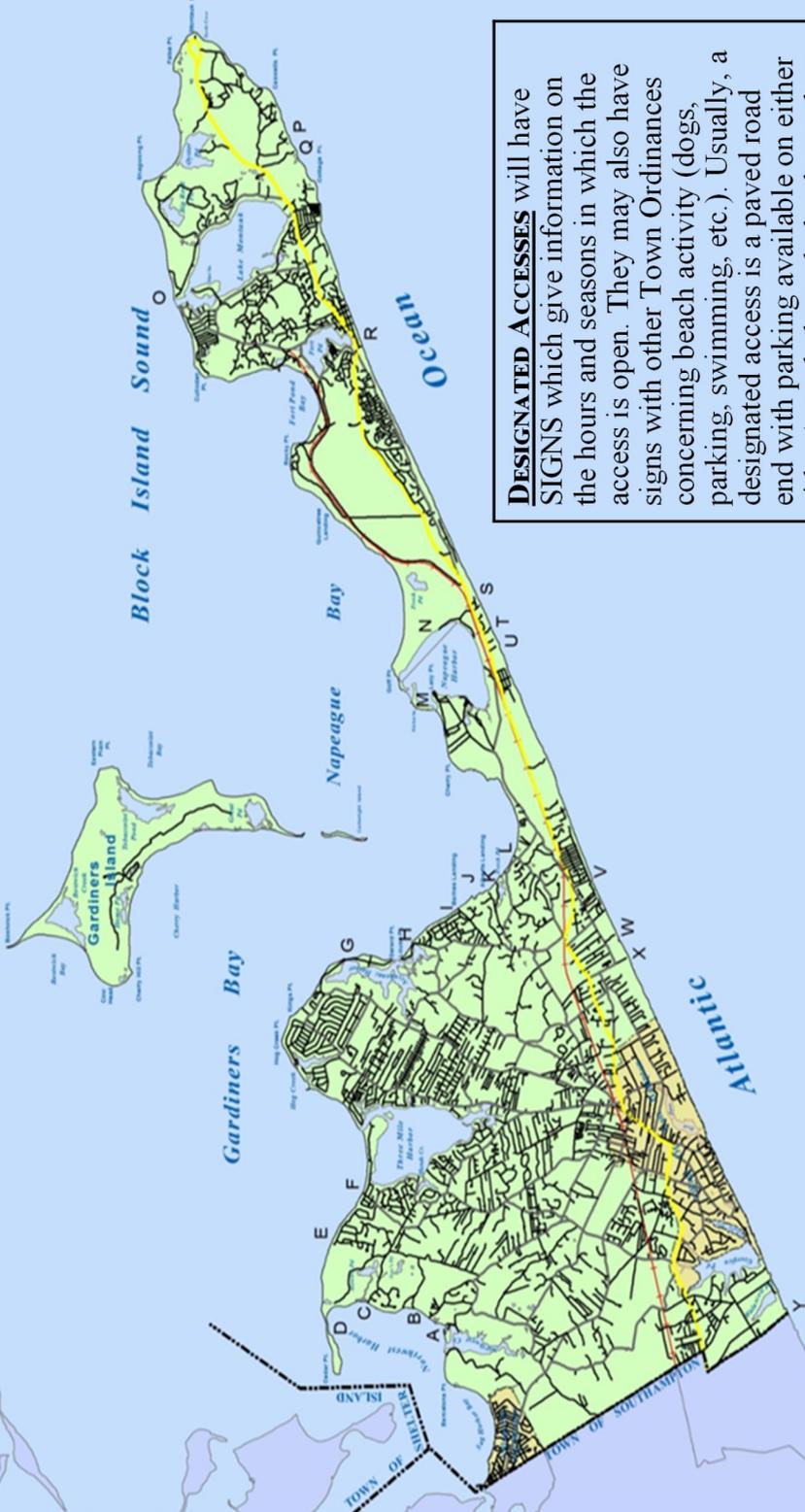
## **DRIVING IS ALWAYS PROHIBITED:**

- \* On any beach vegetation.
- \* On any dune or bluff face or within 50 feet of the beach grass line.
- \* Within or immediately adjacent to any protected bird nesting area.

## TIPS AND PRACTICES

- ◆ Drive at a slow even pace. Whenever possible, use existing tracks. Drive in areas where the sand is the hardest – between the waterline and the high tide mark. Driving all over the beach is reckless. Only appropriate 4-Wheel Drive vehicles should be driven on the beach.
- ◆ Use designated access locations only. Utilizing undesignated access can damage vegetation and cause erosion, leaving the beach vulnerable to storm damage.
- ◆ Ruts and holes caused by stuck vehicles should be filled and all debris removed.
- ◆ Lower the pressure on all tires from 16-20 psi depending on the type of vehicle, tire size, and sand condition. Use lower pressure for softer sand. Be sure to inflate your tires when returning to the roadway. If you do get stuck, do not spin your tires. Place vehicle in reverse, drive forward a bit before reversing again. Repeat to create traction. Avoid all beach vegetation and do not drive in dune areas that are not designated as access roads.
- ◆ Avoid traveling in the high tide wrack line, the layer of debris is often where birds feed and can be full of nails, bottles, shells, etc.





**DESIGNATED ACCESSES** will have **SIGNS** which give information on the hours and seasons in which the access is open. They may also have signs with other Town Ordinances concerning beach activity (dogs, parking, swimming, etc.). Usually, a designated access is a paved road end with parking available on either side. A track through the dunes that is **NOT** a designated access should not be used.

A. Northwest Landing Rd.  
B. Mile Hill Rd.  
C. Alewife Brook Rd.  
D. Cedar Point County Park  
E. Old House Landing Rd.  
F. Sammy's Beach Rd.  
G. Gerard Park (Gerard Point,  
bayside often closed)  
H. Louse Point (harbor side)  
I. Barnes' Hole Rd. (beach to the  
south is private property)  
J. Albert's Landing Rd.  
K. Fresh Pond Rd.  
L. Abraham's Landing Rd.

M. Lazy Point Rd.  
N. Napeague Harbor Rd.  
O. East Lake Dr.  
P. Otis Ave.  
Q. Ditch Plains  
R. South Eton Dr.  
S. Navahoe Lane  
T. Dolphin Dr.  
U. Atlantic Dr.  
V. Napeague Lane  
W. Atlantic Ave.  
X. Indian Wells Plain Hwy.  
Y. Town Line Rd.

**NOTE:** Most ocean beaches have restricted access from the Thursday before Memorial Day to September 15, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Several beaches are closed to vehicles year-round (see page 3).  
Accesses within state and county parks and village limits may be subject to additional restrictions under their jurisdiction. Information on the area is available at each park or village hall.  
Access points near nesting areas may be restricted by fencing or closed during part of the nesting season.

## PROTECTED SPECIES YOU MAY

### Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

#### What they look like:

A small, stout, sand colored shore bird about the size of a sparrow with a black neck and black band across the brow. It has orange legs and an orange bill with a black tip. Piping plovers are often observed solitary or in pairs.



#### Where they nest:

Piping plovers nest on open beaches with sparse vegetation where they can forage the upper beach and along the shoreline. They arrive in mid-March and begin setting up territories on the bay and ocean beaches. By mid-April, pairs are formed and courting begins. Once nesting locations are established, pairs scrape out small depressions in the sand for their nests above the high tide line, sometimes lining them with small pieces of shells. A full clutch will contain four sand-colored, dark speckled eggs which hatch in about 28 days. To protect their nests, a piping plover will feign a broken wing to distract predators (and humans) from their nests.

#### What they eat:

Adults and active chicks feed on marine worms, crustaceans, and small insects that are found in the sand around beach grass, in the seaweed wrack line, and in the wave and wash zone. Shortly after hatching, piping plover chicks are able to feed themselves and the parents remain nearby protection. Throughout the day, the adults and chicks travel and forage between the water and upper beach. The chicks cannot fly for about a month after hatching, and therefore are vulnerable to vehicles driving on the beaches. Areas containing chicks are restricted to driving during these times, specific to individual hatch date. Please do not drive in these areas!



#### Status:

The piping plover has been listed on the United States Endangered Species list since 1986 and is a New York State Threatened Species.

# ENCOUNTER ON THE BEACH

## Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*)

### What they look like:

Least terns are small, long-winged birds with white undersides and gray backs. Adults have a black cap, white forehead, and a black mask extending from the cap to the black-tipped yellow bill. Least terns are often observed near their colonies of several pairs. Least terns are known to dive-bomb intruders who venture too close to their nesting areas.



### Where they nest:

Starting in mid-May, the terns arrive in small groups, searching out nesting grounds. Males court the females by dancing with fish in their mouths. In East Hampton, tern colonies can range from three pairs to fifty pairs. Clutches of two eggs are laid in sandy depressions in June. After hatching about a month later, the chicks seek shelter in the beach vegetation and debris. Adults frequently abandon whole colonies in response to a disturbance such as a marauding fox or nearby fireworks.



### What they eat:

Adults dive for small fish in shallow waters, hovering to pinpoint their prey, and finally plunging underwater to grab the fish with their bills. Groups of fishing terns are often used by fisherman to locate schools of fish.

NYS and Federally Endangered

### Seabeach Amaranth (*Amaranthus pumilus*)



NYS Threatened

### Seabeach Knotweed (*Polygonum glaucum*)



## LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL LAWS THAT PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Town of East Hampton prohibits the disturbance, or endangerment, of any protected bird nesting area on the beach. No person shall alter, move, remove, or tamper with any fence, rope, or flagging that designate nesting areas. Nor should anyone permit a horse, dog, cat, or other animal to be in or upon a bird nesting area.

New York State law protects all endangered species, including the common, least, and roseate terns, piping plovers, and endangered plants from any disturbance. In additions, sections of this law prohibits defacing or removing wildlife signs. **Penalties can be fines up to \$250.**

The United States Migratory Bird Act of 1918 protects ALL colonial water-birds and shorebirds. Te Endangered Species Act also protects the piping plover and roseate tern. Federal listing provides added protection from a taking. The term “take” means to harass, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct. Regardless of whether the act was accidental or intentional, **fin**es can be up to **\$50,000 and/or imprisonment**. This law can even be applied to pets that “take” endangered species. This protection also includes federally listed plants such as the sea beach amaranth which grows on our ocean beaches.

### **WHEN YOU BREAK THE LAW:**

You are subject to the following penalties:

- First Offense – \$100 to \$250 fine and/or imprisonment for 15 days.
- First Offense – \$250 to \$500 fine and/or imprisonment for 15 days.
- First Offense – \$400 to \$1000 fine and/or imprisonment for 15 days.
- Federal penalties – can be up to \$50,000 and jail time (see page 8)
- If you break any beach driving laws in a protected nesting area, you are subject to a fine of not less than \$250, and as much as \$1000, and/or imprisonment.

IF YOU WITNESS SOMEONE BREAKING THE LAW OR SEE EVIDENCE THAT A LAW HAS BEEN BROKEN, IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE TOWN POLICE AT **631-537-7575**. THEY WILL NOTIFY THE OTHER AGENCIES INVOLVED. TREAT THE SITUATION AS A CRIME SCENE, TAKING CARE NOT TO DISTURB THE AREA OR THE BIRDS.

## Look For Protected Area Signs



posted with “NO VEHICLE” signs. These fences designate non-driving beaches or sections of beach that are temporarily closed because they contain newly hatched piping plover chicks that cannot yet fly out of the way of moving vehicles.

Some piping plover nests are protected individually by round enclosed wire fencing to keep out dogs, foxes, raccoons, cats, crows, gulls, and other potential predators. Drive VERY slowly here, and keep as far from the fence as possible so as not to disturb the nesting birds.

DO NOT drive past snow fencing



### Keep In Mind:

- \* Fireworks are prohibited in New York State. Lighting unregulated fireworks has resulted in the loss of entire plover and tern colonies. Do not set them off within 1000’ of a nesting area.
- \* Litter, especially food, attracts raccoons, gulls, and crows that prey on eggs and chicks. Keep the beach free from any kind of litter.
- \* Dogs on the beach may scare an adult off the nest or scare it away from its young, leaving the eggs or chicks unprotected from the sun, weather, and predators.

### Important Telephone Numbers

Emergency Assistance .....	911
Town Police .....	(631) 537-7575
East Hampton Village Police .....	(631) 324-0777
State Park Police .....	(631) 669-2500
State DEC .....	(631) 444-1444
US Fish and Wildlife Service .....	(800) 334-WILD

**PLEASE,  
WHENEVER YOU VISIT A BEACH, HELP KEEP  
IT CLEAN FOR EVERYONE TO ENJOY!**

- Leave No Trace! Make sure you leave the beach with everything you brought with you.
- Bring a bag to take home all trash you bring in or create.
- Recycle bottles and cans or reuse your own instead of throwing them away,
- Do not drive or walk on the dunes or ANY beach vegetation.
- Keep your distance from shorebird nesting areas and keep dogs on their leashes when in close proximity to symbolic fencing areas containing nesting shorebirds.
- Smokers: Put butts in a proper receptacle. Butts are made of plastic and do not decompose.
- Secure all of your belongings from the wind.
- Dog Owners: Pick up any wastes produced by your dogs. Their feces contribute bacteria directly to the beach.
- **DO NOT FEED ANY BIRDS OR WILDLIFE.**

