

Critical Habitat for Piping Plover

Extracts from Federal Register Notice for 50 CFR Part 17
Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants;
Final Determinations of Critical Habitat
for Wintering Piping Plovers; Final Rule

(Following is extract from page 36086 of the Federal Register /
Vol. 66, No. 132 / Tuesday, July 10, 2001)

3. Amend § 17.95(b) by adding critical habitat for the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) in the same alphabetical order as this species occurs in § 17.11(h), to read as follows:

§ 17.95 Critical habitat-fish and wildlife.

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(b) *Birds*.

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Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) Wintering Habitat

1. The primary constituent elements essential for the conservation of wintering piping plovers are those habitat components that support foraging, roosting, and sheltering and the physical features necessary for maintaining the natural processes that support these habitat components. The primary constituent elements include intertidal beaches and flats (between annual low tide and annual high tide) and associated dune systems and flats above annual high tide. Important components of intertidal flats include sand and/or mud flats with no or very sparse emergent vegetation. In some cases, these flats may be covered or partially covered by a mat of blue-green algae. Adjacent non-or sparsely vegetated sand, mud, or algal flats above high tide are also important, especially for roosting piping plovers, and are primary constituent elements of piping plover wintering habitat. Such sites may have debris, detritus (decaying organic matter), or micro-topographic relief (less than 50 cm above substrate surface) offering refuge from high winds and cold weather. Important components of the beach/dune ecosystem include surfcast algae, sparsely vegetated backbeach and salterns (beach area above mean high tide seaward of the permanent dune line, or in cases where no dunes exist, seaward of a delineating feature such as a vegetation line, structure, or road), spits, and washover areas. Washover areas are broad, unvegetated zones, with little or no topographic relief, that are formed and maintained by the action of hurricanes, storm surge, or other extreme wave action.

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2. Critical habitat does not include existing developed sites consisting of buildings, marinas, paved areas, boat ramps, exposed oil and gas pipelines and similar structures. Only those areas containing these primary constituent elements within the designated boundaries are considered critical habitat.

3. Below, we describe each unit in terms of its location, size, and ownership. These textual unit descriptions are the definitive source for determining the critical habitat boundaries. All distances and areas provided here are approximated. General location maps by State are provided at the end of each State's unit descriptions and are provided for general guidance purposes only, and not as a definitive source for determining critical habitat boundaries.

(Following extracted from pages 36105-6 of the Federal Register)

Florida (Maps were digitized using 1994-95 DOQQs)

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Unit FL-25: Bunche Beach. 187 ha (461 ac) in Lee County This unit is mostly within a CARL Estero Bay acquisition project. Bunche Beach (also spelled Bunch) lies along San Carlos Bay, on the mainland between Sanibel Island and Estero Island (Fort Myers Beach), extending east from the Sanibel Causeway past the end of John Morris Road to a canal serving a residential subdivision. The unit also includes the western tip of Estero Island (Bodwitch Point, also spelled Bowditch Point), including Bowditch Regional Park, operated by Lee County and, on the southwest side of the island facing the Gulf, the beach south nearly to the northwesterly intersection of Estero Boulevard and Carlos Circle. It includes land from MLLW to where densely vegetated habitat or developed structures, not used by the piping plover, begin and where the constituent elements no longer occur or, along the developed portion of Estero Island.

Unit FL-26: Estero Island. 86 ha (211 ac) in Lee County The majority of the unit is privately owned. The unit consists of approximately the southern third of the island's Gulf-facing shoreline starting near Avenida Pescadora to near Redfish Road. The unit excludes south-facing shoreline at the south end of the island that faces Big Carlos Pass rather than the Gulf. It includes land from MLLW to where densely vegetated habitat (including grass or lawns) or developed structures, not used by

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the piping plover, begin and where the constituent elements no longer occur.

Unit FL-27: Marco Island. 245 ha (606 ac) in Collier County Most of the unit is at the Tigertail Beach County Park. The unit's northern border is on the north side of Big Marco Pass, including Coconut Island and all emerging sand bars. On the south side of Big Marco Pass, the boundary starts at the north boundary of Tigertail Beach County Park and extends to just south of the fourth condominium tower south of the County Park. The placement of the southern boundary assures that the unit includes all of Sand Dollar Island, the changeable sandbar off Tigertail Beach. The western boundary includes all the sand bars in Big Marco Pass but excludes Hideaway Beach. It includes land from MLLW to where densely vegetated habitat (including grass or lawns) or developed structures, not used by the piping plover, begin and where the constituent elements no longer occur.

(Following extracted from pages 36114-5 of the Federal Register)



Some locations have been slightly enlarged for display purposes only.



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