

July 31 vs. August 31

Question: Can the date for removal of bird closures be changed to an earlier date, such as July 31 vs. August 31.

Benefits:

- Selected areas within the Seashore might be opened for recreation activities prior to August 31 if all nesting activities have ended for the season.

Problems:

- Some species initiate nesting in late July and August; Black Skimmers, for example.
- Eliminates protection for migrant shorebirds; shorebird fall migration = 1 July to 1 December, peak migration time is variable/species
- Requires more frequent and intensive monitoring
- Require additional staff time and resources for NPS

Requirements to remove bird closures prior to August 31:

- Closure removed no earlier than July 31.
- July 31 to Aug 31—Closure removed only if no breeding activity, unfledged chicks, broods, family groups, or breeding species present within previous two weeks.
- Sites with history (2000-present) of nesting Black Skimmers excluded.
- Habitats for fall migrant shorebirds are protected at Bodie Island Spit, Cape Point, Cape Point South Beach, Hatteras Inlet, eastern end of Ocracoke, and Ocracoke South Point. Protected habitats must include areas of ocean intertidal zone with 50 buffer, ~~all~~ soundside wet sand flats and other MOSH at inlets, and -wet sand flats and other MOSH at Cape Point with 50m buffer.
- Only corridors to Cape Point and inlets opened, pre-nesting closures remain closed as delineated in Alternative E until ~~31 August~~ 15 November.
- Monitored daily for 7 days prior to removing closure to detect the presence of unfledged chicks or other nesting activity.
- Surveys for seabeach amaranth must be conducted prior to reopening any area to ORV use.

Comment [MSOffice1]: Locations need to be identified.

Comment [MSOffice2]: Quantity or proportion of the areas to be closed needs to be better defined

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