



NEW YORK STATE ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

for the birds and birders of New York State since 1948

July 5, 2021

Tim Sullivan
US Fish & Wildlife Service

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

I am writing on behalf of our organization to urge the Fish & Wildlife Service to maintain needed protections for nesting Piping Plovers at Sandy Pond, NY. The NY State Ornithological Assoc. is the umbrella group for over 30 bird clubs and Audubon Chapters in the state, plus over 400 individual members.

As you are aware, Piping Plovers are a highly endangered species, with scattered populations at risk from habitat loss, human disturbance, predation, and other threats. Inland nesting birds such as those at Sandy Pond are in particular trouble and have disappeared from numerous breeding areas.

The recent proposal to dredge a channel in proximity to these birds' nests poses a high risk of disturbance and abandonment. The federal Endangered Species Act prohibits such activity and it is critical that protections be maintained and enforced while the birds are present. Any effort to use an emergency consultation to bypass these needed safeguards should be rejected.

We call on the Service and other agencies to ensure that the Sandy Pond Piping Plovers receive the highest level of protection as required by law.

Sincerely,

Andrew Mason, Conservation Chair

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cc: Matthew Marko
NYS DEC Region 7