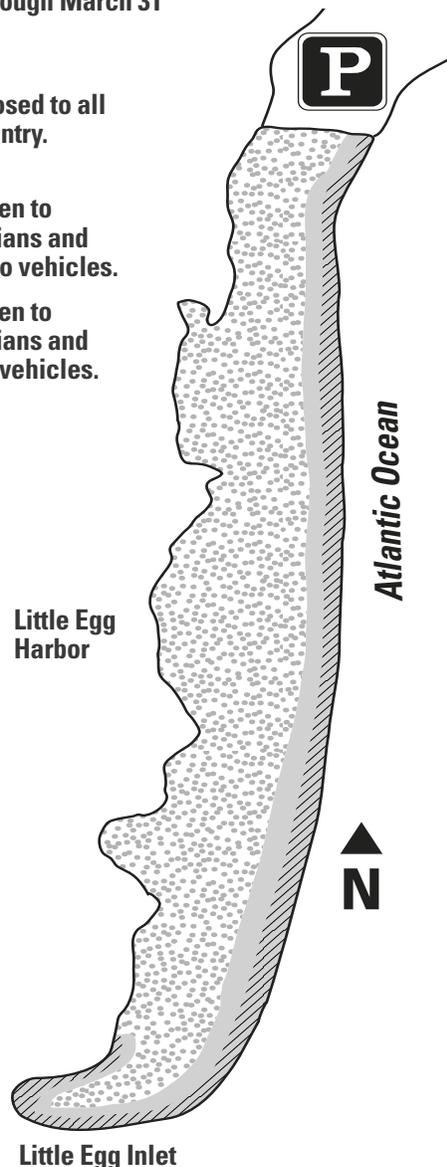


Access to Holgate Peninsula from about September 1 through March 31

 Area closed to all public entry.

 Area open to pedestrians and closed to vehicles.

 Area open to pedestrians and open to vehicles.



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August 2002



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Edwin B. Forsythe *National Wildlife Refuge*

Public Use Regulations Holgate Unit of the Brigantine Wilderness Area

Welcome!

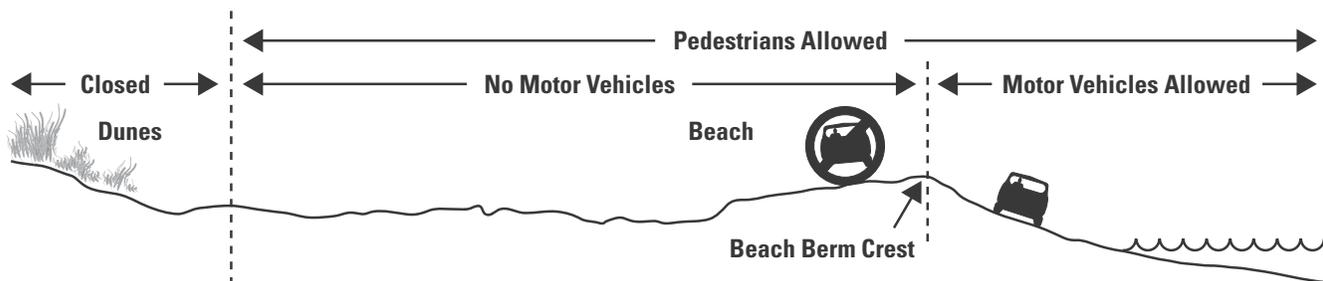
Holgate is at the southern tip of Long Beach Island. The Holgate Peninsula is about three miles long, and contains more than 400 acres of pristine barrier beach, dunes, and tidal salt marsh. It is part of the E.B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge's Brigantine Wilderness Area designated by Congress in 1975 (Public Law 93-632).



As one of New Jersey's last undeveloped barrier beaches, Holgate is important for beach-nesting birds — including piping plovers, least terns, and black skimmers. The State of New Jersey lists all three species as endangered. The federal government lists the Atlantic Coast piping plover population as threatened. More than 50 other migratory bird species nest at Holgate each year, including black ducks, oystercatchers, ospreys, and willets.

Key Information

The **mean high water line** is the seaward boundary of the Holgate Unit. The mean high water line is where the mean high tide meets the slope of the beach. The mean high water line is based on still water conditions – no waves. The land in from the mean high water line on the Holgate Peninsula is part of the Brigantine Wilderness. The land out from the mean high water line on the Holgate Peninsula is State-owned intertidal land.



Because of wave run up, the mean high water line is not readily recognizable. Furthermore, the beach front is too dynamic to keep the mean high water line (the Holgate Unit refuge/wilderness boundary line) delineated with markers. **Therefore, the Service is using recognizable natural beach features as readily visible markers for the line vehicles may not cross.** These natural features are: the **beach berm crest** and the **wet sand/dry sand line** or last high tide swash line. The **last** high tide swash line marks the upper limit of the surf zone. The beach berm crest is the primary visible marker.

The beach berm crest is always higher than the mean high tide line. The wet sand/dry sand line or last high tide swash line is always higher than the mean high tide line, except during “blow out” tides. During “blow out” tides the last **regular** high tide swash line is the line vehicles may not cross where there is no berm crest.



Year Round

Holgate’s dunes, and all vegetated areas, including the salt marsh, are closed to all public use or entry throughout the year. Walking on the dunes can harm stabilizing vegetation, and result in erosion and loss of important wildlife habitat. (“Closed Area” signs mark areas closed to all public use.)

Spring and Summer

From April 1 to about September 1 the entire Holgate Peninsula, both above and below the mean high water line, is closed to **all** public entry, including boat and personal water craft landings.

This closure helps ensure that piping plovers, and other beach nesting migratory bird species

of management concern (black skimmer and least tern), have high quality, undisturbed nesting habitat. Holgate is one of the most productive piping plover nesting sites in New Jersey.

Fall and Winter

From about September 1 through March 31 the Holgate beach is open to pedestrians for such wildlife-dependent activities as fishing, wildlife/wildlands observation, photography, and environmental education.

During storm surges, when there are higher high tides and higher low tides, the Service does not allow anyone to enter the Holgate Peninsula.

What about motor vehicle use?

The Wilderness Act prohibits the use of motor vehicles within wilderness areas. **No** motor vehicle use (driving or parking) may occur in from the beach berm crest (where a crest is present) or, except during “blow out” tides, in from the wet sand/dry sand line or last high tide swash line.

All motor vehicle use (driving and parking) must occur out from the beach berm crest where a crest is present. Where no beach berm crest is present, **all** motor vehicle use must occur below the wet sand/dry sand line (last high tide swash line) in the area washed by the waves during the last high tide, except during “blow out” tides, when the last regular high tide swash line serves as the visible marker for the line vehicles may not cross.

After a storm surge, the Service does not allow motor vehicles to enter the Holgate Peninsula until there has been **at least one** regular high tide cycle.



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Where there is a beach berm crest, the vehicle must be kept to the seaward side of the crest. Where there is no beach berm crest, the vehicle must be kept in wet sand, or, in the case of “blow out” tides, below the last regular high tide swash line.

When is the best time for motor vehicles to be on the Holgate Peninsula?

About 2 to 3 hours before, to 2 to 3 hours after each LOW tide.

In order for vehicle operators to be able to drive out on sand, the Service recommends that motor vehicles exit the Holgate Peninsula 2 to 3 hours before each HIGH tide and not return before 2 to 3 hours after each HIGH tide. Vehicles are not allowed to pull up on or over the berm crest, or to pull above the last high tide wet sand/dry sand line, to avoid rising water. If operators do not give themselves enough time to exit the Holgate Peninsula, rising salt water may damage their vehicles. Motor vehicle operators need to be aware of unusually high and prolonged tides.

What about Motorboat use?

Motorboats may land on the Holgate Peninsula beach.

The Service recommends landing motorboats on the bay side of the Holgate Unit.

Prohibited Activities:

Disturbing wildlife or vegetation; feeding wildlife; possession and/or use of fireworks or weapons/ firearms; hunting; trapping; fires; non-wildlife oriented activities such as frisbee throwing, ball playing, kite flying, horseback riding, camping, using metal detectors, or collecting of valued objects. Pets are prohibited.

Public Use Regulations