

Refuge Manager, Target Rock NWR

Notes from Harold Eckes re Amagansett Refuge dated 9/7/71

Mr. George E. Gage:

1. Thank you for your letter of September 2, 1971.
2. Within 10 days I will send you a brief report covering 1971 observations of the wildlife area in Amagansett.
3. In the meantime, you will be pleased to know:
 - a. The sand fence you erected on August 26 stood tropical storm, Doria, very well. Some surf washed through the fence (3 to 6 feet).
 - b. The beach was not changed - the ocean area has a very flat beach, similar to contours prior to the 1938 hurricane. The beach has changed over the years, but is now closer to, prior to 1938.
 - c. There are no broken pockets in the fence. All iron uprights are intact. Only two leaned inward very slightly, but I found two props to support them.
 - d. For over 25 years there has been a clump of wild white roses on the western edge of the dune. Doria did not affect them.
 - e. The run of bluefish, just prior to Doria was much less offshore 500 to 600 feet or more, but the 100 to 200 foot area since the storm is void of bluefish.
 - f. Stripers have been netted (east of the area) in the last 7 days by haul sieners; the season's first.
 - g. Few birds were sighted in the area on September 7 (2 to 3 p.m.).
 - h. No evidence of trespassing.
 - i. All the wildlife signs which were erected are intact.

Nov, 5 1971
Jupiter Fla. 33458

Mr. George E. Gage
U. S. Dept. Interior
Target Rock Wildlife Refuge
Dogd Neck
Huntington, N. Y. 11743

Dear Sir:

I left Amagansett October 15, 1971, so this will be my final report on the wildlife area, on the ocean at Amagansett.

1. The sand fence is in good shape. Your agent, very cleverly repaired the fence, vandalized, as I reported. The sand has been blown, or propelled by the surf, to cover up to eight inches of sand at the base of the pickets and several feet westward. All your signs were intact.
2. The beach has improved this year, compared with the last ten years. It is wider and a sand bar has been created one-hundred to two-hundred feet in the ocean. This bar extends east(To Napeogue) and west of your area. A similar sand bar existed prior to the 1938 hurricane.
3. The dunes have not changed substantially since the 1930's. As you know the groins or stone breakwaters, at Wainscott have caused problems, on beach areas Westwood. If the Federal Government, and the many state agencies, have not perfected a method of ocean buildups in the last fifty years, it is my non technical observation, that nature has done a good job. As a non-professional, I believe, an aggressive dune grass program, together with sand fence protection seems adequate. The natural dunes, with scant vegetation have endured. More vegetation might help.
4. Because of the lack of bushes and trees, the bird life seems less than West of Bluff Road, where there are houses and spruce trees, and wooded areas.

At my acre, we have a good number of robins, grackels, cat birds, finches, woodpeckers etc. We offer them no feed but provide three water sources. The lack of collected water, on the preserve, may be a factor.

5. There is no evidence of trespassing. The habits of the bathers at the Atlantic Avenue Beach have been observed by me for years. They congregate in a small area, and except for strollers do not use the empty beach east or west of eight-hundred feet at the base of Atlantic Avenue. Parking (with beach stickers) is more than ample. ~~As~~ An observer, living on Bluff Road, (An officer of the Amagansett Residential Association), has studied the parking lot (with binoculars, and on foot) and reported, his notes show that the lot has never been full at any time in the 1971 season. It is my observation in New York and Florida, that people will not drive a few miles more to avail themselves of an open beach, but tend to crowd into parking lots closest to their homes. The same beach behavior takes place at the Atlantic Avenue Beach, and in my opinion would not change by additional parking lots. There were few people at the Naupouge Beach, and beaches three or four miles East are only used on a handful of week-ends. I have spent three to five hours every day from June to October either walking, (and surf-casting) ⁱⁿ beach buggy, and have observed the many times when I was practically alone beachwise. If more convenient access roads were available westward to the more populated areas, thereby spreading the beach seekers, it would seem to help. The same situation exists in Florida.

6. Fishwise, the 1971, was good for bluefish in the ocean surf. I believe more surfers got more big blues, casting, this year than any recent years. Haulsiene's got plenty of blues, that drove the price down to under ten cents. At times, strippers were scarce, much to the commercial (and casters) fishermen's concern. Weakfish, (not in ocean) revived, starting in 1970.

The vegetation, in the area remains unchanged over the past few years. The heavy rains in Jersey, etc. were not evident at eastern Long Island. Our weather was more like Eastern Connecticut or Massachusetts. Very few trees were damaged by Doria. The clump of roses (wild) white on the dunes (western end) are unchanged over the last twenty years.

In 1972, I will attempt a more thorough observation of wildlife, particularly birds. My first observation should reach you early in July of 1972.

If any of your personal visit the area in 1972, it would be a pleasure to discuss the area, at my Hand Lane retreat.

I have noticed the cleanliness of the ocean waters at Amagansett, and as you are aware, few ocean steamers are ever seen off the beach. Coast wise, traffic uses Long Island Sound. European traffic from and to New York City is well offshore at eastern Long Island. In my travels in 1971, I noted the Pacific Ocean is debris filled off the coast of central California. The Japan rivers are all polluted. Hong Kong Harbor benefits somewhat by strong currents. In Bangkok, forty thousand people live in an area with no sewage or piped water. The Siene in France is nothing to be proud of. The Thames is a disgrace. Eastern Long Island can be saved. In Northern Palm Beach County, in Florida, the legislature in 1970 created a river area district called (The Loxahatchee River Environmental District), one of the first to controll water and sewage of a river from source to ocean. I am enjoying acting as a consultant on the complicated social, political, legislative, engineering, construction, financial and Rate making problems facing parts of two counties and three towns in the Loxahatchee River Basin.

Sincerely,

Harold E. Kes
