



P.O. Box 7073
Amagansett, NY 11930

Trustees
of the Freeholders and Commonalty of the
Town of East Hampton

631-267-8688
trustees@eamptonny.gov
www.ehtrustees.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

East Hampton Town Trustees Response to Mass Waterfowl Die-Off at Georgica Pond

East Hampton, NY – March 13, 2026 - The East Hampton Town Trustees are issuing this statement to provide transparency by outlining the sequence of events and actions taken in response to a significant die-off of geese recently discovered on the beaches surrounding Georgica Pond.

The Trustees were first alerted to this matter on February 27, 2026, when Chief Harbor Master Tim Treadwell reported a large number of deceased birds along Georgica beaches. Officer Treadwell initially sought assistance from the Town of East Hampton to hire a contractor for cleanup, but within thirty minutes, he informed the Trustees that the Town of East Hampton had declined, citing that the affected areas fell under Trustee jurisdiction and the private shoreline of the Georgica Association. Officer Treadwell forwarded New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) guidance on carcass handling along with photos from the site.

Following this notification, Deputy Trustee Clerk Jim Grimes visited the area to document conditions and assess the scope of the die-off. Trustee Clerk Francis Bock contacted the Town Supervisor's office for clarification regarding jurisdiction. Deputy Town Supervisor David Lys confirmed that, based on photographs provided, the die-off appeared confined to Trustee and Georgica Association properties, and that the Town of East Hampton would not assist in the matter. Mr. Lys also reiterated the NYSDEC guidance previously provided.

Trustee Jim Grimes then conducted a survey of the affected area and took a rough count of the deceased birds. While doing so, he collected and buried some of the carcasses in place to prevent further exposure. The NYSDEC was then contacted for potential site review and avian flu testing. Due to overwhelming number of reports, the agency declined to visit and referred the Trustees again to its general disposal guidelines, which includes burial in place.

To safeguard public health, Trustees ordered permanent warning signs and, due to delays in delivery, immediately produced temporary signage through a local business. These were posted at all Georgica Pond access points and at Beach Lane. Additional signs were posted at Louse Point following confirmation that a Snowy Owl found there had died of avian influenza.

Warming temperatures raised concern amongst the Trustees that rotting geese carcasses with potential avian flu could create an increased hazardous risk to humans and animals and therefore time was of the essence to address this immediate public health hazard. The Trustees determined that quick and decisive action was required to prevent further environmental and public impacts, and as such approved Jim Grimes' landscaping company, who had already begun clean-up on a voluntary basis, to complete cleanup operations. Carcasses were disposed of according to the provided NYSDEC guidelines, with some buried onsite and a majority taken to upland areas for burial. Burial on the beach was done on the first day of removal, when an upland area had not yet



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been made available to the Trustees. Burial was outside the tidal zone at a depth of approximately 3', with an additional 3' of locally sourced and compatible sand placed on top. Thus, providing a total of 6' of coverage. Workers were provided with appropriate protective equipment and all equipment used in the effort was sterilized. At the conclusion of the clean-up effort, the NYSDEC confirmed that all work was done within their guidelines.

At no time did the Georgica Association request assistance from the Trustees regarding this incident.

The Trustees have been made aware of inappropriate comments and misinformation shared by a Trustee staff member in response to public inquiries. The Trustees take this matter very seriously, and it is being addressed internally in cooperation with the Human Resources Department and under established Civil Service protocols.

The East Hampton Town Trustees remain committed to protecting public health, safeguarding the environment of Georgica Pond and Georgica beaches, and providing transparent communication as more information becomes available.