

At the far east end of Montrose Beach is a native dune ecosystem. The native plants began appearing in the late 1990s, and in response, the Chicago Park District stopped grooming this area. Over the years, two ridges have formed parallel to the shore, separated by swales populated by native wetland species. Further up the beach, a larger dune is developing, and it continues to grow each year.

In 2001, the Chicago Park District installed a fence to protect the dune; now vehicles are prohibited, and the area is closed to recreation. (It remains open for nature observation.)

Beginning in 2001, high quality native dune species were planted in the dune habitat, to increase diversity and improve bird and wildlife habitat. These complement the existing rare dune plants that colonized the area naturally.

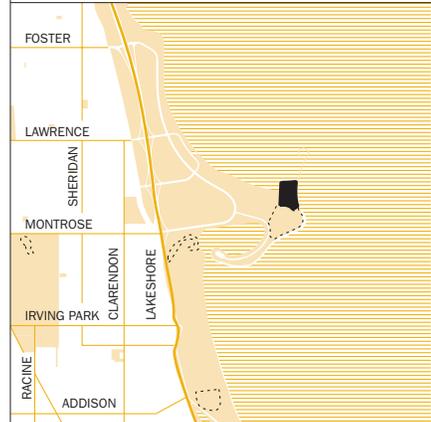
Additional management includes control of invasive species like common reed, cottonwood, sandbar willow, and cocklebur.

Montrose Beach Dunes provides valuable habitat for migrating shorebirds. Killdeer and spotted sandpipers nest here. In early fall, thousands of purple martins flock here and stay for a while before heading south. (There are also purple martin houses to the west by the harbor.) You can see them flying high above of the park and harbor in the evenings. In the winter, snowy owls are likely to spend time here. From the point itself or when walking out on the artificial pier that extends even farther out into the lake, it's possible to observe water birds. In the winter, look for common goldeneye and oldsquaw floating next to sheets of ice.

Volunteers have been active from the beginning in monitoring rare plants and birds; volunteers also remove invasive weeds and trash.

In 2005, Montrose Beach Dunes was added to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' statewide list of high-quality natural areas, called the INAI (Illinois Natural Areas Inventory).

LINCOLN PARK—
MONTROSE BEACH DUNES



**Lincoln Park—
Montrose Beach Dunes**

ADDRESS 4400 N Simonds Ave
OWNER Chicago Park District
ACREAGE 8.48

HABITATS
1 Dune

DIRECTIONS
Exit Lake Shore Drive at Montrose Avenue and head east. Follow the road to the point where it starts to curve to the right (south). Park along there, and walk to the beach.

