



Seabirds

Nest in colonies varying in size from a few individuals to several hundred pairs. Colonies are typically conspicuous since seabirds nest on more open beach, and adults are very defensive around the nest. Nests are shallow scrapes in the sand, and eggs/nestlings are sand-colored with dark speckling. Colonies are very sensitive to disturbance.

LEAST TERN. *Sterna antillarum*

21-23 cm

State Listed- Threatened. Smallest tern and only tern with a yellow, black-tipped bill. Common- most likely species of seabird to be encountered. Nests April-August. Photos: (left) adult on nest, (right) adult in breeding plumage (loses cap towards the end of the breeding season).



BLACK SKIMMER. *Rynchops niger*

40-50 cm

State Listed- Species of Special Concern. Distinctive, boldly patterned with lower bill much longer than upper bill. Fairly common- more so on the Gulf coast. Nests May-August. Photos: (left) adult in breeding plumage, (right) adult close-up.



ROYAL TERN. *Thalasseus maxima*

45-50 cm

Large tern with orange bill. Fairly common- however, nests in large colonies that are few and very localized. Nests April-August. Photos: (left) adult with chick, (right) adult close-up (acquires full black cap early in the breeding season).



SANDWICH TERN. *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

34-45 cm

Medium-sized tern and only tern with a black yellow-tipped bill. Uncommon- often nests with Royal Terns in large colonies that are few and very localized. Nests April-August. Photos: (left) adult with chick, (right) adult close-up (note: adults have a full black cap early in the breeding season).



Shorebirds

Non-colonial species, occasionally nesting in loose groups. Shorebirds nest on open beach and within dune vegetation. Nests are typically shallow scrapes lined with shell fragments and other debris, and are difficult to find since shorebirds rely on concealment as a primary defense. Birds/eggs are well-camouflaged and remain still when approached.

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER. *Haematopus palliatus*

40-44 cm

State Listed- Species of Special Concern. Large shorebird with distinctive color pattern and stout red bill. Fairly common- nests in wrack line and dune vegetation. Nests April-August. Photos: (left) adult close-up, (right) adult.



SNOWY PLOVER. *Charadrius alexandrinus*

15-17 cm

State listed- Threatened. Small shorebird with thin bill and grayish legs (compare with Wilson's Plover). Uncommon- found only along Gulf coast, nests on open beach. Nests February-August. Photos: (left) adult on nest, (right) nest with eggs.



WILSON'S PLOVER. *Charadrius wilsonia*

16-20 cm

Similar to Snowy Plover with larger bill and pinkish legs. Common- nests within dune vegetation. Nests March-August. Photos: (left) adult close-up in non-breeding plumage, (right) adult in non-breeding plumage (note: forehead and neck black in breeding plumage).



WILLET. *Tringa semipalmata*

33-41 cm

Large shorebird with long bill and grayish legs. Fairly common- nests within marsh and dune vegetation. Nests April-August. Photos: (left) adult close-up in breeding plumage, (right) adult in breeding plumage.





FWC Signs

Sites posted for beach-nesting birds by FWC (and FWC partners) typically use one of the official signs (left) in combination with assorted educational signs. "NO TRESPASSING" signs are used exclusively on Critical Wildlife Areas (CWA). *Note: some FWC partners (e.g. Florida State Parks, USFWS, NPS) use their own signage, but the relevant laws still apply to all nesting areas.*

1 68A-27.004. Designation of Threatened Species; Prohibitions; Permits.

(1) The following species are hereby declared to be threatened, and shall be afforded the protective provisions specified.

(a) No person shall take, possess, transport, molest, harass or sell any of the threatened species included in this subsection or parts thereof or their nests or eggs except as authorized by specific permit from the Executive Director, permits being issued only for scientific or conservation purposes and only upon a showing by the applicant that the

permitted activity will not have a negative impact on the survival potential of the species.

Threatened Species:

- 1) Least Tern *Sternula antillarum*
- 2) Snowy Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*
- 3) Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* (winter resident)

2 68A-27.005. Designation of Species of Special Concern; Prohibitions; Permits.

(1) The following species are hereby declared to be of special concern, and shall be afforded the protective provisions specified.

(a) No person shall take, possess, transport, or sell any species of special concern included in this paragraph or parts thereof or their nests or eggs except as authorized by Commission regulations or by permit from the executive director or by statute or regulation of any other state agency, permits being issued upon reasonable conclusion that

the permitted activity will not be detrimental to the survival potential of the species.

Species of Special Concern:

- 1) Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger*
- 2) American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*

3 68A-4.001. General Prohibitions

(1) No wildlife or freshwater fish or their nests, eggs, young, homes or dens shall be taken, transported, stored, served, bought, sold, or possessed in any manner or quantity at any time except as specifically permitted by these rules nor shall anyone take, poison, store, buy, sell, possess or wantonly or willfully waste the same except as specifically permitted by these rules.

4 68A-13.002 (1). Migratory Bird Treaty Act

(1) The following United States statutes are hereby adopted as rules of the Commission and are incorporated herein by reference.

(a) The Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 U.S.C. Sections 703-711 and 16 U.S.C. Section 712.

5 68A-19.005 (2). Establishment and Protection of Critical Wildlife Areas.

(2) No person shall take or disturb any wildlife within any critical wildlife area during the period designated by the order establishing such area. No person shall enter or operate a vehicle within any critical wildlife area during any period in which public access is prohibited by the order establishing such area. No person shall knowingly allow a dog under their care to enter or remain upon a critical wildlife area during any period in which public access is prohibited by the order establishing such area.

For questions regarding shorebird issues or to report an un-posted nesting site please email shorebird@myfwc.com



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
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