

Nature Coast Shorebird Partnership

2018 Post-Season Meeting Notes

25th October 2018 | 1:00pm-4:00pm EST

Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve | 1001 SE Old Rock Rd, Yankeetown, FL 34498

Meeting Objectives:

1. Update and coordinate with partners on shorebird conservation efforts in the Nature Coast Partnership region and statewide.
2. Discuss ideas of effective communication strategies and outreach opportunities to better share information about shorebird issues between partners, the public and law enforcement.



TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER
1:00 – 1:15	Welcome & Introductions	
	<p>Attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blair Hayman, FWC, regional species conservation biologist • Yasmin Serajfar, FWC, legacy biologist • Shea Armstrong, FWC, Florida Shorebird Alliance Coordinator • Fara Ilami, FWC, Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative Coordinator • Janell Brush, FWC-FWRI, seabird and shorebird research scientist • Jamie Letendre, FDEP-FCO, Big Bend Seasgrasses Aquatic Preserve • Nick Vitale, UF, graduate student • Joe Marchionno, FWC-FWRI, avian biological scientist • Vic Doig, USFWS, Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys NWR, Fire Mgmt Officer • Joyce Kleen, USFWS, Crystal River NWR, wildlife biologist • Officer Brennan Starling, FWC-Law Enforcement • Mary Opall, Nature World Wildlife Rescue, rehabilitator • Cindy Armstrong, Nature World Wildlife Rescue, rehabilitator • Diane Cole, Volunteer, Hernando Co. rooftop expert. • Megan Wallrichs, FWC, asst. regional species conservation biologist <p>Thank you to our host, Sally Douglas, at the Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve!</p>	
1:15 – 1:35	FWRI Updates: Wilson’s Plovers and Rooftop Surveys	<i>Janell Brush (FWRI)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rooftop Study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This study aimed to compared flush count data to direct nest count data to improve our rooftop population estimates and was completed this summer. ○ Flush counts underestimate the number of birds actually nesting. ○ The study allowed researchers to calculate a correction factor that can be used to estimate rooftop populations of LETEs statewide. ○ This method does not work for BLSK because of differences in behavior. ○ Full report out in January 2019 • Wilson’s Plover <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased efforts were made this year to document WIPLs state-wide ○ Methods: using e-Bird to find previously unknown locations, asking partners to make an extra effort to include WIPL in their surveys ○ Results: increased efforts led to more WIPL sitings • Thank you partners for your efforts in these projects! 	
1:35 – 1:45	2018 summaries from the Florida Shorebird Database	<i>Megan Wallrichs (FWC)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorebird & Seabird Nesting in Nature Coast Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 14% of the state’s AMOY nesting 	

- <5% of WIPL nesting
- 0% of BLSK nesting
- <5% of LETE nesting
- 0 rooftop nesting
- Partnership Route Survey Frequency:
 - We had consistent surveys of almost all our sites throughout the season.

1:45 –
2:00

American Oystercatcher Project Update

Nick Vitale (UF)

- AMOY nesting rate is high in Cedar Key and Barge Canal Islands, but productivity is very low
- Motion-detection cameras were placed on nests to determine nest fate
- VHF radio transmitters placed on 12 chicks to determine chick fate at Barge Canal
- Cameras showed predation is the major issue at Barge Canal (major issues this year were fish crows and black crowned night herons). Overwash is major issue in Cedar Key.
- Chick fate: survival is good to 35 days, however sharp decline of survival rate to 60 days
- 4 mortalities of transmittered chicks, 2 unknown fates, and one sent for necropsy showed evidence of starvation
- Compared to AMOY chicks at other Florida sites, the Barge Canal chicks are smaller
- Undetermined if smaller size is biologically significant and more work into looking at the AMOY prey base is needed.

2:00 –
2:30

Round Robin: Partner updates from the 2018 season

All

Megan Wallrichs

- Covered Road to Nowhere Route, fledged at least 2 WIPL chick compared to 0 last year.
- Would like some help covering the RtN route next season in between survey windows to improve our understanding of nesting at that site. **Will coordinate in pre-season meeting.**
- Mid-season call with partners, short and sweet but a good time to catch up with everyone.

Joe Marchionno

- Helped a lot with Nick's project this season
- Surveyed new areas with Vic from Horseshoe to Keaton Beach
- Efforts led to a new AMOY and WIPL nest site in Steinhatchee (Janell: coordination was swift! Within 24 hours of detecting the new site, Janell and Megan posted the site, and contact was made to LE to make them aware of the area)
- **Jamie offered to help survey this site next season because they are in that area 1x a month for sampling work anyways.**

Vic Doig

- Missed a few of his survey windows because a lot of required work travel this summer
- A lot of shorebird use, but not so much nesting.

- Did see WIPL chicks in some areas but was not able to locate nests
- Atsena Otie Key Platform was refurbished this year with little success. LETE use (loafing) decreased this year compared to last year. Trouble with the broadcast system may be a reason. One overwash event occurred. There are plans to raise and widen the platform this winter.

Jamie Letendre

- Covered 2 routes this season, no nesting
- Increase in magnificent frigates at St Martin Islands
- Ann Paul is trying to target Bird Island for more surveys; this year equipment and schedules never quite aligned.

Joyce Kleen

- No nesting habitat in the refuge, but a lot of shorebird use during low tides
- 2 pairs of reddish egrets nesting on refuge for the 2nd year!

Diane Cole

- Has conducted a lot of rooftop monitoring in Sarasota/Manatee Co/Pinellas Co
- Noticed fish crows as major predator.
- Observed an instance of loggerhead shrike predation on LETE chick
- Methodically checked out all areas in Hernando county looking for rooftop nesting; did not see any activity but noticed a lot of crows and gulls
- Wants to search Citrus County next season
- Megan will send Diane Ann Paul's contact information for some coordination since Ann surveys some rooftops in Citrus
- Diane will work on creating a list of the rooftops she checked

Mary Opall and Cindy Armstrong

- Receive a lot of animals each year (900 animals received in 2017!)
- Two AMOY chicks were brought to them this year by kayakers, one survived and is to be released.
- ACTION ITEM: We all need to continue to share the message that chicks should be left alone. Chicks will sometimes jump into the water when disturbed or scared.

Officer Starling

- Handles shorebird issues when they arise
- Tried to get into the field with Nick and Joe this season, but it did not pan out
- Happy to help where needed
- Best way to contact them is to email Captain Shuster.

2:30 –
2:45

----- 15-minute break -----

2:45 –
3:15

Group Discussion: Improving communication and outreach within and outside our partnership

All

- Megan asked if the current way the partnership communicates is efficient (one large email list). Partners agreed it worked for them. Moving to a Google Group style listserv can be problematic. Megan will work on cleaning up the email list.
- Public outreach was the focus of this discussion and many ideas were discussed:
 - Ways to reach out to kayakers

- Past CWCI efforts were stalled in creating signage for kayak rental operators and creating small tags/stickers to be placed on the kayaks
 - Boater guides were suggested to map important areas that boaters should avoid and include suggested areas to go (Panhandle may have done something similar); if we make maps we need to make sure that our posting is consistent with areas that are marked to avoid.
 - Reach out to the Paddle Florida group about creating social media posts on their pages (Jamie said she will reach out to Bill)
 - Increasing posting at important nesting sites,
 - Booths at festivals
 - Mary and Cindy will be working several upcoming festivals and can share information about shorebirds
 - Vic will send some Nature Coast Waterbirds Brochures
 - Janell has posters they can borrow to use at their booths
 - Shorebird messaging/materials to be disseminated in a variety of ways:
 - Diane will work on getting a post to the Monofilament Busters website
 - Retail stores (hardware stores, west marine, bait and tackle shops) are a good place to leave outreach materials
 - Shorebird article in the Florida Angler Magazine likely in the works for next year (per Janell)
 - Local newspapers (there is already an annual press release that is sent to larger newspapers, can we get our (FWC) PICs to send to smaller local papers?)
 - Fishing tournaments
 - Give materials to law enforcement officers to have on hand
 - Boater safety courses
 - Create a video for kayakers to watch before going out?
 - Cindy and Mary will ramp up Facebook posts about shorebirds on their own page.
- We discussed the need to work with law enforcement to set patrol targets for important nesting sites
 - In some regions biweekly emails are sent to law enforcement to update them about active nesting areas and any disturbance issues. Will explore this idea for this region.

3:15 –
3:30

Predator Management: Statewide update & partnership needs

Megan Wallrichs

- Predation management employs non-lethal methods to deter predation on impacted species such as managing predator perches, cleaning up trash, minimizing human disturbance
- Lethal methods are a last resort and we need to be strategic and targeted in our approaches
- Collecting data about predation is of utmost importance to make sound decisions

- Data can be collected through photos or documenting tracks or using game cameras to monitor nest fates.
- FWC is working on guidance documents for best practices regarding predation management and predation data collection.
- These documents are being created from information we have learned from our predation management biologists and data from our partners.

3:30 –
3:35

Policy updates: Shorebird guidelines & the MBTA

*Blair Hayman
(FWC)*

- Shorebird permitting guidelines for LETE, BLSK, AMOY and SNPL are to be completed in 2019
- Per FWC’s website:
 - “These guidelines are intended to provide clear information on what the requirements of our rules in 68A-27.007, F.A.C as it relates to intentional and incidental take permitting. They also provide guidance on species range, survey methodology, and recommended practices.”
- In December 2017, the USFWS released an “M opinion” concluding that incidental take of non-listed birds due to an otherwise lawful activity does not require federal authorization
- In Florida, take of any adult birds, eggs, or young is prohibited by state rule (68A-4.001 F.A.C.) without a permit.
- Permits are typically not issued for nest removal unless it is a matter of human health or safety.
- Imperiled species remain protected by 68A-27 F.A.C.

3:35 –
3:50

Q&A: Shorebirds 101

All

3:50 –
4:00

Wrap up & Adjourn

- Everyone enjoyed the new meeting location
- Will attempt to alternate meeting venues (Nature Coast Biological Station’s 2nd floor conference room could work, **Jamie will contact them for next meeting possibly**)
- **Jamie will send her counterparts email to be added to the partnership email list.**
- Thank you to everyone who attended!!