

Florida Panhandle Shorebird Working Group meeting: 10/4/18, at Bay County Library in Panama City, Florida. Area of coverage: St Marks National Wildlife Refuge in the eastern panhandle to Perdido State Park near the Alabama border in the western panhandle, a distance of appx 250 miles and two time zones.

Jen Manis, FWC NW Regional Species Conservation Biologist moderated the meeting. Presentations on Creation of Spoil Islands for Nesting Species by Mississippi Audubon's Abby Darrah, Molly Folkerts, Sarah Pacyna; Research and Export Tools of the FSD by Paula Grendel; Piping Plover Survival in Fl Panhandle by Molly Tuma, M.S. Student, Univ. Fla; FSD Monitoring, Emma LeClerc; Predator Challenges, Jen Manis; Rooftop populations, Ariam Jimenez; Group Round Robin of 2018 breeding season; Q&A Band and Band Resighting in group Jenga format, Raya Pruner and 3 minute Round Robin format of site-by-site information sharing by attendees.

Volunteers, partners from area Air Force bases, Gulf Islands National Seashore, ANERR, FPS, USFWS, local Audubon Society chapter representatives, FWC/FWRI, and Audubon Florida staff participated.

We were very fortunate to have representatives from throughout the state along with partners from Mississippi Audubon provide presentations for our partnership meeting.

Abby Darrah, Sarah Pacyna and Molly Folkerts from Mississippi Audubon attended our partnership meeting. Abby presented information on their work in Mississippi monitoring coastal bird use of a new spoil island and how that island was created. A fascinating look at the project timeline from 2015 – 2017 showing cross dikes, sand berms, sand mining area spillway and turbidity curtain in engineering design with before and after photos. Abby also discussed importance of sites in Mississippi where Least Tern numbers and productivity were high.

Predation Management by Jen Manis, FWC. Predation management is a sensitive issue that needs to be data driven leading to mindful and purposeful actions directly benefiting shorebirds. Discussion on predator issues showing significant declines in species due to predator issues; statewide needs and resources; and limited resources and options for grant funding. The future outlook of hiring additional FWC predation management biologists, and needs for working with allies at Air Force Bases, FPS, NPS and land managers. There are complex issues with potential for data collections tools such as periodic transects 4x a year minimum; game camera use; and thorough communications with shorebird biologists. Jen brought awareness of the complex issues predator management biologist's face such as limits of available hours, equipment is intensive, number of sites they must manage, travel time and availability of local housing/camping.

Molly Tuma, M.S. student, presented hers and Abby Powell Study Objective estimating the survival rate of non-breeding Piping Plovers in the Florida Panhandle. Molly discussed winter distribution, habitat use, high site fidelity, little movement, and sources of disturbance. Some of her methodology was double observer study; resight data from FPS/FWC 2011-2018 and Audubon Florida 2014-2018; discussion of Program MARK and running of Cormack-Jolly-Seber model (CJS). Some of what they found was high resight rate, similar survival rate to other studies and no significant difference between juvenile and adult survival. [Molly.Tuma@ufl.edu](mailto:Molly.Tuma@ufl.edu) for more information.

Ariam Jimenez and Janell Brush with FWC presented 2018 Rooftop Nesting data in determining goal of establishing statewide breeding population estimates for rooftop nesting seabirds. (Least Terns and Black Skimmers). The goal and objective to determine confidence associated with flush counts and developing a monitoring strategy for detecting trend in populations and productivity of rooftop nesting. They compared survey visits and time of day; showed statewide survey coverage and compared partner flush counts vs FWC staff direct counts. Results were FSA partners were critical for project success; flush count of adults were a good indicator of number of nests on the rooftop and flush counts from all the rooftops will be used to access the statewide minimum populations size with full report available prior to 2019 season.

They also discussed goals and objective of refining state populations and trends for Wilson's Plover by visiting historic sites and eBird areas; future documentation of nesting in Florida Keys and development of strategy for estimating statewide populations.

Emma LeClerc, FWC, presented 2018 Season Summary of distribution of FSA partnership nesting; Panhandle shorebird nest fates, colony impacts, rooftop distribution, survey frequency and routes surveyed. Some interesting figures, while some data may have been incomplete at the time of presentation, showed panhandle distribution for American Oystercatcher was 45%, Wilson's Plover 33% and Snowy Plover 87%.

Paula Grendel, FWC, showed the group the new research and data collection tools on the Florida Shorebird Database. One highlight was the use of the KMZ button in custom search to export results and view the data in Google Earth. Be sure to check out the FSD site and experiment with collecting your needed data.

During a round robin format, attendees discussed highlights of the sites they monitored while showing Powerpoint photos. With photos provided ahead of time and a 3 minute time limit, this format provided for interesting summaries of the 2018 nesting season!

Raya Pruner, FWRI, led the group participation in Jenga format for learning Q&A on banded birds and band resights. Breakout sections with Raya, Marvin Friel, FWRI and Kevin Christman, FWC, provided for excellent education and fun for all!

