



Guide for wildlife rehabbers:

What to do when a shorebird or seabird is admitted to your facility

What species am I likely to encounter? Many species of shorebirds and seabirds are found in Florida year-round (see [full species list](#)). During the breeding season (March-August), species such as Least Terns and Black Skimmers nest on Florida's beaches, inland sites, and gravel rooftops (see [breeding species](#)). Their chicks learn to fly within 3-4 weeks after hatching. During their flightless period, chicks are sometimes mistaken for being injured and brought to wildlife rehabilitators.



*Black Skimmer and chicks
(Photo: John Herrick)*

What should I do with an uninjured chick? Since these species learn basic life skills from their parents, **the best thing to do for a healthy chick is to immediately return it to its nest site**. Please ask whoever brings in the chick exactly where it was found. In many cases, it can be safely returned to its nesting area. If the chick came from a beach colony, please release it at the colony's edge (there is often a posted boundary). If it came from a rooftop nest, it can be returned to the roof's edge or passed through the roof hatch. Please watch to make sure that the chick is accepted by the other birds. If the chick is attacked (which happens sometimes with Black Skimmers), you may need to care for it until it can fly and then release it at a nearby staging area (*see next section*). If the nest location is unknown, please contact **FWC** (*info below*) for help finding nearby sites in our database.

Where should I release the bird? If a nearby nest cannot be found, or an injured bird needs to be held for treatment, the next best thing is to **release the bird at a local shorebird staging area**. Please contact **FWC** for help finding nearby staging areas.

Who can I call for treatment advice? Here is a partial list of rehabbers in Florida that treat shorebirds and seabirds:

- [Busch Wildlife Sanctuary](#): 2500 Jupiter Park Drive, Jupiter – (561) 575-3399
- [Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife \(CROW\)](#): 3883 Sanibel Captiva Road, Sanibel Island – (239) 472-3644
- [Conservancy of Southwest Florida](#): 1495 Smith Preserve Way, Naples – (239) 262-2273 ext. 1
- [Emerald Coast Wildlife Refuge](#): 105 Santa Rosa Ct., Fort Walton Beach – (850) 650-1880
- [Florida Wildlife Hospital](#): 4560 US Hwy 1, Palm Shores – (321) 254-8843
- [Key West Wildlife Center](#): 1801 White Street, Key West – (305) 292-1008
- [Marathon Wild Bird Center](#): MM 50 at Crane Point Hammock, P.O. Box 501328, Marathon – (305) 743-8382
- [Save our Seabirds](#): 1708 Ken Thompson Parkway, Sarasota – (941) 388-3010
- [South Florida Wildlife Center](#): 3200 SW 4 Avenue, Fort Lauderdale – (954) 524-4302 or (866) SOS-WILD
- [Treasure Coast Wildlife Hospital](#): 8626 SW Citrus Boulevard, Palm City – (772) 286-6200

What if I get a dead or sick bird? Please report dead or ill birds to FWC at: <http://legacy.myfwc.com/bird/default.asp>. You may be asked to freeze dead specimens.

What if I get a bird that has been banded? Please **record the band colors and positions** (top or bottom part of the leg) on each leg, as well as any numbers, codes, or colored dots on bands and flags. The [Banded Birds](#) page at www.FLShorebirdAlliance.org (*Resources tab*) has a list of where to report each species.

Questions? Please contact shorebird@myfwc.com or your [FWC Region](#) for assistance.