

# Volusia County Shorebird Partnership

## 2017 Spring Meeting Notes

Location: Beach Safety Headquarters, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor conference room  
515 S. Atlantic Ave. Daytona Beach, FL

Date: Wednesday March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017

Time: 1-4pm

### AGENDA

#### **1:00 – 1:15 Welcome and Introductions – All**

Partners in attendance:

Jennifer Winters, County of Volusia, Volusia Shorebird Partnership Coordinator

Becki O'Keefe, County of Volusia, Sea Turtle HCP Field Manager

Rob Walsh, County of Volusia, Activity Manager Environmental Management Division

Amber Stevenson, Ecological Associates, Inc., Field Biologist

Alex Kropp, FWC Northeast Region Species Conservation Biologist

Anna Deyle, FWC Northeast Region Assistant Species Conservation Biologist

Shea Armstrong, FWC, Florida Shorebird Alliance Coordinator

Megan Malicot, FWC Law Enforcement Officer

Lt Steve van Nortwick, FWC Law Enforcement

Don Piccard, Southeast Volusia Audubon

Neil Folsom, Volunteer for Canaveral National Seashore, does shorebird and sea turtle surveys

Michael Brothers, Marine Science Center Manager

David Hartgrove, Halifax River Audubon

#### **1:15 – 1:45 Round robin updates and highlights from partners – All**

**Feb 7<sup>th</sup> winter shorebird survey-** NE FL region is coordinated by Billy Brooks with USFWS. Thanks to everyone who participated! Covered all Atlantic Beaches that day and some of the Halifax River area. The Rookery Island south of Dunlawton had some banded AMOY, and several banded PIPL were seen on the County led route. There were also a lot of banded red knots along the beach north of Ponce Inlet. David's group and Don's group participated along with Volusia County.

**Lt Van Nortwick gave an update on the dog photographed with a gull in its mouth.** FWC can't make a charge other than what Beach Safety enforced at the time - Megan Malicot went to USFWS and had them review it. They (USFWS) primarily deal with civil infractions- which requires 51% preponderance of

evidence - they didn't have enough to go civil with it so it came back to the state (FWC). They have to show criminal intent beyond a reasonable doubt in order to charge and since the dog owner didn't even know the dog was gone, they didn't have intent. It was the 2<sup>nd</sup> time that particular dog had gotten loose on the beach but the dog hadn't killed a bird before. When seen on the beach, it had a gull in its mouth. Intent changes when the dog owner is present and they take the dog off the leash or knowingly let it go into a roped area - more clearly intent in the eyes of the state attorney. The dog owner was charged for no leash (leash law on beach) and charged because it was the 2<sup>nd</sup> time dog got out.

#### **Routes:**

**A Route** - Jennifer & Amber will continue to survey through sea turtle survey team in NSB. (concurrent sea turtle and shorebird surveys)

**Apollo Beach** - Neil Folsom (volunteer for Canaveral National Seashore) conducts the surveys monthly during the count windows. Michael Cooper enters the data into the FSD. There were about 5 WIPL nests with chicks last year. A sea turtle dug a nest right on top of a WIPL nest. Nests were within the northernmost 2 miles from where the entrance to park is, just south of Bethune Beach area.

The WIPL nests were counted but not posted. Neil thought it better to not mark at this point as it might draw more attention to it.

Told LE doing patrols, lifeguards patrolling on ATVs, and sea turtle monitors on ATVs where the nests were and to avoid that area/be careful. Seemed to work - nests all hatched.

\*FWC will follow up with Mike Cooper about whether or not they should post those nests.

**B Route** - Jennifer & Amber will continue to survey through sea turtle survey team in NSB. (concurrent sea turtle and shorebird surveys). Amber has some concern about dogs and coyotes in that area. (a few nests were lost last year, but none that were confirmed dog or coyote predation). Coyotes have made it up to New Smyrna Dunes Park so 2017 is anticipated to be a year of higher predation for sea turtle nests.

**Disappearing Island** - Jennifer will continue to conduct monthly surveys as there is still some good dry habitat (post hurricane Matthew changes) but is reluctant to post because it has been unproductive the last two years, is labor intensive, there are a lot of human disturbances and because predator tracks were observed in the posted area last year (raccoon tracks). It was the first time Jennifer had seen raccoon tracks on the island. A sitting WIPL was sighted inside the posted area last year. It looked like maybe it was getting ready to nest but no eggs were confirmed and the bird was gone on subsequent surveys.

Volusia County conducts winter shorebird surveys on the island through April each year which overlaps with FSD surveys.

\*FWC suggested that it would not hurt to have a volunteer who could go out there in between monthly surveys to keep an eye out for birds - so we'd know as soon as birds arrive and could post (before they get disturbed and abandon).

\*Michael Brothers can try to get out there the 2 weeks in between monthly surveys and also keep an eye on the island with his scope from Lighthouse Point Park.

**Dolphin View MDC** - Don Piccard- lots of BRPE chicks in the 100s category and lots of nests. BRPE vacated the Island closest to discovery center in December and it is still vacant, he doesn't know why. He says there is no indication of any problems - no predator tracks or anything. They may be using a different island nearby \*ask Don for location.

Covering this year: Lisa Mickey and Roger Lawson (an avid birder). Don is trying to get him on board as Don will be out of town most of the summer.

Lisa Mickey and the MDC just did a big monofilament cleanup of the NSB rookery islands. They do that once a year just before nesting season.

**Dunlawton area- north side** - David Hartgrove - This route includes islands on the north side of the bridge. AMOY nesting activity is usually on the L-shaped oyster/sandbar. He conducts his monitoring from the bridge.

**Lighthouse Point Park and PI North Jetty** - Michael Brothers will continue to survey this route.

**North Route** - Jennifer will continue to survey through sea turtle survey team.

**Playalinda Beach**- Michael Cooper (enters data in database) - Neil Folsom will survey this year but there is not much in the way of WIPLs in that whole area.

Neil pointed out the lagoon side at Canaveral a big gap for AMOY. Don Piccard- has done past surveys of the lagoon and indicated that he had found AMOY nesting around Three Sister islands and around Edgewater area.

**Rattlesnake Island** - Jennifer. Successful WIPLs last year, saw some chicks. A few LETE nests last year but presumably got predated and no chicks hatched.

**Rookery Island South** - David Hartgrove - Port Orange proposed CWA.

**Smyrna Dunes Park Shoreline**- Jennifer Winters and staff posted the north end of Smyrna Dunes Park along the inlet shoreline yesterday (2/28). They posted a big wide area off of boardwalk 3 west to the inlet/river meeting point. Last year was the first year the County had not posted since 2009 because the area had eroded and was intertidal all season but now it's dry again. There is a lot of public use in this area and dogs are allowed (they are supposed to be on leashes but aren't always). The County's coastal division developed their own sign for that posted area. Jennifer offered them FWC signs, but they didn't want any at the time. The area is posted with 4 X 4 wooden posts year round (for nesting and wintering birds). They are holding off on using string between posts unless there's nesting. \*Jennifer will talk with the park about putting up twine now to keep people out of the area.

If we do get nesting, FWC LE will have trouble enforcing since these signs don't have the legal language. If we want enforcement, we need some FWC signs. If it looks like there is nesting activity park staff will take the next step with additional FWC signs.

Follow up - The park was provided FWC "Do Not Enter" posted area signs and they were used in conjunction with the park signs. An updated version of the custom sign will also be printed and used in 2017.

**South Route** - Jennifer will continue to survey through sea turtle survey team.

### **Rooftops:**

\*Daniel (Danny) Young is an environmental consultant and VSP partner. He lives in Oak Hill and monitored a couple rooftops in 2016. He will cover the following rooftops this year: BB&T, Waterway West Condo, and Lopez Fishcamp at Oak Hill.

Boston Whaler - 2 ½ miles south of Edgewater city limits - someone thought they saw LETE flying on and off of roof - won't let us on the property. Not sure if this rooftop ended up in the database last year or is still in there.

\*Brandon Noel - was not present, but we assume he will monitor the BCU rooftop again

David Hartgrove - Does 1 route to check all remaining rooftops which takes about 2 ½ hours or so to cover the route, he can cover them for all 6 count windows again this year.

Schnebly Recreation center - \*can take off of rooftop list in FSD since it was re-roofed in 2016.

Waterway West Condo - Don Piccard - won't be here from May on. Danny Young is down as lead for 2017.

David may be gone all of June and much of July. He should be able to get Joan Tague to run rooftop and Dunlawton routes for him. She just took over being web master for Audubon chapter. \*David will let her know about the training webinars.

Alex - Asked if any chicks had fallen off of rooftops where we need to do chick checking. David was not aware of chicks falling off roofs. In years past, birds have fallen off of the roof at Together Unisex Salon the owner of the salon (Vince) goes around and checks the parking lot when birds are using the roof. He puts chicks back up on roof with a ladder (only a 1 story building). That roof has recently had a problem with boat tailed grackles and fish crows.

\*The Other Place - probably going to get demolished soon (don't know exactly when- thought they would have done it by now) - if activity is seen this year, let Jennifer know right away because they are supposed to demolish it soon. It's a County owned building.

Michael Brothers covered Flagler rooftops last year (which are under the St Johns/Flagler Shorebird Partnership). His Breeding Bird Atlas work in Flagler is done now so if someone else could cover those rooftops this year that would be good. \*He has names of some people up there who might be able to do it.

**1:45 – 2:15 Sign up to monitor routes and rooftops for 2017 (bring your calendar) – All**

Combined with above agenda item (did both together at same time). See route and rooftop Excel spreadsheet.

**2:15 – 2:45 Florida Shorebird Database custom search option & FSD training dates – Shea Armstrong**

FSD started in 2011, going into our 6<sup>th</sup> year now.

Custom Search - a new search function, a new tab under the Explore Data tab on the FSD. Shea went over a demo of how to use it. Users can search for data from a specific user or for a specific site for one or more years and can export just the data you want into an Excel file. Users no longer have to do a raw data download and download all data from a particular year into a giant Excel file and then search it for the data they want. Users can still do raw data downloads of all data from a given year if they want to, it is under Quick Exports on the FSD.

FSD will work much easier and work faster in Google Chrome (much slower in Internet Explorer).

**Pre-season FSD Webinars:**

March 7, 1-2 pm: **FSD Webinar for new surveyors.** Learn the basics of the Breeding Bird Protocol and how to enter surveys in the database.

March 8, 1-2 pm: **FSD Webinar for returning surveyors.** This refresher includes 2017 updates to the database and protocol review.

March 9, 1-2 pm: **FSD Webinar for rooftop monitors.** Learn the basics of monitoring seabirds and shorebirds on rooftops.

All webinars were recorded and have been posted on the Resources page of FSD website

**2:45 – 3:10 Imperiled Species Management Plan (ISMP) Approval/Rule Changes/Policies – Anna Deyle**

ISMP updates were approved at the November 2016 FWC Commission meeting (along with the CWA designations). All associated rule changes were done by January 18, 2017. There were changes to many listed species. 15 species are no longer state listed as imperiled, including Brown Pelican, Limpkin, Snowy Egret and White Ibis (all four of these species are still under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act). 23 species are newly listed as state threatened, a change from their former status of FL species of special concern, including American Oystercatchers and Black Skimmers. American Oystercatchers and Black Skimmers now have the same protection as Least Terns. 14 species are staying at the threatened status including the Snowy Plover and Least Tern. The FWC definition of "Take" is defined differently according to species listing status (Species of Special Concern or State threatened). Other changes to the ISMP policies include "Nest removal for inactive single-use nests of state-Threatened birds and state-listed species and man-made structures. An Incidental Take Permit or Intentional Take Permit may be required according to the activity being conducted. Alex Kropp is the point of contact about this item for our area of the state. More information is available on-line.

**See attached PDF of the presentation for full details.**

**3:10 – 3:25 Critical Wildlife Areas (CWA) Update – Anna Deyle**

CWA updates were approved at the November 2016 FWC Commission meeting. 5 sites were re-established and 13 new sites were approved. 1 failed to pass which was the Port Orange Colony (the Rookery Island south of Dunlawton). The Florida Inland Navigation District (F.I.N.D.), which is the landowner, rescinded their letter of approval as the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) has an easement on the island for future spoil placement. David Hartgrove and Clay Henderson met with the FIND rep who wrote the letter, Sheila McCabe, to discuss the issue after she rescinded the approval letter. FWC is continuing efforts to address FIND's concerns about Port Orange to hopefully get it okayed for CWA establishment.

2 new CWAs approved for Brevard County. One is "Stick Marsh" which is a Roseate Spoonbill Rookery. The current status is that the establishment order (EO) has been signed, but the signs to be placed in the water are currently in the permitting process. A temporary posting for 2017 is already up. The other area, "BC-49" got a seasonal closure Jan 1st-Aug 31st approved. The EO is still in process. The FWC office of boating and waterways does the sign permitting work for CWA's.

**See attached PDF of the presentation for full details.**

**3:25 – 3:45 2015 FSD Annual Report – Alex Kropp**

2 big take homes: 1 - these reports exist, 2 - if you want to read them they're at [www.flshorebirdalliance.org](http://www.flshorebirdalliance.org) under the resources tab, then reports. Can see all annual reports from 2011-2015.

Current data shows that WIPL nesting has pretty good coverage on our beaches but we think we are missing some other nesting sites. FWC is hoping to cover the state better with new grant funded shorebird positions, a new statewide CWA coordinator and tech for the NE region of FL will be filled soon. FWC received National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) funds due to the oil spill recovery for increased monitoring statewide in the future.

There is pretty good statewide coverage of colonial nesting shorebirds and seabirds.

LETE statewide nesting trend shows an increase in smaller colonies with fewer nests, which makes them more vulnerable to predation and disturbance. BLSK nesting trends show a decline in smaller colonies, with an increase in colonies larger in size.

30-40% of monitored rooftops statewide are reported active each year.

**See attached PDF of the presentation for full details.**

**3:45 – 4:00 Wrap up – All**

The News Journal is doing a story about feeding birds at the beach and may contact some of the partners. David Hartgrove had been contacted along with County staff. Alex explained that FWC has a

rule against feeding pelicans, but no there are no other rules against feeding shorebirds/seabirds. Michael Brothers indicated that the Daytona Beach Shores area is the largest concentration of gulls on any beach in the U.S. and that it has nothing to do with the feeding of birds by humans. The gulls aren't getting attracted to the beach because they'll get fed. There is a local problem with people feeding birds and them defecating on nearby properties. Some residents have asked the County to adopt an ordinance to prohibit feeding birds at the beach.

Follow up: The article ran in the News Journal on March 6, 2017. This topic is also an item for discussion for the March 16<sup>th</sup> County Council meeting.