



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 well-camouflaged. Chicks remain still when approached. Colonies are very sensitive to disturbance.

LEAST TERN *Sternula antillarum*

8-9 in

State Listed-Threatened. Smallest tern with a yellow, black-tipped bill. The most likely species to be encountered. Nests on both Atlantic and Gulf Coast beaches, spoil islands, rooftops, and nests inland. Nests April-August. Photos: (left) adult on nest, (right) least tern chicks.



BLACK SKIMMER *Rynchops niger*

15-20 in

State Listed-Threatened. Distinctive, with lower bill much longer than upper bill. Nests more commonly along Gulf Coast beaches and rooftops, with little nesting on Atlantic Coast. Nests May-August. Photos: (left) adult on nest, in breeding plumage, (right) adult with chick.



ROYAL TERN *Thalasseus maxima*

17-20 in

Large tern with orange bill. Adults have full black cap early in the breeding season. Nests in large, localized colonies, mostly along the Gulf Coast. Nests April-August. Photos: (left) adults on nests, in breeding plumage (right) adults with chicks.



SANDWICH TERN *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

13-18 in

Medium-sized tern and only tern with black yellow-tipped bill. Adults have full black cap early in the breeding season. Often nests with Royal Terns in large colonies, mostly along the Gulf Coast. Nests April-August. Photos: (left) adults in breeding plumage, (right) chick with adults.



Shorebirds

Solitary-nesters, 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. Eggs/chicks are well-camouflaged, and chicks remain still when approached.

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus palliatus*

15-17 in

State Listed-Threatened. Large shorebird with distinctive color pattern and stout reddish-orange bill. Nests on beaches, spoil islands, oyster rakes, and rooftops on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. Nests March-August. Photos: (left) adult, (right) downy chick.



SNOWY PLOVER *Charadrius nivosus*

6-7 in

State Listed-Threatened. Small shorebird with thin bill and grayish legs (compare with Wilson's Plover). Nests only along Gulf Coast beaches. Nests February-August. Photos: (left) adult male in breeding plumage, (right) nestling laying beside two eggs in scrape.



WILSON'S PLOVER *Charadrius wilsonia*

6-8 in

Similar to Snowy Plover with larger bill and pinkish legs. Male adults have black forehead and neck bands during breeding season. Nests on beaches, dunes, and other coastal areas along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. Nests March-August. Photos: (left) adult male, (right) downy chick.



EASTERN WILLET *Tringa semipalmata semipalmatus*

13-16 in

Large shorebird with long bill and grayish legs. Nests within marsh and dune vegetation along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. Nests April-August. Photos: (left) adult in breeding plumage, (right) downy willet chick.





68A-27.003. 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, or sell any threatened species included in this subsection or parts thereof or their nests or eggs except as authorized by Commission rule or by permit from the Commission.

State Threatened Species:

- American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*)
- Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*)
- Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*)
- Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*)

Federally Threatened Species:

- Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) – winter resident
- Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*) – winter resident
- Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii dougallii*)

***Take** (68A-27.001(4)) – to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in such conduct. The term “harm” in the definition of take means an act which actually kills or injures fish or wildlife. Such act may include significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding or sheltering. The term “harass” in the definition of take means an intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to breeding, feeding or sheltering.

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.
- (5) The intentional feeding or the placement of food that attracts pelicans and modifies the natural behavior of the pelican so as to be detrimental to the survival or health of a local population is prohibited.

68A-16.001 (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.

68A-14.001 and -19.005 (2). Establishment and Protection of Critical Wildlife Areas.

Areas established as critical wildlife areas shall be done so by an establishment order, and adhere to any terms and conditions under which the area is established (refer to 68A-14.001). 68A-19.005 (1)(b)The take of fish and wildlife is prohibited within areas posted as critical wildlife areas. (c) Public access, including vehicles, vessels, and dogs, is prohibited within areas posted as “Closed to Public Access.” (d)Dogs are prohibited with areas posts as “Dogs Prohibited.”

FWC Signs

Sites posted for beach-nesting birds by FWC (and partners) typically use one of the official signs (left) in combination with assorted educational signs. “CLOSED TO PUBLIC ACCESS” 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.*



If you have any questions, contact shorebird@myfwc.com

FWC Regional Phone Numbers

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|---------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Northwest | 850-265-3676 | Southwest | 863-648-3200 |
| North Central | 386-758-0525 | South | 561-625-5122 |
| Northeast | 352-732-1225 | | |