

Volusia County Shorebird Partnership

2018 Fall Meeting Notes

Location: Beach Safety Headquarters, 3rd floor conference room
515 S. Atlantic Ave. Daytona Beach, FL
Date: Thursday October 4, 2018
Time: 9-12pm

Action Items: highlighted in yellow

Partners in attendance:

Jean Olbert, FWC, NE/NC Florida Shorebird Biologist
Jennifer Winters, County of Volusia, Volusia Shorebird Partnership Coordinator
Rob Walsh, County of Volusia, Activity Manager Environmental Management Division
Logan McDonald, FWC NE Regional Coordinator
Lt Steve Van Nortwick, FWC Law Enforcement
Ed Carlson, Southeast Volusia Audubon
David Hartgrove, Halifax River Audubon
Debbie Wingfield, Manatee Protection Plan Coordinator, Environmental Management Division
Mike Daley, Canaveral National Seashore (CNS) Volunteer

9:00 – 9:05 Welcome and Introductions:

Partnership attendance was smaller than usual. Michael Brothers, former MSC manager was out on vacation. Alex Kropp, FWC and Don Picard, SE Audubon were both out sick. Ed Carlson represented SE Audubon and conducted many surveys with Don Picard. Amber Stevenson, EAI Field Biologist was preoccupied with a stranded sea turtle. Becki OKeefe is no longer working with VCEM. Michael Cooper, CNS was also unable to attend but sent Mike Daley to share information. There was no representation from FDEP Parks Dept. and FIND. Jean Olbert gave all FWC presentations and updates.

9:05 – 9:50 Volusia Nesting/Summary of effort during count windows. Discuss challenges and successes from the 2018 breeding season. All monitoring partners to provide updates (5-10 minutes each)

Mike Daley- CNS summary: Michael Cooper conducted the surveys during the nest count windows. He counted 25 WIPL nests and 30 chicks. There was one (1) LETE colony on an island site but no details were shared about that site. It may have been reported to Jennifer Winters by Ed Carlson and then passed on to CNS staff. CNS does not post each nesting site with traditional posted areas but uses a reflective marker stake nearby. They also curb routine activities such as reducing horse activity on the beach and not conducting ATV training on the beach during nesting season. They cover 24 miles of beach in two routes.

David Hartgrove- Port Orange Rookery Islands. He did not survey in March. In April he discovered AMOY nest on SE part of island across from boat ramp. During May kayak survey with Cameron from FWC assisting, 1 AMOY chick was found dead- no known cause. They also observed Rosette Spoonbill nesting activity on the Port Orange Rookery Island #2 (just south off main the channel). No nest was confirmed there. Lots of Pelicans on both islands.

Tanger Outlets- The site was active with up to 87 LETE nests at the peak time but no documented production of fledglings. It was checked 2-3x's per week by David or FWC staff. There was predation by a red-tailed Hawk and construction activities surrounding the site. The area was posted and the contractor was cooperative until the road nearby needed to be paved. Despite verbal agreement by FWC and contractor, the road adjacent to 10 active nests was paved and the nests were abandoned after the activity was conducted. The contractor had been advised to obtain an Incidental Take Permit to proceed but one was not issued for this activity. This area will need to be watched as it is now developed but as other areas get cleared for development nearby, birds could come back next season as they did this year.

Rooftops:

David Hartgrove- Covidian was the only active rooftop observed in 2018. All D. Hartgrove observations were from the ground. 14 birds observed, no fledglings. Roof top visits by FWC resulted in 2 dead chicks found, and David's count confirmed. It has since been re-roofed. The Unisex Salon in Ormond contacted FWC about installing chick fencing on the roof but due to past predation, no activity in 2018, and another objecting tenant in the complex, that project is not being pursued at this time. David shared a story about Dauphin Island, a large LETE nesting island in Alabama on which island visitors collected all shorebird eggs and stacked them together in one large pile unknowingly killing them all. Later in the meeting per Jennifer's inquiry, David indicated that Bethune Cookman University Music building rooftop was checked 2 X's with also no activity observed. (That route was previously covered by former member Dr. Noel, who left the area in 2017)

Jennifer Winters- Volusia County Beaches and Routes- No activity on County beaches north of Ponce Inlet (N & S routes). Most activity was in Bethune Beach at the south end of New Smyrna Beach (B route) which had at least 7 WIPL nests and many fledglings (no exact #'s provided as Amber was absent). At least 1 more WIPL nests was in Smyrna Dunes park (A route)- only 2 hatchlings observed inside of previously posted area, no eggs seen. Disappearing Island -There was 1 posted WIPL nest found in May and 1 more WIPL and up to 7 LETE nests (which were also posted) in June. However the outcome of all nests is unknown and there is no confirmed production. The island posted area was removed in August. The island continues to be a high recreation use area for people, boats and unleashed dogs. Rattlesnake Island -there was no nesting activity observed.

Jennifer Winters (for Michael Brothers)- Lighthouse Point Park route surveys also had no nesting activity observed. This route will need a new monitor in 2019 as Michael may not be committed to continuing this location due to work changes (retirement form the nearby MSC).

Ed Carlson (for Don Picard)- NSB Rookery Island. Don and Ed kayaked around the island and counted 25 nests and 100 juvenile Pelicans along with Cattle Egrets. Rooftops- BBT and Waterway West Condo had no activity. David Hartgrove shared that in past years, he was able to access the rooftop at Waterway west via the kind manager and the rooftop hatch. Ed also had observed and reported the LETE island in CNS (previously mentioned by Mike Daley).

9:50 – 10:05 2018 Rooftop monitoring/WIPL monitoring updates presentation and Q & A – Jean Olbert (see attached presentation-PostBreedingSeasonResults2018 - FWRI)

This presentation discussed flush counts versus direct/actual counts for rooftops. Some research was conducted to determine which type is more accurate. Overall take-away, direct counts are preferred when possible. The 2nd portion shared WIPL research indicating that the population is declining but more data is needed. David Hartgrove suggested that FWC work with E-bird to get more shared nesting data from contributors which may be outside the current FWC efforts. **Jean will research this idea further.**

10:05 – 10:15 How to query data from the Florida Shorebird Database – Jean Olbert (see attached presentation- FSD Custom Search Tutorial)

Please review attachment for instructions on how to conduct a custom data search. There are a lot of tools and options to pull data. Data can be exported into Excel or KMZ format (shown in google earth maps). This feature is open to the public. If you would like to population estimates, please work directly with FWC.

10:15 – 10:25 Migratory Bird Treaty Act and House Bill 631 Updates – Jean Olbert (see attached presentation- MBTA & Law Enforcement slides)

Updates on the recent interpretation of the MBTA & Beach Access Bill concerns related to posting shorebird areas along beaches. Volusia and St. John's are exempt from this bill due to customary use of the beaches.

10:25 – 10:30 Law Enforcement reporting and patrols – Jean Olbert, (see attached presentation- MBTA & Law Enforcement slides)

Jean needs updated photos for her presentation of LEO's in action! Alex Kropp initiated this project to get LEO's more involved in the NE FL region especially. They have contributed significantly in terms of hours and numbers of patrols. In our area, this includes Bethune Beach, Disappearing Island, Smyrna Dunes Park, and Rookery Island. They have also helped with posting areas. THANK YOU LEO's!!!

10:30 – 10:40 BREAK

The following topics were changed in order from the original agenda due to Jean presenting so much information

10:40 – 10:50 VCEM Bird entanglement signs and locations- Debbie Wingfield

Debbie manages the monofilament recycling program and gave an overview of that program. David Hartgrove has adopted 12 bins! Her staff has been in the process of replacing missing or damaged bins. 19 completed in the past couple of months. In total, there are 127 active bins. Since 2004, the program has collected over 3,00lbs of monofilament line for recycling. She also coordinates underwater monofilament clean-ups at the Ponce Inlet Jetty. Debbie also shared the new bird entanglement prevention signs which she recently had printed and will be installing them in key fishing locations around the County. The signs have English and Spanish translation and printed on marine grade metal for longevity. Partners suggested locations to install the signs in the near future. If you have a location in mind, please let Debbie know. Dwingfield@volusia.org

10:50 – 11:05 Stewards 2019 & Shorebird Education – Jennifer Winters

Jennifer discussed the challenges with maintaining a Steward group here since there is little nesting activity which needs Stewards and the time lapse between seasons and training. She had been contacted by Paula Wehr, Board member of Audubon FL and former Halifax Audubon President regarding educational efforts and suggestions. Paula's suggestions included distributing rack cards in hotels, educating beach home owners and the general public about shorebird nesting and the problem with dogs on the beach and about wintering congregation of gulls and migratory birds. Jennifer suggested to the group and FWC volunteer coordinator, Logan McDonald, that we consider expanding a steward group to include some of these other educational efforts in lieu of nest stewarding (if those opportunities are not available). Ed Carlson suggested using meet-up groups to bring people together in group efforts and to recruit people. Logan indicated that she has more time in the winter to help with Steward Coordination. Jean, Logan and Jennifer to schedule a follow up meeting to pursue this idea further. Jennifer is currently understaffed and may have a harder time coordinating volunteers until a new person is trained.

11:05 – 11:35 Habitat restoration updates, USFWS efforts in Volusia and other ideas (drone)- Jennifer Winters

USFWS, Gian Basilli has helped coordinate some shorebird related projects in Volusia County. He was unable to attend this meeting to present but shared updates. The Motus tracking station in Ponce Inlet was installed here along with many others throughout North America including 6 National Wildlife Refuges. Our station is the furthest south. The research effort is coordinated by Bird Studies Canada and their focus is on Kirtlands Warblers. Many other species have been recorded here. To view the data, go to motus.org, zoom into the station you want to see, then click on the point and a data table will pull up. Data sets include red Knots, Piping Plovers, Least terns and many other species for this area. You can also view other nearby stations.

Gian also has been involved with a potential habitat restoration effort at Smyrna Dunes Park. The project focus is on beach mice habitat restoration but there may be a shorebird component or benefit as well. The interior of the park spoil is hardpan. A geologist, Pete Adams with U of FL, was hired to conduct an assessment of the material. He also uses ground penetrating radar and his data will be used

to write a restoration plan. That phase will go to Ecologist, also from U of F, to write the plan. The next step is have a scoping meeting. Some ideas discussed include a water feature, creation of dunes and predator control.

There are no spoil island restoration ideas being pursued at this time but that may be a future goal of USFWS. There are funding opportunities available from ACOE in large quantities, but Duval and Nassau are the focus areas right now.

Gian has changed positions with USFWS and will be handling Air Force Station tasks. Amy Conrad will be working on future Volusia projects.

Embry Riddle Aeronautical University approached VCEM offering to partner on some student led research projects with use of drones. Project parameters are 1-2 semesters long, must be in accordance with FFA guidelines for drones which means away from populated areas and roadways and drones must remain in sight of operator. Jennifer, with input from Jean, has submitted a few ideas for consideration, including aerial surveys for shorebird nesting activity in along the ICW spoil islands which are currently remote and un-surveyed locations, to check rooftop sites for changes to materials or for activity during season, document human use of shorebird habitat and to observe habitat changes over time. Any projects related to shorebirds will be done in consultation with FWC and in accordance with FWC recommendations for drones. A suggestion to use drones with infrared looking for predators was suggested. Any other ideas can be shared with Jennifer at jwinters@volusia.org

11:35 – 11:50 Predator Management Team Update – Jean Olbert, (see attached presentation- Predation Management FWC)

Most of the FWC efforts are being conducted on the Gulf side but the same management approaches apply statewide. FWC and other agencies often contract with USDA for this work. A future goal is to create predator tracking videos that will be available to partners on the FSD (focusing on track/scat identification). FWC can assist with predator monitoring, data collection, games cameras, ect.. Predator control is a sensitive issue and control approaches need to be science based and include an education component about imperiled species.

11:50 – 12:00 Port Orange Critical Wildlife Area, CWA educational signs, and other CWA updates and discussions – Jean Olbert

In water posting scheduled to be complete by 12/15/18. Once it is posted, then the CWA is enforceable. Jean shared the postcard being used to educate the public about the posting effort. A discussion regarding historical nesting use areas around the Dunlawton bridge was had. Nesting birds from the 50's and 60's have moved from the NW side of bridge spoil island to the current island, sometime before 1981 at which time they have been on the current island but now some appear to migrating to the island south off the channel. Jennifer and Debbie will coordinate to schedule a monofilament line removal effort on the island in October or November (pre-2019 nesting season). Logan will help with recruiting if needed. Jennifer will also follow up with Alex about the status of the dumpster removal effort on the island.