

FLORIDA PANHANDLE SHOREBIRD WORKING GROUP- OCTOBER 5, 2017

MEETING NOTES:

Welcome and introductions

Julie Wraithmell, Audubon Florida

Roles of new FWC Staff

Paula Muellner Grendel, FWC

- Paula Grendel (previously Muellner) has joined FWC as the Regional Shorebird Biologist. Work mobile: 850-387-9069
- Peter Keene has joined FWC as the new Predator Management Biologist. Peter will be focusing on predator control and aversion for many of our important nesting sites in the Eastern half of the panhandle.

Motus Towers – Building a Telemetry Network in Florida

Cindy Fury, USFWS

- Motus is a coordinated and automated approach to studying migration rates, routes, and connectivity and stopover decisions/habitats, launched in 2012 in Southeastern Canada.
- Consists of a network of automated telemetry receiving stations that record detections of tagged birds when they pass within 15-20km. Data managed by Bird Studies Canada.
- Stations must consist of a receiver, power source, antennas, and structure. Cost between \$2.5K and \$8K depending on pre-existing components and number of antennas. A building can serve as a structure.
- Current goal is to fill in “priority voids” within network. Florida is a “priority void” due to the many migratory species which pass through Florida, but only a few existing towers within the entire state.
- Benefits of hosting a station: Filling in spatial gaps for a collaborative, coordinated effort to conduct cutting edge research on animal movement. Data on what species pass through or stopover on site and when, as well as what habitats they are using. Relatively cheap with low to no maintenance. High tech attraction with interactive data for visitor service/public potential.

Law Enforcement Q & A

Captain Lee, FWC

- FWC Law Enforcement was provided questions sourced from the working group prior to the Fall Meeting. During the meeting, Captain Lee answered these questions and lead discussions on the topics. Highlights provided:
- When reporting shorebird violations, it is important to go through FWC dispatch (888-404-FWCC, 888-404-3922) so that the call information is captured and can inform and influence future priority patrol areas for Law Enforcement.
- As many as 50% of the cases FWC Law Enforcement makes against wildlife violations comes from public information. It is important for shorebird surveyors to document potential violations as thoroughly as possible, including pictures and video. (Note: In FL, it is only legal to record video of someone if they are on public property.) If a surveyor provides a statement to Law Enforcement on a case that ends up going to trial, they can be asked to serve as a witness during the trial.
- FWC Law Enforcement does technically have the jurisdiction to enforce local laws and ordinances, but it is not within the directive of FWC Law Enforcement and should be left up

to local Law Enforcement. However, if the violation of a local law or ordinance involves a wildlife violations, FWC Law Enforcement can and should be involved.

- FWC Law Enforcement cannot enforce FAA rules regarding drones, ultra-lights, and gliders. However, FWC Law Enforcement can address/enforce shorebird harassment or other wildlife violations that occur because of these vehicles. To help prevent such issues, FWC Law Enforcement reaches out to local vendors to educate them on the potential wildlife conflicts within the area.
- Contacts: East of Apalachicola River- Captain Charlie Wood- Charlie.Wood@MyFWC.com
Escambia through Walton Counties- Captain Phillip Glover- Phillip.Glover@MyFWC.com
Remaining Panhandle- Captain Scott Lee- Scott.Lee@MyFWC.com

3 minutes per person Round Robin
Victories - Speed Review Breeding Season

Julie Wraithmell, Audubon Florida

Critical Wildlife Areas

Michele Vandeventer, FWC CWA Coordinator

- CWAs are specific sites designated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to protect places where wildlife congregates to breed, nest, roost, and feed. The areas are designated through an establishment order to minimize disturbance from human activities.
- Between 1977 and 2015, 24 CWA's have been established. In 2016, the Commission approved the initiative to add 13 new CWA's and improve 5 existing CWA's.
- In the panhandle, 3 existing CWA's were Tyndall AFB, Alligator Point, and St. George Causeway.
- In 2016, Lanark Reef and Flag Island were established as new CWA's, and St. George Causeway's establishment order was updated to extend the closure period.
- Lanark Reef and Flag Island are closed year-round with in-water posting.
- Tyndall is closed year-round.
- Alligator Point and St. George Causeway are closed within the posted area seasonally.
- Posted CWA's can be enforced by FWC Law Enforcement and any local Law Enforcement Agency. Violations are punishable by up to \$500 fine or 60 days in jail. FWC will be taking an initial educational approach.

Panel Q & A: Innovative Techniques for Predator Management.

Paula Muellner Grendel, FWC

Panelists:

Jeremy Butts, Richard Hinnah, & Josh Davison USDA-APHIS

Eric Grendel, Predator Mngmnt Biologist, FPS

Peter Keene, Predator Mngmnt Biologist, FWC

- Panelists took questions from the audience regarding predator management for shorebirds within the Florida panhandle. Panel was video recorded. Please contact Ashley.Warren@MyFWC.com for recording.

- FICR are becoming a major shorebird egg predator in Florida.
- Emetic eggs were previously tested to reduce FICR predation, but the permit for the emetic, as well as the procedure, is expensive. Electrified eggs were tested in this study as a cheaper alternative.
- 10 electrified eggs were placed one per faux nest within a colony, and monitored 4 hours/day for 10 days. Results of the trial were quantified by replacing the electrified eggs with wax eggs for the following week.
- The study showed this method was not 100% effective, but would likely decrease the number of eggs taken by crows. Other benefits were that there are no negative impacts on the environment and no non-target species are harmed. Potential negatives are that the eggs must be monitored while deployed, which is labor intensive.

Group Assessment of Meeting.

- What was good? What can be improved on? Thoughts on venue? Ideas for future meetings?
- Please send thoughts and ideas to Ashley.Warren@MyFWC.com or bsamuelsen@audubon.org.