

St. Johns and Flagler Shorebird Partnership

Post-season Meeting Agenda

Thursday, October 12th, 1PM – 4PM

St. Augustine Alligator Farm Conference Room, St. Augustine



1:00: Introductions – All

Meeting Attendees:

Craig van Boskirk (Volunteer), Melinda van Boskirk (Volunteer), Sylvia van Boskirk (Volunteer), Doug Brace (St Johns County Sherriff's Office), Ryan Campbell (FWC Law Enforcement), Mary Conte (volunteer), Peggy Cook (Fort Matanzas Volunteer), Jason DePue (State Parks), Anna Deyle (FWC), Chris Farrell (Audubon), Kurt Foote (Fort Matanzas National Monument), Josh Greenier (FWC Law Enforcement), Chanell Guillaume (Anastasia State Park), Kurt Harris (FWC Law Enforcement), David Jones (Anastasia State Park), Sue Killeen (FWC/DEP Volunteer), Alex Kropp (FWC), Joe Marchionno (FWRI), William Miller (FWC Law Enforcement), Jade O'Neil (St Johns County), Nathan Otter (St Johns County), Jean Olbert (FWC), Diane Reed (GTMNERR Volunteer), Kevin Roberts (St Johns County Sheriff's Office), Jean Rolke (Audubon), Karen Tobi (Volunteer), and Michelle Vandeventer (FWC)

1:15: Post-season area summaries by partners – All (5-10 minutes each)

Discuss challenges and successes from the 2017 season. Discuss hurricane Impacts.

Nocatee: Jean Rolke, Anna Deyle

- Nocatee is an empty cleared lot that was first discovered to have Least Terns (LETE) nesting in the 2016 breeding season.
- There was a large drop in nesting observed on 5/30 without any clear indication of cause of failure (suspected predation but no obvious predator signs observed).
- Someone drove through the colony between the 5/30 to 6/15 site visits.
- Due to the hard ground at this site only a few posts/signs were erected in buckets.
- Potential new threats to the colony could include students walking through/near the colony and golf carts driving near the colony with dogs.
- Possible interest for stewards to attend this area in future breeding seasons.

Mickler's Landing North to Duval line, Mickler's south to GTMNERR, Vilano Road to GTMNERR South Boundary: Jade O'Neil

- Two mixed flocks were observed at this site.
- Both ATVs and Mules were used for monitoring purposes.
- The North beaches are recovering from Hurricane Matthew.
- It is important to note that there are a lot of human impacts in this area.

GTMNERR: Diane Reed

- Six mixed flocks were documented close to the GTMNERR line.
- All survey windows were covered at this site.
- No Wilson's Plovers (WIPL) were observed this season.
- A lot of Peregrine Falcons were documented in this area after the recent Nor'easter.
- Active sand nourishment occurred by houses this season.
- A large number of sea turtle nests were lost this season.
- There is still only one access point open which funnels people into that location. It is important to note that there are a lot of dogs and people at this site.

Porpoise Point: Tara Dodson, Sue Killeen

- Very little bird activity was recorded this year and it is unlikely to be active next year.
- Extensive wash over occurred during Hurricane Irma and as a result there is no longer a "point".
- The habitat closest to the houses is now lower than the beach.
- A Leatherback sea turtle nest was documented along the driving path (temporarily closed) on the beach.

ICW/Julia's Island: Jean Rolke, Joe Marchionno, Anna Deyle

- Overall this was a good nesting year for LETE. Peak nest count of 40 LETE nests (north end) recorded on 6/24 and a peak flight capable juvenile count of 24 on 7/2.
- Difficult to detect chicks at this site but predation/overwash/disturbance events look likely.
- There were successful WIPL nests and suspected to be a lot of Willet (WILL) nests that were not found (north end).
- Some LETE nesting was observed on the south end (TLETEJulias02) but all failed.
- 1 American Oystercatcher (AMOY) nest at north end marked complete (one or more chicks hatched), 1 WILL nest at south end with unknown final status, and 7 WIPL nests documented (3 at south end with unknown final status and 4 complete at the north end).
- There were issues with this site getting over washed throughout the season (esp. south end)
- Hurricane Irma diminished the size of this site (both area and height) and created a sandbar nearby that may attract increased boating activity adjacent to the colony.
- It is important to note that this site may benefit from sand nourishment and that we may want to pursue known funding opportunities for this (Chris/Alex).
- There were issues with a UAV flying over the island and people boating to the island who were allowing their dogs off leash. Mostly people did observe the posted guidelines.

Tolomato River: Joe Marchionno

- A total of 28 AMOY breeding pairs of AMOY observed (19 chicks banded).
- There are plans to increase adult AMOY banding efforts this year.
- A total of 4 WIPL nests were found- 3 marked complete, 1 with last status marked as active.
- A colony of LETE (up to 19 nests) (TLETE01) and 1 AMOY nests were located on the SE most oyster rake (failed) north of Julia's Island within the GTMNERR.
- This was the most productive year for this site compared to the past few years.
- Continuing to see a loss of oyster rakes with storms.

Anastasia State Park: Jason DePue, Sue Killeen, Jean Rolke

South LETE Colony

- Largest/most productive colony recorded in St. Johns County since St. Johns Partnership started regular monitoring in 2005!
- Increased bird steward presence and predation management.
- Peak count of 282 LETE nests, peak count of 171 flight capable juvenile LETE recorded!
- Important to note that a beach nourishment project will be taking place starting in December. They will be taking sand from the North Shore off shore of ASP. Donor site of project is midway through South Colony (past pier).

North LETE Colony

- Detection limitations due to vegetation/blowing sand.

Solitary Nesting

- 11 WIPL nests with observed high count of 21 WIPL chicks (6/15).
- Heard a pair of WILL with chicks in the back end of the marsh.
- Halfway down the beach there is a large sand dune blowout from Hurricane Irma that may increase LETE nesting for next season.

Black Skimmers (BLSK)

- Three BLSK nests were found this year within the south LETE colony with a total of 5 chicks produced (1 injured and taken to rehabber, 2 died, 2 fledged).
- BLSK are noticeably more sensitive to people/disturbance. As a result, colony buffers were increased wherever possible.
- First successful skimmer nesting in St. Johns in decades!

Stretch between ASP and FMNM (St. Johns Managed Beach 1 route): Jade O'Neil

- Two mixed flocks observed (staging) closer to Fort Matanzas side.
- 1 missed survey window.
- ATVs and mules used for survey efforts.
- There was noticeable beach loss due to Hurricane Irma.

Fort Matanzas NM and CWA: Kurt Foote, Peggy Cook

- Peak counts of 15 nests, 7 downy chicks, 5 feathered chicks, and 22 flight capable juveniles.
- According to the data there was some sort of disturbance event that occurred in June at the LETE colony, but some FCJs likely fledged.
- At least 8 WIPL nests and 17 WIPL chicks were estimated to have been produced from this site.
- Hurricane Matthew and Irma have opened a lot of LETE habitat. Approximately 70 feet of lost dunes. East side of bridge where CWA is located, had been impacted severely by Mathew and Irma. Beach mouse habitat dramatically reduced.

Fort Matanzas FIND SITE (SJ-1 DMMA): Anna Deyle

- Active dredge material management area.
- Monitoring of the site began in May.
- May-Aug: 4 adult WIPL and a roving chick record in May, 3 adult WIPL and a roving chick record in late June.
- There were no consistent sightings of LETE (site tends to be a predator sink).

MSA-233 (Summer Haven mitigation site): Chris Ellis, Alex Kropp

- This is the mitigation site for the Summer Haven Restoration Project, managed by Taylor Engineering.
- There was a big learning curve this year (figuring out grounding system for electric fence, monitoring, predator control, etc.).
- Peak LETE nest count of 16, peak flight capable juvenile count of 2.
- There was a gap in monitoring (June) and suspected disturbance from an aerial predator (July).
- It is recommended next year that cameras are set much closer to nests and checked regularly for predator detection and management.
- There were a total of 4 WIPL nests (1 renest) this year, 3 hatched chicks successfully.

Summer Haven River Restoration Project: Alex Kropp

- Two colonies of LETE nested in the project area this year and delayed project activities. This site required a lot of monitoring by FWC technician due to lack of monitoring experience of bird monitor initially hired for the project.
- Due to a project delay (~5 days) LETE and WIPL began nesting at site and subsequently delayed the project.
- Issues this year with an unqualified monitor hired (subsequently a qualified monitor was hired as the result of a warning letter from DEP).
- Despite human disturbances/entry into posted areas, flight capable LETE and WIPL were produced from the site.

Flagler County Rooftops: Anna Deyle

- Four historic rooftops in Flagler (2 inactive this season).
- Two rooftops with LETE nesting (Central Avenue House = 12 peak flush, Ocean Villas = 8 peak flush count)

Flagler Routes: Frank Quinn (No birds and Frank was not at the meeting, skipped)

St. Johns Rooftop Sites: Rooftop Monitors (Sue Killeen, Jean Rolke, Anna Deyle)

- Winn-Dixie, Scottish Inn, Anastasia Square = All not active.
- Jail (active for 1 count only), Burkhardt's (listed in FSD as Outlet mall on inman) LETE/KILL active for short duration unclear why failed, Old Winn-Dixie (active only short duration, KILL nest with 3 chicks), Anastasia Plaza (flush count of 2, then nothing).

Law Enforcement Activities: FWC LE

- St Johns County Resource Deputies got called out of the meeting early
- Issues with reporting in the FWC CAD system possibly due to automatic geosite dispatch pulling to nearest cross street, dispatch reporting, and ability for LE Officers to remember to check in and out of locations.
- When officers pulled the reports, they estimated 89.7% coverage and goals obtained (as opposed to 13% from the CAD system report).
- Total hours spent = 148 hours on patrol.
- St. John's county had a total of 87 different calls.
- A total of 10 warnings issued (mostly at ASP and a few at Julia's) for dogs off leash.

- By next year they hope that they will be reporting their shorebird hours by a monthly report (it may be necessary to go outside of the CAD system).

2:40: BREAK

2:50: Shorebird Program Update - New funds, goals, and staff!: Alex

- See Power Point slides

3:10: Critical Wildlife Areas Update: Michelle Vandeventer, FWC CWA Coordinator

- See Power Point slides

3:30: Amazing Bird Steward Efforts!: Jean Rolke

- See Power Point slides

3:45: Wrap-up/Action Items/Agenda Feedback: Anna

- The data entry deadline for the Florida Shorebird Database is Friday, 10/20/17. Please get all of your data entered by then.
- Follow up on funding opportunities for sand nourishment at Julia's Island.
- Follow up with Jean Olbert (Jean.Olbert@MyFWC.com) if you need any of the Shorebird signs or "Don't Cut the Line" signs once you have approval for deployment.
- Increase outreach to lifeguards and LE to educate them about watching for birds in ruts and speed limits (especially BLSK chicks at Anastasia State Park).
- Check on the rooftop quality for the Burkhart's rooftop to determine why decrease in nesting (Sue/Jean O.).