

Suncoast Shorebird Partnership Post-season Meeting

When: Thursday, October 5, 2017 @ 1 - 3 PM

Where: Eckerd College, Pelican Room - CEC Bldg (Continuing Edu. Center).

Minutes

1:00 – 1:05 PM - Welcome & Introductions

Armstrong, Shea; Clifton, Amy; Crawford, Sid; Douglass, Nancy; Forys, Beth; Hood, John; Ingham, Paul; Irwin, Jaclyn, Larremore, Dan; Leasure, Pam; Liechty, Jeff; Margeson, Lorraine; Parks, Morgan; Plage, Peter; Short, Holley; Wilson, Jim

1:05 – 1:20 PM - Shea Armstrong, FWC - Florida's Shorebird Program

- History of shorebird program in Florida (1990's monitoring until current day, funding was received from NFWF from BP criminal settlement).
- Florida beach-nesting bird plan (needed for NFWF grant). Time based, well defined goals, tied to specific funding levels, comparable to Atlantic Flyway Shorebird initiative.
- Goal: increase populations of five species 10% in 10 years. American Oystercatcher, Black Skimmer, Least Tern, Snowy Plover, Wilson's Plover (WIPL added late).
- Strategies (1st group): reduce human disturbance, habitat management, predator management.
- Strategies (2nd group): address management info needs, improve conservation regulations, ensure effective monitoring.
- Intensive Research in the next 5 years: statewide survey of Wilson's Plovers, rooftop survey and productivity, population and productivity (and others).
- At 5 years there will be a programmatic review.
- Questions: will the Florida Shorebird database going to get more user friendly and faster?
Answer: send emails when you encounter a problem. FLShorebirdDatabase@myfwc.com

1:20 - 1:50 PM - Q&A with FWC law enforcement

- 3 LE law enforcement officers were available for questions (Sarasota Manatee = Rob Gerkin, South Coastal Area including Lee Co = Guy Carpenter, Anclote Key & Pasco = Dan Parisoe).
- Question: on Anclote Key, began documenting dogs on the preserve and contacting FWC (5-8 times/day), is this the right approach? Officer said "yes", keep calling. Sometimes it takes too long for them to get there on time and they must just "close out" the ticket. But several citations and warnings were written this past summer. There was a peak number of phone calls to FWC dispatch in July on weekends.
- Question: how many signs are needed for enforcement? What if stewards educate people? Office replied that they could take testimony from the steward and that could be enforceable.
- Question: is it helpful to get the registration numbers and/or videos? Not that helpful, does not prove, LE people have to see violation occur.
- FWC shorebird biologists are going to work with LE to make sure that issues are coded consistently.
- Comment: what about drones? Apparently you can't launch or land your drone on county property, but you can fly it over. However, it is a criminal act to "take" a bird with a drone and even harassment of one of our 4 listed beach nesting bird species. They could have to pay up to \$500 and go to court. They may get a misdemeanor.

1:50 – 2:05 PM - Morgan Parks (SW Regional Biologist), FWC - Breeding season update

- Database is still open, so this is just an overview of what has been entered

- 77 routes, 54 surveyed at least once in 2017, 22 routes surveyed during all 6 windows.
- We are completing more routes, hopefully when data is entered we'll have more info for "surveyed at least once".
- 112 rooftops surveyed, 83 inactive, 29 active
- FSD close on 10/20/17, then there will be quality control for 2017 data
- FSD will open in March 2018
- Morgan Parks can help you with how to enter data and actually entering data "Parks, Morgan" <Morgan.Parks@myfwc.com>
- If you have a colony on a beach you can work with DEP to get vegetation removal on posted beaches. Person to contact: "Ilami, Fara" Fara.ilami@myfwc.com". She is the Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative (CWCI) Coordinator. This has to be done at the beginning of the nesting season. A "compliance letter" can be issued. This will be brought up again at the Spring meeting.

2:05 - 2:20 PM - Nancy Douglass, FWC – Critical Wildlife Area (CWA) Update

- A recent rebirth of this "tool".
- Overview of what has been going on with this tool and how it might be used.
- CWA legally enforceable posted area closed to public access (more than just a closed sign). Established under the Florida Administrative code. Used for a wide variety of species (not just birds). It is only done if the land-owner give permission.
- History: 1977-1993: 22 CWA's established, then went dormant. 2014-2015 Martin Co Bird Island and 2nd Chance CWA established. 2016: statewide CWA Conservation Initiative. 13 new CWA's and re-established 5 of them. Total: 32.
- Now there can be a buffer established around each area (including in-water buffers)
- Significant CWA's in our region: Alafia Banks, Dot-dit-dash, Robert's Bay (new), Myakka River, (several in Lee Co)
- Hard to get contractors to put pilings and signs (in the post Irma world), can use buoys, but expensive and can float away.
- Question about listing process: new state listing has species listed or not listed (listed as threatened under imperiled species list. Listing Criteria is more quantitative. Habitat of listed species is also covered under "take". Language about harassment is also much stronger.

2:20– 2:40 PM – Predation Management - Discussion about needs for predation management and site-specific suggestions for what could be done to implement control (can overlap into round-robin if needed)

- This year there was virtually no bird productivity on Ft. De Soto and Shell Key because of coyotes. FWC may be able to work directly with Pinellas County to help get predator management (specifically coyote control).
- Northern Islands have had mammalian predation issues too.
- Sand Key Laughing Gull issue. FWC will follow up.

2:40 – 2:55 PM – Round-robin discussion: Nesting season route surveys & rooftops, management, and colony stewardship.

- Should we anonymous survey to determine what we want to do during the meeting?

2:55 – 3:00 PM – Select calendar week for Spring 2018 partnership meeting: 3/1/18 (Thursday) 1-3