American Oystercatcher
*Haematopus palliatus*

**CONSERVATION STATUS**
Florida: Threatened

**WHERE DO AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHERS BREED?**
They nest on sand/shell rakes or islands as well as spoil islands, beach habitats, and occasionally rooftops.

**2018 MINIMUM PAIRS**
118 pairs observed April 27 - May 6

**WHEN DO THEY BREED?**
- March – September
- Days to hatch: 27-29
- Flight capable: 35-45 days

**CLUTCH SIZE**
- Average: 3 eggs
- Re-nests: 1-3 eggs

**LIVING WITH SHOREBIRDS**
If you are boating or kayaking near shell rakes, stay back 300 ft, especially if you see one or two adults.

**CHICKS**
When chicks are young, they will lie flat and remain still if they become frightened. As they get older, they will jump in the water to flee danger.

**LONGER NESTING SEASON ~150 days**
Oystercatchers arrive at nesting territory and defend ~60 days before laying eggs.
Chicks remain dependent on adults ~25 days after becoming flight capable.

**MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES**
Determining cause of nest failure is challenging because tracks are rarely visible in their nesting habitat.
Overwash and unknown predation are leading causes of nest failure.

**KEY NONBREEDING AREA - FLORIDA’S BIG BEND REGION**
2nd largest concentration of wintering oystercatchers, with flocks of up to 500 birds

Photos by Janell Brush, Joe Marchionno, Amy Schwarzer
Black Skimmer
*Rynchops niger*

**CONSERVATION STATUS**
Florida: Threatened

**WHERE DO BLACK SKIMMERS BREED?**
They nest in colonies on sandy beaches, salt marshes, dredge islands, and gravel rooftops along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts.

**2018 MINIMUM PAIRS**
2,834 pairs observed June 9-18

**WHEN DO THEY BREED?**
- May - September
- Days to hatch: 21-25
- Flight capable: 23-26 days

**CLUTCH SIZE**
- Average: 4 eggs
- Range: 2-5 eggs

**MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES**
Predation (unknown predator) and overwash are the leading causes of nest failure.

**CREPUSCULAR FEEDERS**
Adults predominantly feed at dawn and dusk; sometimes even at night.

**CHICKS**
Small chicks will hide in the sand; as they get older, they will wander out of the posted area toward the water or shade.

**LIVING WITH SEABIRDS — PHOTOGRAPHY**
Predators of seabird eggs and young are opportunistic. When photographing a colony, remain behind posting, don’t exceed 10 minutes, and stay at least 300 ft away from birds—farther if they are disturbed. These birds are easily disturbed and flush frequently, please give them space to rest!

**BANDING**
In 2015, researchers from Pinellas County, FL started putting green bands with an alpha-numeric code on chicks. Multiple Atlantic coast states are banding chicks to learn more about movement, habitat use, and longevity.

Photos by Britt Brown and Pat Leary
**Least Tern**
*Sternula antillarum*

**CONSERVATION STATUS**
Florida: Threatened

**WHERE DO LEAST TERNs BREED?**
- Rooftops
- Ground
- They nest on or near beach habitats, sand/shell rakes or islands, spoil islands, and gravel rooftops.

**MINIMUM PAIRS 2018**
4,718 pairs observed May 13-22

**WHEN DO THEY BREED?**
- April - September
- Days to hatch: 19-25
- Flight capable: 19-20 days

**MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES**
Almost half of colony loss in 2018 was from unknown causes, followed by predation and overwash.

**FALLEN CHICKS**
Occasionally, chicks fall off rooftops, are blown off, or get washed down gutters. If you find a chick, please notify the managers/staff of the building immediately.

**CLUTCH SIZE**
- Average: 3 eggs
- Range: 1-3 eggs

**LIVING WITH SEABIRDS**
Gravel rooftops are an essential nesting habitat for least terns. To support ongoing nesting, FSA Rooftop Stewards put significant resources into managing rooftops, like ‘chick-proofing’ rooftops and ‘chick checking’. Learn more about ways to support rooftop nesting at www.flshorebirdalliance.org!

**DECLINING NEST DENSITY ON ROOFTOPS**
Average of 29 nesting pairs per rooftop in 2018, which is half the number reported in 1993.

**OPPORTUNISTIC NESTERS**
Can be found nesting at newly available habitats like construction sites. May utilize derelict bridges, elevated or floating platforms.
**CONSERVATION STATUS**
Florida: Threatened

**MINIMUM PAIRS 2018**
142 pairs observed May 7-16

**WHEN DO THEY BREED?**
February - August
Days to hatch: 24-32
Flight capable: 28-42 days

**MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES**
Predation is the leading cause of nest failure for Snowy Plovers in Florida.

Ghost crabs and coyote are the most frequently documented predators on Gulf coast beaches.

**LIVING WITH SHOREBIRDS**

These solitary nesters breed on beaches with sparse vegetation. Their camouflaged eggs and chicks are vulnerable to predation when disturbed. Low disturbance is critical for their survival. *Respect posted areas.*

**CLUTCH SIZE**
Average: 3 eggs
Range: 1-3 eggs

**KEY BREEDING AREAS**
>50% of the Snowy Plover fledglings produced in Florida over the last 5 years fledged from only 7 locations.

St. Joseph State Park | Fort Pickens–GUIS | Santa Rosa–GUIS | Eglin Restricted | Perdido Key-GUIS | Windmark Beach | Crooked Island | East–Tyndall AFB

**LONG DISTANCE RUNNERS**
At just days old, chicks may travel over 9 miles in search of food.

**LONGEVITY**
Based on band re-sights, the oldest known Snowy Plover in Florida lived to be **17 years old**.
He hatched at Grayton Beach State Park and bred on Tyndall Air Force Base, 1998-2015!

*Photos by Britt Brown, Kevin Christman, Raya Pruner*
Wilson’s Plover
Charadrius wilsonia

**CONSERVATION STATUS**
Florida: Species of Greatest Conservation Need

**WHERE DO WILSON’S PLOVERS BREED?**
They nest in a variety of habitats along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, including marsh edges, shell rakes, sandy beaches, and vegetated areas.

**CLUTCH SIZE**
Average: 3 eggs
Range: 2-4 eggs

**WHEN DO THEY BREED?**
March - August
Days to hatch: 24-25
Flight capable: 31-35 days

**MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES**
About ¼ of nest failures had cause unknown. Predation and overwash were the next most common causes of failure.

**2018 MINIMUM PAIRS**
146 Pairs observed May 9-18

**LIVING WITH SHOREBIRDS**
Trash and food scraps attract predators to nesting areas. Please keep beaches clean.

**UNIQUE NESTING HABITATS**
New nest sites are discovered every season as we expand the search into new habitats.
Keep your eyes open, you never know where they may nest.

**FOOD SELECTION**
Their larger bill allows for a highly varied diet including crustaceans like fiddler crabs.

**MONITORING CHALLENGES**
Locating nests can be challenging. Wilson’s plover nests are cryptic and can be found in a variety of habitats, including within seabird colonies.

Photos by Britt Brown, Janell Brush, Pat Leary