

Florida Updates

American Oystercatcher Management During COVID

Janell Brush, FL Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission



2020 Timeline of Events

3/17 First AMOY
nest documented

3/22 State
Parks Closed

3/19 Beaches
started to close

4/1 State safer-
at-home order

*"The Order limits movement and personal
interaction outside of the home to only those
necessary to obtain or provide essential services,
or to conduct essential activities"*

*'Essential activities' included
participating in recreational activities*



2020 Timeline of Events

3/17 First AMOY
nest documented

3/22 State
Parks Closed

4/17 Beaches
began slowly
reopening

5/26 Most
beaches open

3/19 Beaches
started to close

4/1 State safer-
at-home order

5/4 Safer-at-home
order removed

7/4 Some
beaches closed
again





Recreation





Recreation



Conservation Strategies

Reduce Human Disturbance

Manage Habitat

Improve Conservation Regulations

Minimize Predation Impacts

Reduce Knowledge Gaps



P. Leary



Reduce Disturbance

- Stewarding
- Posting
- Outreach
- Education
- LE Training
- LE Coordination




B. Samuelsen



My July

Help Conserve Our state's plovers, le... video to le... more: <http://...>

If you go c... not only fr... More



0:16 / 1:30


FLORIDA
Living with Wildlife: Beach-nesting



392

UF IFAS Nature Coast Biological Station
June 13, 2020 · 🌐

Please share!

Taking to the water for fun and adventure? Florida shorebird and seabird nesting along the Nature Coast is in full swing from March to August, but many of the nests are almost impossible to see to the untrained eye. These ground-nesting species use a wide variety of coastal habitats in Florida including sandy beaches, barrier islands, marsh edges, and shell rakes to nest and raise their young. Shorebird and seabirds have a limited amount of habitat left around the state and face many new threats including unintended impacts from recreational activities (such as beach-goers accidentally crushing nests). We can all help Florida's shorebirds and seabirds thrive by giving them space and respecting posted areas. For more information on conserving Florida's imperiled shorebirds and seabirds and how you can get involved, please visit <https://flshorebirdalliance.org/> #sharetheshore #shorebird #conservation #floridashorebirdalliance

 courtesy FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

43


1 Comment 35 Shares

FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute
May 1, 2020 · 🌐

Florida shorebird and seabird nesting activity around the state is on the rise! Social distancing has been an important strategy for keeping ourselves and others healthy. This is also true for ground-nesting shorebirds and seabirds - you can help, please give nesting birds plenty of space.

For more on conserving Florida's imperiled shorebirds and seabirds and how to get involved: flshorebirdalliance.org/ Be a beach hero: [MyFWC Florida Fish and Wildlife](http://MyFWC.org)

#floridashorebirdal... See More




0:15 / 0:34

315

10 Comments 268 Shares

ay weekend, remember
These birds nest right in
est, eggs and chicks are
help beach-nesting



33 Comments 674 Shares

Audubon Florida
May 23, 2020 · 🌟

Check out our Breakfast with the Birds schedule and tune in for a presentation with our own Collier Monitoring and Stewardship Program Manager, Adam DiNuovo



Black Skimmers. Photo: Jean Hall

JOIN US FOR THESE VIRTUAL LECTURES!

BREAKFAST WITH THE BIRDS

\$10 per lecture

MAY 27 LIFE IN A SEABIRD COLONY

JUNE 17 BIRD BLING; HOW BANDING BIRDS AIDS CONSERVATION

JULY 22 MEET THE BEACH NESTING BIRDS OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

AUGUST 19 BIRDS AS BIOINDICATORS: WHAT STUDYING BIRDS TELLS US ABOUT THE HEALTH OF OUR PLANET

REGISTER AT [ROOKERYBAY.ORG/EVENTS](https://rookerybay.org/events)

Lectures start at 9:30 a.m.

All proceeds benefit the Friends of Rookery Bay and Audubon Florida.

👍❤️ 41

1 Comment 11 Shares

- Dispose of trash in designated receptacles to keep the beaches clean.
- If you see a beach steward, ask questions! We love talking about Florida's native bird species.

Audubon Florida

April 28, 2020 · ⚙️

Learn about the amazing birds that call the Florida panhandle home



Relax in Navarre Beach was live.

April 28, 2020 · 🌐

Learn about the amazing birds that call our beaches home!



Weekend

more:
audubon.org/july4

contact us or volunteer:
ervation@audubon.org



👍❤️👍 93

1 Comment 11 Shares



Audubon Florida

May 22, 2020 · ⚙️

Live from a Black Skimmer colony in St. Pete!

Here are four tips for making our beaches safer for birds:

- Give nesting birds at least 150 feet of distance if the space allows. Signs or people usually alert you to these areas, but some posting and fencing efforts are delayed this season.
- If pets are permitted on beaches, keep them leashed and away from birds.
- Remove trash and food scraps, which attract animals that might eat shorebirds' eggs and/or chicks.
- Do not drive on beach dunes or other nesting areas.



National Audubon Society was live.

May 22, 2020 · ⚙️

Join us live with [Audubon Florida](https://audubon.org) from a Black Skimmer colony in St. Pete Beach, Florida.

Back to the shore


10 Comments 61 Shares



Shorebird Ads on Social Media

Duration = May 14 through May 31

Cost = \$500


 **MyFWC Florida Fish and Wildlife** ...
Sponsored · Paid for by Florida Fish and Wildlife ...

Remember: 6 feet for people, & when possible, at least 300 feet for shorebird nesting areas




Shorebirds LOVE #SocialDistancing
Help protect shorebirds by giving the...

Help protect giving th

 **MyFWC Florida Fish and Wildlife** ...
Sponsored ·

Headed back to a dog-friendly beach with your best friend? Keep shorebirds safe by keeping pets on a leash.



MYFWC.COM
See more tips for helping shorebirds

LEARN MORE

 **MyFWC Florida Fish and Wildlife** ...
Sponsored ·

Be a beach hero! #StashYourTrash to keep predators away from shorebird chicks.



MYFWC.COM
Make a big difference for these little birds!

LEARN MORE

Total Reached = 727,393





Success



AMOY Monitoring & Conservation

Monitoring & Conservation Metrics	2019	2020
# monitors	92	62
# survey routes	54	53
# miles (route coverage)	245	234
# miles monitored (repeat surveys)	4,065	4,105
# nests posted	174	199



Florida Shorebird Alliance



Rooftop Nesting

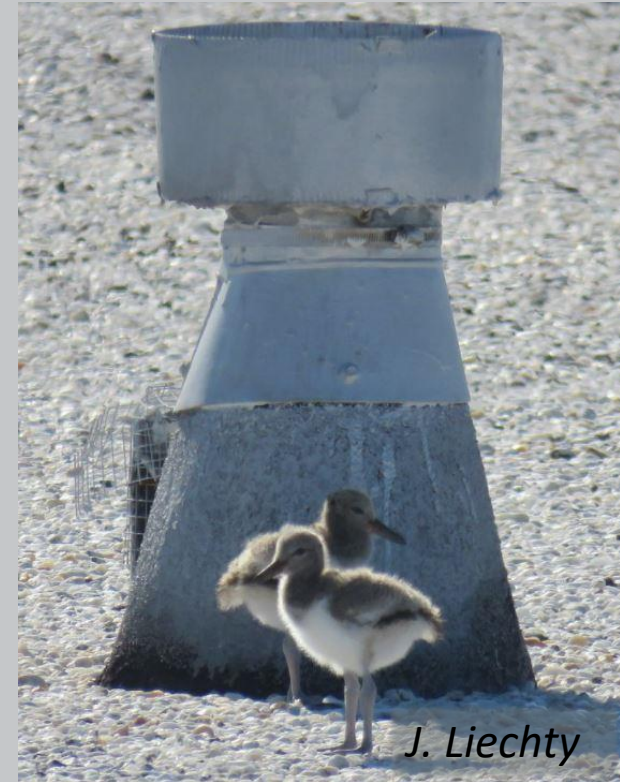


J. Liechty



Rooftop Nesting

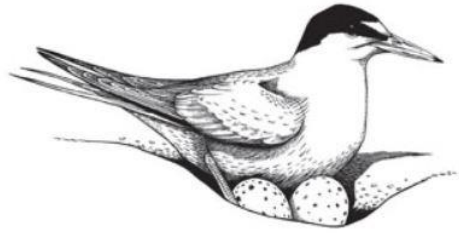
Look who joined the
rooftop nesting party!



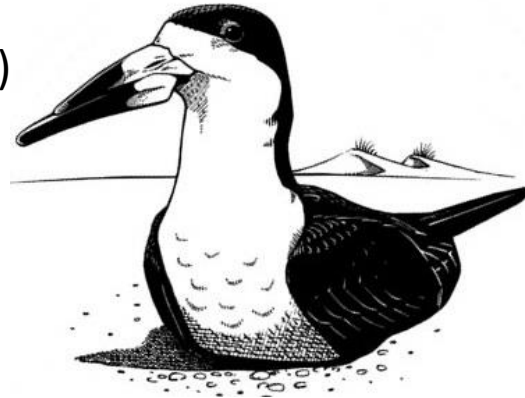
Liechty, J. 2021 (in review). *Site characteristics and reproductive success of roof-nesting American Oystercatchers (Haematopus Palliatus) in Florida*. Florida Field Naturalist.



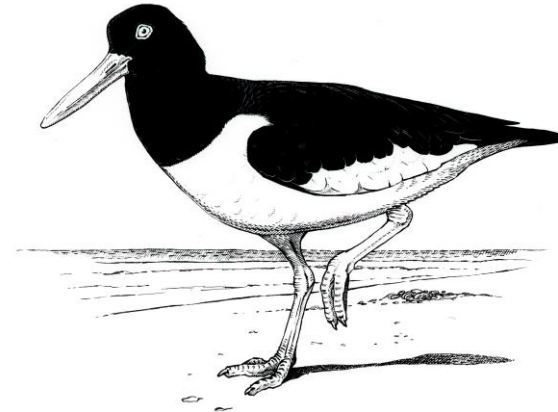
2019 Abundance Estimates



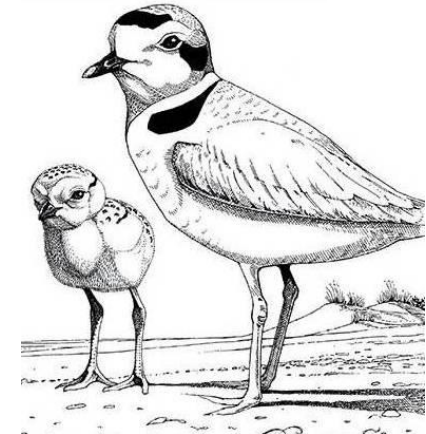
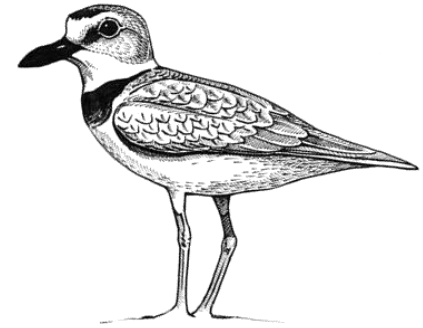
7,206 pairs (95% CI: 6,210-8,203)



3,006 pairs (95% CI: 2,741-3,272)



April 2021



FLORIDA SHOREBIRD DATABASE

AN ONLINE TOOL FOR ENTERING AND EXPLORING DATA ON FLORIDA'S SHOREBIRDS AND SEABIRDS.




Florida Shorebird Alliance Monitoring Data at Work

<https://flshorebirdalliance.org/resources/reports/>


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.

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.




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.

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 Marchionni, Amy Schwarzer

JULY 2019

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER

Haematopus palliatus



Conservation Status

Florida: Threatened

Age at First Breeding

3 years

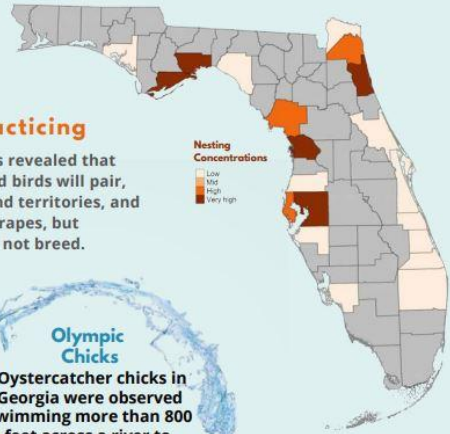
Where Do They Breed?

Sand/shell rakes, natural islands, spoil islands, beaches, and occasionally rooftops

CONSERVATION

Habitat enhancement and restoration is an important conservation strategy to increase reproductive success.

WHERE OYSTERCATCHERS BREED



Nesting Concentrations
Low
Mid
High
Very High

Nesting Season

Breeding oystercatchers will spend over 150 days at a single nesting location...or longer if they have failed attempts.

Just Practicing

Banding has revealed that two-year-old birds will pair, court, defend territories, and excavate scrapes, but typically do not breed.

Rooftops

Some oystercatchers have taken to nesting on rooftops in Pinellas County. They have high hatch success, but surviving to fledging in an urban environment is difficult and poses a unique conservation challenge.

Olympic Chicks

Oystercatcher chicks in Georgia were observed swimming more than 800 feet across a river to access foraging areas with each tidal change!



When They Breed

- March - September
- Days to hatch: 27-29
- Flight capable: 35-45 days

Clutch Size

- Average: 3 eggs
- Range: 1-3 eggs

Living with Shorebirds

If you see one or two oystercatcher adults sticking to an area during nesting season, they are probably nesting. Give them space!





Florida Updates

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Pat Leary