

**American Oystercatcher Working Group Annual Meeting**  
**Nov 30 – Dec 3, 2021**  
**Meeting Notes – Day 1**

**Welcome from Shiloh Schulte and Lindsay Addison**

- Agenda for meeting available [ONLINE](#)
- Day 1 – big picture, 2021 updates and to date accomplishments

**Plenary Speaker – Erica Nol**

- Please see recording and/or powerpoint for Erica's excellent presentation on her thesis work in Virginia in the 1980s and the evolution of AMOY conservation since.
- Special note on topics that still need further investigation despite the significant amount of work that has been accomplished with the species.
- **Noted 2022 is 10 years from last BNA update.**
- Question – are there plans to get better wintering estimates for Central and/or South America given what we have learned about how north American birds are linked to there?
  - Gulf of Fonseca surveys have been initiated.
  - Bigger picture winter surveys in Central America possibly next year, winter of 2023. Currently looking into how to do a comparable winter survey over a broader range. North American 2023 survey hopefully to be timed with at least ground based surveys. Also ideas for tracking wintering birds from Gulf of Fonseca and tracking them back to the U.S. Example of 9 banded birds in flock of 50 in Gulf of Fonseca.

**State of the AMOY Summary – Shiloh Schulte**

- See recording and/or powerpoint.
- Upcoming potentially – **interactive map of AMOY work across Atlantic and Gulf coasts**, not only to showcase accomplishments of the group but as a tool to identify research and management needs.
- 2023 winter survey being planned.
- Note on expanded international cooperation – sharing and learning from places with similar conservation and management issues for coastal bird species (e.g. of dog exclosures for nesting oystercatcher pairs from Australia)
- State by state productivity variable and large spread in terms of the number of pairs monitored. Virginia with highest number of pairs monitored had lowest productivity overall in 2021. Large number of pairs here can heavily influence overall rate.
- Average 0.51 chicks/pair per year after 2008/2009 and start of recovery initiative.
- Summary of wintering survey estimates:
  - 2003 – 10971
  - 2008 – 10150 (not comprehensive)
  - 2013 – 11284
  - 2018 – 12453
  - Estimate of 23% population increase 2008-2018.
- Question about juvenile survival rates from chat. VA population has estimates – Wilke et al. 2017. Shilo Felton's thesis may have some estimates. Georgia resights of banded chicks show 50% never resighted.
- Comment about parallel patterns of higher success with AMOY and PIPL in NE relative to mid-atlantic and southeast.
  - No ghost crabs in New England
  - Possibly lower flooding risk at sites in New England

- Could southern areas be seeing climate change issues earlier and impacts to birds? TX has had major storm issues in recent years. However, Gulf of Maine SLR happening relatively fast, for example.
- SLR issues happening across the range but to varying degrees with different factors having more impact (i.e. wind).
- How much money has been invested over recovery period? See Shiloh for answer.

### State/Country updates – 5 minute recordings available

- Chile – ROC; Franco Villalobos
  - Chilean Shorebird Protection network – focus on AMOY and Snowy Plover
  - Car-free beaches project
  - Video for educating beach visitors (multiple requests for video to be shared and/or posted on AMOY WG website). YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyOHQil9j1E&t=1s>
  - Training for the Navy which is responsible for enforcing certain laws on the beaches
- Northwest Mexico – Abril Heredia
  - 2019 data from 5 states in NW Mexico
- Texas – Sue Heath, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory
  - 44 pairs monitored in 2021 with volunteers monitoring 18 pairs
  - Season from Jan 23 through Sept. 1!
  - Pair attempted to nest on breakwater
- Mississippi – Abby Darrah, Audubon
  - Islands only nesting in the state
  - New banding program with help from Alabama Audubon
  - Raccoon translocation program
- Alabama – Sabrina Cobb and Olivia \_\_\_\_, Alabama Audubon
  - 5 pairs documented and monitored
- Florida – Janell Brush FL FWCC
  - 21 million visitors sharing shorebird habitat in FL!
  - 6 primary conservation actions – see slide
  - Florida Shorebird Alliance formed in 2009; FL shorebird database 2011
  - 2019 estimate for FL – 455 breeding adults; YouTube link of webinar about these results as well as WIPL and SNPL; working on 2021 estimates and working on trends. 227 breeding pairs.
  - Shout out to Pat and Doris Leary for their work
- Georgia – Tim Keyes, GA DNR
  - Georgia Shorebird Alliance
  - Did not hit productivity goals in 2021; partly because of habitat degradation and predators
  - Habitat restoration projects – Army Corps has created interagency working group along entire GA coast. Spoil island and shell rake restoration projects.
- South Carolina – Janet Thibault, SC DNR
  - Deveaux Bank Whimbrel discovery – Cornell Lab video and CBS feature
  - Crab Bank seabird sanctuary restoration with material from Charleston Harbor resulted in South Carolina Coastal Bird Conservation
  - Audubon Stewardship program; DNR hiring Stewardship coordinator
  - SC will be increasing wintering AMOY resights
  - “Discovery at Deveaux” by Andy Johnson & Cornell Lab of Ornithology - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSr6V3VDgFo>
  - “A Migration Odyssey Tagging Whimbrel” by CBS Sunday Morning - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1I72z2ksISE>
- North Carolina – Lindsay Addison, Audubon North Carolina
  - Summary of 2021 monitoring; about half of state’s population

- Met goal of 0.5 young/pair driven by good productivity on barrier islands
- Heavy metals study and AMOY data loggers
- Virginia – Alex Wilke, The Nature Conservancy
  - 2021 summary from monitoring of 55% of barrier island pairs
  - Lowest productivity since widespread monitoring began in 2002-2004
  - Memorial Day storm a factor, unknown causes of chick loss a mystery
- Delaware – Hen Bellman, DE Division of Fish and Wildlife
  - 2020 started more extensive monitoring in Inland Bays
  - Up to 8 pairs in 2021, 2 fledgers documented
- New Jersey – Emily Heiser, NJ Div of Fish and Wildlife
  - Number of monitored birds, not overall population for NJ; many marsh nesting AMOY not covered with monitoring; 169 pairs at 46 different sites; 0.24 young/pair
  - Memorial Day storm a factor; lots of loss to predation as well
- New York – Rob Longiaru, Town of Hempstead
  - 161 pairs, 123 with known fledge rate; 0.61 productivity
  - Share the Shore Award from Audubon for Town of Hempstead; first of only 2 local municipalities to receive the award
- Connecticut – Beth Amendola, Audubon CT
  - 78 pairs, 50 chicks fledged – 0.64 young/pair
  - Predation and storms (Memorial Day) an issue in 2021; higher productivity on island sites
  - Notable – drone injury to AMOY adult that dive bombed it
- Rhode Island – Maureen Durkin, USFWS
  - South County and Block Island and Narragansett Bay region
  - 20 pairs at South County sites (increasing), 26 pairs in Narragansett Bay (partial)
- Massachusetts – Lyra Brennan, Mass Audubon
  - 184 statewide pairs, low estimate for 2021 due to limited capacity
  - Memorial Day storm noted
  - Noted increase in proportion of urban pairs in MA over time
- New Hampshire/Maine – Shiloh Schulte, Manomet
  - Rocky shorelines in these regions
  - Small number of nesting pairs overall – 12-14 pairs, likely more
  - 2021 9 pairs monitored, 7 chicks fledged

#### Summary/Questions

- ALL – review contact info on AMOY WG website to facilitate communication and questions