

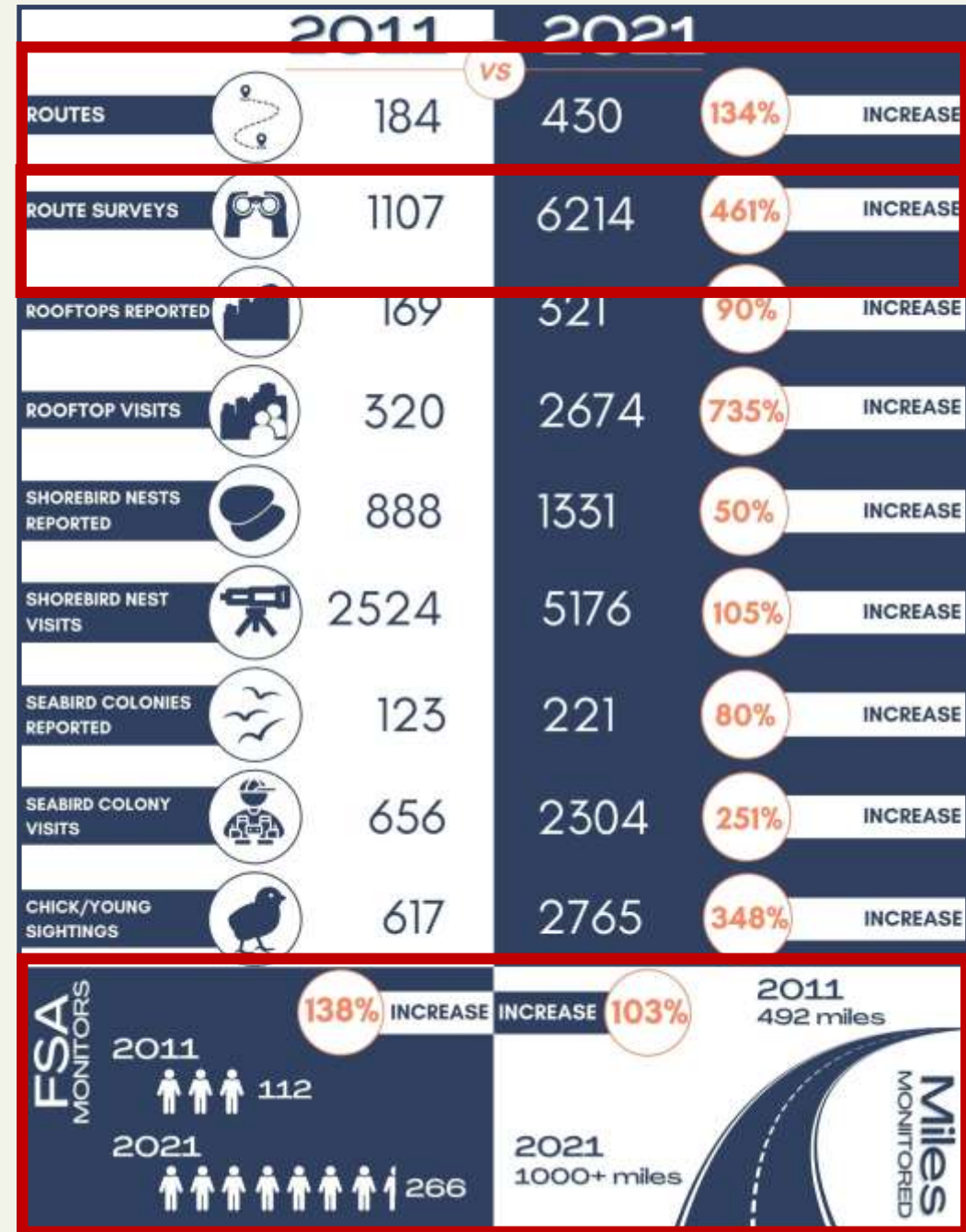
Oystercatchers in Florida



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Jack Roger

Celebrating 10 years of monitoring!



American Oystercatchers in Florida

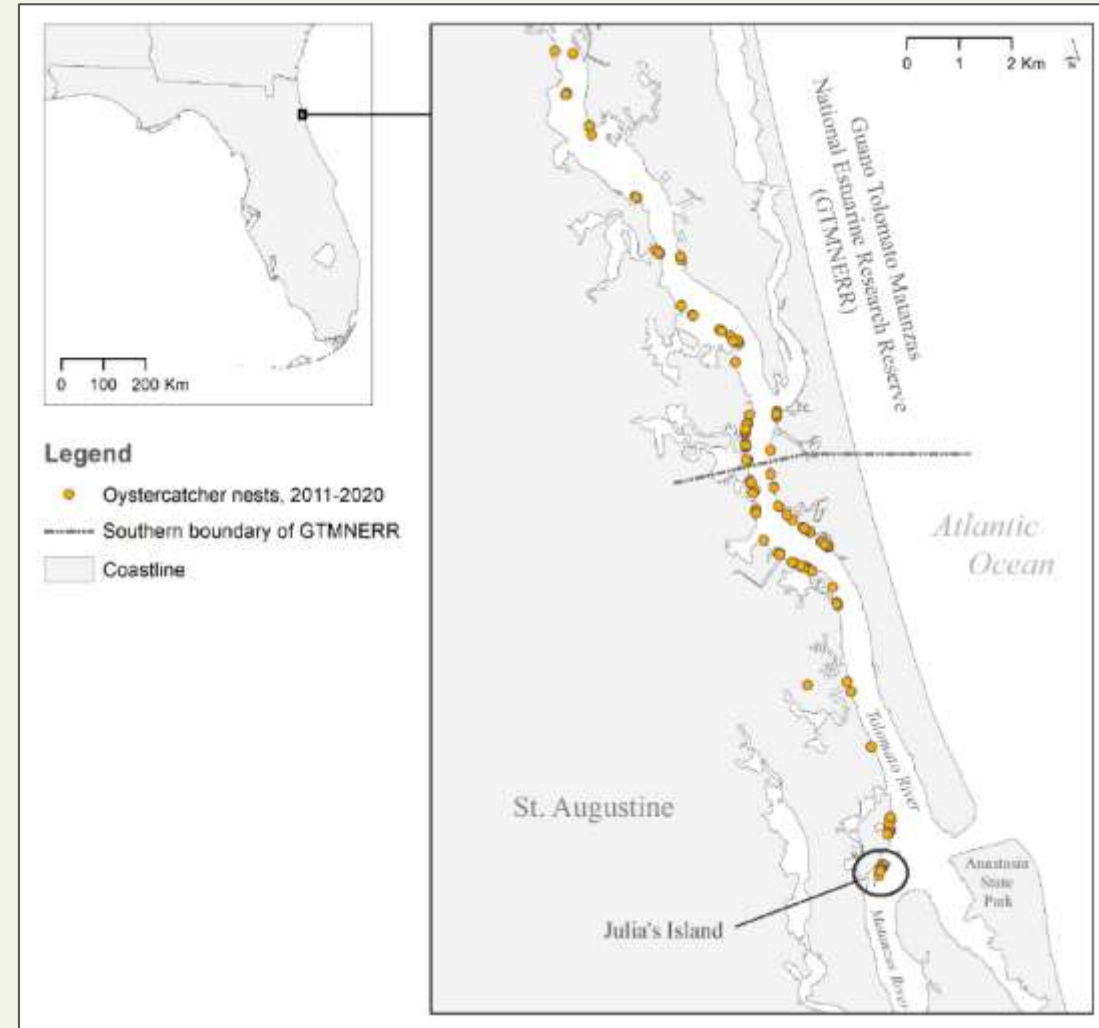
- Breeding adults were reported at 66 routes
- > 200 nests reported by partners in 2022
- The primary reported sources of loss include overwash, coyote, and unknown predators.
- **101 fledglings produced!**



Tolomato River

Supports the largest concentration of nesting oystercatchers in Florida.

The breeding population grew by 20 adults in just two years.



St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

- Supports the 2nd largest concentration of nesting oystercatchers in Florida.
- High raccoon and rodent predation

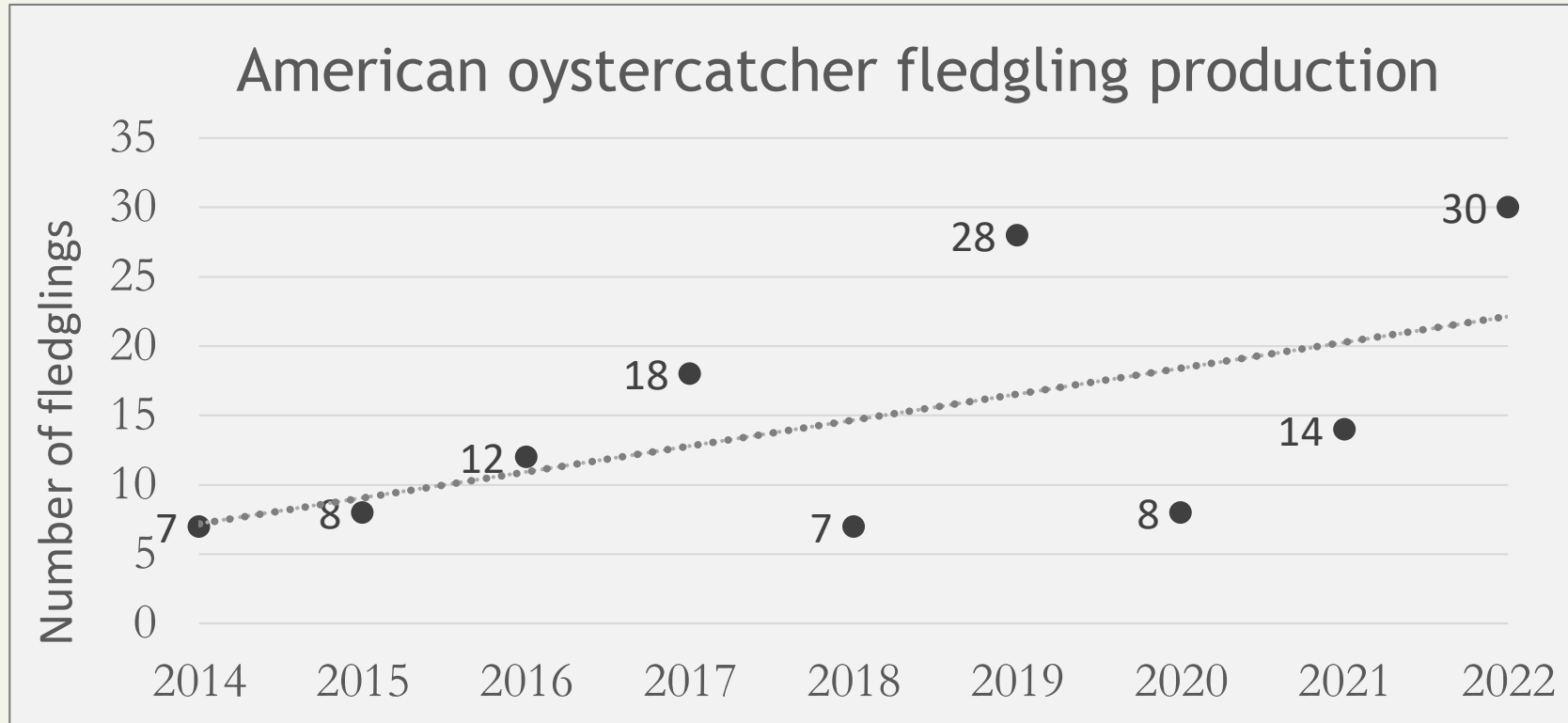
Add map



Observed the highest hatch rates and productivity

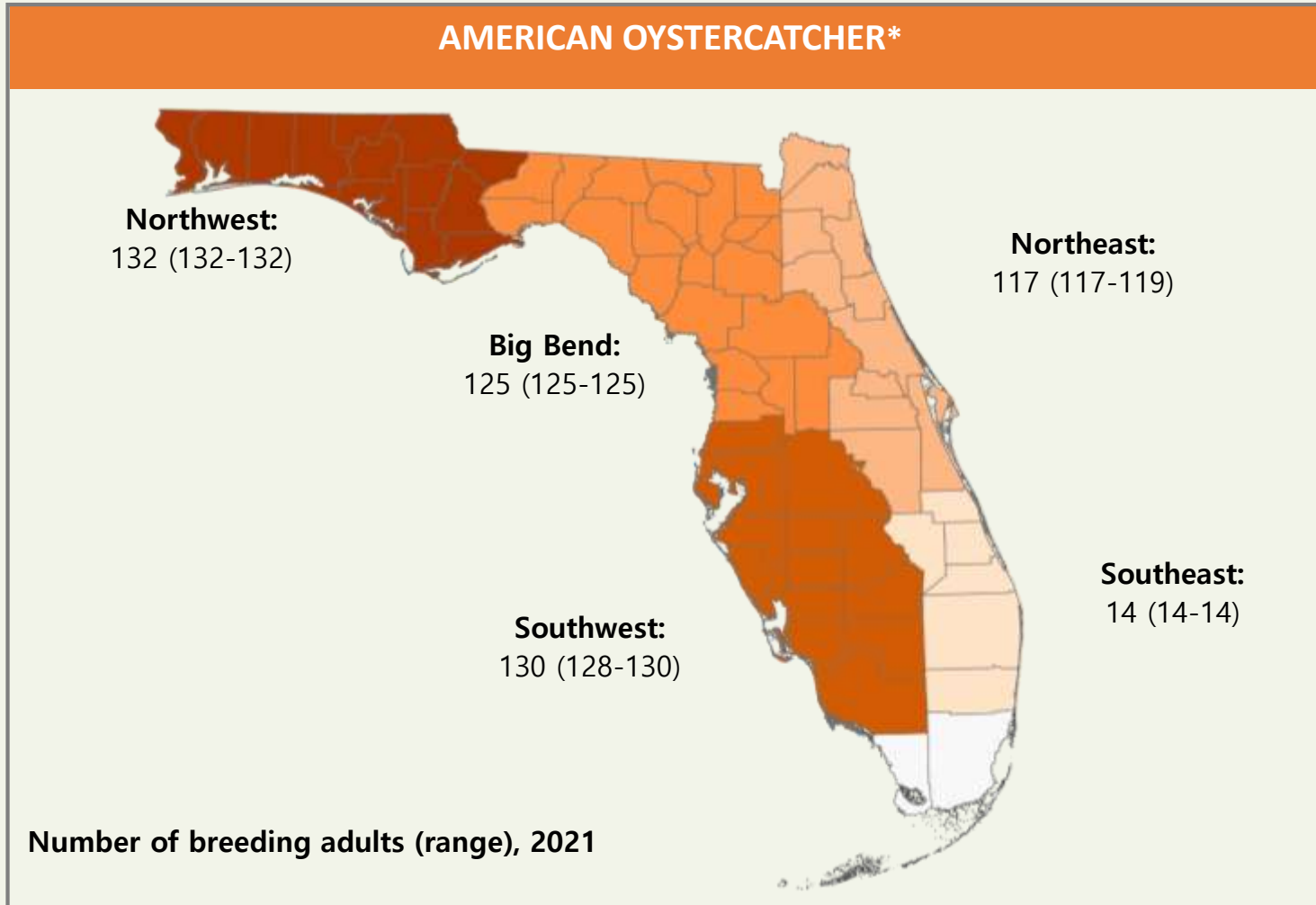
Highlights- Regional

Florida panhandle



Jack Roger

2021 Abundance Estimate



518 (516-520) Breeding American Oystercatchers



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
116 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
No-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 criticism predation are leading causes of nest failure.

KEY NONBREEDING AREA - FLORIDA'S BIG BEND REGION
Largest concentration of wintering oystercatchers, with flocks of up to 500 birds.

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

Just Practicing
Bandings has revealed that two-year-old birds will pick, court, defend territories, and separate territories, but typically do not breed.

Rooftops
Some oystercatchers have taken to nesting on rooftops in Duval 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 900 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

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!

Clutch Size
• Average: 3 eggs
• Range: 1-3 eggs

Respect posted areas

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER

Haematopus palliatus

455 Breeding adults in 2019

Conservation Status in Florida: Threatened

Site Importance
Oystercatchers will return to the same nest site each year sometimes arriving ~60 days before they initiate a nest. They often stay in one location for at least 100 days during the nesting season!

WHERE THEY BREED

Hammocks
Oystercatcher chicks depend on their parents for food and protection ~25 days after they lay the egg.

Rooftop Territories
Pairs that nest on rooftops will defend a territory that extends to the ground or beach near the rooftop.

Field Notes
A partner documented a flock of six wintering oystercatchers on a single shell rake near Cedar Key. This is 98% of the entire population of American Oystercatchers.

Breeding Grounds
They nest on sand/shell rakes, natural islands, spoil islands, beaches, and occasionally rooftops.

Three percent of the Florida population nests on rooftops.

Field Notes
A partner documented a flock of six wintering oystercatchers on a single shell rake near Cedar Key. This is 98% of the entire population of American Oystercatchers.

Bandings Insights
Bandings oystercatchers nesting in St. Johns County have been documented within in Central America. Thanks to our international conservation partners for the banding report!

Movement Patterns
Immigration: The Tallapoosa River in St. Johns County is one of the most productive sites in the state and duck hunters have documented many banded birds from other states entering the FL breeding population here.

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER

Haematopus palliatus

Conservation Status in Florida: Threatened per 800-87 F.A.C.

LOCAL POPULATION INCREASES
The Tallapoosa River area currently supports the largest concentration of nesting oystercatchers (22 adults in Florida and has grown by 28 adults in just two years).

THREATS
Oystercatchers are dependent on low-lying coastal habitats for breeding and wintering and are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and sea-level rise.

WHERE THEY BREED
They nest on sand/shell rakes, natural islands, spoil islands, beaches, and occasionally rooftops.

SOCIAL MEDIA SUPERSTAR
The most photographed oystercatcher in Florida resides in Duval County. Part of a 10-year-old and originally from Georgia. After exploring the Nature Coast, AJ discovered the wonderful beaches of Duval County and Dooly Key Preserve and never left.

518 Breeding adults in 2021

Bandings Insights

- PRODUCTIVE**
Red 19 "Joker" who breeds on Joker's Island in St. Johns County was banded as an adult and is at least 10 years old and has produced at least 10 fledglings.
- YOUNG THROBLES**
Band's information has revealed that young birds do not always spend their first winter with their parents and they band in areas around and they are of breeding age.
- LONG-LIVED**
In Florida, the oldest documented oystercatcher is more than 14 years old. Red 19 was also the first oystercatcher ever banded in Florida.

NOVEMBER 2021
www.FishandWildlife.org

Species Fact Sheets

- <https://flshorebirdalliance.org/resources/outreach-materials/>



What's Next?

- Manuscripts:
 - Decline in Annual Survival of American Oystercatchers Wintering in Florida Linked to Extreme High Tides (*Janell Brush, Amy Schwarzer, Cody Griffin*)
 - Shorebird abundance estimates (*Data team*)
 - Florida Shorebird Program (*Janell et. al*)
 - Restoration project note (*Joe Marchionno, Janell*)
- Ongoing Projects:
 - Gomez Key Restoration Project (*Janell, Joe*)
 - St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge
 - Identification of high-priority areas and restoration project resources to benefit oystercatchers (*Ezra Thompson, Caity Reiland-Smith, Raya Pruner, Joe, Janell*)



Thank you!

