

Rookery Bay Research Reserve

Finding Solutions



Beach-nesting Birds

Throughout the world, many beach-nesting bird species are declining due to loss of habitat caused by rapid coastal development and to increased disruption of nesting activities. Due to declining numbers, both least terns and snowy plovers are listed as Threatened Species by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). From March to

September, least terns and black skimmers nest in colonies along open, sandy Gulf beaches while snowy plovers and Wilson's plovers nest nearby. When beach-nesting birds are disturbed and flushed off their nests by people or dogs, eggs and chicks are exposed to high temperature extremes and predators. Frequent disturbance of birds on the beach, especially

disturbance that flushes birds from their nests, threatens their survival. These birds depend on southwest Florida beaches for nesting and to raise their chicks.



Least Tern courtship

Project Team
 Audubon Florida
 Collier Bird Stewards
 Team OCEAN and
 Rookery Bay Volunteers



Project Dates
 2002 - present

Monitoring and Protection

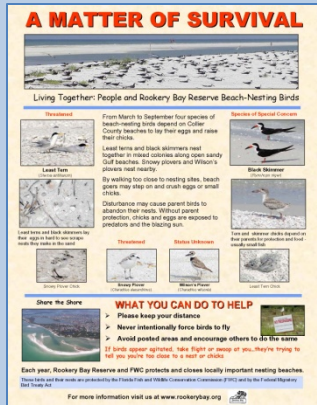


Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, in cooperation with FWC, seasonally posts and closes viable beach-nesting bird habitat within the Reserve. Reserve staff aided by volunteers post "Area Closed" signs connected by string and

orange flagging to enclose nesting colonies. Colonies are protected from the beginning of the nesting season (early - April) until nesting is completed and chicks have fledged (mid-August). These sites are monitored regularly and the numbers of adults, nests and chicks are recorded and shared via the Florida Shorebird Database. Additionally, educational posters and hand-outs are provided to local partners and

organizations for distribution at beach access points and visitor centers within the community. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of nesting sites has indicated that the seasonal closure of nesting beaches in conjunction with increased public awareness through education enhances nesting success for beach-nesting birds.

Share The Shore



Educational Poster Available Online

Find more information at
www.rookerybay.org
www.myfwc.com



Rookery Bay, located in southwest Florida, is recognized as one of the few remaining pristine, mangrove-forested estuaries in the U.S. As part of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, it serves as an outdoor classroom and laboratory for students and scientists. For more information, visit www.rookerybay.org.

