

A MATTER OF SURVIVAL

The eggs and chicks of beach-nesting birds are especially vulnerable to human disturbance. From early March to late August **least terns**, **snowy plovers** and **Wilson's plovers** nest on Keewaydin Island and other area beaches. Nests are made in shallow depressions or "scrapes" on bare sand. Eggs and young are so well camouflaged they can be unintentionally stepped on by beachgoers.

Adult birds will quickly abandon their nests when disturbed by people or dogs.

Snowy and Wilson's plovers are solitary nesters and their nests can be found on the beach above the high tide line or in open sandy areas with sparse vegetation.

Least terns nest together in colonies consisting of several pairs or hundreds of individuals.

Threatened



Snowy Plover

Threatened



Least Tern

Species of Special Concern



Wilson's Plover

Keewaydin Island also serves as an important year-round feeding and resting area for gulls, terns, black skimmers, herons, egrets and brown pelicans. Repeated disturbance causes birds to waste valuable energy reserves. Weakened and vulnerable, birds with a reduced ability to feed may not survive.



"Scrape" nest with eggs

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Never intentionally flush or force birds to fly.
- If birds appear agitated, take flight or swoop at you...they're trying to tell you you're too close to a nest or chicks.
- Maintain a minimum distance of 300 feet from any known nesting colony.
- Refrain from any activity which drives parent birds away from their nests which leaves eggs or young chicks increasingly vulnerable to intense summer heat and predators.

These birds are protected by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act