Beach Nesting Bird Surveys at Little Estero Critical Wildlife Area

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Beach Nesting Birds

- Black Skimmer
- Snowy Plover
- Least Tern
- Wilson's Plover



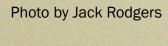




Colonial Seabirds

- Colonies range in size from just a few nests to 100s of nests
- Nest is a scrape in the sand
- Eggs camouflaged to match sand (2-3)
- Just over 1 inch long
- Easily missed by pedestrians, beach drivers







Solitary Nesting Shorebirds

- More Secretive
- Nests Hidden
- Nest closer to dune vegetation
- Chicks very mobile





Beach Nesting Bird Diet

- Dive into the water or skim across the water to catch small fish
- Forage along beaches, mud flats eating mole crabs, fiddler crabs, flies, beetles, marine
 worms





When and Where do They Nest?



- Nest on Florida beaches, barrier islands, spoil islands and oyster rakes, March— August.
- All species dig a "scrape" in the sand and lay 2-3 eggs in the scrape.

Why is Disturbance a Problem?



- For eggs to hatch, parents must consistently incubate/shade eggs from the sun.
- Disturbance causes adults to flush and exposes eggs to the hot sun and predators.

Why is disturbance a problem?

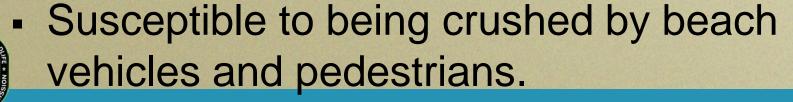


- Chicks can also overheat in the midday sun without consistent shade from parents.
- Disturbance exposes young to the hot sun and to predators.

Nests Invisible from a distance



Eggs camouflaged/invisible to predators.



Chicks hard to see from a Distance



 Young, downy chicks also susceptible to being crushed by pedestrians/vehicles.



Beach Recreation





Beach Raking





Pets and other Predators





Posting Nesting Areas is Essential





 Minimizes disturbance that can directly or indirectly destroy eggs/flightless young.







