

Wading Birds in South Carolina: Resources for Property Owners and Managers

January 2014

Commonly Seen Wading Birds

Species	Status
Wood Stork	High Concern (Endangered)
Little Blue Heron	High Concern
Snowy Egret	High Concern
Tricolored Heron	High Concern
White Ibis	Moderate Concern
Great Blue Heron	Low Concern
Great Egret	Low Concern

Waterbird Conservation for the Americas, 2007



Why do wading birds nest in residential communities and on golf courses?

Changes in Land Use and Habitat Availability

- Coastal areas of South Carolina are rapidly developing.
- Most of the suitable habitat for wading birds in South Carolina is near the coast.
- As natural wetlands are altered and new ponds are created in human developments, wading birds are moving into developed areas.

Attracting Wading Birds

- Select a site where a rookery will be an amenity for residents and guests. Create and maintain suitable habitat for nesting and/or feeding.
 - Nesting habitat: ponds with islands, ponds with shrub or tree branches that extend over the water, mature alligators, few mammalian predators such as raccoons.
 - Feeding habitat: ponds or other wetlands with shallow edges and/or branches extending over water. Wetlands where small fish and invertebrates are abundant.
- Prepare site to handle increased nutrients. Install aerators in ponds and do routine pond maintenance during the winter to avoid disturbing nesting birds.

Deterring Wading Birds

- Contact SCDNR, USFWS, or your county planner before taking any actions to deter wading birds from using your property. We will be able to offer guidance to help avoid violating regulations.
- Regulations vary by species and location. Habitat that has been used by Wood Storks is protected even when the storks are not present. Never harm or harass a bird or damage a nest containing eggs or young.
- Plan ahead. Modify habitat during the nonbreeding season (winter) so that it is no longer appealing to wading birds. If you have plans to deter wading birds from nesting on your property, contact SCDNR during the nesting season so that a survey can be completed to ensure that Wood Storks are not present. Not all rookeries are surveyed every year, but sites can often be added to survey routes by request.

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Resources

SCDNR Wading Bird Website

- www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/species/wadingbirds/index.html

Online Bird Identification Guide: Cornell Lab of Ornithology – All About Birds

- www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/browse/12,28/

USFWS Migratory Bird Program homepage:

- www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/

Endangered Species Program homepage:

- www.fws.gov/endangered/

WOST specific guidance, regulations, biology, news:

- www.fws.gov/northflorida/WoodStorks/wood-storks.htm

Contact Information

SC Department of Natural Resources

Christy Hand – handc@dnr.sc.gov

US Fish & Wildlife Service

Morgan Wolf – Morgan_Wolf@fws.gov