

With your help, beach-nesting birds will be here for future generations to enjoy.

- Keep your dog on a leash
- Keep away from posted nesting and feeding areas
- Learn to recognize birds and habitat
- Be aware of birds calling loudly nearby, which indicates that you are too close to nests or chicks
- Avoid the ends of barrier islands, inlets, and remote stretches of beach
- Walk below the high tide line during nesting season
- Do not feed gulls
- Take your trash with you
- Teach others to appreciate South Carolina's shorebirds and seabirds

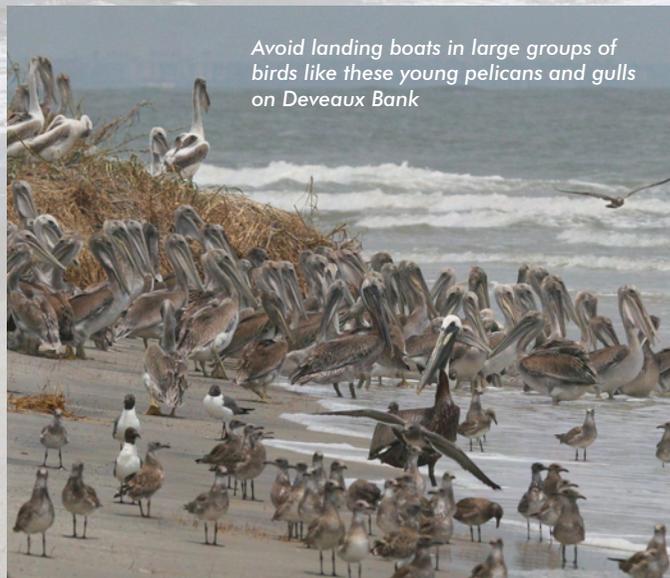


Wilson's Plover chick

Eggs and chicks are perfectly camouflaged to match their sandy environment



Least Tern with eggs



Avoid landing boats in large groups of birds like these young pelicans and gulls on Deveaux Bank

To learn more go to:  
<http://www.scsshorebirdproject.org>

To report violations of posted areas call:  
1-800-922-5431



Willet

## Share The Beach With South Carolina's Coastal Birds



Sanderling

You can help preserve  
our coastal birds for  
future generations

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## Throughout the Year South Carolina's Beaches Provide Critical Habitat for Hundreds of Thousands of Shorebirds and Seabirds

Shorebirds are small, highly-migratory birds that feed on marine invertebrates along the coast. Some species of shorebirds fly round-trip from the arctic tundra of Canada to the southern tip of South America each year, a journey of nearly 20,000 miles! July through April, South Carolina beaches are important feeding and resting areas for migratory shorebirds. During the summer, our beaches serve as nesting areas for shorebirds and seabirds. The open, sandy areas at the ends of barrier islands and inlets are ideal nesting areas.

Each year, from April through August, beach-nesting birds congregate along the coast of South Carolina to breed. These include pelicans, terns, and skimmers that nest in



American Oystercatcher

large groups called colonies and shorebirds that nest singly. They nest above the high tide line on bare sand with little or no vegetation and lay their eggs in nests that are little more than scrapes in the sand. The eggs and chicks are camouflaged perfectly to match their sandy environment. Downy chicks, looking like tiny fluff balls, leave their nests soon after hatching. Chicks often hang out on the beach with their parents for several weeks until they are able to fly and fend for themselves.



Ruddy Turnstone

### Beach-nesting Birds in SC

Brown Pelican  
Black Skimmer  
Royal Tern  
Sandwich Tern  
Least Tern  
American Oystercatcher  
Wilson's Plover  
Willet

### A Few of SC's Winter Shorebirds

Black-bellied Plover  
Piping Plover  
Semipalmated Plover  
Wilson's Plover  
Dunlin  
Red Knot  
Sanderling  
Ruddy Turnstone  
Short-billed Dowitcher  
Marbled Godwit  
American Oystercatcher  
Willet  
Western Sandpiper  
Least Sandpiper

## Populations of Our Beach-nesting Birds and Winter Shorebirds are Declining and They Need Your Help

Without your help, some of these coastal bird species may be lost forever. South Carolina provides important migration and wintering habitat for the federally threatened Piping Plover. Of the 115 to 120 Piping Plovers that winter along our coast annually, some return each year to nearly the exact same location. Some wintering and breeding species have shown alarming declines in recent years. Studies suggest that Red Knot populations in North America have declined by as much as 50% since the early 1990's. Nesting numbers of Brown Pelicans in South Carolina have declined by nearly 50% since 1989.



Piping Plover



Royal Tern

### What can you do to help ensure the protection and survival of South Carolina's coastal birds?

Coastal development has left our coastal birds with few suitable nesting and feeding areas. Please help by reducing the amount of disturbance our coastal birds receive from humans and dogs. Every time a bird is forced to fly, it burns valuable energy that it needs to survive. It is important to keep in mind that while your actions may seem small, there are thousands of people that use the beach. Birds that are continuously harassed may not have enough energy to survive migration or winter. Beach-nesting birds are extremely sensitive to human disturbance. Camouflaged eggs and chicks can easily be stepped on and crushed. When people wander too close to nesting areas, adults will leave their eggs and chicks, exposing them to extreme temperatures and predators.



Short-billed Dowitcher

## Here are some things that you can do to help minimize disturbance:

- 1) Keep your dog on a leash.** Dogs can chase and harass shorebirds, which causes the birds to expend valuable time and energy. During the summer, dogs can destroy nests and kill chicks.
- 2) Stay out of posted nesting and feeding areas.** Entering these areas can result in a loss of eggs or chicks and can lead to civil or criminal penalties. Seabird nesting islands, such as Bird Key Stono, Crab Bank, and Deveaux Bank all have closures during the summer months. The islands are vitally important breeding areas for thousands of shorebirds, gulls, terns, skimmers, pelicans, and egrets.
- 3) Avoid walking, biking, or boating through large flocks of birds.** The actions of one person walking through a flock can be detrimental to hundreds of birds. Make every attempt to walk around the flock.
- 4) Be alert.** Beach-nesting birds are often well camouflaged and some are not much bigger than a sparrow. If you get too close to a nest, the birds will often call loudly in distress, dive bomb you, or try to lead you away from their nest.
- 5) Do not feed gulls or leave trash on the beach.** Both of these activities can attract gulls near nesting areas where they prey on the eggs and chicks of beach-nesting birds.
- 6) Teach others to appreciate South Carolina's shorebirds.** Shorebirds are an important part of the barrier island ecosystem and a sign of a wild and healthy beach. We are fortunate to share our beaches with this valuable natural resource.



Wilson's Plover



Black Skimmer