

WINTER SHOREBIRD SURVEY

Feb. 3 - 10, 2012



OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the Winter Shorebird Survey is to develop a better understanding of the winter distribution of waterbirds, primarily shorebirds and seabirds, in Florida. Conducted annually, this survey will enable us to recognize long-term trends or changes in winter population sizes and distribution, and identify key wintering sites- information that is much needed to guide future conservation efforts.

BACKGROUND

The Winter Shorebird Survey was initiated in Northeast Florida in 2008 as an extension of the statewide survey in Georgia (which was a continuation of the International Piping Plover Census). In 2009, partners within the Florida Shorebird Alliance (FSA) expanded the scope of the survey to include the rest of Florida.

PROTOCOL

The Winter Shorebird Survey involves counting birds along a stretch of beach or marsh. Walking your survey routes is preferred since areas can be checked more closely- shorebirds resting on the beach or within the wrack line can be difficult to observe and may get overlooked. However, long stretches of beach may require the use of a vehicle, and driving between flocks while scanning is acceptable.

For safety purposes, please survey with a partner (i.e., someone willing to lug the scope and tripod). Equipment list should include:

- 1) binoculars and/or spotting scope;
- 2) field guide (even the experts get stumped occasionally);
- 3) data sheet;
- 4) writing utensil;
- 5) sun protection;
- 6) clothing layers (rain and wind can be unpredictable along the coast).

DATE AND TIME

Surveys need to be performed sometime **between Friday, February 3rd and Friday, February 10th**. Choose the tide that gives you the best opportunity to count shorebirds.

BANDED BIRDS

It is extremely important to carefully record information on colorbanded birds you observe during your survey. Snowy Plovers, Piping Plovers, Red Knots, and American Oystercatchers are species regularly observed with color bands. On the data sheet, please note the exact position of each band on the leg, and the alpha-numeric values on flags and bands for Red Knots and American Oystercatcher.

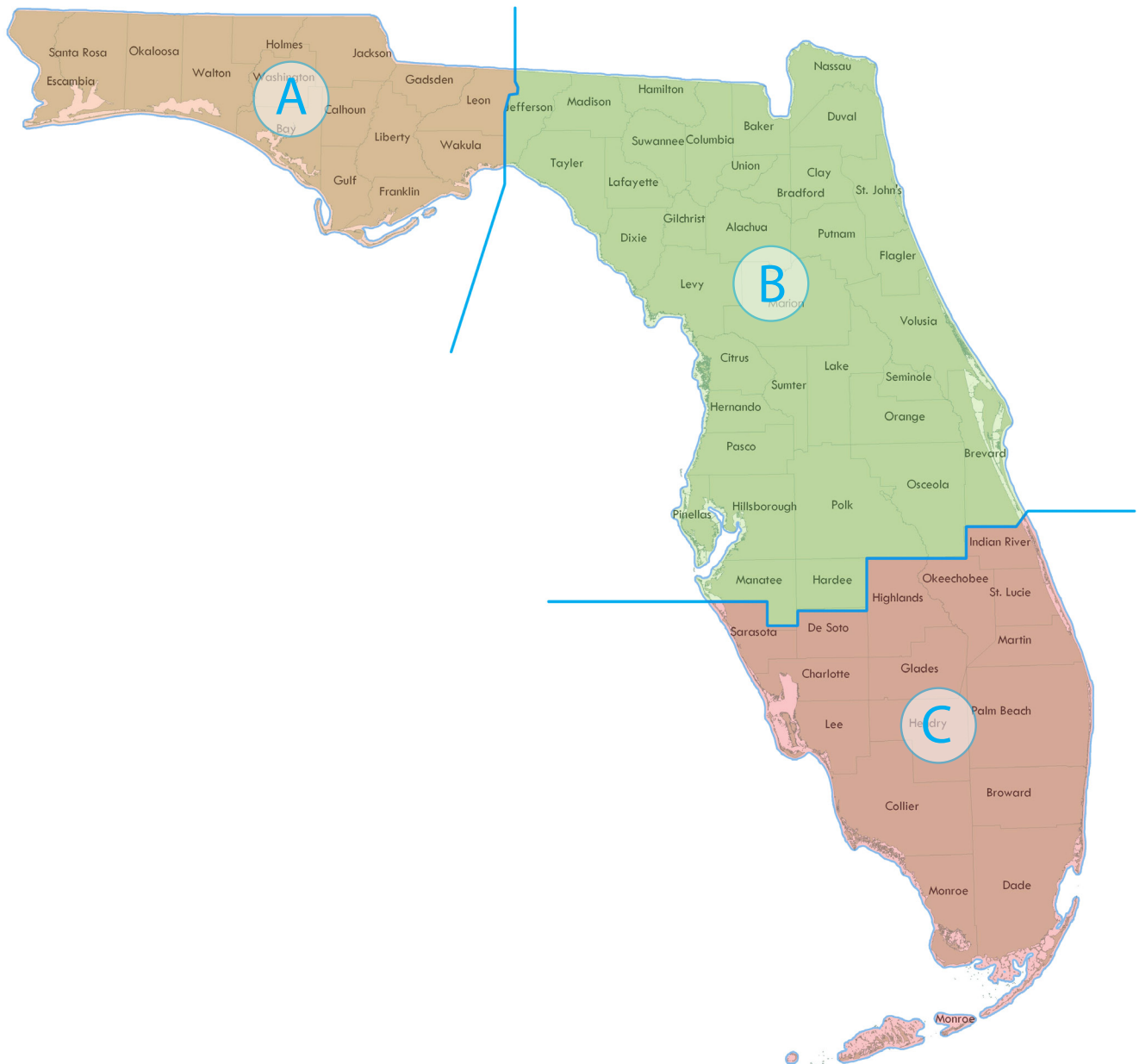
Thank you and please let us know if you have any questions. Contact Bill Brooks, USFWS: (904) 731-3136 or billy_brooks@fws.gov



Survey Coordinators (where to send your data sheets?)

Coordinate your survey route with the USFWS Coordinator for your county (see map below). Then mail or **scan/email** data sheets (pg. 4-6) to your Coordinator or enter online (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Aiyv-WU09H1qdE5tUXdKNnc2QkV2b0N6Q3I4WWdGNhc>) by **March 1, 2012**.

A	Northwest Florida	Patty Kelly	patricia_kelly@fws.gov	US Fish and Wildlife Service 1601 Balboa Avenue Panama City, FL 32405
B	North Florida	Billy Brooks	Billy_Brooks@fws.gov	US Fish and Wildlife Service North Florida Field Office 7915 Baymeadows Way, Suite 200 Jacksonville, FL 32256-7517
C	South Florida	Marilyn Knight	Marilyn_Knight@fws.gov	US Fish and Wildlife Service 1339 20th Street, Vero Beach, FL 32960



Winter Shorebird Survey- Instructions

The following example offers guidance in how to select sites and fill out the data forms.

STEP 1

Attempt to coordinate your survey(s) with other local efforts to ensure all important areas are covered and double-counting is prevented (i.e. someone else is counting your site too). If you are unfamiliar with the important wintering waterbird sites in your area, see a map of winter shorebird sites on the Florida Shorebird Alliance (FSA) website (go to: www.flshorebirdalliance.org/resources-pages/winter_sites.html).

STEP 2

Once you have selected an area, divide it into manageable survey routes. You will need to fill out data forms for **each survey route**. For Honeymoon Island State Park (photo right), you may want to divide the park into a north and south route with the parking lot as a convenient midpoint. On **Data Sheet 1**, fill in the top information (ex. Site name and description: Honeymoon Island State Park- North Route, from parking lots to north tip of island; surveys conducted on both Gulf and Intercoastal shorelines).

STEP 3

With a GPS unit or internet tools such as GET LAT LON (<http://www.getlatlon.com>) be sure and determine the latitude and longitude of the endpoints of your survey route(s). Mark your starting point (A), and the point (B) on your route furthest away from the starting point (A).



Point	Latitude	Longitude	Species	Information
A			not applicable	Start point of your survey route.
B			not applicable	Furthest point of your route from the start point (A).
1	28.0852517	-82.8372359	Red Knot	120 birds (8 banded).
2	28.0959850	-82.8347682	Mixed Flock	8 Snowy Plovers, 4 Wilson's Plovers, 45 Dun
3	28.0852517	-82.8372359	Pipling Plover	1 individual (unbanded)
4	28.0848887	-82.8362547	Mixed Flock	230 Lesser Scaup, 15 Red-breasted Merganser

Other points you will need to GPS during your survey include the following: 1) observations of any of the following species- Snowy Plovers, Piping Plover, Wilson's Plover, and Red Knot; 2) individual birds that are color-banded; and 3) any large group of birds (i.e. 50+), be sure to note the species and number of birds.

STEP 4

Enter your species counts on **Data Sheet 2**. Enter your totals (T) for each species at the end of your survey.

Species	T	Species	T	Species	
DUCKS		Caspian Tern	4	RAPTORS	
Redhead	10, 2, 1, 1, 11, 3	Royal Tern	50, 12, 10, 3	Osprey	2
Ring-necked Duck	66, 24, 10	Common Tern	0	Bald Eagle - Adult	1, 1, 1, 1

STEP 5

Enter your observations of banded birds in **Data Sheet 3**. Make sure your GPS Points correspond with **Data Sheet 1**.

GPS Point	Species	Right (above knee)	Right (below knee)	Left (above knee)	Left (below knee)	Notes
2	Red Knot	KE3-green flag	Fish band	Blue	None	in flock of 120 birds

STEP 6 - Last and most important

Enter your data online in our GoogleDocs database (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/ccc?key=0Aiyv-WU09H1qdE5tUXdKNnc2QkV2b0N6Q3I4WWdGNHc>). You can also mail or scan/email the data sheets for both surveys to the USFWS coordinator for your area- see map with addresses on page 2.

2012 Winter Shorebird Survey- Data Sheet 1

Site Information & GPS Locations

Site name and description:		Observer (lead):	Email:
			Phone:
Start time:	Weather conditions:	Other observers:	
End time:			

GPS Locations.

Please use a GPS unit or internet tools such as GET LAT LON (<http://www.getlatlon.com>) to determine latitude and longitude for the following:

- 1) Length of your survey route: start point (A) and point furthest from the start (B).
- 2) Individuals or groups of Snowy Plovers, Piping Plover, Wilson's Plover, and Red Knot.
- 3) Color-banded individuals.
- 4) Large aggregations or flocks of birds (i.e. 50+); note species composition and number of birds.

Point	Latitude	Longitude	Species	Information
A			<i>not applicable</i>	Start point of your survey route.
B			<i>not applicable</i>	Furthest point of your route from the start point (A).
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2012 Winter Shorebird Survey- Data Sheet 2

Species List & Count

Site Name:

Observer (lead):

<i>Species</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>T</i>
DUCKS		Caspian Tern		RAPTORS	
Redhead		Royal Tern		Osprey	
Ring-necked Duck		Common Tern		Bald Eagle - <i>Adult</i>	
Greater Scaup		Forster's Tern		Bald Eagle - <i>Immature</i>	
Lesser Scaup		Sandwich Tern		Northern Harrier	
Scaup sp.		Black Skimmer		Sharp-shinned Hawk	
Surf Scoter				Cooper's Hawk	
White-winged Scoter		SHOREBIRDS		Red-shouldered Hawk	
Black Scoter		Black-bellied Plover		Red-tailed Hawk	
<i>Scoter sp.</i>		Wilson's Plover		American Kestrel	
Long-tailed Duck		Semipalmated Plover		Merlin	
Bufflehead		Piping Plover		Peregrine Falcon	
Common Goldeneye		Snowy Plover			
Hooded Merganser		Killdeer		WADING BIRDS	
Red-breasted Merg.		American Oystercatcher		Great Blue Heron	
Ruddy Duck		American Avocet		Great Egret	
		Greater Yellowlegs		Snowy Egret	
		Lesser Yellowlegs		Little Blue Heron	
SEABIRDS		<i>Yellowlegs sp.</i>		Tricolored Heron	
Red-throated Loon		Willet		Reddish Egret	
Common Loon		Spotted Sandpiper		White Ibis	
Horned Grebe		Whimbrel		Wood Stork	
Northern Gannet		Long-billed Curlew			
Brown Booby		Marbled Godwit		OTHER SPECIES	
Brown Pelican		Ruddy Turnstone			
White Pelican		Red Knot			
Double-crested Corm.		Sanderling			
Pomarine Jaeger		Western Sandpiper			
Parasitic Jaeger		Least Sandpiper			
Laughing Gull		Purple Sandpiper			
Bonaparte's Gull		Dunlin			
Ring-billed Gull		Short-billed Dowitcher			
Herring Gull		Long-billed Dowitcher			
Lesser Bk-backed Gull		<i>Dowitcher sp.</i>			
Great Bk-backed Gull		Wilson's Snipe			
Franklin's Gull		Purple Sandpiper			
Glauous Gull		Wilson's Snipe			
Vega Gull					

