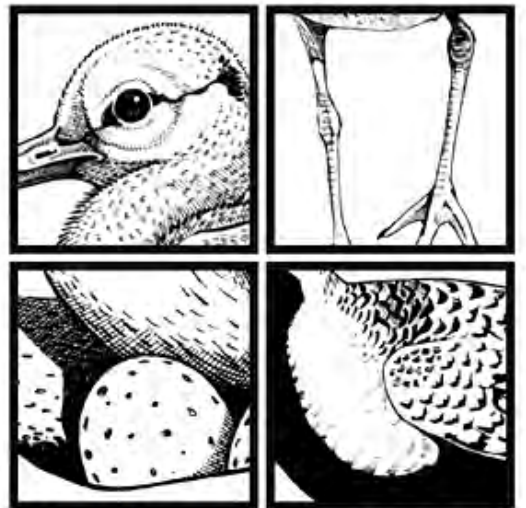


DECEMBER 2011



the  
**WRACK LINE**

holiday issue



**NEWSLETTER** of the  
FLORIDA SHOREBIRD ALLIANCE





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*The Wrack Line is the official e-newsletter of the Florida Shorebird Alliance (FSA). In addition to providing news and updates, the Wrack Line is a vehicle for partners across the state to share experiences, information, and ideas.*

Do you have news to share?  
Submit content to:  
[shorebird@myfwc.com](mailto:shorebird@myfwc.com)

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Cover design: Chris Burney

## reminders:

- **Upcoming Events:**
  - **Dec. 14, 2011 – Jan. 5, 2012:** Participate in the 112<sup>th</sup> annual *Audubon Christmas Bird Count*. For locations and contact info for most CBC circles in Florida go to: [www.fosbirds.org](http://www.fosbirds.org).
  - **Jan. 25 – 30, 2012:** *Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival* in Titusville, FL. If you want to help table for the *Florida Shorebird Alliance*, please email [shorebird@myfwc.com](mailto:shorebird@myfwc.com). For additional details, visit: [www.spacecoastbirdingandwildlifefestival.org](http://www.spacecoastbirdingandwildlifefestival.org).
  - **Feb. 3 – 6, 2012:** Annual Mid-winter Shorebird Survey (Friday, Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> is the main target date). Details TBA.
- **Win a pair of beach chairs for your bird stewardship program** (see page 5 for details)



happy holidays from the  
florida shorebird alliance!





## fsa news

*The 112<sup>th</sup> annual Audubon CBC will be held from December 14, 2011 to January 5, 2012.*

*For locations and contact info for most CBC circles in Florida go to:*

[www.fosbirds.org](http://www.fosbirds.org)

➤ *Flock of roosting Dunlin  
(Photo by Jack Rogers)*



## partners urged to participate in audubon christmas bird counts

National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) began as a bird-friendly alternative to the Christmas Side Hunt of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, in which people competed to kill as many birds as possible in a single day. Conservation was in its beginning stages around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, when scientists were becoming concerned about the mass slaughter of shorebirds and wading birds to supply the millinery trade with feathers. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition – a "Christmas Bird Census" – that would count birds rather than hunt them.

Currently, more than 2,100 CBC circles are surveyed in the Americas by more than 60,000 participants who brave a range of weather conditions from before dawn to after dark. Volunteers are divided into teams to count all birds observed in a 15-mile diameter circle on a single day set by each count's organizer.

The data collected by observers over the past century allow researchers, conservation biologists, and others to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. More than 40 of Florida's CBC circles encompass coastal areas and many of these have been counted annually for decades. Because CBCs are conducted during the same time period each year, the resulting data set provides a long-term record of wintering shorebird populations and species diversity on Florida's coastlines.

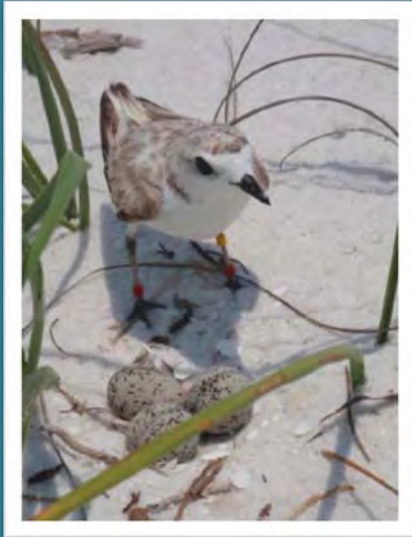
FSA partners are among the most capable at identifying our state's wintering shorebirds and seabirds, so your help is particularly important on the CBCs. For more information on CBCs go to:

<http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>.

– Marianne Korosy

## fsa news

The full report is available  
by contacting  
[shorebird@myfwc.com](mailto:shorebird@myfwc.com)



➤ Snowy plover (above)  
and Eastern Willet (below)  
(Photos by Raya Pruner)

## posting and predator removal improve nest success

A report just released by our partners in the panhandle has demonstrated that removing predators and posting nesting and brooding habitat significantly improves shorebird productivity.

The study, which was funded by a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation/Power of Flight grant, examined the effects of predator removal, posting (symbolic fencing), and beach stewardship on six focal shorebird species. In their final report, *Interpreting the influence of habitat management actions on shorebird nesting activity at coastal state parks in the Florida panhandle*, Raya Pruner, Martin Friel, and Jared Zimmerman (Florida Park Service) describe the results of their two year study.

They found that the probability of successfully hatching a nest, across all species, significantly correlated with predator removal (coyotes). The probability of hatching increased with posting of nesting habitat, and the probability of fledging increased with posting of brooding-rearing habitat.

The authors recommend that managers employ these effective conservation measures to protect shorebirds where they nest and brood young.



# fsa news

To all our stewards and coordinators out there, **THANK YOU!**

If you would like to become a bird steward, please contact your local area coordinator. Contact information can be found on the "Get Involved" page of the Florida Shorebird Alliance website (see [opportunities](#)).



For more information on this study, please contact [forysea@eckerd.edu](mailto:forysea@eckerd.edu)

## stewards and closures helping birds!

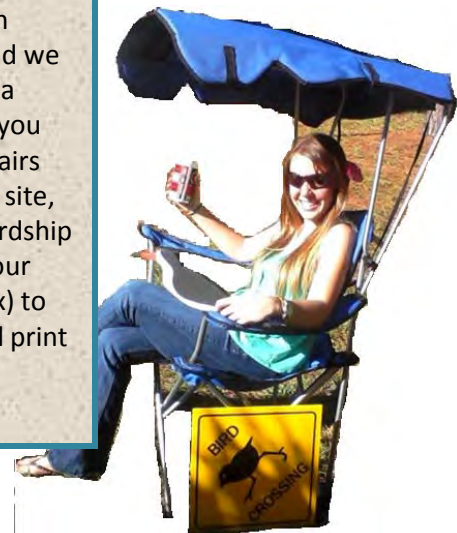
We now have proof that protected areas and bird stewards make a difference for shorebirds. A study by Dr. Beth Forsyth of Eckerd College and the Suncoast Shorebird Partnership confirms that disturbance to shorebirds is lower inside posted areas, and even more so when a bird steward is present.

The final report, *An evaluation of existing shorebird management techniques' success at location in Pinellas County*, describes Dr. Forsyth's two-year study funded by Audubon of Florida. It compares the type and frequency of disturbance to Red Knots and American Oystercatchers in protected versus unprotected areas at four sites: Fort Desoto's sanctuary (protected) and North Beach (unprotected), Indian Shores, and Redington Shores beach. For both species, the frequency of disturbance (mostly by walkers) was significantly fewer in protected areas. When bird stewards were present, nine times fewer people intruded into the posted areas.

Because disturbance can have significant impacts on shorebirds during nesting, migration, and wintering, measures that protect against disturbance really make a difference. Please consider volunteering with your local bird stewardship program and help defend area closures for these sensitive animals.

bird stewards:  
win these beach chairs!

A couple of gently-used beach chairs were donated to us, and we want to pay them forward to a good cause. Bird stewards, if you need these covered beach chairs for your shorebird protection site, tell us why your site or stewardship program should win! Email your contest entry (200 words max) to [shorebird@myfwc.com](mailto:shorebird@myfwc.com). We'll print the winning entry in the next *Wrack Line*.



## partner profile

*Keith Laakonen receives Guy  
Bradley Award*



## lee county partner wins audubon award

Keith Laakonen, the Environmental Sciences Coordinator for the Town of Fort Myers Beach and active member of the Lee County Shorebird Partnership, recently received Audubon's prestigious Guy Bradley Award for his conservation efforts.

The seabirds and shorebirds that nest each year on the South end of Fort Myers Beach are indebted to Keith for his seemingly unending persistence and patience advocating for their protection. Keith took on a complicated quandary over the last several years, involving beach permitting issues, posing challenges, and negotiations between property owners, local government and State agencies – all to protect a critically important beach-nesting bird site. His continued efforts were recognized at the Audubon Assembly in Orlando.

Keith is currently pursuing his Master's degree from Florida Gulf Coast University, where he is comparing state to state policies on sea level rise with regard to management of coastal-dependant species. Keith has earned a reputation for working effectively with diverse stakeholders and for simply taking the necessary actions to resolve complicated situations. He also keeps us laughing on those hot days in the field. Thanks Keith, for embracing what the FSA is all about!

– Brie Ochoa





## caption contest

Each month we pick a favorite photo that we've received from our partners, and ask YOU to submit a funny caption for it. Captions will be printed in the next Wrack Line.

last month's photo and captions →

next month's photo →

Please email caption entries for next month's photo to:  
[shorebird@myfwc.com](mailto:shorebird@myfwc.com)



➤ **Beach Clean-Up**

(Photo by David Macri)

- On my way to audition for the Ringling Circus. – Gisela Vaughan
- Something's clinging to my lip... just not safe anywhere any more! – Peggy Cholley
- I turn around to grab the cap, and someone walks off with my Pepsi. Have you seen my Pepsi?!? – Michael Lunn
- Who wants to join me for a cold frosty one?.....growing up makes me thirsty!! – Lorraine Margeson
- I just got this cheap in eBay! – Jon-Mark Davey
- I just LOVE a good parade! – Roxy Barber
- Yeah, he's got a big bill but does he have one of THESE? – Shawnlei Breeding
- Hey guys, guys... I'm serious, don't turn away from me, this is real food. I mean.... it is not a fish, but the humans are always eating this stuff. – Raya Pruner
- Where's the recycle bin? – Marianne Korosy



➤ **New leg bands!** (Photo by Raya Pruner)