

About Shorebird Stewarding

Many shorebirds and seabirds depend on open sandy beaches and undisturbed dunes to breed, feed, and rest. One of the greatest threats beach-nesting shorebirds face is disturbance from people, pets, and vehicles in the nesting area. Under these circumstances, signs posted around the nests are not enough to prevent people from disturbing nesting birds, and it requires time and effort from caring individuals - beach stewards - to monitor the nests and chicks.



Shorebird steward programs are organized by shorebird partnerships throughout Florida under the umbrella of the Florida Shorebird Alliance (FSA).

In 2006, the St. Johns/ Flagler Shorebird Partnership - a collaborative effort among government agencies, NGOs, and individuals was created - to conserve shorebird and seabird populations in Flagler and St. Johns Counties.

The focal species these stewards monitor are Least Terns, Wilson's Plovers, Black Skimmers, and American Oystercatchers – all imperiled species.

The beaches where stewards work are Anastasia State Park, Ft. Matanzas, Julia's Island, and others as needed.

- The St. Johns Partnership is the oldest FSA partnership along the Atlantic coast of Florida.
- St. Johns is generally recognized as the most important county along the Atlantic coast of Florida for beach-nesting Least Terns.
- This partnership has always had a special energy and a very committed workforce of conservation partners. One reason the partnership is so strong is due to the wide variety of state, local, federal, and NGO participation. This allows the Alliance to accomplish intensive monitoring and stewarding at priority sites.

Stewarding begins after the nests and colonies are located and posted by biologists. The season generally starts in May and runs through Labor Day. Although the greatest needs for stewards are on weekends and holidays, stewarding can be done anytime an area has active shorebird nesting.

Celebrating and protecting birds from the river to the ocean in NE Florida

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While out on the beaches, stewards engage in two important tasks: 1) minimizing disturbance to nests, chicks, and adult birds and 2) public outreach and education about beach-nesting birds.

As a volunteer, you will be trained. You will also be equipped with gear to help identify you as an official bird steward, optics to allow beachgoers a closer look at nest and chicks, and educational materials with information on beach nesting birds and how to help protect them. A stewarding shift generally lasts three hours and volunteers are able to sign up for shifts to meet their own personal schedules.

Contact the following for more information about this program:

Audubon Florida NE Policy Representative [Chris Farrell](#)



If you are interested in becoming a St. Johns/Flagler Partnership steward, use this application [link](#).