

Wilson's Plover adult and chick



Michael Brothers

### How you can help

- Drive carefully and keep your distance from wildlife. Vehicles, bicycles and beachcombers can disturb resting birds that need all their vital energy for long migrations and searches for food.
- Use binoculars to view wildlife from a safe distance.
- Keep dogs in designated areas and on a leash. Dogs can deter birds from nesting, destroy nest areas, and disturb resting birds.
- Keep house cats indoors. Domestic and feral cats prey on bird populations and other wildlife.
- Dispose of trash properly. Use designated trash and recycling receptacles. Recycling bins for fishing line are on piers and jetties.
- Don't feed wild birds. Human food is not a nutritious diet. Birds can become aggressive and injure humans if fed.
- Report injured birds or nesting sites to park staff, lifeguards or wildlife protection agencies. When asked, county staff can rescue injured birds or post warning signs around bird nesting sites. Call Volusia County's Beach Safety Division at 386-239-6414 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. or the Florida Fish and Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922).

### Help spread the word, bird!

If you see people disturbing birds, gently remind them that their actions may cause problems. Most people don't realize they are harming wildlife and once informed, will change their behaviors.

Wilson's Plover chick



Michael Brothers

### Watch your step

- Shorebirds nest on the ground in sandy, slightly shelly and often vegetated areas near sand dunes. The eggs and chicks are small and well camouflaged in the sand. This makes them very vulnerable to being destroyed accidentally.
- Newly hatched chicks often rest or hide in small depressions, such as footprints or vehicle tracks, making them even harder to spot. These birds can't fly until they're about 30 days old, so small chicks are very vulnerable and need a safe beach.
- As chicks grow and develop, they can be seen running to the water's edge and back to the sand dunes. They move fast and are small, so it takes a sharp eye to see them.
- Adult birds stay near their young, bring them food, and protect them from larger birds and other predators. They also warn people and dogs if they come too close.
- If birds appear agitated, "dive bomb" you, make loud calls repeatedly, or act like they have a broken wing, please move away. You are likely too close to a nesting site. Disturbances can flush adults away from the nests and cause eggs to be exposed to extreme temperatures and predation. They can even cause abandonment!

## Did you know?

The "disappearing islands" in Ponce Inlet are significant feeding and resting areas for many species of birds throughout the year.

The piping plover is an inlet-specific bird that prefers to winter only on islands and beaches adjacent to inlets in Florida.

Most birds cannot smell. However, their sight is keen, which helps them to find food and avoid predators.

Shorebird habitat is being lost at an alarming rate due to human development in coastal areas.

Monofilament fishing line takes more than 500 years to decompose in the marine environment. It can entangle wildlife and lead to their death.

A bird's feathers and legs may change as it grows older. Its colors may also change with the breeding and wintering seasons.

Birds can be identified by their songs or call notes.

Seaweed deposited on the beach provides food for birds and helps build the beach by trapping sand.

The Marine Science Center in Ponce Inlet has a bird hospital with public bird-viewing areas. For more information, please call 386-304-5545 or visit [marinesciencecenter.com](http://marinesciencecenter.com).

Volusia County is a member of the Volusia Shorebird Partnership. This group helps to monitor and protect shorebird and seabird nesting sites in Volusia County. Please visit [flshorebirdalliance.org](http://flshorebirdalliance.org) for more information or to get involved.

This publication was produced by the Environmental Management Division of Volusia County. For more information, please call 386-736-5927 or visit our web site at [www.volusia.org/environmental](http://www.volusia.org/environmental)



# Birds of the beach

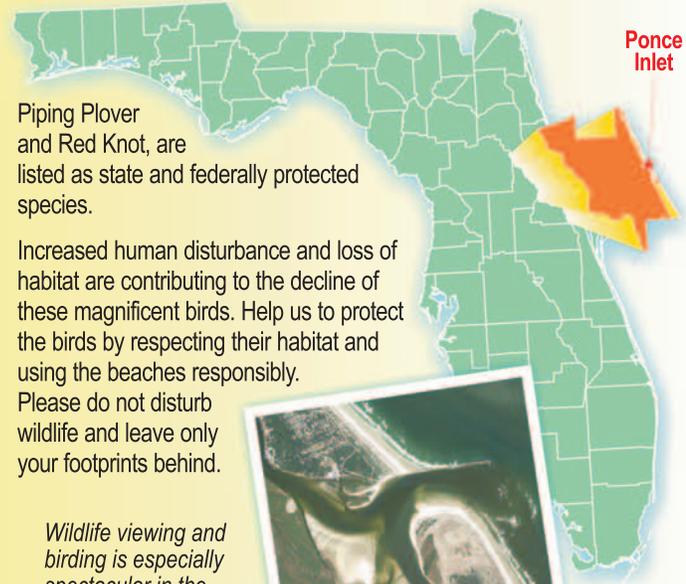
Volusia County, Florida



Birds of the beach  
Volusia County, Florida

**Volusia County is located on the east coast of Central Florida.**

Volusia County's beaches draw millions of visitors each year because of the hard-packed white sand, great vacation amenities, water sports and special events. The shoreline also provides habitat for a variety of birds that nest, winter, feed and live here year-round. Some birds, such as the



Piping Plover and Red Knot, are listed as state and federally protected species.

Increased human disturbance and loss of habitat are contributing to the decline of these magnificent birds. Help us to protect the birds by respecting their habitat and using the beaches responsibly.

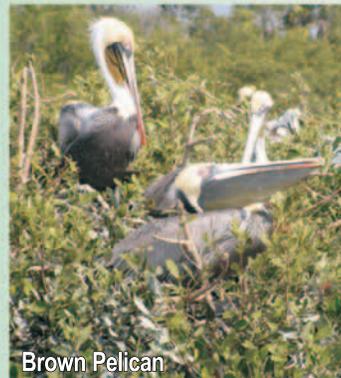
Please do not disturb wildlife and leave only your footprints behind.

*Wildlife viewing and birding is especially spectacular in the vicinity of Ponce Inlet.*

**Tree nesters**

Mangroves and other salt-tolerant trees are found on islands in the Intracoastal Waterway. Large colonies of wading and seabirds nest and rest in these trees. Rookery Island, which can be viewed from the south side of the Dunlawton Avenue bridge in Port Orange, is one of the best locations to see this activity.

In the spring, birds can be seen nesting and foraging for fish to feed their young. Please bring your binoculars and view them from a distance.



**Brown Pelican**  
Joel Wooster



**Tri-colored Heron with eggs**  
Joel Wooster



**Great Egret with chicks**  
Joel Wooster

**Common shorebirds and seabirds**

Many bird species can be seen year-round. Shown here are some of the birds you are likely to see while in Volusia County. Often, birds will rest and forage at the water's edge. Please do not disturb birds, especially when they are resting in large groups, by walking or biking around them.



**Reddish Egret**  
Jack Rogers



**Snowy Egret**  
Jack Rogers



**Ring-billed Gull**  
Jack Rogers



**Royal Tern**  
Mark Peck



**Laughing Gull**  
Russ Namitz



**Osprey**  
Mark Peck



**Sanderling**  
Magill Weber



**Ruddy Turnstone**

**Ground nesters**

Many shorebirds nest on open beaches in small depressions they create in the bare sand. Volusia County historically has had large colonies of nesting birds and solitary nest sites. Today, colonial beach nesting events are rare and solitary nests are seen mostly in parks in Ponce Inlet.



**Willet**  
Russ Namitz



**Killdeer with eggs**  
St. Johns Water Management



**Least Tern with chick**  
Amanda Morgan



**Least Tern eggs**  
Jack Rogers



**American Oystercatcher**  
Jack Rogers



**American Oystercatcher eggs**  
J. Gehring-Noel



**Black Skimmers with chick**  
Volusia County



**Black Skimmer chick with eggs**  
Margo Zdravkovic/Audobon CBCP



**Wilson's Plover**  
Jack Rogers



**Wilson's Plover chick with eggs**  
Margo Zdravkovic/Audobon CBCP

**Wintering residents**

Winter or migratory birds is the term used to describe the many species of birds that spend their winters in our warm climate. Shorebirds winter in Florida for up to nine months – from August through May. This long time period reflects the importance of their Florida habitat as many birds leave only to nest in northern climates during the summer.



**White Pelican**  
Jack Rogers

*Birds of the beach*  
Volusia County, Florida



**Semipalmated Plover**  
Russ Namitz



**Piping Plover**  
Jack Rogers



**Herring Gull**  
Michael Brothers



**Caspian Tern**



**Red Knot**  
Alex Kropp



**Great Black-backed Gull**  
Mark Peck



**Black-bellied Plover (winter plumage)**  
Mark Peck



**Black-bellied Plover (summer plumage)**  
Magill Weber