

# Louisiana Shorebirds 2014



# Birding Louisiana's Legendary Coastal Zone

## What is a Shorebird?

Of all of the world's major bird groups, the shorebirds probably exhibit the highest degree of variability in terms of body structure, size, behavior, and habitat preferences. In terms of size, for example, the six-inch Least Sandpiper is hardly larger than a sparrow, whereas the eighteen-inch long American Avocet is larger than a crow and possesses a wingspan comparable to that of a mid-sized heron. The eight-inch long sickle-shaped bill of the Long-billed Curlew gives it an almost freakish appearance, whereas the abbreviated "chicken-like" bills of the smaller plovers are only a quarter-inch or less in length. Some shorebirds, such as the Purple Sandpiper, possess notably short legs, whereas others such as those of the Black-necked Stilt seem almost ridiculously long. The Ruddy Turnstone and the aptly named Sanderling live almost exclusively on beaches, whereas the American Woodcock makes its home in dense forests. Some, like the Stilt Sandpiper, routinely forage in several inches of water, while the prairie-dwelling Upland Sandpiper rarely ever approaches water at all.

Extremes aside, some broad generalizations can be made concerning the majority of shorebird species. Most shorebirds live in close association with water. Most live in open landscapes such as beaches, prairies, pastures, agricultural fields or along the bare edges of lakes and streams. Most shorebirds possess long, pointed wings and are swift, powerful fliers. As well, most possess short tails for maximum maneuverability both on the ground and in the air. On the ground, shorebirds do not hop, but walk and/or run, some with remarkable dexterity and speed.

Over 60 species of shorebirds have been recorded in North America. Most of these nest within marsh, prairie and tundra habitats of far-northerly latitudes, and most overwinter thousands of miles to the south, along the coastal zones of North, Central and South America.

A number of shorebirds, particularly those within sandpiper group are known for their epic long-distance migrations. Semipalmated

Sandpipers engage in a globe-trotting 10,000+ mile, elliptical migratory route similar to that of the American Golden-Plover. Such routes include a few non-stop 2,500 mile legs, the first of which is launched from the Bay of Fundy (southeastern Canada) out over the western Atlantic Ocean, then banking off of the trade winds to reach their first stop in northern South America. In order to find favorable winds, migrating birds utilize a variety of altitudes ranging from just above sea level all the way up to 20,000 feet.

Like most animals, shorebirds are opportunistic foragers, routinely taking a wide variety of prey items in accordance with the wide variety of habitats in which they seasonally occupy. Typical items include small amphibians, fishes, mollusks, crustaceans, spiders, insects, worms and grubs, as well as the adults and/or larvae of other invertebrates. Some species also include seeds and berries in their diets. The high metabolic demands of these long-distance migrants require much of their time to be spent foraging.

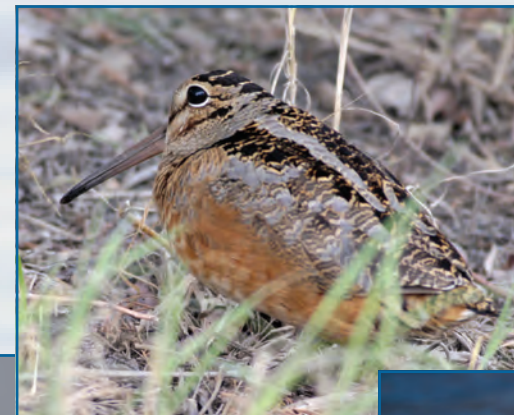
*"...the shorebirds probably exhibit the highest degree of variability in terms of body structure, size, behavior and habitat preferences."*



◀ **American Avocet**  
Greg Lavaty,  
Photographer



◀ **Long-billed Curlew**  
Greg Lavaty,  
Photographer



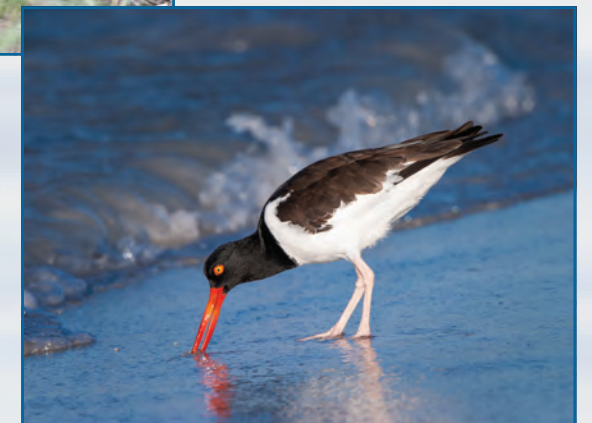
◀ **American Woodcock**  
Greg Lavaty,  
Photographer



◀ **Black-necked Stilt**  
Greg Lavaty,  
Photographer



◀ **Ruddy Turnstone**  
Greg Lavaty,  
Photographer



▼ **America Oystercatcher**  
Russ Norwood, Photographer



▲ *Baird's Sandpiper*, Greg Lavaty, *Photographer*



▲ *Louisiana Sunset*, Greg Lavaty, *Photographer*



▲ *American Golden Plover*  
Greg Lavaty, *Photographer*

## Shorebirds in Louisiana

Shorebirds are generally attracted to damp-to-wet sites, so it follows that shorebirding should be first-rate in Louisiana, one of the dampest-to-wettest regions in North America.

It also has been established that shorebirds generally prefer wide-open landscapes such as beaches, marshes, agricultural fields and at the open edges of lakes and streams. Here in Louisiana, such landscapes are commonly associated with the alluvial lands within the Red and Mississippi River valleys; and abundantly so within the state's coastal zone which includes the Interstate-10 and Interstate-12 corridors and all lands southward to the coast itself.

Of particular importance to Louisiana shorebirds is the old "prairie district" – now referred to as "the rice country" located in the southwestern quadrant of the state. This 2+ million-acre region forms a rough triangle extending southward from Evangeline Parish in central Louisiana, southwesterly through Jefferson Davis Parish and southeasterly through Vermilion Parish, with both legs terminating along LA 14, which forms the southern/east-west base of the triangle. Here, vast pastures along with numerous large rice and crawfish-farming operations dominate the landscape, featuring thousands of acres of flat, open lands containing various degrees of moisture and vegetation at various times of the year.

Fortunately, the flooding/draining cycles associated with these rice/crawfish aquacultural practices dovetail nicely with the seasonal habitat requirements for most of North America's nesting, migrating and overwintering shorebird species.

Elsewhere, damp agricultural lands, pastures, reservoirs, sandbars, river locks and beaches are well-distributed throughout the state, attracting a fairly steady stream of shorebirds throughout much of the year.

In terms of "shorebirding hot spots," several areas within the state stand out. In northwestern Louisiana, the Yates Unit of the Red River National Wildlife Refuge (Red River Parish) and the Natchitoches Fish Hatchery (Natchitoches Parish) can be quite productive, especially during migration seasons. In northeastern Louisiana, the eastern portion of the Ouachita Wildlife Management Area (Ouachita and Richland parishes) supports rice production and hosts shorebirds through much of the year. In southeastern Louisiana the Grand Isle area (southern Jefferson and Lafourche parishes) provides excellent shorebirding opportunities, particularly along Bay Tartellon at Port Fourchon, on Elmer's Island just west of Grand Isle and in many places on Grand Isle itself, including Grand Isle State Park.

As previously mentioned, almost all of the "Rice Country" of southwestern Louisiana provides outstanding shorebirding on a near-year round basis. Best opportunities exist throughout most of Acadia, Vermilion, Jefferson Davis, southwestern portions of St. Landry Parish and northeastern Cameron parishes. Here, most of the shorebirds are found on private lands operated by rice/crawfish farmers which limits birding opportunities to public roadsides possessing safe pull-off areas. In such cases, birders are

Wildlife Refuge and eastern edge of the Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, both located in northeastern Cameron parish.

The beaches, marshes and pastures along coastal Cameron parish also provide excellent shorebirding throughout most of the year. Best opportunities exist at Rutherford Beach, Holly Beach and Martin Beach – all easily accessible off of LA 82.

*"...shorebirding is good to excellent in Louisiana from mid-July through early June, very nearly year round!"*

In terms of seasonality, shorebirding is good to excellent in Louisiana from mid-July through early June, nearly year round! The summer months are

strongly advised to remain near their vehicles at all times should farmers require access into the fields through the pull-off areas. Farmers are generally friendly and courteous to those birders who remain safely parked along public roads and are more often than not curious as to what birders might be observing in their fields.

Less-intrepid birders would best be advised to limit their southwestern Louisiana shorebirding to the public "wildlife drives" located at the western edge of the Lacassine National

the slowest, with most of the migrants and overwintering species absent, leaving only local breeding and a few "summering" individuals present.

The absolute peaks in both species diversity and sheer numbers of individuals occur in Louisiana during spring migration between mid-April and mid-May, and again from August through October during fall migration. Winter shorebirding is normally excellent to outstanding, particularly

in the Grand Isle/Fourchon and rice country regions, with over 20 species regularly overwintering in these areas.

Detailed Louisiana shorebird records date back to those of J.J. Audubon in the early 19th century. Over a century later, ornithologist Harry C. Oberholser compiled the shorebird records of over 40 contributing ornithologists, biological surveyors, and collectors in his book, *The Bird Life of Louisiana*, published in 1938 by the Louisiana Department of Conservation. In it, he listed a total of 37 shorebird species (along with numerous sub-species) for our state.

Over the years, more species have been added as both identification skills and seasonal coverage have increased. Today, a total of 45 shorebird species have been recorded for Louisiana, 37 of which occur here on an annual basis.

The vast majority of the world's shorebirds nest far north in tundra or taiga habitats. In North America, 43 species nest in Alaska alone. Only a small percentage breed at tropical/sub-tropical latitudes. Here in Louisiana seven species annually nest, ranging from the common and ubiquitously distributed Killdeer to the rare and isolated Snowy Plover.

# Observing and Identifying Shorebirds in the Field

Observing some shorebirds – species such as American Oystercatcher, American Avocet, Long-billed Curlew and Black-necked Stilt – all of which possess larger body sizes and starkly contrasting plumage patterns on a year round basis, is easy and straightforward. All an observer needs to do is find the right place at the right time in which to encounter them. Over time, observers learn that the best places to find most shorebirds are in wetland settings, especially where two or more habitat types converge, such as where tidal pool-studded salt-marshes meet open beaches; or in artificial settings such as sewerage treatment facilities and here in Louisiana, especially in rice/crawfish fields that are in the process of being flooded or drained, creating a mosaic of wet, dry, and damp places – effectively mimicking natural tidal actions in estuarine settings.

Unfortunately, simply finding proper shorebird habitats is not the primary challenge to observing and identifying most shorebird species, for most are relatively small birds possessing multiple and often cryptic plumage patterns over the course of each year. Here in Louisiana, due in no small part to our geographical location, observers annually view individual birds of many species in full breeding (alternate) plumage, full wintering (basic) plumage, sub-adult plumage and many variations in between. In all of these instances, the ability to focus on fine and subtle details in order to identify the bird in question – the presence or absence of “eyebrows,” eye-lines, eye-rings, streaked or unstreaked crowns, streaked or clear underparts, etc. – is paramount.

The most important identification character upon which an observer should first focus is the appearance of the bird’s bill. What is its relative length? Shape? Coloration? Using the bird’s head as a measure, compare bill length to head length. If bill length is longer, then how many times longer than head length? Bills of many shorebird species also possess distinctive shapes. Is the bill straight or curved? If curved, is it curved downward (decurved) or upward (recurved)? Is the bill evenly curved, or is it somewhat straight, but “droops” up or down toward the tip?

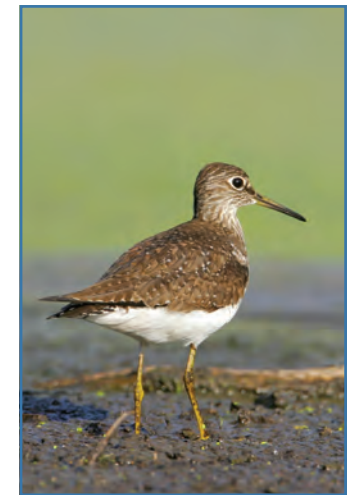
Noting coloration of both bill and legs is also useful. Note whether the bill is bicolored or uni-colored (concolored). Leg coloration is quite diverse across many species. Note whether legs are pale or dark, then determine color hue, which can range from straw-yellow, orange-yellow, flesh-colored, reddish, greenish, blueish, grayish or black. Understand that leg color varies not only between species, but also within some species, as numerous shorebirds exhibit differing leg coloration between breeding and non-breeding plumages.

In summary, when studying shorebirds, especially the smaller, more cryptically-colored species, focus first on the bird’s bill, ascertaining relative length, exact shape and coloration, moving next to markings (or lack thereof) on the face and crown, then progressing to body plumage and flight-feather (wings,

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◀ **Marbled Godwit**  
Greg Lavaty, Photographer



▲ **Solitary Sandpiper**  
Greg Lavaty, Photographer



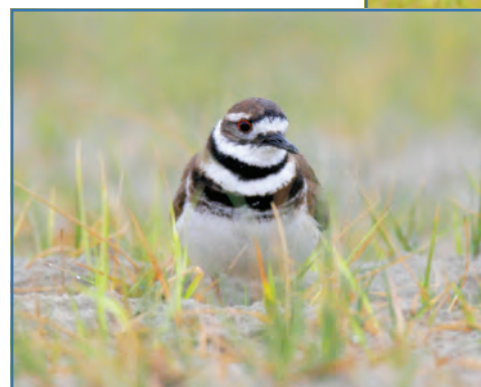
▲ **Black-bellied Plover**  
Greg Lavaty, Photographer



▲ **Spotted Sandpiper**  
David Chauvin, Photographer



◀ **Pectoral Sandpiper**  
Alan Murphy, Photographer



▲ **Killdeer**, Greg Lavaty, Photographer



▲ **Sanderling**, Russ Norwood, Photographer

tail) markings, and finally, leg length and coloration. All the while, listen for vocalizations, which in some cases are the best identifying feature upon which to rely.

Experienced shorebirders prefer lightweight equipment, usually smaller-bodied scopes featuring high-light-dispersion optics in "fixed" powers of 20-30X. Some observers prefer variable-power optics, most often 20-60X, which can offer some advantage. Remember, however, that heat wave distortion and shallow depth-of-field problems often ensue at powers above 30X. When considering the purchase of a scope/tripod for shorebirding purposes, first seek advice from experienced shorebirders (via local bird clubs, nature centers or wildlife refuge visitors centers).

After only a little practice with a spotting scope/tripod set-up, observers find careful study of shorebirds to be far easier, convenient and even leisurely compared to working with binoculars. Soon, one will experience the value of such equipment when sorting through mixed flocks comprised of hundreds of shorebirds, which is more often than not the case in shorebirding. In such large, mixed-flock situations, learning comes quickly, with many opportunities for direct comparison of bill appearance, body size, plumage patterns and leg details, both between and within species.



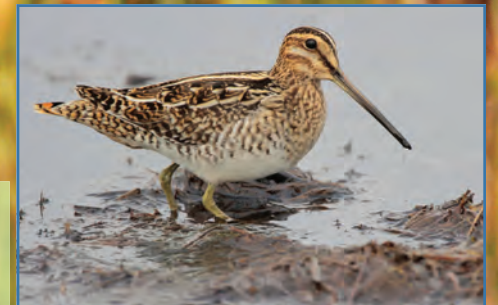
◀ **Semipalmated Plover**  
David Chauvin,  
Photographer



▶ **Long-billed Dowitcher**  
Alan Murphy,  
Photographer



◀ **Lesser Yellowlegs**  
Greg Lavaty,  
Photographer



▶ **Wilson's Snipe**  
Greg Lavaty,  
Photographer



## Louisiana 2014 Bird Watching Dates to Remember

### Eagle Expo 2014

February 20-22, 2014 \_\_\_\_\_ Morgan City \_\_\_\_\_ 985-395-4905

### The Great Louisiana Birdfest

April 11-13, 2014 \_\_\_\_\_ Mandeville, North Lake Nature Center \_\_\_\_\_ 985-626-1238

### Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration

April 11-13, 2014 \_\_\_\_\_ Grand Isle \_\_\_\_\_ 800-259-0869

### Black Bear & Bird Festival

April 19-20, 2014 \_\_\_\_\_ Franklin \_\_\_\_\_ 225-763-5425

### Neotropical Songbird Tour

May 10, 2014 \_\_\_\_\_ Sherburne Wildlife Management Area \_\_\_\_\_ 318-793-5529

### Wood Stork Day

July 19, 2014 \_\_\_\_\_ Sherburne Wildlife Management Area \_\_\_\_\_ 337-948-0255

### Feliciana Hummingbird Celebration

July 25 & 26, 2014 \_\_\_\_\_ St. Francisville \_\_\_\_\_ 800-789-4221

### Lafayette Hummingbird Day

September 20, 2014 \_\_\_\_\_ Lafayette \_\_\_\_\_ 337-993-2473

### Yellow Rails & Rice Festival 2014

October 29 - November 2, 2014 \_\_\_\_\_ Jennings \_\_\_\_\_ 225-642-5763

*For more information about these events, please visit [www.birdlouisiana.com](http://www.birdlouisiana.com)*



*Killdeer*, Russ Norwood, *Photographer*

# January 2014

## *Killdeer* (*Charadrius vociferus*)

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
29	30	31	1 <i>NEW YEAR'S DAY</i>	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 <i>MARTIN LUTHER KING Jr. DAY</i>	21	22	23	24 <i>LA Ornithological Society (LOS) Winter Meeting, Lafayette, LA</i>	25
26 <i>Meeting continues</i>	27	28	29	30	31	1

Well-known throughout most states and provinces in North America, the Killdeer is one of the continent's largest plovers. Easily identified by its loud and frequent vocalizations alone, the Killdeer's heavily-etched double breast band and long, yellowish-orange tail provide immediate visual recognition as well.

The Killdeer is in fact the noisiest of all shorebird species, uttering a variety of vocalizations depending on circumstances. Its breeding display call is a high-pitched, thin, rolling, echoing "Teedee-year!" When disturbed or flushed, it gives a strong, clear "Tee-dee-dee!" often uttered so rapidly that it transforms into a trill. Its normal "Killdeer!" call is strong and penetrating as well, often heard as a steadily repeated "Dee-ye!" or "Tee-wee!"

As with several other plover species, Killdeer occasionally employ a "foot stir" technique when foraging; making rapid, trembling foot-tapping motions to either stir up or attract prey as they move forward. All plovers are very alert, visual foragers, possessing eyes that seem a bit large for their heads. In this regard the Killdeer is no different; and along with the Black-bellied Plover, is an active nocturnal forager and flier as well.

Killdeer have been recorded nesting in nearly every Louisiana parish, and using every imaginable open-country rocky/gravelly substrate in which to build its simple scrape – including busy gravel roads and parking lots! Even many non-birdwatchers are aware of the Killdeer's "broken wing tactic," in which it feigns injury by deliberately hanging one or both wings dragging the ground as it limps away – vocalizing in mock terror all the while – in attempts to lure intruders away from its nest.

Killdeer are especially numerous in and around short-grass pastures and agricultural fields; and each winter our sizable resident population is augmented by many more birds which pour in from points north. Peak winter density occurs along the Interstate-10 corridor, where over the years the Crowley, Lafayette and Baton Rouge Christmas Bird Counts have ***all recorded top national high-counts for this species.***

***For more information on birding in Terrebonne Parish,*** contact the Houma Area Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800-688-2732 or visit their website at [www.houmatravel.com](http://www.houmatravel.com).



*Piping Plover*, Greg Lavaty, *Photographer*



# February 2014

## Piping Plover (Charadrius melodus)

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
			<i>American Woodcock breeding season begins in Louisiana</i>		<i>VALENTINE'S DAY</i>	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	<i>WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY</i>			<i>Eagle Expo 20/4</i> Morgan City 985-395-4905		
23	24	25	26	27	28	1
<i>1st spring-migrating American Golden Plovers appear in Louisiana coastal zone</i>						

Superficially, the Piping Plover appears as a sort of “cross” between a Semipalmated Plover and a Snowy Plover; with breeding adults possessing the same bill and leg color patterns of the former along with the pale sandy colored upperparts of the latter. Compared to those two species, however, the Piping Plover is notably shorter-legged and more compactly built.

The Piping Plover breeds sparingly along the sandy shores of freshwater lakes and rivers in the Great Plains and Great Lakes regions of North America, as well as along the north Atlantic coast from Canada down to North Carolina. Each winter, it drops down into the southern Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the U.S. and on into Mexico.

Through the early 20th century, Oberholser considered this species a rare to occasionally locally common migrant on beaches throughout the Louisiana coast, and at least a casual winter resident on the Mississippi River Delta (one record on January 22, 1932 from Octave Pass). By the mid-20th century, Lowery had provided the species’ first two inland records, both from the LSU Baton Rouge campus during the passage of hurricanes.

Today, continuous records exist for the Piping Plover from August through April (along with 2 isolated June records) along the southeastern Louisiana coast, where its official status is “uncommon.” Along the southwestern coast it is considered fairly common in fall migration (late-July – early-October), dropping to uncommon from mid-October through mid-May. Piping Plover records are rare in inland Louisiana. It is only occasionally detected in the rice country during migration periods. In northwestern Louisiana, a smattering of spring and fall migration records exist, falling mostly between mid-June and early-October.

*For more information on birding in Calcasieu Parish,* contact the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800-456-7952 or visit their website at [www.visitlakecharles.org](http://www.visitlakecharles.org).



*White-rumped Sandpiper*, Alan Murphy, *Photographer*

# March 2014

## White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*)

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
2	3	4 <i>MARDI GRAS</i>	5	6	7	1
		<i>1st spring-migrating Upland Sandpipers appear in Louisiana coastal zone</i>				8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
		<i>1st spring-migrating Buff-breasted Sandpipers appear in Louisiana coastal zone</i> <i>Last Eskimo Curlew reported for Louisiana 1889 near Rayne</i>				
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

Averaging 7.5 inches in length, the White-rumped Sandpiper is notably larger than either the Least, Western and Semipalm. Otherwise, it can appear distressingly similar to them in all its plumages, save for its longer wings which, unlike the other three, extend noticeably beyond its tail when they are folded, resulting in an overall slimmer look, with a more attenuated posterior. The “clinging” field mark for this species, however, is its unmarked pure-white rump – easily seen when the bird takes flight.

The White-rumped Sandpiper breeds in the Arctic tundra of north-central Canada, and winters far south in southern South America. As with the American Golden-Plover and several other shorebird species, most White-rumped migrate southward over the western Atlantic Ocean in fall, but back through the middle of the North American continent in spring.

Also known as the “Bonaparte Sandpiper” back in the early 20th century, Oberholser characterized the White-rumped Sandpiper’s Louisiana status as a fairly-common but local transient, regularly recorded throughout our coastal zone March-June, and again in August in fall migration. Later in the 20th century, Lowery considered its status to be similar to that of Oberholser’s but “not common until late-May after most other transient shorebirds have moved north,” routinely noting “throngs in the rice belt” of inland southwestern Louisiana, and appearing “regularly at the Natchitoches Fish Hatchery and other places” in northern Louisiana.

Today, the White-rumped Sandpiper is considered a fairly common spring (May through early-June) migrant within Louisiana’s southeastern coastal zone. Within the southwestern Louisiana coastal zone, it is considered a rare (April) to common (May through mid-June) spring migrant.

*For more information on birding in Lafourche Parish*, contact the Bayou Lafourche Area Convention and Visitors Bureau at 877-537-5800 or visit their website at [www.visitlafourche.com](http://www.visitlafourche.com).



*Wilson's Plover*, Brian Small, *Photographer*

# April 2014

## Wilson's Plover

(*Charadrius wilsonia*)

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
			<i>JJ Audubon reports flocks of Eskimo Curlew at Barataria Bay in 1837</i>			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		<i>Louisiana's first Baird's Sandpiper recorded 1926 in Cameron Parish</i>			<i>The Great Louisiana Birdfest</i> Mandeville, North Lake Nature Center 985-626-1238	
					<i>Grand Isle Migratory Bird Fest.</i> Grand Isle 800-259-0869	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<i>Festival</i> continues						<i>Black Bear &amp; Bird Festival</i> Franklin 225-763-5425
<i>Celebration</i> continues	<i>Peak Spring Shorebird Migration through Louisiana</i>					
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
<i>Festival</i> continues <i>EASTER</i>					<i>LA Ornithological Society (LOS)</i> Spring Meeting, Cameron, LA	
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
<i>Meeting</i> continues						

Similar in appearance to the Snowy Plover, but a bit larger, the Wilson's Plover possesses a more prominent bill than the former as well as a more substantial upper breast band. When encountered, Wilson's Plovers tend to run relatively long distances, whereas the Snowy Plover tends to hunker down on the sand. Wilson's Plover is also similar in appearance to the Semipalmated Plover, but possesses longer, duller-colored legs than the latter, along with an all-black bill in all plumages.

The breeding range of Wilson's Plover is restricted to the beaches of the mid-Atlantic Coast southward through Florida and westward around the entire rim of the Gulf of Mexico. Another breeding population exists along the lower Pacific Coast of Mexico northward to Baja, California.

In 1938, Harry Oberholser listed Wilson's Plover as a permanent resident in coastal Louisiana, common in summer, somewhat more numerous during migration periods, but with only one winter record (December 12, 1931 in Grand Isle). By the latter part of the 20th century, its status remained the same here: common in spring, summer and fall; extremely rare in winter.

Most recently, Wilson's Plover has been designated a species of conservation concern, and is listed as threatened or endangered in a number of Atlantic Coast states. In 2001, a rough estimate of the continental population was put at 6,000 individuals. In Louisiana, a 2005 beach-nesting bird survey revealed a total of 759 pairs (1,518 individuals) of Wilson's Plover. A similar survey conducted in 2010 documented twice as many breeding pairs when compared to 2005.

Today, Wilson's Plover's Louisiana status remains about the same as it was a century or more ago, only with more winter records. It is not known whether this recent spike in winter sightings is due to increased observer effort, or perhaps global climate change. Traditionally, Wilson's Plovers retire to tropical coasts in winter, and have been considered rare anywhere north of the Florida peninsula during that season.

*For more information on birding in St. Mary Parish,* contact the Cajun Coast Visitors and Convention Bureau at 800-256-2931 or visit their website at [www.cajuncoast.com](http://www.cajuncoast.com).



Dunlin, David Chauvin, *Photographer*

# May 2014

## Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
			<i>Peak time for spring-migrating Whimbrels in Louisiana</i>			
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		<i>Peak time for spring-migrating Wilson's Phalarope through Louisiana</i>			<b>Neotropical Songbird Tour</b> Sherburne Wildlife Management Area 318-793-5529	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
MOTHER'S DAY			<i>Peak time for spring-migrating White-rumped Sandpipers in Louisiana</i>			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	MEMORIAL DAY					

Slightly smaller than a Red-winged Blackbird, the Dunlin was once known as the "Red-backed Sandpiper" due to the bright-rufous upperparts of its breeding plumage. This mark, combined with an extensive, jet-black belly patch and medium-long gently-decurved bill make this species easy to recognize during spring migration. On the other hand, in non-breeding plumage, birds are about as nondescript as a shorebird can get, featuring unmarked dull-brown upperparts and breast and dingy-white bellies. At such times, it's important to note the bill shape and length, along with the bird's size relative to other known species (yellowlegs, dowitchers, peeps) with which it often associates.

The Dunlin breeds on Arctic tundra habitat worldwide and winters along all northern hemisphere coasts, including the Pacific, Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the U.S. and Mexico.

In Louisiana, Dunlins are most attracted to mud flats in rice fields, marshes and along the coast itself; methodically picking and probing their way over the mud, often into belly-deep water. As with the Stilt Sandpiper and Long-billed Dowitcher, the Dunlin's shallow water probing often becomes so rapid that the bird appears to be "stitching" like the needle of a sewing machine.

From the earliest days of record-keeping through the present, the Dunlin has always been considered a common-to locally-abundant winter species throughout the coastal zone of Louisiana.

Today, within the southeastern coastal zone of Louisiana the Dunlin is considered a common winter species and an abundant spring and fall migrant. Along the southwestern coast and inland through the rice country it is considered uncommon to common from the second week of September through May.

*For more information on birding in St. Bernard Parish,* contact the St. Bernard Parish Office of Tourism at 504-278-4242 or visit their website at [www.visitsbernard.com](http://www.visitsbernard.com).



*Black-necked Stilt*, Alan Murphy, *Photographer*



# June 2014

## Black-necked Stilt

(*Himantopus mexicanus*)

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 <i>FATHER'S DAY</i>	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

Its bold black and white color pattern has earned the Black-necked Stilt the nickname “Tuxedo Bird.” This, along with its long red legs and loud, whining, “Keef! Keef!” or “Kek! Kek!” vocalizations make it instantly recognizable wherever it is encountered.

Historically, the Black-necked Stilt has been primarily a bird of New World tropical marshes, reaching peak population densities in Central and South America. Today, however, it nests along most all U.S. coasts from Maryland southward through the entire Gulf Coast and up the entire Pacific Coast of North America up through California. It also nests in U.S. interior marshes in the Great Basin, southern Arizona and New Mexico and up the Mississippi River Valley through Memphis.

Besides nesting in marsh habitats throughout Louisiana’s coastal zone, the Black-necked Stilt has adapted to nesting on the levees of actively-growing rice fields all the way up into such interior rice-growing parishes as Rapides, Natchitoches, Concordia, Morehouse and East and West Carroll. In such settings, the starkness of this bird’s black/white/red color pattern against a backdrop of bright spring-green rice is dramatic indeed.

Even in non-breeding seasons, Black-necked Stilts spend most of their time in marshes and rice fields, picking at prey just below the water’s surface with their long, straight, thin bills.

In both his first (1955) and third (1974) editions of *Louisiana Birds*, George Lowery, Jr. referred to the Black-necked Stilt as “confined to the coast, especially the southwest Louisiana coastal zone” where he considered it a “regular summer resident,” with “a few overwintering.”

Today, this species is considered common in spring and summer and uncommon in fall and winter within the coastal zone of southeastern Louisiana, and common to fairly common year round in our southwestern coastal zone. In its central and northern Louisiana haunts, the Black-necked Stilt is considered uncommon to common during the spring/summer breeding season, and into early fall.

*For more information on birding at Grand Isle, LA, contact the Grand Isle Tourism Office at 985-787-2229 or visit their website at [www.townofgrandisle.com](http://www.townofgrandisle.com).*

*Spring shorebird migration season ends in Louisiana*

*Fall shorebird migration season begins in Louisiana*



*Willet*, Russ Norwood, *Photographer*

# July 2014

## Willet

(*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*)

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
29	30	1	2	3	4 <i>INDEPENDENCE DAY</i>	5
6	7	8	9	10 <i>First fall-migrating Pectoral Sandpipers arrive in Louisiana</i>	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 <i>Wood Stork Day</i> Sherburne Wildlife Management Area 337-948-0255
20	21	22	23	24	25 <i>Felicians Hummingbird Celebration</i> St. Francisville 800-789-4221	26 <i>First fall-migrating Long-billed Curlew arrive in Louisiana</i>
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

Plain gray-brown and unadorned, this large, stout-legged, thick-billed shorebird often initially presents a puzzle to observers who encounter it – until it flies off, that is, exhibiting boldly “zebra-patterned” black and white wings and sounding its characteristic “Clee-leelee!” alarm call. True to its name, its territorial breeding song is a loud, rolling “pill-Will-WILLET!” George Lowery, Jr. mentioned “vire-vire” as a Cajun French nickname for this species, in obvious reference to its vocalizations.

Willetts breed in marshland and grassland habitats along the entire Atlantic and Gulf coasts as well as in the Great Basin and northern Great Plains of the United States and south-central Canada.

In Louisiana, Willets most often use immediate beach and back-beach dune and marsh habitats for both foraging and nesting. Birds migrating in and out of the state – to and from points west and north – are fairly commonly observed in the rice country of south central and southwestern Louisiana, and are occasionally encountered inland into northwestern Louisiana. Willets are most often encountered singly or in groups of a few individuals; but occasionally can be observed in groups of up to a few dozen birds. Miscellaneous records (1967-2004) taken from individual islands within the Chandeleur Island chain during the month of June have totaled 50-200 Willets at a time on a number of occasions.

Over the years, a number of observers have reported a propensity for some individuals (territorial males?) to perch up high on fence posts, low trees and even buildings – a decidedly unusual behavior amongst shorebirds.

For the past 150 years, the Willet has been considered a common permanent resident (augmented by numerous migrants in fall, winter and spring) throughout Louisiana’s coastal zone. Today, the year round status of the Willet remains much the same as it has since the early to mid-19th century.

*For more information on birding in Terrebonne Parish, contact the Houma Area Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800-688-2732 or visit their website at [www.houmatravel.com](http://www.houmatravel.com).*



*Snowy Plover*, Greg Lavaty, *Photographer*

# August 2014

## Snowy Plover (Charadrius alexandrinus)

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	<i>First Snowy Plover recorded 1886 in New Orleans</i>					
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	<i>First fall-migrating Wilson's Snipe arrive in Louisiana</i>					
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

The U.S. breeding range of the Snowy Plover is comprised of a curious mix of inland alkali ponds in the Great Basin and southern Great Plains as well as the beaches of the Pacific and Gulf Coasts. A species of conservation concern throughout its patchy breeding range, recent estimates put the U.S. population of Snowy Plover at 18,000 individuals, with the majority breeding in the interior locales. The Pacific Coast population is comprised of about 2,000 individuals, and the Gulf of Mexico/Caribbean population hovers around 2,500 birds.

Louisiana's first Snowy Plover nest was not recorded until 1994 (Cameron Parish). More recently, during Louisiana's first ever comprehensive ground-based beach-nesting bird census held in 2005, only two pairs of Snowy Plovers (both in Cameron parish) were encountered along the state's 322 mile beach-survey route. Just this past breeding season, surveys along eastern Louisiana's barrier islands turned up a "tending" male Snowy Plover and chick. Thus, after 11 years, it seems that this species' breeding status here is still only barely established.

Referred to by U.S. shorebird expert Dennis Paulson as the "Beach Ghost," The Snowy Plover is a small, sand-colored bird that differs from other U.S. small plover species in its lack of a complete breast-band. This character, combined with its notably thin black bill and gray legs, distinguishes it from the similar-appearing but stubbier-billed, yellow-legged, Piping Plover.

Prior to the mid-20th century, the Snowy Plover was considered a rare transient in Louisiana, with records confined to spring and fall migration periods only. By 1974 (third edition of *Louisiana Birds*) George Lowery, Jr. commented that it "seems to be rapidly passing from the Louisiana scene," and noted that it occasionally went unreported all year long.

Presently, non-breeding Snowy Plover records have picked up somewhat since Lowery's time. At certain times during migration periods it can become fairly common along our beaches.

*For more information on birding in Calcasieu Parish, contact the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800-456-7952 or visit their website at [www.visitlakecharles.org](http://www.visitlakecharles.org).*



*American Oystercatcher*, David Chauvin, *Photographer*

# September 2014

## American Oystercatcher

(*Haematopus palliatus*)

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
31	1 LABOR DAY	2	3 <i>First fall-migrating Dunlin arrive in Louisiana</i>	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 <i>First Curlew Sandpiper recorded 1953 in Cameron Parish</i>	12	13
		<i>Hurricane Betsy strands a pair of Marbled Godwit on LSU Campus 1965</i>				
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 <i>Lafayette Hummingbird Festival</i> Lafayette 337-993-2473
<i>Peak Fall Shorebird Migration through Louisiana</i>						
21	22	23	24	25 <i>First Hudsonian Godwit recorded 1895 in New Orleans</i>	26	27
			<i>Fall-migrating, Semipalmated Plovers peak through Louisiana</i>			
28	29	30	1	2	3	4

With its stark, bold color pattern and large crow-sized body, the easily-identifiable American Oystercatcher is almost cartoon-like in appearance. Unfortunately for birders, it is a shy, wary bird, preferring isolated sandy or rocky stretches along secluded beaches. This behavior, combined with low population numbers, makes any encounter with this species a real treat.

Plover-like in behavior, posture and overall appearance, the American Oystercatcher is able to run rapidly as well as to occasionally swim and even dive with ease. It possesses strong, thick legs and a long, stout, knife-like bill with which it pries open oysters and other bivalved mollusks.

In North America, the American Oystercatcher possesses a breeding range confined to secluded beach habitats along the Atlantic, Gulf and southern Pacific Coasts. Since the beginning of ornithological record-keeping here in the United States, this species has always maintained its highest population density on the Atlantic Coast.

Considered a rare permanent resident in Louisiana by Oberholser in 1938, he added that the American Oystercatcher was “formerly apparently much more numerous” here. By the mid-20th century, George Lowery, Jr. maintained its status as rare in Louisiana with breeding records confined to the Chandeleur Island chain. With the publication of the third edition of *Louisiana Birds* (1974), Lowery mentioned a first-ever nest record for this species west of the Mississippi River Delta (Timbalier Island, 1973) since Audubon’s 1837 report from the Isles Dernieres.

Most recently, in Louisiana’s first-ever comprehensive ground-based beach-nesting bird survey completed in the summer of 2005, 57 breeding pairs (114 individuals) of American Oystercatchers were tallied over a 322 mile coastal beach route. A similar 2010 survey found more than double the 57 breeding pair identified in 2005. The latest (2001) estimate for the entire North American continental population was 7,500 total individuals. The American Oystercatcher is a species of high conservation concern throughout much of its North American distribution range.

*For more information on birding Lafourche Parish*, contact the Bayou Lafourche Area Convention and Visitors Bureau at 877-537-5800 or visit their website at [www.visitlafourche.com](http://www.visitlafourche.com).



*Least Sandpiper*, Greg Lavaty, *Photographer*



# October 2014

## Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*)

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 <i>Louisiana's first Red Phalarope recorded 1950 on LSU Campus</i>	13 <i>COLUMBUS DAY</i>	14	15	16	17	18 <i>Last fall-migrating Upland Sandpiper depart Louisiana for South America</i>
19	20	21	22	23	24 <i>LA Ornithological Society (LOS) Fall Meeting Cameron, LA</i>	25 <i>Last fall-migrating Buff-breasted Sandpiper depart Louisiana for South America</i>
26	27	28	29 <i>Yellow Rails &amp; Rice Festival Jennings, LA 225-642-5763</i>	30	31	1

Averaging six inches in body length, the Least Sandpiper is not only the smallest peep, but also the smallest shorebird species in the world. In breeding plumage, the Least Sandpiper closely approximates that of the Semipalmated Sandpiper; and in winter plumage, it can superficially resemble both the Semipalmated and Western sandpipers. In general, however, the bill of the Least Sandpiper is somewhat finer in structure, and tapers to a more pointed tip than that of the others. In all plumages, the more densely-streaked face, neck and breast of the Least Sandpiper stand out as "dirty" compared with that of the Semipalmated and especially that of the Western. Most importantly, the leg color of the Least Sandpiper is a dull-yellow in all plumages whereas that of the Semipalm and Western is jet-black in all plumages. Thus, given a good look at the legs, the Least Sandpiper can be easily differentiated from the other two in any season.

In foraging, the Least Sandpiper is most often found on mud substrates, either bare or sparsely-vegetated, and on occasion even shallowly-flooded, where it both surface-gleans and probes for prey. The high-pitched, somewhat musical "preep!" flight call of the Least Sandpiper is the most "peep-like" of the group.

The Least Sandpiper nests in boreal forest habitats throughout all of Alaska and Canada and winters along and well-inland of the Pacific, southern Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the U.S. and Mexico southward into northern South America.

Back in the early 20th century, Oberholser characterized the Least Sandpiper as a "common permanent resident; less numerous in summer" and "fairly-common in central and northern Louisiana in migration." Two decades later, as more records accumulated, George Lowery, Jr. called it "the commonest and most widespread" of all the peep species in Louisiana. Throughout our entire coastal zone, its current Louisiana status is similar to that of Lowery's day: fairly common much of the year from early-July through early-June.

*For more information on birding St. Mary Parish, contact the Cajun Coast Visitors and Convention Bureau at 800-256-2931 or visit their website at [www.cajuncoast.com](http://www.cajuncoast.com).*



*Red Knot*, Brian Small, *Photographer*

# November 2014

## Red Knot

(*Calidris canutus*)

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
26	27	28	29 <i>Yellow Rails &amp; Rice Festival</i> Jennings, LA 225-642-5763	30	31	1
2 <i>Festival continues</i>	3	4	5	6 <i>First American Avocet recorded for Louisiana by JJ Audubon 1819 at Bayou St. John in New Orleans</i>	7	8
9	10	11 VETERANS' DAY	12	13	14	15
<i>Fall-migrating Marbled Godwits peak through Louisiana</i>						
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<i>Last fall-migrating Semipalmated Sandpiper depart Louisiana for South America</i>						
23 <i>First Marbled Godwit recorded for Louisiana 1885 Calcasieu parish</i>	24	25	26	27 THANKSGIVING DAY	28	29
30						

Once known as the “American Knot” or simply “Knot,” this husky Killdeer-sized sandpiper is yet another globally cosmopolitan species, breeding in both Old World and New World Arctic tundra habitats, and wintering along tropical and sub-tropical coasts stretching from the Americas to western Europe and Africa and all the way south into Australia.

Although some references list mud flats as the preferred substrate for the Red Knot, most Louisiana observations are from open, sandy beaches – often in the company of Sanderlings and Ruddy Turnstones. In its relatively bright “burnt-salmon” breeding plumage the Red Knot is not difficult to pick out from amongst the other “beach pipers;” but in its drab gray non-breeding plumage identification problems may arise. At such times, the combination of the Red Knot’s relatively large body size and relatively short, straight bill may assist in differentiating it from other beach-loving shorebirds.

In 1955 Lowery reported the “Knot” as “never common, but encountered regularly at Grand Isle during migration periods, with a few remaining in cold months.” Some 20 years later he considered it to be “regular at Grand Isle and Cameron during migration periods,” and had accumulated records for all winter months along the coast, as well as three inland records (Baton Rouge, Natchitoches and Shreveport).

Presently, the Louisiana status for Red Knot remains essentially the same as in Lowery’s day. Along the southeastern coast and barrier islands it is considered uncommon in spring and fall migration, rare in summer and winter. Along the southwestern coast it is uncommon to rare from late March through early June and from mid-July through mid-November. Inland sightings remain quite rare and confined to migration periods.

*For more information on birding St. Bernard Parish,* contact the St. Bernard Parish Office of Tourism at 504-278-4242 or visit their website at [www.visitstbernard.com](http://www.visitstbernard.com).



*American Woodcock*, Gerrit Vyn, *Photographer*

# December 2014

## American Woodcock

(Scolopax minor)

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 <i>First Mountain Plover recorded for Louisiana 2012 Jeff Davis Parish</i>	15	16 <i>Last fall-migrating American Golden Plover departs Louisiana for South America</i>	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

Unlike any other shorebird, the American Woodcock is adapted to spending much of its life in woodland niches. Slightly larger than a robin, this species is a large-chested, short-legged and long-billed shorebird with a characteristically dumpy appearance. Its gorgeously-patterned cryptically-colored plumage recalls that of our native sparrows.

Unlike most shorebirds, the American Woodcock's wings are short and broad, with more rounded tips, allowing a more explosively-vertical helicopter-like launch when disturbed in its densely-wooded roosting habitat. Its prominent eyes hint at its nocturnal foraging habits. Woodcocks roost in dense forest thickets by day, flying out each dusk into open, moist to muddy ground where they probe for earthworms, grubs and slugs. Foraging habitats vary geographically and include agricultural fields, open margins of lakes or streams, damp meadows, pastures, utility rights-of-ways and the like.

Woodcock flight is buoyant and erratic; bat or butterfly-like. Upon flushing, its rapidly beating wings give off a characteristic "doodling" sound, similar to that of some dove species.

The American Woodcock breeds throughout most of eastern North America from southeastern Canada southward through the coastal plain forests of the Gulf Coast states. In Louisiana, the "becasse," as it is known in Cajun French, is considered a thinly-distributed and irregular breeder – a status which might well change if breeding bird surveyors focused on the very early spring period, particularly the months of February and March, which is when local Woodcocks are said to breed. Normally, breeding bird survey work takes place from mid to late spring and into early summer.

In any case, Louisiana's Woodcock population swells many times over each winter, when local birds are joined by large numbers of northerly-breeding birds. As with many species of waterfowl, the density of the overwintering population at this latitude is dictated each year by the severity of winter weather to our immediate north. In milder winters, more Woodcocks overwinter to our north; in colder winters, they move as far south as necessary to escape frozen foraging habitats.

*For more information on birding Grand Isle, LA, contact the Grand Isle Tourism Office at 985-787-2229 or visit their website at [www.townofgrandisle.com](http://www.townofgrandisle.com).*

# Shorebird Conservation

## Surveys Show Many Shorebirds Critically Imperiled

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, over hunting of many shorebird species by market hunters and sportsmen alike was the primary conservation issue of the day. The passage of the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* in 1918 solved that problem. Today, only two shorebird species (Wilson's Snipe and American Woodcock) may be legally hunted in North America. Both of these have demonstrably large and stable continental populations.

For the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and now into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, much has changed on a global basis, with many nations currently involved in developing natural resource-based economies. Thus, for most shorebird species, the far-flung distances between breeding and wintering grounds, combined with the specific nature of the wetland habitat types which they require, presents a unique set of conservation issues.

It is fortunate that the majority of the world's shorebirds breed far north in arctic/sub-arctic habitats where agricultural and residential development are not feasible. For some species that breed farther south, however, such development issues have become problematic.

Among some of the plovers in particular, conservation and management of

North American breeding habitats is needed for several species. For beach-nesting species such as Wilson's, Snowy Plovers and Piping Plovers, increasing residential/commercial development and recreational use of beaches is an issue of primary concern. Recent changes in management considerations along the Atlantic Coast beaches in particular have resulted in modest increases in the Piping Plover population there.

Within North America's interior, conversion of some habitats to agriculture has become an issue for other species. Conversion of arid short-grass habitats to agriculture, for example, is considered a primary causal issue involving declines in the U.S. endemic Mountain Plover population.

Among some long-distance migrants such as Red Knot, Semipalmated Sandpiper and Western Sandpiper, the majority of their respective North American populations annually use single staging areas (Delaware Bay, Bay of Fundy and Alaska's Copper River Delta respectively) in order to fatten up for their fall trip south. With these, the primary area of concern involves the ongoing environmental quality of their respective staging areas; for if anything should go wrong with any of these places, then the entire continental populations of these species would be in immediate jeopardy.

Small North American population sizes of the Willet, Long-billed Curlew, Hudsonian Godwit, Stilt Sandpiper and Buff-breasted Sandpiper, among others, has been of ongoing concern. In eastern North America in particular, population declines of Whimbrel, Sanderling, Red Knot, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers and Short-billed Dowitcher have been detected over the past 30 years. Habitat loss in both migratory stopover sites and wintering ranges is blamed for most of these declines.

In Louisiana, where the primary migratory stopover and wintering habitats for shorebirds were converted to rice agriculture a century ago, it is indeed fortunate that rice-farming has proven compatible with the needs of not only shorebirds but also of wading birds, waterfowl, raptors and many others.

In the 2005 document, *Louisiana Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy* (also known as the *Louisiana Wildlife Action Plan*), published by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, a "species of conservation concern" listing was generated for our state. This listing was made using multiple data sources, including those of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Partners in Flight Program, as well as that of the LDWF's own Louisiana Natural Heritage Program. See sidebar.

From a more local perspective, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) has focused much of its energy on monitoring and collecting data regarding Louisiana's shorebird species. Beginning in 2005, the BTNEP program funded and provided logistical support of the first ever "ground" survey of Louisiana's beach habitats in search of nesting Wilson's Plover, Snowy Plover, Least Tern and American Oystercatcher. Often proving to be a difficult challenge due to inaccessibility of much of the coast, this "first ever" snapshot provided an all important baseline on populations of breeding shorebirds. Again in 2010, BTNEP funded and coordinated the second ever "ground" survey of available nesting habitat. Here too, we collected data on the same suite of bird species as before. This information proved invaluable during the response to the 2010 oil spill. Another such survey is being planned for 2015 so that we might once again, gather data on the number of shorebird species nesting along the coast.

Additionally, the 2005 survey that kicked off our efforts also spawned numerous other shorebird studies funded and coordinated through the BTNEP program including a multi-year breeding biology study of Wilson's Plover; breeding biology study of Least Tern; and multi-year participation in annual Piping Plover surveys.

## LOUISIANA WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN

In the *Louisiana Wildlife Action Plan*, the primary shorebird conservation issue involves [the condition of the state's coastal and barrier island beaches](#). The beach-nesting Snowy Plover, Wilson's Plover and American Oystercatcher have all been designated as "critically imperiled" due to increasing human disturbance issues along the beach habitats that these birds use to nest. The Piping Plover (placed on the Federal Endangered Species List back in 1986), which does not breed in Louisiana, but spends many months of each year along Louisiana beaches, has been listed as "imperiled" in Louisiana as well.

Regarding all beach-dependent shorebird species, [specific threats to Louisiana beach-habitat include commercial/industrial/residential development, presence of invasive exotic plant and animal species and increasing recreational usage](#). Resulting conservation objectives include partnering with other state, federal and non-governmental agencies in

- 1 increasing [public education](#) regarding the needs of beach-dependent wildlife
- 2 working with parish governments to recommend [limits on recreational vehicle use](#)
- 3 coordinating and implementing [habitat conservation recommendations](#) such as invasive exotic species control/eradication, shoreline stabilization and habitat restoration projects.

*"...the far-flung distances between breeding and wintering grounds, combined with the specific nature of the wetland habitat types which they require, presents a unique set of conservation issues."*



# South Louisiana America's Wetland Birding Trail

1. I-10 Eastbound Welcome Center  
337-589-7774
2. Sabine National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center  
337-762-3816
3. Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau  
337-436-9588
4. Rockefeller State Wildlife Refuge  
337-538-2276
5. Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge  
337-598-2216
6. Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters  
337-774-5923
7. Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission  
337-232-3737
8. Acadiana Park Nature Station  
337-291-8448
9. Vermilion Parish Tourist Commission Visitor Center  
337-898-6600

10. Atchafalaya Welcome Center  
337-228-1094
11. Lake Fausse Pointe State Park Visitor Center  
888-677-7200
12. Iberia Parish Convention & Visitors Bureau  
888-942-3742
13. Tabasco® Pepper Sauce Factory  
337-365-8173
14. Cajun Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Franklin, LA 70538 • 337-828-2555
15. Cajun Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Patterson, LA 70392 • 985-395-4905
16. Louis Armstrong International Airport  
Kenner, LA 70062
17. New Orleans Metropolitan  
Convention & Visitors Bureau  
504-566-5011
18. Audubon Louisiana Nature Center  
504-861-2537

19. Audubon Aquarium of the Americas  
800-774-7394
20. Audubon Zoo  
866-487-2966
21. St. Bernard Parish Tourism Commission  
888-278-2054
22. Houma Area Convention & Visitors Bureau  
985-868-2732
23. Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center  
985-448-1375
24. W.J. DeFelice Marine Center LUMCON  
985-537-5800
25. Lafourche Parish Tourist Commission  
985-537-5800
26. Grand Isle State Park Visitor Center  
985-787-2559
27. Grand Isle Tourist Information  
985-787-2997

28. Plaquemines Tourism Center  
Belle Chasse, LA 70037 • 504-394-0018
29. Barataria Preserve Visitors Center Jean Lafitte  
504-589-2330
30. BREC's Baton Rouge Zoo  
225-775-3877
31. State Capitol Welcome Center  
225-342-7317
32. Tickfaw State Park Nature Center  
888-981-2020
33. Fontainebleau State Park  
888-677-3668
34. I-10 Slidell Welcome Center  
985-646-6451

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contact any of these locations.*

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