



Audubon | FLORIDA

Ann F. Paul

Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries

**Birds of
Mirror
Lake**





Mission: Protect the great colonial waterbird populations of Florida and the habitats that support them.

Colonial waterbirds are

- large
- noisy
- slow-growing young
- odiferous nests.

Hiding from predators is not an option.

Adults nest on islands that don't have mammalian predators.



Mammal deterrence:

Inland swamp colonies are protected by alligators.

Estuary colony islands are separated from land by tidal currents.





Adults on their nests can defend their eggs and young from most aerial predators.

Brown Pelicans

among Florida's most charismatic species.

Breed and live year-round in Florida.

Nest in trees, shrubs, and even seagrape and seaoats.





Double-crested Cormorants nest high in the colony, where they can fly into their nests, unobstructed.

Hook-billed, they hunt their fish prey by sight, swimming underwater.

Mostly eat bottom-dwelling fish and crabs.

Anhingas, like cormorants, hunt by swimming underwater, but they use their needle-sharp bills to spear through the body of their fish prey.

Generally, more freshwater than cormorants.



Great Blue Herons

eat large prey.

Nest in every state in the continental U.S.

Our largest heron.



Great Egrets

familiar birds of
our swamps and
shorelines

large white
herons with
yellow beaks
and black legs.





Snowy Egrets

Rely on freshwater wetlands, increasingly impacted by development.



Little Blue Heron - blue-grey as adults, white during the 1st year of life. Identified by the National Audubon Society as declining nationwide

Both species state-listed as "Threatened" due to reliance on freshwater wetlands for foraging sites.



Tricolored Heron





Cattle Egrets show buffy colored breeding feathers in the colony.





Green Herons

That long neck is useful in surprising fish prey.

Chicks are quiet and very hard to see.





Black-crowned Night-Herons are generally found in freshwater areas, where they eat all sorts of prey – fish, frogs, snakes, rodents, and even other birds.

Yellow-crowned Night-Herons are generally coastal, as they are largely crab specialists.



White Ibis chick and egg



White Ibis are among Florida's most numerous wading birds.

Depend on freshwater wetlands for foraging; tactile foragers

populations have declined in Florida by 80% since the 1940s.



Limpkins are nearly exclusive in Florida, in the U.S.

Depend on freshwater wetlands for foraging.

Eat snails, mussels, clams

Territorial nesters as rely on the surrounding pond edge to raise their brood of young each spring.





Colony Watch volunteers in Brandon at a wading bird colony



Sandy Huff and Sid Crawford monitor Alligator Lake Bird Island

Deborah Ewing,
Medard Park Bird Colony monitor



Project ColonyWatch

A COLONIAL WATERBIRD PROTECTION PROJECT

Attalus





Brown Pelican

Main cause of mortality

For

HOOKED A BIRD? Don't Cut the Line!

Why? Birds that fly away with hook and line attached may become entangled in trees and die.

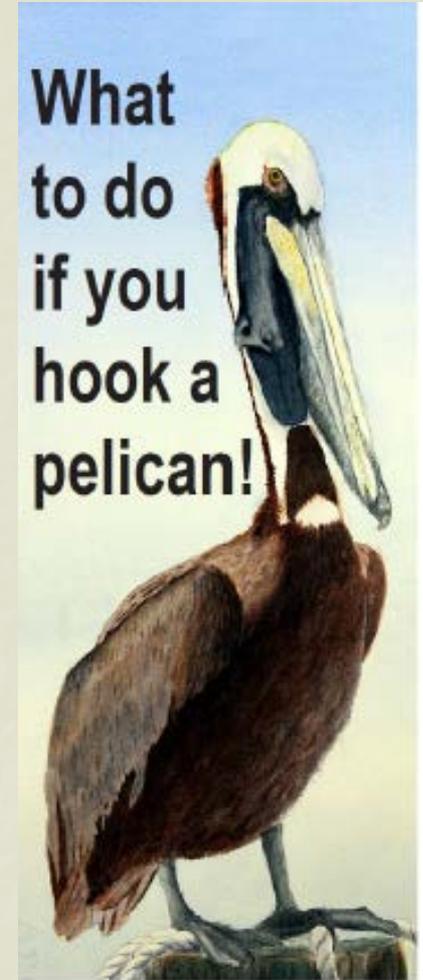
5 simple steps to save pelicans and other seabirds:

1. Reel the bird in slowly to reduce the risk of additional injuries to the bird.
2. Use a hoop net to carefully lift the bird from the water. Before handling the bird, put on glasses to protect your eyes. Fold the bird's wings against its body and hold its beak firmly and slightly open. Cover its head with a towel or shirt to calm it.
3. Cut the barb and back the hook out. Don't remove a hook that still has a barb!
4. If the bird is severely hurt or has swallowed the hook, call *FWC on your cell phone for a list of wildlife rehabilitators.
5. If the bird appears healthy, it's OK to release it. Place its feet on the ground, point it toward the water and stand back. Let the bird take off on its own.

More information? MyFWC.com/Unhook



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To design habitat for wading birds:

- 1) Wetlands need to have shallow slopes and experience season drought draw-downs that concentrate prey
- 2) Nesting islands require surrounding deep water and alligators
- 3) Disturbance during courtship and nesting that causes birds to stop natural behaviors must be reduced
- 4) Foraging sites must be near nesting sites





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