

Colonial Waterbird Nesting in the Sarasota Bay Estuary

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INTRODUCTION

Colonial Waterbirds of Sarasota Bay

- 18 species of birds that nest in colonies on islands in Sarasota Bay include 9 species listed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as “Endangered” or “Species of Special Concern”.
- 13 islands provide nesting habitats for colonial waterbirds in the Sarasota Bay estuary, with the largest colonies at Cortez Kay Sanctuary and the Roberts Bay Bird Islands.
- Audubon’s Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries manages Sarasota Bay bird nesting and habitat islands.

Sarasota Bay’s Bird Islands

North Sarasota Bay

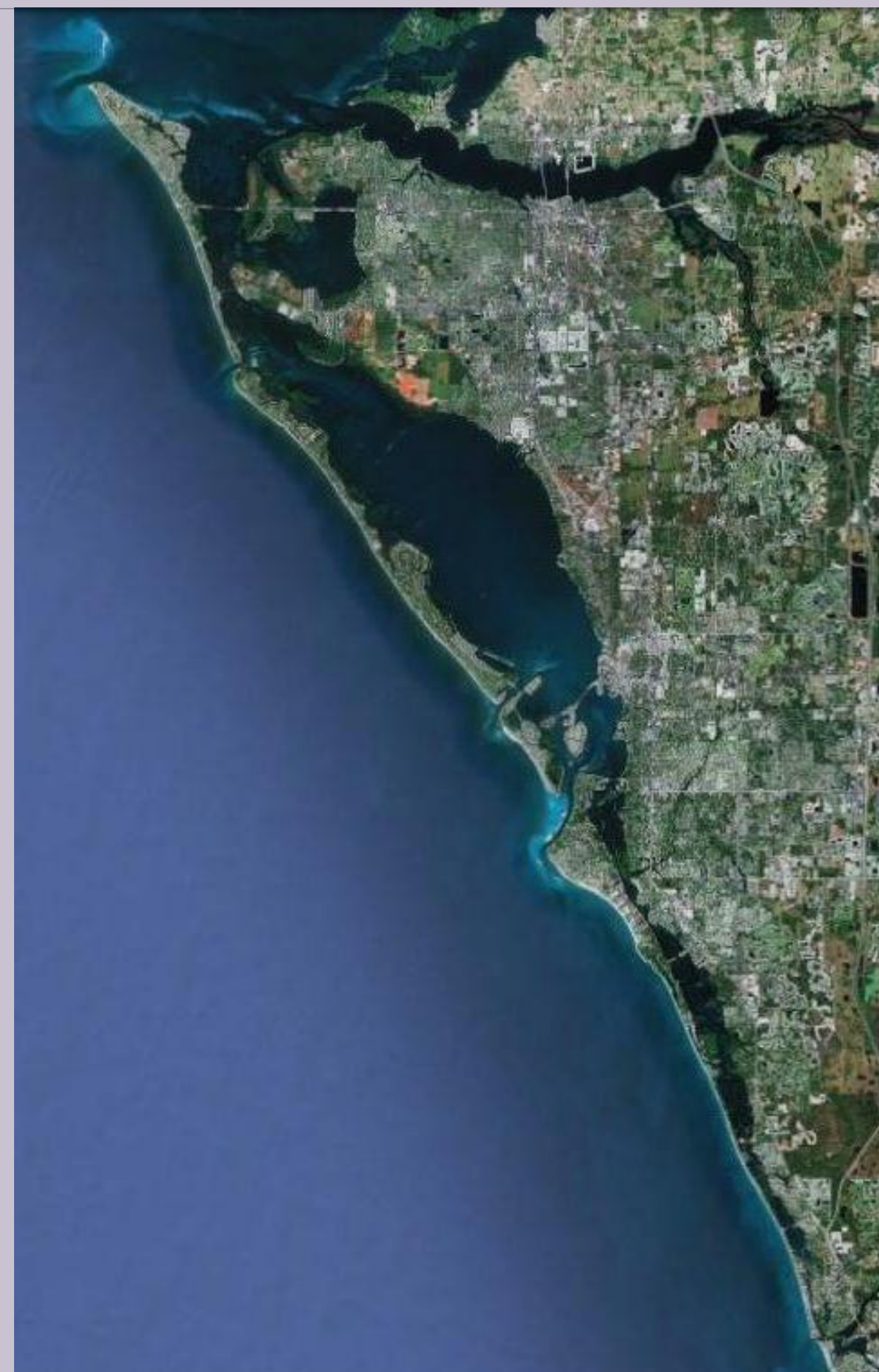
- Cortez Key
- Bishop Bayou
- The Town Islands
- Whale Key
- Bowlees Creek Bird Island

Middle Sarasota Bay

- Sarasota Yacht Club- Plymouth Harbor
- City Island
- Ringling Park Pines
- Save Our Seabirds
- Roberts Bay
- Little Skier’s Island
- Skier’s Island

South Sarasota Bay

- Blackburn Bay (3 islands)
- Dona Bay



| Species | FWC Listing | Nesting Pairs in 2011 |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Brown Pelican | SSC | 181 |
| Double-crested Cormorant | | 169 |
| Anhinga | | 3 |
| Great Blue Heron | | 61 |
| Great Egret | | 276 |
| Snowy Egret | SSC | 127 |
| Little Blue Heron | SSC | 15 |
| Tricolored Heron | SSC | 23 |
| Reddish Egret | SSC | 3 |
| Cattle Egret | | 179 |
| Green Heron | | 1 |
| Black-crowned Night-Heron | | 20 |
| Yellow-crowned Night-Heron | | |
| White Ibis | SSC | |
| Glossy Ibis | | 22 |
| Roseate Spoonbill | SSC | 4 |
| Wood Stork | E | 147 |
| American Oystercatcher | SSC | 1 |
| Total | | 1,232 |

NESTING SPECIES



Anhinga



Great Blue Heron adult feeding chicks



Great Blue Heron large chicks



Brown Pelican with chicks in the nest



< Double-crested Cormorant adult (left) with chicks in the nest



Snowy Egret chick begging



Green Heron “branchling”



< Great Egret with chicks in the nest



Tricolored Heron chicks



Reddish Egret with chicks



Little Blue Heron adult



Tricolored Heron & chick



White Ibis chick & egg



American Oystercatcher adult (left) with fledged chick, Roberts Bay Bird Islands



< Wood Stork chicks in the nest

Two Roseate Spoonbill chicks >



Photos by Liu Newman, Bonnie Samuelson, Rich Paul, Deborah Ewing, Sarah Schwitzer, Gary Raulerson, Herman Moulder, Charles Lee, Damon Moore, Audubon files

BIRD HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Posting nesting islands

Annual surveys

Field trips for colony protection partners, Project Colony Watch

Fishing line clean-up with Sarasota Bay Watch, each fall

Predator removal

Habitat management: invasive vegetation control, erosion control



Sarasota Audubon Project Colony Watch volunteer Rick Greenspun posts the Roberts Bay Bird Islands with Sanctuary Manager Mark Rachal <

Sarasota County’s wavebreak to control erosion of the Roberts Bay Bird Islands (below)



Brown Pelican killed by entrapment by fishing gear, Roberts Bay Bird Islands

