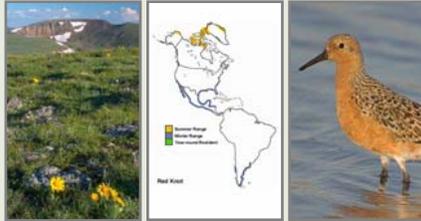


Feathers, Flyways and Fast Food

Living Together: People and Birds at Rookery Bay



Red Knot Migration Route



Whimbrel



Willetts

Peregrine Falcon



Western Sandpiper and Dunlin

THE JOURNEY

Each fall, thousands of shorebirds make their annual migration from distant nesting grounds on the tundra of Canada and Alaska - high above the Arctic Circle - to spend the winter months at warmer spots as far away as southern South America. In the spring, they repeat the long, arduous journey in reverse.

En route, exhausted migrants stop along our beaches for both food and a brief rest before continuing their travels. These shorebirds use stored fat as energy and need to eat a lot and feed frequently to refuel themselves.

Repeated disturbance causes birds to waste valuable energy reserves. Weakened and vulnerable, migrating shorebirds with a reduced ability to feed may not survive to complete their journey.

SHOREBIRDS AS SNOWBIRDS

For some migrating shorebirds, Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is their final destination until the following spring. Many shorebirds stay on as winter visitors to escape the cold northern climate and to take advantage of a variety of coastal habitats containing an abundant food supply.

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

At low tide, expansive mudflats provide an excellent feeding ground for most shorebirds. Their diet may consist of polychaete worms, insect larvae, tiny snails and shrimp, invertebrate eggs and small clams

While some shorebirds rely on sight to find a meal, others use their sensitive bills to probe in the sand or mud for food.

The bill of each different shorebird species differs in length and shape. This allows each species to pursue different prey in the same area at the same time and not compete with its neighbors.

THE FOOD CHAIN AT WORK

For safety in numbers, shorebirds often feed together in mixed flocks ...but large concentrations of shorebirds can attract predators. In winter, peregrine falcons also patrol our beaches and mudflats looking for their dinner - often an old, sickly or weakened shorebird.

Our Shorebird Visitors



Black-bellied Plover
(*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Snowy Plover *
(*Charadrius alexandrinus*)

Wilson's Plover *
(*Charadrius wilsonia*)

Semipalmated Plover
(*Charadrius semipalmatus*)

Piping Plover
(*Charadrius melodus*)

American Oystercatcher
(*Haematopus palliatus*)

Greater Yellowlegs
(*Tringa melanoleuca*)

Lesser Yellowlegs
(*Tringa flavipes*)

Willet
(*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*)

Whimbrel
(*Numenius phaeopus*)

Marbled Godwit
(*Limosa fedoa*)

Ruddy Turnstone
(*Arenaria interpres*)

Red Knot
(*Calidris canutus*)

Sanderling
(*Calidris alba*)

Western Sandpiper
(*Calidris mauri*)

Least Sandpiper
(*Calidris minutilla*)

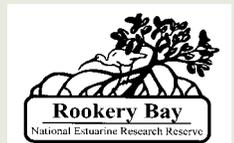
Dunlin
(*Calidris alpina*)

Short-billed Dowitcher
(*Limnodromus griseus*)

* Breeds in Collier County

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- Enjoy the birds, but please keep your distance.
- Never intentionally flush or force birds to fly.
- Share the shore.
- Avoid posted, closed areas and encourage others to do the same.



www.rookerybay.org

If birds appear agitated and take flight...they're trying to tell you you're too close.

The Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve encompasses 110,000 acres of upland habitats, mangrove forest and coastal waters near Naples, Florida. As part of a nationwide network of protected areas, the Reserve provides a basis for informed coastal decisions through stewardship, research and education. RBNERR 2005

