



MANUAL FOR BUILDING OWNERS AND CONTRACTORS ACCESSING ROOFTOPS WITH PROTECTED NESTING BIRDS



Audubon | FLORIDA

WHAT PROTECTED BIRDS ARE PRESENT ON ROOFTOPS?

Many of Florida's birds are at risk due to habitat loss and disturbance to natural nesting habitat. Some birds, such as seabirds that regularly lay their eggs on flat, open beaches, have begun to nest on gravel rooftops instead. These rooftop nesting birds are protected by state and/or federal laws, so it is important to recognize their presence and spread awareness about rooftop nesting.

Although a rooftop colony may be active for up to five months, each nest is incubated by the parents for only three weeks and the chicks will learn to fly three weeks later. The nesting season for Florida's seabirds begins in April and ends in August. *During this time, it is important that disturbance to nesting colonies is avoided.*

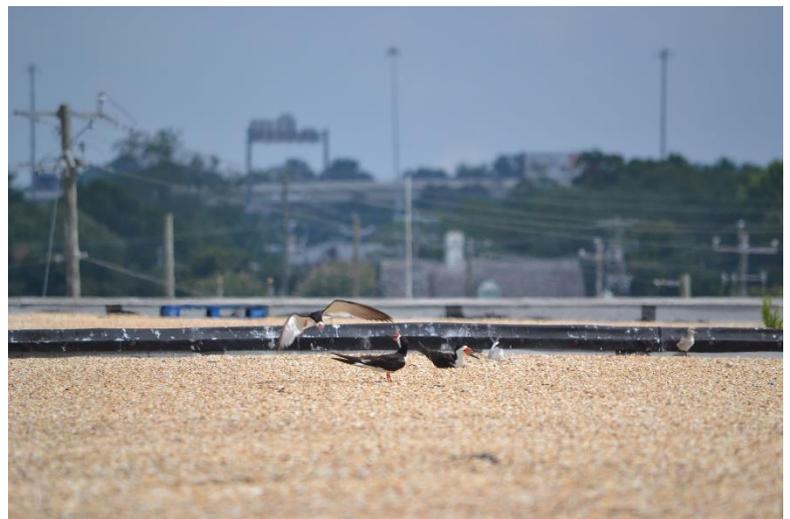
Species* commonly found on gravel rooftops:

- Least Tern (most common)
- Black Skimmer
- American Oystercatcher
- Gull-billed Tern
- Killdeer
- Roseate Tern
- Common Nighthawk



Least Tern on eggs

© Dave Kandz



Black Skimmers on a gravel rooftop

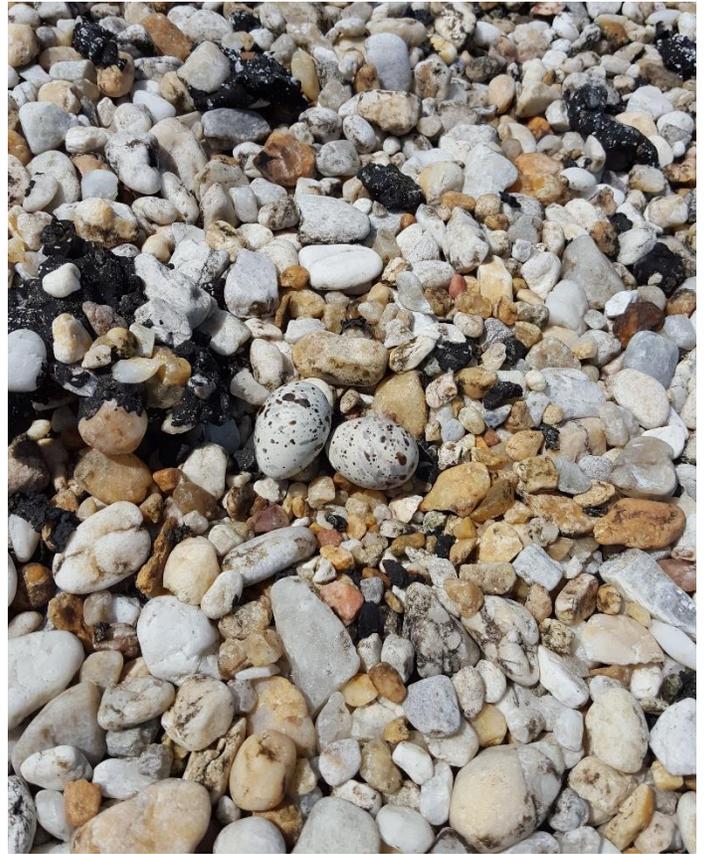
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*See back cover for identification and protections of these species

ROOFTOP VISITS ARE DETRIMENTAL TO NESTING SEABIRDS

Any visit to a rooftop with active nesting poses several risks to seabirds and their young. For example:

- Eggs are laid in a shallow depression in the gravel and are very well camouflaged. This makes them hard to spot and easy to step on.
- Chicks are mobile within 2-3 days of hatching, roam widely and can easily fall off the edge of the rooftop when disturbed and frightened.
- Humans on the rooftop will flush adult seabirds from their nests, leaving eggs and chicks at risk of overheating, dehydration, and predation.



Above: Least Tern nest on gravel rooftop
Below: fallen Least Tern chicks

Photos by Michelle Landis



HOW TO RECOGNIZE A ROOFTOP WITH NESTING SEABIRDS

Least Terns, Black Skimmers, and other seabirds nest in large groups called colonies. When disturbed, the colony of birds will fly up from their nests and begin dive-bombing the perceived threat (humans, crows, gulls, etc). Even from the ground, you can often see and hear seabirds flying to and from the rooftop, especially during the early morning and late evening hours of daylight. These species will also make plenty of noise to announce their presence!



Examples of signage available for rooftop owners to place at roof access points:



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORKING AROUND PROTECTED SEABIRD COLONIES

Routine maintenance and non-emergency repairs should be made prior to the breeding season (April 1) or after nesting has finished (Sept. 1) to avoid disturbance to the colony.

If emergency repairs need to be conducted on a rooftop with nesting birds, please contact Audubon Florida for assistance.



Photo by Michelle Landis

- Contact Audubon Florida or the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission if Least Terns, Black Skimmers, or other nesting birds are present on a rooftop.
 - Emergency repairs should be scheduled during cool, early morning or evening hours.
 - Building owners and managers should inform contractors about nesting birds present on gravel rooftops.
- **adherence to these recommendations does not authorize take of protected species. Please contact your regional FWC office for necessary authorizations.

THANK YOU FOR PROTECTING YOUR LOCAL WILDLIFE

**For more information, please
contact Audubon Florida:**

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Least Tern



American Oystercatcher



Black Skimmer



Gull-Billed Tern



Killdeer



Common Nighthawk



Roseate Tern

LEGAL PROTECTION OF ROOFTOP NESTING BIRDS

State Protected Species

Least Tern

American Oystercatcher

Black Skimmer

No person shall take*, possess, or sell any of the threatened species, or parts thereof or their nests or eggs (68A-27.003(1 a), F.A.C.)

*Take- to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in such conduct. The term "harm" in the definition of take means an act which actually kills or injures fish or wildlife. Such act may include significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering. The term "harass" in the definition of take means an intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to breeding, feeding, or sheltering (68A-27.001(4), F.A.C.)

Federally Protected Species

Protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. Sections 703-711 and U.S.C Section 712)

Gull-billed Tern

Killdeer

Common Nighthawk

Protected by the Endangered Species Act

Roseate Tern

