

Shorebirds on Edisto Beach

General Description

Shorebirds live along the coast and use marine and freshwater habitats. On Edisto Beach, shorebirds can be found on the shoreline, along marsh edges, on mudflats, and on mounds of oyster shells.

Shorebirds, also known as waders, are not super strong swimmers and have long legs for wading through shallow water. Their beaks and legs are adapted to whatever they feed on. Examples of common shorebird food include: mollusks, crustaceans, marine worms, and insects.

Nesting Behaviors

Many species nest in the arctic and sub-arctic zones of the globe and spend the winter in the Southern Hemisphere. During their travels, they stop in large groups to rest and fuel themselves to sustain their migration. Edisto Beach provides both migratory stop-over sites for flocks of thousands of these birds and also wintering grounds for birds that do not travel as far south. Because many of these birds do migrate great distances, they should not be disturbed when feeding as these disturbances cause them to waste energy flying when they should be feeding.

Three species of birds that nest on Edisto Beach are the American oystercatcher (highest priority conservation status), Wilson's plover (highest priority conservation status and state threatened), and willet (high priority conservation status). Both the American oystercatcher and the Wilson's plover nest right on the sand beach while the willet nests in the marsh. None of these nests should be disturbed for any reason.



American Oystercatcher
Photo by Bill Cumming



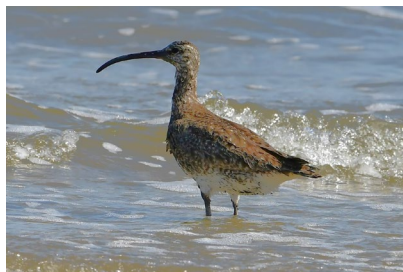
Wilson's Plover
Photo by Bill Cumming



Willet
Photo by Bill Cumming

Migratory Shorebirds

Three other notable birds found on Edisto Beach include the whimbrel, red knot, and long-billed curlew. These birds winter on Edisto Beach and migrate great distances for nesting – mostly in arctic and sub-arctic areas.



Whimbrel
Photo by Bill Cumming



Red Knot
Photo by Bill Cumming



Long-billed Curlew
Photo by Ken Tingman

Protect Our Shorebirds

Kindly respect these birds on our beach by leaving them undisturbed! Be sure to keep dogs on leashes as one free-running dog can wipe out many nests very quickly. Try to not run through a group of shorebirds that have landed on the shore because flushing the birds causes them to waste much-needed energy!

Source: South Carolina Department of Natural Resources <https://dnr.sc.gov>
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