

# SHARE THE BAY WITH NESTING BIRDS

A REMINDER FROM THE AUDUBON SOCIETY . . .

Many species of wading birds and shorebirds share the Lavaca and Matagorda Bay area with boaters, fishermen, jet skiers, shrimpers, beach walkers and other people enjoying the bay and Gulf.

The space birds need for feeding, resting, and nesting has been reduced by development, subsidence, wetland loss, and nesting island erosion as well as by vehicles using the beaches.

Terns, gulls and long-legged wading birds have nesting colonies on small islands in the bay. Storms, raccoons, and fire ants are some of the threats they face in raising chicks. The additional stress of boaters who frighten them when they come too close to their islands may mean more death to the chicks. Be considerate of hard-working parent birds and stay a respectful distance from the rookeries. If you approach bird islands and birds fly up, you are too close. Dogs should never be taken to bird islands.

Birds feed and nest on beaches too. They survive by being well camouflaged. While this helps them avoid animal predators, it makes them difficult for people driving to see. Be aware of bird activity when you drive on the beach so that you can avoid disturbing a colony with eggs or chicks.

When the chicks are larger, they gather in groups at the water's edge and wait for their parents to bring them food. Again, you can help them survive by not disturbing them.

Many of our shorebirds are migratory, and they spend most of their time feeding or resting —gaining weight and conserving energy for the next long flight on the way to their summering or wintering areas. You can increase their chance for survival by watching them from a distance. With a little care, people and birds can enjoy our bay and beaches.

For more information, contact:

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