



Special Area Management Planning for Critical Wildlife Areas (CM226, 316)

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Habitat and Species Conservation



Criteria for CWAs

- Significant concentration of wildlife
- Subject to disturbance
- A distinct, manageable area
- Landowner concurrence



Patrick Leary



How CWAs work

- There are no restrictions where signage is not posted
- Only the portions of each CWA that are critical for a wildlife population are posted
- Posted areas are closed to all public access to minimize disturbance to wildlife



Established CWAs



Established CWAs

- Primary species protected
 - 2 inland sites
 - Southeastern bat
 - 20 coastal sites
 - 7 : wading birds
 - 12 : seabirds and shorebirds
 - 1 : gopher tortoise



2012: CM226 Objectives

- Develop species lists, current level of management for each active CWA;
- Identify CWAs that need to be re-established (or new sites that need to be established) and initiate the process;
- Conduct outreach to partners/stakeholders on the importance of CWAs and the role they play in coastal conservation;
- Identify partners with the resources to participate in developing and implementing management strategies;
- In coordination with DEP, discuss current vegetation management limitations and begin to develop guidelines (adopt through an MOU);
- Implement management strategies at CWAs to reduce human wildlife conflict and improve habitat for wildlife.



Outcomes

- The hiring of a coordinator provided guidance to partners and identified needs.
- An internal process for establishment was developed and approved by the Commission February 2013.
- The hiring of two technicians assisted with management at 6 CWAs during the nesting season, easing the burden on partners and FWC staff.
- Outreach was implemented by attending partner meetings.
- Discussion with DEP regarding vegetation management was initiated, but the development of an MOU seemed unlikely. Discussion ongoing.



2013: CM316 Objectives

- Develop a web-accessible GIS database for CWAs, with data identified in Year One incorporated into the mapping product;
- Identify CWAs needing re-establishment under the revised rule;
- Implement conflict management strategies (by trained technicians) identified in Year 1;
- Incorporate management strategies in mapping product;
- Develop a prioritized list of sites with vegetation management needs and begin to implement proposed management;
- Utilize technicians to train partners and volunteers in management strategy methods.



Outcomes

- 4 technicians hired to conduct management at 8 CWAs.
- Funds were also applied to a law enforcement hire back program. This allowed off-duty officers to patrol extra hours CWAs during the nesting season.
- Outreach was implemented by attending partner meetings.
- New educational signage was developed to be installed prior to the next nesting season.
- A new website was developed with a clickable map which provides basic information on each CWA such as closure dates and species protected.
- Vegetation management: DEP suggested an area-wide permit that could cover various sites throughout the state. The coordinator worked with the Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative coordinator to develop the list of CWA and non-CWA sites to include in the application.





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Critical Wildlife Areas

Issues and Policies

Value of Conservation

How You Can Conserve

Freshwater Programs

Saltwater Programs

Terrestrial

Critical Wildlife Areas

Management of CWAs

ABC Islands

Alafia

Alligator Point

Amelia Island

Big Marco Pass

Bill Sadowski

Bird Island

Bird Islands

Caxambas Pass

Deerfield Island Park

Fort George

Gerome

Little Estero Island

Mantanzas Inlet

Myakka River

Pelican Shoal

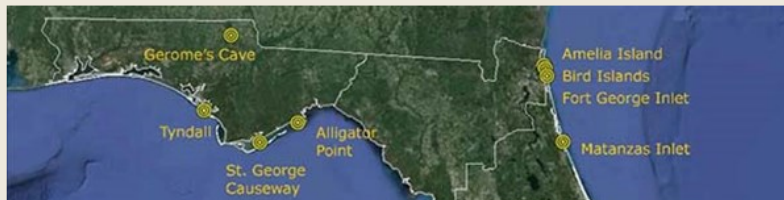
Critical Wildlife Areas (CWAs) are established by Code rule to protect important wildlife concentration critical periods of their life cycles, such as nesting boundaries and periods of time when portions of CWA establishment order. Public access is prohibited. Dogs, vehicles and vessels are a boundary may be larger than the posted area of structure and use. Thus, the area closed each year

Management of Critical Wildlife Areas is multi-faceted. The five regional biologists in the Species Conservation Planning Section, working with the CWA Coordinator, are responsible for evaluating the need for potential CWAs, developing or revising establishment orders, managing the posting of appropriate signage, and coordinating the monitoring of the wildlife populations using those areas each year. CWAs are monitored by biologists and protection efforts are coordinated with local government, other agencies, organizations, and FWC law enforcement personnel, as appropriate.

Almost all active CWAs support listed species, the most notable of which include: Alafia Banks (wading birds, oystercatchers and pelican rookeries); ABC Islands (wading birds and pelican rookeries); Fort George Inlet (terns and black skimmers); St. George Causeway (least terns); and Big Marco Pass (least terns, black skimmers, plovers and wintering shorebirds).

For additional information regarding Critical Wildlife Areas, please contact the CWA coordinator.

There are currently 20 CWAs across the state. Select the name on the map below to learn about each one.



Welcome to Big Marco Pass Critical Wildlife Area

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission designated this Critical Wildlife Area in 1988 to protect nesting shorebirds. Avoid areas posted as closed to public access. You can help conserve our rich natural heritage for the enjoyment of people today and future generations.



Black skimmer



Least tern



Wilson's plover



Why are nesting areas closed to the public?

Shorebird populations are threatened by disturbance and habitat loss. When nesting birds are flushed from their nests, their eggs and chicks are exposed to extreme temperatures and predators.

Share the beach!

Help protect shorebirds by staying away from posted areas, and share this information with others. If birds appear agitated or take flight, you are too close! Watch your step to avoid harming eggs or chicks which sometimes are present outside posted areas.



CRITICAL WILDLIFE AREA

CLOSED TO PUBLIC ACCESS



No vehicles



No dogs



No entry

Pedestrians, vehicles, vessels or dogs are prohibited from entering this area. The take of fish or wildlife within this area is prohibited.

Engaging in any of these activities is a violation of State Law, Chapter 68A-19.005 F.A.C., and violators may be subject to criminal penalties. To report violations, call 888-404-3922.



MyFWC.com

DO NOT ENTER IMPORTANT NESTING AREA

- TEMPORARY POSTING -



Help save our coastal birds. Disturbance by people, pets or vehicles can result in nest abandonment and death of young birds.

Harassment or take of endangered or threatened birds, their eggs, or young is a violation of State Law, Chapter 68A-27 F.A.C., and may subject violators to criminal penalties. The attempt to take or possess any migratory bird, their nest, or eggs is a violation of Federal Law, 16 USC Sec. 703.

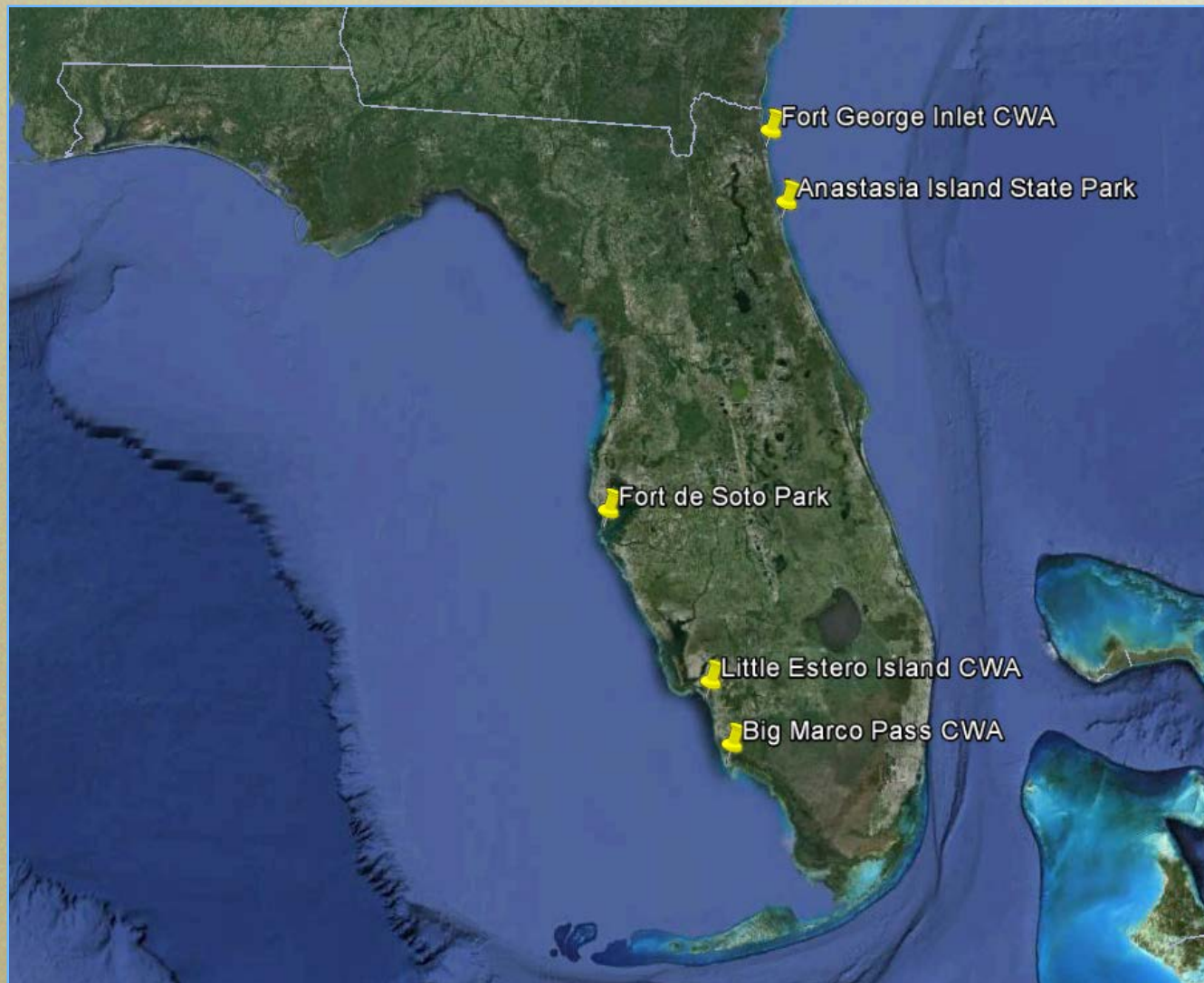
Funds for this sign provided by the Wildlife Foundation of Florida. Report Violations, call 1-888-404-3922.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



Area-Wide Permit

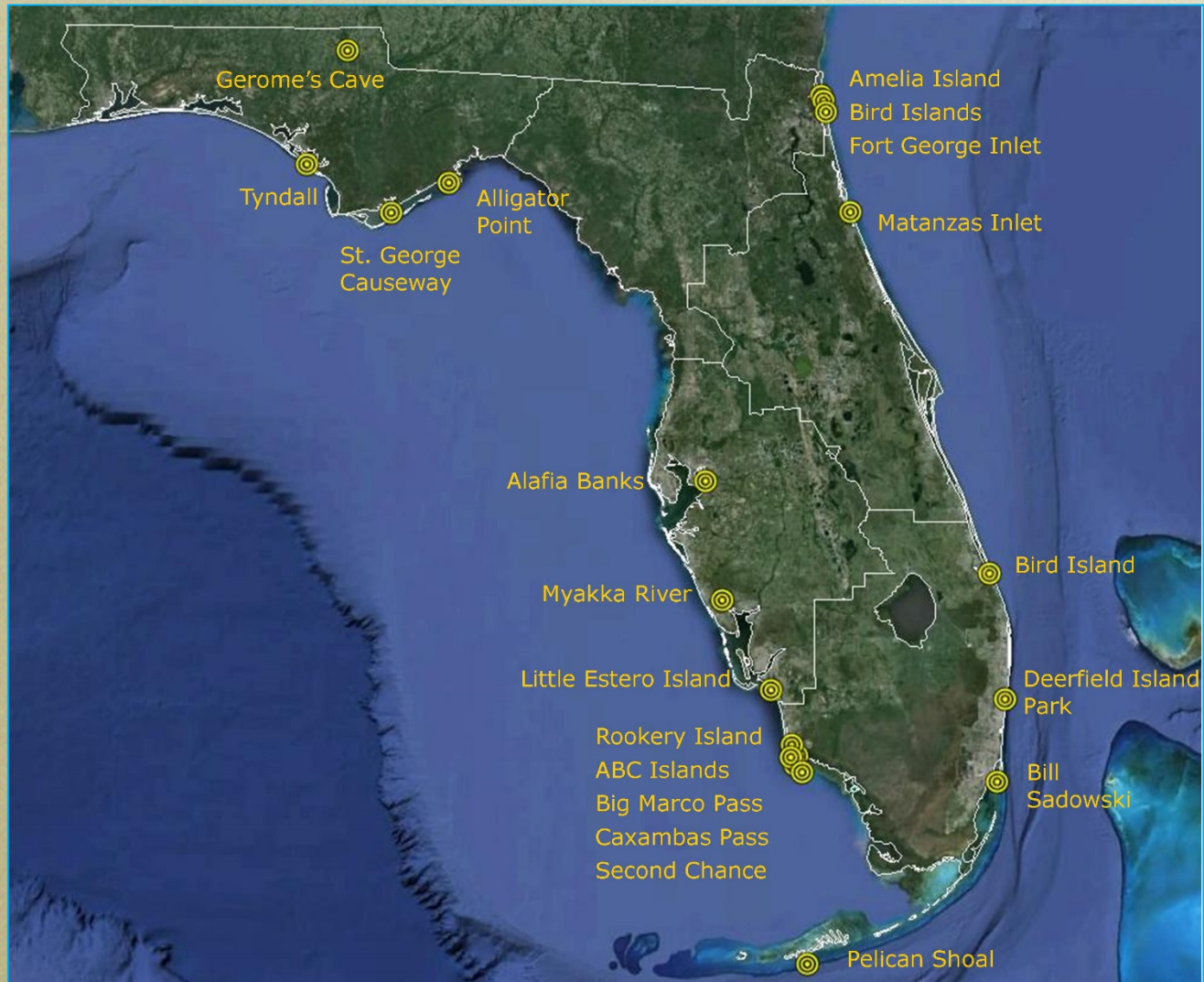


Momentum

- 2014 – Bird Island CWA approved
- 2015 – Waterway markers installed
 - Eight minor re-establishments approved
 - Four disestablishments
 - Field permit authorized
 - Second Chance CWA approved
- 2016 – LBR approved



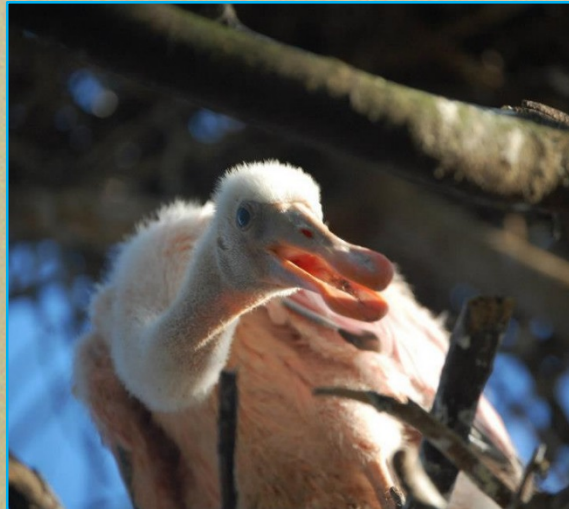
Established CWAs



A Teddy Roosevelt Moment



9 new CWAs
5 major re-establishments



Questions?

