

Best Management Practices for Harrison County, Mississippi Beaches

Benefits for Birds and People



Audubon has been monitoring beach-nesting birds in coastal Mississippi since June 2014, following the receipt of a grant funded by Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill settlement money to implement monitoring and stewardship along the coast.

Audubon has developed seven Best Management Practices (BMPs) to guide current and future work in protecting Harrison County’s beach-nesting birds, especially Least Terns and Black Skimmers. Many of these BMPs are already in progress, but all of them can be expanded upon with help from community members, beach-front businesses, municipalities, and local legislators. Every contribution towards one of these BMPs helps these vulnerable species remain a part of Mississippi’s vibrant coast.

- 1** **Protect nesting area perimeters** using signs and symbolic fencing, stationing staff or volunteers to monitor compliance, and provide public outreach to beachgoers.
- 2** **Keep dogs on leash** at all times and off the beach, per Harrison County ordinances.
- 3** **Protect nesting colonies from fireworks,** enforce “No Fireworks Zones”, and expand regulations prohibiting fireworks near nesting areas.
- 4** **Reduce beach trash and predator access to food waste** through installation of bins with wildlife-proof lids, adding bins for fishing lines, and promoting beach clean-up events.
- 5** **Practice adaptive management** of colony boundaries, including a buffer zone between raking activities and colony borders.
- 6** **Provide training and colony-protection guidelines** for stakeholders and agencies permitted to drive on the beach.
- 7** **Promote the use of bird-friendly lighting and building design** both for beach-nesting birds in the summer, and migratory song-birds in the spring and fall.

How You Can Help Beach-Nesting Birds

Local businesses, agencies, and community members can help in many ways!

- Take the “Share the Shore” pledge act.audubon.org/a/share-love-and-share-shore.
- Commit to following and expanding these BMPs for the safety and success of beach-nesting birds.
- Contact Audubon Delta staff about training opportunities for those working on the beach.
- Volunteer to help monitor and conserve coastal birds year-round.
- Read the full paper, which can be found at ms.audubon.org/whitepapers.

Contact Information

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Least Terns. Photo: Robert Blanchard/Audubon Photography Awards