

# Share the Shore

## The Lively Beach Wrack Community

The wrack is stuff cast ashore by the sea. Much of this once grew in the sea, like seaweeds and seagrasses. These marine castaways foster protective dunes and allow assembly of a unique natural community that brings life to the beach.



### Base of the Wrack Community

Most energy for the wrack community comes from a variety of marine plants. In their death, these plants form the base of a food web that spans the western Atlantic and Americas.



### The Red Knot's Journey

Red knots migrate as far as 70,000 miles each year between their wintering and summer breeding areas. On their journey, the birds depend on jet stops where beach wrack and other food sources provide refueling energy. Without these options, the birds can starve to death.



### What's in the Wrack?

Hidden in the wrack community are many items with their own interesting stories to tell. Sea beans drift from the tropics, dune plant seeds give rise to future beach plants, and seashells and other invertebrate skeletons reveal former lives lived at sea. Human influence also reveals seagrass shards and bits of plastic from marine litter.



### Threats to the Wrack

Some of our efforts to "clean" the beach include the mechanized removal of wrack from the beach. Unfortunately, without wrack, some of the most interesting attributes of a beach are also absent.

### You Can Help



### Did You Know?

Picking up trash almost doubles the calories you burn walking down the beach. As you stop, you'll discover treasures, common in wrack are more than 300 kinds of sea shells and 60 kinds of sea beans.

## Beach Nesting Birds



From February through July, four bird species (ring-billed plovers, Wilson's plovers, black turnstones, and least terns) nest on our beaches. Their nests are simple depressions in the sand. Eggs, chicks and adults blend in with the surroundings making them nearly invisible on the ground. They are vulnerable to storms, predators (especially crows, gulls, and raccoons), vehicles, and disturbance by people and pets. Because of population declines, these bird species have protected status in various states ranging from Endangered to Species of Special Concern. It is important to let them nest undisturbed.



### Never feed wildlife

Feeding wildlife, including gulls and crows, and leaving food scraps, attracts these and other predators to vulnerable nesting areas.



### Keep pets off the beach

Just the sight of a dog is enough to panic a nesting bird. Flushed from their nest, adult birds are forced to leave their eggs and chicks unprotected from predators and the hot sun.



### Respect posted nest areas

Keep out of posted areas. You may unknowingly crush nests and chicks. A single disturbance can cause birds to abandon nest sites or even the entire breeding colony.



### Let birds feed and rest

If birds take flight, you or your pet are too close. For migratory birds, feeding and resting on our beaches is key to their survival.



### Protect dune vegetation

Dune vegetation stabilizes and builds beaches, and provides cover and food for wildlife.

## Sarasota's Beaches are Essential Habitat for Shorebirds

The eight bird profiles below are illustrated at half their actual size. Sizes noted are lengths from tail to bill tip.

