

WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Help protect this important nesting area

Egmont Key supports more than 35,000 pairs of colonial and solitary beach-nesting birds! More laughing gulls nest here than anywhere else on the Gulf Coast.

You are standing at the edge of a national wildlife sanctuary. This special place has been set aside for birds and other wildlife to rest, nest, and feed – undisturbed by human activity. Though a variety of animals find refuge here, you will most likely spot sea birds, wading birds, and shorebirds.

OBSERVE FROM AFAR

In summer, you may witness the incredible sights and sounds of thousands of birds nesting and roosting together within the sanctuary. Known as colonial nesters, these birds find safety in numbers. Royal and sandwich terns, brown pelicans and laughing gulls make up the majority of the colony. Fewer in number and less conspicuous are the solitary nesters, such as American oystercatchers which can also be seen roaming around the island.

For the protection of wildlife and the benefit of future generations, do not enter the sanctuary or allow pets on the beach as this will disturb the birds. When adults flush from their nests due to disturbance, it leaves their eggs and chicks vulnerable to predators or overheating and thus contributes to bird mortality.

Observe with binoculars and be aware of the following bird distress signals:

- Broken wing display to lure predators away from young.
- Dive-bombing
- Defecation on intruders

The future of this nesting colony depends on your compliance. This area is protected by State and Federal Law and disturbance to wildlife may result in fines. Thank you for your cooperation.



AREA CLOSED

Beyond This Point



Laughing gull
Nests on the ground in a colony.



Brown pelican
Nest in colonies on the ground or in trees.



Royal tern
Colonial nester, builds nest on sand.



Sandwich terns
Nest often in the center of royal tern colonies.



American oystercatcher
Territorial solitary nester



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Wildlife Sanctuaries

No-entry sanctuaries were created on the southern and northern tips of Egmont Key to allow colonial nesting birds and sea turtles to nest without disturbance. Any disturbance may cause birds to flush off a nest leaving their eggs vulnerable to a myriad of threats such as predation from other birds, trampling by people, and heat stress.



American Oystercatcher



Laughing Gull



Black Skimmer



Brown Pelican



Royal and Sandwich Terns



Loggerhead Sea turtle

