

Connecticut's offshore islands provide critical nesting habitat for an extraordinary array of birds, from striking American Oystercatchers to long-legged Great Egrets.

Use this guide to help you identify our most threatened island nesting birds, and take steps to help them thrive.

Get involved by contacting ctwaterbirds@gmail.com or visit <http://www.ct.audubon.org>.

Find updates from the field at ctwaterbirds.blogspot.com.

About the Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds

A partnership between Audubon Connecticut (a state office of the National Audubon Society), the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History, the Connecticut Audubon Society, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Alliance trains and coordinates field staff and volunteer beach stewards.

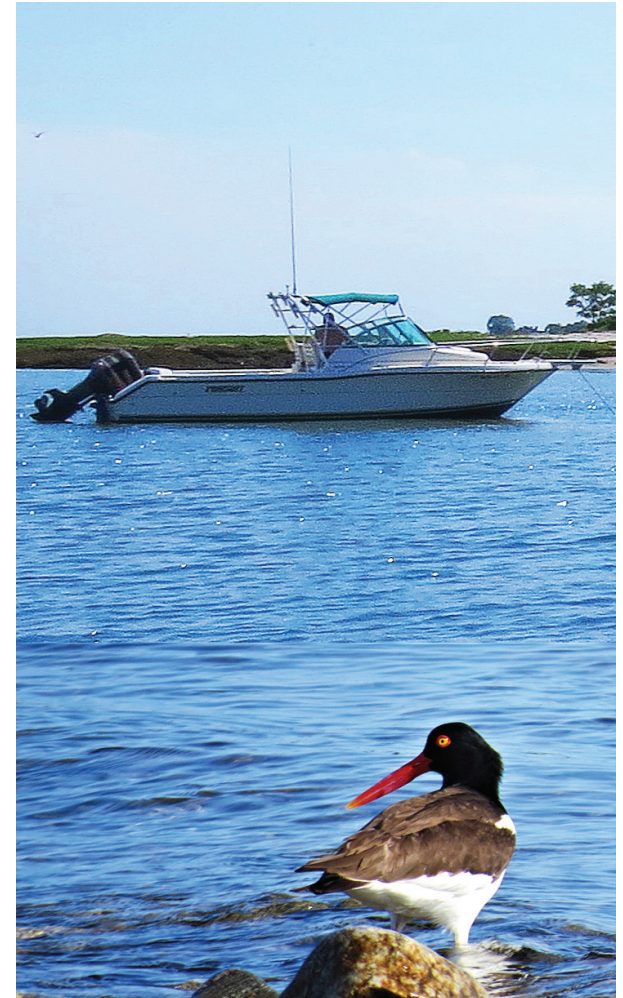
Through this community-wide effort, federally and state-threatened birds can rest, nest, and raise their chicks in a safer environment in and around Long Island Sound.



Photos: Elizabeth Amendola/Audubon (unless otherwise indicated)

Audubon Alliance GUIDE TO Boating with Birds

Sharing the Waterways



Safe Harbor for Threatened Species

Each spring and summer, Connecticut's offshore islands are home to over 80% of the state-threatened American Oystercatcher breeding population, nearly all of the state's breeding pairs of Common Terns, and five heron and egret rookeries.

Nesting birds are easily distressed by humans who get too close, even if we mean no harm. Imagine caring for a chick the size of a single scoop of ice cream! You might behave strangely in the presence of strangers too.

LEARN THE BIRD SIGNS OF STRESS

When you get too close, bird parents will often:

- Display warning behavior or alarm calls (terns will dive bomb a perceived threat)
- Draw your attention away from their nest or chicks (some may fake a broken wing)
- Stand very still and watch YOU (instead of watching their nest or chicks)



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Respect posted signs and fences

During nesting season, state, local, and federal agencies will rope off critical habitats with string fencing and post signs to protect nesting species from human disturbance.

Land kayaks and anchor boats away from nesting sites

Even a single disturbance can cause adult birds to leave nests and abandon chicks, which makes chicks and eggs more vulnerable to predators and overheating.

Follow beaches' dog laws

Even well-behaved, leashed dogs can scare a bird off a nest for longer than normal. Worst case scenario, eggs or fragile chicks get crushed underfoot.

Carry in, carry out

Leftover food, fish scraps, and trash attracts predators that can attack nests and young birds. Trash that winds up in the water washes up on the islands, and nesting in trash is no fun.

Dispose of fishing line

Birds can easily become entangled in loose line, which can trap, injure, or even kill them.

Avoid landing or walking at high tide

Birds have fewer places to go and rest during this time.

Keep close to the water

When walking on the shoreline or an island, stick to a path or on the wet sand to avoid stepping on a nest or chick.

Can You Identify This Bird Mom (Or Dad)?

Thousands of migrating shorebirds stop in Connecticut to rest and feed each year, but island life isn't always easy! Boats and people can scare parents away from chicks and nests. Can you ID the birds you see?



American Oystercatcher



Common Tern

Scott Dere/Audubon Photography Awards



Great Egret

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