

Guidance for Releasing Rehabilitated Migratory Birds



Decisions on where to release rehabilitated birds should be based on where and when individual birds were rescued, an understanding of the life history of each species, and, the location of uncontained oil that may still potentially impact the coastal habitat and associated wildlife.

The following general guidance is offered with the important tenet of consulting with and seeking more specific guidance from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

- (1) If it is determined by the FWC that a bird is appropriate for release within the state, then the only consultation needed is between the IC and the FWC. When possible, birds should be released on the same coast (Atlantic or Gulf) on which they were found.
- (2) If it is determined by FWC that it is inappropriate to release the bird within Florida, then consultation is needed between the IC and FWC and the state wildlife agency where the bird is proposed to be released. Birds can be released outside of the state on either the Gulf or Atlantic coasts with the following exceptions:
 - Breeding shorebirds/seabirds (snowy plover, Wilson's plover, American oystercatcher, willet, black skimmers, black-necked stilt) – Gulf coast only
 - Pelicans – Gulf coast preferred, Merritt Island is an alternate Atlantic site
 - Mottled Ducks – no mottled ducks captured outside of Florida should be released in Florida. Florida mottled ducks can be released anywhere in interior Florida.
 - Marsh Birds – no marsh birds captured outside of Florida should be released in Florida. Any marsh birds captured in Florida can be released in Florida and should be released in an area near their capture unless a risk of re-oiling remains. Wading birds, pied-billed grebes, eagles, osprey – can be released anywhere in Florida, freshwater, or saltwater.