

## **APPENDIX 13**

### **Shell Key Preserve Visitor Guide**

## Shell Key Preserve

The most extraordinary feature of the Preserve is Shell Key itself, an undeveloped barrier island. This type of ecosystem is rare in Florida and is critical to the survival of a number of wildlife species that depend on coastal systems. Some of the same natural features that attract wildlife to Shell Key also attract thousands of human visitors annually.



## Bird Preservation Area

A protected 95-acre Bird Preservation Area has been set aside as a sanctuary for nesting, migrating, and wintering birds. This area extends into shallow waters in some portions of the Preserve, so please read the signs. Access within the Bird Preservation Area is prohibited without prior authorization.

Thousands of protected migrating and wintering shore and sea birds use the Preserve during the fall, winter and spring months. Nesting species that enjoy special protection by the State include the American oystercatcher, least tern and black skimmer. All bird species benefit when humans do not disturb them. Please remember that we are visitors to an area they call home.



American oystercatcher @ Tom Vaso



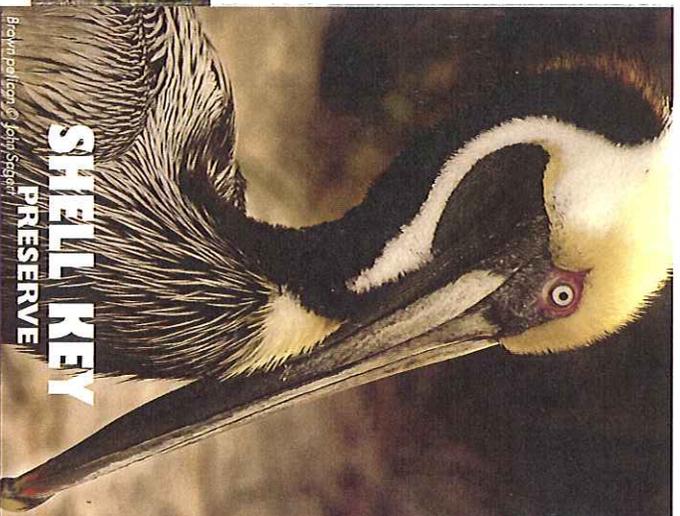
Black skimmer @ Tom Vaso

Before you leave, take a moment to look around and take with you everything you brought. This ensures a pleasant experience for the next visitor, which may be you.



Least tern @ Tom Vaso

Help us maintain the valuable amenities of the Preserve. Enjoy the beaches, fish the shallows, and watch the birds.



Black skimmer @ John Siggel

## SHELL KEY PRESERVE

For additional information, please call us at (727) 453-6900  
Group Permits: (727) 453-6900

SEP 08/10 200

Department of Environmental Management  
Environmental Lands Division  
3620 Fletch Haven Drive  
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688



[www.pinellascounty.org/environment](http://www.pinellascounty.org/environment)

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## SHELL KEY PRESERVE Visitor Guide

Shell Key Preserve is a 1,755-acre preserve, which includes a 180-acre barrier island known as Shell Key. The entire region is a sanctuary for nesting, wintering, and migrating birds, as well as a popular fishing and boating area. Access to Shell Key is limited to water vessels only and boaters should check local tide charts before navigating the shallow waters that lie to the east of Shell Key.



Willet @ Tom Vaso



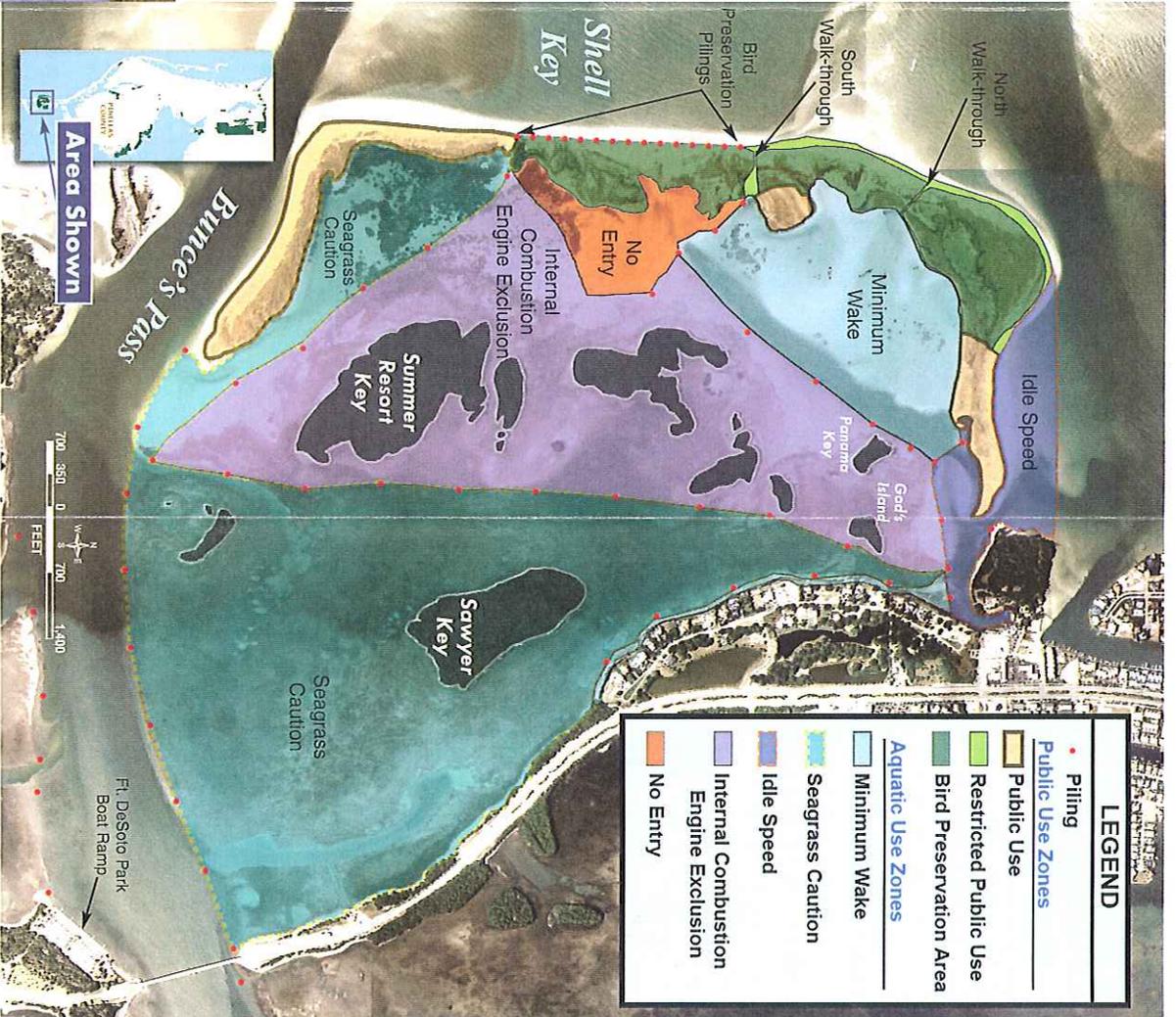
Shell Key Preserve is managed by Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management's Environmental Lands Division under a plan developed with the community to protect the natural resources while providing recreational use. Help us protect the Preserve's barrier and mangrove islands, seagrass beds, sand bars, and mudflats by remembering that we are the visitors to this extraordinary place.

## General Rules

- All flora and fauna are protected.
- Return shells with live animals to the water.
- Please remove all trash when you leave.
- Fireworks and weapons are prohibited within the Preserve.
- No open containers of alcohol are allowed on Shell Key.
- Group permits are required for groups larger than 50.

## Pets

- Pets are permitted in Public Use Areas only.
- Pets are not allowed on the beaches in the Restricted Public Use Area, which is adjacent to the Bird Preservation Area.
- All pets must be under voice control or on a leash at all times.
- The Preserve is closed to pets during the critical bird nesting period annually from April 15 – June 15.



## Fishing

- Adhere to all State and Federal fishing regulations.

## Camping

- Camping is allowed in the Public Use Areas only.
- Campfires must be extinguished and the site cleaned up before you leave.
- Bring your own sanitary facilities with you; none are available on the island.

## Hiking

- Hiking is allowed on Shell Key except in the Bird Preservation Area, which is clearly posted.
- Two walk-throughs, which allow access from the east side of Shell Key to the Gulf side, are clearly marked.
- Bird Preservation Piling denote the area where the Bird Preservation Area extends toward the Gulf. Please walk on the west side of these pilings.

## Boating

- Please follow signage in shallow areas.
- Respect the posted aquatic use zones.
- Do not block navigational routes in the flats, especially in the posted area on the north end.
- Do not enter the No Entry Zone located on the east side of Shell Key.