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## **County closes Beach Access 7 to protect Snowy Plover nests**

Sarasota County Parks and Recreation has closed Siesta Beach Access 7 to protect Snowy Plovers and their nests.

The beach access is at the intersection of Beach Road and Calle de la Siesta on Siesta Key. Parking still is available and signage directs beachgoers to nearby beach entrances.

“Snowy Plovers are imperiled species and depend on this stretch of nesting beach for their survival,” said John McCarthy, general manager, Sarasota County Parks and Recreation. “We appreciate the local community working to protect this vital nesting beach.”

The number of Snowy Plovers has been declining and the National Audubon Society estimates there are less than 18,000 birds in the continental United States. There are only about 60 breeding pairs along the Gulf Coast of Florida, with five to seven pairs nesting on Sarasota County beaches.

“Because of their small size, pale coloring and ground nesting, Snowy Plover chicks are not easy to see and their nests are easily damaged or destroyed,” said Jerris Foote, supervisor, Sarasota County Parks and Recreation. Snowy Plovers are vulnerable to many human activities, including pedestrians who enter marked nesting locations. That can force the birds to leave the nesting area and abandon their eggs or chicks.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000.

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