

To: City of Marco Island

From: Audubon Western Everglades

Date: August 5, 2025

Subject: Justification for Reallocation of Funding to Shorebird Stewards

Greetings,

On behalf of Audubon Western Everglades, I thank you for your continued support of our conservation-focused programs on Marco Island. This year, we respectfully request the City of Marco Island's approval to reallocate \$1,000 in funding previously designated for our Marco Island Academy initiative toward supporting two Summer Shorebird Stewards.

This change is necessary because the Marco Island Academy project has been discontinued due to staffing limitations. Despite our best intentions, we no longer have the capacity to maintain the program, and it has been formally closed. As a result, the previously allocated funds are no longer needed .

We propose that these funds be redirected to support the work of our Summer Shorebird Stewards, who are critical to our shorebird conservation efforts on Marco Island beaches. These stewards play an essential role in:

- Educating beachgoers on shorebird conservation and the importance of responsible behavior near nesting sites.
- Engaging the community in conversations to raise awareness about local wildlife and conservation.
- Conducting monitoring activities that track local shorebird populations and nesting success, which is vital for data-driven conservation planning.

By supporting the Stewards, the City will be directly contributing to the protection of native wildlife, fostering community engagement, and promoting responsible recreation on Marco Island's beaches.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let us know if any additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

Bridget Washburn

Executive Director

Audubon Western Everglades

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