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First Nesting Roseate Spoonbills at Harris Neck NWR

Report by Kimberly Hayes

Welcome to the Neck

It finally happened. This was the first year a Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) pair nested at Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge. We've been waiting for them ever since the first Georgia nesting pair was documented in June 2011 in St. Mary's.

The pair at the Refuge was discovered nesting in the rookery on Woody Pond. Woody Pond is home to Georgia's largest Wood Stork rookery. In addition to Wood Storks, a variety of wading bird species nest in the rookery. Each year Roseate Spoonbills can be found visiting the Refuge but they have never nested....not until this summer.

Mary Ellen Urbanski, Wood Stork program volunteer, found them nesting alongside other wading birds in the rookery. Their bright pink plumage might have given them away. As Mary Ellen, other dedicated volunteers and staff monitored the Wood Stork colony throughout the summer, they kept an eye on the spoonbills.



Photo by Mary Ellen Urbanski, USFWS Volunteer

Harris Neck NWR is happy to report that the parent Roseate Spoonbills did a great job fledging 3 chicks! This is the second documented site in Georgia to have nesting Roseate Spoonbills. We are hopeful they will return next year... with friends.