

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners  
**From:** Dr. Thomas Eason, Director, Habitat and Species Conservation  
**Date:** November 19, 2015  
**Subject:** Critical Wildlife Area Establishment: Second Chance

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**Purpose:**

To provide the Commission background on the island known as Second Chance and seek approval to designate it a Critical Wildlife Area.

**Summary:**

Second Chance is an approximately 3-acre island in the Cape Romano Shoals in Collier County within the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (Rookery Bay). It provides crucial nesting habitat for imperiled seabirds and shorebirds, especially least terns and Wilson's plovers. Observed nesting effort has decreased in recent years while human activity and disturbance by boaters and shellers have increased. Educational signage has been used, but has not succeeded in protecting the colony from disturbance. A Critical Wildlife Area designation has been requested by staff from Rookery Bay, and would allow the island to be closed to public access from March 1 to August 31 to prevent disturbance to nesting birds. Rookery Bay and/or FWC staff contacted Collier County officials; boating, fishing, and other recreational businesses and advocates; and environmental organizations to inform them of the proposal. Additionally, two public meetings were held to discuss the proposal and take comments from interested persons. A total of 25 people, other than Rookery Bay and FWC, attended these public meetings and no opposition to the proposal was expressed.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends approving the establishment of Second Chance Critical Wildlife Area.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

Melissa Tucker, Assistant Section Leader, Species Conservation Planning (Presenter)  
Dr. Brad Gruver, Section Leader, Species Conservation Planning