

Florida's Beautiful Roseate Spoonbill© by Dan Pemble, Kissimmee, Florida



For those of us who reside in Central Florida, it is a true delight to occasionally witness the beautiful and remarkable roseate spoonbill merrily carrying on with its life's daily routines! The above photos are typical of what may be seen around many inland wetlands, including those in our own back yard right here in Kissimmee!

During the 1930's, this beautiful bird was "harvested" (hunted & killed) almost to the point of extinction because its unique plumage was used in making women's hand fans and hats. Thankfully, wildlife conservationists stepped in and placed these birds on the "endangered species list" and they were saved. Today, based on frequent sightings, it is clear that the species is continuing to recover and will indeed continue to proliferate in the future.

The roseate spoonbill's habitat ranges from points in South and Central America, the Caribbean islands, Texas, Louisiana, and in south & central Florida.

The approximate average size of the Roseate Spoonbill is: 85 cm (33.5 inches) tall, a wingspan of 1.5 meters (4.9 feet) and weight of 1.2-1.8 kg's (2.6-4 pounds).

The spoonbill's pink, red, and magenta-colored plumage is diet derived. They like a varied diet of small fish, amphibians, aquatic invertebrates, and some plant material. They feed in the early morning and evening hours by wading through shallow water with their bills partially submerged. As this bird walks it swings its head back and forth in a sideways motion. When the bird feels a prey item it snaps its bill closed, pulls the prey out of the water, and swallows it.

I hope that if you have not already done so, you will someday have a chance to see one of these beautiful creatures "strutting its stuff" in nature's wonderland!