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**Lee County Parks & Rec staff asks visitors to observe wildlife with caution
*Good bird-watching etiquette requested at beach preserve***

Fort Myers, FL, Jan. 28, 2016 — Lee County Parks & Recreation staffers are asking visitors to exercise sound bird-watching etiquette around a rare bird that is being sighted at Bunche Beach Preserve.

An American flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) has been in Lee County on and off since July 2015. Summer sightings included Estero Bay and the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge. But most recently it has been seen in the waters just off San Carlos Bay Bunche Beach Preserve, a Conservation 20/20 preserve located at the end of John Morris Road in South Fort Myers.

Unfortunately, some visitors who are trying to capture dramatic photos have been observed by Parks staff getting too close to the bird to make it flap its wings, among other things.

“This a rare treat for wildlife enthusiasts to see, but the bird should not be harassed,” Conservation 20/20 Manager Cathy Olson said. “Please respect this bird and others on the preserve by using binoculars, spotting scopes or cameras with zoom lenses and do not try to get continuously closer to the bird.”

The American Birding Association rules of etiquette are available online, and Olson suggests people who are planning to visit Bunche view them at www.aba.org/about/ethics.html.

The species’ typical range includes Central America through South America and the Caribbean, with regular populations on the east coast of Florida.

Visit www.leeparks.org or www.conservation2020.org for more Bunche Beach information. Or call 239-533-7275.

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Note to media: Images available upon request. Contact Tim Engstrom at 239-533-2221