

LIMPKINS

Have you heard a haunting, unforgettable call that sounds more prehistoric raptor than waterbird-- mostly at dawn or night? More than likely, the sound was the cry of a Limpkin.

These gangly birds seem to limp as they walk along wetland surfaces, hence the name limpkins.

- The Limpkin has a heavy brown body with elongated neck and legs. The head and neck are speckled with white flecks.
- Limpkins can be seen slowly walking through shallow water along our lakes stalking apple snails, insects, lizards, frogs and crustaceans with their uniquely adapted long bill.
- Limpkins are found in tropical freshwater wetland in the American tropics, Georgia and right here in VillageWalk ,Florida.
- They appear calm except during territorial conflicts between males, which are dramatic encounters involving chasing, calling, flying, and stylized combat.
- They nest above the water in reeds and grass on the ground or in shrubs or trees.
- They usually produce 4-8 eggs. Incubation is done by both sexes.
- Young birds leave the nest within a day after hatching, and follow one or both parents.
- Limpkins are protected by the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act that prohibits the taking (including killing, capturing, selling, trading, and transport) of protected migratory bird species without prior authorization by the Department of Interior U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Some regions in Florida have noticed a dramatic increase in Limpkins over the last few years.

Researchers are starting to investigate why the bird population has increased. This is possibly due to the increased availability of apple snails, which is one of their primary food sources. They are also watching what happens to their ecosystem with this sudden shift in population.