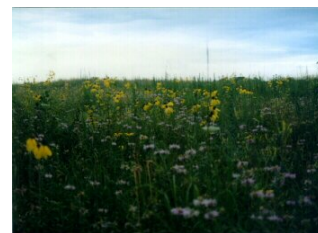


Protected Animal Species Common to Pine Flatwoods and Dry Prairie Habitats

There are a variety of ecosystems in the FDOT District IV region that have characteristics that are desirable to certain species. This fact sheet covers species found in what is known as Pine Flatwoods and Dry Prairie Habitats. This ecosystem typically occurs in the northern counties of FDOT District IV. Some of the wildlife that inhabit these areas are protected under Federal and State laws (e.g., “listed species”). It is important to always consider the area that could be impacted by construction and the habitat it might provide for protected species. Pine Flatwoods and Dry Prairie Habitats are two of the ecosystems that provide shelter, food and nesting areas for some protected species. Construction or maintenance projects that will occur in areas typically inhabited by these species are reviewed during design to ensure that impacts to listed species will be minimized. This sometimes results in special construction requirements to avoid potential harm to the listed species. These measures typically can be found in the notes and/or permits issued by agencies such as the South Florida and St. John’s River Water Management Districts (SFWMD and SJRWMD), the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Provided construction occurs according to the notes and permit conditions, it is not likely that direct impacts to protected wildlife will occur. However, if you believe a protected species is on your site and could potentially be impacted by construction activities, cease construction impacts in the immediate area and contact FDOT. *Do not try to catch, remove or scare away protected species.* Actions such as these may be ineffective as the animals may return shortly thereafter, and in addition may be in violation of State and Federal law. The FDOT will instead work to have the animal relocated or provide other means to avoid impacts. This will help to avoid potential liability, and keep construction activities on schedule. If you believe a protected animal has been injured or killed by construction activity, cease activities in the area and contact FDOT. Reporting in this manner minimizes liability and the appearance of wrongdoing. The following is information about the most commonly encountered listed species when working in or near a Pine Flatwoods or Dry Prairie Habitat. For more information on identifying these species, consult the FWC website: http://www.myfwc.com/WILDLIFEHABITATS/imperiledSpp_index.htm.



Pine flatwoods are usually found in dry, upland areas of Florida. The vegetation consists of an overstory of pine trees including longleaf, slash and pond pine. The shrubby understory vegetation, including plants such as saw palmetto, wax myrtle and wiregrass, provides suitable nesting areas and the dry, sandy soils provide shelter for burrowing animals. Dry Prairies are similar to Pine Flatwoods but lacking the pine overstory. Below is a table of protected species commonly found in Pine Flatwood and Dry Prairie Habitat and the



FDOT District IV counties in which they are usually found. Following the table is a brief description of each animal.

Type	Species	Latin Name	County
Birds	Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River
	Burrowing Owl	<i>Athene cunicularia floridana</i>	Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River
	Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara cheriway</i>	Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River
	Florida Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis pratensis</i>	Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River
	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	<i>Picoides borealis</i>	Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River
	Southeastern American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius paulus</i>	Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie
Mammals	Black Bear	<i>Ursus americanus floridanus</i>	Throughout state
	Florida Panther	<i>Puma concolor coryi</i>	Broward, Palm Beach
	Sherman's Fox Squirrel	<i>Sciurus niger shermani</i>	Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River
Reptiles	Gopher Tortoise	<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River



Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)



The adult Bald eagle has a white head and tail, dark plumage and a bright yellow bill. An immature eagle is dark with light splotches on the body, wings and tail. Most eagles are found near large bodies of water where fish is plentiful; however, they prefer to nest in large trees such as pines. Juvenile birds are migratory while adults tend to be resident. Removed from the listed species list, but is still protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the state bald eagle rule.

Florida Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia floridana*)

This ground-dwelling bird has long legs, a white chin stripe, yellow eyes, a round head, and stubby tail. The adult is boldly spotted and barred with brown and white. The Burrowing owl tends to dig its burrows in places such as roadsides, ball fields and airport runway areas, and generally do not migrate. These owls are listed as Species of Special Concern in Florida.



Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*)

The Crested caracara is large, distinctive raptor. It has a large head with a black crest, a hooked bill, and long, rounded wings. White patches at the ends of dark wings are a distinctive feature in flight. They prefer to nest in cabbage palms or live oak trees. Caracaras generally stay year-round in the same territory and are listed as a Threatened Federally and in Florida.

Florida Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis pratensis*)

The Sandhill Crane is a tall, long-legged, long-necked bird with a clump of feathers that droop over the tail. The adult is gray overall, with a whitish chin, cheek and upper throat. Sandhill Cranes will frequent agricultural fields and pastures, but nest in shallow water or on marshy ground. They are generally non-migratory and are listed as a threatened species in Florida.



Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*)

This small bird has distinguishing black and white bars with white on the side of the face. This non-migratory bird is listed as an Endangered species Federally and a Species of Special Concern in Florida. It typically nests in cavities within very old longleaf pine trees.

Southeastern American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*)

This is a small falcon that is listed as Threatened in the state of Florida. It has a black and white face and gray-blue wings (typical on males). The wings are long and pointed and the tail is typically long. The kestrel is found in Florida year-round. Breeding season is from April to September. They typically nest in the cavities of dead trees.



Florida Black Bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*)

This large mammal is listed as Threatened in almost every county in Florida. The bear has a shiny black coat and a brown muzzle. The tail is short and the ears are round. Male bears can weigh up to approximately 250 pounds. Black bears rely on a variety of forested communities to maintain a diet that varies with the season.

Florida Panther (*Puma concolor coryi*)

A typical Florida panther can weigh from 70-150 pounds. They are dark buff to tawny above, and light buff to white below. The muzzle is black and white and the tip of the tail is black. A typical panther track shows four clawless toe pads around a three-lobed heel pad. Panthers require extensive blocks of mostly forested communities as well as wetlands. They are year-round residents in primarily South Florida and are listed as an Endangered species Federally and in the State.



Sherman's Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger shermani*)

This large squirrel is listed as a Species of Special Concern. The squirrel's fur usually varies from all black to silver on its back with a tan belly. The head is black and the ears and muzzle are white. Sherman's fox squirrel has a very long tail. Pines and oaks provide seeds and cones that are necessary for the squirrel's diet.

Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*)

This medium-sized land turtle is Threatened in Florida. The upper shell is domed and mostly brown. The bottom shell has some yellow shading. The tortoise digs deep burrows in dry, upland habitats. During winter months, it is common for the Gopher tortoise to remain underground with limited above-ground activity. Regulations regarding the protection and permitting for the relocation of the Gopher tortoise or the destruction of its habitat can be found at: : <http://myfwc.com/permits/Tortoise/default.asp>



Florida Department of Transportation Protected Species Contacts:

Fernando Ascanio: (954) 777-4665 David Bogardus: (954) 777-4339

Other protected species Fact Sheets also available include: Freshwater Marshes, Scrub and High Pine, Swamps and Coastal Areas

