

Protected Animal Species Common to Scrub and High Pine Habitat

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 Scrub or High Pine Habitat. This can occur in FDOT District IV, particularly in the northern counties. Some of the wildlife that inhabits these areas is protected under Federal and State laws (i.e., “listed species”). It is important to always consider the area that could be impacted by construction and the habitat it might provide for listed species. Scrub and High Pine Habitat is one of the ecosystems that provide shelter, food and nesting areas for some listed 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 District (SFWMD and SJRWMD), the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), UA 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 laws. 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 Scrub and High Pine Habitat. For more information on identifying

these species, consult the FWC website: http://www.myfwc.com/WILDLIFEHABITATS/imperiledSpp_index.htm

This habitat is usually found in dry, upland areas of Florida. The vegetation consists of drought-tolerant shrubs and oaks. The overstory (trees) may also contain tall sand pine or slash pine. The shrubby vegetation provides suitable nesting areas and the dry, sandy soils provide shelter for burrowing animals. Below is a table of listed species commonly found in Scrub and High Pine 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	Southeastern American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius paulus</i>	Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie
	Florida Scrub Jay	<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>	Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River
	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	<i>Picoides borealis</i>	Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie
Reptiles	Eastern Indigo Snake	<i>Drymarchon corais couperi</i>	Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, Indian River
	Florida Pine Snake	<i>Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus</i>	Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River
	Gopher Tortoise	<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River
Amphibians	Gopher Frog	<i>Rana capito</i>	Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River
Mammals	Florida Black Bear	<i>Ursus americanus floridanus</i>	Throughout state
	Sherman's Fox Squirrel	<i>Sciurus niger shermani</i>	Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River

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 Scrub Jay** (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*)

This species resembles the blue jay and is listed as Threatened Federally and in Florida. The wings and tail are blue, and unlike the Blue Jay the head does not have a crest. Preservation and restoration of oak scrub habitat is necessary for their survival. Certain steps are required for the protection of the Florida scrub jay. The regulations regarding the protection of this species can be found at:

<http://www.fws.gov/northflorida/Scrub-Jays/general-survey-guide-082407.htm>

**Red-cockaded Woodpecker** (*Picoides borealis*)

This small bird has distinguishing black and white bars with white on the side of the face. This species remains in the same area year-round. The Red-cockaded woodpecker is listed as Federally Endangered and as a Species of Special Concern in Florida. It typically nests in cavities within very old longleaf pine trees.

**Eastern Indigo Snake** (*Drymarchon corais couperi*)

This non-venomous snake is listed as Threatened federally and in the state of Florida. It is large, black and shiny. The indigo snake can be found using the gopher tortoise burrow for shelter. It is illegal to gas burrows for the collection of snakes.

Florida Pine Snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus*)

This non-venomous snake is listed as a Species of Special Concern. It is a large snake with a blotchy pattern. It typically has tan or brown coloring. This snake also utilizes gopher tortoise burrows for shelter. The Florida pine snake generally remains below ground.

**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 of 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>

Gopher Frog (*Rana capito*)

This medium-sized frog is listed as a Species of Special Concern. The Gopher frog is typically plump and has very spotted skin. It breeds and lays eggs in small wet prairies or shallow marshes. Because this is another animal that utilizes the gopher tortoise burrow as a shelter, it is important to maintain burrows for protection of this species.

**Florida Black Bear** (*Ursus americanus floridanus*)

This large mammal is listed as Threatened in almost every county in the state of 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.

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.

**Florida Department of Transportation Protected Species Contacts:**

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Other protected species Fact Sheets also available include: Freshwater Marshes, Pine Flatwoods and Dry Prairie, freshwater, Swamps and Coastal Areas.

