

FDOT CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS FOR UNANTICIPATED INTERACTION WITH PROTECTED SPECIES

The species covered in this document are protected under federal and state regulations. Consideration for protected species occurs on all FDOT projects. For species anticipated to occur within the project limits, permit conditions or special provisions to avoid adverse impacts to these species are included in the contract. The requirements in this document are included as part of all projects and must be followed when unanticipated interactions with protected species occur within an active construction area and there are no permit conditions or special provisions for that specific species in the contract or when unanticipated habitat, burrows, nests, etc. are encountered.

These requirements address common protected species that may be encountered on FDOT projects. These requirements **DO NOT** address all protected species found in Florida.

SPECIES PROTECTION MEASURES

- ✓ Do not harm, harass or kill any wildlife. Stand back and allow animals to leave the site.
- ✓ If a protected species is observed in an active construction area, cease work in the immediate area or as directed based on the species-specific requirements.
- ✓ For health and safety reasons and for the protection of animals, removal and relocation of wildlife must be done by a qualified and properly equipped personnel.
- ✓ Do not feed any wildlife or leave out food where it could attract wildlife.
- ✓ If it can be done safely, take photos of wildlife concerns to share with biologists.

There may be civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing or killing of protected species including those actions that results in death or injury to listed species by significantly impairing normal behavior patterns such as breeding, feeding, or sheltering.

Reporting and Consultation Guidelines

For all species in this document the following requirements apply:

1. When observed in the active construction area, cease work in the immediate area or as directed based on the species-specific requirements. Report the sighting of the species (including nests, burrows, or other indicators of species' presence) immediately to the Construction Project Administrator (CPA) who will coordinate with the District environmental staff. Do not approach or harass species and allow them to leave the project site on their own. Additional species-specific requirements are noted on the corresponding page for that species. Resume work as directed by the CPA or based on the species-specific requirements.
2. District environmental staff will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and/or the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) as needed to confirm if any further procedures/and or conditions need to be implemented within the construction area. The contractor may be required to provide details such as means and methods, duration of specific activities, and material types, to support the District's agency coordination. The CPA will inform the Contractor of any changes or actions required for the project.

Click (Ctrl + Click) on the species name below for a brief description, ID photograph(s), and guidance on protection requirements.

MAMMALS	BIRDS
Bat Species and Roosts	Audubon’s Crested Caracara (<i>Polyborus plancus audubonii</i>)
Black Bear (<i>Ursus americanus floridanus</i>)	Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)
Panther (<i>Puma concolor coryi</i>)	Burrowing Owl (<i>Athene cunicularia floridana</i>)
West Indian Manatee (<i>Trichechus manatus</i>)	Everglade Snail Kite (<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus</i>)
REPTILES	Florida Scrub Jay (<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>)
Eastern Indigo Snake (<i>Drymarchon corais couperi</i>)	Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>)
Gopher Tortoise (<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>)	Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (<i>Picoides borealis</i>)
Sea Turtle Species	Sandhill Crane (<i>Antigone canadensis pratensis</i>)
FISH	Southeastern American Kestrel (<i>Falco sparverius paulus</i>)
Smalltooth Sawfish (<i>Pristis pectinata</i>)	Wood Stork (<i>Mycteria americana</i>)
Sturgeon Species	

Bat Species and Roosts

There are nine species of bat in Florida that have the potential for using FDOT structures, including bridges, culverts and buildings. Identifying individual bat species requires training, however, since all are protected, there are ways to determine whether they are present.

- Visual – bats flying in and out or roosting (hanging) on a structure (note that they may be found in small crevices; therefore, use the other indicators listed below in addition to visual detection)
- Sound – high pitched squeaking or chirping
- Droppings (guano) – bat droppings are small brown or black pellets. Older droppings may be gray. These droppings will accumulate on the floor of a building, the ground beneath a bridge or on bridge structural components.
- Smell – bat urine and droppings have a pungent, acrid odor especially with a large colony
- Staining – stains generally appear as a dark discoloration on the structures surface and may look as if the stain is wet.
- Signs of feeding – insect legs, wings and other parts in piles.

When working above, on, or under bridges, culverts, or on buildings, report any of these indicators of bat presence immediately to the CPA.



Top Left – Bridge staining. **Top Right** – Guano deposits visible from bridge deck.
Bottom Left – Visible bats within an expansion joint. **Bottom Right** – Staining on underside of expansion joint and guano deposits on the ground.

Photo credits: FDOT and Federal Transportation Agency/State Department of Transportation (DOT) Preliminary Bat Assessment Guidelines for Bridges/Structures

The two species listed below are specifically included in this document due to their Federally Endangered status under the Endangered Species Act.

The **Bonneted Bat** (*Eumops floridanus*) are known for their large, rounded ears that join from a single point on the forehead (like a bonnet). This is the largest species of bat found in Florida and can reach a length of 6.5 inches and can be found in central to southern Florida (17 counties – see figure below). They are typically found in cracks, crevices or cavities in trees and structures greater than 15-feet tall and may utilize bridges, and artificial structures (bat houses, utility poles, and buildings with tile roofs, chimneys, soffit gaps, gaps along gutters or other structural gaps).

If a possible bonneted bat is observed within the active work area, establish a 250-foot¹ buffer around roosts to limit disturbance of roosting individuals and report the siting to the CPA.

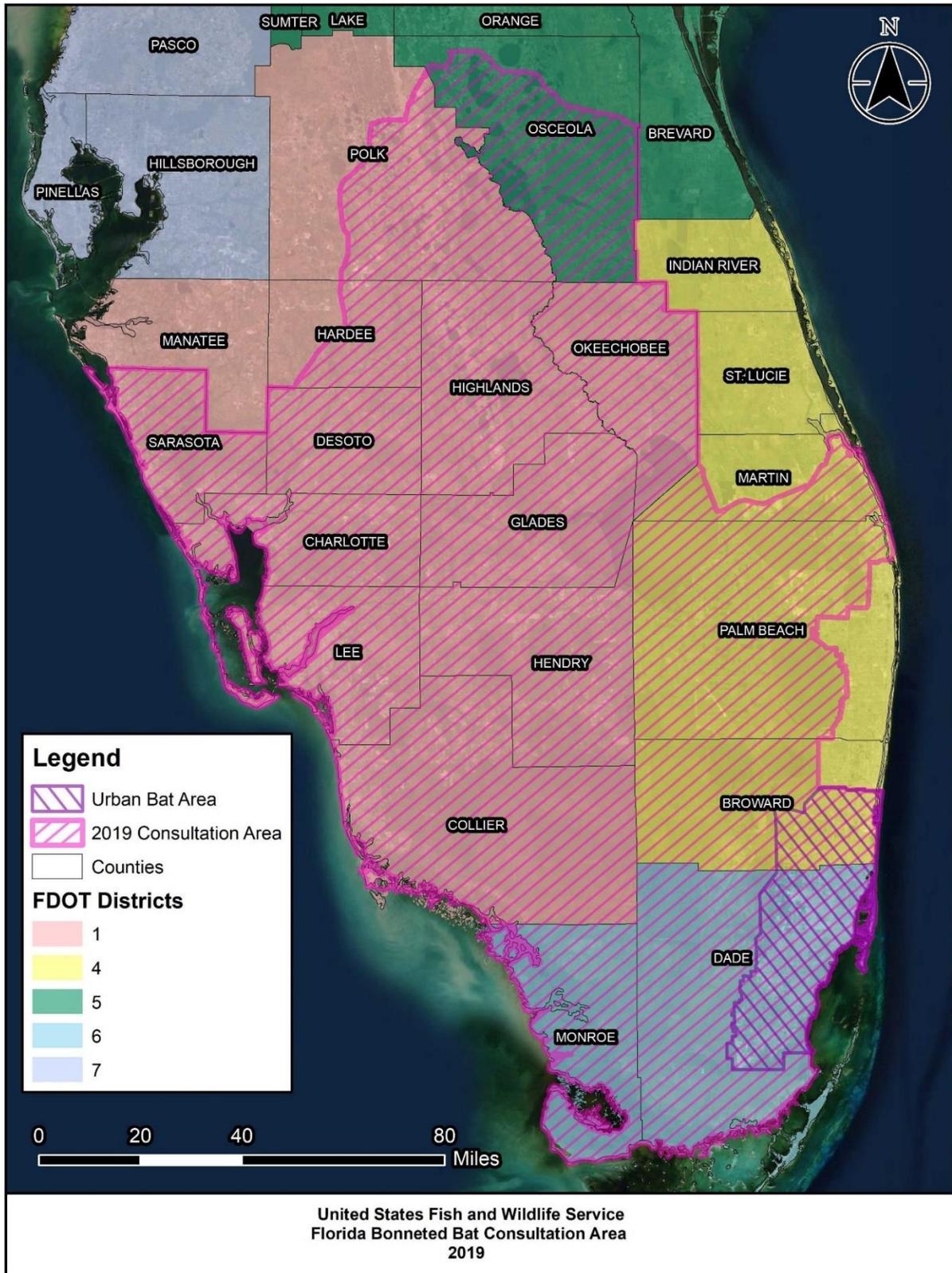


The **Gray Bat** (*Myotis grisescens*) measures up to 4 inches in length. Its fur is gray, sometimes turning reddish-brown during the summer. Gray bats also have a calcar (spur of cartilage) on their foot, which is used for stability during flight. It is only found in the Panhandle in the Counties of Calhoun and Jackson.



Photo credit: John MacGregor

¹ [Consultation Key for the Florida Bonneted Bat](#)



Florida Bonneted Bat Consultation Area (USFWS)

Black Bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*)

Black bears are the only bears naturally occurring in Florida. Although black bears in western states may have several color phases, all black bears in Florida are black with a brown snout. Black bears are large, powerful mammals with rounded ears, short tails, 5-toed feet, and large canine teeth.

If a black bear is observed within the active work area, once it has left the area, remove unsecured garbage and food debris from the construction site. Continue to do so daily to eliminate possible sources of food that could encourage and attract bears.



Photo credit: Ashley Hockenberry

Panther (*Puma concolor coryi*)

Florida panthers are very large cats with a long tail, broad head, and round ears. Panther kittens are gray with dark spots and bands around their tail. Adults are brown with a pale underside and a dark area on the end of their tail. Bobcats (see second photo below) are often mistaken for panthers. A bobcat is about twice the size of a normal housecat and has a “bobbed” tail, that may be only 1 in. – 7 in. long.



Photo credit: A Florida panther – Larry W. Richardson ([USFWS](#))



Photo Credit: A bob cat for reference, not to be confused with a panther- [FWC](#)

West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*)

West Indian manatees are large, gray aquatic animals with a blunt, whiskered snout and a torpedo-shaped body that tapers to a flat, paddle-shaped tail.

If a manatee is observed within 50 feet² of the active work area, the following precautionary measures are to be implemented:

- All in-water activities, including vessel operation, must be shut down if a manatee(s) comes within 50-feet of the work area. Activities shall not resume until the manatee(s) has moved beyond a 50-foot radius of the in-water work, or until 30 minutes elapses since the last sighting within 50-feet.
- Any collision with or injury to a manatee shall be reported immediately to the FWC Hotline at 1-888-404-3922 or by email at ImperiledSpecies@myFWC.com, to the USFWS and to District environmental staff. For projects in north Florida contact the North Florida Ecological Services Office at 1-904-731-3336 and for projects in south Florida contact the South Florida Ecological Services Field Office at 1-772-562-3909.



Photo credit: A Florida manatee calf sticks close to its mother in shallow water – Keith Ramos ([USFWS](#))



Photo credit: Manatee with scars from encounters with the propeller or hull of moving boats ([USFWS](#))



Photo credit: Manatee “footprint” in the water ([Save the Manatee](#))



Photo credit: Manatee snout ([Pittsburgh Paddlefish](#))

² [Standard Manatee Construction Conditions](#)

Audubon’s Crested Caracara (*Polyborus plancus audubonii*)

Audubon’s crested caracara are large birds of prey with a large head with a black cap and crest and orange beak. Juveniles are brown with a light pinkish beak. Caracara’s prefer open prairie habitat and pastures with scattered cabbage palms when foraging and typically use cabbage palms for nesting and roosting. There are rare reports of caracara nesting in slash pines. While adults are generally solitary birds outside of nesting season (nesting season occurs from November-April), juvenile birds have been known to use gathering areas and can be found roosting in large groups within a single tree.

If a caracara nest is observed within an active work area (or within a radius of one mile³), cease work activities and contact the CPA.



Photo credit: Adult – Joshua Vandermeulen ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Juvenile – Ryan Sanderson ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Caracara nest – Carl Anglesea ([NestWatch](#))

³ [Caracara Conservation Guidelines](#)

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

Adult bald eagles are identified by their large size, dark brown body with white head and tail and yellow bill, eyes, legs and feet. Juveniles are brown with speckled white plumage. Bald eagles typically nest from October through June. Bald eagle nests are very large and typically found at the top of tall trees. They return to the same nesting territory and nest each year.

If a nest is identified within 660 feet⁴ of the active work area, the Contractor must stop work and report the sighting to the CPA.



Photo credit: Adult – Scott Heidorn ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Juvenile – Blair Dudeck ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Immature adult (2nd Year) – Karl Overman ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Nest – Dan Vickers ([Macaulay Library](#))

⁴ [National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines](#)

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia floridana*)

Burrowing owls are small ground dwelling owls with long legs, white chin stripe, boldly spotted, brown and white stripes, round head, and stubby tail. Burrowing owls use a primary burrow with one of more satellite burrows for breeding, sheltering, and escape from predators. Burrowing owls can dig their own burrows, which are typically 5 to 10 feet long and can be excavated in as little as 2 days, or utilize existing gopher tortoise burrows, armadillo burrows, or man-made structures. Burrowing owls use burrows year-round, for roosting during the winter and for raising young during the breeding season (February through July).

If a potential owl burrow is identified, maintain a 1,970-foot⁵ protective radius around the burrow.



Photo credit: Adult – Christopher Lindsay ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Juvenile – Luke Seitz ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Owls near burrow ([Lagunatic Photo](#))

⁵ [Burrowing Owl Guidelines](#)

Everglade Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus*)

The Everglade snail kite is a medium-sized raptor. Adult males are slate grey to black, while adult females are brown in color with varying amounts of white streaking on the face, neck, and chest. Both sexes have red eyes and orange legs. Juveniles are similar in color to adult females but have brown eyes. A distinguishing feature is their long, curved bill used for picking snails from their shells. The breeding season varies widely from year to year in relation to rainfall and water levels. Generally nesting occurs from January to May. Nesting may be done communally with other birds. Nest sites are over water, or in shrubs, low trees, cattails, or sawgrass, usually 3-15 feet above water, and rarely higher than 30 feet.

If a snail kite nest is identified within 1,640 feet⁶ of the active work area, the Contractor must stop work and report the nest to the CPA.



Photo credit: Adult Male – Thore Noernberg ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Adult Female ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Juvenile ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Typical Everglade snail kite nest ([Adam Price, The Wildlife Society](#))

⁶ [Snail Kite Management Guidelines](#)

Florida Scrub Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*)

The Florida scrub jay is similar in size and shape to a familiar blue jay; however, it does not have a head crest or white spotting on the wings and tail that are characteristic of the blue jay. Juveniles have a dusky brown head and neck with shorter tails. Scrub jays live in family groups, and generally more than one bird will be seen if encountered. They breed from March to June and nests are built from twigs and palmetto fibers 3 – 10’ off the ground in shrubby oaks.

If a scrub jay or an active nest is identified, stop work in the area (600 feet⁷ and/or natural vegetation within the location) and report sighting to the CPA.



Photo credit: Adult – Cassidy Ficker ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Juvenile – Luke Berg ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Florida scrub jay and nest ([Michelle Rensell](#))

⁷ [Florida Scrub Jay Conservation Guidelines](#)

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Osprey are large birds, with their head and undersides largely white. A dark brown streak extends through the eye and towards the back of the head. Several features distinguish the osprey from other birds of prey, including a reversible fourth toe and spines located on their feet that are used to help grasp their prey as they fly over the water. Juveniles are similar in appearance to adults but with fine white spotting on their upper-wings and back.

Osprey are commonly found throughout Florida; therefore, not every sighting needs to be reported just those that are in conflict with work activities. These include identification of an existing active osprey nest; osprey constructing a new nest within the project footprint; and osprey that appear to be in distress.

If an osprey is observed within the active work area, the following precautionary measures are to be implemented:

- If a sick, injured, or juvenile osprey is discovered, contact the CPA.
- If an active osprey nest (i.e., contains eggs or flightless young) is found and cannot be avoided, a federal permit for removal is required. The removal of an active nest is typically only approved in extreme cases where there is an immediate danger to the public's health and/or safety.
- Ospreys will actively defend their nests using their large talons. Working around a nest is not only potentially hazardous to workers, but also to the osprey eggs and young. Adults regulate the temperature of eggs and young chicks within a relatively narrow range. If the osprey is off the nest for an extended period, eggs or young may become too hot or too cold, causing them to die. The likelihood of osprey chicks hurting themselves or jumping from the nest increases when chicks can see or hear workers near the nest.
- If a nest is identified in the project area, try to avoid moving within a distance that causes a disturbance (i.e., alarm calls or taking flight). If continued disturbance is unavoidable, consider erecting a shade structure or other type of blind to block the birds' view of people.



Photo credit: Adult – Christoph Moning ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: ([Carlton B, Marco Island](#))

Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*)

Red-cockaded woodpeckers are small birds with a large white patch located on their cheek, a black head and neck, a white belly, and a barred black and white back. The “red-cockade”, which is only found on the male, consists of a small red streak above the cheek and is rarely visible. Juveniles have a red patch in the center of their black crown. The red-cockaded woodpecker may be confused with species of similar appearance such as the downy woodpecker (see second photo below); however, the red-cockaded woodpecker will often have identification bands around their legs. Red-cockaded woodpeckers require old growth pine forests. They nest and roost exclusively in cavities in mature living pines (10-inch diameter at breast height (DBH) or larger). Nesting season for this species is between April and June.

If a nest is observed within the active work area, cease work and notify the CPA.



Photo credit: Adult male – Craig Brelsford ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Downy woodpecker – Evan Lipton ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Nest and white bands indicating known nesting location ([USFWS](#))

Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis pratensis*)

Adult Florida sandhill cranes are easily identified by their large size, long neck, gray body and a patch of red on the top of their head. Juveniles are cinnamon brown and transition to grey in their first year. This species is non-migratory and nests year-round. Nests are low mounds built from marsh plants and twigs on the ground along freshwater marshes and lakes.

If a sandhill crane is observed within the active work area, the following precautionary measures are to be implemented:

- Stop work activities within 400 feet⁸ of an active sandhill crane nest.
- If young are observed in a wetland area, a nest is likely located nearby. Attempt to locate the nest without disturbing the birds, cease work within 1,500 feet⁸ of the nest site and report the sighting immediately to the CPA.



Photo credit: Adult – Lorri Howski ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Immature adult – Evan Lipton ([Macaulay Library](#))

([Mary Lundeberg](#))



Photo credit: Adult sandhill cranes and nest



Photo credit: Sandhill crane chick with adult ([USFWS](#))

⁸ [Final Florida Sandhill Crane Species Guidelines 2016](#)

Southeastern American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*)

Southeastern American kestrels are the smallest falcon in Florida (smaller than other raptors such as the red-tailed hawk or red shouldered hawk). They are colorful falcons (about the same size as doves) with a wingspan up to 2-feet. Males have slate-blue wings and head. Females have brown wings. Males and females have a pair of black stripes on each cheek and a brownish back with black flecking on their bodies. Juveniles are similar in appearance with heavier streaking on the chest and are difficult to distinguish from adult females. During flight, they have a high-pitched call which sounds like “killy-killy-killy”. Kestrels are found in open woodlands, pastures and open fields. Typical nest cavities are in dead trees, snags and utility poles as well as man-made nest boxes. Nesting occurs after early June when the breeding season ends.

If an active nest is detected or an individual is observed within the active work area, stop work if within 490 feet⁹ of the nest cavity.



Photo credit: Alex Lamoreaux ([FWC](#))



Photo credit: Tom Vezo ([FNAI](#))



Photo credit: [FWC](#)

⁹ [Southeastern American Kestrel Management Guidelines](#)

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*)

Wood storks are very large, white birds with black in the wings and a short black tail. They are tall with long legs. They have featherless, scaly, dark–gray heads and necks and a long heavy bill. They forage for food within wetlands and breed in colonies of storks and other wading birds. Breeding colonies in South Florida are from late November – early March, and from February – March in Central and North Florida.

If a wood stork is observed within the active work area, the following precautionary measures are to be implemented:

- There should be no human intrusion into feeding sites when storks are present. Depending upon the amount of screening vegetation, human activity should be no closer than between 300 feet¹⁰ (where solid vegetation screens exist) and 750 feet (no vegetation screen). Feeding sites are wetlands and other water sources that support prey (fish, tadpoles, invertebrates, etc.) for this species.
- Cease work within 2,500 feet¹⁰ of an active wading bird colony. Active colonies can be distinguished by groups of birds perching or attending nests.

Wading bird comparisons

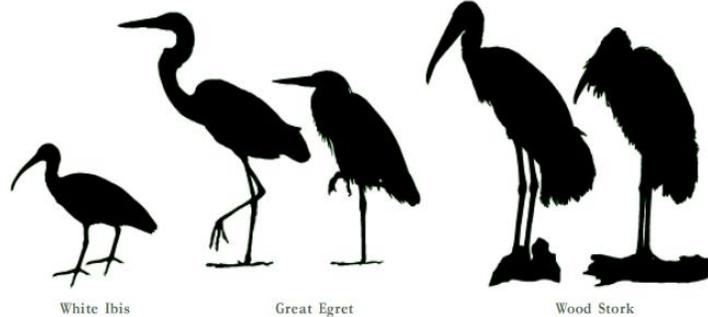


Photo credit: Adult – Rio Dante ([Macaulay Library](#))



Photo credit: Juvenile – Jason Denesevich ([Macaulay Library](#))

¹⁰ [Wood Stork Habitat Management Guidelines](#)

Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*)

Eastern indigo snakes are large, stout-bodied snakes often confused with black racers, and other black-colored snakes. The most notable feature is the glossy, iridescent, blue-black coloration of the snake. The body is glossy black and in sunlight has iridescent blue highlights. The bottom of the snake is a blue-gray. They may have red, reddish-orange, or cream coloration on the chin, throat or cheeks that may extend down the body.

If an eastern indigo snake is observed within the active work area, immediately notify CPA with the location information and condition of the snake.



Photo credit: James C. Godwin ([USFWS](#))



Photo credit: James C. Godwin ([USFWS](#))

Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*)

The gopher tortoise is a land turtle with a brown or black shell (5-12 inches) that is relatively flat above. They are dark brown to black with scales on their broad flat legs. Young gopher tortoises are tan or yellow in color and hatchlings typically emerge from their nests between August and November. They can be distinguished from other species of turtles by their stumpy, elephantine hind feet and shovel-like forelimbs adapted for digging. The entrances of gopher tortoise burrows are identifiable by their half-moon shape, flat bottom, and dirt apron unlike that of armadillos which have rounded burrows.

If a gopher tortoise is observed within the active work area, the following precautionary measures are to be implemented:

- If a tortoise, or its burrow is observed within a 25-foot radius of the active work area, cease work in that area and contact the CPA.
- Nests are typically laid in the sand of the burrow apron. Avoid the use of equipment or ground disturbing activity at the burrow apron.

To learn more about gopher tortoise, see FDOT’s **Gopher Tortoise Handbook** found at: <https://www.fdot.gov/environment/protected-species-and-habitat>



Adult – Photo credit: [FWC](#)



Juvenile – Photo credit: [FWC](#)



Adult and burrow – Photo credit: [FWC](#)

Sea Turtle Species

While each species differs in color, size and shape, all sea turtles share a common overall appearance. Sea turtles are much larger than freshwater turtles (2 feet to 8 feet in length) and have long front flippers. There are five species that occur in Florida.

- Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*)
- Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)
- Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*)
- Kemp’s Ridley (*Lepidochelys kempi*)
- Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

Sea turtles typically nest from March through October but may be found in Florida waters year-round. Sea turtle nests can be identified by disturbances in the sand with track or “crawls” leading up to the disturbed area.

If a sea turtle is identified, the following precautionary measures are to be implemented.

In-water Activities:

- All in-water activities, including vessel operation, must be shut down if a sea turtle(s) comes within 150 feet¹¹ of the work area. Activities shall not resume until the sea turtle has moved beyond a 150-foot radius of the in-water work, or until 20 minutes elapses since the last sighting within 150 feet.
- Vessel - When a protected species is sighted, attempt to maintain a distance of 150 feet or greater between the animal and the vessel. Reduce speed and avoid abrupt changes in direction until the animal(s) has left the area.

Land activities:

- Do not disturb marked sea turtle nests.
- If a sea turtle is identified on the beach, maintain a safe distance. Never touch or disturb a nesting female, turtle nests, or emerging hatchlings. Only authorized FWC permit holders are allowed to touch or move sea turtles.
- Record and report any sightings, interactions or involvement with sea turtle nests to the CPA immediately.
- If unanticipated nesting occurs within the vicinity of the project, contact the CPA and stay a minimum of a 3-foot radius¹² from the nest.
- For any project located adjacent to sea turtle nesting habitat, compliance with the FDOT Special Provision¹³ for night work along coastal roads will be required for all work zone lighting.

¹¹ [Vessel Strike Avoidance Measures; Protected Species Construction Conditions](#)

¹² [Marine Turtle Conservation Handbook p.2-14](#)

¹³ [FDOT Special Provision - SP0080401](#)



Photo credit: Green sea turtle ([NOAA](#))



Photo credit: Leatherback sea turtle – Stephanie Rousseau ([Oceana](#))



Photo credit: Kemp's Ridley sea turtle ([Oceana](#))



Photo credit: Loggerhead sea turtle ([Oceana](#))



Photo credit: Hawksbill sea turtle ([NOAA](#))



Photo credit: Marked sea turtle nest ([Susan Gaillard](#) – [Mote Marine Lab](#))

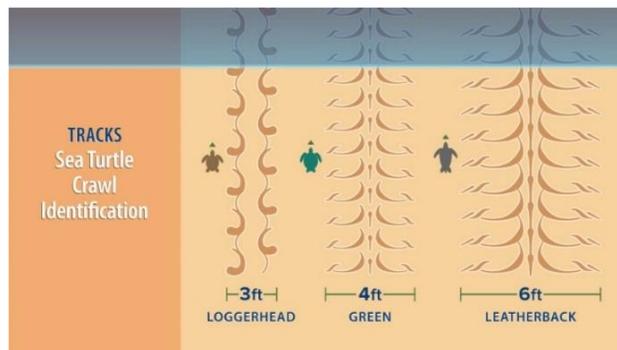


Photo credit: Sea turtle crawl track identification ([titusville.org](#))

Smalltooth Sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*)

The smalltooth sawfish is a species of ray that looks like a shark, but with wide pectoral fins and flatter bodies. Sawfish have a distinctive long flattened rostrum fringed with teeth. Sawfish grow up to 18-feet and prefer bays, estuaries and rivers but may be found in deep water and freshwater.

If a sawfish is observed within the active work area, the following precautionary measures are to be implemented:

- All in-water activities, including vessel operation, must be shut down if a smalltooth sawfish comes within 150 feet¹⁴ of the work area. Activities shall not resume until the sawfish has moved beyond a 150-foot radius of the in-water work, or until 20 minutes elapses since the last sighting within 150 feet.
- Vessel – If a smalltooth sawfish is sighted, attempt to maintain a distance of 150 feet or greater between the animal and the vessel. Reduce speed and avoid abrupt changes in direction until the animal(s) has left the area.
- Any collision with and/or injury to a sturgeon shall be reported immediately to NMFS’s Protected Resources Division at 1-727-824-5312 and to District environmental staff. Secure any sawfish carcass on site or hold in a freezer until an agency representative arranges for its transport for analysis.



Photo credit: Doug Philipson



Photo credit: Scott Cameron.

¹⁴ [Vessel Strike Avoidance Measures; Protected Species Construction Conditions](#)

Sturgeon Species

Sturgeon are primitive looking fish having a round body imbedded with bony plates, a tail similar to sharks and a long snout. Sturgeons can grow 6 to 14 feet in length depending on the species. They occur in bays, estuaries and rivers. Sturgeon can often be seen jumping with their whole body out of the water. There are three sturgeon species that occur in Florida, and it may be difficult to distinguish one from the other:

- Atlantic Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*)
- Atlantic Sturgeon, Gulf Subspecies (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*)
- Short Nosed Sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*)

If a sturgeon is observed within the active work area, the following precautionary measures are to be implemented:

- All in-water activities, including vessel operation, must be shut down if a sturgeon comes within 150 feet¹⁵ of the work area. Activities shall not resume until the sturgeon has moved beyond a 150-foot radius of the in-water work, or until 20 minutes elapses since the last sighting within 150 feet.
- Any collision with and/or injury to a sturgeon shall be reported immediately to NMFS’s Protected Resources Division at 1-727-824-5312, to the USFWS and to District environmental Staff. For projects in Northeast Florida, contact the Jacksonville USFWS office at 1-904-731-3336, in Northwest Florida contact the Panama City office at 1-850-769-0552 and for projects in South Florida contact the South Florida Ecological Services Field Office at 1-772-562-3909. Secure any sturgeon carcass on site or hold in a freezer until an agency representative arranges for its transport for analysis.

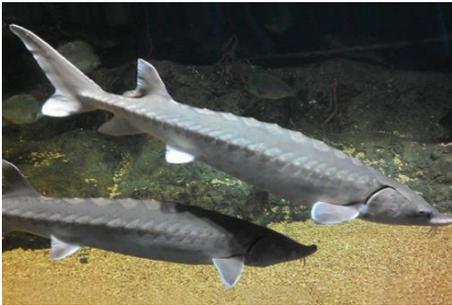


Photo credit: Atlantic Sturgeon ([NOAA](#))



Photo credit: Shortnose Sturgeon – Robert Michelson ([NOAA](#))



Photo credit: Sturgeon jumping out of the water ([NPS](#))

¹⁵ [Vessel Strike Avoidance Measures; Protected Species Construction Conditions](#)