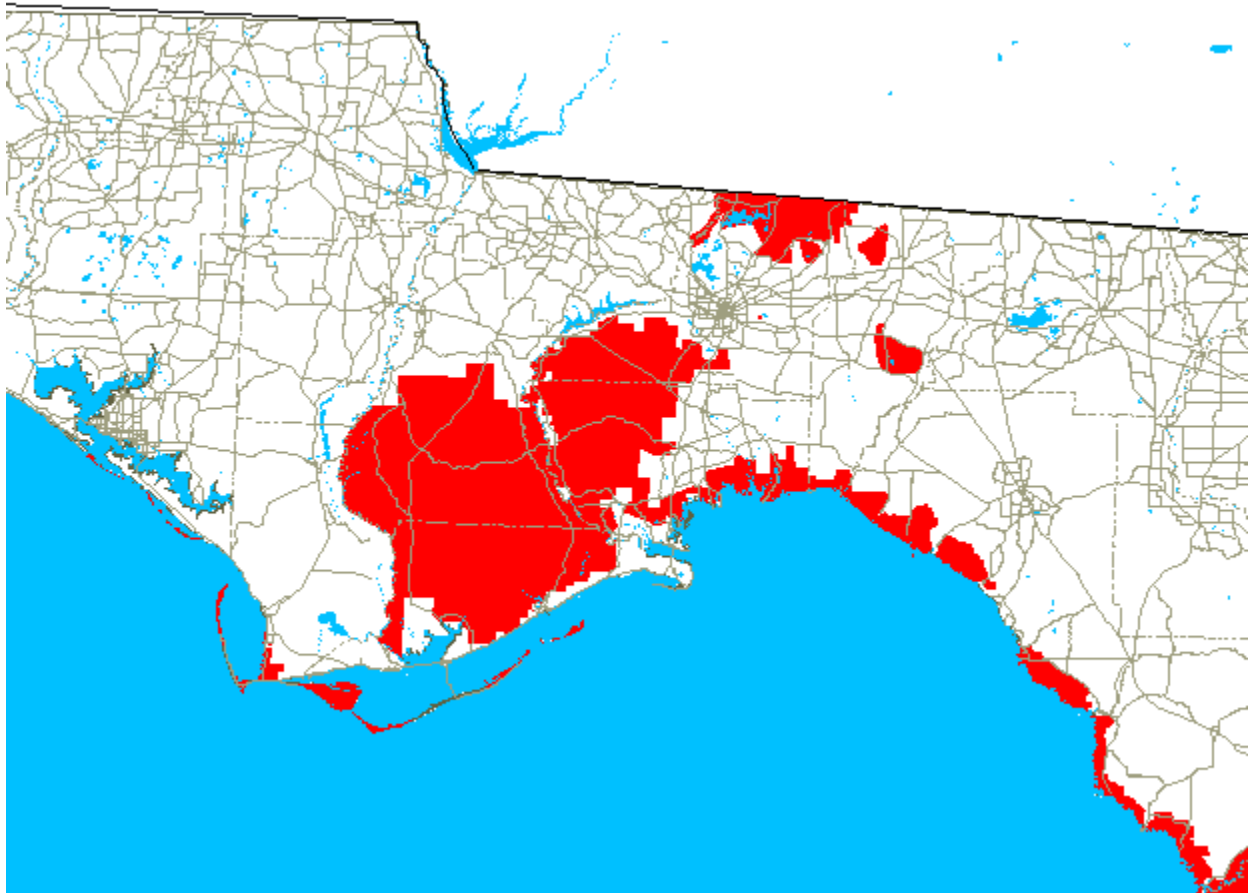


## EASTERN PANHANDLE



**APALACHICOLA AND TATES HELL FORESTS**

**Apalachicola National Forest** (569,596 acres; 227,838 ha) and **Tates Hell State Forest** (198,901 acres [79,560 ha], with 158,756 acres [63,502 ha] acquired)

Franklin, Leon, Liberty, and Wakulla counties

768,497 acres (307,398 ha), with 728,352 acres (291,340 ha) acquired

**LOCATION:** southwest of Tallahassee, in southwestern Leon County, western Wakulla County, most of Franklin County, and southern Liberty County, extending west to the Apalachicola River and south to U.S. Highway 98 along the Gulf of Mexico. Parts are contiguous with the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge IBA to the east and southeast, and with the potential Wakulla Springs IBA to the east.

**DESCRIPTION:** A huge forested area comprising over 800,000 acres (320,000 ha) when non-IBA public acreage is added. **Apalachicola National Forest** is divided into two Ranger Districts: Apalachicola and Wakulla. It is one of Florida’s largest and most significant conservation areas. \_\_\_\_\_. The National Forest receives \_\_\_\_\_ recreationists and \_\_\_\_\_ hunters annually. **Tates Hell State Forest** is a large area south of, and contiguous with, Apalachicola National Forest. Public acquisition began in 1992, and over 150,000 acres (60,000 ha) have been purchased to date, at a cost of over \$100 million. The State Forest receives \_\_\_\_\_ recreationists and \_\_\_\_\_ hunters annually.

**OWNERSHIP:** U.S. Forest Service (Apalachicola National Forest) and Florida Division of Forestry (Tates Hell State Forest, co-managed by the Florida Division of Wildlife as “Tates Hell Wildlife Management Area”

**HABITATS: Apalachicola National Forest:** \*longleaf pine flatwoods, \*pine plantation, \*pine savanna, \*sandhills, \*cypress swamp, \*hardwood swamp, \*bayhead, \*riverine, freshwater marsh, lacustrine.

**Tates Hell State Forest:** \*longleaf pine flatwoods, \*pine plantation, \*pine savanna, \*cypress swamp, \*riverine, hardwood swamp, bayhead, freshwater marsh, lacustrine, coastal strand

**LAND USE: Apalachicola National Forest:** \*conservation, \*timber production, \*hunting, recreation.

**Tates Hell State Forest:** \*conservation, recreation, hunting, timber production

**IBA CATEGORIES: Apalachicola National Forest:** significant populations of Endangered and Watch List species; complete diversity of longleaf pine flatwoods and savannas species; significant numbers of wintering sparrows; and significant natural habitats [long-term research for RCWs?]. **Tates Hell State Forest:** significant populations of Endangered, Special Concern, and FCREPA species; complete diversity of longleaf pine flatwoods species; and significant natural habitats.

**AVIAN DATA:** This vast IBA is critically important for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, with 638 active clusters. Apalachicola National Forest alone supports 611 clusters, representing nearly half of Florida’s population, and 12% of the world population. Apalachicola also supports large numbers of other species of longleaf pine flatwoods and savannas, including Henslow's Sparrows, which are locally abundant winter residents. Tates Hell State Forest supports significant populations of the state's breeding Swallow-tailed Kites and Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. Bird diversity of both sites combined is \_\_\_\_\_ native species. [Are bird lists available for either Forest?]

**Apalachicola National Forest:**

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Yellow Rail	Annual	Uncommon	(W)
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	1999	611 clusters	47% (R)
Red-headed Woodpecker	Annual	Common	(R)
Sedge Wren	Annual	Abundant	(W)
	22 Jan 1997	20 birds	in one savanna (W)
Brown-headed Nuthatch	Annual	Common	(R)
Bachman’s Sparrow	Annual	Common	(R)
Le Conte’s Sparrow	Annual	Common	(W)
Henslow’s Sparrow	Annual	Abundant	(W)



**DOG ISLAND–LANARK REEF**

**Lanark Reef** (depending on the tide, 5–73 acres; 2–29 ha) and **Dog Island** (1102 acres [440 ha] acquired as **Jeff Lewis Wilderness Preserve**)

Franklin County

1100+ acres

**LOCATION:** two islands in the Gulf of Mexico off central Franklin County. Lanark Reef is about 1 mile (1.6 km) south of Lanark Village, while Dog Island is about 4 miles (6.4 km) south of Carrabelle. This IBA is just east of the Greater Apalachicola Bay IBA.

**DESCRIPTION:** **Dog Island** is the much larger of the two islands, more than 6 miles (9.6 km) long and nearly 1 mile (1.6 km) wide at its widest point. It encompasses 1842 acres (736 ha), of which about 60% is managed by The Nature Conservancy in cooperation with the Barrier Island Trust as the Jeff Lewis Wilderness Preserve. The remainder of the island is in private ownership in small tracts. *N.B. For now, we currently consider all of Dog Island as an IBA, since much of the privately owned properties remain in their native state. However, IBA designation may eventually apply only to Jeff Lewis Wilderness Preserve, as privately-owned lands on Dog Island are developed.* **Lanark Reef** comprises mostly sand flats, with mud flats occurring at the eastern and western ends during low tides. During high tides, most of Lanark Reef is submerged, with only a few grassy areas above water. Both islands have been proposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as Critical Habitat for the Piping Plover. [Is the number of recreationists to either site known?]

**OWNERSHIP:** State of Florida (all [?] of Lanark Reef), The Nature Conservancy (60% of Dog Island), and private owners (remainder of Dog Island, and possibly the western end of Lanark Reef)

**HABITATS:** **Dog Island:** \*pine flatwoods, xeric oak scrub, sand pine scrub, depression marsh, mangrove forest, tidal marsh, estuarine, coastal strand. **Lanark Reef:** \*coastal strand, tidal marsh

**LAND USE:** **Dog Island:** \*conservation, residential, recreation. **Lanark Reef:** \*conservation, recreation

**IBA CATEGORIES:** **Dog Island:** significant populations of Threatened, Special Concern, and FCREPA species; significant numbers of larids and Neotropical migrants; and significant natural habitats. **Lanark Reef:** significant populations of Threatened, Special Concern, and FCREPA species; significant numbers of shorebirds and larids; and significant natural habitats

**AVIAN DATA:** This IBA is one of the most important wintering shorebird areas in Florida, especially for Piping Plovers and Snowy Plovers. Lanark Reef was ranked by +Sprandel et al. (1997) as the biologically most important site in Florida for winter shorebirds. Lanark Reef also supports a breeding colony of Brown Pelicans, wading birds, American Oystercatchers, and larids. In the early 1990s, a banding station at Jeff Lewis Wilderness Preserve [?] recorded large numbers of Neotropical migrants, including over **6000** Gray Catbirds in a single day. [Are bird lists available for the two islands, especially Dog?]

**Dog Island (mostly limited to Jeff Lewis Wilderness Preserve):**

SPECIES	DATE	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Common Loon	19 Dec 1993	450 birds	(W)
Reddish Egret	18 Sep 1993	13 birds	(N)
Northern Harrier	13 Oct 1996	96 birds	(M)
Snowy Plover	1989	0 birds	
	20 Jan 1993	20 birds	4% (R)
	Jan–Feb 2001	0 birds	
Piping Plover	21 Feb 1993	92 birds	15% (W)
	Jan–Feb 2001	3 birds	<1% (W)
Sandwich Tern	30 Aug 1992	490 birds	(M)
Common Tern	27 Sep 1992	700 birds	(M)
Least Tern	7 Jun 2000	339 pairs	8% (B)

Black Skimmer	7 Jun 2000	20 pairs	1% (B)
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	22 Oct 1993	50 birds	(M)
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3 Nov 1996	40 birds	(M)
Hermit Thrush	3 Nov 1996	40 birds	(M)
Gray Catbird	28 Sep 1993	6000 birds	Florida record count, by far (M)
White-throated Sparrow	3 Nov 1996	25 birds	(M)

1989 Snowy Plover data from +Gore and Chase (1989); Least Tern and skimmer data provided by Gary Sprandel (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission); all other data from observations of Duncan Evered and Lyla Messick published in *Florida Field Naturalist*.

#### Lanark Reef:

SPECIES	DATE	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Brown Pelican	25 May 1999	375 pairs	4% (B)
	31 May 2000	377 pairs	4% (B)
Black-bellied Plover	winter 1993–1994	153 birds	(W)
Snowy Plover	29 Jan 1997	22 birds	5% (R)
	Jan–Feb 2001	2 birds	<1% (R)
Piping Plover	winter 1993–1994	87 birds	14% (W)
	16 Jan 1996	83 birds	13% (W)
	Jan–Feb 2001	15 birds	3% (W)
American Oystercatcher	winter 1993–1994	110 birds	(W)
Willet	winter 1993–1994	704 birds	(W)
Marbled Godwit	4 Feb 1997	376 birds	(W)
Red Knot	22 Oct 1995	410 birds	(M)
Dunlin	20 Feb 1997	1064 birds	(W)
Shorebirds	winter 1993–1994	3287 birds	(W)
Laughing Gull	25 May 1999	460 pairs	nearly 2% (B)

Pelican and knot data provided by George Wallace (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission), shorebird data from +Sprandel et al. (1997) and +Gunnels (1999), and gull data from +Hovis and Sprandel (1999).

**OTHER RESOURCES:** Dog Island supports small numbers of nesting sea turtles.

**THREATS: Dog Island:** \*human disturbance. **Lanark Reef:** \*development, human disturbance

**CONSERVATION ISSUES:** Ownership of the western end of **Lanark Reef** is in dispute; if parts are private property and development was attempted, it could be a serious threat. However, any proposed development probably would be prevented due to resource concerns. During nesting, human disturbance of colonies from fisherman who land on the island could be a threat. **Dog Island:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOMINATED BY:** Gary Sprandel (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) and Bill Pranty (Audubon of Florida)

**REVIEWED BY:** Jeff Gore, Karen Lamonte, and George Wallace (all of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission)

**REFERENCES:** +Gore, J.A., and C.A. Chase, III. 1989. Snowy Plover breeding distribution. Final performance report, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Tallahassee, FL • +Gunnels, C.M. 1999. Survey and home range analyses of wintering shorebirds using the Lanark Reef shorebird complex, Franklin County, Florida. M.Sc. thesis, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV. • +Hovis, J.A., and G.L. Sprandel. 1999. Statewide breeding shorebird survey preliminary draft, annual report. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Tallahassee, FL. • +Sprandel, G.L., J.A. Gore, and D.T. Cobb. 1997. Winter shorebird survey. Final performance report, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Tallahassee, FL.

**GREATER APALACHICOLA BAY**

**Apalachicola Bird Island** (8 acres; 3.2 ha), **Cape St. George State Reserve** (2294 acres; 917 ha), **Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park** (1962 acres; 784 ha), **St. George Island Causeway** (50 acres; 20 ha), **St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge** (12,489 acres; 4995 ha), and **Yent Bayou** (50 acres; 20 ha)

Franklin County

16,853 acres

**LOCATION:** off the coast of southwestern Franklin County, where the Apalachicola River and several barrier islands form Apalachicola Bay. **Apalachicola Bird Island** is located about 0.5 miles (0.8 km) south of the western end of the John Gorrie Bridge. **St. George Island Causeway** is about 4 miles (6.4 km) long and connects the island with the mainland at Eastpoint. St. George Island is about 4–8 miles (6.4–12.8 km) south of the mainland; **Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park** occupies the eastern end of the island, about 4 miles (6.4 km) from the causeway. **Cape St. George** is between St. George Island and St. Vincent Island, about 6–8 miles (9.6–12.8 km) off the mainland. **St. Vincent Island** is the westernmost island, a few miles (km) off the mainland. **Yent Bayou** is on the mainland about 7 miles (11.2 km) east of Eastpoint and about 6 miles (9.6 km) west of Carrabelle Beach, bounded on the west by Royal Bluff. The Greater Apalachicola Bay IBA is just west of the Dog Island–Lanark Reef IBA.

**DESCRIPTION:** This IBA contains six islands (two artificial) in Apalachicola Bay, one of the most productive estuaries in the Northern Hemisphere. **Apalachicola Bird Island** is a “spoil” island at the mouth of the Apalachicola created in 1995 from dredging activities. **Cape St. George State Reserve** encompasses all of Little St. George Island, which was formed when a channel was dug in 1957 through the western third of St. George Island. It is inaccessible except by private boat and was purchased by the State in 1977. No formal IBA nomination was submitted. The **St. George Island Causeway** is about 4 miles (6.4 km) long, and a 1 mile (1.6 km) stretch of shell and grass supports nesting American Oystercatchers and a larid rookery. The causeway is designated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as a Critical Wildlife Area. **Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park** was purchased beginning in 1963 and opened to the public in 1980. It protects more than 9 miles (14.4 km) of beaches and dunes at the eastern half of St. George Island. During World War II, the island's dunes were used by troops for training exercises. Most of the eastern end of St. George Island has been proposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as Critical Habitat for the Piping Plover. **St. Vincent Island National Wildlife Refuge** encompasses all of St. Vincent Island and is inaccessible except by private boat. No formal IBA nomination was received; the limited data here were provided by others or were taken from the Refuge website. It is four miles wide (6.4 km) at the eastern end and nine miles (14.4 km) long, and is composed of several ridges that represent different shorelines over the past 5000 years. **Yent Bayou** is mostly private property, part of the Hidden Beaches and Victorian Village developments. The areas below mean high tide is State-sovereign land. Annual visitation to the sites are: \_\_\_\_ for Bird Island, \_\_\_\_ vehicles on the causeway, \_\_\_\_ to the State Park, \_\_\_\_ to the State Reserve, \_\_\_\_ to the National Wildlife Refuge, and \_\_\_\_ to Yent Bayou.

**OWNERSHIP:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (St. Vincent Island National Wildlife Refuge), State of Florida (submerged acres of Yent Bayou), Florida Department of Transportation (St. George Island Causeway [and Bird Island, or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers?]), Florida Division of Marine Resources (Cape St. George State Reserve), Florida Division of Recreation and Parks (Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park), and private owners (uplands adjacent to Yent Bayou).

**HABITATS:** **Bird Island:** \*artificial (spoil island). **St. George Island Causeway:** \*artificial (grassy causeway). **St. George Island State Park:** \*slash pine flatwoods, \*coastal strand, temperate hammock, sand pine scrub, sawgrass marsh, tidal marsh, estuarine, coastal grasslands, artificial. **Yent Bayou:** \*estuarine, coastal strand, private (housing lots)

**LAND USE: Bird Island:** \*dredged-material disposal area, conservation. **St. George Island Causeway:** \*transportation, conservation. **St. George Island State Park:** \*conservation, \*recreation. **Yent Bayou:** conservation (sovereign wetlands), recreation, residential (uplands)

**IBA CATEGORIES: Bird Island:** significant populations of Special Concern and FCREPA species; significant numbers of shorebirds and larids. **St. George Island Causeway:** significant populations of Threatened, Special Concern, FCREPA, and IBA species; significant numbers of larids. **St. George Island State Park:** significant populations of Endangered, Threatened, and FCREPA species; significant numbers of Neotropical migrants; and significant natural habitats. **Yent Bayou:** significant populations of Threatened species.

**AVIAN DATA:** The islands are regionally important for breeding and wintering shorebirds and for breeding larids, while wooded portions of the state park are important for Neotropical migrants. Apalachicola Bird Island also supports breeding shorebirds. Bird diversity for all sites combined is \_\_\_\_ native species. [I have bird lists for St. George and St. Vincent; are lists available for any of the other sites?]

#### Apalachicola Bird Island:

SPECIES	DATE	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Brown Pelican	2001	269 pairs	3% (B)
American Oystercatcher	11 Jul 1999	3 chicks	<1% (B)
Gull-billed Tern	11 Jun 1999	18 pairs	32% (B)
	2000	6 pairs	10% (B)
Caspian Tern	1 Jun 1998	105 nests	32% (B)
	26 May 1999	104 pairs	32% (B)
	2000	148 pairs	45% (B)
Royal Tern	11 Jun 1999	174 pairs	3% (B)
	2000	718 pairs	13% (B)
Sandwich Tern	1998	7 pairs	<1% (B)
	2000	30 pairs	3% (B)
Least Tern	26 May 1999	20 pairs	<1% (B)
Black Skimmer	11 Jun 1999	186 pairs	12% (B)
	2000	115 pairs	7% (B)

Pelican and oystercatcher data provided by \_\_\_\_, other data from +Hovis and Sprandel (1999) and provided by Gary Sprandel (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission), 1996–1998 Caspian Tern data from +McNair and Gore (2000).

#### Cape St. George State Reserve:

SPECIES	DATE	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Snowy Plover	1989	4 pairs	2% (R)
	Jan–Feb 2001	12 birds	3% (R)

Data from +Gore and Chase (1989) and provided by Patty Kelly (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

**Dr. Julian G. Bruce St. George Island State Park:**

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>NUMBERS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Peregrine Falcon	24 Sep 1998	42 birds	2% (M)
Merlin	24 Sep 1998	40 birds	(M)
Piping Plover	15–21 Jan 1996	6 birds	1% (W)
	Jan–Feb 2001	7 birds	1% (W)
Snowy Plover	1989	14 pairs	7% (R)
	Jan–Feb 2001	2 birds	<1% (R)
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	29 Sep 1999	40 birds	(M)
Red-eyed Vireo	9 Sep 1998	60 birds	(M)
Veery	1 May 1998	20 birds	(M)
Swainson's Thrush	29 Sep 1999	21 birds	(M)
Overall diversity	_____ list	233 natives	
		1 exotic	

1989 Snowy Plover data from +Gore and Chase (1989); other plover data provided by Patty Kelly (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service); all other State Park data gathered by Jim Cavanagh for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, provided by George Wallace

**St. George Island Causeway:**

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>NUMBERS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
American Oystercatcher	annually	1–2 pairs	<1% (B)
Laughing Gull	26 May 1999	3443 pairs	14% (B)
	2000	2695 pairs	11% (B)
Least Tern	26 May 1999	128 pairs	3% (B)
	2000	142 pairs	3% (B)
Royal Tern	26 May 1999	1086 pairs	20% (B)
	2000	187 pairs	3% (B)
Sandwich Tern	26 May 1999	39 pairs	4% (B)
	2000	3 pairs	<1% (B)

Data provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, from +Hovis and Sprandel (1999) and provided by Jeff Gore and Gary Sprandel.

**St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge:**

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>NUMBERS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Snowy Plover	1989	5 pairs	2% (R)
	Jan–Feb 2001	4 birds	1% (R)

Data provided by Patty Kelly (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

**Yent Bayou:**

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>DATES</b>	<b>NUMBERS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Piping Plover	11 Jan 1997	14 birds	2% (W)
	Jan–Feb 2001	0 birds	
Snowy Plover	22 Jan 2000	23 birds	5% (R)
	Jan–Feb 2001	0 birds	

Data from +Hovis and Sprandel (1999) and provided by Patty Kelly (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

**OTHER RESOURCES:** Sea turtles nest along the beaches. • The St. George Lighthouse, on Little St. George Island, was built in 1852. At that time, the lighthouse was 1330 feet (400 m) from the beach, but erosion of the island has brought the shoreline to its base; the lighthouse is being stabilized to prevent its collapse. • St. George Island State Park contains some virgin “cat-faced” slash pines from the turpentine industry active in the early 1900s. • St. Vincent Island National Wildlife Refuge is a breeding site for the critically endangered ♦red wolf (*Canis rufus*). • Apalachicola Bay is a designated International Biosphere Reserve, and a National Estuarine Research Reserve.

**THREATS:** **Bird Island:** \*human disturbance. **St. George Island Causeway:** \*human disturbance. **St. George Island State Park:** human disturbance. **Yent Bayou:** \*development (adjacent uplands), \*human disturbance

**CONSERVATION ISSUES:** **Apalachicola Bird Island** is posted from April through August to prevent disturbance to the breeding colony. The island is maintained as a bird nesting area by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by adding dredged material every few years, and by controlling vegetation. **Cape St. George State Reserve:** Prescribed fire is used to maintain the condition of pine flatwoods and savannas, and exotic plants are removed as needed. • Dogs must be leashed at all times. • The larid colony on the **St. George Island Causeway** is subject to high mortality from motor vehicles. To prevent continued bird deaths from vehicles, the speed limit on the causeway has been reduced to 35 mph (56 kph) and fencing keeps young birds off the road. A new bridge is being built between the mainland and St. George Island; when this is completed, the existing causeway will become an island managed for nesting birds. • **St. George Island State Park:** Most of the dunes in the state park are off limits except along paths; private portions of the island are undergoing extensive development. • **St. Vincent Island National Wildlife Refuge** contains populations of exotic ♦sambar deer (*Cervus unicolor*) [and a second exotic mammal?] native to southeastern Asia; these are remnants of previous owners who used the island as a hunting reserve. These deer apparently are not impacting the island negatively. • **Yent Bayou:** Uplands are residential lots, which probably will be developed eventually. It is not known whether this will impact shorebird use of the tidal wetlands. • Yent Bayou has been proposed as Critical Habitat for the Piping Plover.

**NOMINATED BY:** Gary Sprandel (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission). Two other sites, Cape St. George State Reserve and St. Vincent Island National Wildlife Refuge, later were added to this IBA, but were not nominated formally.

**REVIEWED BY:** Jeff Gore and Karen Lamonte (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission).

**REFERENCES:** +Gore, J.A., and C.A. Chase, III. 1989. Snowy Plover breeding distribution. Final performance report, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Tallahassee, FL. • +Hovis, J.A., and G.L. Sprandel. 1999. Statewide breeding shorebird survey preliminary draft, annual report. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Tallahassee, FL. • +McNair, D.B., and J.A. Gore. 2000. Recent breeding of Caspian Terns in northwest Florida. *Florida Field Naturalist* 28: 30–32. x

**WEBSITES:** <<http://www.baynavigator.com/TheIslands/capestgeorge.html>>  
<<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district1/stgeorge>>,  
<<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/othrdata/chekbird/r4/vincent.htm>>

**LAKE LAFAYETTE**

688 acres (275 ha)

Leon County

**LOCATION:** in southeastern Leon county a few miles (km) east of Tallahassee.**DESCRIPTION:** an island in this freshwater lake supports a wading bird colony. Annual use of the lake is \_\_\_\_ recreationists and \_\_\_\_ hunters.**OWNERSHIP:** Florida Division of Wildlife**HABITATS:** \*lacustrine, freshwater marsh**LAND USE:** \*hunting, conservation, recreation**IBA Category:** significant populations of Endangered species; and significant natural habitats**AVIAN DATA:** An island in Lake Lafayette contains a wading bird rookery with a significant number of Wood Storks. Waterfowl also use the lake. [Is a bird list available?].

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>NUMBERS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Wood Stork	1993	283 nests	5% (B)
	1 Jun 1999	225 nests	4% (B)

Data supplied by Jim Rodgers (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) and taken from +Rodgers et al. (in prep.). [Are data available for 2000–2002?]

**OTHER RESOURCES:** none known**THREAT:** human disturbance, runoff**CONSERVATION ISSUES:** Access to the rookery is prohibited during the breeding season. During nesting, human disturbance of colonies from landing fisherman or airboats could be a threat. • Located near an urban area, Lake Lafayette faces water quality impacts from nearby developments and a landfill.**NOMINATED BY:** Gary Sprandel (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission)**REVIEWED BY:** Jeff Gore and Karen Lamonte (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission).**REFERENCE:** +Rodgers, J.A., Jr., P.S. Kubelis, S.A. Nesbitt, M.F. Delany, R.K. Felix, J. Swan, K.T. Bowman, and J.B. Dodge. In prep. Atlas of breeding sites for colonial waterbirds in Florida during 1999. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Tallahassee, FL.

## RED HILLS ECOSYSTEM

Gadsden, Jefferson, and Leon counties

105,000 acres (42,120 ha), with about 25,000 acres (10,000 ha) protected under perpetual conservation easements

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**LOCATION:** an IBA shared by Florida and Georgia. The Florida portion encompasses a tiny portion of northeastern Gadsden County, two separate parcels in northern Jefferson County, and all of northern Leon County, north of Tallahassee between Havana and Monticello,

**DESCRIPTION:** The Red Hills physiographic region encompasses a large area between Thomasville, Georgia and Tallahassee, Florida. The region is so named after its reddish clay soils and rolling topography. The Red Hills Ecosystem IBA contains nearly 250,000 acres (100,000 ha), with a majority of this area in Georgia. Longleaf pine flatwoods were the original land cover, but these forests were cleared and heavily farmed for cotton and corn during Antebellum times. Today, oldfield pine communities of loblolly and ♦shortleaf pines (*Pinus echinata*) dominate the Florida portion of the Red Hills, and most of the plantations exist for hunting Northern Bobwhites. Despite the lack of their original threeawn ground cover, these pine forests resemble native pinewoods. Landowners in the region have a strong land stewardship tradition that recognizes the value of biological diversity. Several conservation organizations, led by Tall Timbers Research Station, are encouraging landowners to protect their plantations with perpetual conservation easements that balance consumptive use of resources with sustainable management. At the heart of the easement program is the encouragement of implementing good timber management practices, for both sustainable forestry and ecological values. Hunter use is unknown since the properties are privately owned.

**OWNERSHIP:** private (plantations proposed for or under perpetual conservation easements, overseen by the Tall Timbers Research Station, The Nature Conservancy, or other conservation organizations).

**HABITATS:** \*oldfield pinelands, longleaf pine flatwoods, pine plantation, fields, non-native pasture, agricultural fields, hardwood swamp, freshwater marsh, cattail marsh, riverine, lacustrine, and artificial

**LAND USE:** \*hunting, \*timber production, conservation, agriculture, ecological research, environmental education

**IBA CATEGORIES:** significant populations of Endangered, FCREPA, and Watch List species; complete diversity of pinewood species; significant diversity of breeding species; significant natural habitats; and long-term research

**AVIAN DATA:** The Red Hills are the last stronghold in Florida for the White-breasted Nuthatch, which has disappeared from the remainder of their statewide range. The Red Hills support the sixth largest population of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers remaining in the world, but nearly all of these clusters now occur in Georgia; Florida populations in the Red Hills have declined significantly. Data obtained during the Florida Breeding Bird Atlas (FBBA) Project documented over 100 breeding species, one of the most diverse breeding areas in Florida. A long-term study of birds killed by a television tower at Tall Timbers Research Station was censused *nearly daily* for 28 years, establishing a study “almost unique for its duration and rigorous effort” (+Crawford and Engstrom 2001; see also +Crawford 2001). Bird diversity for all sites combined is \_\_\_\_ native species. [Are bird lists available? There must be one for Tall Timbers at least].

**Florida portion** [data on the entire IBA (i.e., Florida and Georgia portions) will be provided later]:

SPECIES	DATE	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	2002	13–14 clusters	1% (R)
White-breasted Nuthatch	1986–1991		20 of the state's 37 FBBA blocks that contained this species were in the Red Hills
	2002	common	
Bachman's Sparrow	2002	common	
Overall diversity	_____ list	_____ natives	
		_____ exotics	

FBBA data from Kale et al. (1992); other data provided by Jim Cox (Tall Timbers Research Station). See also +Crawford (2001) and +Crawford and Engstrom (2001)

**OTHER RESOURCES:** The pinewoods of the Red Hills are unique in Florida, as pines do not grow in clay soils elsewhere in the state. • Protection of this IBA will aid in recharge of the Floridan Aquifer. • Several rare plants and animals occur within the IBA, such as pine snake, gopher tortoise, and black bear. • Many historical and cultural features are present, from the Plantation era to Indian settlements.

**THREATS:** \*development, timber harvesting

**CONSERVATION ISSUES:** this IBA is entirely in private ownership, but the owners of several plantations have established perpetual conservation easements on their properties, thereby ensuring the preservation of their natural resources. • The Red Hills support one of the largest populations of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers remaining on private property. Populations in the Florida portion of the IBA are small but management activities are increasing this number. • This IBA also contains one of few demographically stable populations of Northern Bobwhites in the state. • Management includes selective timbering, herbiciding of oaks, and frequent prescribed fires to maintain the open understory of the pinewoods. In some plantations, longleaf pine is being replanted as other pines are logged.

**NOMINATED BY:** Jim Cox (Tall Timbers Research Station)

**REFERENCES:** +Crawford, R.L. 2001. Some erroneous WCTV tower data. *Florida Field Naturalist* 29: 129. • +Crawford, R.L., and R.T. Engstrom. 2001. Characteristics of avian mortality at a Northern Florida television tower: A 29-year study. *Journal of Field Ornithology* 72: 380–388.

**WEBSITES:** <<http://www.ttrs.org>>, <<http://www.ttrs.org/conserv/ceinrhr.html>>

**ST. MARKS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

Jefferson, Taylor, and Wakulla counties

67,562 acres (27,024 ha)

**LOCATION:** along the Gulf of Mexico in southern Wakulla County, extreme southern Jefferson County, and extreme northwestern Taylor County, south of U.S. Highway 98. Parts are contiguous with the Apalachicola and Tates Hell Forests IBA to the west and northwest.

**DESCRIPTION:** St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1931 to provide wintering habitat for migratory waterfowl. It consists of four units: Aucilla River, Panacea, St. Marks, and Wakulla. The Refuge receives 250,000 recreationists and \_\_\_\_ hunters annually.

**OWNERSHIP:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**HABITATS:** \*slash pine flatwoods, \*sandhills, \*temperate hammock, \*cypress swamp, \*hardwood swamp, \*freshwater marsh, \*sawgrass marsh, \*freshwater impoundments, \*tidal marsh, \*riverine, \*estuarine, pine plantation, xeric oak scrub, fields, non-native pastures, bayhead, cattail marsh, lacustrine

**LAND USE:** \*conservation, \*recreation, hunting

**IBA CATEGORIES:** significant populations of Threatened, Special Concern, FCREPA, and IBA species; significant numbers of aquatic birds, wading birds, shorebirds, and larids; significant overall diversity; significant natural habitats; and long-term research

**AVIAN DATA:** The Refuge supports a great variety of aquatic birds, including wading birds, waterfowl, and shorebirds. Coastal hammocks and upland forests are important for Neotropical migrants.

SPECIES	DATE	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Brown Pelican	summer 1999	125 pairs	1% (B)
Great Egret	1 Jun 2000	250 nests	1% (B)
Snowy Egret	1 Jun 2000	250 nests	>1% (B)
Tricolored Heron	1 Jun 2000	480 nests	>1% (B)
Reddish Egret	Jun–Sep 1999	12 birds	1% (N)
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1 Jun 2000	75 nests	(B)
Wading birds	Mar–Jun 2000	1300 nests	(B)
Ducks	995–1996 to 1999–2000	mean of 6256 birds (range of 3953–9680)	Impoundments only (W)
Redhead	Jan surveys, 1998–2000	mean of 4601 birds (range of 2430–8644)	Ochlockonee to Aucilla Rivers (W)
American Coot	1995–1996 to 1999–2000	mean of 6664 (range of 811–12,624)	Impoundments only (W)
Swallow-tailed Kite	6 Jul 1999	16 birds	1% (N)
Bald Eagle	1998–1999 and 1999–2000	13 nests	1% (B)
Wilson's Plover	8 Jul 2001	30 birds	7% (N)
Shorebirds	winter 1993–1994	4006 birds	(W)
	19 Nov 1999	7600 birds	(W)
Laughing Gull	Jun 1999	775 pairs	3% (B)
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	summer 2000	7 clusters	<1% (R)
Long-term research	since 1981		Red-cockaded Woodpecker demography
Overall diversity	1991 list	321 natives 5 exotics	The third most diverse IBA in Florida.

Pelican data from +Rodgers et al. (in prep.), eagle GIS coverage provided by Julia Dodge (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission), 1993–1994 shorebird data from +Sprandel et al. (1997), plover data from an

observation by Tom Curtis published in *Florida Field Naturalist*, other data provided by Refuge staff or from +USFWS (1991).

**OTHER RESOURCES:** The refuge protects over 40 miles (64 km) of coastline. • The St. Marks Lighthouse was built in 1832 and remains in use today.

**THREAT:** human disturbance

**CONSERVATION ISSUES:** Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at the Refuge are “demographically and geographically connected” to others on nearby public lands such as Ochlockonee River State Park and Apalachicola National Forest. Biologists from Florida State University are assisting with monitoring all Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in the region, and are color-banding nestlings and adding cavity inserts to stabilize and increase the population. • Monitoring of birds and other wildlife has declined in recent years because of increased staff workloads and “changing priorities.”

**NOMINATED BY:** Gary Sprandel (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) and Joe Reinman (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

**REFERENCES:** +Rodgers, J.A., Jr., P.S. Kubelis, S.A. Nesbitt, M.F. Delany, R.K. Felix, J. Swan, K.T. Bowman, and J.B. Dodge. In prep. Atlas of breeding sites for colonial waterbirds in Florida during 1999. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Tallahassee, FL. • +Sprandel, G.L., J.A. Gore, and D.T. Cobb. 1997. Winter shorebird survey. Final performance report, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Tallahassee, FL. • +USFWS. 2001. St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge Annual Narrative, Fiscal Year 2000. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. St. Marks, FL.

**WEBSITES:** <<http://saintmarks.fws.gov>>,

<<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/othrdata/chekbird/r4/stmarks.htm>>

**WAKULLA SPRINGS**

**Edward Ball–Wakulla Springs State Park** (4740 acres; 1896 ha) and the **Wakulla Springs Protection Zone CARL–FF Project** (7964 acres [3185 ha] remaining)

Wakulla County

12,704 acres (5081 ha), with 4740 acres (1887 ha) acquired

[This nomination needs additional data; it has not yet been designated as an IBA]

**LOCATION:** in north-central Wakulla County, 13 miles (20.8 km) south of downtown Tallahassee. Contiguous with the Apalachicola and Tates Hell Forests IBA to the west.

**DESCRIPTION:** Edward Ball–Wakulla Springs State Park protects Wakulla Springs and the upper 3 miles (5 km) of the Wakulla River. The Wakulla Springs Protection Zone CARL–FF Project will preserve much additional lands west and north of the State Park, which overlie some of the extensive cavern systems of the springs. The State Park receives 180,000 recreationists annually. All data for this IBA refer solely to the State Park except for land use of the private properties, which was taken from +DEP (2001).

**OWNERSHIP:** Florida Division of Recreation and Parks (Edward Ball–Wakulla Springs State Park), Florida Division of Forestry (some acquired acreage of the Wakulla Springs Protection Zone CARL–FF Project), private owners (remaining acreage in the Wakulla Springs Protection Zone CARL–FF Project)

**HABITATS:** \*longleaf pine flatwoods, \*xeric oak scrub, \*hardwood swamp, \*riverine, pine plantation.

**LAND USE: Edward Ball–Wakulla Springs State Park:** \*conservation, \*recreation. **Wakulla Springs Protection Zone CARL–FF Project:** \*timber production, agriculture

**IBA CATEGORIES:** significant populations of FCREPA species; and significant natural habitats

**AVIAN DATA:** The State Park supports a diversity of species, including breeding Mississippi Kites and other woodland species, wintering waterfowl, and Neotropical migrants. Until recently, the park supported a large population of Limpkins, which was called “the largest population” in northern Florida (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). Wakulla Springs also marks the westernmost nesting site of the Snail Kite in the United States; a nest was found along the river in 1929 (plate 29 in Howell 1932), which is 228 miles (365 km) northwest of Orlando Wetlands Park (pages 186–187), the most recent northernmost breeding site.

SPECIES	DATE	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Osprey	Jan–Jun 2001	15 nests	1% (B)
Overall diversity	Undated list	180 natives 0 exotics	

Data provided by Scott Savery and Sandy Cook (Florida Division of Recreation and Parks)

**OTHER RESOURCES:** Edward Ball–Wakulla Springs encompasses the largest, deepest, and best-mapped underground springs and tunnel system in the world; it is 185 feet (55.5 m) deep. • The Wakulla River has been designated as an Outstanding Florida Water. • Wakulla Springs is designated as a National Natural Landmark. • Over 60 cultural or historical sites are found within the State Park, including the Wakulla Lodge, which is on the National Register of Historical Places.

**THREATS:** \*human disturbance, \*exotic plants, development, habitat succession, feral hogs, poaching

**CONSERVATION ISSUES:** Hydrilla has infested the spring and Wakulla River, which may have contributed to the decline of the Limpkin population in recent years. • About 1300 acres of the park are prescribed-burned. • Restoration of uplands disturbed by from either fire exclusion or logging is ongoing. • An approved Management Plan is in place. • Wakulla Springs Protection Zone CARL–FF Project was designed to protect lands above “enormous caverns” that feed the springs and that are

located north and west of the State Park. Nearly half of the CARL–FF Project acreage has been acquired, and if fully purchased, will directly link Edward Ball–Wakulla Springs State Park with Apalachicola National Forest to the northwest. Much of the acreage of the Wakulla Springs Protection Zone CARL–FF Project, of which 70% is pasture or commercial pine forest, will be added to the State Park, but some will be managed by the Florida Division of Forestry and Florida Division of Wildlife.

**NOMINATED BY:** Scott Savery and Sandy Cook (Florida Division of Recreation and Parks)

**REFERENCES:** +DEP. 2001. Florida Forever five year plan. Department of Environmental Protection. Tallahassee, FL. • Stevenson, H.M., and B.H. Anderson. 1994. *The Birdlife of Florida*. University Press of Florida. Tallahassee, FL.

**WEBSITE:** <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district1/wakullasprings>>