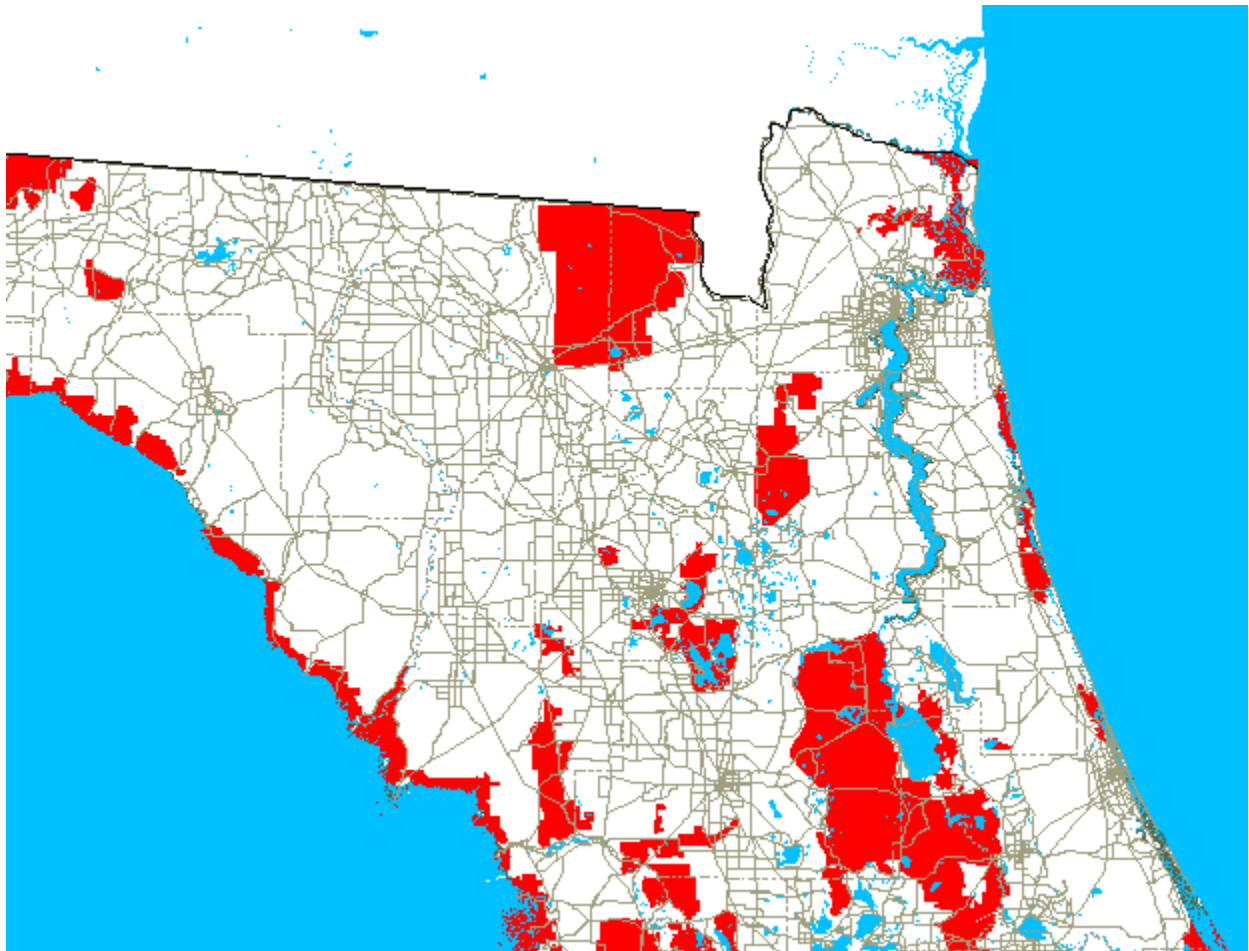


NORTHERN PENINSULA



ALACHUA LAKES

Gum Root Swamp Conservation Area and Park (1895 acres; 758 ha); **Lochloosa Wildlife CARL–FF Project** (33,793 acres [13,517 ha], including 16,994 acres [6797 acres] acquired as **Lochloosa Wildlife Conservation Area**), **Newnans Lake CARL–FF Project** (12,957 acres [5582 ha], including 372 acres [148 ha] acquired), **Prairie Creek Conservation Area** (203 acres; 81 ha), and private lands surrounding **Orange Lake** (~12,100 acres; 4840 ha)

Alachua and Marion counties

60,948 acres (24,379 ha), including 19,464 acres (7785 ha) acquired, mostly as perpetual conservation easements

LOCATION: in southeastern Alachua County and extreme northern Marion County, bordered by State Road 24 to the north, U.S. Highway 301 to the east, County Road 318 to the south, and Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park and U.S. Highway 441 to the west. Contiguous with the Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park IBA to the west.

DESCRIPTION: _____ [Is annual visitation/hunter use known for any of the lakes or upland sites?]

OWNERSHIP: St. Johns River Water Management District (Gum Root Swamp Conservation Area, Lochloosa Wildlife Conservation Area, and Prairie Creek Conservation Area), Florida Division of Recreation and Parks (Prairie Creek Conservation Area), Gainesville Department of Recreation and Parks (Gum Root Park), and private owners (lands under conservation easements, and unacquired acreage of the Lochloosa Wildlife CARL–FF Project, and lands surrounding Orange Lake outward about 1 mile [1.6 km])

HABITATS: *temperate hammock, *cypress swamp, *hardwood swamp, *lacustrine, pine flatwoods, pine plantation, sandhills, cattail marsh, riverine

LAND USE: *conservation, *recreation, *timber production, hunting

IBA CATEGORIES: significant populations of Threatened and FCREPA species; significant numbers and diversity of shorebirds; significant diversity of Neotropical migrants; and significant natural habitats

AVIAN DATA: This IBA supports significant numbers of Bald Eagle and Osprey nests. Water levels at Newnans Lake have receded in recent years due to drought, and as a result, the extensive mudflats have attracted large numbers of wading birds and shorebirds. [Are bird lists available for any of these sites?].

Newnans Lake:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Osprey	2000	>15 nests	1% (B)
Semipalmated Plover	29 Apr 2000	100 birds	(M)
Lesser Yellowlegs	29 Apr 2000	340 birds	(M)
Whimbrel	26 Apr 2000	15 birds	(M)
Semipalmated Sandpiper	27 May 2000	500 birds	(M)
Least Sandpiper	23 Apr 2000	600 birds	(M)
White-rumped Sandpiper	29 Apr 2000	31 birds	(M)
Dunlin	29 Mar 2000	60 birds	(M)
Long-billed Dowitcher	23 Apr 2000	130 birds	(M)
Shorebirds	Jan–Dec 2000	30 species	(W)
	Apr–May 2000	>1500 birds	(W)
Blue-winged Warbler	22 Sep 1985	15 birds	(M)*
Cape May Warbler	9 May 1992	36 birds	(M)*
Blackpoll Warbler	9 May 1992	41 birds	(M)*
American Redstart	13 Oct 1993	>20 birds	(M)*
Wood-warblers	Annually in fall	~25 species	(M)

Observations of John Hintermister, Adam Kent, Andy Kratter, Cathy Reno, and Rex Rowan, mostly published in *Florida Field Naturalist*. *Observed along a 1 mile (1.6 km) stretch of Lakeshore Drive.

All sites combined:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Bald Eagle	1998–1999 and 1999–2000	35 nests	3% (B)

GIS coverage provided by Julia Dodge (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission)

OTHER RESOURCES: The Newnans Lake–Lake Lochloosa–Orange Lake–Paynes Prairie system is one of the most critical wetland systems in the northern Peninsula. The lakes support very large densities of nesting Bald Eagles and Ospreys. Newnans Lake is bordered by an intact, continuous fringe of cypress, unlike all other lakes of similar size in the region. • Numerous Indian artifacts have been found, including dozens of dugout canoes along Newnans Lake, where one or more battles during the Second Seminole War were fought.

THREATS: *exotic plants, *runoff, feral hogs, cowbird brood parasitism

CONSERVATION ISSUES: Water flowing into Newnans Lake is high in phosphorus, which creates algae “blooms” that contribute to lower water quality. One source of the phosphorus is the soil surrounding the lake, much of which is composed of pine plantations. Soil disturbance associated with harvesting of the pines allows the phosphorus to drain into the lake. Other sources resulting in low water quality are residential and industrial developments in Gainesville. • Nearly all of the uplands surrounding Lochloosa Lake have been protected, although most lands are pine plantations still privately owned, with perpetual conservation easements purchased by the State. The northern, eastern, and southern portions of Newnans Lake are sought for acquisition (or conservation easement), but have not yet been protected.

Acquisition of the shoreline and adjacent uplands surrounding Orange Lake should be considered. These areas contain 15 of the 35 Bald Eagle nests occurring within the IBA.

NOMINATED BY: Rex Rowan (Alachua Audubon Society) and Bill Pranty (Audubon of Florida)

BIG BEND ECOSYSTEM

Big Bend Wildlife Management Area (58,435 acres 23,374 ha), including **Hagens Cove** [1200 acres; 480 ha]), **Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve** (4875 acres; 1950 ha) and **adjacent private properties** (>3400 acres; >1360 ha), **Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge** (832 acres; 332 ha), **Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge** (50,838 acres; 20,335 ha), and **Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park** (34,032 acres; 13,612 ha)

Dixie, Levy, and Taylor counties

149,303 acres (59,721 ha)

LOCATION: along the Gulf of Mexico encompassing most coastal portions in western Taylor, Dixie, and Levy counties. Nearly contiguous with the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge IBA to the northwest, and with the Crystal River marshes IBA to the south.

DESCRIPTION: a great expanse of tidal marshes and adjacent uplands stretching nearly continuously for 120 miles (192 km) from the Aucilla River south to the Withlacoochee River. Hagens Cove is a small non-hunted portion of Big Bend Wildlife Management Area, a site for which no other data were submitted. Annual visitation of the sites is as follows: ____ to Big Bend Wildlife Management Area, ____ to Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve, 25,000 to Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge, 8000 vehicles to Hagens Cove, 10,000 to Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge, and ____ to Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park. Annual hunter use of the sites is: ____ to Big Bend Wildlife Management Area, ____ to Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve, 8000 to Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge, and ____ to Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park. Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge and Hagens Cove are not hunted.

OWNERSHIP: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge and Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge), Florida Division of Recreation and Parks (Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve and Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park), Florida Division of Wildlife (Big Bend Wildlife Management Area), and private owners (north and east of Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve)

HABITATS: **Big Bend Wildlife Management Area:** _____. **Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve:** *pine flatwoods, *xeric oak scrub, sandhills, sand pine scrub, cattail marsh, artificial. **Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge:** *temperate hammock, *tidal marsh, *estuarine, *coastal strand, mangrove forest. **Hagens Cove:** *tidal marsh, *estuarine, pine flatwoods, artificial. **Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge:** *pine plantation, *cypress swamp, *freshwater marsh, *sawgrass marsh, *tidal marsh, *riverine, *estuarine, longleaf pine flatwoods, sandhills, temperate hammock, xeric oak scrub, fields, bayhead, cattail marsh, lacustrine, coastal strand. **Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park:** _____.

LAND USE: **Big Bend Wildlife Management Area:** _____. **Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve:** *conservation, *hunting, recreation. **Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge:** *conservation, recreation. **Hagens Cove:** *recreation, conservation. **Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge:** *conservation, *hunting, recreation, timber production. **Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park:** _____.

IBA CATEGORIES: **Big Bend Wildlife Management Area:** ____; significant natural habitats. **Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve:** significant populations of Threatened species; and significant natural habitats. **Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge:** significant populations of Special Concern, FCREPA, and IBA species; significant numbers of wading birds and shorebirds; and significant natural habitats. **Hagens Cove:** significant populations of Threatened and Special Concern species; significant numbers of shorebirds; and significant natural habitats. **Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge:** significant populations of Threatened species; and significant natural habitats. **Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park:** ____; significant natural habitats.

AVIAN DATA: _____. Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge supports one of the largest wading bird rookeries in the northern half of the Peninsula, and a large roost of Magnificent Frigatebirds. The Cedar Key area contains significant numbers of shorebirds, including very large numbers of wintering

American Oystercatchers. Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve and adjacent properties once supported a viable population of Florida Scrub-Jays, which has declined severely in the past 20 years. The IBA is also extremely important for breeding Short-tailed Hawks. Bird diversity of all sites combined is 277 native species. [Bird list is a combination of Cedar Keys and Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuges; are bird lists available for any other site?].

Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve and adjacent private lands:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Florida Scrub-Jay	Sep 1980–Mar 1981	55 birds	<1% (R); habitat management would increase this significantly
	Nov 1992–Jan 1996	27 birds	
	summer 1997	16 birds	

Data from +Cox (1987), +Pranty (1996b), and provided by Tom Webber (University of Florida)

Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Brown Pelican	_____	700 pairs	8% (B)
	26 May 1999	200–600 pairs	2–9% (B)
Magnificent Frigatebird	_____	200 birds	4% (N)
	26 May 1999		
Great Egret	_____	250 pairs	1% (B)
	26 May 1999	100–300 pairs	<1–2% (B)
Snowy Egret	_____	300 pairs	(B)
	26 May 1999	100–300 pairs	
Tricolored Heron	_____	75 pairs	(B)
	26 May 1999	100–300 pairs	
White Ibis	_____	3000 pairs	(B)
	26 May 1999	200–600 pairs	1–3% (B)
Wading birds	_____	>3650 pairs	(B)
	26 May 1999	800–2400 pairs	(B)
American Oystercatcher	4 Jan 1997	431 birds	(W)
	Dec 1998	588 birds	(W)
	30 Dec 1999	483 birds	(W)
	15 Nov 2000	485 birds	(W)
Shorebirds	winter 1993–1994	3449 birds	(W)
Black Skimmer	30 Dec 1999	349 birds	(W)

Wading bird data from the Seahorse Key rookery provided by Dale Henderson [need year]; 1999 wading bird data provided by Julia Dodge (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission); 1993–1994 shorebird data from +Sprandel et al. (1997), November 2001 oystercatcher data supplied by Steve Nesbitt (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission), other oystercatcher and skimmer data from Cedar Key Christmas Bird Counts—some of these observations probably were of birds outside the Refuge (and IBA).

Hagen's Cove:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Shorebirds	winter 1993–1994	1198 birds	(W)

Data from +Sprandel et al. (1997)

Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Swallow-tailed Kite	25–27 Mar 1997	19–24 pairs	3–4% (B)

Data from +Sykes et al. (1999)

Multiple sites:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Reddish Egret	summer 2000	>25 birds	2% (N)
	30 Jul 2001	16 birds	>1% (N)
Wading birds	15 Nov 2000	“several thousand” birds	(N)
Osprey	1999–2000	50 nests	3% (B)
Bald Eagle	1998–1999 and 1999–2000	20 nests	2% (B)
Short-tailed Hawk	1999–2001	ca. 25 radio-tagged birds under study; 10–15 pairs estimated	5–7% (B)
Black Rail	Mar–Jul 1989	8 birds	(B)
American Oystercatcher	15 Nov 2000	585 birds	(W)
Piping Plover	winter 1999–2000	>6 birds	1% (W)
Shorebirds	15 Nov 2000	“several thousand” birds	(W)
Overall diversity	Sep 1998 list	277 natives 2 exotics	Cedar Keys and Lower Suwannee national wildlife refuges only

Reddish Egret data from observations by John Hintermister et al. published in *Florida Field Naturalist*, eagle GIS coverage provided by Julia Dodge (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission), hawk data provided by Ken Meyer (Avian Research and Conservation Institute), rail data from +Runde et al. (1990), November 2001 data provided by Steve Nesbitt (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission), other data provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel or Celeste Shitama (University of Florida) and Steve Nesbitt (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission)

OTHER RESOURCES: This and other IBAs protect about 120 miles (192 km) of coastline, nearly all of it continuous, and encompassing virtually the entire Gulf coast from the Ochlockonee River (Franklin and Wakulla counties) to south of the Pithlachascotee River (Pasco County), a distance of over 200 miles (320 km). **Big Bend Wildlife Management Area:** _____. **Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge:** Atsena Otie Key contains the remnants of the original (1890s) town of Cedar Key, while Seahorse Key contains a Civil War cemetery and the Cedar Key lighthouse. **Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge:** Numerous Indian middens and burial mounds occur onsite; the Shell Mound site is well-known. **Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park:** _____.

THREATS: **Big Bend Wildlife Management Area:** _____. **Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve:** *offsite development, *habitat succession. **Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge:** cowbird brood parasitism. **Hagens Cove:** offsite development, overharvesting, increased human use. **Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge:** none. **Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park:** _____.

CONSERVATION ISSUES: **Big Bend Wildlife Management Area:** _____. **Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve and adjacent private properties** formerly supported a regionally significant population of Florida Scrub-Jays, but lack of fire management has reduced the population to very low levels (by 1999, only 7 groups remained, with 6 of these on private lands). Without immediate restoration of scrub habitats at Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve—coupled with acquisition of adjacent privately owned scrub—the future for this population is bleak. **Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge:** _____. **Hagens Cove:** There are few management concerns, but there is no legal protection to prevent vehicles from driving into the marsh. Over-harvesting of fiddler crabs by bait dealers is a minor

concern. **Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge:** _____. **Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park:** _____.

The State should vigorously pursue scrub acquisition efforts in the Cedar Key–Sumner–Rosewood area, and take immediate steps to properly manage scrub habitats at Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve.

NOMINATED BY: Cedar Key National Wildlife Refuge and Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge: Dale Henderson (____), **Hagens Cove:** Jerry Krummrich (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission), **Waccasassa Bay to Deadman Bay:** Steve Nesbitt (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) and Celeste Shitama (University of Florida), **Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve and adjacent private properties:** Bill Pranty (Audubon of Florida)

REFERENCES: +Cox, J.A. 1987. *Status and Distribution of the Florida Scrub Jay*. Florida Ornithological Society Special Publication Number 3. Gainesville, FL. • +Pranty, B. 1996a. Distribution of the Florida Scrub-Jay, 1992–1993. Final report submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cooperative Agreement No. 14-16-0004-91-950, Modification No. 5. Jacksonville, FL. • +Runde, D.E., P.D. Southall, J.A. Hovis, R. Sullivan, and R.B. Renken. 1990. Recent records and survey methods for the Black Rail in Florida. *Florida Field Naturalist* 18: 33–35. • +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. • +Sykes, Jr., P.W., C.B. Kepler, K.L. Litzenberger, H.R. Sansing, E.T.R. Lewis, and J.S. Hatfield. 1999. Density and habitat of breeding Swallow-tailed Kites in the Lower Suwannee ecosystem, Florida. *Journal of Field Ornithology* 70: 321–336.

WEBSITES: <<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/othrdata/chekbird/r4/cedarkey.htm>>, <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district2/cedarkeyscrub>>, <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district2/waccasassabay>> <http://www.gorp.com/gorp/resource/us_nwr/fl_cedar.htm>, <http://www.gorp.com/gorp/resource/us_nwr/fl_lower.htm>.

CAMP BLANDING–JENNINGS

Camp Blanding Military Reservation (62,340 acres; 24,936 ha) and **Jennings State Forest** (20,567 acres; 8226 ha)

Clay County

82,907 acres (33,162 ha)

LOCATION: in western Clay County from the Duval County line south to State Road 21 near Keystone Heights, west to the Bradford County line.

DESCRIPTION: _____ Camp Blanding Military Reservation receives ____ recreationists and 9000 hunters annually, while annual use of Jennings State Forest is >500 recreationists and 350 hunters.

OWNERSHIP: Florida Department of Military Affairs (Camp Blanding Military Reservation), Florida Division of Forestry and St. Johns River Water Management District (Jennings State Forest)

HABITATS: Camp Blanding Military Reservation: *longleaf pine flatwoods, *pine plantation, *sandhills, *xeric oak scrub, *lacustrine, sand pine scrub, fields, riverine, artificial. **Jennings State Forest:** *longleaf pine flatwoods, *pine plantation, *sandhills, *bayhead, *riverine, temperate hammock, non-native pasture, hardwood swamp, freshwater marsh, lacustrine

LAND USE: Camp Blanding Military Reservation: *military training, timber production, conservation, hunting. **Jennings State Forest:** *conservation, recreation, hunting, timber production.

IBA CATEGORIES: Camp Blanding Military Reservation: significant populations of Endangered species; complete diversity of longleaf pine flatwoods species; and significant natural habitats.

Jennings State Forest: significant populations of Threatened and Watch List species; and significant natural habitats.

AVIAN DATA: Both areas contain extensive areas of longleaf pine flatwoods. [Are bird lists available for either site?].

Camp Blanding Military Reservation:

SPECIES	DATE	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	1998	13 clusters	1% (R)

Data from John Kappes (University of Florida), provided by Rex Rowan (Alachua Audubon Society)

Jennings State Forest:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
“Southeastern” American Kestrel	2000	>15 pairs	(R)
Bachman's Sparrow	2000	common	(R)
Red-cockaded Woodpecker		0 birds	extirpated in the 1950s–1960s, but good potential for natural colonization or translocation in the future

Data provided by Charlie Pedersen (Florida Division of Forestry)

OTHER RESOURCES: Camp Blanding Military Reservation: Numerous other scrub and flatwoods species are present, including gopher tortoise, ♦ indigo snake (*Drymarchon corais*), ♦ gopher frog (*Rana capito*), and Florida mouse. **Jennings State Forest:** Extensive longleaf pine flatwoods and sandhills have retained their natural ground cover. Seepage ravines contain Appalachian flora; many of the seepage slopes contain their original floral diversity.

THREATS: Camp Blanding Military Reservation: *timber harvesting. **Jennings State Forest:** *offsite development, *feral hogs, human disturbance, exotic plants, habitat succession

CONSERVATION ISSUES: Camp Blanding Military Reservation: Fire management and mechanical restoration is needed in longleaf pine flatwoods to increase the number of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. • Habitat for the “Southeastern” American Kestrel needs to be increased. • Salvage logging of snags in burned areas eliminates nesting sites for kestrels and other cavity-nesting species. **Jennings State Forest** was acquired beginning in 1991. The five-year Resource Management Plan currently is up for review. Conservation issues include returning fire as a management tool, restoring longleaf pine flatwoods and sandhills, restoring the hydrology, and maintaining water quality. • The Forest contains 6000 (2400 ha) acres of flatwoods and a similar amount of sandhills, which are under “aggressive” restoration via prescribed fire, removing sand pine and slash pine from some sites, and by replanting longleaf pine. • Red-cockaded Woodpeckers have been extirpated from the Forest since the 1960s or earlier, but as the longleaf pine forests age, there is great potential for translocation, or natural colonization from Camp Blanding.

NOMINATED BY: Charlie Pedersen (Florida Division of Forestry) and Rex Rowan (Alachua Audubon Society)

WEBSITE: <http://www.fl-dof.com/state_forests/Jennings.htm>
<http://www.floridaguard.net/cbts/post_history.htm>

DUVAL AND NASSAU TIDAL MARSHES

Nassau River–St. Johns River Marshes Aquatic Preserve (mostly submerged; 85,000 acres; 34,000 ha) and **Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve** (46,000 acres [18,400 ha], 23,946 acres [9578 ha] in public ownership). Adjacent uplands include the **Pumpkin Hill Creek CARL–FF Project** (6927 acres; 2770 ha), with 3720 acres (1488 ha) acquired as **Pumpkin Hill Creek State Buffer Preserve**.

Duval and Nassau counties

137,927 acres (mostly submerged; 55,170 ha), with 112,666 acres (45,066 ha) protected

LOCATION: in northeastern Duval County and southeastern Nassau County northeast of Jacksonville, encompassing all tidal areas from the southern shore of the St. Marys River (the border with Georgia), through the Nassau River to the northern shore of the St. Johns River. Contiguous with the Huguenot Park–Nassau Sound and Northern Atlantic Migrant Stopover IBAs to the east, and the Fort George and Talbot Islands IBA to the south.

DESCRIPTION: _____. The tidal marshes were nominated as a single IBA, with no specific data submitted for the individual public ownerships. [Is visitation and hunter use of the site(s) known?]

OWNERSHIP: U.S. National Park Service (Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve), State of Florida (submerged lands), Florida Division of Marine Resources (Nassau River–St. Johns River Marshes Aquatic Preserve), St. Johns River Water Management District (Pumpkin Hill Creek State Buffer Preserve), and private owners (remaining acreage of the Pumpkin Hill CARL–FF Project, and portions of Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve)

HABITATS: *tidal marsh, *riverine, red-cedar hammock

LAND USE: *conservation, recreation, hunting

IBA CATEGORIES: significant populations of Special Concern species; significant numbers of wading birds; complete diversity of tidal marsh species; and significant natural habitats

AVIAN DATA: The marshes support virtually the entire Florida populations of “Worthington’s” Marsh Wren and “MacGillivray’s” Seaside Sparrow. [Are bird lists available for any of the sites?].

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
White Ibis	22 May 2000	>500 birds	1% (N)
“Worthington’s” Marsh Wren	Apr–Jul 2000	342 birds	25 of 53 points in Duval County and 92 of 100 points in Nassau County; (B)
“MacGillivray’s” Seaside Sparrow	Apr–Jul 2000	412 birds	22 of 53 points in Duval County and 90 of 100 points in Nassau County (B)

Data provided by Katy NeSmith (Florida Natural Areas Inventory)

OTHER RESOURCES: Significant historical resources are known from the site, although not necessarily in the marshes.

THREATS: *sea-level rise, human disturbance

CONSERVATION ISSUES: Marshes along the St. Johns River in Duval County are mostly protected as Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve and Pumpkin Hill Creek State Buffer Preserve, but the Nassau River marshes in Nassau County are mostly unprotected. A Florida Forever Project in 2001 has targeted Tiger Island and Little Tiger Island (1260 acres; 504 ha) for state acquisition. Several archaeological sites on these islands are known, but they have been impacted by “rampant looting” +(DEP 2001).

NOMINATED BY: Katy NeSmith (Florida Natural Areas Inventory)

WEBSITE: <<http://www.nps.gov/timu>>

FORT GEORGE AND TALBOT ISLANDS

Big Talbot Island State Park (1592 acres; 636 ha), **Fort George Island** (1000 acres; 400 ha), and **Little Talbot Island State Park** (2633 acres; 1052 ha)

Duval County
5225 acres (2090 ha)

LOCATION: along the Atlantic Ocean in northeastern Duval County, between the Nassau River and St. Johns River. Contiguous with the Duval and Nassau Tidal Marshes IBA to the west, the Huguenot Park–Nassau Sound IBA to the north and south, and part of the Northern Atlantic Migrant Stopover IBA to the east.

DESCRIPTION: **Big Talbot Island State Park** _____. The Park receives _____ visitors annually. **Fort George Island** consists of **Fort George Island Cultural State Park** (620 acres; 248 ha), and **Kingsley Plantation** (20 acres; 8 ha), and some private residences. The two publicly owned sites receive 85,000 recreationists annually. **Little Talbot Island State Park** is a barrier island between Nassau Sound and the St. Johns River, about 1 mile (1.6 km) wide and 5 miles (8 km) long. Except for State Road A1A, which bisects the island, most habitats are largely undisturbed. The State Park receives 100,000 recreationists annually. [Is Long Island a part of either state park?]

OWNERSHIP: U.S. National Park Service (Kingsley Plantation), Florida Division of Recreation and Parks (Big Talbot Island State Park, Fort George Island Cultural State Park, and Little Talbot Island State Park).

HABITATS: **Big Talbot Island State Park** _____. **Fort George Island:** *temperate hammock, *maritime hammock, pine plantation, sawgrass marsh, riverine, estuarine. **Little Talbot Island State Park:** *xeric oak scrub, *coastal strand, temperate hammock, sawgrass marsh, riverine, estuarine, artificial.

LAND USE: **Big Talbot Island State Park** _____. **Fort George Island:** *conservation, *recreation. **Little Talbot Island State Park:** *conservation, *recreation.

IBA CATEGORIES: **Big Talbot Island State Park** _____. **Fort George Island:** significant populations of Watch List species; and significant natural habitats. **Little Talbot Island State Park:** significant populations of Threatened and Watch List species; and significant natural habitats.

AVIAN DATA: Big Talbot and Little Talbot islands support significant populations of breeding and wintering shorebirds and larids. All three islands support significant breeding populations of Painted Buntings. Overall diversity is _____ species. [Are bird lists available for any site?]

Fort George Island:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Painted Bunting	1997	58 banded	(B)
	2000	61 banded	(B)
	May 2000	78 singing males	(B)

Banding data provided by Paul Sykes (U.S. Geological Survey), other data provided by Roger Clark (U.S. National Park Service)

Little Talbot Island State Park:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Piping Plover	Jan–Feb 2001	26 birds	5% (W)
Painted Bunting	2000	>100 birds banded	(B)

Plover data provided by Roger Clark (U.S. National Park Service) and bunting data provided by Paul Sykes (U.S. Geological Survey)

OTHER RESOURCES: Big Talbot Island State Park _____. About 70% of **Fort George Island** consists of >100-year old maritime hammock. • The cultural history of the island is outstanding. Shell middens created by the Timucuan Indians and their predecessors date back as far as 7000 YBP. One midden, the *Shell Ring*, is thought to have been an important center of worship. A Spanish Mission (San Juan del Puerto) was established in the center of the island in 1587 and lasted until 1702. General James Oglethorpe established Fort Saint Georges on the island in 1736 as the English tried to take Florida from Spain (the location of the fort today is unknown). The English gained control of Florida and the island in 1763 and this began the plantation period. The most dramatic evidence of this period can be found at Kingsley Plantation, a unit of the National Park Service. • **Little Talbot Island State Park** shares much of the same history as the other islands in the vicinity. An extensive Indian culture is evidenced by shell middens. • Some of the most important habitats are at the southern part of the island, which formed in the 1880s due to the building of the jetties at the mouth of the St. Johns River.

THREATS: Big Talbot Island State Park: _____. **Fort George Island:** development (proposed channel dredging), human disturbance, erosion, feral cats, habitat succession, cowbird brood parasitism, and exotic plants. **Little Talbot Island State Park:** development, human disturbance, habitat succession, cowbird brood parasitism, and feral hogs.

CONSERVATION ISSUES: Big Talbot Island State Park _____. **Fort George Island:** Talbot Island State Park managers are currently writing the Management Plan. A General Management Plan was completed by the National Park Service and does not address the conservation aspects of the island proper, but of the Timucuan National Preserve (the proposed new name of the preserve) in general. The major future impacts will come from increasing human use. The National Park Service and Kingsley Plantation are contemplating a Landscape Management Plan, which has the potential to clear habitats between the Slave Quarters and the Plantation House that may remove habitat for several pairs of Painted Buntings. • The State Park is currently restoring the Ribault Club House on the southeast side of the island. Preparations for increased use of this part of the island include increased mowing, removing trees along the edge of the marsh to open up the view, and planning additional parking and picnicking areas. • The interior of the island contains unique habitat. A golf course built in the 1920s was abandoned in 1991 and offers an opportunity to manage old fairways as habitat for many wildlife species. **Little Talbot Island State Park:** The park management plan is rewritten every five years. Visitation is rising and will become an increasing concern. One positive regulation is that dogs are prohibited from the park. Little Talbot Island is long and linear, with about 5 miles (8 km) of beach. Driving on the beach is prohibited. The main problem along the beach is the disturbance of nesting and roosting birds, especially on the north end of the island. However, boaters who land on the sand islands between Little and Big Talbot Islands are a much more urgent problem. • State Road A1A is the main highway between Fernandina Beach and Jacksonville. This highway may become an issue if planners need to move the highway farther inland as the southern end of the island continues to erode. There has already been significant erosion on the south end of the island. The pier was lost two years ago and encroachment by the sea is becoming more evident. A decision looming by city, state, and federal agencies about the Fort George River Inlet Bridge will greatly impact the south end of Little Talbot Island.

NOMINATED BY: Roger Clark (U.S. National Park Service)

WEBSITES: <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district2/bigtalbot>>, <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district2/fortgeorge>>, <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district2/littletalbot>>

GOETHE STATE FOREST

Goethe State Forest (49,229 acres; 19,691 ha) and the **Watermelon Pond CARL–FF Project** (11,585 acres [4634 ha] remaining)

Alachua and Levy counties

60,814 acres (24,325 ha), including 49,229 acres (19,691 ha) acquired

LOCATION: mostly in southeastern Levy County east of U.S. Highway 19; a separate parcel is in northeastern Levy County and extreme southwestern Alachua County.

DESCRIPTION: Goethe State Forest protects extensive longleaf pine flatwoods and high-quality sandhills. Most of the Forest was purchased from the Goethe family in 1992 for \$65 million. The Forest receives ____ recreationists and ____ hunters annually.

OWNERSHIP: Florida Division of Forestry (Goethe State Forest) and private owners (remaining acreage of the Watermelon Pond CARL–FF Project)

HABITATS: *longleaf pine flatwoods, *temperate hammock, pine plantation, sandhills, non-native pasture, cypress swamp, bayhead, riverine, lacustrine

LAND USE: *conservation, *timber production, recreation, hunting

IBA CATEGORIES: significant populations of Endangered, Threatened, and Watch List species; complete breeding diversity of longleaf pine flatwoods species; and significant natural habitats

AVIAN DATA: Goethe State Forest contains all species of longleaf pine flatwoods. _____. [Is a bird list available?].

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Wood Stork	Jul 1999	200 birds	1% (N)
“Southeastern” American Kestrel	Jul 2000	>20 nests	(R)
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Jun 2000	28 clusters	2% (R)

Data provided by staff of the Florida Division of Forestry and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, provided by Kwami Pennick (Florida Division of Forestry)

OTHER RESOURCES: Goethe State Forest contains one of the largest contiguous tracts of longleaf pine remaining in the Peninsula, with pitcher plant bogs and other rare flora and fauna.

THREATS: *habitat succession, development, human disturbance

CONSERVATION ISSUES: Goethe State Forest is undergoing a revised management plan that involves Alachua Audubon Society. The plan is to create an uneven-aged forest to mimic natural pine flatwoods. • The Red-cockaded Woodpecker population is monitored intensively.

NOMINATED BY: Kwami Pennick (Florida Division of Forestry)

WEBSITE: <http://www.fl-dof.com/state_forests/Goethe.htm>

GUANA RIVER

Guana River State Park (2397 acres; 958 ha) and **Guana River Wildlife Management Area** (9815 acres; 3926 ha)

St. Johns County

12,212 acres (4884 ha)

LOCATION: on the barrier island between the Tolomato River (Intracoastal Waterway) and the Atlantic Ocean in northeastern St. Johns County, bordered on the north by State Road 210.

DESCRIPTION: Two adjacent public ownerships purchased in 1984 that protect a large area of coastal habitats. The State Park occupies the southern quarter of the property (north to Guana dam), while Guana River Wildlife Management Area occupies the northern three-quarters of the IBA. Guana Lake was formed by damming a portion of the Guana River. Beachfront property north and south of the IBA is composed of single-family homesites. The park receives ____ recreationists annually, and the Wildlife Management Area receives ____ hunters and ____ recreationists annually.

OWNERSHIP: Florida Division of Recreation and Parks (Guana River State Park), Florida Division of Wildlife (Guana River Wildlife Management Area)

HABITATS: **Guana River State Park:** *temperate hammock, *xeric oak scrub, *tidal marsh, *estuarine, *coastal strand, pine flatwoods, freshwater marsh. **Guana River Wildlife Management Area:** ____.

LAND USE: **Guana River State Park:** *conservation, *recreation. **Guana River Wildlife Management Area:** ____.

IBA CATEGORIES: **Guana River State Park:** significant population of Endangered, and FCREPA species; significant numbers of migrant raptors; and significant natural habitats. **Guana River Wildlife Management Area:** ____.

AVIAN DATA: Since 1997, a raptor watch has been conducted during the same 16-day period from late September through mid-October, and has recorded significant numbers of Peregrine Falcons, and presumably also of Merlins. The park also supports breeding Painted Buntings, and is a monitoring site for a color-banding project underway by the U.S. Geological Survey. The Park supports a small colony of Least Terns. [Is a bird list available for the WMA?].

Guana River State Park:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Peregrine Falcon	1997–2001 seasons (27 Sep–12 Oct)	mean of 371 birds (range of 234–489)	mean of 18% (range of 11–24%; M)
Merlin	1997–2001 seasons (27 Sep–12 Oct)	mean of 51 birds (range of 40–65)	(M)
Least Tern	18 Jul 2001	116 birds	1% (B)
Overall diversity	Aug 1995 list	220 natives 3 exotics	

Raptor data of Bob Stoll and cooperators, observed from the northernmost beach platform; other data provided by Richard Owen (Florida Division of Recreation and Parks)

OTHER RESOURCES: This IBA contains 4.2 miles (6.7 km) of undeveloped beach–dune habitats, one of the longest stretches remaining along the Atlantic Ocean. The dunes at Guana River are some of the highest in Florida, with the secondary dunes attaining heights of 20–35 feet (6–10.5 m). • In 1992, fifty-five ♦ “Anastasia Island” beach mice (*Peromyscus polionotus phasma*) were reintroduced into the beaches dunes; periodic releases of additional mice from Anastasia Island are undertaken to decrease the threat of inbreeding. • Three species of sea turtles nest along the beaches: the loggerhead sea turtle, leatherback, and green turtle. Park staff have monitored sea turtle nests since

1987. • The State Park contains nine natural communities and 17 significant historic or pre-historic cultural sites; an early 19th century Minorcan coquina block well is on the National Register of Historic Places. The region has been inhabited almost continuously for the past 5000 years. There is some evidence that Juan Ponce de Leon first landed in Florida at Guana River [year?].

THREATS: Guana River State Park: development. **Guana River Wildlife Management Area:** ____.

CONSERVATION ISSUES: Guana River State Park: Least Tern surveys conducted by park staff since 1994 indicate that there once may have been a significant colony at the park. In recent years, only small numbers (12 or fewer pairs) have bred, and fledging success is low, due primarily from storm tides washing away nests. The nesting area is fenced and posted against human intrusion. • Erosion “blowouts” have been caused by vehicles and pedestrians crossing the dunes. The largest occur at sites used for vehicular access in the past—vehicles are now prohibited from the park beaches. Pedestrian traffic through the dunes has been alleviated somewhat by the creation of three parking lots with accompanying walkovers across the dunes. As offsite development continues, visitation is expected to increase and the problem will be magnified. • Guana River flows south from Guana Dam to the Intracoastal Waterway. Water quality of both the lake and river has been poor in recent years, and shellfishing currently is prohibited. **Guana River Wildlife Management Area:** ____.

NOMINATED BY: Richard Owen (Florida Division of Parks and Recreation) and Bill Pranty (Audubon of Florida)

WEBSITE: <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district3/guanariver>>

HUGUENOT PARK–NASSAU SOUND

Huguenot Memorial Park (169 upland acres; 67 ha), and **Nassau Sound Bird Islands** (100 acres; 40 ha)

Duval County

269 acres (107 ha)

LOCATION: coastal areas along the Atlantic Ocean in extreme northeastern Duval County, from just north of the Nassau River south to the St. Johns River, much of it on both sides of State Road A1A. Contiguous with the Duval and Nassau Tidal Marshes IBA to the west, and with the Fort George and Talbot Islands IBA to the north and south.

DESCRIPTION: two separate conservation areas divided by Fort George Island, north of the St. Johns River and east of Sisters Creek. Both sites have been designated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as Critical Wildlife Areas. The Nassau Sound Bird Islands consist of three small sand keys within the **Nassau River–St. Johns River Marshes Aquatic Preserve**. Huguenot Memorial Park, known locally as Ward's Bank, receives 100,000 visitors annually. [Is visitation known for Nassau Sound?]

OWNERSHIP: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Florida (Huguenot Memorial Park), the State of Florida (Nassau Sound Bird Islands, but ownership of Big Bird Island is in dispute), and (possibly) private owners (Big Island)

HABITATS: **Huguenot Memorial Park:** *estuarine, *coastal strand, tidal marsh, maritime hammock. **Nassau Sound Bird Islands:** *coastal strand, tidal marsh, estuarine.

LAND USE: **Huguenot Memorial Park:** *recreation, conservation. **Nassau Sound Bird Islands:** *conservation, *recreation

IBA CATEGORIES: **Huguenot Memorial Park:** significant populations of Threatened, Special Concern, and FCREPA species; significant numbers of raptors and larids; and significant natural habitats. **Nassau Sound Bird Islands:** significant populations of Endangered, Threatened, Special Concern, FCREPA, Watch List, and IBA species; significant numbers of raptors, shorebirds, and larids; and significant natural habitats

AVIAN DATA: This IBA is extremely important for breeding and roosting shorebirds and larids, and significant numbers of migrant falcons in fall. [I have a bird list for Huguenot Memorial Park; is a list available for Nassau Sound?].

Huguenot Memorial Park:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Brown Pelican	23 Feb 1986	410 birds	(N)
Wilson's Plover	19 Jun 1999	5 nests	2% (B)
Piping Plover	29 Jan 1978	28 birds	5% (W)
	26 Dec 1994	10 birds	2% (W)
	Jan–Feb 2001	8 birds	1% (W)
Red Knot	15 Feb 1981	1466 birds	(W)
Shorebirds	28 Dec 1996	1127 birds	(W)
Laughing Gull	8 Aug 1999	4700 birds	20% (B)
Gull-billed Tern	summer 1999	4 nests	7% (B)
Royal Tern	8 Aug 1999	1850 birds	(N)
Sandwich Tern	8 Aug 1999	68 birds	(N)
Least Tern	20 Jul 1990	100 adults	1% (B)
Black Skimmer	20 Feb 1985	2026 birds	(W)
	7 Jul 1985	100 nests	6% (B)
Total diversity	Jan 2001	180 natives	
		2 exotics	

1980s data provided by Bob Richter (____) and Linda Bremer (____), 1999 observations of Roger Clark published in *Florida Field Naturalist*, 1994 data from the 1994 Jacksonville CBC, bird list compiled by Peggy Powell (Duval Audubon Society).

Nassau Sound Bird Islands:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Brown Pelican	6 Oct 1999	500 birds	(N)
Merlin	17 Oct 1999	53 birds	(M)
	21 Apr 2000	83 birds	(M)
Peregrine Falcon	17 Oct 1999	30 birds	1% (M)
Raptors	17 Oct 1999	343 birds	(M)
	21 Apr 2000	311 birds	(M)
Wilson's Plover	1999	7 nests	3% (B)
Piping Plover	10 Feb 2000	15 birds	2% (W)
	11 Nov 2000	10 birds	>1% (W)
American Oystercatcher	1999	4 nests	1% (B)
Gull-billed Tern	1974–1977	mean of 203 nests (range of 157–261)	? (B)
	1987–1988	6–12 nests	? (B)
	1999	8 nests	14% (B)
	4 Jul 2001	22 pairs	40% (B)
Royal Tern	1974–1977	mean of 1296 nests (range of 533–2153)	? (B)
	1987–1988	3000–4200 nests	? (B)
	27 Sep 1999	2000 birds	>1% (W)
	10 Oct 2000	>1000 birds	>1% (W); Third Bird Island only
Sandwich Tern	1974–1976	mean of 10 nests (range of 5–21)	? (B)
Common Tern	10 Sep 2000	>1000 birds	Third Bird Island only
Least Tern	1974–1977	mean of 131 nests (range of 80–202)	? (B)
Black Tern	24 Aug 1999	500 birds	
Black Skimmer	1974–1977	mean of 772 nests (range of 556–933)	? (B)
	1987–1988	390–630 nests	? (B)
	1999	75 nests	4% (B)
	27 Sep 1999	2000 birds	(M)
	4 Jul 2001	250 pairs	15% (B)
Larids	10 Sep 2000	>2200 birds	(M)

1970s larid data of Robert Loftin (deceased), 1980s data of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, other data provided by Patrick Leary (Duval Audubon Society)

OTHER RESOURCES: Huguenot Memorial Park: _____. Nassau Sound Bird Islands contain remnant natural inlet, dunes, and coastal hammocks. [what about Huguenot?]

THREATS: Huguenot Memorial Park: *human disturbance, *erosion, *development (channel-dredging proposal). **Nassau Sound Bird Islands:** *human disturbance, *erosion

CONSERVATION ISSUES: Driving on dunes at **Huguenot Memorial Park** is prohibited, but it does occur. Dogs are supposed to be leashed at all times, but often are allowed to run free, causing severe disturbance to shorebirds and larids. Regular enforcement to protect beach-nesting and –roosting birds is needed urgently. • Parts of the beach are eroding and “riprap” has been placed along the shoreline. Beach renourishment is recommended. • Jet skis should be prohibited, especially in the bay portion. • Water quality should be monitored. • A large amount of sand has accreted at the north

end of the spit, which threatens to close the Fort George Inlet. • A proposal to dredge a new channel through the Critical Wildlife Area could have devastating effects on the birds that nest and roost there. • Erosion has greatly reduced the size of **Nassau Sound Bird Islands** since the 1970s • Increasing use of the Bird Islands for human recreation threatens the nesting and roosting populations of its shorebirds and larids. Although designated as a Critical Wildlife Area, enforcement is lacking and disturbance of birds from humans and unleashed dogs is rampant. • The islands are just offshore of Big Talbot Island State Park, and may become part of the park.

It is essential that the State enforce protection of the Critical Wildlife Areas during spring and summer to protect their breeding colonies.

NOMINATED BY: Huguenot Memorial Park: Peggy Powell (Duval Audubon Society), and **Nassau Sound Bird Islands:** Patrick Leary (Duval Audubon Society)

ICHECTUCKNEE SPRINGS STATE PARK

Columbia and Suwannee counties

2276 acres (910 ha)

LOCATION: mostly north of U.S. 98 along both sides of the Ichetucknee River in southeastern Suwannee County and southwestern Columbia County, just upstream of its convergence with the Santa Fe River.

DESCRIPTION: Ichetucknee Springs is a series of first-magnitude springs that discharge 233 million gallons (880 million liters) per day and that form the short (6 mile; 9.6 km) Ichetucknee River. The Park receives 200,000 recreationists annually, primarily inner-tubists on the river.

OWNERSHIP: Florida Division of Recreation and Parks

HABITATS: *upland (“high pine”) forest, *sandhills, *temperate hammock, *riverine, fields, cypress swamp, hardwood swamp, freshwater marsh

LAND USE: *conservation, *recreation

IBA CATEGORIES: significant populations of Watch List species; and significant natural habitats

AVIAN DATA: The Park contains a diversity of species, including pine flatwoods–sandhills species and Neotropical migrants. A kestrel nest-box “trail” was established in 1994, and nestlings have been banded annually since then.

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
“Southeastern” American Kestrel	2000	8 of 13 nest boxes occupied	(R)
	2001	7 of 13 nest boxes occupied	(R)
	1994–2001	147 birds banded (141 nestlings and 6 adults)	(R)
Bachman's Sparrow	2001	76 territories	(R)
Wood-warbler diversity	Oct 2000 list	32 species	(M)
Overall diversity	Oct 2000 list	170 natives 4 exotics	

Data provided by Sam Cole (Florida Division of Recreation and Parks); kestrels banded with the cooperation of John Smallwood (____)

OTHER RESOURCES: Surveys in 1994 documented **629** vascular plant species, including several significant sandhills and “high pine” species. The Park also supports 134 other vertebrate [or animal?] species. Plants and animals of interest include ♦ “Ichetucknee ladies'-trusses” (*Spiranthes odorata* X *S. ovalis*), ♦ wakerobin (*Trillium* spp.), ♦ King Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*), ♦ Florida willow (*Salix floridana*), ♦ Ichetucknee silt snail (*Cincinnatia mica*), ♦ mountain mullet (*Agonostomus monticola*), ♦ pine snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*), ♦ short-tailed snake (*Stilosoma extenuatum*), gopher frog, gopher tortoise, Florida mouse, and “Sherman's” fox squirrel. • Many cultural sites occur within the Park, of which the most studied is the Mission de San Martin de Timucua. Ichetucknee Springs was declared a National Natural Landmark in 1972.

THREATS: *human disturbance, offsite development

CONSERVATION ISSUES: The Park has an approved management plan. Upland habitats are burned at frequent intervals to maintain their open characters. • Overuse of the river by inner-tube “riders” has caused damage to vegetation in the river and along its banks. As a result, the number of inner-tubists within the Park now is regulated to protect riverine habitats. • Off-site development may impact water quality in the river.

NOMINATED BY: Sam Cole (Florida Division of Recreation and Parks)

WEBSITE: <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district2/ichetuckneesprings>>

KANAPAHA PRAIRIE

Alachua County
3520 acres (1487 ha)

LOCATION: in southwestern Alachua County, bordered by State Road 24 to the north and west, State Road 121 to the east, and County Road 346 to the south. Nearly contiguous with the Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park IBA to the east.

DESCRIPTION: a privately owned site _____. [Is there any public visitation or hunter use?]

OWNERSHIP: private

HABITATS: *temperate hammock, *freshwater marsh, *fields, agricultural fields

LAND USE: *cattle grazing, conservation, recreation

IBA CATEGORIES: significant numbers of wading birds and wintering cranes and sparrows

AVIAN DATA: Kanapaha Prairie supports large numbers of “Greater” Sandhill Cranes and sparrows during winter, and can support significant numbers of wading birds. [Is a bird list available?].

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Wading birds	Year-round	up to 1000 birds	(N)
“Greater” Sandhill Crane	Annual	1500 birds	6% (W)
Wintering sparrows	Annual	>1000 birds estimated	50% Savannah, 20% Swamp, 10% Vesper, 10% Song, and 10% others

Data provided by Celeste Shitama (University of Florida) and Steve Nesbitt (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission)

OTHER RESOURCES: none known.

THREATS: *habitat succession, human disturbance, exotic plants

CONSERVATION ISSUES: The site is below the 100-year floodplain and no development will be permitted. Kanapaha Prairie is under consideration for public acquisition by the Alachua County Forever program.

NOMINATED BY: Celeste Shitama (University of Florida) and Stephen Nesbitt (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission)

LAKE DISSTON

Flagler County
1844 acres (736 ha)

[As recommended by the IBA Executive Committee, the boundaries of this IBA will be adjusted to include upland habitats to protect the Swallow-tailed Kite roosting and breeding areas].

LOCATION: in extreme southwestern Flagler County, between the Volusia County line and State Road 11, south of County Road 304 and north of the Volusia County line.

DESCRIPTION: Lake Disston is a shallow (average depth 8–10 feet; 2.4–3 m) tannic lake that is drained by Little Haw Creek, which flows north into Crescent Lake. Lake Disston is ringed by a band of ancient cypresses, mostly along the northern end. The lake and creek are part of the St. Johns River basin. Two developments are built along parts of the eastern and southwestern shorelines of the lake, but these do not impact the cypresses. The lake receives an estimated 250 boats and 80 hunters annually.

OWNERSHIP: State of Florida

HABITATS: *lacustrine, cypress swamp

LAND USE: *conservation, recreation

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

AVIAN DATA: Lake Disston supports significant populations of Swallow-tailed Kites and Ospreys. The number of Osprey nests has been monitored informally in many years since 1967, when 5 nests were known. Since that time, numbers have increased significantly, but show a high degree of annual fluctuation; the highest count was 84 nests in 1985.

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
White Ibis	Nov 2001	800 birds	(N)
Wood Stork	2000	18 nests	new rookery; <1% (R)
	2002	36 nests	<1% (R)
Swallow-tailed Kite	1997	27 birds	1% (N); pre-roost assemblage
	Mar–Apr 1999	2 nests found; others suspected to occur	<1% (B)
Osprey	1998	40 nests	2% (R)
	May 2000	40 nests	2% (R)
	31 Mar 2002	33 nests	2% (R)

Wood Stork data provided by Steve Nesbitt (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission); ibis and Osprey data provided by Ann Moore (Lake Disston LakeWatch); kite data provided by Ken Meyer (Avian Research and Conservation Institute)

OTHER RESOURCES: The largely intact natural forest cover surrounding the lake (from the relative lack of development) and its water clarity help to explain the importance of Lake Disston to raptors, and have allowed for the lake and its drainage to remain one of the most pristine and intact black-water habitats in northeastern Florida. In April 2001, the State designated Lake Disston as an Outstanding Florida Water.

THREATS: *development (of surrounding uplands), runoff

CONSERVATION ISSUES: A proposed development along the Lake’s southeastern shore will be composed of homes built with septic tanks. Together with existing residences, which also use septic tanks, and surrounding agricultural areas, this may impact water quality in the lake. The St. Johns River Water Management District has identified this property as a potential acquisition. If acquired, this property will form a contiguous swath of protected lands from Lake Disston southwest through

Heart Island Conservation Area, Lake George State Forest, and Ocala National Forest to extensive conservation lands in the Wekiva River basin.

NOMINATED BY: Ann Moore (Lake Disston LakeWatch) and Gianfranco Basili (St. Johns Audubon Society)

MATANZAS INLET AND RIVER

Fort Matanzas National Monument (300 acres; 120 ha), **Northeast Florida Blueway Phase II Tolomato and Matanzas Rivers FF Project** (~15,000 acres; 6000 ha, none acquired), and State-sovereign lands (9985 acres; 3994 ha)

St. Johns County

24,985 acres (9994 ha), with 300 acres (120 ha) acquired and 9985 acres (3994 ha) of sovereign lands

LOCATION: in southeastern St. Johns County, from State Road 312 to Pellicer Creek (the boundary between St. Johns and Flagler counties) between the mainland and the barrier islands. Fort Matanzas National Monument is at the extreme southern end of Anastasia Island in southeastern St. Johns County, along the north side of the Matanzas Inlet. This IBA is contiguous with parts of the Northern Atlantic Migration Stopover IBA to the north and south.

DESCRIPTION: **Fort Matanzas National Monument:** a national monument with undisturbed coastal dunes surrounding Fort Matanzas. **Tolomato and Matanzas Rivers FF Project:** an extensive marsh and estuarine system running from St. Augustine south for 14 miles (22 km). The entire FF Project area encompasses 27,929 acres (11,191 ha), but some of this is north of State Road 312, which marks the northern boundary of the IBA. A 9000-acre (3600-ha) silvicultural site sought for public acquisition occupies virtually the entire southern half of the IBA. **Matanzas Inlet** is a natural inlet that connects the Matanzas River with the Atlantic Ocean. The Inlet is characterized by extensive tidal flats and sandbars, interspersed with natural out-croppings of coquina rock.

OWNERSHIP: U.S. National Park Service (Fort Matanzas National Monument), State of Florida (sovereign lands), and private (acreage part of the Northeast Florida Blueway Phase II Tolomato and Matanzas Rivers FF Project)

HABITATS: **Fort Matanzas National Monument:** *coastal strand, maritime hammock, artificial. **Tolomato and Matanzas Rivers FF Project:** *tidal marsh, *estuarine, *pine plantation, *maritime hammock, sand pine scrub, freshwater marsh, hardwood swamp, riverine.

LAND USES: **Fort Matanzas National Monument:** *conservation, *recreation, *historic preservation. **Tolomato and Matanzas Rivers FF Project:** *silviculture, *conservation, recreation, private lands under threat of development

IBA CATEGORIES: **Fort Matanzas National Monument:** significant natural habitats. **Tolomato and Matanzas Rivers FF Project:** significant populations of Endangered species; significant numbers of shorebirds; and significant natural habitats.

AVIAN DATA: this IBA supports a Wood Stork rookery, large numbers of wintering shorebirds and larids, and smaller numbers of breeding larids.

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Wood Stork	2 Jun 1999	50–250 pairs	Blueway Project; <1–4% (aerial survey only; B)
American Oystercatcher	8 Dec 2001	48 birds	Matanzas River
	16 Dec 2001	44 birds	
Shorebirds	25 Feb 2001	1141 birds	Matanzas River
	8 Dec 2001	1013 birds	
	16 Dec 2001	998 birds	
Least Tern	May–Jun 2000	100 nests	Fort Matanzas; 2% (B)
	25 May 2001	24 nests	Fort Matanzas; <1% (B)

Wood Stork rookery data provided by Julia Dodge (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission); shorebird data provided by Gian Basili (St. Johns River Water Management District); and larid data provided by Peggy Powell, published in *Florida Field Naturalist*.

OTHER RESOURCES: This IBA is part of Guana-Tolomato-Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, part of a significant regional fishery. • Fort Matanzas was built by the Spanish during 1740–1742 to guard the Matanzas Inlet, and to warn St. Augustine of British invasion from the south.

THREATS: Fort Matanzas National Monument: human disturbance. **Tolomato and Matanzas Rivers FF Project:** development, runoff.

CONSERVATION ISSUES: Fort Matanzas National Monument: the Least Tern rookery is posted against human intrusion. • Driving on the beach which disturbs roosting and foraging shorebirds and larids, is permitted within the National Monument. **Matanzas River Blueway FF Project:** The entire piece is private and under moderate threat of development. • Residential runoff from existing development impacts the river.

NOMINATED BY: Gianfranco Basili (St. Johns Audubon Society)

WEBSITE: <<http://www.nps.gov/foma>>

NORTHERN ATLANTIC MIGRANT STOPOVER

Anastasia State Park (1492 acres; 596 ha), **Faver-Dykes State Park** (1465 acres; 586 ha), **Fort Clinch State Park** (1362 acres; 544 ha); **Moses Creek Conservation Area** (2042 acres; 816 ha), **Smyrna Dunes Park** (250 acres; 100 ha); **Tomoka Basin GEPark** (7000 acres; 2800 ha), **Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve** (8000 acres; 3200 ha), **Washington Oaks Gardens State Park** (413 acres; 165 ha)

Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns, and Volusia counties
22,004 acres (8809 ha)

[This IBA needs additional information]

LOCATIONS are variable, but all are along or near the Atlantic Ocean. **Anastasia State Park** is opposite St. Augustine in central St. Johns County, at the northern portion of Anastasia Island on the eastern shoreline of the Matanzas River. **Faver-Dykes State Park** is on the mainland in extreme southeastern St. Johns County, east of Interstate 75 along the north side of Pellicer Creek. **Fort Clinch State Park** occupies the northernmost tip of Amelia Island in extreme northeastern Nassau County, across the St. Mary's River from Cumberland Island, Georgia. **Moses Creek Conservation Area** is in southeast St. Johns County, north of County Road 206 on the west side of the Matanzas River. **Smyrna Dunes Park** is north of New Smyrna Beach in northeastern Volusia County, occupying the northernmost tip of the barrier island south of Ponce de Leon Inlet. **Tomoka Basin GEPark**, including **Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve**, extends from south of Flagler Beach in extreme southeastern Flagler south to north of Ormond Beach in northeastern Volusia County, between State Road 5A and the Intracoastal Waterway. **Washington Oaks Gardens State Park** _____.

DESCRIPTION: Several fairly large, disjunct sites along the Atlantic Ocean between the Georgia state line and New Smyrna Beach, a distance of 115 miles (185 km). **Anastasia State Park** _____. The Park receives 750,000 recreationists annually. **Faver-Dykes State Park:** _____. **Fort Clinch State Park:** _____. **Moses Creek Conservation Area** preserves one of the few remaining tidal creeks in the region; Moses Creek is a tributary of the Matanzas River. The Conservation Area receives _____ recreationists annually. **Smyrna Dunes Park:** a coastal area on the barrier island, bordered by Ponce de Leon Inlet on the north and New Smyrna Beach on the south. **Tomoka Basin GEPark** includes Addison Blockhouse Historic State Park (5 acres; 2 ha) Bulow Creek State Park (5200 acres; 2080 ha), Bulow Plantation Ruins Historic State Park (150 acres; 60 ha), and Tomoka State Park (1645 acres; 658). Together with **Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve**, these two sites preserve a large area of uplands and wetlands north and south of Tomoka Basin. The GEPark receives 75,000 recreationists annually. **Washington Oaks Gardens State Park** _____. The State Park receives _____ recreationists annually.

OWNERSHIP: U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Coast Guard (Smyrna Dunes Park, managed by Volusia County Parks and Recreational Services), Florida Division of Recreation and Parks (Anastasia State Park, Fort Clinch State Park, Tomoka Basin GEPark, and Washington Oaks Gardens State Park), Florida Office of Coastal and Aquatic Areas (Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve), St Johns River Water Management District (Moses Creek Conservation Area).

HABITATS: **Anastasia State Park:** *coastal strand (525 acres; 210 ha), *tidal marsh (400 acres; 160 ha), estuarine, maritime hammock. **Bulow Creek State Park:** _____. **Faver-Dykes State Park:** _____. **Fort Clinch State Park:** _____. **Moses Creek Conservation Area** *maritime hammock, *sandhills, *slash pine flatwoods, *tidal marsh, temperate hammock, sand pine scrub, estuarine. **Smyrna Dunes Park:** *coastal strand, *maritime hammock, tidal marsh, artificial. **Tomoka Basin GEPark/Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve:** *pine flatwoods, *maritime hammock, *hardwood swamp, *tidal marsh, *riverine, *estuarine, pine plantation, xeric oak scrub, sand pine scrub, bayhead, sawgrass marsh, lacustrine, and artificial. **Washington Oaks Gardens State Park** _____

LAND USE: Anastasia State Park: *conservation, *recreation. **Bulow Creek State Park:** _____. **Faver-Dykes State Park:** _____. **Fort Clinch State Park** _____. **Moses Creek Conservation Area** *conservation, recreation. **Smyrna Dunes Park:** *conservation, *recreation. **Tomoka Basin GEPark/Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve:** *conservation, *recreation. **Washington Oaks Gardens State Park** _____

IBA CATEGORIES: Anastasia State Park: significant populations of Threatened, Special Concern, FCREPA, and Watch List species, significant numbers of shorebirds and larids; and significant natural habitats. **Bulow Creek State Park:** _____. **Faver-Dykes State Park:** _____. **Fort Clinch State Park** _____. **Moses Creek Conservation Area** significant numbers of Neotropical migrants and significant natural habitats. **Smyrna Dunes Park:** significant numbers of Neotropical migrants and significant natural habitats. **Tomoka Basin GEPark/Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve:** significant populations of Endangered, Threatened, and FCREPA species; significant numbers of wading birds; and significant natural habitats. **Washington Oaks Gardens State Park** _____.

AVIAN DATA: All of these sites support large numbers and a diversity of Neotropical migrants during spring and fall. Smyrna Dunes Park was one of two sites from which the largest migration of Neotropical migrants in Florida (estimated at “hundreds of thousands” of birds—and many of these made landfall) was observed in a few hours 17 October 1999, the day following the passage of Hurricane *Irene*. Anastasia Island supports significant populations of breeding and wintering shorebirds and larids, and breeding Painted Buntings. The Tomoka sites support large numbers of foraging wading birds and larids. Overall diversity is ____ species. [I have a (small) bird list for Anastasia State Park; are lists available for any of the other sites?]

Anastasia State Park:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Wilson's Plover	summer 2000	5 pairs	2% (B)
Royal Tern	11 Sep 2000	1570 birds	(N)
Sandwich Tern	11 Sep 2000	128 birds	(N)
Least Tern	1 Jul 1999	140 birds	1% (N)
Black Skimmer	11 Sep 2000	102 birds	(N)
Shorebirds	23 Mar 1998	1200 birds	(M)
Painted Bunting	summer 1999	>30 pairs	(B)
Overall diversity	_____ list	92 natives	
		1 exotic	

Data from a quarterly shorebird survey by which agency?, other data provided by J.B. Miller (Florida Division of Recreation and Parks)

Smyrna Dunes Park:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Neotropical migrants	17 Oct 1999	“hundreds of thousands” of birds (60% Palm Warblers, 15% each Blackpoll and Cape May warblers, 5% Black-throated Blue Warblers, and 100s of Yellow-billed Cuckoos and Gray Catbirds)	(M); part of the largest fallout observed in Florida

Data of Cindy and Kurt Rademaker, published in *Florida Field Naturalist*; see also +Rademaker and Rademaker (in press)

Tomoka Basin GEOPark/Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve:

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Wood Stork	__ Nov 1995	270 birds	2% (N)
	__ Feb 1996	204 birds	1% (N)
Wading birds*	11 Oct 1995	1613 birds	(N)
Peregrine Falcon	11 Oct 1995	20 birds	1% (M)
Least Tern	__ Apr 1996	186 birds	1% (N)
Royal Tern	__ May 1996	242 birds	2% (N)
Overall diversity	undated list	173 natives 2 exotics	

Data obtained from monthly surveys (Aug 1995–Jul 1996), conducted by Lorne Malo (St. Johns River Water Management District) and prepared by Teresa Downey and Charles DuToit (Florida Division of Recreation and Parks). *500 or more wading birds were counted on nearly every survey; only the highest count is listed.

OTHER RESOURCES: Aquatic habitats within **Anastasia State Park** have been designated as Outstanding Florida Water. The park supports a large population of the Endangered “Anastasia Island” beach mouse and contains 4 miles (6.4 km) of frontage along the Atlantic Ocean and 5 miles along (8 km) Salt Run. **Bulow Creek State Park:** _____. **Faver-Dykes State Park:** _____. **Fort Clinch State Park** _____. Timucuan Indians used **Moses Creek Conservation Area** thousands of years ago. **Tomoka Basin GEOPark/Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve** supports 260 native plants, 108 native fishes, 28 reptiles, 7 amphibians, and 20 mammals. The Tomoka River is a designated sanctuary for the Florida manatee. **Washington Oaks Gardens State Park** _____

THREATS: **Anastasia State Park:** human disturbance, cowbird brood parasitism. **Bulow Creek State Park:** _____. **Faver-Dykes State Park:** _____. **Fort Clinch State Park:** _____. **Moses Creek Conservation Area:** feral hogs, runoff, exotic plants. **Tomoka Basin GEOPark/Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve:** *exotic plants, human disturbance, habitat succession, feral hogs. **Washington Oaks Gardens State Park** _____

CONSERVATION ISSUES: **Anastasia State Park:** Nesting areas are roped off against human disturbance.

- Beach access is limited to trails to protect the dunes. Most of the park is designated as a protected zone in the park management plan.
- The bird list could be improved substantially from surveys that target Neotropical migrants.

Bulow Creek State Park: _____. **Faver-Dykes State Park:** _____. **Fort Clinch State Park** _____. **Moses Creek Conservation Area** is surrounded by residential subdivisions, which complicates prescribed-fire management. Feral hogs and exotic plants (primarily _____) are controlled as needed. **Tomoka Basin GEOPark/Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve:** A Draft Management Plan was written in December 2001. The primary objective is to preserve and restore ecological functions of the area through prescribed fire, controlling exotics, and restoring wetland communities. **Washington Oaks Gardens State Park** _____.

NOMINATED BY: **Anastasia State Park:** J.B. Miller (Florida Division of Recreation and Parks); **Bulow Creek State Park:** _____. **Faver-Dykes State Park:** _____. **Fort Clinch State Park** _____. **Moses Creek Conservation Area:** Gianfranco Basili (St. Johns Audubon Society). **Tomoka Basin GEOPark/Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve:** Charles DuToit and Teresa Downey (Florida Division of Recreation and Parks). **Washington Oaks Gardens State Park** _____

REFERENCE: +Rademaker, K., and C. Rademaker. In press (2002). First recent record of the Kirtland’s Warbler in Florida. *Florida Field Naturalist* 30: _____.

WEBSITES: <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district3/anastasia>>, <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district3/bulowcreek>>, <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district3/faver-dykes>>, <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district2/fortclinch>>, <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district3/tomoka>>, <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district3/washingtonoaks>>

OCALA NATIONAL FOREST–LAKE GEORGE

Lake George Conservation Area (20,184 acres; 8073 ha), **Lake George State Forest** (19,609 acres; 7842 ha), and **Ocala National Forest** (383,573 acres; 153,429 ha)
 Lake, Marion, Putnam, and Volusia counties
 423,366 acres; 169,346 ha

LOCATION: in northern Lake County, eastern Marion County, extreme southern Putnam County, and western Volusia County, primarily from the northern portion of the Ocklawaha River south to State Road 40 between the western portion of the Ocklawaha River and U.S. Highway 17. Contiguous with the Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge IBA to the south.

DESCRIPTION: ____; **Lake George Conservation Area** is managed as a Wildlife Management Area by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. **Lake George State Forest** _____. The Conservation Area receives ____ recreationists and ____ hunters annually, while use of the State Forest is ____ recreationists and ____ hunters annually. _____. **Ocala National Forest** is the southernmost national forest in the continental United States. The Forest receives ____ recreationists and ____ hunters annually.

OWNERSHIP: U.S. Forest Service (Ocala National Forest), St. Johns River Water Management District and Volusia County (Lake George Conservation Area), Florida Division of Forestry (Lake George State Forest).

HABITATS: **Lake George Conservation Area:** *hardwood swamp, *slash pine plantation, pine flatwoods, temperate hammock, cypress swamp, lacustrine. **Lake George State Forest:** *slash pine plantation, *longleaf pine flatwoods, *hardwood swamp, riverine. **Ocala National Forest:** *sand pine scrub, *xeric oak scrub, longleaf pine flatwoods, sandhills, temperate hammock, cypress swamp, hardwood swamp, bayhead, freshwater marsh, riverine, lacustrine, artificial

LAND USE: **Lake George Conservation Area:** *conservation, *recreation, *hunting, *timber production. **Lake George State Forest:** *conservation, *timber production, *recreation, *hunting. **Ocala National Forest:** *conservation, *recreation, *timber production, *hunting

IBA CATEGORIES: significant populations of Endangered, Threatened, FCREPA, and Watch List species; significant numbers of raptors; and significant natural habitats

AVIAN DATA: Ocala National Forest is critical to the survival of the Florida Scrub-Jay, supporting the largest extant population and accounting for more than 20% of overall numbers. It also supports Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and other flatwoods/sandhills species. Eighty point count stations (40 in sand pine scrub and 40 in longleaf pine sandhills) in the National Forest are surveyed once annually during the breeding season to track populations of selected species. The area surrounding Lake George, nearly entirely within this IBA, contains one of the densest nesting concentrations of Bald Eagles in the United States. The points are surveyed for 10 minutes are broken down into segments of 0–3, 4–5, and 6–10 minute segments to allow comparison with BBS data and other surveys methods.

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Swallow-tailed Kite	Jul 1997	200 birds	13% (N)
Bald Eagle	2001	79 nests	7% (B)
“Southeastern” American Kestrel	2001	75 nest boxes occupied	(B)
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	1999	18 clusters	1% (R)
	2001	30 clusters	2% (R)
Florida Scrub-Jay	1998	>700 groups	19% (R)
	2001	763 groups	21% (R)
Bachman's Sparrow	2001	2.0 birds/sandhills sample point	(R)
Overall diversity	1998 checklist	244 natives	
		____ exotics	

Kite data provided by Ken Meyer (Avian Research and Conservation Institute); eagle GIS coverage provided by Julia Dodge (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission); woodpecker data from +USFWS (2000); 1998 scrub-jay data from +Stith (1999); and all 2001 data provided by Laura Lowery (U.S. Forest Service)

OTHER RESOURCES: Ocala National Forest contains the largest patch (over 200,000 acres; 80,000 ha) of xeric oak scrub remaining in the world. • Two of Florida's 27 first-magnitude springs occur within the National Forest: Alexander Springs (76 million gallons [287 million liters] per day) and Silver Glen Springs (70 million gallons [264 million liters] per day), along with 20 or more smaller springs. • Ocala Forest also contains over 200 ephemeral ponds important to amphibians of xeric habitats. • Lake George is the second-largest lake in Florida. • The regional population of black bears is under study. • **Lake George State Forest** contains pre-historic Indian sites dating back thousands of years, but most of the shell middens were destroyed when they were excavated for roadfill.

THREATS: Conservation Area: human disturbance, offsite development, exotic plants, feral hogs. **State Forest:** _____. **Ocala National Forest:** *human disturbance (Off-Road Vehicles), *habitat succession, *exotic plants •

CONSERVATION ISSUES: Lake George Conservation Area: Off-Road Vehicle disturbance is addressed [how?] in the management plan. • Feral hogs and exotic plants are controlled as needed. Some out-parcels remain to be acquired. • Pine plantations are being thinned, and will be managed to attain a more natural old-growth condition. Forests heavily burned during the July 1998 wildfires were salvaged-logged and are being replanted to longleaf pine to be managed as natural flatwoods. **Lake George State Forest:** Beginning in the 1960s, native longleaf pine was “aggressively harvested” and converted to slash pine plantations. Nearly half of the Forest burned during the July 1998 wildfires; current restoration efforts include salvage logging and replanting with longleaf and slash pines. • Most of **Ocala National Forest** is managed for the production of sand pines, which are harvested for pulpwood. The Forest contains more Florida Scrub-Jay groups than any other site, determined to be 763 groups in 2001. Clear-cuts regenerate initially as xeric oak scrub, then succeed to sand pine forests. +Cox (1987) found that clear-cuts 4–7 years old are most suitable for Florida Scrub-Jays, which then must move to other, more recent clear-cuts as the sand pines increase in density and height. The long-term effects of mechanical treatment as a substitute for fire management on scrub flora and fauna are unknown +(Woolfenden and Fitzpatrick 1996). • A “National Forests in Florida Land and Resource Management Plan” was issued in 1999. Its conservation objective is to contribute to recovery of Endangered and Threatened species by maintaining viable populations. The Management Plan has set a goal of 44 active Red-cockaded Woodpecker clusters (an increase from 30 in 2001), and 907 Florida Scrub-Jay groups. • The northern boundary of the Forest is defined by the Ocklawaha River, which has been flooded and dammed by the Rodman Dam (recently renamed the Kirkpatrick Dam to “honor” its long-time political supporter) for 30 years, a relict of the now-defunct Cross-Florida Barge Canal. State legislation to remove the dam has so far been unsuccessful, largely due to a few powerful politicians. The Federal government owns land flooded by the dam and the U.S. Forest Service recently prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that calls for removal of most of the dam and the restoration of 9000 acres (3600 ha) of riverine habitats, with 600 acres (240 ha) within the Forest. The Federal EIS calls for removal of the Kirkpatrick dam by 30 June 2006. • There is heavy and increasing demand for Off-Road Vehicle use of the Forest; an Access Plan is in preparation.

NOMINATED BY: Lake George Conservation Area: Gianfranco Basili (St. Johns River Water Management District), **Lake George State Forest:** _____, and **Ocala National Forest:** Laura Lowery (U.S. Forest Service)

REFERENCES: +Cox, J.A. 1987. *Status and Distribution of the Florida Scrub Jay*. Florida Ornithological Society Special Publication Number 3. Gainesville, FL. • +Stith, B.M. 1999. Metapopulation variability analysis of the Florida Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma coelurescens* [sic]). Final report to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Jacksonville, FL. • USFWS. 2000. Technical/agency draft revised

recovery plan for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Atlanta, GA. • Woolfenden, G.E., and J.W. Fitzpatrick. 1996. Florida Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 228 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.

WEBSITES: <<http://www.r8web.com/florida/forests/ocala.htm>>,
<http://www.fl-dof.com/state_forests/Lake_George.htm>

OSCEOLA NATIONAL FOREST–OKEFENOKEE AND PINHOOK SWAMPS

Osceola National Forest (193,104 acres; 77,241 ha), **Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge** (3678 acres; 1471 ha), and unacquired acreage of the **Pinhook Swamp CARL–FF Project** (51,972 acres [20,788 ha] remaining)

Baker and Columbia counties

248,754 acres (99,501 ha), including 196,782 (78,712 ha) acquired

LOCATION: in eastern Columbia County and western Baker County between the Suwannee and St. Marys rivers, and extending from the Georgia state line south to State Road 90.

DESCRIPTION: a vast area of pine flatwoods, cypress swamps, and wetlands. Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is one of the most preserved freshwater habitats in the United States. It is a vast depressional area that supports a diversity of swamps. Most of Okefenokee (390,000 acres; 156,000 ha) is located in Georgia. The Forest receives ____ recreationists and ____ hunters annually, while the Refuge receives ____ recreationists and ____ hunters annually.

OWNERSHIP: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge), U.S. Forest Service (Osceola National Forest), and private owners (unacquired acreage of the Pinhook Swamp CARL–FF Project)

HABITATS: *longleaf pine flatwoods, *cypress swamp, *hardwood swamp, pine plantation, bayhead, riverine, lacustrine, quaking bog

LAND USE: *conservation, *timber production, recreation, hunting, saw palmetto berry harvesting

IBA CATEGORIES: significant populations of Endangered, Threatened, and Watch List species; complete diversity of longleaf pine flatwoods species; and significant natural habitats

AVIAN DATA: Osceola National Forest supports the full diversity of pine flatwoods species, including Red-cockaded Woodpecker; no avian data are available for Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge or the Pinhook Swamp CARL–FF Project.

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Swallow-tailed Kite	1994–1998	3–4 nests found annually; many others predicted	probably >1% (B)
“Florida” Sandhill Crane	1999	>25 pairs	1% (R)
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	2000	66 clusters	5% (R)
Brown-headed Nuthatch	1994–1998	common	(R)
Prothonotary Warbler	1994–1998	common	(B)
Bachman's Sparrow	1994–1998	common	(R)
Overall diversity	undated list	167 natives 3 exotics	

Stork data provided by Terry Noonan (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission), kite data provided by Ken Meyer (Avian Research and Conservation Institute), woodpecker data from +USFWS (2000), all other data provided by Jane Monaghan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

OTHER RESOURCES: This IBA represents one of the largest roadless areas in the Southeast. The region supports a large population of black bears, and was included in a recent experiment that released western cougars into the region as part of a potential Florida panther reintroduction project. • Over one-third of Osceola National Forest has an intact ground-cover, representing significant examples of native longleaf pine flatwoods. The only known ♦ flatwoods salamander (*Ambystoma cingulatum*) population occurring east of the Suwannee River is found in the Forest. On 20 February 1864, the battle of Olustee, the largest Civil War battle to occur in Florida, was fought in what is now Osceola National Forest.

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

CONSERVATION ISSUES: The primary management issue is returning a natural fire regime to the flatwoods. For the past 30 years, fires have been set during the non-growing season. A wildfire in 1998 burned over 20,000 acres (8000 ha); vegetation surveys of the burned area documented their recovery. Large-scale restoration using growing-season fires is urgently needed. Longleaf pines and threawn are being replanted in areas formerly converted to slash pine plantations; these areas need to be monitored to determine the effectiveness of the restoration. • CARL–FF land is added to the National Forest as publicly acquired.

NOMINATED BY: Jane Monaghan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

REFERENCE: +USFWS. 2000. Technical/agency draft revised recovery plan for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Atlanta, GA.

WEBSITE: <<http://www.r8web.com/florida/forests/osceola.htm>>

PAYNES PRAIRIE PRESERVE STATE PARK

Alachua County

20,945 acres (8378 ha)

LOCATION: in southern Alachua County a few miles south of Gainesville, primarily between County Road 121 and County Road 234. Contiguous with the Alachua Lakes IBA to the east, and near the Kanapaha Prairie IBA to the west.

DESCRIPTION: a large natural area centered around Paynes Prairie, currently a shallow marsh but previously a large lake; steamboats plied its waters in the 1880s. The State Park receives 125,000 recreationists annually.

OWNERSHIP: Florida Division of Recreation and Parks

HABITATS: *pine flatwoods, *temperate hammock, *freshwater marsh, *cattail marsh, fields, non-native pasture, cypress swamp, bayhead, sawgrass marsh, riverine, lacustrine, artificial

LAND USE: *conservation, recreation

IBA CATEGORIES: significant populations of Endangered and Threatened species; significant numbers of wintering Sandhill Cranes; significant overall diversity; and significant natural habitats

AVIAN DATA: A large diversity of species has been recorded in recent years, partially dependent upon water levels in the prairie. Hammocks around the prairie support a variety of Neotropical migrants in spring and fall, and other upland species at other seasons.

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Wood Stork	30 Oct 1999	666 birds	5% (N)
Bald Eagle	winter 1999–2000	>50 birds	1% (N)
“Greater” Sandhill Crane	19 Dec 1999	4882 birds	19% (W)
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	21 Sep 1997	42 birds	along 1 mile (1.6 km) of trail (M)
Wood-warbler diversity		34 species	mostly (M)
Overall diversity	Sep 1999 list	267 natives 4 exotics	

Stork observation from Howard Adams, published in *Florida Field Naturalist*, eagle and crane data are from the 1999 Gainesville CBC; diversity data from park checklist.

OTHER RESOURCES: The Preserve supports an extraordinary floral diversity: over **700** species of native plants have been identified. Upland habitats contain over 100 gopher tortoises. The prairie rim has been inhabited by humans nearly continuously for 10,000 years. The Prairie contained the largest 17th century cattle ranch in Florida. Some fortifications built during the Second Seminole War occurred along the prairie rim [do these still exist?]

THREATS: *exotic plants, *habitat succession, cowbird brood parasitism, feral cats, runoff

CONSERVATION ISSUES: Sweetwater Branch, a primary source of water to the Prairie, is affected by residential runoff, which has accelerated succession of the marsh in the Preserve's northeastern quarter to woody plants such as willow, wax myrtle, and ♦boxelder (*Acer negundo*). Fire frequency is insufficient to return this area back to wet prairie and open marsh. • Exotic plants are a serious problem, especially Chinese tallow and ♦wild taro (*Colocasia esculenta*). Common water-hyacinth has been a problem in the past. • An organization in Gainesville that supports “colonies” of feral cats refused to agree to keep “colonies” at least 1 mile (1.6 km) from the park boundaries. Feral cats could have a devastating impact on native animals in the park.

NOMINATED BY: Rex Rowan (Alachua Audubon Society)

WEBSITE: <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district2/paynesprairie>>

SAN FELASCO HAMMOCK PRESERVE STATE PARK

Alachua County
6927 acres (2770 ha)

LOCATION: northwest of Gainesville in northwestern Alachua County, mostly between U.S. Highway 441 and Interstate 75.

DESCRIPTION: ____ The Park receives 27,000 recreationists annually.

OWNERSHIP: Florida Division of Recreation and Parks

HABITATS: *sandhills, *temperate hammock, non-native pasture, bayhead, riverine, lacustrine

LAND USE: *conservation, recreation

IBA CATEGORIES: significant numbers or diversity [?] of Neotropical migrants and significant natural habitats

AVIAN DATA: The Park supports significant numbers [and diversity?] of Neotropical migrants, and approaches the southernmost breeding site in Florida for the Wood Thrush.

SPECIES	DATES	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Acadian Flycatcher	9 May 1992	27 birds	(B)
Great Crested Flycatcher	9 May 1992	48 birds	(B)
Yellow-throated Vireo	9 May 1998	20 birds	(B)
Red-eyed Vireo	9 May 1998	67 birds	(B)
	13 May 2000	55 birds	(B)
Veery	21 Sep 1996	30 birds	(M)
Northern Parula	9 May 1998	65 birds	(B)
Ovenbird	24 Sep 2000	22 birds	(M)
Bay-breasted Warbler	14 Oct 1991	20 birds	(M)
Black-throated Blue Warbler	27 Apr 1997	27 birds	(M)
American Redstart	8 Oct 2000	18 birds	(M)
Black-and-white Warbler	8 Oct 2000	15 birds	(M)
Summer Tanager	21 Sep 1996	19 birds	(M)
	9 May 1998	30 birds	(B)
Overall diversity	Apr 1998 list	178 natives 1 exotic	

Data from observations of John Hintermister, Mitch Lysinger, and Mike Manetz published in *Florida Field Naturalist* and observations during the spring and fall North American Migration Counts, provided by Sam Cole (Florida Division of Recreation and Parks), checklist data from the Management Plan.

OTHER RESOURCES: Ravines and sinks within the Preserve harbor flora that otherwise occur no closer than the Appalachian Mountains; San Felasco marks the southern limit of several plants. • The Preserve supports healthy populations of gopher tortoises, Florida mice, and 27 species of ♦underwing moths (*Catocala* spp.). • Twenty-five archaeological or historical sites occur onsite, from Paleo-Indians to post Civil War. Many Spanish-era artifacts have been found, along with several associated village sites. Spring Grove, the former (19th century) Alachua County seat, was built within the current Preserve boundaries.

THREATS: *offsite development, *exotic plants, cowbird brood parasitism, feral hogs

CONSERVATION ISSUES: Encroaching development from Gainesville threatens to isolate the Preserve. • Water quality is declining from runoff from increased development. • About 20 species of exotic plants occur within the Preserve, and several are considered to be threats, including Chinese tallow, wild taro, ♦tropical soda apple (*Solanum viarum*), cogon grass, ♦Chinaberrytree (*Melia azedarach*), ♦tungoil tree (*Aleurites fordii*), and ♦black mimosa (*Mimosa pigra*). • Feral hogs are a minor concern; eradication is planned.

NOMINATED BY: Rex Rowan (Alachua Audubon Society) and Sam Cole (Florida Division of Recreation and Parks)

WEBSITE: <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/district2/sanfelasco>>