

# Jacksonville

## *Ecological Services Field Office*

photo: Arehbold Biological Station



photo: P. Hagan, USFWS



photo: Larry W. Richardson



### Photos (top to bottom)

*Threatened Florida scrub-jay*

*Endangered Florida manatee*

*Endangered green sea turtle* (Photo credit - Florida FWCC photo by B. Witherington)

*Endangered scrub loptina* (Photo credit - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

### Mission

Our mission is to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We accomplish our mission through a wide variety of activities including endangered/threatened species and habitat listing, conservation, recovery and consultation. We execute these and other public trust obligations under the authority of the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and numerous other Federal rules and regulations.

### Area of Responsibility

North/North Central Florida Ecosystem - encompassing the following counties: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Brevard, Citrus, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Hillsborough, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Madison, Manatee, Marion, Nassau, Orange, Pasco, Pinellas, Putnam, St. Johns, Seminole, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, and Volusia.

### Station Facts

- Office was established in 1976.
- Our FY 04 budget is \$3.4 million.
- We have a staff of 33 people.

### Services Provided

- Conducts endangered and threatened species consultations with Federal agencies that authorize, fund or carry out activities that may impact Federally listed species,

wetlands, migratory birds, anadromous fish and other trust resources. Such activities include, but are not limited to, beach restoration, boat docks, and land development.

- Serves as a key endangered & threatened species information resource for state and local governments, conservation organizations, schools and other educational and community groups.
- Reviews private development proposals through permit applications and other requests.
- Develops and implements endangered/threatened species recovery strategies.
- Reviews species and habitats for possible addition to the Federal list of endangered and threatened species or critical habitat.
- Works with agency partners to protect imperiled wildlife.
- Develops and implements plans to restore important Florida habitats.
- Responds to questions from or requests for support by private citizens.
- Provides support to other U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service divisions.

### Field Office Goals

- Protection and recovery of endangered and threatened plants and wildlife in Florida, as well as several species crossing regional, national and international boundaries.
- Conservation of wetlands.
- Maintaining and improving the integrity of the St. Johns, St. Marys and Suwannee River basins.
- Restoration of the Tampa Bay estuary.

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## Jacksonville Ecological Services Field Office

- Developing and maintaining effective partnerships with Federal, state and local agencies, other public and private organizations, and private citizens.

### Questions and Answers

*If there is an endangered species on my property, are there restrictions on what I can do?*

Possibly. It is illegal to harm or harass an endangered or threatened species; under the law this is referred to as "take." While continuing your normal daily activities may not present a problem, if you are planning construction work or major changes, it is best to check with our office before proceeding. You may need a permit from the Service if your work will harm a Federally protected species. Check with your local state agencies regarding state listed species.

*Is there any money available to help wildlife on my land?*

There are opportunities for cost-sharing partnerships through several Federal programs. Assistance and information are available through our office and at the Service internet site ([www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)).

*Where can I obtain information on endangered species?*

There are several sources. On the internet, the Service has extensive information available at [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov). You can find a North Florida county-by-county species listing at our website: [www.fws.gov/r4jaf1](http://www.fws.gov/r4jaf1). Endangered species information can also be obtained from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Florida Department of Agriculture for wildlife and plants, respectively.

*Can I, and how do I get permission to import wildlife from outside the U.S.?*

Contact the Service's Office of Management Authority at 1/800 358 2104 for assistance.

*How can I help manatees?*

While common sense plays a role in dealing with the manatee, there are some specific steps you can take to protect manatees.

- When boating, watch for manatees, watch for signs and buoys marking manatee habitat, and obey all posted speed zones.
- Report violations to the Florida Marine Patrol or U.S. Coast Guard.
- Get involved in local protection and education efforts.
- Enjoy viewing manatees, but don't feed or disturb them.
- Report distressed, sick and injured manatees to the Florida Marine Patrol at 1-800-DAIL-FMP (1-800-324-5367) or \*FMP (\*367) on your cellular phone.

*How can I help sea turtles?*

The main sea turtle nesting season in the Southeast U.S. is from May through October. During this period female sea turtles crawl onto the beach at night, build their nests, lay eggs, and then return to the sea leaving the eggs to develop on their own. If you live on or near the beach, or visit the beach during the nesting season, there are several ways you can help sea turtles.

- Minimize lighting on or near the beach during the nesting and hatching season by turning off, shielding or redirecting exterior lights, and close all blinds or draperies in oceanfront rooms at night.
- Do not construct campfires on the beach. The hatchlings are known to be attracted to the fire light and will crawl into the flames and die.
- Properly dispose of your garbage. Turtles may confuse plastic bags, pieces of styrofoam, and other man-made materials floating in the water as jellyfish and other marine animals on which they feed. Many turtles die each year when this indigestible trash blocks their intestines.

- Help reduce hatchling deaths by controlling your pets and removing trash and recreational equipment (lounge chairs, cabanas, etc.) from the beach at night. Recreational equipment can deter nesting attempts and interfere with the incubating egg clutches and the seaward journey of hatchlings.
- In Florida, report sightings of dead or distressed sea turtles to the Florida Marine Patrol at 1-800-DAIL-FMP (1-800-324-5367) or \*FMP (\*367) on your cellular phone.