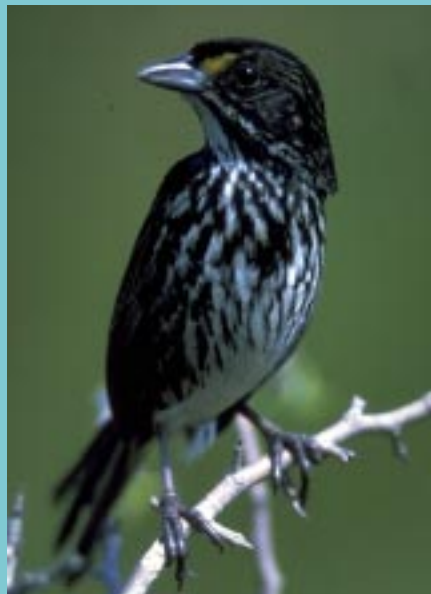


South Florida Ecosystem Team's Ecosystem Plan



Acknowledgments

The plan and this document have come to fruition through hard work, diligence, and a love of the South Florida Ecosystem by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's South Florida Ecosystem Team and by Craig Johnson, Dawn Jennings, and Melanie Steinkamp. Thank you all for your vision.

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Executive Summary

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's South Florida Ecosystem Management Plan (Plan) was prepared by staff in the Divisions of Ecological Services, Fisheries, Law Enforcement, and Refuges and Wildlife. The South Florida Ecosystem encompasses eight subregions; (1) Kissimmee River, (2) Lake Okeechobee, (3) The Everglades, (4) Peace River, Charlotte Harbor, Caloosahatchee River, (5) Big Cypress Basin, (6) Florida Keys, (7) Upper East Coast, and (8) Lower East Coast. National interest lands of the South Florida Ecosystem include sixteen national wildlife refuges, five national parks, one national marine sanctuary, and one air force range. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service utilizes a variety of international treaties, legislative mandates, and cooperative agreements to manage federal trust resources such as migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, freshwater and freshwater wetlands, interjurisdictional fisheries, mangrove forests, estuaries and estuarine wetlands, seagrasses, hardbottom, and coral reefs.

Seven goals were established to assist Service personnel; federal, state, and local governments; landowners; private non-profit organizations and other partners in the conservation of trust resources and the restoration of the ecosystems on which wildlife and humans depend.

Goal 1. Protect and manage National Wildlife Refuge System units and other national interest lands.

Goal 2. Protect migratory birds and protect, restore, and manage their habitats.

Goal 3. Protect, restore, and manage candidate, threatened, and endangered species and their habitats.

Goal 4. Protect, restore, and manage wetlands and other freshwater habitats.

Goal 5. Protect, manage, and restore fish and other aquatic species, and their habitats.

Goal 6. Protect, restore, and enhance coastal and estuarine habitats.

Goal 7. Protect, restore, and manage for biodiversity.

Additional copies of the plan can be obtained from team members listed in Appendix A or from the internet at <http://www.fws.gov/r4eao/esvb.htm1>.

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