



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Florida Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Florida Ecological Services Field Office

Gainesville, Florida

The Florida Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program has four biologists strategically located throughout the state to provide service in four work areas. The North Florida Work Area biologist is the State Coordinator who is co-located within the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Office in Gainesville. The Central Florida Work Area biologist is co-located at Avon Park Air Force Range in Avon Park. The South Florida Work Area biologist is co-located at Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Immokalee. Located in the USFWS Panama City Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, the Panhandle Work Area biologist shares time and is jointly funded between the PFW Program and the Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC) Program. An additional PFW Program position is planned for the Panhandle Work Area and will also be jointly funded by the PFW Program and the FAC Program. The Florida PFW Program works collaboratively across the state with the Service's Coastal Program on habitat improvement projects, bringing together partners and leveraging resources. The State Coordinator also serves as the Team Lead to support the coordination between both programs.

Florida is considered one of the most ecologically diverse states in the Nation. The climate ranges from temperate in the north to subtropical in the south. From coastal, tidal saltmarshes to inland rivers and wetlands, to various upland habitats including sandhill and scrub along with an abundance of working lands, Florida is home to 134 federally listed species and 90 federally designated at-risk species. The existing human population, along with projected population growth and further development, will continue to alter the landscape and increase impacts to open spaces and wildlife habitat, especially within inland communities historically focused on forestry, ranching, and agriculture. These alterations and impacts are increasing the need to effectively work alongside cooperators and willing landowners alike. Overarching goals for



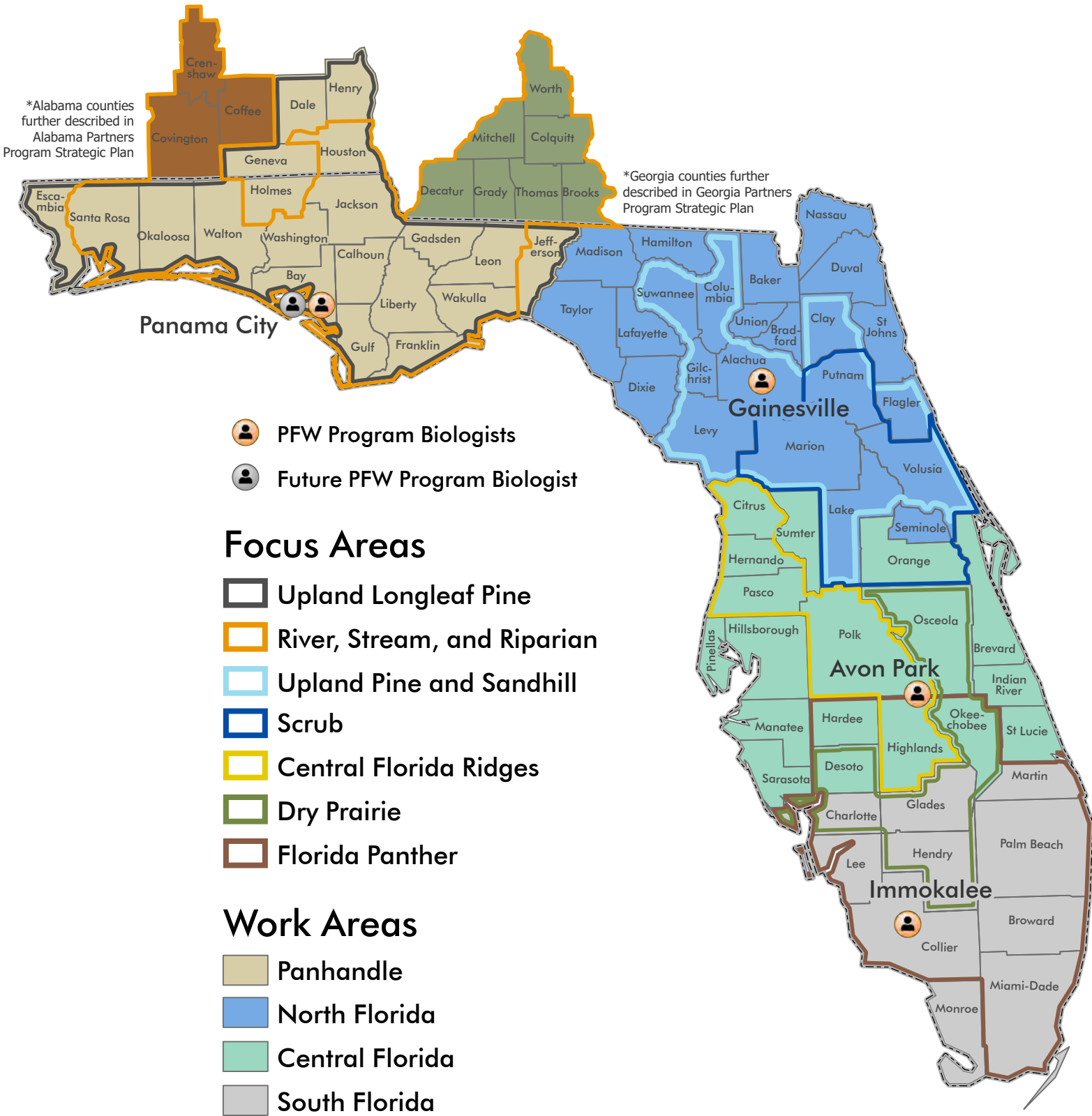
Partners educating landowners on Clasping warea (Warea amplexifolia), credit USFWS/Chad Allison.

Key Partners in Florida

- Alachua Conservation Trust
- American Forest Foundation
- Archbold Biological Station and Buck Island Ranch
- Barron Collier Companies
- Bok Tower Gardens
- Camp Blanding Joint Training Center
- Central Florida Regional Planning Council
- Conservation Florida
- Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas
- Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed Land and Water Trust
- Farm Service Agency
- Florida Cattlemen's Association
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)
- Florida Forest Service
- Florida Native Plant Society
- Institute for Regional Conservation
- The Longleaf Alliance
- National Audubon Society
- National Wildlife Refuge System
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- The Nature Conservancy
- North Florida Land Trust
- Private Landowners
- Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership
- Tall Timbers Research Station
- University of Florida
- University of West Florida
- U.S. Department of Defense
- U.S. Forest Service
- Water Management Districts

the Florida PFW Program include increasing community involvement in rural and urban areas, expanding habitat connectivity among a vast network of public lands (i.e., wildlife corridors), and restoring/enhancing habitat for listed and at-risk species. The four work areas

are further broken down into seven focus areas in Florida, representing several diverse habitats including: sandhill, flatwoods, upland longleaf pine, rivers and streams, riparian areas, springs, caves, scrub, marsh, beach dunes, and dry and wet prairies.



Panhandle Work Area

Florida's Panhandle has upland longleaf pine along with river, stream and riparian habitats and is considered one of the richest biodiversity hotspots in North America. The vast network of rivers and large, intact forests supporting multiple productive estuaries contributes to this designation. Combined with significant protected lands, this region's unique, large-scale natural systems provide promising opportunity. It contains a multitude of species including frogs (27), snakes (42), turtles (18), salamanders (28), birds (approximately 300), plants (over 2500 species) and supports many freshwater fish (over 90 species) and mussels (over 30 species).

Historically, the PFW Program has helped landowners in this area install sea turtle friendly lighting, stabilize coastal dunes, initiate upland pine/warm-season grass restoration, and complete stream, riparian and complex wetland restoration. Working in this area has been challenged recently with the increasing number of flood and tropical storm events, causing severe upland blowdowns and major erosional processes in riverine systems. Providing financial and technical assistance to private landowners is critical for mitigating these habitat impacts.

Private landowners, as well as numerous partners are essential for the conservation of listed and at-risk species and supporting larger efforts of maintaining high species diversity, creating wildlife corridors across the landscape, and supporting resiliency efforts to address the effects of climate change.

Upland Longleaf Pine Focus Area

The Upland Longleaf Pine Focus Area is a longleaf pine community characterized by an open canopy of tall pines and a dense ground cover of low shrubs, grasses, and forbs. Monoculture forestry, lack of prescribed burning, residential and commercial development, and the introduction of invasive species are major threats to this ecosystem. Past hurricanes have impacted the upland landscape with losses to private land timber stands and wildlife ecology. In this focus area the PFW Program will continue working with private landowners to implement full scale restoration of longleaf pine/wiregrass



Warm-season grasses and longleaf pine restoration in Gadsden County, Florida, credit USFWS/Chris Metcalf.

Upland Longleaf Pine Focus Area	
Habitat Type: Longleaf Pine	
Total Listed & At-Risk Species in Focus Area: Endangered (12), Threatened (7), At-Risk (4)	
Focal Species: ESA Status, Common Name (<i>Scientific Name</i>)	Taxa Group
Endangered:	
Reticulated Flatwoods Salamander (<i>Ambystoma bishopi</i>)	Amphibian
Red-cockaded Woodpecker (<i>Dryobates borealis</i>), proposed downlisting	Bird
Apalachicola False Rosemary (<i>Conradina glabra</i>)	Plant
Chapman's Rhododendron (<i>Rhododendron chapmanii</i>)	Plant
Threatened:	
Eastern Indigo Snake (<i>Drymarchon couperi</i>)	Reptile
Frosted Flatwoods Salamander (<i>Ambystoma cingulatum</i>)	Amphibian
Paper-like Whitlow-wort (<i>Paronychia chartacea</i>)	Plant
Telephus Spurge (<i>Euphorbia telephioides</i>)	Plant
At-Risk:	
Gopher Tortoise (<i>Gopherus Polyphemus</i>)	Reptile
Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus adamanteus</i>)	Reptile
Florida Pine Snake (<i>Pituophis melanoleucus</i>)	Reptile
Gopher Frog (<i>Lithobates capito</i>)	Amphibian
Focal Area Counties: Florida: Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Wakulla, Walton, Washington Alabama: Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston	
Types of Habitat Improvement: Prescribed fire, mulching, thinning, planting longleaf pine, planting native warm-season grasses, invasive species control.	



Installation of fish friendly culvert to benefit listed mussels in Chipola River tributary, Marianna, Florida, credit USFWS/Chris Metcalf.

ecosystems, including wetland restoration situated within longleaf pine habitats. Field staff will collaborate with other PFW field staff in several key counties of Alabama to ensure continuity of habitat improvement efforts in the area. Utilizing knowledge of large-scale landowners in both states, as well as established partnerships with conservation organizations like the American Forest Foundation, field staff can work beyond state lines to provide range-wide support for focal species.

River, Stream and Riparian Focus Area

Stream and riparian habitat restoration will be a primary work initiative in the Florida Panhandle, including river watersheds from counties in Alabama and Georgia. PFW field staff in the Florida Panhandle and in Alabama and Georgia will coordinate across state lines to address habitat needs throughout the various watersheds in this focus area.



Chipola River tributary in Marianna, Florida. Restored meander geometry to channelized tributary to benefit listed mussels, credit USFWS/Chris Metcalf.



Streambank stabilization to benefit the threatened Florida manatee in the Peace River, Zolfo Springs, Florida, credit USFWS/Chris Metcalf.



Endangered Fat Threeridge mussels found during a post project survey, credit USFWS.

The Chipola, Ochlockonee and Yellow river basins are the main locations for restoration efforts in this focus area. PFW projects will continue to concentrate on perennial and intermittent streams and associated riparian habitats to improve physical and biological habitats for targeted species on private lands. In those streams most impacted by erosion, sedimentation, and biodiversity decline, field staff will use instream techniques to design and construct new stream channels. Promoting dam removal projects will enhance aquatic connectivity and long-term benefits of fish populations in this focus area.

River, Stream and Riparian Focus Area	
Habitat Type: River, Stream, Riparian	
Total Listed & At-Risk Species in Focus Area: Endangered (8), Threatened (9), At-Risk (2)	
Focal Species: ESA Status, Common Name (<i>Scientific Name</i>)	Taxa Group
Endangered:	
Ochlockonee Moccasinshell (<i>Medionidus simpsonianus</i>)	Mussel
Fat Threeridge (<i>Amblema neislerii</i>)	Mussel
Shinyrayed Pocketbook (<i>Hamiota subangulata</i>)	Mussel
Oval Pigtoe (<i>Pleurobema pyriforme</i>)	Mussel
Threatened:	
Atlantic Sturgeon (Gulf subspecies) (<i>Acipenser oxyrhynchus desotoi</i>)	Fish
Okaloosa Darter (<i>Etheostoma okaloosae</i>), proposed delisting	Fish
Chipola Slabshell (<i>Elliptio chipolaensis</i>)	Mussel
Purple Bankclimber (<i>Elliptoideus sloatianus</i>)	Mussel
At-Risk:	
Saltmarsh Topminnow (<i>Fundulus jenkinsi</i>)	Fish
Southern Elktoe (<i>Alasmidonta triangulata</i>)	Mussel
Focal Area Watersheds/Counties:	
Chipola River/Florida: Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Jackson, Washington; Alabama: Houston	
Ochlockonee River/Florida: Franklin, Gadsden, Leon, Liberty, Wakulla	
Yellow River/Florida: Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton; Alabama: Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw	
Georgia: Brooks, Colquitt, Decatur, Grady, Mitchell, Thomas, Worth	
Types of Habitat Improvement: Modification/removal of barriers, habitat creation within streams, streambank stabilization, riparian enhancement and restoration including livestock exclusion fencing, nonpoint source pollution control, and reforestation.	

North Florida Work Area

The North Florida Work Area consists of two focus areas: Upland Pine and Sandhill, and Scrub. Major landscape features in the area are the Suwannee and St. Johns rivers, several ancient dune ridges that are inland from coastlines, and an extensive network of public conservation land that includes the Ocala and Osceola National Forests, and the Lower Suwannee NWR. Natural resource management issues in the region vary depending on drainage basin, but common challenges are loss, fragmentation and degradation of habitat, reduced water quality and quantity, and invasive species. Work on private lands in this focus area will emphasize habitat connectivity and wildlife corridor enhancement along with efforts to enhance forest management in support of resiliency efforts targeting drought and wildfire mitigation.

The PFW Program State Coordinator has historically been assigned to this area of Florida. This location has facilitated a long and successful working relationship with the NRCS State Office, influencing Farm Bill programs to support priority habitats and species. In addition, many frequent PFW collaborators are based in this area, supporting efficient design and implementation of projects and the application of technical assistance. Current collaborative conservation initiatives supported by the PFW Program include three approved Regional Conservation Partnership Programs through NRCS and the Longleaf Alliance’s Ocala Local Implementation Team.

Upland Pine and Sandhill Focus Area

The upland pine community in this focus area is characterized by an open canopy of predominately longleaf pines and a dense ground cover of low shrubs, grasses, and forbs. Sandhill is a xeric community characterized by widely spaced pine trees with a sparse midstory of oaks and moderate to dense ground cover of grasses, herbs, and low shrubs. In addition to incompatible forest management practices and the proliferation of invasive plant and animal species, reduced frequency of fire is a threat to these communities. PFW field staff will seek to engage small-scale landowners and farms, as well as larger operations such as plantations

Upland Pine and Sandhill Focus Area

Habitat Type: Longleaf Pine Flatwood, Sandhill

Total Listed & At-Risk Species in Focus Area: Endangered (13), Threatened (14), At-Risk (17)

Focal Species: ESA Status, Common Name (<i>Scientific Name</i>)	Taxa Group
Endangered: Britton’s Bear-grass (<i>Nolina brittoniana</i>) Wide-leaf Warea (<i>Warea amplexifolia</i>)	Plant Plant
Threatened: Eastern Indigo Snake (<i>Drymarchon couperi</i>)	Reptile
At-Risk: Gopher Tortoise (<i>Gopherus Polyphemus</i>) Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus adamanteus</i>) Florida Pine Snake (<i>Pituophis melanoleucus</i>) Gopher Frog (<i>Lithobates capito</i>)	Reptile Reptile Reptile Amphibian

Focal Area Counties: Alachua, Clay, Columbia, Flagler, Gilchrist, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Suwannee, Volusia

Types of Habitat Improvement: Longleaf pine planting, off-site pine conversion to longleaf, native warm-season grass restoration and enhancement, midstory reduction, prescribed fire for uplands and ephemeral wetlands, wetland restoration targeting encroaching woody species, and invasive species control.



Before and after restoration of sand pine removal in scrub habitat, credit USFWS/R. Aldredge.



Scrub plum (*Prunus geniculata*) surveys, credit USFWS/Chad Allison.



Upland Pine in Alachua County, credit USFWS.

and hunting leases in support of healthy wildlife habitat and corridors. Common projects pursued include ecologically beneficial pine thinning, reintroduction of fire through vegetation management and groundcover restoration, species specific management for listed plants, and the restoration of ephemeral wetland systems degraded through lack of appropriate fire return intervals.

Scrub Focus Area

There are eight major ridge features on the peninsular Florida landscape, five occur wholly or partially within the North Florida Work Area. When sea levels were much higher, these ridges were islands where species evolved separate from the mainland. Scrub ridges are a unique habitat to Florida dependent on intense stand replacing fires and are home to iconic endemic species such as the Florida scrub-jay and the fossorial sand skink. Given scrub’s limited geography and desirably high and dry status prized by developers, its protection and management remain critical to the recovery of multiple species. The Ocala National Forest protects one of the largest pieces of intact scrub habitat in Florida and anchors this focal area on the Mount Dora Ridge. In an effort to help buffer from incompatible land use, such as intense residential development, the PFW Program will continue working with private landowners to protect and restore lands surrounding the national forest and other public areas on these ancient scrubby ridges.

Scrub Focus Area

Habitat Type: Scrub, Sandhill

Total Listed & At-Risk Species in Focus Area: Endangered (15), Threatened (7), At-Risk (15)

Focal Species: ESA Status, Common Name (<i>Scientific Name</i>)	Taxa Group
Endangered:	
Rugel’s Pawpaw (<i>Deeringothamnus rugelii</i>)	Plant
Pygmy Fringetree (<i>Chionanthus pygmaeus</i>)	Plant
Etonia Rosemary (<i>Conradina etonia</i>)	Plant
Scrub Plum (<i>Prunus geniculata</i>)	Plant
Threatened:	
Florida Scrub-Jay (<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>)	Bird
Sand Skink (<i>Plestiodon reynoldsi</i>)	Reptile
Florida Lady’s-nightcap (<i>Bonamia grandiflora</i>)	Plant
At-Risk:	
Florida Scrub Lizard (<i>Sceloporus woodi</i>)	Reptile

Focal Area Counties: Lake, Marion, Orange, Putnam, Seminole, Volusia

Types of Habitat Improvement: Mechanical reduction of vegetation, prescribed burning, invasive species control, establishment and maintainance of firebreaks, native xeric scrub vegetation.



Overgrown scrub before restoration, credit USFWS.



Scrub habitat being restored, credit USFWS.

Central Florida Work Area

The Central Florida Work Area includes the Central Florida Ridges and Dry Prairie focus areas along with portions of the Scrub and Florida Panther focus areas identified in the North and South Florida work areas respectively. The habitats within these focus areas include scrub, sandhill, dry and wet prairie, as well as springs and caves. Because these focus areas include many rare and endemic species specific to Central Florida landscapes, large private landowners and cooperators alike have a strong history of leveraging the PFW Program for shared conservation goals. This work area also includes the Everglades Headwaters NWR and Conservation Area which emphasizes regional contributions and partnerships in support of working lands, drinking water, wetlands, and important habitats of South Florida and the Everglades. Historically the field staff has worked in the rural central counties of this area, aiding partners in combating invasive species and helping implement prescribed fire to improve groundcover.

This work area is at the southern-most end of the longleaf pine range, where the Heartland Local Implementation Team works together to promote this iconic southern tree species. The Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape Partnership is also located in this work area. The partnership is a coalition of agencies and organizations that works with private landowners to strengthen military readiness, conserve natural resources, bolster agricultural and forestry economies, and increase climate change resilience. This work area contains the expanding major metropolitan areas of Tampa and Orlando. Improving outreach and education opportunities to these communities will give the public better understanding of the unique species and habitats of Florida, their conservation value, and how private landowners can play a role in their protection.

Central Florida Ridges Focus Area

Five of the eight major named Florida ridges occur wholly or partially in the Central Florida Work Area, the two largest and most well-known being the Lake Wales and Brooksville Ridges. Considered the 'backbone of Florida,' the Lake Wales Ridge is known for its scrub



PFW field staff and Archbold Biological Station provide input to dry prairie habitat management at DeLuca Preserve, credit USFWS/Aline Morrow.

Central Florida Ridges Focus Area	
Habitat Type: Scrub, Sandhill, Spring, Cave	
Total Listed & At-Risk Species in Focus Area: Endangered (23), Threatened (7), At-Risk (18)	
Focal Species: ESA Status, Common Name (<i>Scientific Name</i>)	Taxa Group
Endangered: Scrub Blazing Star (<i>Liatrix ohlingerae</i>) Short-leaved Rosemary (<i>Conradina brevifolia</i>) Brooksville Bellflower (<i>Campanula robinsiae</i>) Florida Bristle Fern (<i>Trichomanes punctatum ssp. floridanum</i>)	Plant Plant Plant Plant
Threatened: Sand Skink (<i>Neoseps reynoldsi</i>) Bluetail Mole Skink (<i>Eumeces egregius lividus</i>) Florida Scrub-jay (<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>)	Reptile Reptile Bird
At-Risk: Scrub Lizard (<i>Sceloporus woodi</i>) Blue Calaminta Bee (<i>Osmia calaminthae</i>) Florida Cave Crayfish (<i>Procambarus lucifugus</i>)	Reptile Insect Crayfish
Focal Area Counties: Citrus, Hernando, Highlands, Pasco, Polk	
Types of Habitat Improvement: Targeted tree removal, invasive species control, prescribed burning, re-establishment including clearing, seeding, maintenance and exclusion fencing/gates of caves and springs.	



Florida grasshopper sparrow singing, credit Christina L. Evans.

habitat and rare plant and insect diversity with new species still being discovered. The Brooksville Ridge, along Florida’s Nature coast, has unique topography associated with notable sandhills as well as springs and cave systems that are home to several endemic species of crayfish and amphibians.

Historically, the main threat to these ridges was the conversion to citrus and other intensive agriculture. This conversion fragmented the landscape and disconnected populations of rare and listed species, leading to further declines in their numbers.

The current threat to this habitat is development. The citrus industry has declined due to disease and large landowners are the focus of residential developers; the northern part of the Lake Wales Ridge being the most impacted as it is closest to the growing Orlando metro area. As ridge habitats are the natural “highpoints” of peninsular Florida, increased emigration is anticipated as climate change threatens coastal communities. The PFW Program will remain committed to working with private landowners and developers to conserve and enhance existing uplands, re-establish native vegetation in abandoned agricultural fields, and provide habitat protection to caves and springs within this focus area.

Dry Prairie Focus Area

Habitat Type: Dry and Wet Prairie

Total Listed & At-Risk Species in Focus Area: Endangered (4), Threatened (3), At-Risk (5)

Focal Species: ESA Status, Common Name (<i>Scientific Name</i>)	Taxa Group
Endangered: Florida Grasshopper Sparrow (<i>Ammodramus savannarum floridanus</i>) Florida Panther (<i>Puma concolor coryi</i>)	Bird Mammal
Threatened: Eastern Indigo Snake (<i>Drymarchon corais couperi</i>) Northern Crested Caracara (<i>Caracara cheriway</i>) Black Rail (<i>Laterallus jamaicensis</i>)	Reptile Bird Bird
At-Risk: Florida Burrowing Owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	Bird

Focal Area Counties: Charlotte, Desoto, Glades, Hendry, Okeechobee, Osceola

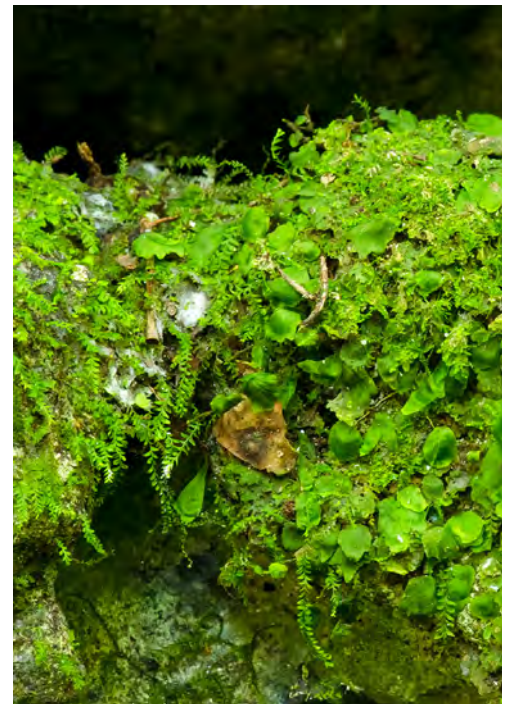
Types of Habitat Improvement: Prescribed burning, targeted tree removal, roller chopping, invasive species control, management/grazing plan development.

Dry Prairie Focus Area

Dry Prairie is another habitat type unique to Florida and has become increasingly rare in its natural state. It is geographically restricted to the interior of central, south-central, and west-central peninsular Florida. Historically, dry prairie was defined in three areas:

- (1) along the Kissimmee River (Okeechobee and Osceola counties),
- (2) an extensive area west of Lake Okeechobee (Charlotte, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry counties), and
- (3) a smaller area north of Charlotte Harbor (Sarasota and Manatee counties).

Shaped by frequent (annual to biannual) fire, Florida’s dry prairie is dominated by a diverse suite of grasses, low shrubs, and very few tall trees. Cabbage palm dot this flat landscape infrequently and are priority nesting sites for the unique Northern crested caracara. The critically endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow is currently only found in the Kissimmee River region within this focus area. Extensive habitat improvement efforts with private landowners, along with captive breeding and reintroduction have kept the Florida grasshopper sparrow from extinction.



The endangered Florida Bristle Fern, credit Keith Bradley.

Dry prairie as a natural habitat type supports working cattle ranches, while some conversion to citrus, row crop, and sod production has occurred. Counties to the west of the Kissimmee River have also been impacted by phosphate mining operations. PFW support for working lands will ensure large tracts of native prairie remain operationally compatible to protect the resiliency of listed species utilizing this landscape.

South Florida Work Area

The South Florida Work Area includes the Florida Panther Focus Area along with a portion of the Dry Prairie Focus Area identified in the Central Florida Work Area. The South Florida Work Area encompasses a wide range of habitat types including scrub, pine flatwoods, dry and wet prairie, cypress sloughs, hardwood hammocks, wetlands, mixed forest, and agricultural land extending from Lake Okeechobee to the Florida Keys. This work area includes dense urban centers along the coasts, large tracts of interior agricultural lands, and many acres throughout conserved by federal, state, local, and private natural resource agencies. Habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, altered hydrologic cycles, decreased fire return intervals, and the introduction of invasive species are the biggest threats to South Florida natural areas.



The threatened Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*), credit USFWS/Todd Mecklenborg.

The primary efforts in this work area will enhance wildlife corridors, restore critical habitat for listed species, and implement cooperative efforts to address the effects of climate change. Additional initiatives will support those projects complimenting the management of the region’s world-renowned natural resources such as Big Cypress National Preserve, Everglades National Park, and Audubon’s Corkscrew Sanctuary.



The Priddys at the JB Ranch in Southwest Florida, credit USFWS/Nicole Adimey.

Florida Panther Focus Area

Habitat Type: Pine Flatwood, Cypress Slough, Hardwood Hammock, Mixed Forest, Wetland

Total Listed & At-Risk Species in Focus Area: Endangered (42), Threatened (17), At-Risk (15)

Focal Species: ESA Status, Common Name (*Scientific Name*)

Taxa Group

Endangered:

Everglade Snail Kite (<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus</i>)	Bird
Red-cockaded Woodpecker (<i>Dryobates borealis</i>), proposed downlisting	Bird
Florida Bonneted Bat (<i>Eumops floridanus</i>)	Mammal
Florida Panther (<i>Puma concolor coryi</i>)	Mammal

Threatened:

Eastern Black Rail (<i>Laterallus jamaicensis jamaicensis</i>)	Bird
Northern Crested Caracara (<i>Polyborus plancus audubonii</i>)	Bird
Florida Scrub-jay (<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>)	Bird
Wood Stork (<i>Mycteria americana</i>)	Bird

At-Risk:

Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus adamanteus</i>)	Reptile
Gopher Tortoise (<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>)	Reptile

Focal Area Counties: Broward, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Martin, Miami-Dade, Okeechobee, Palm Beach

Types of Habitat Improvement: Invasive species control, prescribed fire, ranchland/pasture improvement, rehabilitation and restoration of native vegetation.

Florida Panther Focus Area

The Florida Panther Focus Area is unique within the PFW Program in placing emphasis on a species rather than a single habitat. Florida panthers can exist in many habitat types throughout very large home ranges (200 square miles for males and 70 square miles for females). By working to identify habitat connectivity and improve function for panthers, the PFW Program is able to learn about and contribute to improved habitat quality for other listed species within this focus area such as red-cockaded woodpeckers, wood storks, and Florida bonneted bats.

Historically, projects in this focus area have largely concentrated on improving available panther habitat and educating landowners on human-panther conflict avoidance. Field staff will continue these efforts and strive to increase opportunities to support panther recovery through further education and outreach, expanded landowner engagement, partnership development, and innovative solutions that address climate change and its impact on listed species recovery.



Florida panther captured on trail camera, credit USFWS.



The endangered Lakela's Mint, credit Bok Tower Gardens.



Prescribed fire at Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed, credit South Florida Water Management District.