

**Walkabout Nov 7 Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park**

**Christmas Bird Count Dec 18th** <http://peacriveraudubon.org/events/>

**Website** <http://peacriveraudubon.org>

**Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/PRASaudubon>

**To join go to:** <http://peacriveraudubon.org/support-our-cause/become-a-member/>

## WhiteBird PRAS Monthly Newsletter

**December 2021**

### Bear Rescue

An adult bear was reported wandering around with a plastic container on its head. Traps were set but the bear was not seen again for over three weeks. Biologists started night patrols of the neighborhood and finally spotted the 250 lb female bear just before midnight.



She was darted, the container appeared to be part of an automatic pet feeder due to the hole near the bear's muzzle. Luckily that hole provided enough access to drink and eat. Even after 28 days of wearing it, the bear was still in great physical shape! She did have a wound encircling her neck and face where the



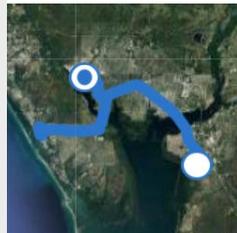
feeder was stuck, but staff cleaned the injury and treated her with antibiotics. After a day and a half of monitoring to make sure she was healthy and able to eat and drink normally, the bear was released by staff in a secure area of Picayune Strand State Forest.



### State of Florida 2021 Audubon Assembly Wrap Up



On Nov 6, the southwest field trip was at Corkscrew Swamp where Bren Curtis took this photo of 20+ wild turkeys on the road into the swamp! In case you missed the virtual sessions, you can watch the Nov 15th recording of Scott Weidensaul's Keynote talk at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQIoZQoznk4> which closed the state meeting. For the virtual presentation of Nature as a Climate Solution: Inland Wetlands, Ranches and Forests go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdoafyxZPGE>. The 2022 Conservation Agenda is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkyo-zDbniQ>



### Walkabout and Field Trip

We saw 22 species on our 3 1/2 hour walkabout at CHEC on November 9 and took photos of the bird blind replacement progress as we were leaving. <https://ebird.org/caribbean/checklist/S97378608>



Jayne Johnston's scheduled Field Trip to Popash Creek was canceled

due to high water so PRAS went to Ollie's Pond on November 20th. Some of the 25 species were: Ring-necked Ducks, Black-bellied Whistling Ducks & Ducklings, Ruby-Crowned Kinglet, Merlin, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron.



### Florida State Bird

A RESOLUTION OF THE PEACE RIVER AUDUBON SOCIETY, COUNTY OF CHARLOTTE, FLORIDA, RELATING TO SENATE BILL 378 AND HOUSE BILL 207 ENTITLED AN ACT RELATING TO THE DESIGNATION OF THE STATE BIRD; CREATING STATUE s. 15.0352, F. S.; DESIGNATING THE FLORIDA SCRUB-JAY AS THE OFFICIAL STATE BIRD; SPECIFYING THAT THE ACT SUPERSEDES DESIGNATION OF THE MOCKINGBIRD AS THE STATE BIRD; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE..

WHEREAS, per Chapter 15 of the Florida Statutes, House has yet to confirm the Mocking Bird so Florida may not have an official state bird; and

WHEREAS, four other states have the Northern Mockingbird as their state bird – Tennessee, Texas, Mississippi and Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Scrub-Jay is the only bird that is endemic to Florida, found nowhere else on the planet which no other state can claim; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Scrub-Jay has been present in Florida for at least 2 million years; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Scrub-Jay was officially listed as a threatened state species by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in 1975 and as a threatened federal species by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in 1987; and

WHEREAS, populations of the Florida Scrub-Jay have declined 90% over the last century, and that decline has accelerated over the last decade; ([www.myfwc.com](http://www.myfwc.com)) and

WHEREAS, the Florida Scrub-Jay's specific scrub or scrub-like habitat is declining rapidly due to development that is fragmenting their habitat and needs our additional efforts in bringing attention to the species; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Scrub-Jay can be considered an "Umbrella" species which protects scrub-like habitats where many other unique animal and plant species that live. and

WHEREAS, the Florida Scrub-Jay is representative of Florida's unique environment and varied ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, Florida wildlife viewing activities are popular among residents and nonresidents alike and provide significant economic benefits for many individuals and businesses composed of retailers, manufacturers, wholesalers and support services grounded in our communities and contributing approximately \$5.8 billion to Florida's economy; ([www.myfwc.com](http://www.myfwc.com)) and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, PEACE RIVER AUDUBON affirms their support and issues this resolution in naming the Florida Scrub-Jay as Florida's official state bird.

ATTEST

Peace River Audubon Society Board

Anyone can volunteer as spotters or as data recorders

Call Tony (941) 505-9775 or

email him at [aflicata02@gmail.com](mailto:aflicata02@gmail.com)

### Florida Scrub Jay



The Peace River Audubon Society Board approved a resolution to make the Florida Scrub Jay, the State Bird. Bren Curtis presented the resolution to the Charlotte County Community meeting held by three congressional

representatives: Senator Ben Albritton, Representative Michael Grant and Senator Joe Gruters. The board wants to express no ill reflections on the Northern Mocking Bird species. No mocking of the NOMO intended.

Due to the continuing loss of specific scrub-oak habitat to housing development, Florida's unique jay remains a Federally-designated threatened species. Audubon sees the climate change threats of spring heat waves, heavy rain, urbanization and sea level rise as future concerns. Many conservation organizations like Florida Forever are making efforts to protect habitats that contribute to the larger plan of Florida Wildlife Corridor. Diversity of species is safeguarded providing open space habitats for the Gopher Tortoise and dispersing Florida Panthers and Black Bears. One such organization is the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast which is exhibiting Mary Lundeberg's photography at the Bay Preserve 400 Palmetto Ave, Osprey in December as a fundraising benefit. The Environmental Conservancy of North Port is another organization which is acquiring Scrub Jay habitat land in Sarasota, Charlotte and DeSoto Counties. They have an online fundraising auction where bids may be entered between Dec 4th until Dec 11th. Go to <https://www.511auction.com/>

PRAS member Edie Driest is requesting help to acquire land in Harbour Heights for the Environmental Conservancy of North Port Inc. Edie Driest is the contact for ECNP Harbour Heights Conservation Committee Chapter. Contact her via email [ECHHchapter@gmail.com](mailto:ECHHchapter@gmail.com) or telephone (941) 876-3720. This organization has been making strides in purchasing parcels in order to provide permanent habitat protection for the Florida Scrub Jay. The ECNP May Bingo Card Fundraiser donations totaled \$5,000 in 25 days. Around that same time another \$5,000 donation from a couple in Venice came in to support the mission. Land conservation is truly a team effort. Continued support helps successful efforts in the conservation of green space in Charlotte County neighborhoods for the benefit of our wildlife, flora. Jays need some tree canopy so clear cutting plots for potential adjacent urban development is discouraged.

To see how Charlotte county developed a conservation plan in 2014 go to: <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/florida-scrub-jay>

For more information go to

<https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/community-services/natural-resources/scrub-jay-conservation-plan.stml>

or <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/core/fileparse.php/409/urlt/2020-scrub-jay-report.pdf>