



Florida Endangered Species List



Mammals

Caribbean Monk Seal

The Caribbean Monk Seal spent much of their time in the water and occupying rocky and sandy coastlines for shelter and breeding. Their diet included lobsters, octopi, and reef fish. The Caribbean Monk Seal was sluggish on land. Its lack of fear for man and an unaggressive and curious nature also contributed to its demise. People exploited the Seal commercially for its oil and meat.

Everglades Mink

Everglades Minks are truly amphibious mammals. The Everglade Mink forage both in the water and on land. Changes in the wetland habitats associated with numerous drainage and flood control projects and the conversion of wetlands to agricultural lands are believed to be the primary reason for the decline and threat to the Everglade Mink population.

Florida Black Bear

The Florida Black Bear is the largest mammal in Florida. Larger populations occur in the Ocala National Forest, the Big Cypress Swamp and other protected wilderness regions across the state. Bear biologists believe that a healthy bear population needs at least 400,000 acres of habitat land to survive. Increased land development and the destruction of bear habitats lead many bears to cross busy highways in search of living space and food. As a result many black bears are struck and killed by cars and trucks, making automobiles the No. 1 killer of Florida's black bears following by hunting.

Florida Mastiff Bat

The Florida Mastiff Bat is the largest of the Florida Bats in size. The Mastiff bat is Florida's only endemic bat. Most commonly found in the southernmost parts of Florida, it is believed that Hurricane Andrew had a direct affect on the loss of habitat, particularly roosting and nesting sites is believed to be the cause of the decline in their population. Increase in yearly pesticide to control mosquitoes has contributed to their decline as well.

Key Largo Cotton Mouse

Tropical hardwood hammocks provide critical habitat for the Key Largo cotton mouse. This species originally ranged throughout Key Largo, however as a result of habitat destruction they are currently limited to the northern third of the island and listed as endangered species.

Key Deer

Habitat use by the endangered key deer includes pinelands, hardwood hammocks, and mangrove swamps. Pinelands, hardwood hammocks and other upland dry areas are utilized for feeding activities while mangrove swamps are used for shelter from the heat during the day. Keys located further south lack a permanent supply of freshwater required by key deer for survival.

Key Largo Wood Rat

Tropical hardwood hammocks provide critical habitat for the Key Largo Wood Rat. This species originally ranged throughout Key Largo, however as a result of habitat destruction they are currently limited to the northern third of the island and listed as endangered species.

Lower Keys Marsh Rabbit

The lower keys marsh rabbit lives in coastal prairies and freshwater marshes of the lower Keys. These habitats are rapidly disappearing due to development in the lower keys, placing this endangered species under the threat of extinction.

Florida Panther (Puma)

A cat of many names, the Puma is also known as the Florida Panther lives in forest and the swamps of southern Florida. The Florida panther only has two natural enemies, large adult alligators, and humans. The two highest causes of mortality for Florida panthers are automobile collisions and territorial aggression between panthers but the primary threats to the population as a whole are habitat loss. Eating of prey contaminated with pollutants and pesticides all serve to aggravate an already critical situation.

Red Wolf

Viewed as a harmful predator, the red wolves were hunted for decades which nearly wiped them out by 1980. Contrary to their namesake, the red wolves are mostly brown with off-white underside and a hint of red on the tips of their ears. Combined with the destruction of their natural habitat, the hybridization also impacted the red wolf population. Given their declining numbers, red wolves sometimes find mates in coyotes.

Sei Whale

Sei Whales can be found in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Preferring deep oceanic water, the Sei Whale spends winters in more temperate waters of Florida. Sei Whales were targeted and greatly depleted by commercial hunting and whaling, killed for their meat and oil. Other threats that may affect Sei Whale populations are ship strikes and interactions with fishing gear, such as traps/pots.



Reptiles

American Alligator and American Crocodile

American alligator is protected due to its similarity in appearance to the threatened American crocodile. The Alligators and Crocodiles are being hunted and killed for their hides. Because of this the population of both species has gotten smaller.

Bluetail Mole Skink

Most commonly found in Central Florida, the Bluetail Mole Skink hunts on the surface. It feeds primarily on cockroaches, spiders, and crickets. The major threat to the Bluetail Mole Skink is habitat destruction due to residential, commercial, and agricultural development and over-collection by herpetological enthusiasts.

Florida Pine Snake

The non-venomous Florida Pine Snake is found throughout the state, excluding the Florida Keys, the Everglades, extreme Southwest Florida, and north of Lake Okeechobee. Due to the alteration and fragmentation of much of Florida's upland habitats the Pine Snake is no longer found in some areas of its range and is declining in others.

Rim Rock Crowned Snake

Found only in Dade and Monroe counties on a low elevation pine ridge called the Miami Rim Rock formation. The Rim Rock Crowned Snake is a terrestrial burrower, mainly seen only under limestone rocks, logs, leaf litter, and other debris. Originally sited in a vacant lot in Miami made up of oolitic limestone, no other Rim Rock Crowned Snakes have been noted.

Sea Turtle

Marine and estuarine habitats surrounding the Keys provide habitat for threatened and endangered species. The Florida population of green sea turtles has been considered endangered since 1978. The declining population has been victim to commercial harvesting for eggs and food as well as incidental by-catch in the shrimp fishery. Hawksbill sea turtle, Atlantic Ridley sea turtle, Suwannee Cooter, and Leatherback sea turtle are all listed as endangered species while the loggerhead sea turtle is considered threatened under the protection of the ESA.



Birds

American Oystercatcher

Oystercatchers insert their long blade-like bills into mussels and other bivalves, severing the powerful adductor muscles before the shells can close. They also feed on barnacles and snails. Although they do not breed in colonies, these birds gather in large flocks during migration and in winter. Not only does human development threaten these coastal birds, but they also fall victim to hurricanes and oil-spills. All these factors make nesting very difficult for the birds. American Oystercatchers nest on the ground, which enables them to blend in with their surroundings as a form of camouflage.

Brown Pelican

This Brown Pelican is distinguished from the American White Pelican by its brown body and its habit of diving for fish from the air, as opposed to co-operative fishing from the surface. It is also the smallest of the eight species of pelicans. Pesticides like DDT and Dieldrin threatened the Brown Pelican's

Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow

The Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow inhabits brushless, subtropical marshes of interior southern Florida. The principal reasons for the decline of the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow and the greatest threats to its continued survival are vegetation changes, fire, residential development, hurricanes, and hydrologic alteration.

Florida Burrowing Owl

Burrowing owls are so named because they live underground in burrows that have been dug out by small mammals like ground squirrels and prairie dogs. The greatest threats to burrowing owls is habitat destruction, pesticides and droughts associated with climate change.

Florida Scrub Jay

The Florida Scrub Jay is a very unique bird, for the fact that they like to eat eggs or fledglings of other birds. They will eat insects and acorns when no other food can be found. Like Squirrels they will bury acorns for a later feeding date. Unfortunately, because Florida forests are being destroyed by wild fires and drought, the Florida Scrub Jay population has decreased drastically.

Florida Wood Stork

The Florida Wood Stork mainly eats snakes and fish. Because they search the waters with their beaks, they find their food by the sense of touch. The Florida Wood Stork is on the endangered list because of the early poaching of them for their feathers. In addition, the loss of their habitat due to the increase of Florida's residential population has caused them to diminish.

Ivory-billed Woodpecker

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker was one of the largest woodpeckers in the world, at roughly 20 inches in length and 30 inches in wingspan. Native to the virgin forests of the southeastern United States due to habitat destruction and to a lesser extent hunting, its numbers have dwindled to the point where it is uncertain whether any remain.

Little Blue Heron

The Little Blue Heron are commonly found along the Gulf of Mexico. It is the largest of the American Heron's. The Little Blue Heron's breeding habitat is sub-tropical swamps. The draining of wetlands and constant use of pesticides is a serious threat.

Roseate Spoonbill

The Roseate Spoonbill is a wading bird that lives in South and Central America and along the Gulf Coast. It was once hunted for its remarkable tufts of pink feathers, and today it is habitat loss that threatens the species' survival.

Snowy Egret

The snowy egret is a medium-sized, all-white heron. It is a migrating bird spending its winters on the coast of Florida. Their main foods are fish, crabs, amphibians, and insects. Their flat, shallow nests are made of sticks and lined with fine twigs and rushes. Snowy Egrets have been decimated by plume hunters for their beautiful breeding plumes. The plumes are considered fashionable adornment for women's hats.

Whooping Crane

The Whooping Crane is the tallest North American bird, is an endangered crane species named for its whooping sound and call. They are omnivorous and slightly more inclined to animal material than most other cranes. Habitat loss through land conversion, dredging, and dam construction is the direct threat to their population.



Amphibians

Flatwood Salamander

The Flatwoods Salamander used to crawl over 100 million acres of longleaf pine habitat in the Southeastern United States. The habitat is being destroyed as cities take over forests, companies harvest timber and land is cleared for crops. Forest management is crucial to the salamander's survival.

Florida Bog Frog

The Florida Bog Frog is less than 2 inches long. This frog is uncommon in Florida and is only found in a few acidic streams in Walton, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties in the panhandle. Due to continual yearly droughts and increase in residential population, their appearance has decreased drastically.

Gopher Frog

The Gopher Frogs are frequently found near to or inside of the gopher tortoise burrows. Since the Gopher Tortoise is endangered, this has caused the Gopher Frog to be displaced with a loss of habitat. The Gopher Frog is also being threatened by fire suppression. Prescribed burns and habitation acquisitions are considered the management strategies for their survival.

Pine Barrens Frog

This is an uncommon frog in Florida. This tree frog is found only in the hillside seepage bogs in a limited area of the western Panhandle. The Pine Barrens Tree Frog is endangered due to its low population and the destruction of its habitat.