



CITRUS COUNTY PUBLIC LANDS, WILDLIFE HABITATS, AND FLORA & FAUNA



Citrus County is uniquely located within Florida. It's north central location within the Florida peninsular provides a range of habitats that can host both temperate and tropical species. The coastal zone represents a highly productive mix of freshwater aquatic ecosystems fed by three first magnitude spring systems and a shallow Gulf influenced salt marsh with coastal hammock islands and peninsulas.

Moving inland, the salt marsh transitions to pine flatwoods and hydric hardwood hammocks and then rises onto a large, ancient sand ridge called the Brooksville Ridge, which was Florida's gulf coast in prehistoric times. This ridge supports two fire dependent ecosystems, Sandhill and Scrub. The Brooksville Ridge is a karst geology, where the sands rest directly on the limestone of the Floridan aquifer, which results in a high aquifer recharge zone which is also subject to sinkholes. Many of these ancient sinkholes and depressions have evolved into cypress domes, wet or dry prairies and rare upland sandhill lakes. There are also inland springs and caves, which are direct connections into the underlying limestone.

Fortunately , Citrus County is blessed with extensive public land holdings, which afford permanent protection to these habitats and their animals and plants.

This webpage is intended to give you some insight and understanding of our County's ecosystem but it cannot

compare to the wonders experienced by first hand visits.

Citrus County Public Lands



CHASSAHOWITZKA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Management: US Department of Interior, US Fish & Wildlife Service
(352) 563-2088

Description: A vast area of saltwater bays, estuaries, and brackish marches with a coastal fringe of hardwood swamps. This site is presently hosting an experimental flock of Whooping Crane in an effort to establish a second migratory flock of this rare crane.

Size: 30,842.91 acres (Citrus and Hernando Counties)

CHASSAHOWITZKA RIVER AND COASTAL SWAMP SANCTUARY

Management: Southwest Florida Water Management District (352) 382-2200

Description: Includes nearly two miles along the Chassahowitzka River, and Outstanding Florida Waterway, three tributary creeks, and the Chassahowitzka Springs, which forms the river's headwaters. This is one of the largest remaining coastal hardwood swamps on the Gulf of Mexico.

Size: 5,678.84 acres

CROSS FLORIDA GREENWAY STATE RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AREA

Management: Florida Department of Environmental Protection - Office of Greenways & Trails
(352) 236-7143

Description: This land was originally acquired by the Federal government for the

proposed Cross Florida Barge Canal. The canal was constructed through much of Citrus County, but is now managed as a cross-state greenway.

Size: 81,289.96 acres (Citrus, Levy, Marion, and Putnam Counties) (14,574 acres less than fee simple ownership)

CRYSTAL RIVER ARCHAEOLOGICAL STATE PARK

Management: Florida Department of Environmental Protection - Division of Recreation and Parks
(352) 795-3817

Description: This site protects a prehistoric Native American coastal community including oyster middens and shell mounds. An onsite permanent exhibit displays many of the artifacts found on this site.

Size: 61.55 acres

CRYSTAL RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Management: US Department of Interior, US Fish and Wildlife Service
(352) 563-2088

Description: Predominantly composed of small islands, spring vents, and adjacent waters within King's Bay. This refuge hosts the largest wintering manatee population on the Gulf Coast.

Size: 80.13 acres

CRYSTAL RIVER BUFFER PRESERVE

Management: Florida Department of Environmental Protection - Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas
(352) 563-0450

Description: This preserve encompasses much of the land between the Homosassa and Crystal Rivers (both "Outstanding Florida Waterways") and several tracts of land north of Crystal River. Coastal lands are marine tidal marsh and swamp with hundreds of variably sized islands in the Gulf. The land rises to hydric hammock, upland mixed forest scrub, and sandhill.

Size: 38,000 acres

FLYING EAGLE RANCH

Management: Southwest Florida Water Management District
(352) 796-7211 ext. 4465

Description: Protects five miles of Withlacoochee River frontage (an "Outstanding Florida Waterway") and encompasses a mosaic of lakes, marshes, swamps, and scattered uplands of mixed forest and xeric hammock.

Size: 11,454 (91 acres less than fee simple ownership)

FORT COOPER STATE PARK

Management: Florida Department of Environmental Protection - Division of Recreation and Parks
(352) 726-0315

Description: Predominantly sandhill and xeric hammock with a sandhill upland lake. Also encompasses a historic battleground from the Seminole Wars.

Size: 747.92 acres

HOMOSASSA SPRINGS STATE WILDLIFE PARK

Management: Florida Department of Environmental Protection - Division of Recreation and Parks
(352) 628-5343

Description: Contains the main Homosassa Springs, the main spring feeding the Homosassa River (an "Outstanding Florida Waterway"). The park contains an interpretive zoo featuring many of Florida's native animals and plants.

Size: 183.56 acres

KNUDSEN SANCTUARY

Management: Audubon of Florida
Description: This predominantly hydric property was donated to the Audubon Society by a local resident to protect it from development.

Size: 7.25 acres

POTT'S PRESERVE

Management: Southwest Florida Water Management District
(352) 796-7211 ext. 4465

Description: Contains major portions of the Tsala Apopka Chain of Lakes (considered part of the Withlacoochee River's "Outstanding Florida Waterway" designation). Regionally important wetlands associated with adjacent uplands much of which have been converted to pastures.

Size: 9432 acres

ST. MARTIN'S MARSH AQUATIC PRESERVE

Management: Florida Department of Environmental Protection - office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas (352) 563-0450

Description: coastal estuaries and salt marsh managed in conjunction with the adjacent Crystal River State Buffer Preserve.

Size: 23,123 acres

WITHLACOOCHEE STATE FOREST

Management: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services - Division of Forestry (352) 754-6777

Description: Comprised of eight large tracts, this forest extends from the salt marshes on the Gulf of Mexico through the Brooksville Ridge down to the flatwoods and cypress swamps of the Green Swamp. It contains the headwaters of the Little Withlacoochee River and many miles of the Withlacoochee River (an "Outstanding Florida Waterway"). High quality sandhills support red-cockaded woodpecker populations of national significance. The southeastern areas contain large expanses of longleaf pine, flatwoods, and cypress. The Two Mile Prairie tract is jointly owned with the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Whispering Pines Park (290 acres) is managed by the City of Inverness.

Size: 155,270.33 acres (Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, and Sumter Counties)

YULEE SUGARMILL RUINS HISTORIC STATE PARK

Management: Florida Department of Environmental Protection - Division of Recreation and Parks (352) 795-3817

Description: This small park contains the ruins of a sugarmill near the Homosassa River that was once part of a thriving sugar plantation prior to the Civil War.

Size: 4.67 acres

These descriptions were developed from the Florida Natural Areas Inventory publication entitled "Florida Conservation Lands 2001", by Sally Jue, Carolyn Kindell, and Jamie Wojcik.

The Habitats of Citrus County



The State of Florida possesses a unique ecology containing a diverse array of habitats some of which are found no where else in the world. Many of the plants and animals that utilize these habitats have very limited ranges and specific requirements that make them extremely vulnerable to modifications or encroachment by man. For this reason, Florida has an extensive list of flora and fauna that have suffered serious declines in recent years and in some cases, are on the brink of extinction.

The Factors that have influenced the formation of Florida's varied habitats are of basically three types; geography, climatology and geology. To better understand the habitats and their inhabitants, it is necessary to look at this foundation.

GEOGRAPHY - Florida is the southern most point on the east coast of the North American continent. The

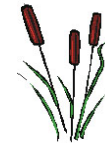
peninsular formation of 58,560 square miles is located between the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Gulf of Mexico to the west. This results in 1,300 miles of open coastline, the largest in the continental US.

CLIMATOLOGY - Due to its long shape and southern location, Florida's climate ranges from warm temperate through southern subtropical to tropical. The presence of the Gulf and Atlantic provides a continual source of moist air being carried inland by sea breezes where it heats up to form convective thunderclouds. This phenomenon results in two of the most dominant factors in Florida's ecology, an annual precipitation of 55 to 60 inches delivered predominantly as rain and following a seasonal pattern and the consistent presence of lightning occurring up to 90 days each year and reaching a level of 40 strikes to ground per square mile.

GEOLOGY - Physiographically, Florida is a young state with land first appearing in the early Cretaceous period (\approx 130 million years ago) and undergoing extensive flooding during the Eocene (55 million years ago) and Oligocene (38 million years ago). During these periods, vast layers of limestone were deposited providing the base for Florida's soils. Beginning in the Miocene (25 million years ago), Florida slowly began to emerge as deposits of marine sediments and sands collected on the limestone base. Florida connected to the continent during the Pliocene (10 million years ago) and again flooded extensively during the Pleistocene (1 million years ago). This pattern of emergence and flooding results in a great variety of soil types occurring sporadically throughout the state.

Considering the multiple combinations that can occur between geography, climate, and soils, it is easy to see why Florida has developed such a diversity of habitats. For reviewing purposes, the habitats will be divided into two general categories, Aquatic and Terrestrial, and will be limited to those found in Citrus County.

Aquatic Habitats



MANGROVES - Citrus County is located at the northern edge of Florida's coastal mangrove forests and are regularly killed back by winter freezes. Therefore, mangroves along our coast typically show a stunted growth pattern and are dominated by the more freeze resistant Black mangroves (*Avicennia germinans*) though the Red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) is also found. The mangrove's prop and aerial roots trap sediments and nutrients from tidal flows and also provide a base for algal and mollusk growth. This protective environment is exploited by both marine and freshwater aquatic life forms and is an important feeding ground for many wading birds including Little Blue herons, Snowy egrets, and Louisiana herons (all Species of Special Concern). The mangrove overstory is also utilized by many bird species as roosts and rookeries for their young.

SALT MARSH - Salt Marshes are found where freshwater rivers and creeks gradually empty into the Gulf resulting in shallow waters of varying salinities and nutrient levels. Due to the extensive riverine system within Citrus County,

these marshes are quite common along our coast. The dominant plant species are Black Needle Rush (*Juncus roemerianus*), salt grass (*Distichlis spicata*) and smooth cord grass (*Spartina alterniflora*), with the former predominating in the high marsh (between mean high water and mean high spring tide) and the latter dominating the lower marsh fringes (between mean low water, and mean high water). These marshes are transected by numerous creeks, channels, and coastal hammock islands providing a diverse and fertile home for many species. Among the animals found in this habitat are the Gulf salt marsh snake (*Nerodia*), ornate diamondback terrapin (*Malaclemys*), American oystercatcher, (SSC) seaside sparrows, assorted wading birds, rice rats, (*Oryzomys*) cotton mice (*P. gossypinus*), and marsh rabbits (*S. palustris*).

It should be noted that salt marshes also provide an important nursery for many commercially important marine species and a protective buffer against hurricane induced storm surges.

FRESHWATER MARSH - Freshwater marshes are associated with low areas occurring on poorly drained soils where shallow freshwater remains for much if not all of the year. These marshes are also found along the shores of many rivers and lakes. The predominant plant growth consists of cattails (*Typha*), pickeral weed (*Pontedeia*), duck potato (*Sagittaria*), maiden cane (*Panicum*) and willows (*Salix*), though a diverse number of other grasses, herbs, shrubs, and trees also occur. Much like their estuary counterparts, these marshes regularly receive rain carried nutrients and

provide an important feeding ground and nursery for many aquatic life forms. Animals found in freshwater marshes include the true frogs (*Rana*), Florida Cottonmouth (*Agkistrodon*), assorted water snakes (*Nerodia*), alligators, Wood storks (Endangered), assorted wading birds, Florida mink (*M. vison*), and Hispid cotton rat (*Sigmodon*),

Freshwater marshes are highly vulnerable to development oriented destruction both by direct means (draining or channeling) and indirect (alteration to drainage patterns or diversion of water sources). Besides their importance as a nursery for commercial and recreationally important fish and wildlife, freshwater marshes can play an important role as a safety valve for storm swollen rivers or lakes.

CYPRESS SWAMPS AND DOMES - Cypress tree (*Taxodium*) often colonize low, poorly drained areas within many upland habitats. Cypress swamps commonly line slow moving rivers and creeks and are interspersed with many other water hardy hardwoods including blackgum, sweetbay, sweetgum, and red maple. Cypress domes are typically much smaller with the trees tightly spaced and covered with Spanish moss and other epiphytes. These domes are often dry during much of the year and support various ferns, shrubs, and grasses. Since the domes are often the only open water source for their surrounding upland habitat, they become an important gathering point for many amphibians, reptiles, and birds for both water, food, and breeding purposes. Species dependent or utilizing cypress domes include assorted tree frogs (*Hyla*), gopher frogs (*R. areolata*) garter snakes, (*Thamnophis*),

limpkins (SSC), Wood storks (E), and Sherman's fox squirrels.

Cypress domes are vulnerable to the same damage as freshwater marshes. Cypress domes beside being critical to the survival of many animals and plants are important recharge areas for the Floridan aquifer and if properly managed can be an important source of renewable timber and other wood by-products.

RIVER SWAMPS - Located on river floodplains, these swamps are dominated by gum and tupelo (*Nyssa*), sweetbay (*Magnolia virginiana*), often intermixed with cypress (*Taxodium*), redbay (*Persea*) and red maples (*Acer*). The understory is typically dense and populated by smaller trees and shrubs tolerant of poorly drained soils and seasonal flooding. The overstory provides important nesting sites for bald eagles, ospreys, and herons and the understory is utilized by many amphibians, ribbon snakes (*Thamnophis*), mud snakes (*Farancia*), limpkins (SSC), Wood storks (E), Florida black bear (Threatened), Florida mink, and bobcats. This habitat was also utilized at one time by the very rare Florida panther (E) and recently extinct Ivory Billed woodpecker (E).

River swamps provide important filtering of stormwater and flood waters and can be an important source of renewable timber and wood by-products if properly managed.

RIVERS AND LAKES - Citrus County is blessed with abundant river and lake systems. The Withlacoochee River and Tsala Apopka chain lie along our eastern boundary and extend northward

and then west to the coast. Our western boundary contains a number of coastal rivers, most of which are fed by springs, some of a first order magnitude (discharge in excess of 100 ft³/sec). These rivers and lakes have varied depth and bottom ranging from limerock to clean sand to mud or muck. They support a diverse population of emergent and floating aquatic vegetation. Animals found in these habitats include the Suwannee Cooter (SSC), alligator, numerous water fowl and wading birds, river otters, and of course, the West Indian manatee (E).

The impact of man on our rivers and lakes has been tremendous. By channeling, dredging, floodplain modification, and direct and indirect discharge of stormwater, wastewater effluent, leachate and nutrients. We have altered the delicate balance of these important ecosystems. In addition, our introduction of nonnative plants, such as hydrilla and water hyacinths (*Eichhornia*) and/or increased commercial and recreational usage of these water bodies has threatened the survival of many of these wildlife species.

STREAMS AND CREEKS - Streams and creeks in Citrus County are usually part of river drainage systems and are often spring fed. Many of these streams have rooted aquatic vegetation and contain small oxbows and backwash areas. They are utilized by many animals along with fish and aquatic invertebrates. They are vulnerable to the same man made problem as the other natural aquatic habitats.

TEMPORARY PONDS AND DITCHES - Often overlooked as an aquatic habitat

because of their uplands locations, these water bodies play an important part in the life cycle of many invertebrates, amphibians, and birds. Due to the lack of aquatic predators, these temporary ponds provide important breeding sites for gopher frogs (SSC), true toads (*Bufo*), spadefoot toads (*Scaphiopus*), and mole salamanders (*Ambystoma*) and can provide concentrated food sources for Wood storks (E), egrets, and herons.

Alteration of drainage ways, grades, or vegetation of the surrounding areas will often reduce or eliminate the presence of a temporary pond or ditch destroying entire populations of dependent fauna.

MANMADE AQUATIC HABITATS - As a vast acreage of natural habitats are lost to development, many animals and plants have learned to adapt to colonize available manmade sites. Animals dependent on aquatic habitats have turned to utilizing manmade canals, roadside ditches, and drainage retention areas to meet some of their needs. While in no way capable of duplicating the intricate biomes of natural habitats, the proper construction and management of these manmade water bodies and promotion and nurturing of natural vegetation within them can play an important part in the future of native wildlife management.

Upland Habitats



SCRUB - Scrub developed on the dunes and ridges of our prehistoric beaches. The white well drained fine sands are

above root reach to groundwater resulting in a harsh, dry environment more related to the North American arid West than Florida's more well known habitats. The dominant vegetation of scrub are evergreen shrubs and perennial herbs of which Florida rosemary (*Ceratiols ericoides*) and scrub oak are two of the most prominent. These are well spaced with silver and gray lichens colonizing the white sand in between.

Citrus County's scrub is not part of the ancient scrub of the Lake Wales Ridge and so does not contain many of the endemic Florida scrub species, however, the Florida scrub jay (T) and Pygmy fringetree (E) are present and others may be found as biological surveys are conducted.

Scrub is dependent on periodic natural wildfires to kill off invading sandpines and other plant invaders while the native vegetation survives due to its below ground root system. Direct development and suppression of natural fire both threaten this unique habitat.

SAND PINE SCRUB - Where fire has not occurred for an extended period, scrub is soon colonized by Sand pines (*Pinus clausa*) which can become quite dense and shade out some of the scrub ground plants. Being on well drained fine sands, Sand pine scrub vegetation is drought tolerant and includes Florida rosemary, Saw palmetto, and Scrub and Laurel oaks. Animals adapted to this dry environment include gopher tortoises (SSC), short-tailed snakes (T), bobwhite quail, rufous-sided towhees and other songbirds, pocket gophers (Geomys), Sherman's fox squirrel (SSC), and the Florida mouse (SSC).

Sand pines are not resistant to fire, but are dependent upon fire to open their cones and release seeds. For this reason, Sand pines are often of the same age class indicating the date of the last fire. Sand pine scrub is quickly disappearing to development.

SANDHILLS - This habitat occurs on high, well-drained, fine, sandy soils and is dominated by Longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) and Turkey oaks (*Queicus laevis*). The groundcover is usually wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*) with an understory of paw paw (*Asimina*) and Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*). This is a xeric (dry) habitat and is fire adapted. This means that fire is a natural occurrence (typically lightning strikes) burning off the understory vegetation and leaf litter and eliminating invading vegetation while releasing the seeds of the established vegetation. Animals found in this habitat include gopher tortoise (SSC), Florida pine snakes (SSC), Eastern Indigo snakes (T), short-tailed snakes (T), Red-Cockaded woodpeckers (T), Southeastern kestrel (T), Pocket gophers (*Geomys*), Sherman's fox squirrel (SSC), Florida mouse (SSC), and white-tailed deer.

Though relatively common through the Central Ridge of Citrus County, there is very little quality sandhill habitat left in the state. Vast tracts were lost to citrus groves, rangeland, and development in the past and much of the remaining sandhill has been altered by pine silviculture, eliminating much of the diversity necessary to sustain healthy wildlife populations. With Florida adding hundreds of new residents each day, private tracts of sandhill are fast disappearing, along with the endemic species that depend on it.

XERIC OAK HAMMOCK - Much like Sand pines invading scrub in the absence of fire, sandhill is soon colonized by species of oak capable of surviving the dry, well-drained sandy soils. Sand Live oak (*Q. geminata*), Live oak (*Q. virginiana*), various hollies (*Ilex*), and other drought tolerant shrubs and wildflowers intermix among the wiregrass (*Aristida*) groundcover. Wildlife includes the gopher tortoise (SSC), Southern Hognose (*Heterodon*), Rat snakes (*Elaphe*), songbirds, turkey, squirrels (*Sciurus*), and white-tail deer.

Unlike the sandhill habitat, these areas are helped by fire suppression, but they are also disappearing at a fast rate due to development.

GOPHER TORTOISE (*GOPHERUS POLYPHEMUS*) - The previously listed upland habitats are able to support such a diversity of wildlife due to the presence of the gopher tortoise. For this reason and more, the gopher is fast becoming a symbol for uplands preservation, much as the manatee has come to symbolize wetlands protection.

Gophers are a keystone species to the sandhill communities due to the burrows they construct. These tunnels can be up to 40 feet long and 10 feet in depth and provide the gopher and his "tenants" relief from the heat, high humidity, and ever present threat of fire. Over three dozen animals find year round shelter in active or old gopher burrows and numerous other species utilize them on occasion. Many animals simply cannot survive the conditions of these dry habitats without the presence of gopher burrows.

Unfortunately, the gopher is extremely sensitive to the effect of man. Their

long period to maturity (10 to 15 years) combined with their vulnerability to death by harvest, automobiles and household pets and their inability to survive urban development, intensive farming and modern timber practices has resulted in a 70% reduction of the Florida population. The preservation of upland habitats and protection of gopher populations is essential to the survival of many of Florida's unique endemic species.

PINE FLATWOODS - Pine flatwoods are found in areas of poorly drained soils and like sandhill is a fire adapted community. Pine flatwoods generally have well spaced trees consisting predominantly of Slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*) and Longleaf (*Pinus palustris*). The understory consists of low growing shrubs, typically Saw palmetto (*Seiinoa repens*), Wax Myrtle (*Myrica ceriteia*) and Gallberry (*Ilexlglabra*). Small marshes, ponds, and cypress domes are often interspersed through this ecosystem. Animals utilizing this habitat include Green Anoles (*Anolis*), fence lizards (*Sceloporus*), black racers (*Coluber*), eastern diamonback rattlesnakes (*Crotalus*), bobwhite quail, great horned owl (*Bubo*), cotton rats (*Sigmodon*), cottontail rabbits (*Sylvilagus*) and the Florida black bear (T).

A subhabitat of the pine flatwoods is the Cabbage Palms (*Sabal palmetto*) become more prevalent and the presence of herbaceous plants increase.

MESIC HAMMOCKS - Mesic (damp) hammocks are found on moderately well-drained soils with an organic/leaf litter surface. They are the climax

vegetation of the Southern coastal plain and typically have three vegetative layers. The overstory is composed of oaks (*Quercus*), Southern magnolia, (*Magnolia grandiflora*), hickories (*Carya*), and sweetgum (*Liquidambar*). The understory is composed of smaller trees such as dogwood (*Cornus*), hollys (*Ilex*), and sparkleberry (*Baccinium*) and the groundcover consists of grasses, herbs, and smaller shrubs. Greenbriers (*Smilax*) and grapevines (*Vitis*) are common creating dense thickets. The combination of dense vegetation and shade maintains moist, moderate conditions and small ponds are not uncommon. Animals commonly found in this habitat include skinks (*Eumeces*), box turtles (*Terrapene*), brown snakes (*Storeria*), songbirds, woodpeckers, flying squirrels (*Glaucomys*), Florida black bear, and whitetail deer.

HYDRIC HAMMOCK - Hydric (wet) hammocks occur on poorly drained soils and within Citrus County the limerock's substrata often comes to the surface. The overstory consists of water hardy trees, such as water oaks (*Quercus nigra*), sweetgum (*Liquidambar*), and maples (*Acer*). The understory contains buttonbush (*Ephalanthus*), dahoon hollys (*Ilex cassine*), and is often around streams or bordering river swamps. Animals occupying this habitat are a mixture of those utilizing river swamps and mesic hammocks.

COASTAL HAMMOCKS - Coastal Hammocks occur on limerock outcroppings in the salt marshes along our western shore. The soils are poorly drained organic and muck and the dominant species are red cedar (*Juniperus silicicola*) and cabbage palm. On the large hammocks, counties

(*Zamia pumila*), yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*), and Florida privet (*Forestiava segvegata*) occur. These hammocks are vulnerable to rising sea levels and storm tides. These hammocks provide upland shelters within the fertile coastal marshes and are commonly used by king snakes (*Lampropeltis*), salt marsh snakes (*Nerodia*), wading birds, rice rats (*Oryzomys*), marsh rabbits, raccoons, and whitetail deer.

MANMADE AND MAN-ALTERED UPLAND HABITATS - Citrus County possesses one coastal beach which though mandmade, is being utilized by numerous shore birds (Gulls, black

skimmers, sandpipers, etc.). It is possible that as the beach is expanded and if properly managed, the list of shore birds will expand and nesting may occur if areas are set aside. Both agricultural lands and golf courses can support healthy wildlife populations if buffers are provided and operations take into consideration the presence of the wildlife. Limited use of pesticides, protection of the buffers and retention of fallow fields can all significantly improve wildlife survival. The same is true of residential development.

(SSC) Species of Special Concern
(T) Threatened
(E) Endangered

Many amphibians, reptiles, songbirds, and small mammals can successfully utilize residential habitat if man is cognizant and tolerant of their presence. By enhancing the habitat through the use of native vegetation, placements of nesting boxes, feeding and watering stations, and establishment of compost pens and brush piles, both the number and diversity of residential wildlife can be greatly increased. Education or elimination of pesticide use, pet control, and tolerance of less attractive species (snakes, mice, rats, bats) all play an important part in the retention of Florida's wildlife. To this end, education shall play the primary role in how Citrus County wildlife and natural habitats will fare into the next century. For more information on how to make your property more conducive to wildlife, please visit the [Citrus County Environmental Homeowners Guide](#).

