

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

BILL: SB 880
INTRODUCER: Senator Garcia
SUBJECT: Designation of the State Birds
DATE: March 24, 2025 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Carroll	Rogers	EN	Favorable
2.			AEG	
3.			RC	

I. Summary:

SB 880 designates the American flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) as the official Florida state bird and the Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) as the official Florida state songbird.

II. Present Situation:

American Flamingo

The American flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*), also called the Caribbean flamingo, is one of the largest flamingo species in the world, standing at approximately five feet tall.¹ American flamingos are wading birds with long legs and necks.² They have a thick, curved bill, which they use to filter crustaceans, mollusks, and other aquatic invertebrates from the water. Adult American flamingos are bright to pale pink with a black trailing edge



¹ Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), *American Flamingo*, <https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/profiles/birds/waterbirds/american-flamingo/> (last visited March 14, 2025).

² Cornell Lab of Ornithology, *American Flamingo*, https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Flamingo/overview (last visited March 14, 2025). The image on this page is courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

on their wings. They are social birds and typically forage and nest in dense colonies that can consist of up to 80,000 individuals.³

American flamingos can be found throughout the Caribbean, with known breeding populations in Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, Bonaire, the British Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, the Galápagos Islands, and Florida.⁴ The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission considers the American flamingo to be native to Florida, however around the turn of the 20th century flamingos had disappeared from the state due to overhunting.⁵ By 1925, captive breeding in South Florida had reintroduced them to the state. Additionally, there is evidence that some flamingos migrated to Florida on their own throughout the 1900s.⁶

Today, American flamingos can be observed along much of the Florida coast, although they are most commonly seen in Hialeah, the Everglades, Biscayne Bay, and the Florida Keys. The Florida population represents only a fraction of one percent of the global population of American flamingos.⁷ The American flamingo is a species of low conservation concern and it is protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.⁸

Florida Scrub-Jay

The Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) is the only bird species that lives exclusively in Florida.⁹ Florida scrub-jays are blue and gray birds that prefer sand pine and oak scrub and scrubby flatwoods.¹⁰ They live in the highest and driest areas of Florida, including ancient sandy ridges in Central Florida, sand dunes along the coast, and sandy deposits along rivers in the interior of the state.¹¹



³ *Id.*

⁴ FWC, *American Flamingo*.

⁵ *Id.*; Audubon, *It's Official: Flamingos Belong in Florida*, <https://www.audubon.org/news/its-official-flamingos-belong-florida> (last visited March 17, 2025).

⁶ FWC, *American Flamingo*.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Cornell Lab, *American Flamingo*; see 16 U.S.C. §703-712; see 50 C.F.R. §10.13. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 implements four international conservation treaties that the U.S. entered into with Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Russia and is intended to ensure the sustainability of populations of all protected migratory bird species. The Act prohibits the take (including killing, capturing, selling, trading, and transporting) of protected migratory bird species without prior authorization by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918*, <https://www.fws.gov/law/migratory-bird-treaty-act-1918> (last visited March 14, 2025).

⁹ Cornell Lab, *Florida Scrub-Jay*, https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Florida_Scrub-Jay/overview (last visited March 14, 2025).

¹⁰ *Id.* (Image courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology); FWC, *Florida Scrub-Jay*, <https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/profiles/birds/songbirds/florida-scrub-jay/> (last visited March 14, 2025). They do best in areas with high concentrations of oak shrubs that average 3.28-6.56 feet. *Id.*

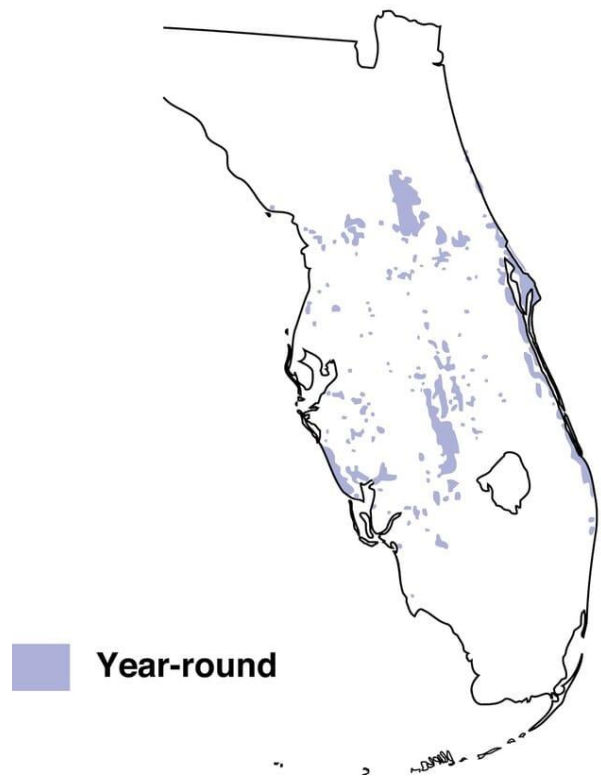
¹¹ FWC, *Florida Scrub-Jay*.

Florida scrub-jays are non-migratory and typically defend the same nesting territory every year.¹² They live in family groups that consist of a breeding pair and helpers, which are typically the pair's offspring. The offspring may stay in their parents' territory until they are two or three years old. Florida scrub-jays eat primarily insects, frogs, toads, lizards, mice, bird eggs, and acorns.¹³

Florida scrub-jays are a federally designated threatened species protected by the federal Endangered Species Act.¹⁴ They are also protected by Florida's Endangered and Threatened Species Act and by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.¹⁵ The main threats to the scrub-jay are habitat destruction, fragmentation, and degradation caused by development, agriculture, and fire-suppression.¹⁶ Habitat fragmentation prevents scrub-jays from easily travelling between patches of suitable habitat and ultimately creates smaller, separated populations that are at greater risk of disappearing. Further, Florida scrub-jays are reliant on fire, because naturally occurring or prescribed fires prevent their habitat from becoming too dense and tall. Fire suppression degrades the habitat and is a threat to scrub-jay survival.¹⁷

Northern Mockingbird

The northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) is commonly found throughout much of North America and the Caribbean.¹⁸ They live in a wide variety of habitats, including arroyos and canyons, deserts,



Range map of the Florida scrub-jay. *Courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology*



¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*; see 16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq.

¹⁵ See 16 U.S.C. §703-712; see 50 C.F.R. §10.13; section 379.2291, F.S.

¹⁶ FWC, *Florida Scrub-Jay*.

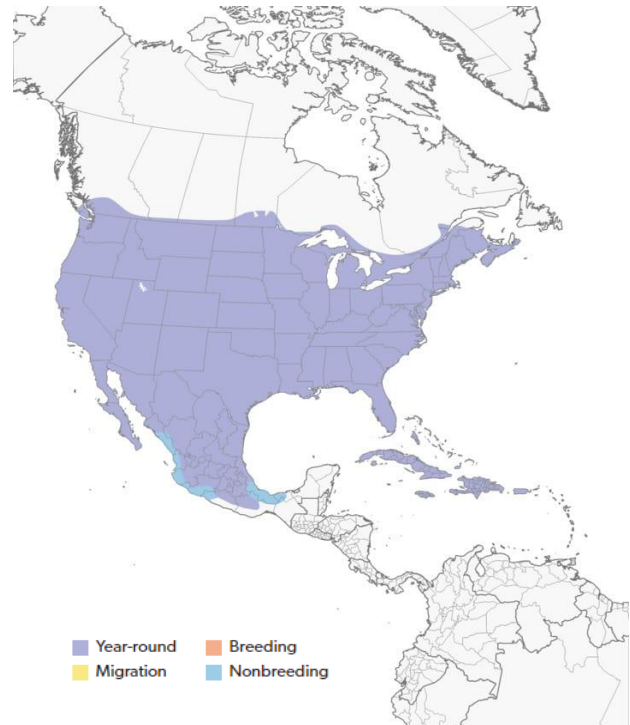
¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Cornell Lab, *Northern Mockingbird*, https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern_Mockingbird/overview (last visited March 14, 2025).

meadows, forests, saltwater wetlands, and urban areas.¹⁹ They typically prefer dense shrubs, thickets, and open ground with short grass or open soil.²⁰

Northern mockingbirds are slim with a long tail. They are pale gray with white wing patches and white outer tail feathers. They regularly imitate other bird songs and typically sing from February through August and September to early November.²¹

The northern mockingbird is the official state bird of five states: Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas.²² The northern mockingbird has held the position of official Florida state bird since 1927.²³ The Florida Legislature designated the northern mockingbird as the official state bird because it had enacted legislation to protect the mockingbird, because “the melody of its music has delighted the heart of residents and visitors to Florida,” and because “this bird of matchless charm” is found throughout Florida.²⁴



Range map of the northern mockingbird.
Courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 creates s. 15.0352, F.S., to designate the American flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) as the official Florida state bird and the Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) as the official Florida state songbird.

Section 2 provides that the designation of the American flamingo as the official Florida state bird and the Florida scrub-jay as the official Florida state songbird supersedes the designation of the northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) as the official Florida state bird by Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3, which was adopted during the 1927 Regular Session.

Section 3 provides an effective date of July 1, 2025.

¹⁹ Audubon, *Northern Mockingbird*, <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/northern-mockingbird> (last visited March 14, 2025). The photo on this page is courtesy of Audubon.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² Audubon, *10 Fun Facts About the Northern Mockingbird*, <https://www.audubon.org/news/10-fun-facts-about-northern-mockingbird> (last visited March 17, 2025).

²³ Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3, Laws of Fla. (1927).

²⁴ *Id.*

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates section 15.0352 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
