

## NOTICE

The Florida Important Bird Areas (IBA) program requests the assistance of FOS members to help identify those sites most important for maintaining the diversity, abundance, and distribution of the state's avifauna. This goal includes protecting the habitats of rare species, as well as "keeping common birds common." FOS members also are asked to help monitor bird populations at selected IBA sites, to update existing bird lists, and to compile lists for new areas.

Florida's IBA program is modeled after successful programs in Europe and the Middle East, and more recently, efforts in Pennsylvania and New York. Sites nominated as IBAs will vary considerably in size, but usually will be distinguished from surrounding areas by habitat or ornithological significance. Generally, an IBA should be large enough to supply all the needs of the targeted species during its residence onsite, although a few sites (e.g., wading bird rookeries) may not meet this definition. Sites that are privately owned may be nominated as IBAs if there is some assurance of long-term conservation management, and usually with the cooperation of the landowner. IBAs exclude from consideration all feral or exotic birds. However, the presence of these birds will not affect the acceptability of a nominated site. In addition, IBAs generally exclude sites that are heavily disturbed or artificially created (e.g., pastures, phosphate mines or landfills), but a few spoil islands that support significant populations of nesting wading birds or larids will be considered.

A nine-month nomination period is underway, and will end 31 October 2000. All sites nominated as potential IBAs must meet the criteria of at least one of four primary categories for site selection, and must be completed on the official IBA nomination form. The criteria for site selection, instructions, and the nomination form may be downloaded from the Florida IBA website (<http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba/florida>), or may be requested by mail for those with no internet access. The website will be updated frequently and will include GIS maps showing the locations of all nominated sites. Florida's Important Bird Areas will be selected by a committee of some of the state's leading ornithologists and conservation biologists in late 2000. It is anticipated that a book of Florida's IBAs will be published by early 2002. All contributors will be acknowledged.

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