

## REVIEW

Florida Field Naturalist 29(3):99, 2001.

**Florida's Fragile Wildlife.**—Don A. Wood. 2001. Florida's Fragile Wildlife—Conservation and Management. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. 212 pages. \$39.95. ISBN 0-8130-1888-9. Protecting Florida's wildlife and biodiversity has been a concern of Floridians for decades, and visionary citizens, academics and politicians have translated that concern into the most aggressive land acquisition program of any state in the nation. As of March 2001, municipal, county, or state governments have acquired approximately 4,500,000 acres. When combined with Federal lands, more than 8,660,000 acres—25% of the land area of Florida—are in some form of public ownership. In the wake of continuing land acquisition efforts in Florida is the herculean task of land management, which is why this book is so timely. It provides land managers with the fundamental biological information necessary to implement practical management initiatives for the benefit of numerous species.

The book covers more than twenty species from numerous taxa and habitats. From beach mice and saltmarsh songbirds to the gopher tortoise and Red-cockaded Woodpecker, the author provides concise and detailed accounts of each. The strength of the book is in the breadth of information covered. The reader is treated to some basic natural history such as habitat requirements, diet, nesting behavior, and home range size. This information is of interest to any student of nature. The author also provides a conservation status for each species and a description of the factors believed to be limiting their populations. For those interested in monitoring and management, included are survey strategies and habitat management techniques. Suggested management activities range from the simple placement of nest boxes for the southeastern American Kestrel to manipulating water levels for the benefit of saltmarsh songbirds and Wood Storks.

At the conclusion of each chapter is a list of relevant literature. Unfortunately, references are only cited in the text when critical management issues are addressed. If additional information on a specific subject is sought, the reader is forced to inefficiently sort through numerous titles and guess which ones may have the desired material. Nevertheless, the literature cited sections as presented are valuable contributions to the book.

It wouldn't take many people implementing some ideas in this book to have a positive impact on populations of the target species. But there are risks associated with many of the recommended monitoring and management strategies. The author provides information on capture and handling techniques, but serious consideration must be given to the necessity of such efforts. Fortunately, the author had each species account reviewed by experts, and their names are listed as contributors. In addition, there are legal considerations because many of the species covered are "listed" by the State and Federal government. To address this, an appendix on applicable State and Federal laws is provided. The author has taken great care to ensure the information provided is not misused in a manner that could have negative consequences for the resource. Readers interested in implementing management strategies should not hesitate to consult with others who have expertise on the subject matter.

Much of the information presented in *Florida's Fragile Wildlife* also appears in the book series on Rare and Endangered Biota of Florida (Ray E. Ashton, Jr., series editor, University Press of Florida, Gainesville). Those individuals who already own the series may not want to spend the \$39.95 to acquire this additional reference, but because the book is written to influence management actions, it fills an important niche. It is a refreshing and practical "how to" guide that is an essential reference for anyone actively involved in land management in Florida. It should also be obtained by college and community libraries. —**Gian Basili**, 5385 Pelican Way, St. Augustine, FL 32080.