



The Florida scrub-jay lives in oak-dominated scrub — the oldest natural community that shelters one of the country's highest concentrations of endangered species, including the Florida scrub-jay.



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looking ahead

The Nature Conservancy will continue to build Jay Watch and explore partnerships with new individuals or organizations interested in working to save the Florida scrub-jay. To continue implementing Jay Watch at a region-wide scale, recruitment of volunteers and sites in other counties will be a priority in coming years. In addition, future monitoring will continue to determine the relationship between vegetation, management techniques and areas used by scrub-jays.

program supporters

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**in-kind services*

Jay Watch Annual Report 2004



from the director

Habitat loss and degradation are pushing the Florida scrub-jay toward extinction at an alarming rate. Ninety percent of jays that originally inhabited Florida are gone. Facing the decline of scrub-jays — and all other scrub plants and animals — conservationists are working to save the species through habitat protection and fire management.

To measure the effects of these efforts and to build support for protecting scrub-jays and their habitat, The Nature Conservancy launched Jay Watch in 2002. Jay Watch is a scrub-jay population assessment program that uses trained volunteers to count scrub-jays on conservation sites. Jay Watch provides invaluable data on an annual basis to researchers and

land managers that directly supports their efforts to save Florida scrub-jays.

The success of Jay Watch depends on the dedication of our partners and volunteers and the generosity of our contributors. Your ongoing support will help save central Florida's scrub lands for future generations and will give Florida scrub-jays a fighting chance.

Tricia Martin

Lake Wales Ridge Program Director
The Nature Conservancy

jay watch expands in 2004

The Jay Watch program welcomed 38 new volunteers in 2004, enabling surveys to take place at six additional sites in two additional counties.

A total of 116 volunteers participated in the program this year, contributing more than 1,160 hours. Many volunteers conducted surveys for three mornings at their selected site, and then volunteered at a second or third site.

Because of increased volunteer recruitment and participation, the program expanded into Manatee and Sarasota counties in 2004. (In 2002 and 2003, surveys were conducted only in Polk and Highlands counties.)

On several sites, Jay Watch volunteers conducted surveys simultaneously with researchers. The data collected by volunteers and scientists were almost indistinguishable, verifying the strength and accuracy of data collected by volunteers.



Jay Watch helps land managers and biologists in their efforts to save the Florida scrub-jay.

Jay Watch Volunteer Participation

Year	Sites	Volunteers	Hours Worked
2002	11	55	885
2003	12	78	750
2004	18	116	1,163

2004 results

Data collected during each Jay Watch season is analyzed under the guidance of Dr. Reed Bowman, director of the Avian Ecology Lab at Archbold Biological Station. Data is summarized into three categories: total number of groups per site, average group size and number of juveniles per group. This information is used to identify Florida scrub-jay population trends.

In 2004, the Jay Watch surveys took place on 18 sites. Jay Watch participants located 92 juveniles and 263 adults, totaling 355 scrub-jays in 113 scrub-jay groups. Volunteers witnessed scrub-jays in family units as large as seven and as small as one.

By examining the overall trends in population and group size, and comparing them to previous years, it appears that 75 percent of the sites are remaining stable, while 17 percent show declines. However, over the past three years the average group size has decreased. This decline will be closely monitored in the future.

Results Summary

Total Number of Groups			
1992 – 93	2002	2003	2004
138	37	72	113
Average Group Size			
2002	2003	2004	
3.14	3.11	2.88	
Juveniles per Group			
2002	2003	2004	
0.93	0.49	0.7	

working together to save florida scrub-jays

Jay Watch provides valuable information to land managers, conservation organizations and agencies. Managers use Jay Watch information to track changes in the number of adult and juvenile scrub-jays on their properties, monitor the dispersal of scrub-jays, and detect movement of new scrub-jays onto their lands. Jay Watch data also helps agencies design prescribed fire plans and measure the success of habitat restoration activities like prescribed burning. For example, data from Jay Watch enables land managers to design burn units around scrub-jay areas and indicates what habitat needs to be burned.

Results from Jay Watch surveys also guide land acquisition by helping conservation groups determine which lands need to be protected for scrub-jay habitat.

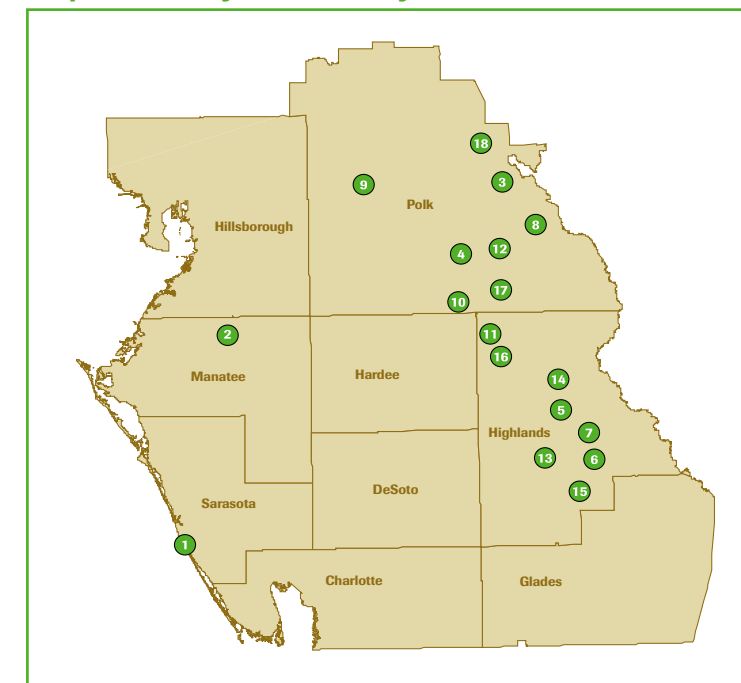
By recording the presence of banded scrub-jays at each site, Jay Watch volunteers help researchers track long-distance dispersal of scrub-jays. This information helps researchers better understand trends and spatial distribution of jays on a landscape scale.

Finally, Jay Watch raises public awareness and participation that results in increased support for the conservation of scrub-jays, their habitat and the land management activities required to keep their habitat healthy. Volunteers are also ambassadors for wildlife and conservation to friends, family and others in the community, and were even featured on a local television news show.



Volunteers are the heart of Jay Watch – more than 100 “citizen-scientists” participated in the program in 2004.

Map of 2004 Jay Watch Survey Sites



2004 Jay Watch Sites

- 1 South Venice Area (Sarasota County NEST)
- 2 Cordell (SWFWMD)
- 3 Allen David Broussard Catfish Creek (DEP)
- 4 Crooked Lake Prairie (Polk ELP)
- 5 Flamingo Villas (USFWS)
- 6 Holmes Avenue (FFWCC)
- 7 Royce Ranch (FFWCC)
- 8 Lake Kissimmee State Park (DEP)
- 9 Lakeland Highlands Scrub (Polk ELP)
- 10 Saddleblanket Scrub Preserve (Conservancy)
- 11 Silver Lake (FFWCC)
- 12 Tiger Creek Preserve (Conservancy)
- 13 Jack Creek (SWFWMD)
- 14 Carter Creek (USFWS)
- 15 Gould Road (FFWCC)
- 16 Sun-N-Lake (FFWCC)
- 17 Hickory Lake Scrub (Polk ELP)
- 18 Lake Marion/Avatar (SFWMD)