



Red Mangrove

POINT OF INTEREST



THE RED MANGROVE, SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS "THE WALKING TREE," IS ONE OF THREE MANGROVE SPECIES NATIVE TO FLORIDA. THESE EVERGREEN TREES ARE MOST OFTEN FOUND ALONG COASTLINES IN BRACKISH WATERS AND SALT MARSHES. RED MANGROVES ARE ABLE TO LIVE IN SUCH SALTY ENVIRONMENTAL DUE TO PROP ROOTS, WHICH EXCLUDE SALT.

EXCESS SALT THAT FINDS ITS WAY INTO THE PLANT IS STORED IN THE LEAVES AND REMOVED FROM THE PLANT WHEN THE LEAVES DIE AND FALL FROM THE TREE. IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY YOU MAY FIND THE "SACRIFICIAL LEAVES"—THEY'RE USUALLY YELLOW.



MANGROVES PROVIDE SHELTER FOR SEVERAL SPECIES

MANGROVES PROVIDE AN IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL ROLE IN ESTUARINE HABITATS. THEY NOT ONLY PROVIDE SHELTER FOR FISH, CRABS, BIRDS, AND OTHER ANIMALS; THEY ALSO ARE KEY IN SOIL STABILIZATION ALONG MUCKY BANKS.





POINT OF INTEREST

Red-Bellied Woodpecker

NAMED FOR THE REDDISH COLOR ON ITS BELLY, THE RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER IS COMMONLY FOUND IN NATURAL AND URBAN AREAS. LIKE MOST SPECIES OF WOODPECKERS THEY HAVE STIFF TAIL FEATHERS AND STRONG FEET THAT AID IN CLIMBING. RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS RELY ON DEAD OR DYING TREES FOR FORAGING AND NESTING. THEIR DIET CONSISTS OF INVERTEBRATES, FRUIT, AND NUTS.



EMERALD ASH BORER BEETLE DAMAGE

THESE BIRDS ARE KNOWN TO TAP (OR DRUM) ON HOLLOW TREES, ALUMINUM ROOFS, AND METAL GUTTERS TO ATTRACT POTENTIAL MATES. IT IS A MAJOR PREDATOR OF THE INVASIVE EMERALD ASH BORER BEETLE. RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS HAVE BEEN OBSERVED REMOVING UP TO 85 PERCENT OF BORER LARVAE IN AN INFESTED ASH TREE.





Little Blue Heron

POINT OF INTEREST

DESPITE THE NAME, THIS NATIVE SPECIES IS MORE CLOSELY RELATED TO EGRETS. THEY ARE COMMONLY OBSERVED WADING AROUND TIDAL FLATS, ESTUARIES, STREAMS, SWAMPS, AND FLOODED FIELDS. THEIR DIET CONSISTS OF FISH, FROGS, CRUSTACEANS, AND EVEN SMALL RODENTS.



JUVENILES OF THIS SPECIES ARE WHITE IN COLOR AND CAN BE DISTINGUISHED FROM SNOWY EGRETS BY THEIR BLACK TIPPED BILL. DURING BREEDING SEASON, ADULT LITTLE BLUE HERONS WILL HAVE PURPLISH FEATHERS AROUND THEIR NECK AND HEAD.



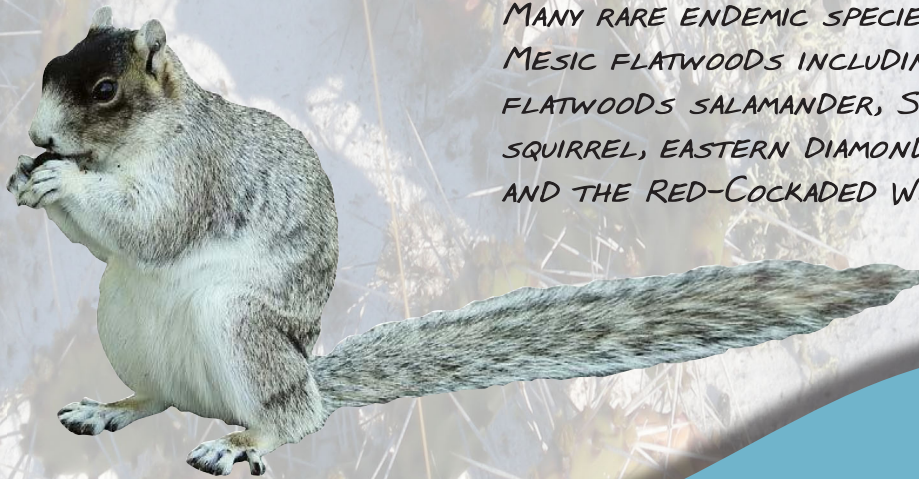


Mesic Flatwoods

POINT OF INTEREST



MESIC FLATWOODS ARE CHARACTERIZED AS HAVING AN OPEN CANOPY OF PINES WITH AN UNDERSTORY COMPOSED OF LOW SHRUBS, GRASSES, AND FORBS. THIS HABITAT TYPE OCCURS THROUGHOUT FLORIDA EXCEPT IN MONROE COUNTY AND PORTIONS OF THE BIG CYPRESS AND EVERGLADES AREAS. SOILS ARE SANDY, ACIDIC, AND NUTRIENT POOR. THIS NATURAL COMMUNITY IS FIRE DEPENDENT AND RELIES ON FREQUENT FIRE TO STIMULATE FLOWERING HERBS AND INCREASE SPECIES RICHNESS.



MANY RARE ENDEMIC SPECIES MAY BE FOUND IN MESIC FLATWOODS INCLUDING THE FROSTED FLATWOODS SALAMANDER, SHERMAN'S FOX SQUIRREL, EASTERN DIAMONDBACK RATTLESNAKE, AND THE RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER.

SHERMAN'S FOX SQUIRREL

