

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

**BILL #:** [HB 11](#)

**TITLE:** Designation of the State Birds

**SPONSOR(S):** Mooney and LaMarca

**COMPANION BILL:** [SB 150](#) (Rodriguez)

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** None

### Committee References

[Natural Resources & Disasters](#)

14 Y, 1 N



[State Affairs](#)

## SUMMARY

### Effect of the Bill:

The bill changes the official state bird from the mockingbird to the American flamingo and designates the Florida scrub-jay as the official state songbird.

### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

None.

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## ANALYSIS

### EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill designates the [American flamingo](#) as the official state bird and the [Florida scrub-jay](#) as the official state songbird. The bill provides these designations supersede the designation of the [northern mockingbird](#) as the official state bird, which was established during the 1927 Regular Session by Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3. (Sections [1](#) and [2](#))

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2026. (Section [3](#))

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

#### [Northern Mockingbird](#)

In 1927, the Legislature designated the mockingbird, also known as the northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), as Florida's official state bird.<sup>1</sup> The resolution cites the "melody of its music" and its "matchless charm" as reasons for the designation.<sup>2</sup> The mockingbird is also the official state bird of Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas.<sup>3</sup>

Northern mockingbirds are medium-sized songbirds with gray-brown feathers that live in the United States, Mexico, Southern Canada, Central America, and the Caribbean.<sup>4</sup> Males and females are similar in color and size, with lengths of 8-10 inches and



<sup>1</sup> SCR 3 (1927); see also Florida Department of State, [State Bird](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> SCR 3 (1927).

<sup>3</sup> Florida Department of State, [State Bird](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>4</sup> Smithsonian's National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute, [Northern Mockingbird](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

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wingspans of 12-14 inches.<sup>5</sup> Northern mockingbirds feed primarily on insects and weed seeds, but also feed on ripe berries during the summer and fall months.<sup>6</sup> They may be found alone or in a pair and are commonly seen on fences, bushes, trees, and utility lines.<sup>7</sup>

The northern mockingbird is protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.<sup>8</sup>

### [American Flamingo](#)

The American flamingo, also called the Caribbean flamingo, is one of the largest species of flamingos, with adults averaging five feet tall.<sup>9</sup> The flamingo's distinctive pink color comes from the pigment of their food, which includes shrimp and other aquatic invertebrates, as well as algae and small seeds.<sup>10</sup> American flamingos also have black tips on their wings and a black beak tip.<sup>11</sup>



The American flamingo is native to the Caribbean and the northern coast of South America, living in the shallows of salt water, brackish water, or alkaline lakes; however, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission considers flamingos native to Florida, treating them as a protected native species under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.<sup>12</sup> Research contends that flamingos were once native to Florida, but disappeared in the early 1900s possibly as a result of hunting.<sup>13</sup> A 2024 Audubon Florida survey of American flamingos found 101 wild flamingos in three areas of Florida: Florida Bay, Pine Island, and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Audubon, [Northern Mockingbird](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>6</sup> Florida Department of State, [State Bird](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>7</sup> Cornell Lab, [Northern Mockingbird](#), (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>8</sup> 50 CFR § 10.13(c)(1) (2025). The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which the United States entered into with Canada, Japan, Mexico, and Russia, implements conservation treaties and “is intended to ensure the sustainability of populations of all protected migratory bird species.” Under the Act, a protected migratory bird species is prohibited from being killed, captured, sold, traded, or transported without prior authorization by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. See U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, [Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918](#) (last visited Nov. 24, 2025).

<sup>9</sup> Smithsonian’s National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute, [American Flamingo](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, [American Flamingo](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>12</sup> See Smithsonian’s National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute, [American Flamingo](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025); Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, [American Flamingo](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, [American Flamingo](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>13</sup> See Gross, Bonnie, Florida Rambler, [Flamingos in Florida: Back for Good?](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025); Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, [American Flamingo](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025); and Audubon, [It’s Official: Flamingos Belong in Florida](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>14</sup> Audubon Florida, [State of the Everglades Spring 2024](#), p. 8 (last visited Sept 18, 2025).

**[Florida Scrub-jay](#)**

The Florida scrub-jay is a blue and gray bird similar in size to a robin.<sup>15</sup> Scrub-jays are social birds that live in family groups with one breeding pair, the offspring of which stay with the group for one or more years to help raise the young and defend their territory.<sup>16</sup> Scrub-jays primarily feed on insects and acorns which the scrub-jays bury in sandy patches of their habitat for winter food.<sup>17</sup>



The Florida scrub-jay is a threatened species and is the only bird species both native to and found only in Florida.<sup>18</sup> Estimates indicate the current scrub-jay population is between 7,700 and 9,300 birds.<sup>19</sup> As of 2024, 12 monitored scrub-jay habitat sites have long-term stable or increasing populations, however, 10 sites experienced population decline and scrub-jays disappeared from seven sites.<sup>20</sup> Scrub-jays live in oak scrub with sandy soils primarily in central Florida.<sup>21</sup> Much of the threat to the Florida scrub-jay is from habitat destruction that causes populations to become smaller and more isolated.<sup>22</sup>

**BILL HISTORY**

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
<a href="#">Natural Resources &amp; Disasters Subcommittee</a> <a href="#">State Affairs Committee</a>	14 Y, 1 N	12/3/2025	Skinner	Jones

<sup>15</sup> Audubon, [Florida Scrub-Jay](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>16</sup> Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, [Florida Scrub-Jay](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>17</sup> Florida Museum, [Tell Me About: The Florida Scrub Jay](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>18</sup> Florida Department of Environmental Protection, [Florida Scrub-Jay is One of a Kind](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> Audubon Florida, [Jay Watch Report 2024 Annual Summary](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025). The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Fish and Wildlife Research Institute recently completed a statewide update of the Florida scrub-jay population, but their report has not yet been released (see p. 6).

<sup>21</sup> Audubon, [Florida Scrub-Jay](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

<sup>22</sup> Fire suppression practices that result in denser and taller growth also negatively impact the scrub-jay population which do best in habitats with scrubby flatwoods averaging 3-6.5 feet tall. See Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, [Florida Scrub-Jay](#) (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).