

## Florida Scrub-Jay Endorsement Reasons

1. Florida does not have a state bird. Many have been taught that the Northern Mockingbird is our state bird. This is incorrect. In 1927 the Senate passed a resolution naming the Northern Mockingbird as the state bird, BUT it was never confirmed by the House of Representatives or signed into law by the Governor. You can confirm this by reviewing Chapter 15 in the state statutes. **WE DO NOT HAVE A STATE BIRD.**
2. Four other states have the Northern Mockingbird as their state bird - Tennessee, Texas, Mississippi, and Arkansas.
3. The Florida Scrub-Jay is the **ONLY** bird endemic to Florida, which means it can NOT be found anywhere else due to specific habitat requirements and behavior patterns. It is representational of Florida's environment and varied ecosystems. Therefore, no other state can support this species or have our state bird.
4. Florida Scrub-Jays are cooperative breeders (*when more than two birds of the same species provide care in rearing the young from one nest*) and reside in permanent, group-defended territories. They have found that groups consist of a permanently bonded monogamous pair and one to six helpers. Helpers participate in the care of raising their young family members. **Floridians should have a state bird that represents the hard-working, family-oriented nature of our residents thus providing a positive model of wholesome family values!**
5. The Florida Scrub-Jay has been present in Florida for at least 2 million years.
6. The Florida Scrub-Jay was officially listed as a threatened state species by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in 1975 and as a threatened federal species by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in 1987.
7. The Florida Scrub-Jays' populations have plummeted 90% over the last century and that decline has accelerated over the last decade. This decline requires a heightened awareness and improved conservation efforts.
8. With continued unbalanced development in our state and subsequent habitat fragmentation the need to bring attention to our Florida Scrub-Jay is imperative for its survival and needs additional support.
9. The Florida Scrub-Jay's color is a beautiful blue and reflects the beauty of our oceans and sky. They are intelligent, resourceful with a good memory and a friendly species. People enjoy being in their presence.
10. Wildlife viewing activities are popular among residents and nonresidents alike and provide significant economic benefits for many individuals and businesses, composed of retailers, manufacturers, wholesalers, and support services grounded in our communities. These diverse players constitute a significant industry contributing approximately \$5.8 billion to Florida's economy.
11. The Florida state bird should be a reflection and an official symbol that showcases the state's natural treasures. The Florida Scrub-Jay is a bird we can be proud of that represents all Floridians and the enchanting nature of Florida.