



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Legislative Affairs Office

620 South Meridian Street • Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

(850) 487-3795 • FAX (850) 410-5265

2009 Session Legislative Proposal

Title: **State Bird**

Submitted by: Office of Recreational Services

1. Issue

This proposal would change the designation of Florida's state bird from the Northern mockingbird to one that better represents the uniqueness of Florida. The proposed new bird will be chosen by Florida's 4th – 8th graders in an on-line election, November 4, Election Day. Their selection will be submitted to the 2009 Legislature for consideration.

2. Present Situation

The Northern mockingbird is the state bird for Florida. It is also the state bird in Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas. It is neither unique nor representative of Florida as a state symbol. The mockingbird was adopted as the state bird of Florida by Florida Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 3, approved on April 23, 1927. Because the mockingbird was adopted by Senate Concurrent Resolution, it is not codified in Florida Statutes.

Selection Process

Selecting a new state bird for Florida involves a partnership between the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Florida Department of Education (DOE) and Kids Voting Leon County (KVLC). Students in grades 4-8 would participate in a statewide vote to select a proposed new state bird. The process encourages teachers and students to learn more about the democratic process of elections by utilizing all aspects of the election process including campaigning and voting. The process also creates awareness and increases knowledge about Florida's birdlife. Voting would occur simultaneously with the national election, November 4, 2008.

When the votes are tallied and the candidate has been selected, legislation will be submitted to the Legislature for their consideration.

3. Effect of Proposed Changes

Selection of a new state bird will better represent the individuality and unique

character of Florida and provide a state symbol that creates a stronger connection between the inspiring beauty of birds and the people of Florida.

Florida's 4-8th grade students will vote on a new state bird November 4, 2008. Once their selection has been made, the proposal will be submitted to the Legislature.

Benefits to utilizing this process include students gaining a greater understanding of the democratic process of elections including campaigning and voting. Students and teachers will also gain more awareness and knowledge of Florida's diverse bird life.

4. Impact on All Pertinent Statutes/Rules

The new designation would be placed with the other state designations in Chapter 15, Florida Statutes.

5. Affected Agencies and Groups

Florida's 4th-8th grade students; Kids Voting Leon County; Florida Department of Education

6. Fiscal Impact

FWC

None – can be done within existing staff and budget.

Private Sector

Newspaper in Education (a cooperative program between newspapers and schools) is paying for production of the student tabloid associated with Kids Voting Leon County.

Other Governmental Agencies

None anticipated.

Tax/Fee Issues

None

7. Proposed Language

Section 15.0355, F.S., Official state bird.

The _____ is hereby designated and declared as the official Florida state bird.