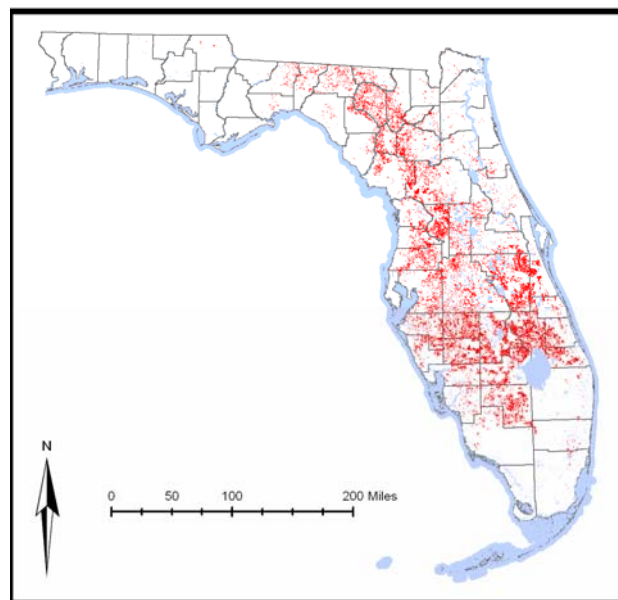


Grassland/Improved Pasture



Some habitat distributions or locations may be misrepresented on this map due to size, resolution and insufficient data sources.

Status

Current condition: Good and declining.

According to the best available GIS information at this time (see Appendix D. GIS Data Tables), 2,931,999 acres (1,186,538 ha) of Grassland/Improved Pasture habitat exist, of which 6% (186,662 ac; 75,539 ha) are in existing conservation or managed areas. Another 7% (193,063 ac; 78,130 ha) are in Florida Forever projects, and 9% (262,558 ac; 106,253 ha) are in SHCA-designated lands. The remaining 78% (2,289,716 ac; 926,615 ha) are other private lands.

Habitat Description

FNAI type: None

This is an upland community where the predominant vegetative cover is very low-growing grasses and forbs, most commonly in monocultures of non-invasive, non-native species. Improved Pastures have typically been cleared, tilled, reseeded with specific grass types, and periodically improved with brush control and fertilizer application.

Associated Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Mammals

- *Condylura cristata* Star-nosed Mole
- *Lasiurus borealis* Eastern Red Bat
- *Lasiurus seminolus* Seminole Bat
- *Lasiurus intermedius* Northern Yellow Bat
- *Sylvilagus floridanus* Eastern Cottontail Rabbit
- *Sciurus niger shermani* Sherman's Fox Squirrel
- *Geomys pinetis pinetis* Southeastern Pocket Gopher
- *Spilogale putorius* Spotted Skunk
- *Mephitis mephitis* Striped Skunk
- *Puma concolor coryi* Florida Panther

Birds

- *Anas fulvigula fulvigula* Florida Mottled Duck
- *Colinus virginianus* Northern Bobwhite
- *Plegadis falcinellus* Glossy Ibis
- *Mycteria americana* Wood Stork
- *Elanoides forficatus* Swallow-tailed Kite
- *Elanus leucurus* White-tailed Kite
- *Ictinia mississippiensis* Mississippi Kite
- *Caracara cheriway* Crested Caracara
- *Falco sparverius paulus* Southeastern American Kestrel
- *Falco columbarius* Merlin
- *Falco peregrinus* Peregrine Falcon
- *Grus canadensis pratensis* Florida Sandhill Crane
- *Grus americana* Whooping Crane
- *Calidris melanotos* Pectoral Sandpiper
- *Columbina passerina* Common Ground-Dove
- *Athene cunicularia floridana* Florida Burrowing Owl
- *Lanius ludovicianus* Loggerhead Shrike
- *Aphelocoma coerulescens* Florida Scrub-Jay
- *Aimophila aestivalis* Bachman's Sparrow
- *Ammodramus savannarum* Grasshopper Sparrow (migrant)
- *Ammodramus savannarum floridanus* Florida Grasshopper Sparrow
- *Ammodramus henslowii* Henslow's Sparrow
- *Passerina ciris* Painted Bunting
- *Sturnella magna* Eastern Meadowlark

Amphibians

- *Ambystoma tigrinum* Tiger Salamander
- *Pseudacris ornata* Ornate Chorus Frog
- *Rana capito* Gopher Frog

Reptiles

- *Terrapene carolina bauri* Florida Box Turtle
- *Gopherus polyphemus* Gopher Tortoise
- *Heterodon platirhinos* Eastern Hognose Snake
- *Heterodon simus* Southern Hognose Snake
- *Drymarchon couperi* Eastern Indigo Snake

- *Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus* Florida Pine Snake
- *Lampropeltis calligaster* Mole Kingsnake
- *Crotalus adamanteus* Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake

Invertebrates

- *Procambarus rogersi rogersi* A Crayfish
- *Chelyoxenus xerobatis* Gopher Tortoise Hister Beetle
- *Aphodius troglodytes* Gopher Tortoise Aphodius Commensal Scarab Beetle
- *Copris gopheri* Gopher Tortoise Copris Commensal Scarab Beetle
- *Onthophagus polyphemi polyphemi* Gopher Tortoise Onthophagus Commensal Scarab Beetle

Conservation Threats

Threats to Grassland/Improved Pasture habitat that were also identified for multiple other habitats are addressed in the Chapter Multiple Habitat Threats and Conservation Actions. These threats include:

- Conversion to more intensive agriculture
- Conversion to recreation areas
- Conversion to housing and urban development
- Roads

No habitat-specific threats to Grassland/Improved Pasture were identified.

The following stresses and sources of stress threaten this habitat:

| Stresses | | Habitat Stress Rank |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| A | Fragmentation of habitats, communities, ecosystems | High |
| B | Habitat destruction or conversion | High |
| C | Altered species composition/dominance | Low |

The sources of stress, or threats, were used to generate conservation actions.

| Sources of Stress | | Habitat Source Rank | Related Stresses (see above) |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Roads | High | A, B |
| 2 | Conversion to housing and urban development | High | A, B |
| 3 | Conversion to agriculture | Medium | A, B |
| 4 | Conversion to recreation areas | Low | A, B |
| Statewide Threat Rank of Habitat | | High | |

Conservation Actions

Actions to abate the threats to Grassland/Improved Pasture that were also identified as statewide threats (Conversion to agriculture, Conversion to housing and urban development, Conversion to recreation areas, and Roads) are in the Chapter Multiple Habitat Threats and Conservation Actions.

Because the experts did not identify any Grassland/Improved Pasture habitat-specific threats, no specific actions were identified. However, during the threats workshops, the participants identified several desired outcomes for this habitat that could form the basis for specific actions:

- While pasture is not a native landscape, pastures can provide significant wildlife habitat; therefore, conversion of pastures to more intense land uses should be discouraged, particularly in areas with karst geology. As much of this area is in private lands, incentives and/or cooperative agreements should be developed to identify and to retain or improve the functional values that these lands provide to wildlife.
- Conversion of natural and semi-natural habitats to improved pasture should be discouraged through incentive programs and easements.
- The value of this habitat could be enhanced for species that use pasture but are not doing well overall. For example, kestrel nest boxes could be placed on rights-of-way, and animal burrows could be located and avoided by heavy equipment operators.
- More conservation land could be acquired (e.g., in Citrus County or adjacent to Withlacoochee State Forest) to protect habitat for burrowing owls, kestrels, and red-cockaded woodpecker.
- A network of contiguous habitats could be conserved, through voluntary restoration or preservation of patches of native vegetation at intervals across the range of this habitat.