

As of 5/13/09 we are tracking 51 mottled ducks, including 36 of the original 47 birds radio-marked in rural areas in September. The rest are birds we marked in urban areas in and around West Palm Beach, FL. We have confirmed 12 mortalities and have another bird that may be dead, but we have not been able to get to the spot to confirm this. All but one of the mortalities has been among the rural cohort. We currently have 4 missing birds.

We are currently in the midst of the nesting season and we have 5 birds known to be on nests or to have attempted a nest. Unfortunately, a large proportion of our rural birds still reside in the Everglades and this area is virtually inaccessible to ground tracking personnel. Several of these birds are using areas with a lot of dry habitat and have been located from the air in dry areas. This may indicate these birds are on nests, but as of now we have not been able to reach them on the ground to confirm any nesting activities. We are trying to reach them using an ARGO amphibious vehicle and this may prove somewhat successful.

A few of the birds that have been using wetland habitats on Lake Okeechobee and in the Everglades for months have just recently moved back into the Everglades Agricultural Area. The sugar and rice plants are now high enough to provide nesting and brood-rearing cover and a couple of these birds have been located on nests in the sugar fields; a very interesting development.

We will continue to monitor all our birds closely as the nesting season moves along. We hope to observe a high proportion of the birds we can track on a daily basis making nesting attempts. Only time will tell.

Mottled Duck locations 5/12/2009

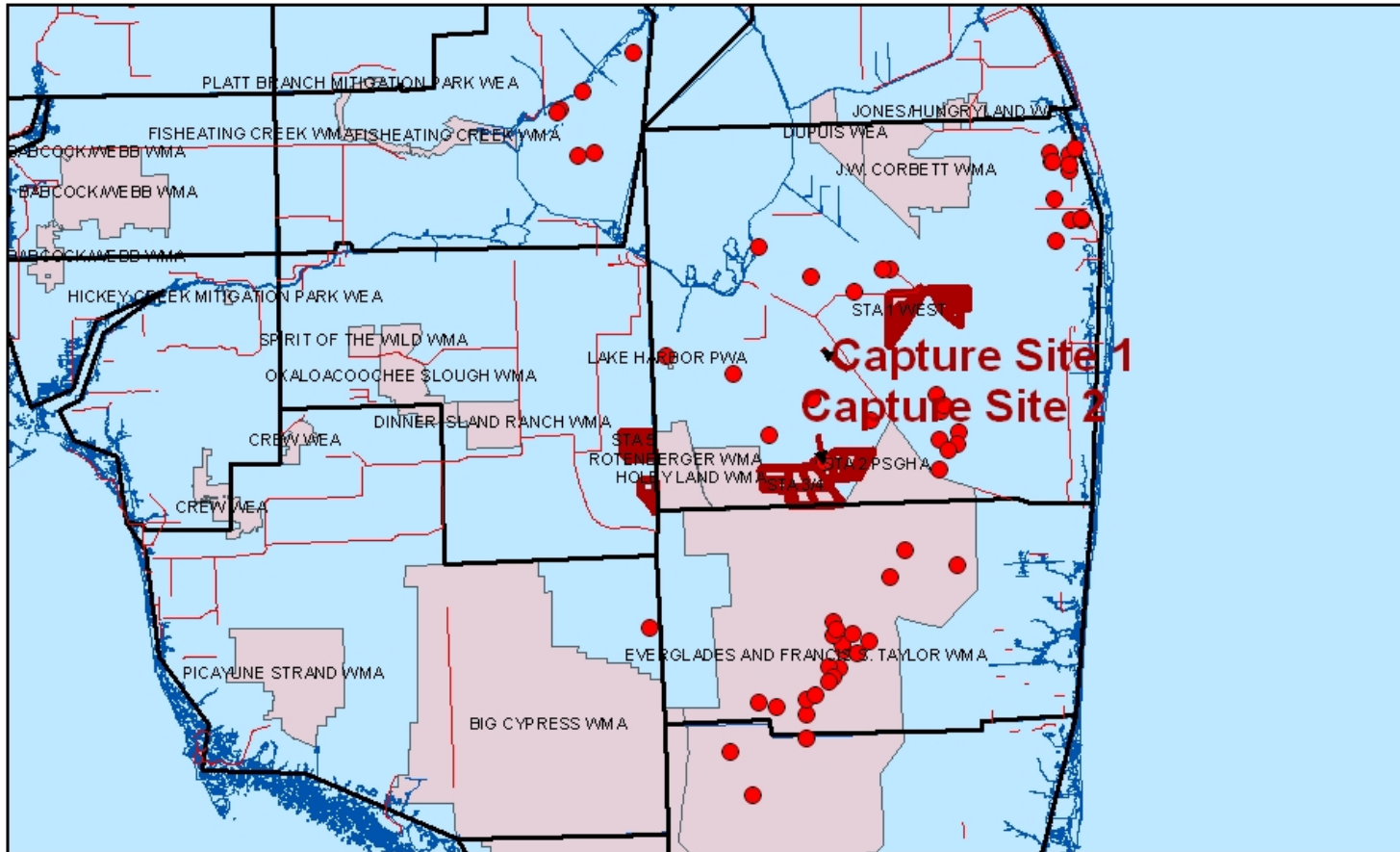


Figure 1