



The Tortoise's Burrow At Hugh Taylor Birch State Park

Hugh Taylor Birch
State Park

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Birch State Park, Protector & Refuge



**Marsh
Rabbit,
once
common
to Birch**



When Hugh Taylor Birch first witnessed this stretch of Barrier Island property in 1908, environmental concepts were hardly begun. At the onset of the 21st century, Florida is a land that has experienced incalculable damage and invasion. Habitat loss and the introduction of invasive plant and animal species are the culprits. What results is a very different Florida than a mere 100 years ago with certain, more fragile plant and animal populations pushed ever more into obscure corners and reduced in numbers. Threatened and endangered species are a very real concern to our modern world and to our peninsula. The disappearance of these species is not just a goodbye to a little bird or an unnoticeable little vine. It is the disappearance of a whole genetic legacy that found itself capable of creating itself into a specific environment. In short, it is a loss of something sacred and biologically irreplaceable.

This tiny property of just under 200 acres offers protection to a number of listed plant and animal species. Ask a Ranger to guide you through our threatened species list if you wish to know them and also become observer and protector. Here is an introduction to some of the most well-known:

South Florida Beach Jacquemontia (*Jacquemontia reclinata*) Endangered

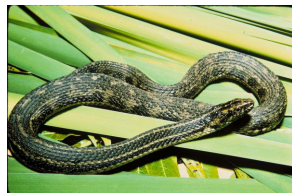
Very few pieces of land are now known to house this Endangered Species. Both Birch State Park and John U. Lloyd Beach State Park offer

refuge to some of the last of this little, ground-level vine, with its small, seasonal, white flowers and bipedal, oval leaf structure. This is a dune plant that can reach into the first hardwood hammock areas.

South Florida Beach Peanut (*Okenia hypogaea*) Species of special concern

As the name suggests, this plant does best along the first or second dune areas past the ocean. This is another ground level vine that displays alternate, more succulent leaf structures with a cover of soft cilia (hair), and seasonal, purple flowers. This vine is important to keep an eye on as it likes to grow amidst the grasses and beach sunflower.

Silver Palm (*Coccothrinax argentata*) - Endangered. This is one of many Caribbean type plants that reach into our peninsula, denoting its mixed, Subtropical bioregional type. But the Silver Palm, a shorter palm no taller than 15 foot and with a silvery under-hue on its furan, is all but disappearing from Florida and the Caribbean where once it flourished.



Atlantic Salt Marsh snake (*Nerodia clarkia taeniata*) - Threatened. The Atlantic salt marsh snake used to occupy the eastern coastline of Florida quite heavily. This non-venomous snake feeds on small fish and crabs and is one of the few snakes that can tolerate salt water. We are hoping to eventually find this snake in our mangrove community.

Staghorn Coral - (*Scropora cervicornis*) - Threatened. The Staghorn Coral along with other types of coral, occupy reefs just a few hundred feet off of our Atlantic coast. The boating industry and water quality has compromised many aquatic species and thus another area for us to consider how to synchronize our behavior with our local habitat.

There are so many more species that merit mention, but no room allows here. If you wish to hear more about Florida's Threatened and Endangered species, a simple internet search will give you a plethora of information. It may lead you to ways you can actively assist, if not simply be aware to spread this information to others so that we can further adapt our behavior to a more unified walk with Nature. Even if we think we can, humans cannot be separated from Nature and therefore everything we do has a consequence. There are so many endeavors that can lead us in reintegrating ourselves so that humans are not always seen as the culprit to environmental damage. Many of us attempt to live with healthy bodies also in balance with a healthy, broader organism that we are always a part of regardless of where we choose to call home. Here is a small list of a few other animal species, like brothers and sisters of our local bioregion, who are in direct danger of extinction: All Four Sea Turtle Species who visit Florida. Key Deer ([Odocoileus virginianus clavium](#)), Scrub Jay ([Aphelocoma coerulescens](#)), Everglades snail kite ([Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus](#)), West Indian Manatee ([Trichechus manatus](#)), Flatwoods Salamander ([Ambystoma cingulatum](#)), Caribbean monk seal ([Monachus tropicalis](#)), Wood stork ([Mycteria americana](#)), Roseate tern ([Sterna dougallii dougallii](#)), Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*)

Broward County Sea Turtles Galore!



Hawksbill Sea Turtle

Both **Lloyd Beach State Park** and the **Ft. Lauderdale Discovery Science Museum** offer night time turtle walks beginning in June. Call today to reserve your space as these are highly attended meets. Nova University offers training for those interested in becoming Scouts for turtle hatchlings, assisting disoriented baby sea turtles make it to the Ocean. If you missed this season, we need your help next season. These marvelous and ancient creatures are all endangered species!

Enviro Tip of the Month!

Providing state property for recreation to the public is a privilege. In order to make your visit a valuable one, here are a few tips that are good etiquette for both the land, animals and people you're sharing your day with. Don't Litter; This might seem like a no-brainer, but it seems to be a constant need to mention. Not only can you be fined, but it is unsightly to both you and your friends and family. More so, it is dangerous to wildlife. Animals do not necessarily discern a food wrapper from the food itself and can eat the entire packaging. This can cause serious illness. Balloons and Plastics are one of the worst items you can leave in the park. They cause illness to animals and take years to break down in the wild. We do our best to provide trash bins and recycling for all to use. As human beings, we have a choice as to how to behave and use our materials.



State Park Prices Increase

On July 1, 2009, all State Park entrance fees increased. Due to budget strains and in keeping with inflation, regular auto entrance fees have increased to \$6 per full occupant vehicle and \$4 single occupant. Pedestrians pay

\$2 entrance. Annual park passes are available for individual: \$64.60 and family: \$128.20. An honor box is located at the Beach Gate entrance for \$2 per person. Please renew passes when expired. State Parks are NOT funded by regular taxes and need your support.

Camp Live Oak

School is out for summer so camp is in session! We welcome Camp Live Oak back for yet another summer session. The camp has been successfully in operation for over 20 years and provides wonderful opportunity for Broward Co. kids to become familiar with a prized piece of their local environment.



Friends of Birch—
Citizens Support
Organization—
assists the park with
many additional
projects and endeavors. They need
support and members. Please inquire
about how you can participate today!