Community Development

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Scrub Jay Permit Boundary

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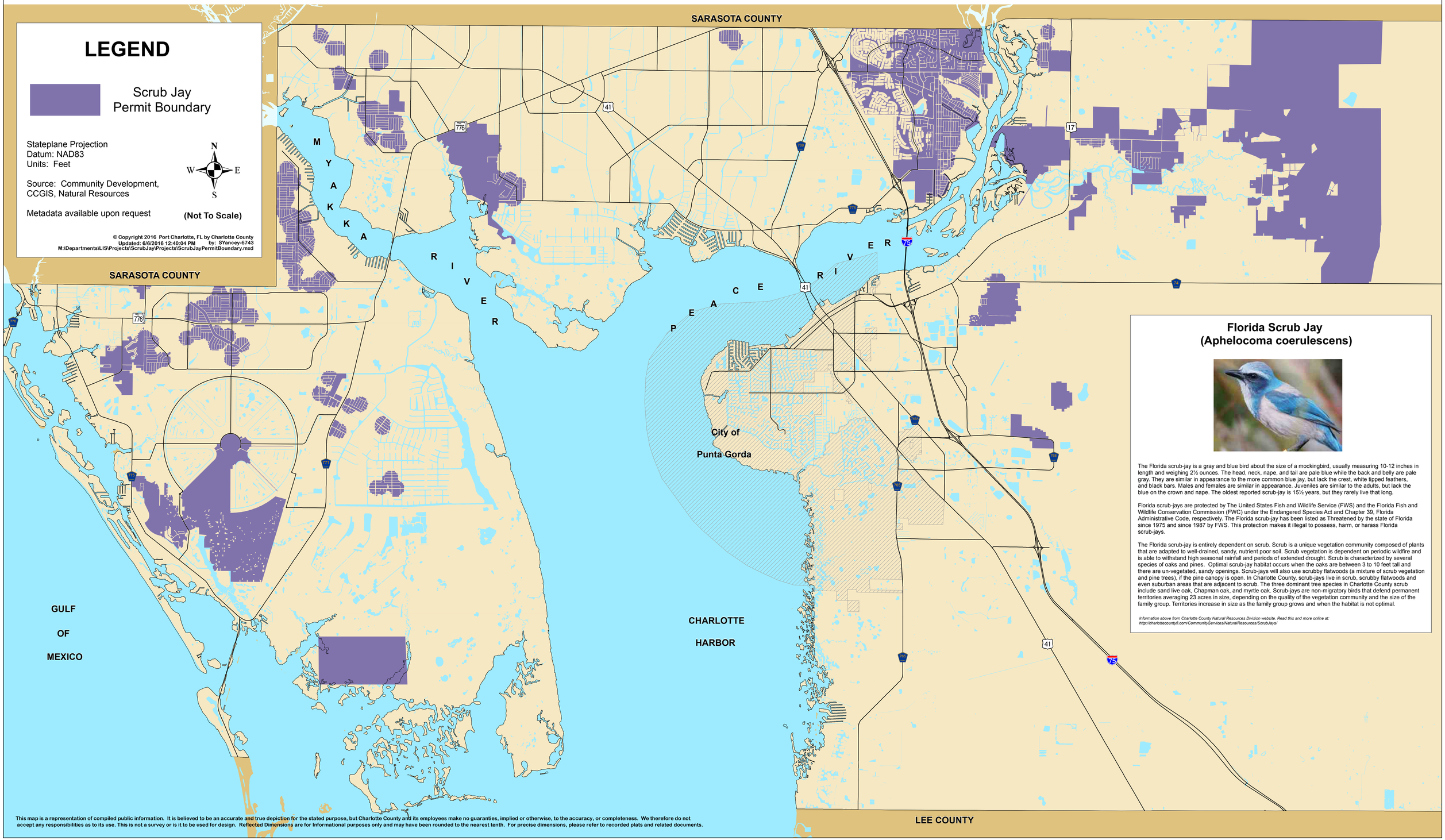

Florida Scrub Jay
(Aphelocoma coerulescens)

The Florida scrub-jay is a gray and blue bird about the size of a mockingbird, usually measuring 10-12 inches in length and weighing 2½ ounces. The head, neck, nape, and tail are pale blue while the back and belly are pale gray. They are similar in appearance to the more common blue jay, but lack the crest, white tipped feathers, and black bars. Males and females are similar in appearance. Juveniles are similar to the adults, but lack the blue on the crown and nape. The oldest reported scrub-jay is 15½ years, but they rarely live that long.

Florida scrub-jays are protected by The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) under the Endangered Species Act and Chapter 39, Florida Administrative Code, respectively. The Florida scrub-jay has been listed as Threatened by the state of Florida since 1975 and since 1987 by FWS. This protection makes it illegal to possess, harm, or harass Florida scrub-jays.

The Florida scrub-jay is entirely dependent on scrub. Scrub is a unique vegetation community composed of plants that are adapted to well-drained, sandy, nutrient poor soil. Scrub vegetation is dependent on periodic wildfire and is able to withstand high seasonal rainfall and periods of extended drought. Scrub is characterized by several species of oaks and pines. Optimal scrub-jay habitat occurs when the oaks are between 3 to 10 feet tall and there are un-vegetated, sandy openings. Scrub-jays will also use scrubby flatwoods (a mixture of scrub vegetation and pine trees), if the pine canopy is open. In Charlotte County, scrub-jays live in scrub, scrubby flatwoods and even suburban areas that are adjacent to scrub. The three dominant tree species in Charlotte County scrub include sand live oak, Chapman oak, and myrtle oak. Scrub-jays are non-migratory birds that defend permanent territories averaging 23 acres in size, depending on the quality of the vegetation community and the size of the family group. Territories increase in size as the family group grows and when the habitat is not optimal.

Information above from Charlotte County Natural Resources Division website. Read this and more online at: http://charlottecountyfl.com/CommunityServices/NaturalResources/ScrubJays/

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