

2023

The Florida Scrub-Jay

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Biology

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Recommended Citation

Hill, Emily (2023) "The Florida Scrub-Jay," *PANDION: The Osprey Journal of Research and Ideas*: Vol. 4: No. 1, Article 6.

Available at: https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/pandion_unf/vol4/iss1/6

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ART SUBMISSION

The Florida Scrub-Jay

Emily Hill

Faculty Mentor: Amy Keagy, Ed.D.

Department of Biology
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Artist Statement

The Florida Scrub-Jay is a digital scientific illustration of *Aphelocoma coerulescens*, the only native bird species endemic to Florida. This piece celebrates the natural beauty of the Florida scrub-jay and its key features that allow it to thrive in scrub habitats. These habitats are threatened by anthropogenic activity and climate change, leading to the fragmentation, degradation, or eventual loss of these areas. Through this artwork, I hope to emphasize the importance of conservation and inspire viewers to appreciate and protect this bird species.

Every stroke and color choice were carefully considered to accurately depict the bird's physical attributes. The beak shape of the Florida scrub-jay allows it to consume various resources found within scrub habitats. Its feet, with four toes, help scrub-jays harvest and store acorns in large quantities, assisting in the planting of oak trees, a key plant species in scrub areas. The most captivating feature of the scrub-jay is its blue coloration, theorized to help scrub-jays blend in with the sky or act as an indicator of health. I aimed to capture the elegant details of its blue-gray plumage and showcase a strong gaze to convey its resilience and adaptability to the unique scrub habitat.

I am a senior at the University of North Florida, majoring in biology with a concentration in coastal environmental science. I had the privilege to enroll and participate in the inaugural class of Scientific Illustrations, where I learned about art as a communicative medium for science. Scientific illustrations, such as The Florida Scrub Jay, allow viewers to observe, explore, and learn about the wonderful and expansive field of science. This artwork represents the culmination of my interest in art and science, and I am excited to apply what I have learned to my future career.



Emily Hill

The Florida Scrub-Jay

Procreate

8"x10"