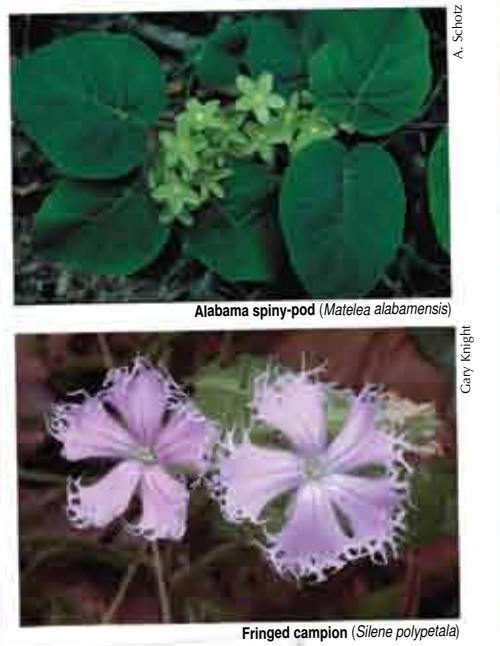


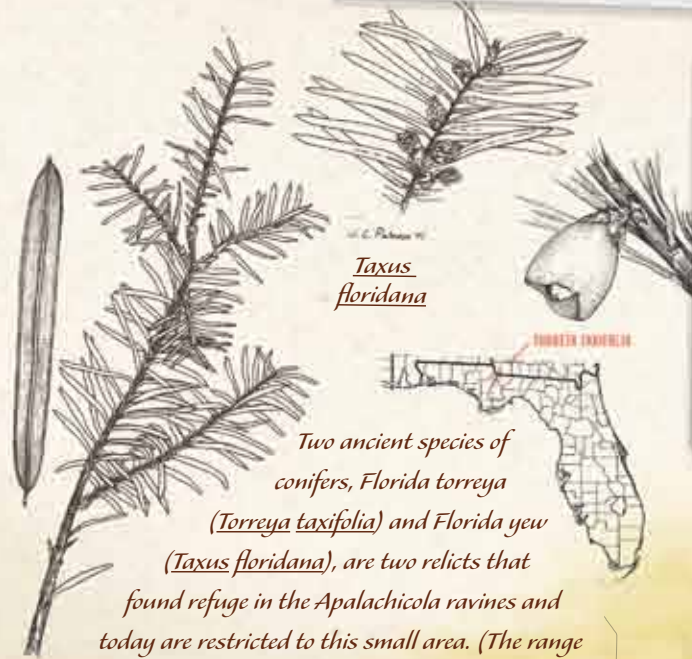
Apalachicola Bluffs & Ravines

The upper section of the Apalachicola River passes along Florida's Northern Highlands, an area of rich soils and relatively high topographic relief, ranging from 50 feet at the river's edge to more than 310 feet a few miles east. Over millions of years, the river has carved into these highlands creating high bluffs along the river's eastern shore. The highlands are further dissected by ravines and steepheads, creating distinctive dendritic topographic patterns; the land is forested with deciduous oak, beech, maple, hickory, ash, and other tree species more typical of the southern Appalachian Mountains than other parts of Florida. These forests have an enduring history, extending back into geologic time and have served as a refugium for species during the Ice Ages.

One River, Two Worlds
 The Apalachicola River basin drains a watershed of approximately 20,000 square miles in Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. The river and its surrounding natural habitats in Florida are one of the top rare species biodiversity hotspots in the United States, ranking sixth in an analysis by the conservation organization NatureServe.
 Habitats along the 107-mile-long river are strikingly different between the upper and lower reaches of the river. An ancient coastal shoreline, 78 miles upstream from the mouth just north of the community of Bristol, serves as a natural divide between the upper and lower reaches.



Alabama spiny-pod (*Matelea alabamensis*)
 Fringed campion (*Silene polypetalata*)



Two ancient species of conifers, Florida torreya (*Torreya taxifolia*) and Florida yew (*Taxus floridana*), are two relicts that found refuge in the Apalachicola ravines and today are restricted to this small area. (The range of torreya extending a short additional distance into adjacent Georgia.)



Florida torreya (*Torreya taxifolia*)



Slope forest, Torreya State Park

KEY ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

Natural Communities	
Slope forest	
Upland glade	
Plants	
<i>Conradina glabra</i>	Apalachicola rosemary
<i>Liatris gholsonii</i>	Gholson's blazing star
<i>Magnolia ashei</i>	Ashe's magnolia
<i>Silene polypetalata</i>	fringed campion
<i>Torreya taxifolia</i>	Florida torreya
Animals	
<i>Amblyma neisleri</i>	fat threeridge
<i>Cambarus pyronotus</i>	fire-back crayfish
<i>Desmognathus apalachicola</i>	Apalachicola dusky salamander
<i>Harniata subangulata</i>	shiny-rayed pocketbook
<i>Medionidus penicillatus</i>	gulf moccasinshell

Seepage stream (Sweetwater Creek)



Florida black bear cub (*Ursus americanus floridanus*)



Yellow pitcherplant (*Sarracenia flava*)



Whitebirds-in-a-nest (*Macbridea alba*)



Red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*)



Wet flatwoods, Apalachicola National Forest



Large-leaved grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia grandifolia*)



Cypress in the Apalachicola River floodplain



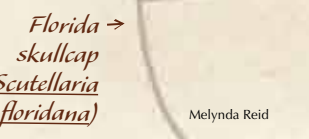
Spiderlily (*Hymenocallis* sp.)

KEY ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

Natural Communities	
Floodplain swamp	
Mesic flatwoods	
Wet prairie	
Plants	
<i>Aster spinulosus</i>	Pine-woods aster
<i>Euphorbia telephoides</i>	Telephus spurge
<i>Harperocallis flava</i>	Harpers' beauty
<i>Lythrum curtisii</i>	Curtiss' loosestrife
<i>Xyris isoetifolia</i>	Quillwort yellow-eyed grass
Animals	
<i>Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi</i>	Gulf sturgeon
<i>Ambystoma cingulatum</i>	Frosted flatwoods salamander
<i>Picoides borealis</i>	Red-cockaded woodpecker
<i>Ursus americanus floridanus</i>	Florida black bear

Apalachicola River Lower Basin

South of the bluffs and ravines, the highlands are left behind and lands in the basin range in elevation from sea level to less than 100 feet. Vast cypress/tupelo swamps line lowlands along the river, and higher elevations support an extensive mix of pine flatwoods, wet prairies, and cypress stringers. This area harbors North America's greatest concentration of carnivorous plant species and the largest stand of tupelo trees (*Nyssa aquatica*) in the world. Not surprisingly, the lower Apalachicola region is also a haven for wildlife. The largest known populations of federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) and Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*), a state-threatened species, occur here. This region supports more than 150 rare plants and animals, of which 15 are listed as federally threatened or endangered. Fortunately, this remarkable landscape is well conserved. The Apalachicola National Forest, Tate's Hell State Forest, Apalachicola Wildlife and Environmental Area, and Apalachicola River Water Management Area together compose more than 850,000 acres of public lands open to all.



Florida skullcap (*Scutellaria floridana*)

