

November 9, 2007

Mr. Marc Bruner
Chief Administrative Officer
Palm Beach County Solid Waste Authority
7501 North Jog Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33412
via email to mcbruner@swa.org

Re: Proposal for Sacred Ibis eradication

Dear Mr. Bruner:

Audubon of Florida would like to voice our support for your request to use lethal take on exotic Sacred Ibises on landfill property. Recent research has revealed this invasive exotic has been increasing in southeast Florida, and currently forages extensively in landfills. We have great concern that this species, where it has become an established exotic in France, has caused extensive harm to native wading bird populations in that country by preying on chicks and eggs. While this behavior has not yet been documented in Florida, we fear our wading bird resources are too extensive and too precious to risk. Similarly, the opportunity to eradicate this potentially devastating invasive exotic species before it becomes more widespread is too significant to ignore.

For these reasons, we support the Palm Beach County Solid Waste Authority's request for permission to employ lethal take by trained agents to eradicate Sacred Ibis occurring on landfill properties. However, we are very concerned that because of the very real similarities between Sacred Ibis and federally endangered Wood Storks, control agents must be thoroughly trained by qualified FWC or USFWS personnel, rather than the standard USDA training provided to most nuisance wildlife control agents. Similarly, because of the ibis' habit of foraging within flocks of Wood Storks, a clear protocol must be established to ensure there will be no possibility of firing on ibis in flocks of storks, resulting in inadvertent take of this federally listed species.

With guarantees of these precautions, we can support the necessary eradication of this exotic species. We appreciate your leadership on meeting this challenge before the species becomes established. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Julie Wraithmell
Wildlife Policy Coordinator
Audubon of Florida

cc: Scott Hardin, FWC, via email to scott.hardin@myfwc.com
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