

FLORIDA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS  
GUIDELINES FOR SAFE DATES FOR SELECTED BREEDING CODES

BBA Newsletter Number 6, May 1988 and subsequent updates.

Individuals of several species of birds breed in Florida as other individuals of the same species are still migrating through or out of the state. Hence, the presence of one of these species in suitable habitat would not necessarily indicate breeding. Thus, the use of some criteria codes outside of specified ("safe") dates would not be appropriate. The "safe dates" listed for species in this list refer only to the following breeding categories and codes:

**Possible:**

- (SH) Suitable Habitat
- (SM) Singing Male

**Probable:**

- (S) Seven or more territorial males (Blockbusting use only).
- (P) Pair
- (T) Bird or pair on territory or a singing male present on more than one date a week or more later.

**Confirmed:**

- (SE) Seven or more territorial males observed on at least two days, a week or more apart.

All other breeding criteria codes list positive evidence of breeding; hence their use is not restricted by "safe" dates. For example, if you see a Northern Parula at a nest (ON) in April that is incontrovertible evidence for breeding even though the "safe" date for codes SH or SM don't occur until May 15 and later.

Colonially nesting species are not listed here because we accept only confirmed evidence found at the nest colony for the species. Species marked with an asterisk on the field data card require full documentation anyway, thus are not listed here.

Breeding codes that are inherently inappropriate (e.g. SM for a non-singing species, or FS for species (ducks, etc.) that do not carry food to their young) are not specifically discussed below.

**Pied-billed Grebe 1 May – 1 September**

- P - Caution, sexes alike (but female often smaller than male.) Behavior clues essential.
- DD - Distraction display rarely observed.
- FS - Adults rarely seen carrying food

**American Bittern 1 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes alike,  
DD - Distraction display rarely observed  
FS - Adults rarely seen carrying food.

**Least Bittern 1 May - 1 Sep**

CD - Distraction display rarely observed.  
FS - Adults rarely seen carrying food.

**Green Heron 1 May - 1 Sep**

CD - Distraction display rarely observed.  
FS - Adults rarely seen carrying food.

**Black Vulture 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

Under Possible, no codes are to be used.  
Under Probable, S and P are unacceptable.  
Under Confirmed, SE is not suitable

**Turkey Vulture 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

Under Possible, no codes are to be used.  
Under Probable, S and P are unacceptable.  
Under Confirmed, SE is not suitable

**Fulvous Whistling-Duck 1 May - 1 Sep**

P - Caution, birds may be paired at anytime of year. Use safe dates.  
C - Caution, courtship display by migrants. Use safe dates only.

**Canada Goose 1 Apr – 31 Jul**

**Wood Duck 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, birds may be paired at any time. Use safe dates.  
C - Courtship may occur any season, use safe dates.  
N - Does not modify nest cavity or carry nest material.

**Mottled Duck 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar, may be paired year round. Use safe dates.  
C- Courtship may occur any season. Use safe dates.

**Mallard 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, may be paired year round. Use safe dates.  
C – Courtship may occur any season.

**Blue-winged Teal 1 Mar – June 30**

**Osprey North Florida 1 Apr - 1 Aug, South Florida year round**

FS - Do not use. Adults also carry food for their own consumption.

**Swallow-tail Kite 1 Apr – 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

FS - Do not use, adults also carry food for their own consumption.

**Snail Kite 1 Dec - 1 Jul**

FS - Do not use, adults carry food for their own consumption.

**Mississippi Kite 1 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

FS - Do not use, adults also carry food for their own consumption.

**Bald Eagle 1 Nov - 1 Jun**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

FS - Do not use, adults also carry food for their own consumption.

**Cooper's Hawk 1 May - 1 Aug**

FS - Do not use, adults also carry food for own consumption.

**Red-shouldered Hawk North Florida 15 Apr – 1 Jul, South Florida 1 Jan – 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

FS - Do not use, adults also carry food for their own consumption.

**Broad-winged Hawk 1 May - 1 Jul**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

FS - Do not use, adults also carry food for their own consumption.

[Only breeds Regions 1-5](#)

**Short-tailed Hawk 1 Mar - 1 Jul**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

FS - Do not use, adults also carry food for their own consumption.

**Red-tailed Hawk 1 Apr - 1 Jul**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

FS - Do not use, adults also carry food for their own consumption.

**Crested Caracara 1 Dec - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

FS - Do not use, adults also carry food for their own consumption.

[Only breeds Regions 5-9](#)

**American Kestrel 1 May - 1 Aug**

N - inappropriate

FS - inappropriate, adults carry food for their own consumption.

**Wild Turkey 1 Mar - 1 Jul**

**Northern Bobwhite 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Black Rail 1 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Clapper Rail 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**King Rail 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Purple Gallinule 1 May - 1 Sep**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Common Moorhen 1 May - 1 Sep**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**American Coot 1 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Limpkin 1 Apr - 1 Jul**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Sandhill Crane 1 Feb - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Snowy Plover 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Wilson's Plover 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Killdeer 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**American Oystercatcher 1 Apr - 1 Jul**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Black-necked Stilt 1 Apr - 1 Sep**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Willet 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**American Woodcock 1 Apr - 1 Jul**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**White-crowned Pigeon 1 Mar - 1 Jul**

SH - Caution, to date, no nests have ever been recorded on islands connected by the overseas highway (U.S. 1), only on out-islands in mangroves.

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Ringed Turtle Dove 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

**White-winged Dove 1 Mar - Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Mourning Dove 1 Feb - 1 Sep**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Common Ground-Dove 1 Mar - 1 Sep**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Budgerigar 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

**Rose-ringed Parakeet 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

**Monk Parakeet 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

(Nests in colonies only.)

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Black hooded Parakeet 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Red-masked Parakeet 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

**Dusky-headed Parakeet 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

**Green-cheeked. Parakeet 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

**Chestnut-fronted Macaw 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

**Canary-winged Parakeet 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**White-fronted Parrot 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Red-crowned Parrot 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Red-lored Parrot 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Orange-winged Parrot 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Yellow-headed Parrot 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Yellow-naped Parrot 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Yellow-crowned. Parrot 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo 15 May -15 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Mangrove Cuckoo 15 Apr - 15 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Smooth-billed Ani 1 Apr - 15 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Barn-Owl Year-round**

Caution, some northern Barn-Owls winter in Florida.

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Eastern Screech-Owl 1 Mar - 1 Jul**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Great Horned Owl 1 Oct - 1 Jul**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Burrowing Owl 1 Mar - 1 Jul**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Barred Owl -North Florida 1 Nov – 1 Aug, South Florida year round**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Common Nighthawk 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Antillean Nighthawk 15 Apr - 15 Aug**

**Chuck-will's-widow 15 Mar - 1 Aug**

**Chimney Swift 1 May - 1 Aug**  
P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird 15 May - 1 Aug**

**Belted Kingfisher 1 May - 1 Jul**  
Important to locate nest holes.

**Red-headed Woodpecker 1 May - 1 Aug**  
P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Downy Woodpecker 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Hairy Woodpecker 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Red-cockaded Woodpecker 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Northern Flicker 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Pileated Woodpecker 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

**Eastern Wood-Pewee 1 May - 1 Aug**  
P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Acadian Flycatcher 1 May - 1 Aug**  
P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Great Crested Flycatcher 1 Apr - 1 Aug**  
P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Eastern Kingbird 1 May - 1 Aug**  
P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Gray Kingbird 1 May - 1 Aug**  
P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Purple Martin 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow 1 May - 1 Aug**  
P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Barn Swallow 1 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**White-eyed Vireo 1 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Yellow-throated Vireo 15 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Red-eyed Vireo 15 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Back-whiskered Vireo 1 May - 1 Aug**

Note: Many warblers are still migrating north in April and May, hence use care before listing these.

**Blue Jay 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Florida Scrub-Jay 1 Mar - 1 Jul**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**American Crow 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Fish Crow 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Carolina Chickadee 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Tufted Titmouse 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**White-breasted Nuthatch 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

**Brown-headed Nuthatch 15 Feb - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Red-whiskered Bulbul 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Carolina Wren 1 Mar - 15 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Marsh Wren 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1 May - 15 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Eastern Bluebird 1 Mar - 15 Jul**

**Wood Thrush 1 May - 1 Aug**

**American Robin 1 May - 1 Aug**

**Gray Catbird 15 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Northern Mockingbird 1 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Brown Thrasher 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Loggerhead Shrike 1 Mar - 15 Jul**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**European Starling 15 Mar - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Common Myna 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Created Myna 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Hill Myna 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Northern Parula 15 May - 1 Aug**

**Yellow Warbler 1 May - 15 Aug**

Breeds in S. Dade and Monroe counties, only.

**Yellow-throated Warbler 15 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Pine Warbler 15 May - 1 Aug**

**Prairie Warbler 15 May - 1 Aug**

**American Redstart 15 May - 1 Aug**

**Prothonotary Warbler 15 May - 1 Aug**

**Worm-eating Warbler 15 May - 1 Aug**

**Swainson's Warbler 1 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Louisiana Waterthrush 1 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Kentucky Warbler 15 May - 1 Aug**

**Common Yellowthroat 15 May - 1 Aug**

**Hooded Warbler 1 May - 1 Aug**

**Yellow-breasted Chat 1 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Summer Tanager 1 May - 1 Aug**

**Northern Cardinal 1 May - 15 Aug**

**Blue Grosbeak 1 May - 1 Aug**

**Indigo Bunting 1 May - 1 Aug**

**Painted Bunting 1 May - 1 Aug**

**Eastern Towhee 15 Apr - 15 Aug**

**Bachman's Sparrow 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Field Sparrow 1 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Grasshopper Sparrow 1 May - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Seaside Sparrow 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Red-winged Blackbird 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Eastern Meadowlark 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**Common Grackle 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

**Boat-tailed Grackle 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

(Oct - Dec breeding-document by nest, eggs, or young.)

**Brown-headed Cowbird 1 May - 1 Aug**

**Orchard Oriole 1 May - 1 Aug**

**Spot-breasted Oriole 1 Apr - 1 Aug**

P - Caution, sexes similar.

**House Sparrow 1 Apr - 1 Sep**

(Winter breeding - document by nest, eggs, or young)