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Kale, H. W., II, B. Pranty, B. M. Stith, and C. W. Biggs. 1992. The atlas of the breeding birds of Florida. Final Report. Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Florida.

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Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*

When not on the nest Killdeers are conspicuous and noisy, hence, the specific name, *vociferus*. Like the Wilson's Plover, the broken-wing distraction display is highly developed in Killdeers and readily confirms breeding. The Killdeer breeds from Newfoundland, the south rim of Hudson Bay, and the southern Yukon and Northwest Territories south to central Mexico and the Gulf coast.

Habitat. The Killdeer inhabits both brackish and freshwater habitats and is perfectly at home in upland situations far from water. It prefers open areas with short or sparse vegetation, such as pastures, golf courses, airports, and extensive lawns. Killdeers will also nest on gravel parking lots and on rooftops (Fisk 1978).

Food of the Killdeer consists of beetles and other insects and invertebrates, including arachnids, worms, snails, and crustaceans (Howell 1932).



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The nest of the Killdeer is a shallow scrape, usually in bare sand or gravel, but occasionally among sparse vegetation. Four buffy eggs with black, brown, and gray markings are laid. The cryptic color of the eggs, adults and chicks enables them to avoid detection by predators. Incubation is performed by both sexes and takes 24-28 days. The young are precocial and leave the nest soon after hatching. They are usually accompanied by the parents until fledging at about 25 days (Ehrlich et al. 1988). Rooftop nesting can present a problem to Killdeer chicks because they must leave the roof to obtain food on the ground. Apparently they are successful at negotiating this, however, because Killdeers return to the same rooftop year after year (H. Kale, pers. commur

Seasonal Occurrence. Most breeding occurs March through July. Fall migrants swell the Florida population Ju through November, and spring migration occurs primarily in March and April.

Status. The Killdeer is the most common and widely distributed shorebird in Florida. The absence of the specie from most of mainland Monroe County is to be expected, as mangroves and saw grass are not preferred breed habitats. Causes of the patchy distribution in the Panhandle are less obvious, although some of the blank spots on the map may be due to the presence of extensively forested areas.

Robert W. Loftin

Sponsored by John H. Bygrave

Killdeer

