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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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Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus*

The Red-shouldered Hawk is one of the most beautiful and distinctively marked hawks in North America. Adults are barred with rusty-red on the underparts and have bright rufous shoulders. Their underparts are dark brown, and the tail is black with 4 or 5 narrow white bands. When in flight, pale crescents in the wings are visible from below. They breed from northern California south to Baja, in the Midwestern United States east to New Brunswick; and south to the Florida Keys and Texas.

Habitat. In Florida, Red-Shouldered Hawks nest in a wide variety of woodland habitats, but they are particularly identified with cypress swamps and river bottomlands. It most frequently still-hunts from a relatively low, inconspicuous perch but may also forage from a low, coursing flight (Palmer 1988; Johnsgard 1990). Its diet is characterized by sluggish, easily captured animals, such as toads, frogs, snakes, rodents, and small birds and their nestlings (Kimmel and Frederickson 1981, Palmer 1988, Kale and Maehr 1990).

Typical nest sites are located in large mature trees with good canopy cover. A bulky well-built nest is usually placed a little more than halfway up the tree in a major fork (Kimmel and Frederickson 1981, Bednarz and Dinsmore 1982, Palmer 1988). Usually two whitish eggs marked with brown are laid and incubated for approximately 33 days. The young birds fledge at 40 to 45 days of age (Palmer 1988; Johnsgard 1990).

Seasonal Occurrence. In Florida, Red-shouldered Hawks breed from January through May (Kale and Maehr 1990), or through June (B. Millsap, pers. commun.). Most birds reside in Florida, but the states' population is augmented in September and October by fall migrants from northern states.

Status. Two of the 5 subspecies of the Red-shouldered Hawk breed in Florida: *B. l. alleni* of the Panhandle and peninsula south to Lake Okeechobee, and the smaller and paler *B. l. extimus* of south Florida and the Keys.

The Red-shouldered Hawk is probably the most numerous and widely distributed breeding hawk in Florida. Pairs are quite noticeable as they circle above their territories, incessantly crying "kee-yar kee-yar," and intermittently performing undulating sky-dances. Because of its relative abundance throughout Florida, the Red-shouldered Hawk was located in more than 85% of the state's quadrangles and was confirmed in more quadrangles than any other raptor.

Brian R. Toland

Sponsored by Philip and Sarah Jane Francoeur



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Red-shouldered Hawk

