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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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Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*

This familiar Florida resident breeds from southern Canada and the northern United States, south to Mexico and the Gulf coast, the Bahamas, and the Greater Antilles, Costa Rica, and Panama (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

Habitat. Originally a bird of open forests, Mourning Doves have become abundant in areas where these woodlands have been replaced by secondary growth, pastures, cultivated fields, and suburban areas. Its food consists primarily of the seeds of weeds, grasses, and grains, with animal matter accounting for about 1% of its diet (Howell 1932). In towns and cities it is frequently the most common visitor to bird feeders.

Mourning Doves usually nest on horizontal limbs in trees or shrubs, although they will use building ledges, rain gutters, and hanging flower pots. Occasionally, they nest on the ground. The nest is a very loose collection of twigs and is lined with grass, pine needles, or Spanish moss. Two white eggs, with an incubation period of 14 to 16 days (Goodwin 1983), are laid. Both adults feed the nestlings a "milk" produced in the crop. As the young mature this is mixed with seeds and grain. Young birds fledge at 14 to 16 days of age.

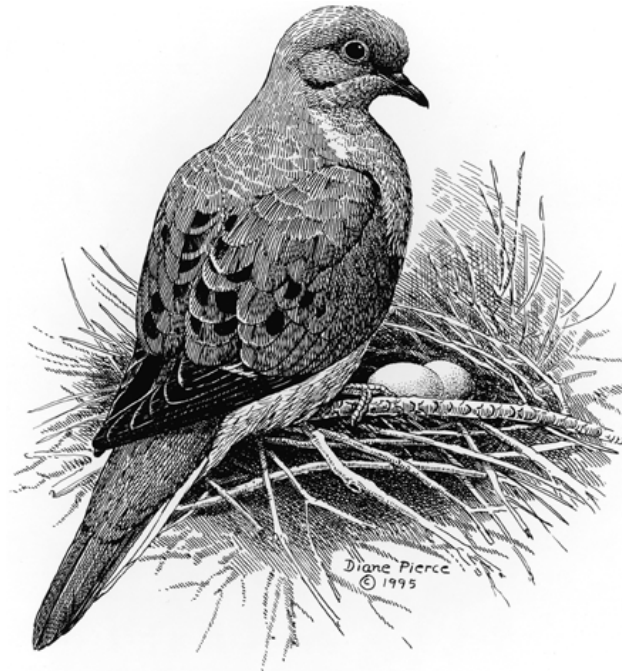


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Seasonal Occurrence. Most pairs of Mourning Doves raise several broods during the nesting season, and nests have been found in every month of the year in Florida. The Florida population shows a marked increase during the winter months, the result of an influx of northern birds.

Status. The Mourning Dove is an abundant permanent resident in Florida. It is a common breeding species, rare to absent only in the Everglades and the extreme southwestern mainland. Its absence from a few isolated quadrangles can only be explained by inadequate coverage. It is one of the few land birds that has bred on the Dry Tortugas. Two breeding subspecies occur in Florida: *Z. m. macroura* in the Keys and *Z. m. carolinensis* throughout the Panhandle and peninsula. In recent years the arrival of the more aggressive White-winged Dove and Eurasian Collared-Dove has put competitive pressure on the Mourning Dove population in southeast Florida and the Keys.

Mourning Doves are easy to locate because of their abundance, proximity to human habitation, and habit of choosing conspicuous perches, such as telephone lines.

R. David Goodwin

Sponsored by Celia V. Scudder

Mourning Dove

