

This resource is based on the following source:

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.

This resource can be cited as:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. 2003, January 6. Florida's breeding bird atlas: A collaborative study of Florida's birdlife. <http://www.myfwc.com/bba/> (Date accessed mm/dd/yyyy).

American Goldfinch *Carduelis tristis*

The American Goldfinch is an irregular yet relatively common wintering bird throughout most of Florida. Because most of them have departed the state by early April, we rarely see them in their brilliant summer plumage.

Habitat. Goldfinches inhabit open woodlands and weedy fields, where they feed primarily on seeds, young flowering buds, berries and occasionally, insects.

Nests are placed in the fork of an upright branch in small trees and are constructed of tightly woven plant materials, spider silks, and thistle down. Two to 7 bluish-white eggs are incubated for 10 to 12 days, and young fledge approximately 12 days after hatching (Middleton 1993).

Seasonal Occurrence.

Status. Stevenson and Anderson (1994) reviewed summer records of the species, all in extreme north Florida, none of which confirmed breeding in the state. Because the Goldfinch nests quite late in the season usually not until July, August, or September its presence in Florida in mid-summer is not necessarily an indication of breeding.

During the Atlas period, a pair of Goldfinches was seen several times by R. L. Crawford in Block 1 of the Monticello quadrangle in Jefferson County, during May and June 1987. However, they were not seen after 20 June. Another pair in the adjacent Block 4 of the Lake Miccosukee quadrangle was also present in June 1987. Other Goldfinches were seen at feeders in Tallahassee (1988), northeast of Tallahassee (1986), and in Apalachicola (1989) (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

Presumably, the Tallahassee record is the "possible" shown in Leon County on the Atlas map. The other sighting were not reported to the Atlas project, although it may be debated whether any sightings less than the confirm category should be reported for a species that has never been known to breed in the state. If the American Goldfinch is expanding its breeding range southward, then these summer sighting in north Florida could represent early pioneers.

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American Goldfinch

