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## Black-hooded Parakeet     *Nandayus nenday*

This South American parakeet is probably the next exotic species that will become widely established in Florida. Called the Nanday Parakeet by Sibley and Monroe (1990) and the Nanday Conure in the pet trade, the Black-hooded Parakeet is native to Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina (Forshaw 1989). First reported in Florida Brevard County in 1973 (Cruickshank 1980), it now occurs (or has occurred) in at least 14 counties in the state (Loftin et al. 1991, BBA data).

Prior to the Atlas project the only suspected breeding record occurred in Polk County in 1982 (C. Geanangel and B. Cooper in Atherton and Atherton 1983). Since 1986, however, breeding has been confirmed in Bay, St. John, Pinellas, and Dade counties, with breeding suspected in other counties.

With their dark hood, red thighs, and blue breast patch, Black-hooded Parakeets are easy to identify, but it is possible that many birds went undetected in urban and suburban habitats. However, unlike most other exotics in Florida, Black-hooded Parakeets have been seen in native pinelands far from developed areas (M. Wheeler, per commun.; B. Pranty, pers. obs.).

Few observations have been made of the feeding habits of Black-hooded Parakeets in Florida, but they have been seen feeding on palm fruits and pine seeds, foods also taken in their native range. Like most other parrots, 2 to 3 white eggs are laid in a cavity. Incubation lasts 21 to 23 days, and the young fledge at about 56 days of age (Forshaw 1989).

Black-hooded Parakeets appear to be already established in Pinellas County. A flock of approximately 70 birds was seen in Lassing Park in St. Petersburg in 1990 (S. Bogert and M. Turner in Cox 1991c), and numbers on recent St. Petersburg Christmas Bird Counts have exceeded 100 birds in 1992, 1994, and 1996. There is no reason to doubt that the species could become established in many other counties in Florida as well.

Bill Pranty

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