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Blue Grosbeak *Guiraca caerulea*

The Blue Grosbeak, a denizen of woodland edges, fence rows, and overgrown fields, breeds in the lower two-thirds of the United States, south to Costa Rica. It winters from northern Mexico south into Central America and Cuba.

In Florida the Blue Grosbeak is a common summer resident in north and central Florida and is a casual winter resident in the state (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

Habitat. The Blue Grosbeak prefers overgrown fields, open woodlands, and brushy areas. Abandoned groves in central Florida in recent years have probably provided additional habitat for this species as well as for Indigo Buntings (Taylor et al. 1989).

The diet of the Blue Grosbeak includes seeds, fruits, and invertebrates.

Nests are usually placed in a low shrub or tangle of vines or briars, and they are constructed of coarse and fine grass blades, rootlets, pieces of snake skin or clear plastic, and lined with finer grasses and mammal hairs. Three or 4 pale bluish eggs are incubated for 11 to 13 days, and nestlings fledge in about 10 days (Ehrlich et al. 1988).



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Seasonal Occurrence. Migration peaks in mid-April and again in mid-October.

Status. The Blue Grosbeak is another species that is expanding its range southward down the Florida peninsula. Taylor et al. (1989) reviewed this process from the early years of this century when few records existed, all but one in north Florida, through the 1970s and 1980s when numerous birds appeared throughout central Florida south into Polk County with one nesting in Palm Beach County (Genung 1976). The Atlas map for the Blue Grosbeak shows continued southward movement into Hernando, Pasco, Hillsborough, Sarasota, DeSoto, Highlands, and Okeechobee counties. It now occurs in almost every quadrangle in north Florida, extending westward through the Panhandle.

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Blue Grosbeak

