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Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

The Black Vulture, with its stocky build and conspicuous white areas in the wing, is easily distinguished from the Turkey Vulture. A permanent Florida resident, it resides and breeds in the desert southwest, east and north to New Jersey, and south to Chile and Argentina.

Habitat. Black Vultures nest on the ground in wooded habitats, in caves or rock crevices, in abandoned buildings, or in saw palmetto thickets in open pinewoods. No nest is constructed. The eggs are laid directly on the bare ground, in a hollow stump or fallen log, or, in hilly country, on a rocky ledge. Incubation requires 37 to 48 days, and the young fledge at 80 to 94 days (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

The Black Vulture's diet consists chiefly of carrion found along roads, in open countryside, and at landfills. Occasionally, it will take live young mammals and birds and, more rarely, piglets or calves as they are being born.

Seasonal Occurrence. This bird is an early nester, and nests have been found from January through August (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). Its migration propensity and patterns in Florida are imperfectly understood.

Status. The Black Vulture is a common resident throughout Florida, except in the Keys, where it is rare. A vulture observed in an Atlas block could be breeding in an adjacent block or quadrangle, hence, the "suitable habitat" (SH) and "pair" (P) breeding codes were not acceptable. For this reason, the Atlas map greatly underrepresents the true breeding distribution of the Black (and Turkey) Vulture, except in the Keys and Everglades, where little breeding habitat for vultures exists. If nothing else, the map illustrates the difficulty in finding vulture nests, recently fledged young, or observing territorial or courtship behavior.

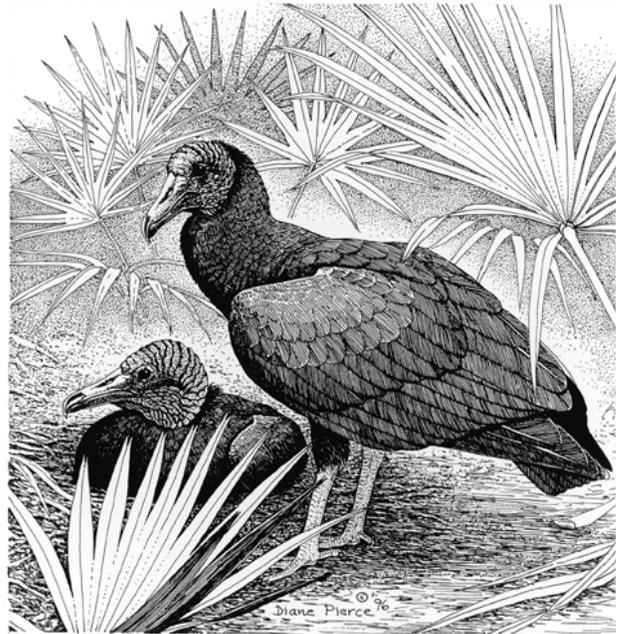


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Black Vulture

