

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).

---

## Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*

Black-necked Stilts breed in the interior from Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Kansas; on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts south through most of Middle America and South America; and also in the West Indies.

**Habitat.** The breeding of the Black-necked Stilt in Florida has been studied at McKay Bay (Dinsmore 1977). Seven out of 10 nests were on platforms of dried vegetation, on tiny islands in the water, or well hidden in dense clumps of *Paspalum*. The nests were often lined with stones, shells, and bits of charred wood. One nest was on land near cattails, and 2 nests were on the ground away from the water. Most nests had 4 eggs, while one had 6. The eggs are pale brownish-buff, variable but usually marked with brownish-black splotches that vary in size. The incubation period is 25 days. Black-necked Stilt chicks leave the nest soon after hatching and are capable of flight in 28 to 32 days (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

**Seasonal Occurrence.** Statewide spring migration dates are between 12 February and 9 June. Fall migration occurs between August and November. Egg dates are 14 April to 26 June; the first week of June was the peak time for hatching.

**Status.** A nesting pair of Black-necked Stilts is hard to overlook. They are fearless in defense of the nest, circling over intruders and diving at them while vocalizing loudly. They also give a distraction display, although it is not as highly developed as in many other birds. Because these habits make the species easy to locate, the Atlas project probably recorded nearly all nesting pairs in the state.

The Black-necked Stilt is a rare and irregular breeder in Duval County. St. Johns County is the northernmost area on the Atlantic coast where the species breeds regularly.

Like many other wetland species, the Black-necked Stilt flourishes in the upper St. Johns River marshes, Cape Canaveral, Tampa Bay, Charlotte Harbor, the phosphate mines of Polk and Hillsborough counties, and the Water Conservation Areas of western Palm Beach County. It also does well on the southeastern coast of the state and the Keys. A confirmed nesting in the highly saline environment of the Marquesas Keys off Key West was unexpected.

Robert W. Loftin

Sponsored by Catherine T. Leavitt

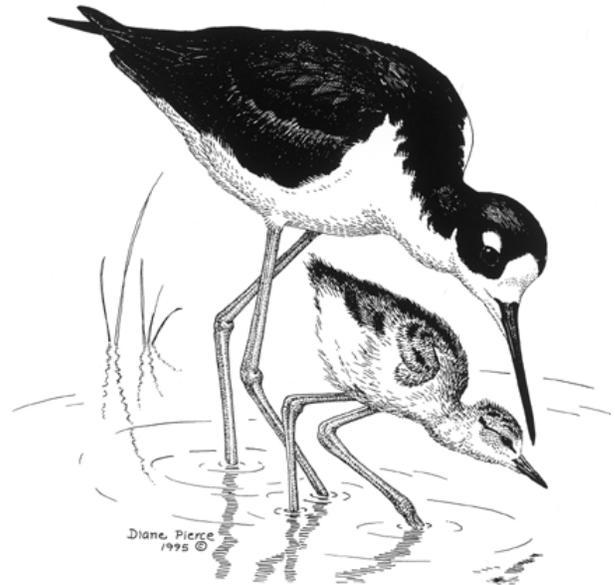


Illustration © 1995 Diane Pierce, All Rights Reserved.

# Black-necked Stilt

