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 a
Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Florida.

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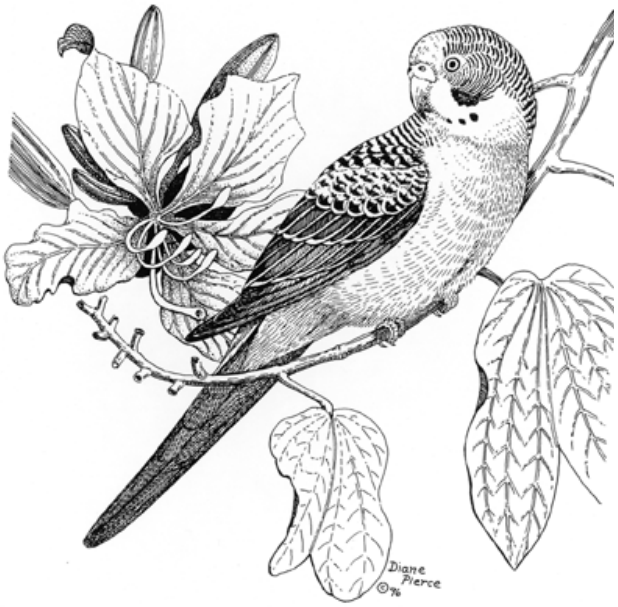
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. 2003, January 6. Florida's breeding bird atlas: A collaborative study of Florida's birdlife. http://www.myfwc.com/bba/ (Date accessed mm/dd/yyyy).

Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*

Native to Australia, the Budgerigar has been present in the St. Petersburg area since at least 1940 (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). By the mid-1960s, it was established in much of Pinellas County. Originally the population was comprised of escaped birds, but later augmented by deliberate introductions the birds were considered a tourist attraction (Owre 1973)! Budgerigars eventually became established along the Gulf coast from southern Hernando County to Sarasota County with the largest numbers in Pasco and Pinellas counties. As of 1995-96, Budgerigars appear to be virtually extirpated from Pinellas, Manatee, and Sarasota counties, with perhaps 100 birds each in southwest Hernando and northwest Pasco counties (B. Pranty, pers. obs.).



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During the 6 years of the Atlas project, Budgerigars were found also in Okaloosa and Polk counties and in Tallahassee, Jacksonville, Orlando, and Dade City. These birds were undoubtedly released or escaped locally, and did not become established. Sites previously mentioned as having breeding populations include Gainesville, Winter Park, Fort Pierce, Port Charlotte, Port St. Lucie, Fort Myers, Fort Lauderdale, Naples, West Palm Beach, and Miami (Wenner and Hirth 1984, Stevenson and Anderson 1994), but apparently none of these populations remain.

Formerly, Budgerigars were much more numerous and had a larger range along the Gulf Coast, but they suffer large-scale reductions in the early 1980s, apparently from the severe freezes that Florida experienced during tl period. Competition with European Starlings over nesting sites may also have been a factor (D. Goodwin, pers. commun.), as well as disease or epidemic (W. Biggs, pers. commun.)

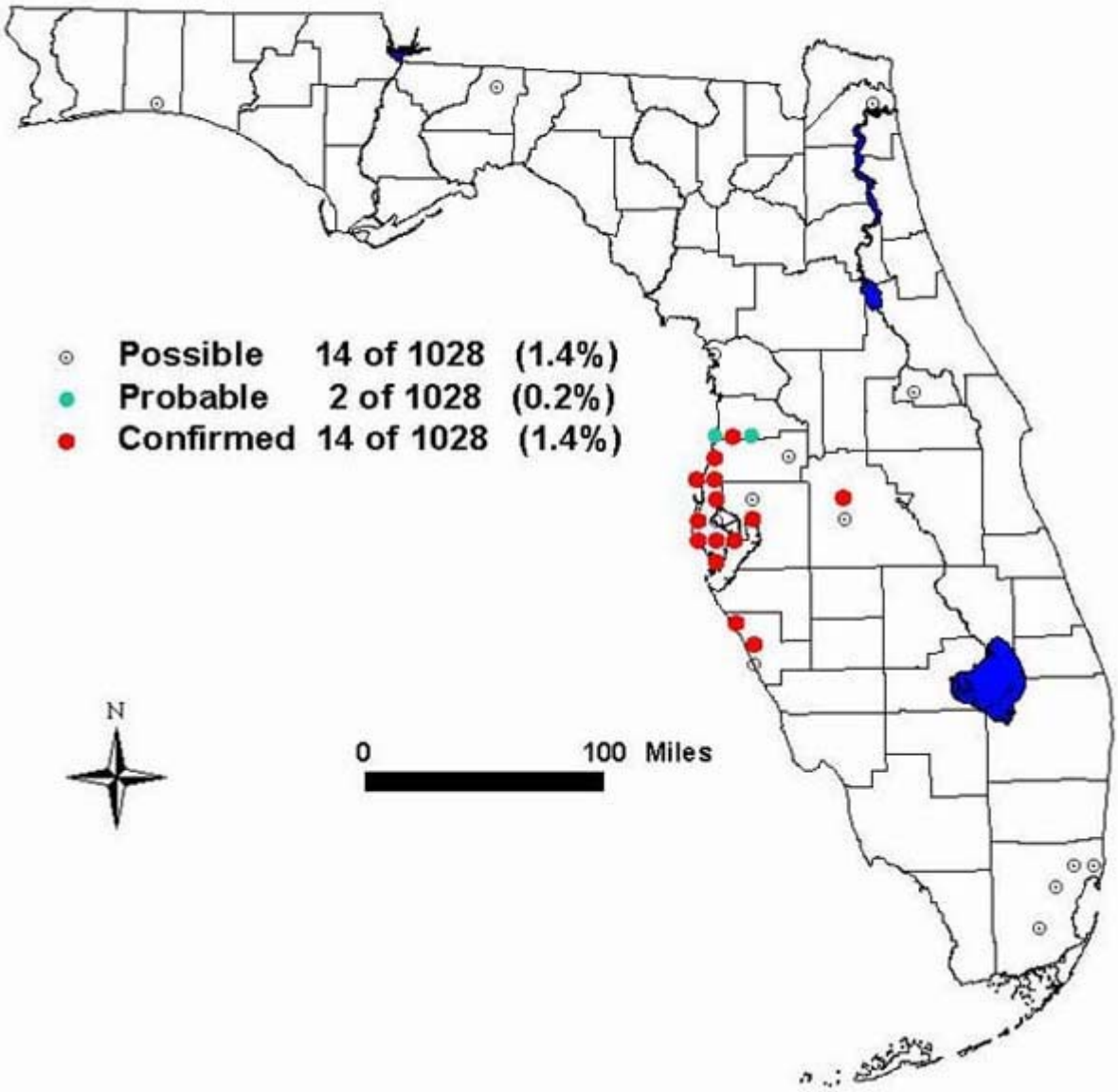
Budgerigar feeding habits in Florida are not well known, but they have been observed feeding on the seeds of grasses (Wenner and Hirth 1984), in addition to the bird seed put out for them by local residents.

In their study of Budgerigars in southwestern Pasco County in 1978, Wenner and Hirth (1984) determined that most birds occur in subdivisions that provide an abundance of bird feeders and nesting boxes, and the birds generally avoid undeveloped habitats. Budgerigars readily exploit nesting boxes built specifically for them, but they can locate their own nesting sites. In Florida they have nested in pine cavities (Wenner and Hirth 1984), street lights, and cabbage palms. In their native land Budgerigars may breed year-round, and they may follow similar schedule in Florida, but Wenner and Hirth (1984) indicated that most nestlings fledge from May to October. Budgerigars lay 4 to 8 round white eggs that hatch in about 18 days, and the young fledge after a month or so (Martin 1980).

Budgerigars are sociable birds and congregate in large flocks. During the winter, they are often seen flocking w European Starlings. In 1978 Wenner and Hirth (1984) counted 6,000 to 8,000 Budgerigars in 1 roost in Pasco County. Comparable flocks have not been seen since the early 1980s, and the species may become extirpated from Florida within the next decade.

Bill Pranty

Budgerigar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