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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.

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Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*

The Broad-winged Hawk is a stocky, crow-sized raptor, easily recognized by its high-pitched whistling call and the 2 conspicuous white bands on its black tail. It breeds from the Midwestern United States and Canada south to Texas, the Gulf coast, and Florida.

Habitat. During the breeding season, the Broad-winged Hawk is a woodland bird, typically perching in or under the forest canopy and foraging along openings, edges, roadsides, and wetlands (Palmer 1988, Johnsgard 1990). Prey items most frequently captured include toads, frogs, snakes, small rodents, and small birds, especially nestlings and fledglings (Mosher and Matray 1974, Rosenfield et al. 1984).

The Broad-winged Hawk nests in deciduous, mixed, or coniferous woodlands ranging in size from a few acres to large expanses of contiguous forest (Rosenfield 1984, Palmer 1988). It commonly selects a relatively large deciduous tree for nesting, but pines are used on occasion. The nest is a poorly constructed shallow bowl of sticks and is usually placed in the first main crotch, about two-thirds the height of the nest tree (Palmer 1988). The nest tree is normally close to some type of wetland or other open foraging habitat (Matray 1974, Keran 1978). The female Broad-winged Hawk lays 2 or 3, sometimes 4, whitish eggs marked with brown, which are incubated for 28 to 32 days. The young fledge at 35 to 42 days of age (Palmer 1988, Johnsgard 1990).



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Seasonal Occurrence. In Florida Broad-winged Hawks breed from March through June (Kale and Maehr 1990 or April through June (B. Millsap, pers. commun.). Migrant Broad-winged Hawks are usually spotted in September, and spring dates range from late February through June (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

Status. In Florida, the Broad-winged Hawk is a rather uncommon breeder, occurring in the Panhandle and northern peninsula south to Levy County. It is conspicuously absent from the northeastern portion of the state.

The aerial displays of the Broad-winged Hawk are conspicuous and consist of mutual soaring, sky dancing, and occasionally aerial tumbling. However, because of the densely forested areas chosen by this bird when nesting, was difficult to confirm breeding. Less than 15% of the quadrangle records confirm breeding, among the lowest of all raptors.

Brian R. Toland

Broad-winged Hawk

