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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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Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula*

The Common Grackle, an abundant permanent resident throughout Florida, breeds in most areas of North America east of the Rocky Mountains and south of the tundra. It is an adaptable species and is found in many types of habitats. Grackles are gregarious, and during the winter months they often form large foraging flocks that number in the thousands.

Habitat. Although widespread, the Common Grackle prefers areas near fresh water and is less common in or near salt marshes. Cypress swamps support large numbers of nesting birds, as do pine forests, hammocks, and suburban areas. In the central part of the state, orange groves provide ideal nesting sites. Common Grackles usually nest in small colonies, but they may nest singly.

The nest of the Common Grackle may be built in trees at almost any height or in bushes or cattails within 61 cm (2 ft) of the ground or water. It will also use hollow trees, broken stubs, or old woodpecker holes and has been recorded nesting in the undersides of active Osprey nests (Bent 1958). The nest is made of coarse grasses, Spanish moss, pine needles, twigs, roots, and mud and is lined with fine grasses and feathers. The eggs, usually 4, are slightly glossy and vary in color from greenish-white to rusty brown, blotched or streaked with dark brown or purple. The eggs are incubated for 10 to 14 days, and the young fledge at 16 to 20 days of age. One brood is normal (Stevenson and Anderson 1994); however, second broods have been reported.

Their diet tends to be as varied as their breeding habitats. Grain composes the largest percentage of its diet, with insects, mollusks, anoles, and bird eggs and nestlings making up the remainder.

Seasonal Occurrence. Most Common Grackles that breed in Florida are thought to be nonmigratory, except those that reside in the Keys. Keys breeders leave in October and return by early March or late February (Ogden 1987). During the winter months, migrating Common Grackles from more northern parts of the species' range swell the numbers of this bird in Florida. Nesting occurs from March through July.

Status. Breeding was confirmed in more than 700 quadrangles throughout the state, except on the westernmost Keys.

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Common Grackle

