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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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Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*

This diminutive woodpecker resides and breeds from western and central Alaska east to Newfoundland and south to southern California and east to southern Florida (AOU 1983).

Habitat. The Downy Woodpecker flourishes in wooded habitats throughout the mainland of Florida and is found in pine flatwoods, sandhills, hammocks, mixed woods, cypress and hardwood swamps, and in urban and suburban habitats.

Approximately 75 to 85% of the diet of the Downy Woodpecker is insect in origin (Howell 1932, Martin et al. 1951), the balance is vegetable.

The Downy Woodpecker seldom accepts nest boxes, preferring to excavate a new hole yearly from 2 to 15 m (5 to 50 ft) high in a dead tree (Bent 1939). It takes from 13 to 20 days to excavate the cavity (Kilham 1983). Between 3 and 7 white eggs are laid, but most clutches contain 4 or 5 eggs. Incubation takes about 12 days, and the young fledge in 20 to 25 days. The adults continue to feed the young for up to 3 weeks after fledging (Kilham 1983).

Seasonal Occurrence. The Downy Woodpecker is a year-round resident of Florida, although fewer birds are present in the winter (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). Egg dates range from April through early May.

Status. The Downy Woodpecker is almost as widespread in Florida as the Red-bellied Woodpecker. The Red-bellied Woodpecker was recorded in 1,001 quads, while the Downy Woodpecker was listed in 889. However, the Red-bellied Woodpecker was confirmed in 323 more quads than the Downy (778 versus 455). This is largely a reflection of the relative abundance of the 2 species. The Downy Woodpecker takes some vegetable food, but on the whole it is much more insectivorous than the Red-bellied Woodpecker, which may partially explain the difference in abundance.

The Atlas map reveals that the Downy Woodpecker breeds almost everywhere in the state except in the agricultural areas southeast of Lake Okeechobee, the Everglades, and Water Conservation Areas of western Palm Beach and Broward counties. The solid band of confirmed quads stretching across northern Dade County corresponds to the Tamiami Trail across the Everglades where an abundance of Australian pine (*Casuarina sp.*) and other introduced trees line the highway providing nest sites, and where it is relatively easy for Atlas workers to gain access.

Across the remainder of the state, areas where the species is confirmed probably correspond more to human population centers, which received better Atlas coverage, than to any real difference in the status of the bird. The species is sedentary and probably breeds in almost every quad where it was listed as "possible" or "probable."

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Downy Woodpecker

