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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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Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*

The loud, resounding "wheep," "whit," and rolling "r-r-rurr" calls unmistakably announce the spring arrival of the Great Crested Flycatcher.

This bird breeds throughout the central and eastern United States, from southern Canada to south Texas and the Florida Keys. It winters from Mexico to northern South America and from central Florida to Cuba.

Habitat. The Great Crested Flycatcher is an aggressive Tyrant Flycatcher, nesting in a variety of woodland and suburban habitats. From exposed perches it searches for insects and vigorously defends its territory against intruders. Most of the Great Crested Flycatcher's diet consists of flying insects, such as beetles, flies, wasps, katydids, and dragonflies, although fruits of the elderberry, wild cherry, and blackberry are eaten by both adults and young.

The Great Crested Flycatcher builds its nest of grasses, leaves, pine needles, fur, and feathers in natural cavities and human-made structures, such as nest boxes, mail boxes, stovepipes, and rain gutters. Deep cavities are usually filled with leaf litter until the nest is just the right height from the cavity hole. A piece of snake skin or cellophane is often incorporated into the bulky nest. The female lays 3 to 6 (usually 5) brown-streaked eggs. The incubation period is 13 to 15 days (Taylor and Kershner 1991). Both sexes vigorously defend the nest (especially from woodpeckers, starlings, other flycatchers, and squirrels), remove fecal sacs, and care for the young. The nestling period is from 13 to 17 days, 13 and 14 days are the most common (Taylor and Kershner 1991). After fledging, the young and adults remain as a family group, staying in the nesting area for up to 3 weeks.

Seasonal Occurrence. In Florida, males begin to settle on their breeding territories in late March or early April. Egg laying takes place during April, May, or June. Great Crested Flycatchers are probably single-brooded (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). Fall migration is from mid-August to mid-October.

Status. The Great Crested Flycatcher is one of the most common breeders in Florida. It is less common in the agricultural area southeast of Lake Okeechobee and in the Florida Keys (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). The Great Crested Flycatcher's loud distinctive vocalizations, conspicuous behavior, and willingness to live close to human habitations make it easy to locate. These factors, coupled with the species' abundance, make it relative easy to confirm as a breeder.

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Sponsored by Hank T. Bowen



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Great Crested Flycatcher

