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## Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*

The Pied-billed Grebe is a common and widespread winter resident in Florida but is uncommon and local as a breeder. This diving bird breeds from Canada to southern Argentina and in the Greater and Lesser Antilles.

**Habitat.** Pied-billed Grebes can be found in virtually all inland and coastal waters. During the breeding season, Pied-billed Grebes select freshwater habitats, such as marshes, ponds, lakes, canals, and slow-moving streams and rivers. The bulky nest, built by both adults, is a floating platform of decaying vegetation, anchored to and hidden by emergent vegetation. Most clutches in Florida contain 5 to 7 bluish-white eggs (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), that are incubated for approximately 23 days. The age of the young at fledging is not known (Ehrlich et al. 1988). Pied-billed Grebes feed largely on insects, crayfish, and fish (Howell 1932). Like other grebes, they swallow hundreds of their own feathers, apparently to "cushion their intestines against the sharp fish bones (Ehrlich et al. 1988).



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**Seasonal Occurrence.** In Florida, Pied-billed Grebes can nest almost throughout the year but most commonly in spring and summer (Woolfenden 1992). Two broods per year frequently are raised (Ehrlich et al. 1988). In winter numbers increase greatly due to migrants from the northern United States and Canada.

**Status.** The Pied-billed Grebe breeds in all parts of the state, but as the Atlas map shows, breeding is strongly concentrated in the wetlands of the central peninsula. However, breeding is probably inadequately represented the Everglades, where Pied-billed Grebes breed commonly (P. Frederick, in litt.). Howell (1932) listed no breeding records west of the Apalachicola River, but Sprunt (1954) mapped a record near Pensacola, without giving any details. During the Atlas project, many more western Panhandle records were obtained. On 14 April 1990, a pair of Pied-billed Grebes with 5 young was discovered on Stock Island near Key West (M. Williams in Langridge 1990b). This represents the first breeding record in the Keys, but others have been reported from the Keys in subsequent years.

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