

This resource is based on the following source:

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.

This resource can be cited as:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. 2003, January 6. Florida's breeding bird atlas: A collaborative study of Florida's birdlife. <http://www.myfwc.com/bba/> (Date accessed mm/dd/yyyy).

Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea*

Called the Golden Swamp Warbler by John James Audubon, the Prothonotary Warbler is a familiar breeder in forested wetlands of the eastern United States from Minnesota to south Florida. It winters from the Yucatan Peninsula south through Central America to northern South America.

In Florida the Prothonotary Warbler is common throughout the Panhandle and the northern peninsula and is becoming increasingly less common southward.

Habitat. During the breeding season, the Prothonotary Warbler is restricted to cypress swamps, flooded river bottoms, and deciduous woodlands near slow-moving or standing water. It forages on the trunks of trees, low branches, and on the ground, feeding primarily on small insects and snails.

The Prothonotary Warbler is unusual in that it is the only eastern warbler to regularly build its nests in cavities. Although usually nesting in natural cavities, this warbler will readily take to nest boxes, when provided, and has been known to nest in buildings, bridges, and other human-made structures. The male usually builds 1 or more dummy nests while the female builds the nest to be used for breeding. The cavity is filled with bark and twigs and is lined with moss, grass, or similar materials. A clutch consists of 4 to 6 pale pink or cream-colored eggs, variably spotted with shades of brown. The female incubates for 12 to 14 days, and the young fledge at 11 day of age.

Seasonal Occurrence. The Prothonotary Warbler migrates across the Gulf of Mexico to wintering areas in South and Central America. Their numbers peak in northwest Florida between late March and mid-April and again in the fall from mid-August to late September. Two broods are often produced in a season (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

Status. Although its loud, conspicuous song makes the Prothonotary Warbler a fairly easy species to locate, breeding is difficult to confirm due to the general inaccessibility of the bird's nesting areas. Atlas data show that the Prothonotary Warbler is a rare breeder south of Hillsborough and Orange counties, but breeding was confirmed as far south as southern Collier County.



Illustration © 1995 Diane Pierce, All Rights Reserved.

Sean P. Rowe

Sponsored by Charles W. Atwood

Prothonotary Warbler

