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Spot-breasted Oriole *Icterus pectoralis*

Native to portions of Central Mexico, the Spot-breasted Oriole was first observed in Miami in 1949, evidently escapees from some import shipment or local aviary. Through most of the 1960s and 1970s, it rapidly spread outward to the south, west, and, especially north. By 1960 the species ranged north to Brevard County (Cruickshank 1980), although no evidence of breeding existed north of Palm Beach County.

A noted population decline and range contraction occurred in the 1980s, believed to be the result of severe freezes which killed much of the tropical vegetation the birds depend upon. During the Atlas project, reports were obtained in only Palm Beach, Broward, and Dade counties. Spot-breasted Orioles feed on nectar, insects, and fruit.

In its native range the Spot-breasted Oriole typically builds a pendant nest about 46 cm (18 in) long, located in a tree or yucca up to 18 m (60 ft) above the ground. In Florida it builds a much shorter nest only about 10 cm (4 in) long. The nest is composed of plant fibers, frequently from palms, and is attached to branches and leaf petioles not only at the rim but on the sides as well, similar to an Orchard Oriole's nest (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). Based on the number of young observed, the species probably lays 2 to 5 eggs that are bluish-white and marked with other colors (Terres 1980). Breeding has been reported from April through August, and the lateness of some clutches indicates that 2 or 3 broods may be raised per season. The incubation and fledging periods are unknown (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

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Spot-breasted Oriole

