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Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*

The fierce and acrobatic Sharp-shinned Hawk is the most common of the North American accipiters. Ten subspecies of this hawk range over both American continents (Wattel 1973).

Habitat. The Sharp-shinned Hawk inhabits areas of open woodland or dense forest with occasional openings.

The Sharp-shinned Hawk feeds almost exclusively on birds from warbler size to dove size, which may be even larger than the hawk.

The Sharp-shinned Hawk most often nests in a stand of coniferous trees situated near an opening in the vegetation (Bent 1937). The nest, made of sticks and twigs, is located in the center of a tree. The 4 or 5 white bluish-white eggs are marked with brown and incubated 32 to 35 days, and the young fledge in 24 to 27 days (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

Seasonal Occurrence. The Sharp-shinned Hawk resides in Florida mostly in the winter, arriving in August or September and remaining until April or May (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

Status. The Sharp-shinned Hawk, or Little Blue Darter, is an abundant hawk in Florida in winter and during migration, sometimes to the dismay of folks who maintain backyard bird feeders. Howell (1932) stated that this hawk "probably breeds locally in small numbers, although there seems to be no definite records of a nest or eggs." After 6 years of atlasing, the best evidence we could find; 5 "possible" and 1 "probable" in north Florida and 1 "possible" in central Florida; still fails to confirm breeding by the Sharp-shinned Hawk in Florida.

The falconry fraternity in Florida is most adept at finding nesting raptors, but the Sharp-shinned Hawk is not one of them. No evidence exists to suggest that this species nests in the coastal plain of Georgia (Haney et al. 1984). Both of these observations suggest the likelihood of breeding in Florida to be quite low.

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Sharp-shinned Hawk

