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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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Swainson's Warbler *Limnothlypis swainsonii*

Swainson's Warblers have always been an ornithological enigma because they are so inconspicuous. They are generally uncommon throughout their range in the southeastern United States, although special efforts can reveal them to be locally common. They breed from northeast Oklahoma, east to Virginia, and south to Texas and the northern Gulf coast. They winter in the Yucatan Peninsula and the West Indies.

This bird is a rare to uncommon summer resident across north Florida; a few may winter in south Florida (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

Habitat. In the southeastern coastal plain, the Swainson's Warbler is found in swampy bottom land thickets (Meanley 1971), especially when cane and ferns are present. In Florida, Swainson's Warblers are most frequent in the areas of titi swamp that ribbon through the pine flatwoods of the Panhandle. They are also found in pine plantations and bottomland hardwoods. Canopy closure is a key to habitat suitability.



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Food consists of primarily insects and other invertebrates found on or near the ground (Ehrlich et al. 1988). The loose, bulky nest is often built on top of a bunch of stranded leaf debris several feet up in cane, vine, or low shrubbery. The clutch is unusual for a wood warbler containing only 3 or 4 white, unmarked eggs.

Seasonal Occurrence. In addition to the breeding population in north Florida, Swainson's Warblers are occasional to rare transients throughout the state in fall and spring. They arrive on the breeding grounds in early April and leave from mid-August through September. Two broods are probably raised (Meanley 1971).

Status. The Atlas map suggests a distribution similar to that described by Howell (1932). Given the considerable problems of detection, it is not surprising that breeding was confirmed in only 4 quadrangles out of 97. The Swainson's Warbler probably breeds widely, if thinly, throughout north Florida.

Duncan Stuart Evered

Swainson's Warbler

