
January 1976

An Offshore Sighting of Sabine's Gull

Robert D. Barber

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn>

Recommended Citation

Barber, Robert D. (1976) "An Offshore Sighting of Sabine's Gull," *Florida Field Naturalist*. Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn/vol4/iss1/9>

This Field Notes is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Field Naturalist by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

Observation of a Bald Eagle Capturing a Cattle Egret in Flight

On 16 January 1975 at approximately 1600 hours on State Road 60, one to 2 miles east of Lake Wales, Florida, I noticed an adult Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) flying across the highway about 100 feet above the ground. I pulled off onto the shoulder of the road to observe the bird. Flying rather slowly against a heavy wind, the eagle passed over a small cattle pasture and startled one of several feeding Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) into flight. The egret appeared to have difficulty flying against the wind, and immediately the eagle swooped and made several unsuccessful passes at the egret before finally making contact. White feathers scattered in the wind as the eagle grasped its prey and disappeared beyond the woods bordering the pasture. Immediately after this incident two more adult eagles passed over the field in the opposite direction, but made no attempt to capture any of the remaining egrets.—*Charles Knight, Environmental Protection Bureau, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, P. O. Box 1840, Vero Beach, Florida 32960.*

An Offshore Sighting of Sabine's Gull

Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) was first known to occur in Florida when an oiled bird was found by Ruth T. Rogers at Daytona Beach, Volusia County, on 1 November 1952. Identification was confirmed by Herbert Friedmann at the U. S. National Museum (Sprunt, Alexander, Jr. 1954. Florida Bird Life. Coward McCann, Inc., New York City. 527 pp.). The second record was a sighting of 2 birds at rest on Playlinda Beach, Brevard County, on 24 September 1963 by A. E. Ellis and J. B. Johnson during a severe northeasterly gale (Cunningham, Richard L. 1964. *Audubon Field Notes*, 18:25).

On 4 November 1975, after 5 days of northeasterly winds up to 40 knots, we identified an immature Sabine's Gull 18 miles E of Cocoa Beach, Brevard County. The bird flew within 12 m of the boat. We noticed the characteristic wing and tail patterns, grayish brown mantle and forewing, blackish primaries contrasting with the immaculate white triangles in the wings, and the forked white tail with a black terminal band. On this day the wind was still NE at 20-25 knots, and seas were heavy.—*Robert D. Barber, 2027 Rockledge Drive, Rockledge, Fla. 32955; James B. Johnson, P. O. Box 273, Merritt Island, Fla. 32952.*