
January 1977

First Sighting of a Thick-billed Murre for Florida

Florida Field Naturalist

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

Recommended Citation

Florida Field Naturalist (1977) "First Sighting of a Thick-billed Murre for Florida," *Florida Field Naturalist*.
Vol. 5 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn/vol5/iss1/10>

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.

ured along South Melbourne Beach, Brevard County, on 1 January 1967 (Cruikshank 1967, Fla. Nat. 40: 48-49). Between that date and 1976 the southernmost Atlantic Coast record was 19 December 1967 when twelve were reported 7 miles off Tybee Island, Chatham County, Georgia (Cooldige 1967, Oriole 33: 1).

The only other alcid records for Florida are a Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) found dead near Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County, on 28 December 1971 (Stevenson 1972, Amer. Birds 26: 592-596) and numerous Dovekie (*Alle alle*) records.

Our Razorbill record is the only one for the Gulf of Mexico and is also the first spring record of any alcid for Florida. — John R. Patterson, 408 Sable Court, Tallahassee, Florida 32304 and Gail E. Menk, 1128 Ocala Road, Apt. G-5, Tallahassee, Florida 32304.

First sighting of a Thick-billed Murre for Florida. — Shortly before sundown on 20 November 1976 at the Lake Worth Fishing Pier in Palm Beach County, Florida, Billy Matthews, a thirteen-year old, observed and alerted local birders to a “murrelet” swimming in the Atlantic Ocean near shore. Rushing to the pier, Billy’s father, William Matthews, Gloria Hunter, and the author saw a large alcid. Moving to within 6 m at times and using binoculars, telescope, and a field guide (Robbins *et al.* 1966, Birds of North America, New York, Golden Press, pp 148-9), we carefully identified the bird as a Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*).

The optimum combination of smooth water, close approach and leisurely study (20-30 min.) enabled the observers to be confident of their identification based on the following field marks: size (smaller than a loon), jet black upperparts and very white underparts, a distinct white line running across the black folded wing, and the sharp murre bill with a white line on the lower mandible. The author is familiar with the Razorbill (*Alca torda*) and Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) in Canada.

The southernmost record of the Thick-billed Murre on the Atlantic coast is from South Carolina (A.O.U. 1957, Check-list of North American birds, 5th ed.).—Howard P. Langridge, 1421 W. Ocean Ave., Lantana, Florida 33462.