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Southward Extension of Orchard Oriole Breeding Range in Florida

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Sight record of Gray-breasted Martin on the lower Florida Keys.—On 7 May 1977, Sykes tentatively identified a Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*) during mid-day just north of Watson Hammock on Big Pine Key, Monroe County, Florida. The writers saw what apparently was the same individual on 14 May 1977 (Kale 1977, Amer. Birds 31:988-992) during late morning and early afternoon at the Blue Hole (a flooded borrow pit) on the Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge, Big Pine Key, approximately 1.4 km (0.9 miles) from the first sighting. Both observations were in rather broken-canopy stands of slash pine (*Pinus elliottii = caribaea*) with a low saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) and thatch palm (*Thrinax microcarpa*, *T. parviflora* and *Coccothrinax argentata*) understory on oolitic limestone.

On 14 May the bird was first observed skimming the surface of the Blue Hole, hawking insects in the vicinity and perching nearby on utility lines along Key Deer Boulevard. Once it perched on a utility wire in direct sunlight for 10-15 minutes allowing leisurely observations from 18 m with binoculars and two 30× balscopes. The crown, forked tail, wings and back were blue black and glossy. The forehead, sides of the head and nape were a dark glossy brown, while the chin and throat were a lighter golden brown. The breast and flanks were brownish gray. The dark band of the breast contrasted with the white of the belly. The throat was much lighter in color than the breast, and the belly and undertail coverts were immaculate white. The eye was dark, the bill black and the feet brownish-red. We did not have size-comparison with any other swallows at the time of this observation. A thorough search was made the next day but the bird was not seen again.

We examined specimens of the Purple (*P. subis*), Cuban (*P. cryptoleuca*) and Gray-breasted martin at the University of Miami on 25 May 1977, and the martin we saw on Big Pine Key was virtually identical to an adult female *P. chalybea* (UMVC 6047) collected in August-September 1967 in Guyana by B. Singh. However, we cannot be certain of the sex of the martin we saw as the immature second year male Gray-breasted Martin is identical in coloration to the adult female (Ridgway 1904, The birds of North and Middle America, U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull. No. 5, Part 3).

The Gray-breasted Martin occurs from central Mexico to central Argentina, including the islands off the northern coast of South America (1957, Check-list of North American birds, Fifth ed., Baltimore, Amer. Ornithol. Union). The species is migratory, at least in the northern and southern parts of its range, and occupies a wide range of habitats (de Schauensee 1970, A guide to the birds of South America, Philadelphia Acad. Nat. Sci.; Oberholser 1974, The bird life of Texas, Vol. 2, Austin, Univ. Texas Press). There are two records in the United States from southern Texas: a male collected on 25 April 1880, Rio Grande City, Starr County, and a female taken on 18 May 1889, Hidalgo, Hidalgo County, as well as numerous unconfirmed sightings for various parts of Texas during the 20th Century (Oberholser 1974). Our sighting is the first report of the Gray-breasted Martin for Florida.

We wish to thank Oscar T. Owre for making specimen material available.—PAUL W. SYKES, JR., 4195 Maurice Drive, Delray Beach, Florida 33445; HOWARD P. LANGRIDGE, 1421 W. Ocean Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33462; and WILLIAM D. MATTHEWS, SR. AND WILLIAM D. MATTHEWS, JR., 2565 Meadow Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33406.

Southward extension of Orchard Oriole breeding range in Florida.—In the course of field work in northern Citrus County, Florida, on 6 June 1978, I was surprised to hear the song of an Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) near route 488, about a mile south of Lake Rousseau. The area was grassy, with scattered shrubs and small to medium-sized trees, including mostly wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), willow (*Salix* sp.) and turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*). Exploring this area of about 25 ha., I found four singing male orioles, at least one of which was mated. In the vicinity of the mated pair, I collected a fledgling (No. 3499, Tall Timbers Research Station). These orioles were 46 mi. (76 km) SSW of Gainesville, Alachua County, the former southernmost breeding station for the species (Sprunt 1954:437).

On 9 June 1970 (Ogden 1970) at Perry, Taylor County, I found six Orchard Orioles barely south of the breeding range depicted by Howell (1932:429), but single singing males in Marion County on 3 July 1974 (west of Fellowship; at south edge of Orange Lake) were 20-30 mi. (33-50 km) south of Gainesville (Ogden 1974). Although this species begins to migrate southward by late June, the fact that these latter two males were in full song led me to believe that they were breeding birds. On 18 June 1977 (Ogden 1977), at a latitude similar to that of the breeding birds of 1978, I found another male in full song at the Marion-Sumter County line north of Oxford, and Gail Menk (pers. comm.) counted six in northern Levy County on 10 June 1977.

Two of my previous early-summer records of single male Orchard Orioles were much farther south—Moore Haven, Glades County, 20 June 1960 (Stevenson 1960), and Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, 8 July 1966 (Stevenson 1966)—but I now believe these birds were early fall migrants.

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Evening Grosbeaks in Citrus County, Florida.—On the morning of 5 January 1978, 2.5 miles southeast of Rutland in Citrus County, Florida, John and Kenneth Backen sighted nine Evening Grosbeaks (*Hesperiphona vespertina*) feeding on the unfallen cones of the bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*). After feeding for approximately one hour the birds flew to a nearby cypress without cones where they perched and preened. After 10 minutes they departed east across the Withlacoochee River.

My wife, Phyllis, and I observed almost the identical behavior at the same location on the morning of 9 January. We determined that there were two males and seven females present.

John and Kenneth Backen reported that over the next ten days the flock increased until 30-40 Evening Grosbeaks could be sighted in the vicinity daily, following the same pattern of behavior. Early in March the number of birds began to drop. By 16 March the number was down again to eight or nine and they were not seen in the area after this date.

This Citrus County flock may well be the southernmost record of Evening Grosbeaks in Florida. In other winter invasions of this species, Gainesville, Alachua County (Stevenson 1969, Aud. Field Notes 23:761-765; Woolfenden 1973, Amer. Birds 27: 603-607; Kale 1973, Amer. Birds 27: 761-765; Stevenson 1978, Amer. Birds 32: 339-342), 80 km (50 mi.) to the north, has been the southern limit of their recorded penetration into Florida.—HENRY ROBERTSON, 206 Forest Park Ave., Temple Terrace, Florida 33617.