
January 1979

Inland Records of Oldsquaws and Surf Scoter from North Florida

Florida Field Naturalist

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

Recommended Citation

Florida Field Naturalist (1979) "Inland Records of Oldsquaws and Surf Scoter from North Florida," *Florida Field Naturalist*. Vol. 7 : Iss. 2 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn/vol7/iss2/4>

This General 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.

scanty, but one (MCZ #42535) is a white-phase, downy nestling collected in the Indian River on 15 April (year not specified on label). This is the only adequately documented nesting report of the four.

The nests reported here extend the Atlantic coast nesting range of Reddish Egrets 380 km north of previously known sites in this century, and 110 km north of Pelican Island, the previous northernmost known locality.

We are indebted to Henri Ouellet for word and photographs of the nesting pair at Riomar Island, and to Samuel A. Grimes for drawing attention to the Pilot Town specimen. Richard L. Zusi of the U.S. National Museum and Raymond A. Paynter, Jr., of the Museum of Comparative Zoology kindly allowed RTP to examine specimens in their care. Chandler S. Robbins generously made available the bird files of the former Bureau of Biological Survey, including many of A. H. Howell's notes for his book *Florida bird life*. Alexander Sprunt, IV, made helpful suggestions on the manuscript.

LITERATURE CITED

- BANCROFT, G. 1971. Northern breeding record for Reddish Egret. *Auk* 88: 429.
- BRYANT, H. 1859. On some birds observed in East Florida. *Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist.* 7: 5-21.
- HOWELL, A. H. 1932. *Florida bird life*. Tallahassee, Florida Dept. Game Fresh Water Fish.
- KALE, H. W., II. 1974. Florida region., *Amer. Birds* 28: 790-794.
- KALE, H. W. II. 1976. Florida region., *Amer. Birds* 30: 828-832.
- MAYNARD, C. J. 1889. *The birds of eastern North America* (revised ed.). Newtonville, Mass., C. J. Maynard.
- PAUL, R. T., A. J. MEYERRIECKS AND F. M. DUNSTAN. 1975. Return of Reddish Egrets as breeding birds in Tampa Bay, Florida. *Fla. Field Nat.* 3: 9-10.
- SCHREIBER, R. W., AND E. A. SCHREIBER. 1978. Colonial bird use and plant succession on dredged material islands in Florida, vol. 1: sea and wading bird colonies. U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station, Technical Report D-78-14.

RICHARD T. PAUL, *Research Department, National Audubon Society, 115 Indian Mound Trail, Tavernier, Florida 33070*, HERBERT W. KALE, II, *Florida Audubon Society, 35-1st Court SW, Vero Beach, Florida 32960*, and DAVID A. NELSON, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Box 6504, Titusville, Florida 32780*.

Inland records of Oldsquaws and Surf Scoter from north Florida.—During the winter of 1977-78, two male Oldsquaws (*Clangula hyemalis*) and a female Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*) were observed and/or shot by hunters on a pond at the Occidental Chemical Company, 8 miles southeast of Jasper, Hamilton County, Florida. On 7 January 1978 an Oldsquaw and the scoter were taken and preserved by Virlyn Willis and Leon Alexander (both of Lake City). Another male Oldsquaw was observed by the author at the same locality on 23 December 1977. This was not the Oldsquaw that was later shot as its molt was more advanced than the second bird. The Oldsquaws and the Surf Scoter were using a 400 acre mine settling pond, 6-8 feet deep with a clay-soil substrate, with shoreline vegetation composed primarily of black willow (*Salix nigra*) and primrose willow (*Jussiaea* sp.).

Inland records of both species in Florida are rare. Sprunt (1954) lists two Oldsquaw records from north Florida at Lake Iamona and Lake Jackson (Leon Co.). There are five additional published winter records from north Florida, 22 January 1962, Lake Jackson, Leon Co. (Stevenson 1963); 29 January 1967, seven on Windham Pond, Jefferson Co. (Ripley 1967); 17 January 1970, road-kill, Hamilton Co. (Stevenson 1970); 14 March 1971, Wakulla Springs, Wakulla Co.

(Stevenson 1971); 19 January 1976, Lake Iamona, Leon Co. (Stevenson 1976); and one from peninsular Florida at Lake Jackson, Highlands Co., 27 January and 1 February 1976 (Stevenson 1976).

Sprunt (1954) lists no inland records for Surf Scoters. A recent sighting of a Surf Scoter on the St. Johns River near Mandarin, 10 November 1971 (Robertson 1971), prompted the suggestion that there might be an overland migration between wintering concentrations on the northeast Atlantic coast and the northern Gulf coast of Florida. This second inland record of a scoter from north Florida adds credence to the possible existence of a migration route between these two wintering areas.

LITERATURE CITED

- RIPLEY, S. D. 1967. Old Squaws [sic] (*Clangula hyemalis*) in northern Florida. Fla. Nat. 40:101-102.
- ROBERTSON, W. B., JR. 1971. Florida region. Amer. Birds 25: 44-49.
- SPRUNT, A., JR. 1954. Florida bird life. New York, Coward-McCann, Inc.
- STEVENSON, H. M. 1963. Florida region. Aud. Field Notes 17: 319-323.
- STEVENSON, H. M. 1970. Florida region. Amer. Birds 24: 493-497.
- STEVENSON, H. M. 1971. Florida region. Amer. Birds 25: 567-570.
- STEVENSON, H. M. 1976. Florida region. Amer. Birds 30: 708-711.

STEVEN K. STAFFORD, *Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Lake City, Florida* 32055.

Winter breeding by the American Coot at Tampa, Florida.—The American Coot (*Fulica americana*) is abundant in winter and generally scarce in summer throughout Florida. (See Ogden 1977, Amer. Birds 31: 1129 for a recent exception to summer scarcity.) In Hillsborough County, the Tampa Christmas Bird Count, 1972-1978, has recorded from 1030 to 3890 coots (Amer. Birds 26-32). The Tampa Summer Bird Count, conducted in June and under the same rules, 1972-1978, has recorded only 2 to 32 coots (unpublished data). Coots have been recorded as occasional breeders in Florida, with about 10 records from scattered localities on the peninsula, but heretofore only in May through July (Sprunt 1954, Florida bird life, New York, Coward-McCann Inc., Aud. Field Notes vols. 1-24, Amer. Birds vols. 25-31).

On 7 February 1978 I watched two adult American Coots feeding three tiny downies and defending a segment of one end of a freshwater borrow pit from numerous other coots wintering on the pond. The young were only a few days old, which indicates nesting began in early or mid-January. The borrow pit, dug recently for construction of the adjacent University Square Mall lies about one mile west of the University of South Florida in Hillsborough County. It has extensive open water and a thick border of cattails (*Typha* sp.). In 1975-1977 only from one to eight coots were seen on this and a nearby pond during the Summer Bird Counts.

On 10 February the family of five again was seen, and on 22 February G. Thomas Bancroft saw one large chick. The breeding was not followed further.

Winter breeding in Florida by any rail appears to be unusual, although I have seen downy young Common Gallinules (*Gallinula chloropus*) in Tampa as late as mid-December, and Stevenson (1960, Aud. Field Notes 14: 302) reports Ogden's sighting of a King Rail (*Rallus elegans*) with downy young on 26 February in Everglades National Park at the southern end of the Florida peninsula. Unfortunately it was not determined whether the winter-breeding coots were migrants from the north nesting (again) on their wintering grounds, or local permanent residents nesting aseasonally.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge use of M. C. Bowman's recent publication (1978, Species index to Florida bird records in Audubon Field Notes and American Birds Volumes 1-30 1947-1976, Spec. Publ. No. 1, Fla. Ornithol. Soc.) in preparing this note.—GLEN E. WOOLFENDEN, *Department of Biology, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida* 33620.