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## Winter Breeding by the American Coot at Tampa, Florida

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(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.

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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 The Tampa Summer Bird Count, conducted in June and under the same rules, 1972-1978, has recorded only 2 to 32 coots (unpublished data).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 seasonally.

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.