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Shorteared Owl on Bush Key, Dry Tortugas, Florida

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The status of the Band-tailed Pigeon in Florida rests on two occurrences. There is a record and photograph of two at Sarasota (Letson 1968, Fla. Nat. 41: 126). However, Stevenson (1976, Vertebrates of Florida, Gainesville, Univ. Presses Fla.) considered these "more likely to have escaped from captivity than to have wandered so far from their usual range." Except for one outer rectrix on one of the Sarasota birds, the tail feathers were not ragged as is often the case with captive birds. The second reference (Edscorn 1974, Fla. Nat. 47: 31) cites no details other than one reported from Sugarloaf Key.

The hunter who shot the Bonifay pigeon did so "about a week before Christmas (1967)" within the same week the Sarasota birds were first seen (17 December 1967). This recovery along with the photographed Sarasota birds should be sufficient evidence to establish the Band-tailed Pigeon on the Florida State list.

I thank Otis Swisher, Hal A. Beecher, Harry Nehls, Henry M. Stevenson and Lovett E. Williams for information I received, and Robert A. Duncan for comments on this note. Copies of letters mentioned above and a xerox of the band have been deposited with the Florida Ornithological Society Archives at the Florida State Museum, Gainesville.—LUCY R. DUNCAN, 614 Fairpoint Drive, Gulf Breeze, Florida 32561.

Great Horned Owl suspected of preying upon Snowy Egret.—On 8 September 1977 at 1435 at the Cross Bar Ranch, 5.5 km south of Masaryktown, Pasco County, Florida, we saw a Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) flying across a marsh with a white bird in its talons. The owl landed in an improved pasture about 400 m away. We flushed the owl and it flew to a slash pine 50 m away leaving the white bird behind. We saw no manipulation of the prey by the owl before it flushed.

The white bird was a Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*). The warm, limp carcass had a lacerated, broken neck and some feather loss at the wound. We left the egret on the ground and the owl remained in the pine tree. We returned several hours later; the egret had not been moved and the owl was not visible.

Snowy Egrets are common at the marsh. The area is devoid of paved access roads and powerlines, thus eliminating some obvious alternative causes of the egret's death. Bent (1938, Bull. U.S. Natl. Mus. 170) Lists "small herons" (species unspecified) among the many species of birds eaten by the Great Horned Owl.—RICHARD CALLAHAN AND WILLIAM CAREY, *Biological Research Associates*, 504 S. Brevard Ave., Tampa, Florida 33606.

Short-eared Owl on Bush Key, Dry Tortugas, Florida.—The Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) occurs widely in the Holarctic region, in South America and in the West Indies. In eastern North America it breeds south to Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey and Virginia (AOU Checklist, 1957) and is an uncommon but regular winter visitor to Florida (Sprunt 1954, Florida bird life, New York, Coward McCann, Inc.). In recent years 3-6 per year total have appeared on Florida Christmas Bird Counts. Short-eared Owls are notorious wanderers, having established breeding populations on a number of oceanic island groups, including Hawaii, the Galapagos Islands, the Falkland Islands and the Juan Fernandez Islands, and appearing as vagrants on many other islands (Burton 1973, *Owls of the World*, New York, Dutton and Co.).

On the afternoon of 20 June 1978, a Short-eared Owl was flushed from bare ground on the east spit of Bush Key, Dry Tortugas, Monroe County, Florida. The bird flew fairly strongly, but when relocated the next morning it was unable or unwilling to fly and was captured. It was thin and its plumage was somewhat waterlogged, but otherwise the bird appeared healthy (Fig. 1). We identified it by plumage and wing measurement as the widespread holarctic race, *A. f. flammeus*, rather than one of the resident West Indian (Puerto Rico or Hispaniola) races. This is only the second summer record of *Asio flammeus* in Florida (on 14 June 1963 Henry M.



Fig. 1. Short-eared Owl photographed inside Fort Jefferson, Dry Tortugas, Florida, on 21 June 1978 by Barbara C. Kittleson.

Stevenson (pers. comm.) sighted an individual near Lakeport, Glades Co.) and the first record for the Dry Tortugas.

A few hours after capture the owl cast a pellet containing the remains of a Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) chick. We suspect that our bird had been present on Bush Key for some time, subsisting on the abundant tern chicks. Short-eared Owls in their normal breeding range have been reported to specialize occasionally on tern colonies (Bent 1938, Bull. U.S. Nat. Mus. 170, p. 175). We transported the owl back to the mainland and on 5 July released it unbanded at the South Florida Research Center, Everglades National Park.—WAYNE HOFFMAN, *Biology Department, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida 33620*, WILLIAM B. ROBERTSON, JR., *South Florida Research Center, Everglades National Park, Homestead, Florida 33030*, and PAIGE C. PATTS, *South Florida Research Center, Everglades National Park, Homestead, Florida 33030*.

Wintering of the Northern Waterthrush in north Florida.—On 21 December 1978, Gail Menk reported that a Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) he saw in early November at a sewage effluent southwest of Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida, near the junction of state roads 263 and 373, was still at that location. He and I went to the spot on 27 December and collected the bird (TTRS No. 3631), a female weighing 15.9g, with no fat and an unossified skull. Contents of its stomach included a small terrestrial snail (*Zonitoides arboreus*, Family Zonitidae), an unidentified leech and numerous unidentified insect remains. The only previous north Florida winter record of this waterthrush is one at a Florida State University dairy pond on 10 December 1948 and 11 February 1949 (Stevenson 1949), a site only 3.5 km northeast of the location of the collected specimen.

The A. O. U. Check-list (1957: 507) referred to the wintering of the Northern Waterthrush in the United States as "casual," citing winter locations for Texas, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. Howell (1932: 413), however, cited specimens collected at Punta Rassa (Lee Co.) on 7 February 1886, and Key West (Monroe Co.) on 5, 6 and 11 March 1890. The birds collected in March, however, may have been early migrants, as I collected one, 6 March 1971, on St. George Island (Franklin Co.) where it had not wintered. The most northerly winter sight record