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A Band-tailed Pigeon Recovery in Florida

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It is always interesting to trap another bander's birds and to have one's birds retrapped by others. The Peppers have had this interchange with three other stations — Clark, Cohen, and Dunning. The Middleton station has had interchange only with the Clark station.

Population changes

The Peppers report that there seems to be little change in the numbers of other species as the House Finch numbers increased during the recent years.

At Norristown the only species decrease has been

the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). The migratory species have been decreasing in numbers since the mid-1950's, and the severe winters of the last two years apparently have resulted in a drop in the numbers of wintering birds in this area. During the winter of 1978 there was an invasion of Pine Siskins (*Spinus pinus*) and Common Redpoll (*Acanthus flammea*). At this time the House Finch population was low in numbers. Also, during the same period in 1978, the number of ground feeding species was at a very low ebb. ☛

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(This paper was presented at the EBBA Annual Meeting 1979.)

A Band-tailed Pigeon recovery in Florida

While reviewing computer printouts of all birds banded or recovered in Florida, I discovered the record of a Band-tailed Pigeon (*Columba fasciata*). Subsequent investigation of records from the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL), Laurel, Maryland, revealed that it was banded in northwest Oregon (lat. 45°20' long. 122°40') on 15 May 1966. It was shot near Bonifay, Holmes County, Florida, in December 1967 by a hunter who mailed the band (#066528422) to the BBL with an accompanying letter.

The evidence accumulated indicates that this was a wild bird and the species should be added to the state list. The following information supports the validity of the record. 1. The bander, James Cromwell, employed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, banded at least 2363 Band-tailed Pigeons during the years 1965-1968 (Otis Swisher, President, Western Bird Banding Association, pers. comm.). The bird in question was an adult male at the time of banding. 2. The hunter who shot the bird wrote that it was a 'pigeon,' and included the actual band in his letter to the BBL. The band is in excellent condition with the numbers clearly legible even on a xerox copy. 3. A letter from the Director, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, states "Oregon has not traded any Band-tailed Pigeons to any other state," and a letter from the Chief, Bureau of Wildlife Resources, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, states that "there has been no attempt to introduce Band-tailed Pigeons into Florida." 4. There are occurrences of this species in other southeastern states. Imhof (1976, Alabama birds, 2nd ed., University, Ala., Univ. Ala. Press) places the bird on Alabama's hypothetical list because the sole record, based on one lengthy observation, lacks a

photograph or specimen. Lowery (1974, Louisiana birds, 3rd rev. ed., Baton Rouge, La., La State Univ. Press) states that "at least five have been recorded in the state." Four of these were specimens.

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. ☛

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