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## An Unusual Female Ruddy Duck in Central Florida

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**An unusual female Ruddy Duck in central Florida.**—From late December 1973 to early February 1974 I sometimes visited Lake Davis, a small lake in the urban area of Orlando, Orange County, Florida. Peak counts of Ruddy Ducks (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) on the lake rose to well over 300 ducks with males predominating. A conspicuous member of the flock was a female Ruddy Duck with head and neck clear white, but otherwise with normally colored plumage and dark bill and eyes. On inquiry of local observers, I was informed that this duck had been on Lake Davis during previous winters "for many years", but it had not been recorded on any other nearby lakes.

Frank C. Bellrose, Jr., (in litt.) has informed me he knows of no personal records of unusually plumaged Ruddy Ducks. However, Palmer (1976, Handbook of North American birds, vol. 3, New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, p. 503) mentions only one, "a mostly black (melanistic) female was collected in Utah in early June". I would be interested to learn of other records of unusually plumaged Ruddy Ducks.—BERNARD KING, *Gull Cry, 9 Park Road, Newlyn, Penzance, Cornwall, England.*

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**Winter breeding of the Common Gallinule in the Florida Panhandle.**—The Common Gallinule (*Gallinula chloropus*) is an abundant permanent resident at the Wakulla Springs Wildlife Sanctuary, Wakulla County, Florida. On 12 January 1980, while on the "Jungle Cruise" approximately one km downstream from the Wakulla River springhead, I observed an adult gallinule feeding a downy chick about 9-10 cm long. The adult was foraging near others on a mat of the floating ends of eel grass (*Vallisneria americana*). The observation was made with binoculars from a distance of 6-7 m in clear weather.

Wilburt Gavin, a tour guide for the Wakulla Springs Wild. Sanc., subsequently reported observing 2 chicks at the same location 2 days earlier, and remembered nest-building activity several weeks earlier. Careful searching on subsequent boat tours on that and following days revealed only adults, so I conclude that no chicks survived.

I estimate the age of the chick I observed to be one week or less, which when considered with a 19-22 day incubation period (Harrison 1978), places the start of incubation near the second week of December. An unusually warm 10-day period (5-14 December), with afternoon temperature maxima ranging from 19-26°C, may have contributed to this unusual winter breeding.

Previous accounts of downy young Common Gallinules include a record on 13 December 1976 in Broward County (Stevenson 1977) and in mid-December in Tampa (Hillsborough Co.) (Woolfenden 1979) and, also from this winter, two St. Petersburg (Pinellas Co.) accounts on 10 December 1979 and 29 February 1980 (Stevenson 1980). These locations are substantially south of the Florida Panhandle, where breeding records occur only as late as September (Stevenson 1958, Robertson 1970, Stevenson 1973). Consequently, this observation of downy young in January represents an unusual winter breeding of the Common Gallinule in Florida and is especially noteworthy for its occurrence in the Panhandle.

M. C. Bowman's invaluable index (1978) was especially helpful in the preparation of this note. I also thank Todd Engstrom for his comments.

#### LITERATURE CITED

BOWMAN, M. C. 1978. Species index to Florida bird records in Audubon Field Notes and American Birds Vols. 1-30 1947-1976. Fla. Ornithol. Soc., Spec. Publ. No. 1.