
January 1983

Reevaluation of the Sight Record of Gray-breasted Martin in Florida

Florida Field Naturalist

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Recommended Citation

Florida Field Naturalist (1983) "Reevaluation of the Sight Record of Gray-breasted Martin in Florida," *Florida Field Naturalist*: Vol. 11 : Iss. 1 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn/vol11/iss1/2>

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NOTES

Reevaluation of the sight record of Gray-breasted Martin in Florida.—We previously reported the sighting of a female-plumaged Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*) on Big Pine Key, Monroe County, Florida in May 1977 (in Kale 1977, Amer. Birds 31: 988-992; Sykes et al. 1979, Fla. Field Nat. 7: 10). After this record was published, we examined a large series of museum skins of the genus *Progne* at the U. S. National Museum, particularly those of *P. chalybea* and of the Caribbean or Snowy-bellied Martin (*P. dominicensis*). We also reexamined the small series at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida. We discovered in the reevaluation that our initial conclusion, based on examination of the small series at the University of Miami, was in error. We have now concluded that the martin in question was probably not *P. chalybea*.

The martin we saw on Big Pine Key had a sharp demarcation between its immaculate white belly and its dark breast, sides, and flanks. In *P. chalybea* there is a gradation of white to dark on the underparts. The sharp demarcation appears to be the best field mark for females of *P. dominicensis*. However, of the *P. chalybea* skins we examined, a small percentage has a sharp demarcation, which led to our misidentification. Field guides and other publications we examined either do not illustrate the female of *P. dominicensis* or show it incorrectly, and the text descriptions in all publications we have seen are inadequate when one has not had previous experience with the species in the field.

We now feel that the bird we saw may have been a *P. dominicensis*, but, under the circumstances and without a photograph or specimen, we can not report the identity of our sighting with certainty. The Caribbean Martin is found in western Mexico and in the West Indies from Jamaica east and south to Tobago (French 1973, A guide to the birds of Trinidad and Tobago, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, Livingston Publ. Co.). The species has been recorded in Bermuda but not in the United States.—Paul W. Sykes, Jr., Mauna Loa Field Station, P.O. Box 44, Hawaii National Park, Hawaii 96718 and Howard P. Langridge, 1421 West Ocean Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33462.

Florida Field Naturalist 11: 17, 1983.

A record of the Black Vulture from Bimini, Bahamas.—On 4 March 1979, I found and photographed a freshly dead Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) above the normal high tide line at the north tip of North Bimini, Bahamas. There was no external evidence suggesting cause of death. While Black Vultures are known from the adjacent mainland of southern Florida, they have not previously been reported from the Bahamas (Brudenell-Bruce 1975, The birds of the Bahamas, New York, Taplinger Publishing Co.; Vaurie 1953, Auk 70: 38-48; Mayr 1953, Auk 70: 499-501). Bond (1971, Birds of the West Indies, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co.) noted that the species has been seen in Cuba and Jamaica but considered it to be a vagrant in the West Indies. A copy of the photograph is on file in the ornithological records of the Biological Sciences Department of Mississippi State University.—Jerome A. Jackson, Department of Biological Sciences, Mississippi State University, Box Z, Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762.

Florida Field Naturalist 11: 17, 1983.