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Birds of the Gainesville Region, Florida/a Checklist

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Birds of the Gainesville Region, Florida/A Checklist.—Oliver L. Austin, Jr., and John William Hardy. Third Edition, November, 1981. Florida State Museum, Gainesville, Florida, 25 pp.—This valuable little pamphlet, now in its third edition (first ed. 1972, second ed. 1975), deserves attention not only for the information it contains but also because it exemplifies an inexpensive alternative to the checklist card-format. The one-page forword includes the total number (283) of species currently recognized for Alachua County and lists the number of species in and defines each of the following categories: residents (75); summer residents (24); winter visitors (91); transients (35); and vagrants (49). Note two corrections: the species totals for each category add up to only 274; and, by my count, the list should include only 282 species. The Fort Pierce Sabine's Gull of October 1981, appearing on page 12, should not be included in the tally. Each species' entry usually contains one or two lines of information and gives status, dates of occurrence, and egg or fledgling dates. Also, this edition contains more information on changes in species' status than earlier editions.

As the Gainesville region is one of Florida's ornithologically best-known places, I was interested to see what changes had occurred in the region's avifauna in the nine-year period between the first edition (1 November 1972) and the third edition (1 November 1981). The first edition includes 254 species (counting Bullock's and Baltimore orioles as one species). Thus there is an increase of 28 species or almost three per year. Probably because of the increased skill and diligence of the Gainesville birding community, the increase in the list is primarily due to wintering or migratory vagrants, with the species about equally divided between non-passerines and passerines and including five shorebirds and six wood-warblers.

Since 1971, five winter species, already on the list, have become more common, Vermilion Flycatcher, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Parula, Brewer's Blackbird, and Pine Siskin. Two other winter species, Short-eared Owl and Rufous Hummingbird, make their appearance on the list as possibly rare but regular and occasional visitor, respectively. There are changes in the breeding avifauna also. Sadly, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker and the Scrub Jay have become rare and the American Kestrel is now uncommon. Additions to the list of breeders include Wood Stork, Broad-winged Hawk, Belted Kingfisher (probably), Barn Swallow, Hooded Warbler, and Brown-headed Cowbird, and the Yellow-throated Vireo is now a common summer resident. None of southern Florida's numerous exotic parrots are on the list yet and unlike the situation in inland Polk and Highlands counties, the Laughing Gull is still considered a vagrant in Alachua County.

Oliver Austin, and his collaborator for this third edition, Bill Hardy, are to be congratulated for keeping this useful checklist up to date with frequent revisions. Florida's bird students will want this publication for their kit and, in anticipation of the next edition, they should make their predictions now for the changes that may occur in the avifauna of Alachua County.—Fred E. Lohrer, Archbold Biological Station, Route 2, Box 180, Lake Placid, Florida 33852.