
January 1988

First Record of the Atlantic Puffin for Florida

Florida Field Naturalist

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn>

Recommended Citation

Florida Field Naturalist (1988) "First Record of the Atlantic Puffin for Florida," *Florida Field Naturalist*. Vol. 16 : Iss. 1 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn/vol16/iss1/5>

This Note is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Field Naturalist by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

onto another dead stalk of dogfennel and then down to green growth to forage. Again my approach startled them to fly away down the track. This time one of them gave twice the familiar "potato chip" flight call that I have heard from this species on hundreds of occasions during the winters of the last 25 years. Although I revisited the site on 21 and 24 June, and on 19 July, I did not see or hear them again.

The American Goldfinch is considered only a winter resident in Florida. Although on rare occasions individuals have been recorded from Florida in summer, some at feeders (Stevenson 1986, pers. comm.), the appearance of a pair in breeding plumage, habitat, and season is unprecedented. The species often breeds in wet, shrubby habitats similar to that in which I saw the birds (Tyler 1968, Hamel et al. 1982). The species is a late nester, even in the south of its range: Georgia egg dates range from 19 June to 31 July (Burleigh 1958). Thus it is possible that this pair of goldfinches was searching for a breeding site when I saw them. Tyler (1968) and Imhof (1976) commented on the importance of thistles (*Carduus* sp.) that are used for food and nesting material; no thistles were apparent where I saw the goldfinches. Although the southern limit of the primary breeding range for American Goldfinch is about 150 km to the north of Florida, the species has been reported in the breeding season from Lowndes County, Georgia (Haney et al. 1986) and Houston County, Alabama (Imhof 1976); both Lowndes and Houston counties are adjacent to Florida.

This work was part of the Florida Breeding Bird Atlas Project (Noss et al. 1985).

LITERATURE CITED

- BURLEIGH, T. D. 1958. Georgia birds. Norman, Oklahoma: Univ. Oklahoma Press.
- HAMEL, P. B., H. E. LEGRAND, JR., M. R. LENNARTZ, AND S. A. GAUTHREAU, JR. 1982. Bird-habitat relationships on southeastern forest lands. Asheville, North Carolina: U. S. D. A., Forest Service, and S. E. Forest Exp. Sta., Gen. Tech. Rep. SE-22.
- HANEY, J. C., P. BRISSE, D. R. JACOBSON, M. W. OBERLE, AND J. M. PAGET. 1986. Annotated checklist of Georgia birds. Georgia Ornith. Soc.: Occ. Publ. No. 10.
- IMHOF, T. A. 1976. Alabama birds. University, Alabama: Univ. Alabama Press.
- NOSS, R. F., H. W. KALE, II, AND C. W. BIGGS. 1985. Florida breeding bird atlas 1986-1990: handbook for cooperators. Maitland, Florida: Florida Audubon Society.
- STEVENSON, H. M. [1986]. Checklist of Florida's birds. Tallahassee, Florida: Nongame Wildl. Program, Fla. Game and Fresh Water Fish Comm.
- TYLER W. M. 1968. Eastern American Goldfinch. Pp 447-466 in Life histories of North American cardinals, grosbeaks, buntings, towhees, finches, sparrows, and allies. (A. C. Bent and collaborators, O. L. Austin Jr., ed.). Bull. U.S. Nat. Museum 237.

Robert L. Crawford, 208 Junius St., Thomasville, Georgia 31792.

Florida Field Naturalist 16: 9-10, 1988.

First record of the Atlantic Puffin for Florida.—The Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) is a boreo-panarctic species which breeds in the North Atlantic and adjacent arctic seas from the high arctic in eastern Canada and west Greenland south to the Gulf of Maine, and from Iceland, Spitsbergen, Novaya Zemlya and northwest Russia south to northern France. The majority of the North American population breeds on a small number of islands along the coast of southeast Newfoundland and Labrador. Smaller colonies are located in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, from Nova Scotia to Maine, and in the eastern Canadian Arctic. In winter Atlantic Puffins disperse widely, mostly in boreal waters south to Massachusetts, the Azores, Canary Islands and the western Mediterranean (Nettleship and Evans 1985). In the United States they occur in winter "casually to New Jersey, Maryland

and Virginia" (American Ornithologists' Union 1983). There are four records from Virginia (Virginia Society of Ornithology 1979; R. A. Rowlett et al. *in* Scott 1979). The only other listing south of Virginia on the Atlantic coast is hypothetical for Georgia, based on its having been "stated by Audubon (1840-44) to occur off the Georgia coast" (Georgia Ornithological Society 1977).

On 6 December 1986 an Atlantic Puffin was found alive by Joseph Bridges on the Atlantic Ocean beach north of Jupiter Island Club, Martin County, Florida sitting on the sand seaward of the primary dune. The puffin was easily approached, captured, and was taken to Jean Henry at the Treasure Coast Audubon Wildlife Hospital. It appeared to be weak and would not eat, but when forced fed it retained the food. The next day the puffin was seen by Richard Smith D.V.M. who gave it antibiotics, electrolytes and vitamin "B₁₂." However, it died about an hour later (Jean Henry pers. comm.). Henry preserved the bird in her freezer and gave it to me later that week. The puffin was transported to the Florida State Museum where the specimen was prepared by J. W. Hardy (UF 21310). Laurence Alexander of the museum staff reported (in litt.): 1) no body fat was found during preparation (weight 279 g, L.O.A. 225 mm); 2) the bird was a male (testis 5x2 mm); 3) the brownish cast to the scapulars and primaries, as well as the single groove on the bill, suggest a young bird, probably in its second or third year; and 4) measurements for wing (chord unflattened 158 mm), tail (44.0 mm), tarsus (26.62 mm), and toe (36.16 mm) are all within the range of the nominate subspecies as reported by Ridgway (1919). The culmen (41.06 mm) is smaller than the mean reported by Ridgway (49.8 mm) and is outside the range (45-53.5 mm) reported by Ridgway for males.

There has been speculation about this Atlantic Puffin but no evidence as to its origin. A report of a puffin near the Port Everglades (Broward Co.) ship channel in late November 1986 was not confirmed by an experienced observer (Betty R. Dean pers. comm.). A Coast Guard officer told Dean about a strange bird he saw and picked out the picture of an Atlantic Puffin in a field guide. The aviculture staff at Sea World in Orlando (Orange Co.) report that they had young Atlantic Puffins as early as September 1986, but they inventory their birds daily and there is no possibility of an escape (pers. comm.). Two other species of alcids were found in Florida during December 1986; a Razorbill (*Alca torda*) at Miami Beach on 6 December (B. Dorney *in* Ogden 1987) and a Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) at Honeymoon Island (Pinellas Co.) on the 29 December (W. Hoffman *in* Ogden 1987).

I thank Jean Henry for preserving what she recognized as an important specimen and for providing information about the bird. I am grateful to Laurence Alexander for his complete technical description of the specimen. I also thank Wayne Hoffman, Herbert W. Kale, II, and C. Wesley Biggs for suggestions on this manuscript and David Lee of the North Carolina State Museum for confirming the absence of records for the Carolinas. I was encouraged to prepare this note by James A. Rodgers, Jr. and I appreciate his editorial assistance.

LITERATURE CITED

- AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION. 1983. Check-list of North American birds, 6th ed. Lawrence, Kansas: Allen Press.
- GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY. 1977. Annotated checklist of Georgia Birds. Occasional Publication Number 6.
- NETTLESHIP, D. N., AND P. G. H. EVANS. 1985. Distribution and status of the Atlantic Alcidae. Pp. 54-154 *in* The Atlantic Alcidae (Nettleship, D. N., and T. R. Birkhead, eds.). Orlando, Florida: Academic Press.
- OGDEN, J. C. 1987. The winter season—Florida region. *Amer. Birds* 41: 274.

Ridgeway, R. 1919. The birds of North and Middle America, part VIII. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office.

SCOTT, F. R. 1979. The winter season—middle Atlantic coast region. Amer. Birds 33: 271.

VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY. 1979. Virginia's birdlife, an annotated checklist. Virginia Avifauna Number 2.

Jane Murray Brooks, 924 Jackson Way, Fort Pierce, Florida 34949.

Florida Field Naturalist 16: 10-12, 1988.

Correction of the type locality of the Gulf Hammock dwarf siren, *Pseudobranchius striatus lustricolus*.—Neill (1951, Publ. Res. Div. Ross Allen's Reptile Inst. 1: 39-46) described the Gulf Hammock dwarf siren (*Pseudobranchius striatus lustricolus*) and reported the type locality to be 7.8 miles (12.6 km) southeast of Otter Creek, Levy County, Florida. He further stated, "On the night of September 8, 1950, Mr. E. Ross Allen and I collected at the type locality of the new form, just on the heels of a severe hurricane that had ravaged the Gulf Hammock. Torrential rains had flooded all but the higher ridges. Creeks, ponds and drainage ditches had coalesced to form an unbroken expanse of water along both sides of the highway from the outskirts of Otter Creek to Cedar Key" (Neill 1951:42).

In Otter Creek, U.S. highway 19 runs northwest and southeast, and intersects Florida highway 24, which runs northeast and southwest (Fig. 1). Cedar Key lies southwest of Otter Creek along Florida highway 24. Neill's (1951) discussion of conditions along the highway to Cedar Key suggests that the type of locality of *P. s. lustricolus* may lie southwest of Otter Creek along highway 24 rather than southeast along highway 19.

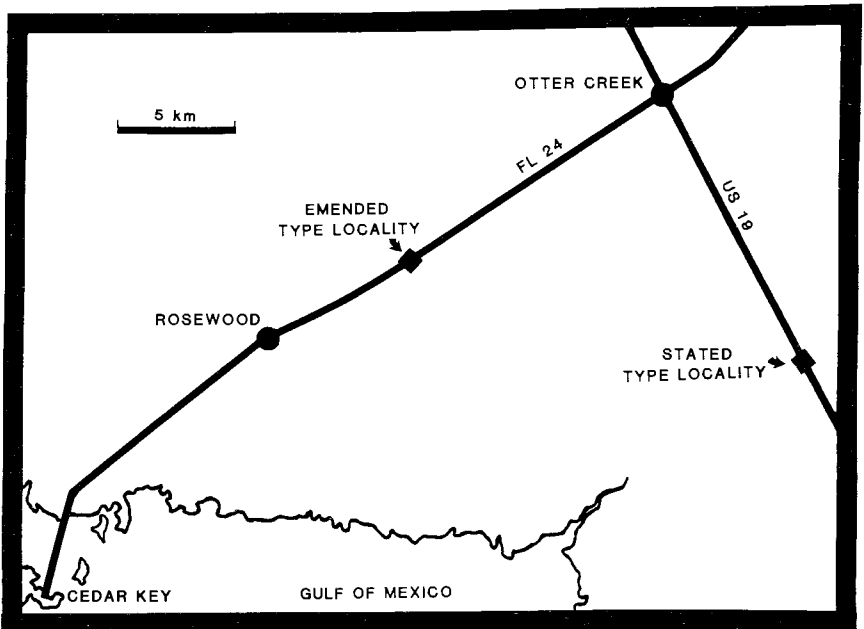


Figure 1. Map of the Gulf Hammock region, Levy County, Florida showing the reported and emended type localities for *Pseudobranchius s. lustricolus*.