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## A Mockingbird and Blue Jay Seeking Shelter from Rain

Florida Field Naturalist

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- Dept. of Biol. Science, Fla. State Univ., Tallahassee, Fla. 32306.*

## FIELD NOTES

### A Great Cormorant in West Florida

On October 29, 1972, I observed an immature Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) on an old dock in Pensacola Bay. It had a pale yellow face, white throat, dark breast, and clear white belly and abdomen to the under tail coverts. It was also observed during the day with 7X binoculars and 30X telescope by my wife, Lucy, and Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Furnans under excellent lighting conditions. I estimated its total length at about 40 inches. Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) in the vicinity were available for comparison. We had just returned from a trip to Maine, where we had seen this species for the first time. My wife took recognizable photographs of it. To the best of my knowledge this is the westernmost record of the bird in Florida. It reappeared at this location briefly on the morning of October 31. An immature Great Cormorant seen on the Alabama coast by Thomas A. Imhof in early November may have been the same individual.—Robert Duncan, 614 Fairpoint Drive, Gulf Breeze, Florida 32561.

### A Mockingbird and Blue Jay Seeking Shelter from Rain

No articles or notes were found in the literature on the behavior of avian forms during various intensities of precipitation. Dawson has recorded the incidence of House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) killed by a rain storm (Dawson, D.G. 1967. Roosting Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) killed by a Rainstorm, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, *Notornis*, 14: 208-210). Hickman attributed the death of a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) to heavy ground fog and rain (Hickman, G. L. 1972. Dead Great Blue Heron found at 11,000 foot Utah Elevation. *Great Basin Naturalist*, 32(2):112).

Heavy rain showers fell with varied intensity during the morning and afternoon of 24 May 1970 in Vero Beach, Florida, following the dissipation of Hurricane Alma. I saw a Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) on 4 occasions (Figure 1) and a Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) on 2 occasions actively seeking shelter on a small branch located under a larger limb of a Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*). The shelter was occupied only during high precipitation intensities which lasted for periods of 5 to 8 minutes. When the rainfall decreased, the bird left the shelter within seconds. The crown, nape, back, scapulars, and rump feathers of both birds appeared to be saturated.

Once, when the Mockingbird occupied the "shelter branch", the Blue Jay appeared but, seeing it occupied, flew down approximately 9 feet, lighting on the outside extension of my home air conditioner. Although the Blue Jay directed chiding vocalizations toward the Mockingbird, it did not elicit any observable behavioral responses from the Mockingbird.

At 1706 hours on 25 June 1970, during a heavy thundershower, I again saw a Mockingbird on the same "shelter branch." It departed at 1723 hours coinciding with a moderation of rainfall.— Gary L. Hickman, 355 South Dixie Highway, Vero Beach, Florida 32960.

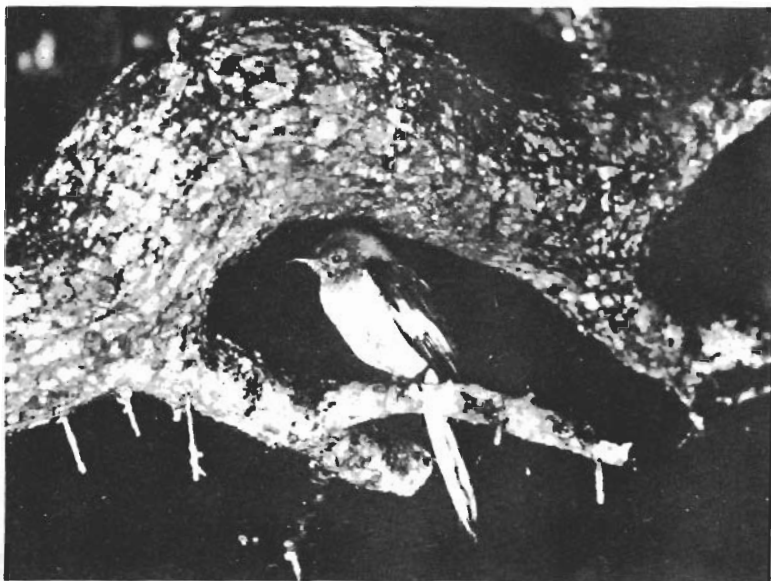


Figure 1. A Mockingbird setting on a "shelter branch" during high precipitation intensities.

### **An Early Common Scoter in Northern Florida**

On the morning of October 22, 1972, I observed a Common Scoter (*Oidemia nigra*) swimming in the salt-marsh area of the Fenholloway River, Taylor County, Florida. I watched it from my canoe at a distance of about 40 feet through 7x50 binoculars in good light (clear sky, about 90