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An Early Common Scoter in Northern Florida

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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.

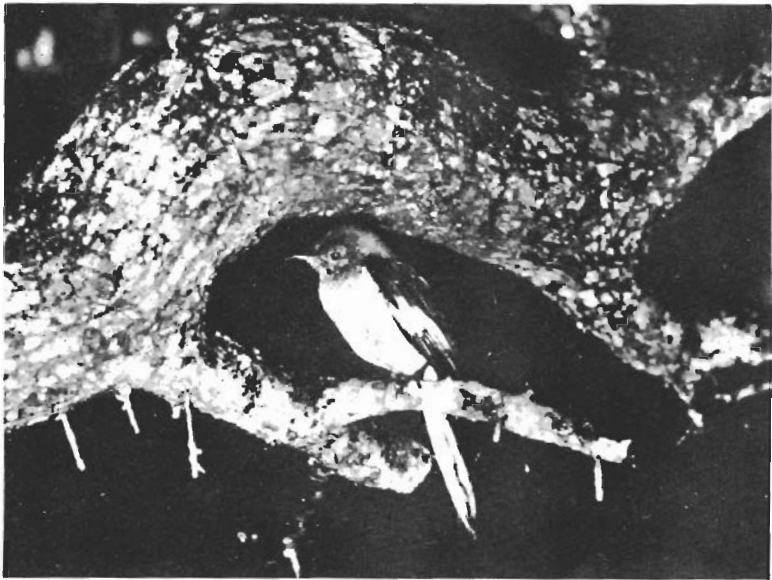


Figure 1. A Mockingbird setting on a "shelter branch" during high precipitation intensities.

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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

degrees from the sun). The heavy-set body and the outline of the head and bill indicated that it was a scoter, and the presence of a large, off-white cheek-and-gular patch on the otherwise uniformly dark-brown plumage indicated a female or immature male Common Scoter. When it flew I noticed an absence of wing patches, lending further support to my identification.

Although there are records of summering scoters in Florida, there seems to be no earlier fall arrival date for the Common Scoter.—Conrad E. Weiser, 314 Lorene St., Tallahassee, Florida 32304.

A Swimming Bald Eagle

While on a boat trip from Chokoloskee to Cape Sable on July 18, 1970, with Don Lilley of Macon, Georgia, I saw an adult Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) force a low-flying Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) to drop its fish into the sea some 3-5 miles offshore from the mouth of Shark River. The eagle entered the water and floated with wings and tail "spread-eagled" and head held high as it searched in vain for the fish. The furious Osprey hovered just overhead (south Florida Ospreys are especially combative with eagles), but not until I stopped my boat close by did the eagle finally take off—very heavily—and head for the distant shore, with the screaming Osprey bedeviling it all the way. Eagles sometimes briefly dip into the water after fish, but observers with whom I have discussed this have never seen one actually float on the surface. Comment by others with regard to such behavior would be of interest.—John B. Edscorn, Rt. 3, Box 400, Lakeland, Florida 33801.

Autumn Singing by Ovenbirds

On Sept. 19, 1970, Paul Fellers, Chester Shaffer, Kris Edscorn, and I twice heard an Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) sing its typical "teeCHUR, teeCHUR, etc." song in Saddle Creek Park near Lakeland. Again, on Sept. 4, 5, and 6, 1972, a newly-arrived migrant Ovenbird in woods at my home near Lakeland came to my "pssh" calling each morning, and with head feathers raised it repeatedly sang in a very "territorial" manner in plain sight at very close range. To date I have learned of no other records of Ovenbirds singing in Florida at any season. If any such instances are known, I would appreciate hearing of them—John B. Edscorn, Rt. 3, Box 400, Lakeland, Florida 33801.

Obituaries

Roy Cline Hallman

Roy Cline Hallman was a lifelong resident of Florida. He was born at Bartow, April 24, 1894, and passed away in Panama City on December 7, 1972. Roy became interested in birds as a small boy. Like many others of that period, his interest was stimulated by collecting birds' eggs—a hobby he maintained all his life but practiced little after the 1930's.

I met Roy Hallman in March, 1931. The occasion was the publication of his note on the nesting of the Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) in the palmetto clumps on Anastasia Island. I had never seen a "buzzard" nest, which circumstance Roy generously agreed to change, and promptly did.