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FIRST FLORIDA SPECIMENS OF THE SHINY COWBIRD

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Since about 1900, the Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*) has been spreading north-westward from the southern Lesser Antilles at an accelerating rate (Bond 1976, Post and Wiley 1977, Cruz et al. 1989). It was first identified in North America in 1985, when a male was sighted at Lower Matecumbe Key, Monroe County, Florida (Smith and Sprunt 1987). Three Males were photographed at Islamorada, Monroe County, Florida in 1986, to provide the first material documentation of the species' occurrence in North America (Smith and Sprunt 1987). The first North American specimen, a juvenile male, was obtained on 28 July 1989 at Sullivan's Island, Charleston County, South Carolina (Hutcheson and Post 1990).

On 25 July 1991 during 1800-1830 hours, I obtained one adult (after second-year) male and one sub-adult (second-year) male Shiny Cowbird near the western limits of the City of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County, Florida. The cowbirds were in a mixed-species roost composed of about 170 Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*), 50 Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*), and 30 Boat-tailed Grackles (*Quiscalus major*). The birds were roosting over water in a small (15 m X 50 m) cattail (*Typha* spp.) marsh. The Shiny Cowbirds did not associate with each other, nor did they approach closer than 1 m to any of the other roosting birds. Both specimens were prepared as standard study skins with detached, flattened wings. The adult male Shiny Cowbird (Charleston Museum No. 1991.37.04) weighed 46.5 g. It was very fat (fat class = 5; Helms and Drury 1960). The wing chord and tail measured 95 mm and 70 mm, respectively. Its testes were enlarged (left = 7.3 mm X 4.5 mm; right = 5.0 mm X 5.0 mm). Its skull was fully ossified (pneumatized). The sub-adult male (ChM No. 1991.37.05) was also very fat, and weighed 48.0 g. Its wing chord and tail were 93 mm and 68 mm, respectively. Its testes were enlarged (left = 5.0 mm X 4.0 mm; right = 4.0 mm X 3.5 mm). The skull of the juvenile was 50% pneumatized. The stomachs of both individuals were full of millet (*Panicum miliaceum*) seeds, which measured about 1.5 mm in diameter. The stomach contents were saved. Neither bird was molting.

Based on comparisons with a series in the Charleston Museum, I determined that both individuals are of the subspecies *M. b. minimus*. These specimens appear to constitute the eighth and ninth for North America, as previously four were collected in South Carolina (Hutcheson and Post 1990; Post, unpubl.), one in Texas (G. W. Lasley, in litt.), one in Oklahoma (Grzybowski and Fazio 1991) and one in North Carolina (R. C. Laybourne, Smithsonian Institution, in litt.)

I thank the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission for giving Charleston Museum personnel permission to collect Shiny Cowbirds in Florida. I also thank P. G. Merritt, P. W. Smith and A. Sprunt, IV for their helpful comments on the manuscript.

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**POPULATION CHANGES IN A LONG-TERM NORTHERN ORIOLE
WINTER ROOST IN CENTRAL FLORIDA**

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The Northern Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) is known to roost communally in groups of a dozen or more on its wintering grounds (Bent 1958). However, such roosts are not well documented in Florida. Previous observations of flocks of orioles in Florida include few details. Stevenson (1972) reported flocks of up to 30 to 40 Northern Orioles at three locations in North Florida, but there was no mention of roosting. An earlier account (S. Grimes in Anonymous 1963) that mentions large flocks in the Jacksonville area apparently consists only of feeder records. This paper describes a roost that occurred at Lake Eva Park in Haines City in Polk County between 1982 and 1989.

On 10 December 1982, I saw four adult Northern Orioles shortly after dusk in a queen palm (*Arecastrum romazoffianum*), a usually frost-resistant neotropical species commonly used in Florida landscapings (McCurrach 1960). It was one of a group of four palms about 4 m high that were growing along the street at the edge of the park. I did not determine that these trees may be a regular roosting spot until later that winter on 16 February 1983. When I visited the site on that date, shortly before dusk, I saw Northern Orioles entering some nearby oaks (*Quercus virginiana* and *Q. laurifolia*) singly and in small groups before settling into the palms. At this time I observed a total of ten birds of various sexes and maturity. Other observers and I visited the roost irregularly between that date and the discovery of the roost's disappearance in 1990.