

Black Phoebe Sighted at Dry Tortugas

On 13 April 1976 on Loggerhead Key, Dry Tortugas, I saw a phoebe, about 15 m away, on the bare branch of an old *Casuarina* tree. The phoebe moved through the branches and settled, facing me, about 5 m above the cactus vegetation growing under the tree. The black head, flanks, and back, and the sharp contrast of the broad black breast with the immaculate white belly were the unmistakable characteristics of a Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*). The bill and eyes were dark. I did not observe (nor look for) the white outer edging of the rectrices. After long minutes it changed position, moved to another branch, and then flew off. A hard wind, blowing for the next 5 days, kept Dr. William B. Robertson, Jr. and other members of our Sooty Tern banding expedition from reaching Loggerhead Key to observe the phoebe, but when we finally returned we could not find it.

Sprunt placed the species on the Hypothetical List for Florida from the report of one "observed on Key Largo, Monroe County, Dec. 28-29, 1952, by Richard C. Rosche . . . the first reported from the state" (1954. Florida Bird Life, Coward-McCann, New York. p. 500). Helen Cruickshank (pers. comm.) saw one 26 October 1958 "on a wire at the end of route 520, Cocoa Beach, Brevard County." Sidney Harrison reported one at Kissimmee, Osceola County, in 1973. "Unmistakably described was a Black Phoebe, a great rarity, seen near Kissimmee November 4 by one well acquainted with the bird" (Edscorn, 1974, *Amer. Birds*, 28: 43).

This fourth sighting and only spring record for Florida was viewed through a 9-power Zeiss binocular in good light. The species is well known to me from observations in California and Arizona. — *Erma J. Fisk*, 17101 S. W. 284th Street, Homestead, Florida 33030.

News and Notes

Nominating Committee — Chairman Steve Nesbitt, 4005 South Main St., Gainesville, Florida 32602, would be pleased to receive your suggestions for candidates for the new slate of officers to be presented at the spring 1977 meeting in Lake Placid.

Spring 1977 Meeting — At the Lake Placid Holiday Inn on 22-24 April 1974. For information write Fred Lohrer, Archbold Biological Station, Rt 2, Box 180, Lake Placid, Florida 33852.