

A Sabine's Gull at the Dry Tortugas, Florida.—On 8 August 1978 at 1630 I was photographing terns on the north coaling dock at Fort Jefferson, Garden Key, Dry Tortugas, Florida, when I watched a summer-plumaged adult Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) alight on the dock among the Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) and Royal (*Sterna maximus*) terns (Fig. 1). I was able to confirm my identification of the gull by consulting the field guides I had with me. I watched the bird for 15 minutes until it flew towards nearby Bush Key. While on the coaling dock, the gull was pecked at by the nearby terns and even after the gull flew to a piling it was soon displaced by two Noddy Terns, and then flew off.



Fig. 1. Sabine's Gull at Garden Key, Dry Tortugas, Florida, 8 August 1978.

I notified other park service personnel at the Fort but no one else observed the gull. There are four other Florida records of Sabine's Gull (23 Sept.-4 Nov., Langridge 1979, Fla. Field Nat. 7: 27) all from the Atlantic coast. This is the first sight record of the Sabine's Gull from the Dry Tortugas and six weeks earlier than the earliest previous record for Florida.—MARK R. COLLIE, 1920 *E. Columbia St., Allentown, Pennsylvania 18103*.

A Band-tailed Pigeon recovery in Florida.—While reviewing computer printouts of all birds banded or recovered in Florida, I discovered the record of a Band-tailed Pigeon (*Columba fasciata*). Subsequent investigation of records from the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL), Laurel, Maryland, revealed that it was banded in northwest Oregon (lat. 45°20' long. 122°40') on 15 May 1966. It was shot near Bonifay, Holmes County, Florida, in December 1967 by a hunter who mailed the band (#066528422) to the BBL with an accompanying letter.

The evidence accumulated indicates that this was a wild bird and the species should be added to the state list. The following information supports the validity of the record. 1. The bander, James Cromwell, employed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, banded at least 2363 Band-tailed Pigeons during the years 1965-1968 (Otis Swisher, President, Western Bird Banding Association, pers. comm.). The bird in question was an adult male at the time of banding. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that it was misidentified by such an experienced bander. 2. The hunter who shot the bird wrote that it was a 'pigeon,' and included the actual band in his letter to the BBL. The band is in excellent condition with the numbers clearly legible even on a xerox copy. 3. A letter from the Director, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, states "Oregon has not traded any Band-tailed Pigeons to any other state," and a letter from the Chief, Bureau of Wildlife Resources, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, states that "there has been no attempt to introduce Band-tailed Pigeons into Florida." 4. There are occurrences of this species in other southeastern states. Imhof (1976, Alabama birds, 2nd ed., University, Ala., Univ. Ala. Press) places the bird on Alabama's hypothetical list because the sole record, based on one lengthy observation, lacks a photograph or specimen. Lowery (1974, Louisiana birds, 3rd rev. ed., Baton Rouge, La., La. State Univ. Press) states that "at least five have been recorded in the state." Four of these were specimens.

The status of the Band-tailed Pigeon in Florida rests on two occurrences. There is a record and photograph of two at Sarasota (Letson 1968, Fla. Nat. 41: 126). However, Stevenson (1976, Vertebrates of Florida, Gainesville, Univ. Presses Fla.) considered these "more likely to have escaped from captivity than to have wandered so far from their usual range." Except for one outer rectrix on one of the Sarasota birds, the tail feathers were not ragged as is often the case with captive birds. The second reference (Edscorn 1974, Fla. Nat. 47: 31) cites no details other than one reported from Sugarloaf Key.

The hunter who shot the Bonifay pigeon did so "about a week before Christmas (1967)" within the same week the Sarasota birds were first seen (17 December 1967). This recovery along with the photographed Sarasota birds should be sufficient evidence to establish the Band-tailed Pigeon on the Florida State list.

I thank Otis Swisher, Hal A. Beecher, Harry Nehls, Henry M. Stevenson and Lovett E. Williams for information I received, and Robert A. Duncan for comments on this note. Copies of letters mentioned above and a xerox of the band have been deposited with the Florida Ornithological Society Archives at the Florida State Museum, Gainesville.—LUCY R. DUNCAN, 614 Fairpoint Drive, Gulf Breeze, Florida 32561.

Great Horned Owl suspected of preying upon Snowy Egret.—On 8 September 1977 at 1435 at the Cross Bar Ranch, 5.5 km south of Masaryktown, Pasco County, Florida, we saw a Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) flying across a marsh with a white bird in its talons. The owl landed in an improved pasture about 400 m away. We flushed the owl and it flew to a slash pine 50 m away leaving the white bird behind. We saw no manipulation of the prey by the owl before it flushed.

The white bird was a Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*). The warm, limp carcass had a lacerated, broken neck and some feather loss at the wound. We left the egret on the ground and the owl remained in the pine tree. We returned several hours later; the egret had not been moved and the owl was not visible.

Snowy Egrets are common at the marsh. The area is devoid of paved access roads and powerlines, thus eliminating some obvious alternative causes of the egret's death. Bent (1938, Bull. U.S. Natl. Mus. 170) Lists "small herons" (species unspecified) among the many species of birds eaten by the Great Horned Owl.—RICHARD CALLAHAN AND WILLIAM CAREY, *Biological Research Associates*, 504 S. Brevard Ave., Tampa, Florida 33606.

Short-eared Owl on Bush Key, Dry Tortugas, Florida.—The Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) occurs widely in the Holarctic region, in South America and in the West Indies. In eastern North America it breeds south to Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey and Virginia (AOU Checklist, 1957) and is an uncommon but regular winter visitor to Florida (Sprunt 1954, Florida bird life, New York, Coward McCann, Inc.). In recent years 3-6 per year total have appeared on Florida Christmas Bird Counts. Short-eared Owls are notorious wanderers, having established breeding populations on a number of oceanic island groups, including Hawaii, the Galapagos Islands, the Falkland Islands and the Juan Fernandez Islands, and appearing as vagrants on many other islands (Burton 1973, *Owls of the World*, New York, Dutton and Co.).

On the afternoon of 20 June 1978, a Short-eared Owl was flushed from bare ground on the east spit of Bush Key, Dry Tortugas, Monroe County, Florida. The bird flew fairly strongly, but when relocated the next morning it was unable or unwilling to fly and was captured. It was thin and its plumage was somewhat waterlogged, but otherwise the bird appeared healthy (Fig. 1). We identified it by plumage and wing measurement as the widespread holarctic race, *A. f. flammeus*, rather than one of the resident West Indian (Puerto Rico or Hispaniola) races. This is only the second summer record of *Asio flammeus* in Florida (on 14 June 1963 Henry M.