

- OLROG, C. C. 1967. Breeding of the Band-tailed Gull (*Larus belcheri*) on the Atlantic coast of Argentina. *Condor* 69: 42-48.
- OLSON, C. S. 1976. Band-tailed Gull photographed in Florida. *Auk* 93: 176-177.
- RIDGELY, R. S. 1976. A guide to the birds of Panama. Princeton, Princeton Univ. Press.
- STEVENSON, H. M. 1975. Florida region. *Amer. Birds* 29: 680-683.
- STEVENSON, H. M. 1976. Florida region. *Amer. Birds* 30: 708-711.

HENRY M. STEVENSON, *Tall Timbers Research Station, Rt. 1, Box 160, Tallahassee, Florida 32312*. LYMAN E. GOODNIGHT (DECEASED), and CURTIS L. KINGSBERY, 2900 N. *Magnolia Ave., Pensacola, Florida 32503*.

Fla. Field Nat. 8(1): 23-24, 1980

**Ruddy Quail Dove again at Dry Tortugas.**—About noon on 15 December 1977, a cold day with severe northwesterly squalls, Given found and photographed a large, reddish dove on the second tier of Fort Jefferson, Dry Tortugas, Monroe County, Florida. She saw the bird make a short flight to a more sheltered location but failed to find it in a thorough search the following day. The photographs readily identify the bird as a male Ruddy Quail Dove (*Geotrygon montana*), the dull color of the crown (brownish shading to gray on the forehead) suggesting that it had not attained full adult plumage. We thank Albert Schwartz of Miami for permitting Robertson to compare the photos with specimens in the Albert Schwartz Collection of West Indian birds. Copies of the set of two color prints have been deposited in bird record photo files at the South Florida Research Center and the Tall Timbers Research Station.

This record is the fifth report of the species from Florida and the second from Dry Tortugas. The previous occurrences were: Key West, 8 December 1888, specimen (Scott 1889); Key West, May 1923, captured alive (Hollister 1925); Tavernier, Key Largo, 13 February 1952, sight record (Sprunt 1954:238); and, Garden Key, Dry Tortugas, 13 May 1962, partial remains collected (Robertson and Mason 1965:135). Because the species exhibits strong sexual dimorphism of plumage (males rufous, females olive-brown), one can determine from published accounts that at least four of the five individuals so far found in Florida were males. (The brief description of the 1923 Key West record includes no information on this point.) As seems usual for Florida records of West Indian birds (Robertson and Kushlan 1974), none of the occurrences of the Ruddy Quail Dove can be attributed definitely to hurricane transport. All records followed hurricane seasons in which no tropical storms moved across the species' usual range and thence to Florida. Assuming that the present bird is most likely to have originated in western Cuba (100 mi S), one can speculate that the intense flow of air from the south which commonly precedes the arrival of strong cold fronts may account for its presence at Dry Tortugas.

For all Florida records of vagrant West Indian birds it is necessary to consider the possibility of escaped captives or accidental transport on boats. This is especially true for largely terrestrial, forest birds such as the Ruddy Quail Dove. Referring to the 1962 record at Dry Tortugas, Paulson commented (Paulson and Stevenson 1962:401), "The fact that there are now four records of this species in Florida is puzzling to those who know it as a non-migratory bird of dense tropical forest. Can these records all be attributed to human influence?" Complete assurance that a particular record represents natural vagrancy doubtless can never be achieved, but several lines of argument suggest that the Ruddy Quail Dove may not be as sedentary as is generally thought. French (1973:195) writes, "... some migration or dispersal evidently occurs, since I trapped a male on Soldado Rock on 1 October." Soldado Rock is a barren islet lying about 15 miles off the southwestern cape of Trinidad. It is also relevant that the Ruddy Quail Dove shows little geographical variation over an enormous range embracing the West Indies and humid areas virtually throughout the continental Neotropics. Griscom (1932:119) stated that its wide range without subspecific variation must indicate an unusual degree of genetic stability in an "ancient stock". It is equally arguable, however, that movement of birds between populations effectively cancels local variation. Much the same

argument applies for another recent Antillean vagrant to Florida, the Key West Quail Dove (*Geotrygon chrysis*), which occurs widely in the Bahamas and Greater Antilles without geographical variation. Audubon (in Howell 1932:282), in addition, reported seeing Key West Quail Doves in the Straits of Florida supposedly migrating from Cuba to the Florida Keys. From their present ranges and lack of variation it seems possible that both of the widely distributed species of quail doves in the West Indies disperse fairly readily between islands. If so, it is not surprising that they occasionally reach southern Florida.

## LITERATURE CITED

- FRENCH, R. 1973. A guide to the birds of Trinidad and Tobago. Wynnewood, Pa., Livingston Publ. Co.
- GRISCOM, L. 1932. The distribution of bird-life in Guatemala. Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. 64: 1-439.
- HOLLISTER, N. 1925. Another record of the Ruddy Quail-Dove at Key West. Auk 42: 130.
- HOWELL, A. H. 1932. Florida bird life. Tallahassee, Florida Dept. Game Fresh Water Fish.
- PAULSON, D. R., AND H. M. STEVENSON. 1962. Florida region. Aud. Field Notes 16: 398-404.
- ROBERTSON, W. B., JR., AND J. A. KUSHLAN. 1974. The south Florida avifauna. Miami Geol. Soc. Mem. 2: 414-452.
- ROBERTSON, W. B., JR., AND C. R. MASON. 1965. Additional bird records from the Dry Tortugas. Fla. Nat. 38: 131-138.
- SCOTT, W. E. D. 1889. Records of rare birds at Key West, Florida, and vicinity, with a note on the capture of a dove (*Geotrygon montana*) new to North America. Auk 6: 160-161.
- SFRUNT, A., JR. 1954. Florida bird life. New York, Coward-McCann, Inc.

WILLIAM B. ROBERTSON, JR., *National Park Service, South Florida Research Center, Everglades National Park, Homestead, Florida, 33030*, and BERYL GIVEN, *National Park Service, Fort Jefferson National Monument, c/o U. S. Coast Guard Base, Key West, Florida, 33040*.

Fla. Field Nat. 8(1): 24-25, 1980

**Notes on the food habits of the Burrowing Owl in Duval County, Florida.**—The Florida Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia floridana*) has recently been expanding its range in northern Florida, apparently invading and occupying newly cleared land (Ligon 1963, Auk 80: 367-368; Courser 1979, Amer. Birds 13: 143-144). The recently established and apparently successful owl colony at Imeson Industrial Park (formerly Imeson Airport) in North Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida, roughly 33 km south of the Georgia border, may represent the current northernmost breeding limit of the subspecies. Burrowing Owls have been established at Imeson since at least 1976 when two burrows (and at least two owls) were present. This small owl population has continued to increase with at least three pairs of adults fledging a total of 12 young in 1979 (S. Grimes, pers. comm.).

The burrows at Imeson are located in an open prairie-like habitat consisting of a sparse cover of short grasses with widely scattered pine trees (1-2 m in height) in sandy soil. Pellets and scattered prey remains collected at the burrows during May 1977 were examined and analyzed to determine food habits, as little such data is available on Florida Burrowing Owls.

All intact pellets contained sand, ranging from 3% to 60% of the total contents by volume. Eighty percent of the pellets at burrow B contained plant material. All of these contained grass stems and one contained a 10 cm by 3 cm piece of *Nostoc*, a fresh water blue-green alga. None of the pellets at burrow A contained any noticeable plant material. The presence of sand and plant matter in burrowing owl pellets has been related to nest excavation and accidental ingestion with prey (Thomsen 1971, Condor 73: 177-192).