

NOTES

Bobcat family utilizes tortoise burrow.—Florida gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) excavate long (3-15 m) burrows in well-drained soils and the excavated sand is pushed from the burrow to form a mound at the entrance. The burrows are sometimes curved, either around roots of other obstacles (Auffenberg 1969) or possibly due to the right or left footedness of the tortoise (Hansen 1963). They are known to offer shelter for numerous arthropods (Young and Goff 1939) and vertebrates in Florida including gopher frogs (*Rana areolata*), indigo snakes (*Drymarchon corais*), diamondback rattlesnakes (*Crotalus adamanteus*) (Conant 1958), opossums (*Didelphis virginiana*), foxes, and skunks (Auffenberg 1969). A striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) was found in an unoccupied northern Florida tortoise burrow when it was excavated (Hallinan 1923). In southern Georgia, Landers and Speake (1980) report the frequent use of burrows by old field mice (*Peromyscus polionotus*), cotton mice (*P. gossypinus*), house mice (*Mus musculus*), and cotton rats (*Sigmodon hispidus*), and the enlargement of burrows for dens by cottontail rabbits (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), opossums (*Didelphis marsupialis*), striped skunks, raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), coyotes (*Canis latrans*), and foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*). During spring 1975 I observed a family of red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) occupy three tortoise burrows consecutively in about one ha of scrub 14 km south of Lake Placid, Highlands Co., Florida. At the third burrow the tortoise left when the foxes arrived; the first two appeared abandoned. In Utah one of the major predators of the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), the kit fox (*Vulpes velox*), uses tortoise burrows in summer and winter (Coombs 1977).

Here I report the utilization of a tortoise burrow by three bobcat (*Lynx rufus floridanus*) kittens and their mother in the west section of the Archbold Biological Station, 12 km south of Lake Placid, Highlands Co., Florida. The female bobcat gave birth to her eighth litter (Winegarner and Winegarner 1982) in a den under a dense stand of saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*). The den was bordered on the west by a temporary pond in a firelane and otherwise surrounded by scrubby flatwoods dominated by sand live oak (*Quercus geminata*) and saw palmetto. The kittens were born in early August 1982, and I heard them at the natal den until 28 August. When I returned on 4 September at 0840, I found them 14 m away at a tortoise burrow. I heard calls of a kitten coming from the edge of the mound at the entrance of the burrow, and I watched as the adult female approached this kitten and began to groom it. When the adult moved to the center of the entrance, she gave a low "Meow" and two more cubs ran out of the burrow. She greeted them with licks to the face and shoulders. Grooming and play behavior continued until 0940 when the adult half entered the burrow head first, loudly purring. All three cubs walked past the adult into the burrow, after which she backed out. The kittens came out after her and more greeting behavior ensued. My experience with bobcat behavior led me to believe the adult was returning from a hunting foray. I

left the area at 1015. That evening 2.3 cm of rain fell, and the next day by 0730 I found fresh tracks of the adult female leading away from the area alone, but I did not see the cats. Five centimeters of rain on 6 September cleared old tracks, and the family group had moved south to a new site.

During my observations of bobcats using the burrow, I saw no tortoise tracks there. Although it has been suggested that bobcats could prey on young and old tortoises (Woodbury and Hardy 1948), in the ten years I have been examining bobcat scats I have seen no evidence of tortoise in their diet and no actual reports were found in the literature. Thus I believe the bobcats I observed were exploring the burrow and found shelter.

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Collection date for the first Florida specimen of the Thayer's Gull.—We recently reported on collection of the first Florida specimen of the Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*) (Stevenson and Atherton 1984, Fla. Field Nat. 12: 99-103. We subsequently have discovered that the published sighting and collection dates of this specimen were incorrect. The gull was first seen at Port St. Joe, Gulf County, on 11 June 1983 and collected on 12 June 1983.—Henry M. Stevenson, Tall Timbers Research Station, Rt. 1, Box 160, Tallahassee, Florida 32312 and Lyn S. Atherton, Box 58124, Tierra Verde, Florida 33715-8124.

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