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First Record of the Eastern Phoebe Nesting in Florida

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On 28 May 1988, while conducting a Breeding Bird Atlas survey in Okaloosa County, Florida, six members of the Choctawhatchee Audubon Society discovered a nest of Eastern Phoebes (*Sayornis phoebe*) containing four young. Donald Ware found the nest under the Pond Creek bridge on County Road #2, about 9.6 km south of the Alabama state line in northern Okaloosa County. The nest was located on a 45 degree slanted concrete surface, about 2.7 meters above the ground. It was propped up by a mud wasp nest and was semicircular, constructed of mud, grasses and fibers, with mosses and hair in the covering. The nest contained four young which occasionally rested their mandibles on the edge of the nest. A pair of adults fed near the bridge, frequently bobbing and wagging their tails. Adult identifications were confirmed by Ware, Gertrude Oakman, Dixie Nicholson, Carolyn Shaeffer, and Jim and Susan Brickell. The "fee-bee" call was heard. Nicholson, Shaeffer and Jim Brickell observed the adults feeding the young. Jim Brickell took several photographs of the nest. On 30 May 1988, Wesley Biggs, Herbert W. Kale, II, and Larry and Judy Hopkins observed the nesting Phoebes. Photographs also were taken by Biggs and an excellent quality videotape of the nest, young, and adults was made by Larry Hopkins. By 2 June 1988, Ware observed that the nest was vacated but Phoebes were seen in the vicinity. The nest was collected on 21 July and deposited with the Florida State Museum, Gainesville, on 25 July.

In eastern North America, the Eastern Phoebe breeds from northern Manitoba, southern Nova Scotia south to central Alabama, northern Georgia, northeastern Mississippi, and northwest Louisiana (American Ornithologists' Union 1983) The closest known confirmed breeding records occur along the fall line in east-central Alabama (Lee County), with unconfirmed but suspected breeding as far south as Crenshaw and Washington counties in southern Alabama (Imhof 1976). This record establishes the first breeding record for this species in the state of Florida and is an extension of its breeding range about 190 km south of its confirmed breeding range in Alabama. It also is the southernmost breeding record for the species in eastern North America.

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