

KNIGHT ANOLES (*ANOLIS EQUESTRIS*) IN EASTERN PALM BEACH AND MARTIN COUNTIES FOLLOWING THE SEPTEMBER 2004 HURRICANESJACK P. HAILMAN¹, ELIZABETH D. HAILMAN², AND BONNIE SCHERER³¹Archbold Biological Station, 123 Main Drive, Venus, Florida 33960

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The introduced Knight Anole (*Anolis equestris*) poses a threat to small birds according to the web site of the Bishop Museum (<http://hbs.bishopmuseum.org/good-bad/anoles-full.html>) in Hawaii, where the species has also been introduced. This large, arboreal lizard has been reported from at least 11 counties in south Florida (<http://wld.fwc.state.fl.us/critters/exotics/SpeciesNumberResults.asp?SPPNO=20>). It is thus of interest to ornithologists as well as herpetologists to document its occurrence in two areas where it appears not to have been previously reported.

On the morning of 24 September 2004, three weeks after Hurricane Frances, JPH and EDH found a single Knight Anole on a huge pile of hurricane debris at the south end of Ocean Drive in Jupiter Inlet Colony, Palm Beach County. This location is about 100 m north of the west end of the Jupiter Inlet jetty on the north side of the Loxahatchee River (approximately 26°56.6'N, 80°03.5'W). The locale is in the extreme northeast Palm Beach County. The only listed reports for Palm Beach County have been from



Figure 1. Knight Anole in Stuart, Martin County, Florida, late September or early October 2004. Photograph by Bonnie Scherer.

Boca Raton in the extreme southern part of the county. Despite nearly daily walks over the same route for the previous 5 years, we had never seen a Knight Anole previously, nor have we seen one since.

Hurricane Jeanne struck the coast in the early hours of the next day (25 September). Soon after (exact date not recorded), BS noticed and photographed a Knight Anole on a fence in Stuart, Martin County (Fig. 1). Presumably the same animal was seen for several days before it disappeared. On 28 July 2005 she again observed a Knight Anole, this time on an oak tree in her yard. The locale is in the southeast part of the county (approximately 27°10'N, 80°13'W). The only previous reports from Martin County have been from Port Mayaca on Lake Okeechobee in the extreme western part of the county.

The Knight Anole may be more widespread than reports suggest. The largest species of *Anolis* known (so large that it is sometimes mistaken for the Green Iguana, *Iguana iguana*), the Knight Anole is a highly arboreal species. It is rarely noticed even where it is reputed to be common, as in Fairchild Tropical Gardens and other places in Coral Gables, Miami-Dade County. Both localities reported here were in the paths of hurricanes Frances and Jeanne, the centers of which made landfall near the Martin County locale given above. As the first hurricanes in decades to hit directly this part of the Atlantic coast, these storms wreaked widespread damage to vegetation, topping and toppling trees. We speculate that Knight Anoles came down with vegetation during the hurricanes, and that the individuals we saw were searching for new homes.