

**A RECENT WINTER RECORD OF SWAINSON'S THRUSH
(*Catharus ustulatus*) IN FLORIDA**

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Publications in this journal have documented first winter records in Florida of seven species of Neotropical birds that breed in or migrate through the state (e.g., Bowman et al. 1995; Doyle 2002; Pranty et al. 2005, 2008 and references therein). In this note we document a winter occurrence of Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) that seems to represent the second winter record in Florida.

Discovery and description.—On 14 January 2010, Larry Manfredi (in litt.) discovered a Swainson's Thrush along Gumbo Limbo Trail in Everglades National Park, Miami-Dade County, Florida. He showed the bird to others but could not obtain photographic evidence to document the occurrence. One month later, on 15 February 2010, Sanchez refound the Swainson's Thrush and obtained one photograph (Fig. 1). Except for pale rusty wing panels, the bird was uniformly olive above, with no contrast between the back, rump, and uppertail. The head was olive with a pale buffy face, lores, chin, and throat; whitish eyering; and dark malar stripe. The irides were black. The upper mandible appeared entirely dark, while the lower mandible was pale orange basally and dark distally. The underparts were photographed in profile, but the whitish breast and gray belly, both with dark mottling, are visible. The legs and feet were pale pink. Many pale-tipped juvenal feathers were retained on the scapulars; otherwise, the plumage appeared fresh with no wear. No vocalizations were heard.

Pranty sent Sanchez's photograph to two ornithologists who authored a series of articles on the identification of *Hylocichla* and *Catharus* thrushes (Lane and Jaramillo 2000). A. Jaramillo (in litt.) felt that the bird "look[ed] good" for a first-basic Swainson's Thrush. His only concern was the rusty wing panel, which suggested a Hermit Thrush (*C. guttatus*), but that species would also display a rusty tail. Furthermore, the "warm wash on the eyering and throat/malar" of the bird is "100% Swainson's" Thrush rather than Hermit Thrush (A. Jaramillo in litt.). D. Lane (in litt.) agreed that the bird was "indeed a Swainson's Thrush . . . in a most unusual plumage: [with] many retained juvenile scapulars. Since it didn't molt into full first-basic plumage, it may be defective."

Discussion.—The five (Lane and Jaramillo 2000) or six (Mack and Yong 2000) subspecies of Swainson's Thrush are divided into "olive-backed" and "russet-backed" groups that differ in plumage, morphology, breeding and wintering ranges, and vocalizations. Swainson's Thrushes breed across most of central and southern Alaska and Canada and in mountainous areas of the lower 48 states, south to California, New Mexico, Michigan, and West Virginia (Mack and Yong 2000) or Virginia (AOU 1998, Lane and Jaramillo 2000). They winter regularly from central Mexico to Bolivia and northwestern Argentina, and are said to winter casually in California, Texas, and along the Gulf Coast (AOU 1998, Mack and Yong 2000). Taxonomy among the "olive-backed" group is ambiguous. Stevenson and Anderson (1994) stated that Florida specimens represented the two eastern subspecies, *C. u. clarescens* and (especially) *C. u. swainsoni*, but Mack and Yong (2000) considered *clarescens* to be a junior synonym of *swainsoni*. Also, Mack and Yong



Figure 1. Swainson's Thrush in juvenal/first-basic plumage along Gumbo Limbo Trail, Everglades National Park, Miami-Dade County, Florida, on 15 February 2010. This photograph establishes the second record of Swainson's Thrush in Florida during winter, and the first record of a bird that apparently wintered successfully. Photograph by Carlos Sanchez.

(2000) recognized the subspecies *C. u. appalachiensis*, which Stevenson and Anderson (1994) did not mention. Based on its breeding range from New Hampshire and New York southward, *appalachiensis* must occur in Florida. A review of Florida specimens of Swainson's Thrushes based on recent taxonomy seems warranted.

Numerous reports of Swainson's Thrushes in Florida during winter months are known (e.g., ca. 25 reports through 1991, Robertson and Woolfenden 1992; or 35 reports through 1992, Stevenson and Anderson 1994), but most if not all of these likely refer to misidentified Hermit Thrushes. We agree with Robertson and Woolfenden (1992) and Stevenson and Anderson (1994), who questioned all undocumented reports of Swainson's Thrushes in the state during winter. One or two previous winter records exist but are problematic. Herbert W. Kale II collected an "apparently injured" thrush at Vero Beach, Indian River County, on 1 December 1972 (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). This specimen, donated to Pierce Brodtkorb at the University of Florida, was prepared as a skeleton (PB 35283) and now resides in the Museum of Texas Tech University, at Lubbock, Texas (A. W. Kratter in litt.). Robertson and Woolfenden (1992) did not consider this to represent a winter record of Swainson's Thrush because it "was probably an injured migrant." But because it was found on the first day of December, we feel that the thrush should be accepted as a valid winter record, albeit being a borderline case. An-

other purported winter record of Swainson's Thrush involved one banded in Massachusetts on 4 June 1972 and recovered at Orlando, Orange County, Florida, on 24 January 1973 (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). Because the recovered bird was not saved as a specimen or photographed, the original identification, although probably correct, cannot be verified. Thus, Sanchez's photograph seems to provide the second verifiable record of a Swainson's Thrush in Florida during winter months, and the first individual that appeared to winter successfully.

Interestingly, two recent winter records of Swainson's Thrushes are known from Georgia. Thrushes were photographed at St. Catherines Island, Liberty County, on 13 December 2003 by Giff Beaton (Anonymous 2004, Davis 2004) and at St. Simons Island, Glynn County, on 24 December 2009 by Dave Slager (Beaton 2010, G. Beaton in litt., D. Slager in litt.). Both of these locations are along the Atlantic coast in southeastern Georgia, within 50 km of the Florida border.

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