

were plainly seen by all observers.—FLOYD P. WOLFARTH, *East Rutherford, New Jersey*.

Short-tailed Hawk in Florida.—During the years of 1935–36–37 and part of 1938, the writer has had occasion to spend considerable time in field work in southern Florida. Trips have been made in almost every month with the exception of the summer season, and particular attention has been paid to the Everglades. The whole of this great area, from Lake Okeechobee to Cape Sable and from the east coast to the west, has been explored by all possible means of investigation. Several flights have been made by dirigible and amphibian plane; extensive surface work accomplished by means of automobile, on foot, by boats of various descriptions. The many rivers of the southwest coast (Ten Thousand Islands) have been explored; the Big Cypress worked; Cape Sable covered as well as the several lakes in that vicinity, and Whitewater Bay visited on several occasions. The Tamiami Trail has been crossed many times, and the area known as Pinecrest, lying on the so-called Loop of this Trail, has been investigated from the air and on the surface; many of the dense hammocks have been visited on foot. Royal Palm Park (Paradise Key), Long Pine Key and others of the larger wooded areas of the lower Everglades, have all been investigated.

Particular attention has been paid to those species which may be described as rare or unusual. Prominent among these are the Roseate Spoonbill, Flamingo and Cape Sable Sparrow, together with the Short-tailed hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*), the last always an item of attraction to any ornithologist visiting that region. This small *Buteo* occurs in the United States in Florida only, and is very locally distributed there. In recent years, it seems to have become even more uncommon than it once was, and at best, it could never have been described as more than 'occasional'. For excellent accounts of its range and habits, the reader is referred to 'Florida Bird Life' by Arthur H. Howell, page 179, and 'Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey' by Arthur C. Bent, page 254. It is the purpose of the writer simply to state his experience with the species as has been noted in field work described above.

This hawk has been observed on four occasions as follows:

(1) One bird (light phase) seen at Royal Palm Hammock, Tamiami Trail, Collier County, on February 25, 1935, observed at a height of about forty feet in bright sunlight.

(2) One bird (light phase) seen at Flamingo, Cape Sable, Monroe County, on March 12, 1937, perched on dead stub and allowed close approach.

(3) One bird (light phase) seen at Pinecrest, The Loop, Dade County, on January 18, 1938. Exact locality was at the site of the old hotel, about three miles west of the Y on the Tamiami Trail. Bird soared directly overhead in excellent light, and was watched for some minutes.

(4) One bird (dark phase) seen at Deep Lake Hammock, Big Cypress, Collier County, on January 20, 1938. This bird flushed from a nest as we walked under the tree, and was seen at close range. The noise occasioned by its leaving the nest which was placed in a cabbage palm, attracted attention, the wings of the bird clashing audibly amid the palmetto fans. It soared overhead in small circles and disappeared into the hammock to the northeast. It will be noted that the last two observations were made only two days apart, while the first two are separated by more than two years! In the later observations, the two localities are widely separated by some thirty-five or forty miles.

Two nests of this rare hawk have come under the writer's observation. The first

was discovered by Edward J. Reimann, of the Audubon Association's Southwest Coast Patrol, and shown to the writer March 16, 1937. It was built in a red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) on the south shore of the upper reaches of Shark River, southwest coast. It was located about twenty-five feet up, and over the water, composed of mangrove sticks, lined with leaves (green) of myrtle, mangrove, stopper-wood and willow. It contained two eggs. This nest was broken up a day or two after by crows.

The other nest was discovered by the writer as above described. It was built in exactly the same manner as that employed by the Audubon's Caracara, being placed close to the trunk of a cabbage palm, and amid the tuft of fronds near the top of the tree. This is, by a considerable margin, the earliest known nesting date, most of the Florida nesting records having been made in March and April.

The writer knows of another nest discovered by James Earl Moore, of Miami, in late March 1937. It was located in Pinecrest, and was built in a very small cypress, hardly more than eight feet from the ground. Moore found the nest when it contained three eggs and watched it until the birds were hatched and left the nest.

I am told by Warden Reimann that he notes these hawks at intervals during the patrols made by the Southwest Coast Warden Patrol. They seem to be not excessively rare along the rivers which make in from the Gulf to the western Everglades. Such streams as Chatham, Broad, Lostman's, Rodgers and Shark Rivers have figured in his reports. He observed one bird on Marco Island during the taking of 'Bird-Lore's' Christmas Census for 1937. It is the opinion of the writer that this species is one of the rarest of birds in Florida and that this is shared by others is evidenced by Mr. Bent's comment in his account of the species in his 'Life Histories'. Never common, it seems to be steadily decreasing its range southward, and now is confined pretty much to the region south of the Tamiami Trail and the southwestern portions of the Everglades. Every effort should be put forth to preserve its present status, and to increase its numbers.—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR., *Charleston, South Carolina*.

Sora Rail breeding in Virginia.—As there appears to be no definite instance of the nesting of the Sora Rail (*Porzana carolina*) in Virginia, the following incident seems worthy of record. It was reported to the Biological Survey by Max D. Hart, Executive Secretary of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries. The observations were made by State Game Warden Jefferson C. Phillips, of Hampton, Virginia. On June 9, 1938, Mr. Phillips was cutting hay in a marshy section of a flying field at Langley Field when the boy operating the rake caught a young black bird, obviously a rail. A second one was found nearby, both of which Mr. Phillips put in his hat on the ground. Several adult Soras had already been noted during the progress of the cutting. About half an hour later Mr. Phillips noted that the young were still calling lustily, so he turned the hat over gently to allow them to escape. Much to his amazement an adult Sora was under the hat. As the adult bird did not move, after about half a minute he lifted it on a finger to see if it were injured, whereupon it flew about fifteen yards and alit again. As the downy young of all rails are black, it is possible, of course, that this incident merely represents the solicitude of a bird for young not its own, but circumstantially, it seems to be reasonably satisfactory evidence of the breeding of this species in tidewater areas of the Old Dominion.—FREDERICK C. LINCOLN, *U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

Florida Gallinule at Philadelphia in winter.—The Florida Gallinule (*Gallinula chloropus cachinnans*) has long been regarded as a summer resident in the Philadelphia region, the bird wintering from South Carolina southward. In the records of Richard