

**RECORD OF A RED-RUMPED AGOUTI
(*Dasyprocta leporina*) IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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To be authoritative and to document the history of a species, faunal lists should include taxa that escape or are released from captivity. Florida is a hotspot for exotics because of its semi-tropical climate, the diversity of its natural and human-modified landscapes, its large, ever-increasing, and diverse human population, and its proximity to other regions (Simberloff et al. 1997). Mammals represent one of the least diverse groups of exotics in the state, and available information is scarce: Layne (1997) focused on 22 species with then-currently or formerly established populations, along with four domesticated species with free-roaming populations. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC 2020) website on exotic mammals likewise excludes many species. Given the scarcity of knowledge on Florida's exotic mammal fauna, any documented record would be significant.

During the weekend of 13–14 June 2020, we were birding in southeastern Florida. At 0855 hours on 14 June 2020, as we were traveling west on SW 256th Street east of its intersection with SW 187th Avenue in the Redland area west of Homestead, Miami-Dade County, we saw an unfamiliar mammal amble across the road. It was the size of a small dog, had virtually no tail, and had dull brown pelage with a brighter, rufous hind end. BP took several photographs of the animal as it trotted away, pausing briefly twice before it moved into dense vegetation and out of our view. After ruling out canine species, we settled on some species of large rodent, eventually settling on red-rumped agouti (also known as Brazilian agouti; *Dasyprocta leporina*). The best and clearest photograph (Fig. 1) allows the animal to be sexed as a male. Red-rumped agouti is widespread in a variety of forested areas in Trinidad and Tobago, the Lesser Antilles, and South America from Venezuela to northeastern Brazil. The land use of the location of our sighting was tropical fruit groves such as mango (*Mangifera* spp.), interspersed with a few residences and agricultural buildings.

The only information we have found on red-rumped agoutis in Florida is from the EDDMapS (Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health 2020) and iNaturalist (2020) websites, which collectively map seven additional records, all of them single individuals, and all but one occurring within the past 10 years. From north to south, the records are from Wesley Chapel, Pasco County, on 8 September 2020; Lutz, Hillsborough County, on 25 May 2020; Tampa, Hillsborough County, on 16 August 2020; an unstated location in Hillsborough County on 28 March 2020; southeast of Plant City, Hillsborough County, on 1 September 2007; and separately in Miami, Miami-Dade County, on 15 May 2012 and 3 September 2015. Our sighting provides at least the eighth record for Florida and the third record from Miami-Dade County.

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Figure 1. Red-rumped agouti at Homestead, Miami-Dade County, Florida, on 14 June 2020. Our sighting represents at least the eighth documented record in the state. Photograph by Bill Pranty.

LITERATURE CITED

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