

## GENERAL NOTES

**Reddish Egrets nesting on Florida's east coast.**—In the last decade the Reddish Egret (*Dichromanassa rufescens*) has recolonized three areas along the southwest coast of Florida (Bancroft 1971; Paul et al. 1975; T. H. Below, pers. comm.). The same has not happened along the Atlantic coast, where despite the occasional sighting of individuals near Vero Beach with the brilliantly colored soft parts characteristic of breeding condition (Kale 1974), no nests have been found north of the Arsenicker Keys in Biscayne Bay (Kale 1976). Here we report the discovery of two nests which considerably extend the known Atlantic coast nesting distribution of Reddish Egrets.

The first nest was discovered on 11 April 1978 by Henri Ouellet, Chief, Vertebrate Zoology Division, National Museums of Canada, on Riomar Island, a spoil island in the Indian River at Vero Beach, Indian River County (Maxwell and Kale 1974). A pair of dark phase Reddish Egrets were seen on an empty nest located in mangroves. One of the birds displayed continuously and was very aggressive towards any bird of another species landing near it. Photographs of these Reddish Egrets are deposited in the Everglades National Park collection.

On 25 May, Kale, June Kregg and Maxine Mallion saw two adults in the colony, but were unable to find the nest. On 14 July, Kale and John Edman observed two large dark-phase young Reddish Egrets walking on the exposed mud flat along the north edge of the colony. Both birds flew into the main colony, although one immediately returned to the flat. Neither bird engaged in any feeding behavior, nor were any adult Reddish Egrets seen nearby.

Numbers of pairs of other species nesting on Riomar estimated during an aerial survey on 18 April 1978 were as follows: Brown Pelican, 500; Double-crested Cormorant, 20; Cattle/Snowy egrets, 500+; Louisiana Heron, 200+; Great Egret, 100; Great Blue Heron, 5; Yellow-crowned Night Heron, 5; Little Blue Heron, +; Black-crowned Night Heron, +. By 25 May, Cattle Egrets had increased to about 2500 pairs, and 500 pairs of White Ibis were also nesting on the island.

During a colony census on 20 June 1978, Nelson discovered the second nest on a spoil island 300 m south of Haulover Canal in Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Brevard County. The heronry is commonly called the Haulover Colony, and is island no. II-62 of Schreiber and Schreiber (1978). The nest, containing two dark-phase nestlings, was in a white mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*), about 3 m above the ground and 3 m from the water's edge. Both young fledged. A photograph of one nestling is on file at the Merritt Island NWR headquarters.

The colony included at least eight other nestling species, in the following numbers (pairs): Great Blue Heron, 10; Green Heron, 1; Cattle Egret, 900; Great Egret, 10; Snowy Egret, 200; Louisiana Heron, 300; Glossy Ibis, 30; White Ibis, 450. (Data are combined from surveys on 23 April by Paul and 20 June by Nelson.)

Howell (1932:104) mapped four east coast nesting sites of Reddish Egrets, all from the 19th century. Close examination suggests that three of these records are inadequately documented. (1) The former breeding site at the mouth of the St. Johns River is based on a specimen at the U.S. National Museum (# 105320), collected 27 June 1884 at Pilot Town (S. A. Grimes, pers. comm.). The specimen is a fledged, dark-phase juvenile, lacking any down on the head and with fully developed primaries, clearly capable of sustained flight. It probably originated from a colony farther south. (2) A white-phase adult (MCZ #203968) collected at Dummitts on 17 April 1872 by C. J. Maynard is apparently the basis for the nesting locality at Merritt Island mapped by Howell. This is within 3 km of the Haulover Colony nest site reported here. But though Maynard observed morning and evening flight lines of white-phase Reddish Egrets, he never found them nesting in that area (Maynard 1889:159). (3) A dark-phase adult (MCZ #249399) collected at Sebastian River in March or April 1890 is the apparent basis for a third breeding locality. No further details are available though the site is within 10 km of Pelican Island (see following). (4) The fourth locality noted by Howell is Pelican Island in the Indian River. Bryant (1859) noted Reddish Egrets of both color phases breeding there. Data accompanying Bryant's specimens are

scanty, but one (MCZ #42535) is a white-phase, downy nestling collected in the Indian River on 15 April (year not specified on label). This is the only adequately documented nesting report of the four.

The nests reported here extend the Atlantic coast nesting range of Reddish Egrets 380 km north of previously known sites in this century, and 110 km north of Pelican Island, the previous northernmost known locality.

We are indebted to Henri Ouellet for word and photographs of the nesting pair at Riomar Island, and to Samuel A. Grimes for drawing attention to the Pilot Town specimen. Richard L. Zusi of the U.S. National Museum and Raymond A. Paynter, Jr., of the Museum of Comparative Zoology kindly allowed RTP to examine specimens in their care. Chandler S. Robbins generously made available the bird files of the former Bureau of Biological Survey, including many of A. H. Howell's notes for his book *Florida bird life*. Alexander Sprunt, IV, made helpful suggestions on the manuscript.

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**Inland records of Oldsquaws and Surf Scoter from north Florida.**—During the winter of 1977-78, two male Oldsquaws (*Clangula hyemalis*) and a female Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*) were observed and/or shot by hunters on a pond at the Occidental Chemical Company, 8 miles southeast of Jasper, Hamilton County, Florida. On 7 January 1978 an Oldsquaw and the scoter were taken and preserved by Virlyn Willis and Leon Alexander (both of Lake City). Another male Oldsquaw was observed by the author at the same locality on 23 December 1977. This was not the Oldsquaw that was later shot as its molt was more advanced than the second bird. The Oldsquaws and the Surf Scoter were using a 400 acre mine settling pond, 6-8 feet deep with a clay-soil substrate, with shoreline vegetation composed primarily of black willow (*Salix nigra*) and primrose willow (*Jussiaea* sp.).

Inland records of both species in Florida are rare. Sprunt (1954) lists two Oldsquaw records from north Florida at Lake Iamona and Lake Jackson (Leon Co.). There are five additional published winter records from north Florida, 22 January 1962, Lake Jackson, Leon Co. (Stevenson 1963); 29 January 1967, seven on Windham Pond, Jefferson Co. (Ripley 1967); 17 January 1970, road-kill, Hamilton Co. (Stevenson 1970); 14 March 1971, Wakulla Springs, Wakulla Co.