GENERAL NOTES

Dry ground nests of Florida Sandhill Cranes.—Although Florida Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis pratensis*) occasionally build nests in areas of standing water that later dry, they apparently rarely nest in an already dry site. The only published record of such a nest appears to be that of Sprunt (1963, Addendum to Florida bird life, Coward-McCann, New York), who observed a nest with one egg on "perfectly dry" ground in April 1956 near Basinger, Okeechobee County. The nest consisted of only a few bits of reed. This was the first such nest he or Audubon warden Glenn Chandler had seen in their many years of experience on the Kissimmee Prairie.

On 25 March 1975 a crane nest that had been built on dry ground was discovered by C. E. Winegarner on the Archbold Biological Station, Highlands County, Florida. The nest, briefly mentioned by Walkinshaw (1976a, Proc. Int. Crane Workshop 1:1-18, Oklahoma State Univ., Stillwater, OK), was in an extensive grassy swale with widely scattered low shrubs and occasional small slash pines (*Pinus elliottii*). The dense grass cover, averaging about 0.3 m high, was composed predominantly of cutthroat grass (*Panicum abscissum*). The muck soil was moist at the time the nest was discovered. Although the soil had been wetter during the preceding summer and fall, there had been no standing water in the area for over a year. The nest consisted of a thin, slightly concave pad of dry grass (Fig. 1). The grass for a distance of about 0.5 m around the nest had been trampled by the adults. No accessory nests such as are frequently found in the vicinity of typical nests in aquatic sites (Layne 1981, Fla. Field Nat. 9:51-59) were observed. The maximum diameter of the nest was 56 cm. In comparison, the average maximum diameter of 75 typical nests in standing water was 120 cm (Walkinshaw 1976a).

The nest contained one egg on 25 March. Adults were observed in attendance at the nest until 9 April. On 15 April the adults were gone. The egg, apparently infertile, had a hole in it, probably made by the adults (Drewien 1973, Ecology of Rocky Mountain Sandhill Cranes, Ph.D. Thesis, Univ. Idaho).

An additional report of dry land crane nests was given to me by Mr. Z. A. Browning. He observed nests in dry native prairie on the Bright Hour Ranch, DeSoto County, Florida, in springs of 1974 and 1975. He described these nests as being very thin and small, quite unlike the large, bulky nests in water with which he was familiar. He had never encountered such nests before in the many years he had lived and worked in the region, although he had seen numerous typical crane nests.

In contrast to the apparent rarity of dry ground nesting in the Florida Sandhill Crane, Cuban Sandhills (*G. c. nesiotes*) typically nest in dry sites (Walkinshaw 1976b, Cranes of the world, Winchester Press, New York). Dry land nests are also relatively frequent in northern populations of the species. For example, 44% of Greater Sandhill Crane (*G. c. tabida*) nests observed by Drewien (1973) at Gray's Lake, Idaho, were in dry sites, including upland meadows. These nests were smaller and more simply constructed than those in wet sites, as in the Florida cases.

Fig. 1. Dry ground nest of Florida Sandhill Crane on Archbold Biological Station, Highlands County, Florida, 27 March 1975.

Dry land nesting by Florida Sandhill Cranes may be a response to dry conditions. The nest recorded by Sprunt was found during a period of severe drought. Winter (December-February) rainfall in the region in which dry ground nests were observed in 1974 and 1975 was 29% below normal in 1974 and 21% below normal in 1975. With the continuing loss of typical wetland nesting habitats of cranes in Florida, the incidence of dry land nesting may increase. Efforts should be made to thoroughly document such a trend if it should occur, both because of its potential effect on productivity and because of the unusual opportunity it would afford to gain further insight into mechanisms of selection on life history parameters in natural populations.—JAMES N. LAYNE, *Archbold Biological Station, Route 2, Box 180, Lake Placid, Florida 33852.*

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Zenaida Dove sighting in Palm Beach County, Florida.—We found a Zenaida Dove (*Zenaida aurita*) at approximately 0900 on 10 October 1981 at Hypoluxo Island, Palm Beach County, Florida. The bird flushed from near a pigeon plum (*Coccoloba diversifolia*) 26 m from us and flew at a height of 1.5 to 3 m southward for 14 m before swerving off the tree- and shrub-lined road and disappearing from view. Because thick foliage presented a dark background, the white stripe on the trailing edge of the secondaries could be seen clearly.