

There are five previously recorded observations of the Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Florida. A sighting on 5 Nov. 1952, 24 km west of Okeechobee along S. R. 78 in Glades County, was reported by Sprunt (1954, Florida bird life, New York, Coward McCann Inc.) Monroe and Marron (1980 Amer. Birds 34: 842-845) summarized three other sightings: one bird on 15-16 July 1974 at Sugarloaf Key, Monroe County; an immature bird on 17 Sept. 1976 at Rockledge, Brevard County; one bird on 17 October 1976 at Chokoloskee, Collier County. Edscorn (1977, Fla. Nat. 50: 30) reported one bird in mid April 1977 on Sannibel Island, Lee County.

Spring records of the Fork-tailed Flycatcher anywhere in North America are rare. Including the above sightings and others summarized by Monroe and Barron (1980), of 43 records only five were in March-June, including the April, 1977 sighting on Sannibel Island, Florida.—Michael W. Britten, 9705 Waterfront Dr., Manassas, Virginia 22110.

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**The Northern Saw-whet Owl in northeast Florida.**—On 10 November 1982 an unidentified surfer found a live Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) in the surf at South Ponte Vedra Beach, St. John's County, Florida. The bird was taken to the St. Augustine Wildlife Rehabilitation Center where it was treated for exposure and exhaustion, but it died on 14 November. Lisa Miller took the specimen to the Florida State Museum in Gainesville, where Dr. J. W. Hardy prepared it as a study skin (UF 20899). The bird was a male (testes 2x3 mm) and showed no signs of disease, but two small holes were found in the skin of the neck. The specimen was an adult, of the subspecies *A.a.acadicus*.

The owl was found in the same area of the state where a Northern Saw-whet Owl was collected on 31 October 1965 by F. H. Lesser and A. R. Stickley, Jr. (1967, Auk 84:425). The A.O.U. Checklist (1957, fifth ed., Baltimore, Maryland, American Ornithologists' Union) mentioned a winter record for Ft. Myers, Florida, but it is unsubstantiated and probably erroneous (H. M. Stevenson pers. comm.). Thus, the bird we report is the second specimen for the state, both from St. John's County.

That the owl was found in the surf is surprising. L. J. Soucy cited two instances of Northern Saw-whet Owls landing on fishing boats off the coast of New Jersey (1982, New Jersey Audubon 8:20). It would be rash to conclude that this owl migrates over the water with any regularity. It seems far more likely that occasionally individuals are blown offshore or become disoriented and wander out over the ocean.

In addition to these specimen records, there are two records of Saw-whet owl calls heard in northeast Florida. On the St. Augustine Christmas Count, 18 December 1982, Joseph Wilson deliberately sought this species by playing a tape of its call at many places near St. Augustine before dawn. Wilson heard a reply which, based on his experience with the species in the Great Smoky Mountains, he believed was a Saw-whet. This call was also heard by Robert Richter, who was with Wilson.

On the Jacksonville Christmas Count, 30 December 1972, Peggy Powell and Terry Reed were near Buckhead Bluff, off Island Drive, Duval County, Florida, where they heard a call at dusk which Powell believed was a Northern Saw-

whet Owl because of its similarity to recorded calls. The record was published (1973, Amer. Birds 27:145, 302) but with skeptical comments by the editor, Allan D. Cruickshank. Therefore, discussion of hitherto unpublished details of this record are appropriate. On two different nights thereafter, Fred Wetzel, formerly assistant curator at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Pennsylvania, was able to get the owl to answer his whistled imitation of its call. He had no doubt that this bird was a Northern Saw-whet Owl. On one of these occasions, Wetzel and other observers saw a small owl fly toward them from the direction of the call, but they were unable to see it well enough to say with certainty that it was a Saw-whet Owl.

These sound records, together with the two specimen records, all from the same area of Florida, raise the possibility that this tiny, secretive owl may be more common in winter in northeast Florida than previously thought. Because of its nocturnal habits and preference for thick cover, it is easy to overlook. Further research is needed to accurately understand its status in Florida.—Lisa Marie Miller, P.O. Box 16196, Jacksonville, Florida 32245 and Robert W. Loftin, University of North Florida, 4567 St. John's Bluff Rd. S., Jacksonville, Florida, 32216.

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**Tree Swallow flock preys on swarming termites.**—Tree swallows (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) wintering in the southern USA commonly form large flocks (Howell 1932, Bent 1942, Longstreet 1969, Terres 1980, Kilham 1980). The function of such flocking may be variable. In this note I show that one function is feeding on swarming insects.

At 1240 on 18 February 1983, four colleagues and I saw several hundred tree swallows massing over the railroad tracks and the pine woods adjoining the main building at the Archbold Biological Station, Highlands County, Florida. The skies were partly cloudy, air temperature 21.1°C, relative humidity 25%, barometric pressure 763.0 mm Hg, wind speed 107-215 m/min gusting to 270 m/min, wind direction NNW ranging from W to NNE. The birds flew quickly back and forth or in circles, veering from side to side. Individuals sometimes made short, low-pitched sounds as if they were clapping their wing tips. Occasionally the flock formed a vortex that rose from a few meters above the ground to more than 50 m, as judged from the height of the Station's water tower (42.7 m).

The flock of tree swallows centered over a rotten slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*) stump from which alate termites were dispersing into the air. Andrew Schreffler and I observed several birds swoop down and catch termites before the insects had risen more than 3 m above the stump. For the next 2 hr the swallow flock moved periodically from east to west and back again downwind from the source of termites, suggesting that it was tracking a plume of the weakly-flying insects carried away from the stump. This pattern was reminiscent of that described by David et al. (1982) for insects cuing on odors dispersing from a point source. The termites were identified by Mark Deyrup as *Reticulitermes flavipes* (Kollar), a common eastern subterranean species that swarms in the spring with the onset of seasonally warm temperatures (Snyder 1948). These flights are solely for dispersal of virginal adults, usually for short distances from the parental colony; mating is delayed until a pair of termites establishes itself in a retreat within wood or in soil (Nutting 1969).