NOTES

A leucistic Eastern Phoebe in Alachua County, Florida—Leucism in birds is a frequently observed phenomenon (Wallace and Mahan 1975, An introduction to ornithology, New York, MacMillan Publishing Co.). According to Gross (1965, Bird-Banding 36:67-71), leucism or albinism has occurred in 304 species and 54 families of North American birds. Gross (1965) used the term "albinism" but stated that only about 7 percent of 1847 cases reported were actually true albinos. Deane (1876, Bull. Nuttall Ornith. Club 1:20-24) suggested however that ". . . among the Tyrannidae few examples have been detected . . ." Gross (1965) found examples of leucism in 11 species (30 individuals) among the tyrant flycatchers but did not provide species' names. Based on a literature review and correspondence (W. E. Lanyon pers. comm.), leucism in the Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*) apparently has been reported only once (Hostetter 1934, Auk 51:524). A leucistic Eastern phoebe in Alachua County, Florida therefore, seems noteworthy.

Fig. 1. Leucistic Eastern Phoebe photographed in Alachua County, Florida.

The bird was first observed on the south side of Paynes Prairie State Preserve, near U.S. Highway 441 on 14 December 1983. We regularly saw this bird through 3 March 1984 foraging from or perched in scattered sugarberry (*Celtis laevigata*) and live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) or a patch of bladderpod

(*Glottidium vesicarium*) stubble. Occasionally the bird was seen in the company of a normally-plumaged phoebe. We detected no behavioral differences between the two. The bird's remiges, rectrices, belly, and top of the head were ivory white, whereas the remainder of the bird's plumage was a pale creamy olive (Fig. 1). The eyes and all flesh parts were normally pigmented. It is interesting that Hostetter's (1934) description of a leucistic nestling Eastern Phoebe is identical to our observations except that the nestling's feet were light-colored. —**Anne Shapiro Wenner, David S. Maehr, and Stephen A. Nesbitt,** Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Wildlife Research Laboratory, 4005 South Main Street, Gainesville, Florida 32601.

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Some avian predators of the round-tailed muskrat.—The round-tailed muskrat (*Neofiber alleni*) is found only in Florida and extreme southeastern Georgia and is one of the region's most poorly known rodents, one reason for its designation as a "Species of Special Concern" in Florida (Tilmant 1978). Very little is known about predation on round-tailed muskrats or their role in marsh food chains. In this note I present some observations on muskrat predators.

On April 12 1973, F. F. Snelson, H. C. Sweet and I observed an adult Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodius*) on a canal bank on the north side of NASA Parkway West, 0.5 km west of the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Center, Brevard County, Florida. The bird was attempting to swallow a round-tailed muskrat. As we approached, it flew several hundred meters with its prey, three times. Each time it alighted, it picked up and dropped the rodent several times and attempted to swallow it by tossing it aloft. We were finally able to frighten the bird away from its catch and collect the specimen. It was a 230 g young adult female and is now in the mammal collection at the University of Central Florida (UCF M546).

During a brief investigation of *Neofiber* populations at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in 1972, I was puzzled by the discovery, on many occasions, of *Neofiber* skeletal parts (upper skulls, jaw rami, teeth, etc.) lying on top of their nests. Later I found freshly regurgitated owl pellets that consisted of a well-cleaned *Neofiber* skull completely wrapped in a bundle of *Neofiber* hair. My earlier observations were probably of weathered pellets, consisting only of skeletal parts. The owls were probably Barred Owls (*Strix varia*), judging by the size of the pellets and the frequent sightings of that species in the area. Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*) and Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) also prey on round-tailed muskrats (Birkenholz, 1963) and Lefebvre (1982) found two owl pellets containing *Neofiber* skulls and other skeletal parts.

The first record of predation of round-tailed muskrats by Great Blue Herons was reported by Howell (1932), who noted that in 1885 C. J. Maynard saw a heron carrying a rat in its bill, on the Indian River. Collecting the rodent after firing a shot at the heron, he found it to be the second specimen of *Neofiber alleni* collected to that time. Other known avian predators of *Neofiber* include Marsh Hawks (*Circus cyaneus*) (Birkenholz 1963) and Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) (McEwan and Hirth 1980). Lefebvre (1982) sug-