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## A SECOND RUDDY DUCK NESTS IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA

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The Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) is a locally common winter resident of Florida lakes and coastal waters (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). A few birds remain in summer, particularly in the phosphate mine district of Polk and surrounding counties, and near McKay Bay in Hillsborough County. At least nine Florida breeding records are known (Woolfenden and Woolfenden 1984, Paul 1987, Fellers 1989, Stevenson 1989, Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). We here report a tenth breeding occurrence for the state, and the second for Hillsborough County.

On 4 May 1993, while conducting a bird count at a small artificial pond near the mouth of the Alafia River, Hillsborough County, we found a female Ruddy Duck and seven downy young. We first noted the female swimming away from us as we approached the shoreline. The ducklings followed close behind, bunched tightly. On the basis of size and plumage, we estimated their age to be about two weeks. We checked them twice before departing 30 min. later, to ensure that our initial, rather sudden appearance had not caused any separation of the young from their mother.

No other ruddies were found in the pond, although several other species were present including Mottled Duck (*Anas fulvigula*), Northern Shoveler (*A. clypeata*), Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*), and several herons and ibises. However, in an adjacent dredge spoil disposal area (D/A-C) we found seven ruddies including an adult male with the rich, reddish-brown back and bright blue bill typical of breeding plumage. On the same date we also found a single male ruddy in the incinerator settling pond at McKay Bay, 10 km north of the breeding site; harsh light conditions prevented careful observation of plumage characteristics. Ruddy Ducks have previously been recorded in summer at this site (Paul J. Fellers, pers. comm.).

Woolfenden and Woolfenden (1984) suggested several characteristics of artificial impoundments that might make them attractive to breeding Ruddy Ducks: scattered cattail (*Typha* sp.) stands, lack of woody shoreline vegetation, fencing to limit access by humans and mammalian predators, and eutrophic conditions. In the present case, scattered patches of cattails dotted the pond's shoreline and also formed marshy islands, providing potential nesting cover, and no trees or woody shrubs were found along the shoreline. Although no fence was present, human access is controlled by the property owner. Abundant tracks indicated the presence of raccoons (*Procyon lotor*). The 4-ha pond, constructed to capture and return stormwater runoff to the closed, circulating "process water" system of a phosphate fertilizer plant, was highly eutrophic (H. M. Mathot, pers. comm.).

It is likely that the availability of impoundments and constructed wetlands will continue to increase in west-central Florida, as wetlands restoration projects on phosphate lands and power plant sites are carried out and other wetlands are created to treat stormwater runoff and wastewater plant effluent. Additional nesting records of Ruddy Ducks should be expected.

We thank Paul Fellers for providing us with details of four Polk County breeding records. Cargill Fertilizer Inc. kindly allowed us access to ponds and impoundments on their property.

#### LITERATURE CITED

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#### GIANT TOAD EATEN BY RED-SHOULDERED HAWK

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The giant toad (*Bufo marinus*) is a successful invader species known to southern mainland Florida since at least 1955 (Duellman and Schwartz 1958, Wilson and Porras 1983). A virtual absence of natural predators has greatly aided its establishment, and high population densities of this species have been reported in Florida (Krakauer 1968) and other target areas (Zug et al. 1975, Zug and Zug 1979). Indeed, Krakauer (1968) suggested that automobiles were the major cause of death of adult giant toads in southern Florida.

Here, I report a field observation of predation of an adult giant toad by a Red-shouldered Hawk (*Butea lineatus*) in southern Florida. At 1600 on 19 October 1993 I was walking near the stadium along the northwestern border of Florida International University, Miami (Dade Co.), Florida and saw a Red-shouldered Hawk on the grass beside a fig tree (*Ficus* sp.). Its attention was directed to the ground near its feet. When I approached, the hawk flew to the top of the tree. I examined the ground where I had first seen the hawk but found nothing. Directly above me a giant toad fell from where the hawk was perched. Apparently the toad was dropped by the hawk as it flew away.

The dead toad measured about 115 mm snout-vent length. A 40-mm hole had been torn on its underside just above the pelvic girdle, and the toad had been eviscerated. The toad had not been dead for long; the right foreleg twitched twice during my examination. No other wounds were apparent and no bufotoxin (which appears milky-white) was seen on or around the parotid glands.