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FIRST RECORD OF THE THICK-BILLED MURRE FROM FLORIDA

HOWARD P. LANGRIDGE¹ AND GLEN E. WOOLFENDEN²

¹1421 W. Ocean Ave., Lantana, Florida 33462

²Archbold Biological Station, Lake Placid, Florida 33862

A live Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*) picked up on Hobe Sound Highway, Palm Beach Co., and later preserved provides the first record (*sensu* Robertson and Woolfenden 1992, i.e., supported by tangible evidence) of the genus and species from Florida. Julia Stutevoss found the live bird on 6 December 1992 and took it to the Treasure Coast Wildlife Hospital where Rebecca Elliot and Ken Christensen cared for the bird until it died on 29 December 1992. The live bird was examined by HPL and photographed (Fig. 1, West and Wamer 1993) and post-mortem it was prepared as a study skin by GEW and added to the collections at Archbold Biological Station. The specimen (GEW 5872) is a female (ovary 18 × 5 mm, granular; emaciated, no fat). The species-specific whitish line



Figure 1. Live Thick-billed Murre captured in Florida.

along the basal edge of the upper mandible is evident in the photographs and on the study skin. The large and granular ovary suggests an adult.

Four reports of murrees from Florida, all of single birds, precede this record. One identified a live bird only to genus; another identified a carcass as a Common Murre (*U. aalge*). The other two were live birds identified as Thick-billed Murrees (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992, Stevenson and Anderson 1994). The first report came from D. C. Scott, who examined a dead bird he found on the ocean beach near Ft. Pierce, St. Lucie Co., 28 December 1971 and decided it was a Common Murre. After consulting a field guide the night after his find, he realized its importance but failed to relocate the carcass (Stevenson 1972). A well-documented report accepted by the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee (Powell 1986) was of a sighting by William Matthews, Gloria Hunter and HPL, who observed a Thick-billed Murre at the Lake Worth Fishing Pier, Palm Beach Co., 20 November 1976. Son Billy Matthews made the discovery near sunset and alerted the others. At times the bird swam within 6 m of the observers who studied it with binoculars and telescope, with field guide in hand. The diagnostic field marks were noted including the white line on the bill. Unfortunately no opportunity existed to photograph the bird (Langridge 1977). Johnny Johnson had a close study of a bird he identified as a Thick-billed Murre off Cape Canaveral, Brevard Co., 20 December 1977 (Stevenson 1978, Cruickshank 1980). Finally, A. Steadman identified a live bird along the Gulf Coast at the south end of Casey Key, Sarasota Co., 30 December 1982, as a murre of undetermined species (Hoffman 1983, Robertson and Woolfenden 1992).

The Thick-billed Murre seems more likely to occur in Florida than its congener because it winters farther south along the east coast of North America. The Thick-billed Murre is regular south to New Jersey and casual to South Carolina. The Common Murre is regular south only to Maine and casual to Virginia (Amer. Ornithol. Union 1983).

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(Editor's note: This note was reprinted in full, because the figure was inadvertently left out of the original printing in FFN 26(3):88-89.)