

RECORDS OF THE BULLOCK'S ORIOLE IN FLORIDA

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The taxonomy of the Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*) and the Baltimore Oriole (*I. galbula*) has changed during the past few decades. Considered separate species by the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU 1957), the two were combined in 1973 as the Northern Oriole (*I. galbula*) based on hybridization in the Great Plains (AOU 1973). But their status as separate species was reinstated when it was learned that the degree and duration of hybridization varied dramatically among sites (AOU 1995). Furthermore, several "important differences" exist between the taxa, such as plumage, vocalizations, molt timing and frequency, nest-site placement, and body size (AOU 1998). Freeman and Zink (1995) provided evidence that the Bullock's Oriole is more closely related to the Streak-backed Oriole (*I. pustulatus*) than to the Baltimore Oriole.

In 1996, the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee (FOSRC) adopted new rules and procedures, and adopted as its base list the list of verified species in Robertson and Woolfenden (1992). Species were or added to or subtracted from this list after evidence had been reviewed by the committee. Robertson and Woolfenden (1992) noted that both subspecies of the Northern Oriole had occurred in Florida, and they cited two specimens of *I. g. bullockii*. The FOSRC evaluated these specimens and concluded that neither was "fully consistent with plumage characteristics of winter female or immature *I. bullockii* (Lee and Birch 1998), but were consistent with *I. galbula*" (Bowman 2000:148). The FOSRC concluded that additional research was needed before Bullock's Oriole could be added to the state list (Bowman 2000). Several other specimens and photographs of Bullock's Orioles from Florida were cited by Stevenson and Anderson (1994), but those records had not been reviewed by the FOSRC (Bowman 2000, 2004). Here, we clarify the record of occurrence of the Bullock's Oriole in Florida by examining all available verifiable evidence of its occurrence in the state.

Published evidence.—The first report of Bullock's Oriole in Florida was one individual (presumably a male) seen at New Port Richey, Pasco County, by F. P. Lord and others on 15 February 1950 (Sprunt 1954).

Since that time, there probably have been over 100 published reports of Bullock's Oriole in Florida. However, because documentation is available for only a small number of these sightings, we have limited our review to those observations supported by archived verifiable evidence (specimens or photographs). Robertson and Woolfenden (1992) listed two purported specimens of *I. bullockii* from Florida: TTRS [Tall Timbers Research Station] 2443 and UMRC [University of Miami] 1437. Stevenson and Anderson (1994) listed these two specimens plus four others: FSU [Florida State University] 6848c, FSU 6848d, UMRC 1403, and UMRC 1631 (details for each specimen are presented in Table 1). Additionally, Stevenson and Anderson (1994) cited three archived photographs of Bullock's Orioles from Florida: ENPr [Everglades National Park] 139, FOSA 18, and TTRS P30. To these published records are added two recent photographic records that have been accepted by the FOSRC: FOSRC 01-443 and FOSRC 01-450 (Bowman 2000, 2004). We believe that these 11 specimens and photographs represent the complete archived evidence of Bullock's Oriole in Florida. Because female and immature Baltimore and Bullock's orioles are difficult to distinguish, we also reviewed two female-plumaged Northern Oriole specimens archived in Florida (FSU 6848e and UMRC 6857; Table 1).

RESULTS

Review of all available archived evidence of Bullock's Oriole in Florida results in six verifiable records. Only two of the six specimens (UMRC 1403 and FSU 6848c) are of Bullock's Orioles; the remaining four refer to Baltimore Orioles. Both Bullock's Oriole specimens were accepted by the FOSRC in August 2004 (UMRC 1403 = FOSRC 04-542; FSU 6848c = FOSRC 04-544). Of the five purported Bullock's Orioles photographed in Florida, four were correctly identified and one (ENPr 139) was not available for review.

DISCUSSION

Separating adult male Baltimore and Bullock's orioles generally is straight-forward, although hybrids are known (Lee and Birch 1998, Sibley 2000). First-year males are also rather easily distinguished, although some Baltimore Orioles can show a dark throat patch reminiscent of that of a first-year male Bullock's Oriole (e.g., the right-hand figure on page 293 of Lee and Birch 1998). Previously, the identification of female orioles was also thought to be straight-forward—female Bullock's Oriole were said to have a whitish belly separated by a yellowish-orange breast and undertail coverts, while the underparts of female Baltimore Oriole were stated to be entirely orangish or yellowish (e.g., Bull and Farrand 1977, Peterson 1980, Scott 1983, 1987). In recent



Figure 1. First-year male Bullock's Oriole photographed at Gulf Breeze, Santa Rosa County, Florida 26 November 2001 by Lyn Atherton (FOSRC 01-443). Note the sharply-defined black throat and the distinctive facial pattern of darkish lores and a darkish eye-line, along with dusky auriculars. The face, breast, undertail coverts, and undertail are butterscotch, contrasting with the whitish belly.

Table 1. Archived specimens and photographs of female-plumaged Northern Orioles and purported Bullock's Orioles from Florida, listed chronologically. One additional photograph (ENPr 139) cited by Stevenson and Anderson (1994) was not available for our review. We present species determinations for all records based on recent re-examination of each specimen or photograph.

Date	Location	County	Collector *photographer	Catalog number original (new)	Sex/age	Assessment/ reassessment
24 Dec 1956	3 miles east of Princeton	Miami-Dade	D. R. Paulson	UMRC 1437	adult female	Baltimore
11 Jan 1957	ca. 3 miles east of Princeton (SW 109 Avenue and 252 Street)	Miami-Dade	D. R. Paulson	UMRC 1403 (FMNH 375099)	first-year male	Bullock's
10 Oct 1957	1.7 miles west of Krome Avenue on Coconut Palm Drive	Miami-Dade	D. R. Paulson	UMRC 1631 (FMNH 375044)	female	Baltimore
15 Jan 1964	Lake Jackson	Leon	H. M. Stevenson	FSU 6848e	female	Baltimore
17 Oct 1964	Dog Island	Franklin	S. L. Olson	TTRS 2443	female-type	Baltimore
1 Oct 1966	5 miles east of Tallahassee	Leon	H. M. Stevenson	FSU 6848c	first-year male	Bullock's
4 Feb 1967	Lake Jackson, Miller's Landing	Leon	H. M. Stevenson	FSU 6848d	female	Baltimore
Spring 1968	Tallahassee	Leon	*Mrs. Miller	TTRS P30	adult male	Bullock's
5 Jan 1971	Homestead	Miami-Dade	E. Fisk	UMRC 6857 (FMNH 375095)	female	Baltimore
Jan-Feb 1981	near Trenton	Gilchrist	*J. W. Hardy	FOSA 18	adult male	Bullock's
26 Nov 2000	Gulf Breeze	Santa Rosa	*L. S. Atherton	FOSRC 01-443	first-year male	Bullock's
21 Jan 2001	Everglades National Park, Flamingo Campground	Monroe	*B. Pranty	FOSRC 01-450	first-year male	Bullock's

years however, it has become clear that pale female or immature Baltimore Orioles can be mistaken easily for female Bullock's Orioles (Lee and Birch 1998, Dickinson 1999, Sibley 2000). Recently, a seemingly definitive field mark has been discovered that allows identification between the species—the edge of the upper wingbar is “jagged” in Bullock's Orioles but is straight in Baltimore Oriole (Lee and Birch 1998). Additionally, Baltimore Orioles tend to have blackish wings, while those of Bullock's are more grayish (Lee and Birch 1998).

The six verifiable records of Bullock Oriole from Florida span the state from Gulf Breeze to Flamingo. One record was obtained during fall, four during winter, and one during spring (Table 1). Thus, it would seem that the Bullock's Oriole is an irregular migrant and winter resident throughout the state, but has not yet been documented on the Keys.

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