

FIRST RECORD OF NORTHERN FULMAR (*FULMARUS GLACIALIS*) FOR FLORIDA, AND NOTES ON OTHER NORTH ATLANTIC SEABIRD SPECIMEN RECORDS IN 2004-2005

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Wildlife rehabilitation clinics offer an outstanding opportunity to document the status and distribution of birds. In Florida alone, over 200 licensed people and clinics collectively take in tens of thousands of birds each year (*vide* Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; FFWCC). Most of these birds, which are injured or sick, are found by concerned citizens and brought to the clinics for rehabilitation and eventual release back to the wild. However, severe injuries and prolonged starvation result in unavoidable mortality rates of 25-40% at most clinics. Individuals of species away from their normal distribution or season of occurrence are particularly prone to be encountered in a weakened state, in part because that species may not be adapted to find food or escape predation in those circumstances. For the past eight years, the Florida Museum of Natural History (FLMNH) has been working with wildlife rehabilitation clinics in Florida to gather specimens that die in the clinics for the research collections at the FLMNH. This very successful program (see Kratter et al. 2002), generously funded in 2003-2005 by the FFWCC, has added 1,000s of new, high-quality specimens to the FLMNH.

In the winter and spring seasons of 2004-2005, a number of especially interesting seabirds were found beached and in a weakened state on the coasts of Florida. These individuals were brought to wildlife rehabilitation clinics where most did not recover. The specimens were eventually brought to the FLMNH, where they were prepared as research specimens. These specimen records were part of a larger incursion of north Atlantic seabirds into the southeastern United States during the winter and spring of 2004-2005 (Davis 2005a, 2005b). In this paper, we provide documentation for the first Florida record of Northern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*), the second record for Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), the eleventh Florida record of Razorbill (*Alca torda*), and three records of the locally rare Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*).

On 19 April 2005, an unknown petrel was found in a weakened state at Satellite Beach, Brevard Co., and brought to the nearby Florida Wildlife Hospital in Melbourne. The staff at FWH correctly identified the bird as a Northern Fulmar (Fig. 1). The weakened bird, however, did not gain weight and died two days later at the FWH. In June 2005, AWK retrieved the specimen and prepared a round study skin, spread wing, and partial skeleton for the FLMNH research collections (UF 44664). Two samples of heart, liver, and flight muscle were saved, one each for the genetic resource collections at FLMNH and at Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science.

The fulmar was a second year (hatched 2004) male, as indicated during dissection of the specimen. The testes were small (3×1 mm), and a large (16×11 mm) bursa was present (the bursa is an outpocketing of the terminal end of the intestines that is present in juvenile birds and gradually assimilated over the first year). The bird appeared to be just beginning to molt from juvenal to first basic plumage. The remiges were lightly worn, with no molt. The rectrices, also not molting, were somewhat more worn, typical for seabirds in juvenal plumage, because the rectrices wear faster than the wings as they develop before fledging. The bird had moderate overall body molt. Northern



Figure 1. Northern Fulmar (UF 44664) from Satellite Beach, Brevard Co., Florida, 19 April 2005. Spread wing (top) and study skin (bottom).

Fulmars typically begin their first pre-basic molt in the spring following hatching, but do not begin molt in the wings until June (Hatch and Nettleship 1998). The bird had no subcutaneous fat and the flight muscles were much reduced. As a result, its mass (400 g) was far below that typical for males (725 g: Wynne-Edwards 1952, Watson 1955).

The polymorphic Northern Fulmar occurs in plumages ranging from white-bodied with a gray mantle to uniformly dark gray, with every gradation between (Hatch and Nettleship 1998). UF 44664 has an intermediate plumage, but toward the lighter end of the variation, with a very pale buffy-gray head and body, medium brownish-gray mantle, slightly paler brownish-gray rump and rectrices, medium gray wing coverts, and dark brownish-gray remiges. The distinctively short and deep bill is yellowish-horn, with the tube and base of the maxilla blackish-horn.

Florida's second record of an Atlantic Puffin is an individual found in weakened condition in St. Augustine Beach, St. Johns Co., by Margaret Cunningham on 23 December 2004. A hatching year female (ovary 7×4 mm, smooth; bursa 8×6 mm), the bird died at Noah's Ark Wildlife Care on 25 December 2004. It is now at the FLMNH (UF 44359, study skin, spread wing, partial skeleton, two tissue samples).

A Razorbill found 13 April 2005 at Honeymoon Island, Pinellas Co., was the first ever found in the Gulf of Mexico (AOU 1998) and only the 11th for Florida (Stevenson and Anderson 1994, Kratter et al. 2002, Anderson 2005). This second-year male (testes 6×1 mm, bursa 9×7 mm) died the same day at the Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary (UF 44677, study skin, spread wing, partial skeleton, two tissue samples).

Three Black-legged Kittiwakes were recorded in the winter and early spring of 2004-2005. This species is a rare winter visitor to Florida (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). The first, a hatching-year male (testes 4×2 mm, bursa 13×9 mm), was found in Satellite Beach, Brevard Co. on 30 December 2004. It was dead on arrival at the Florida Wildlife Hospital (UF 44403, skin, spread wing). Another first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake (UF 44971, complete skeleton), a female (ovary 12×4 mm, smooth; bursa 14×8 mm), was found with oiled plumage in Volusia Co. on 10 February 2005. It died the next day at the Marine Science Center. An adult Black-legged Kittiwake (female, ovary 11×9 mm, oviduct 4 mm wide, convoluted; no bursa) was found in Daytona Beach, Volusia Co., on 12 February 2005. It was also brought to the Marine Science Center, where it died on 14 February (UF 44942, skin and spread wing).

The specimens we report here were part of a major influx of north Atlantic seabirds reported in the southeastern United States during the winter of 2004-2005. Common Eiders (*Somateria mollissima*) were present in the Carolinas in "much higher than normal numbers" (Davis 2005a). Off North Carolina, 86 Northern Fulmars on 19 February 2005

was considered a “good count” (Davis 2005a). Four Black-legged Kittiwakes were recorded off northern Georgia on 12 February 2005 (Davis 2005b). A Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) present from 30 December 2004 to 29 January 2005 was the first record for South Carolina (Davis 2005b). Multiple Thick-billed Murres (*Uria lomvia*) were found in the Carolinas from January to March 2005 (Davis 2005b). In Florida, a Razorbill was found in Boynton Beach, Palm Beach Co. (Anderson 2005) on 18 January 2005, three months prior to the specimen record mentioned above. In northern Georgia, a state record-high number (106) of Razorbills was recorded on 12 February 2005 (Davis 2005b). Atlantic Puffins were found in record numbers in North Carolina (31 on 19 February 2005) and South Carolina (19 on 20 February) (Davis 2005a). A record number Dovekies (*Alle alle*) was recorded off Maryland and Delaware on 26 February 2005 (Day 2005) and “good numbers” reached the Carolinas (Davis 2005a).

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