

**FIRST RECORD OF WHITE-EARED HUMMINGBIRD  
(*Hylocharis leucotis*) FOR FLORIDA**

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In recent decades unprecedented numbers and many new species of western hummingbirds have appeared in southeastern North America (Brinkley 2009). Most of the individuals belong to widely distributed western species, including Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*), Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*), Allen's Hummingbird (*S. sasin*), Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*S. platycercus*), Calliope Hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*), and, in much smaller numbers, Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*). These individuals tend to arrive in early to late fall, and many spend the winter (Dinsmore and Fontaine 2003).

A number of Neotropical hummingbird species, most of whose northern limits barely reach the Mexico/United States border, have also been found recently in the southeastern United States. One of these, Buff-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia yucatanensis*), occurs annually east to Florida. Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cyananthus latirostris*) is annual in Louisiana, with three records in Florida and one from South Carolina. Green Violetear (*Colibri thalassinus*) is annual in Texas and also has been found in Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana, along with scattered records farther north. Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*) has strayed to Alabama and Georgia (and also to Minnesota and several western states). Blue-throated Hummingbird (*Lampornis clemenciae*) has two records from Louisiana and one from South Carolina. Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevostii*) has had two records in the region, one in Georgia in October 2007 and one from North Carolina in November 2000; there is also a record from Wisconsin. The rarest of these, with single records in the southeastern United States, are Violet-crowned Hummingbird (*Amazilia violiceps*) with a record from Virginia in June 2009, and White-eared Hummingbird (*Hylocharis leucotis*), with a record from Mississippi in November 1995-January 1996 (and also Michigan). Contrary to the more widespread Western hummingbirds noted above (including Broad-tailed and Buff-bellied hummingbirds), many of these rarer species tend to appear in the summer (July and August) and stay briefly.

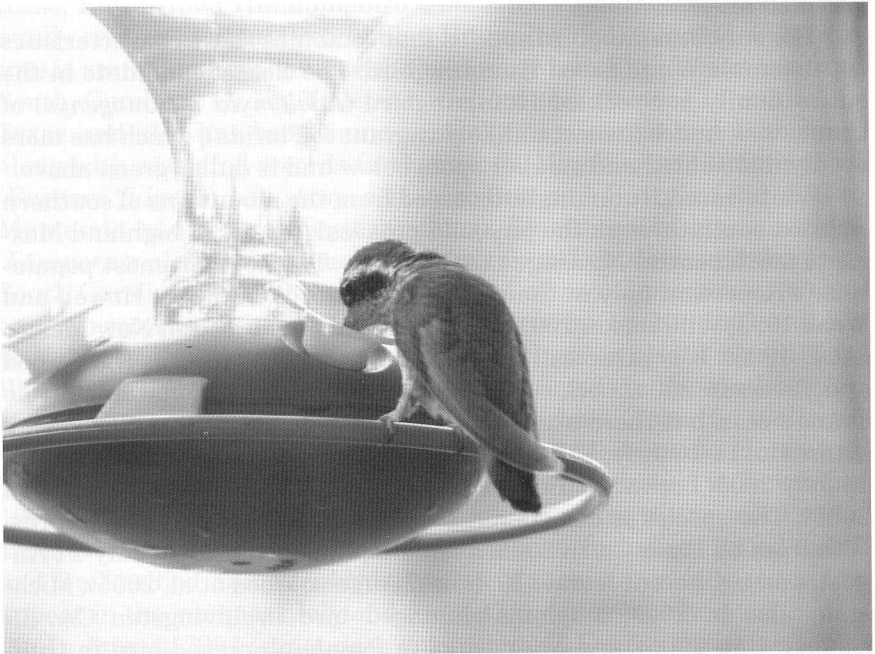
In August 2004 (exact date not recorded), Cecilia Strickland took two photographs of a hummingbird she did not recognize at her Florida

Panhandle residence in Panama City, Bay County, Florida. The bird remained unidentified for several years, until the photographs were shown to hummingbird bander Fred Bassett, who tentatively identified it as a female White-eared Hummingbird and urged the observers to submit the photographs to the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee (FOSRC). In April 2009, Ms. Strickland submitted the photographs to the FOSRC (#09-731), and in August 2009 the submission was accepted by the FOSRC (Kratzer 2010).

Both photographs show a hummingbird perched on a standard commercial hummingbird feeder. In both photographs (Figs. 1 and 2), the bill is completely out of view because the bird is probing the plastic "flowers" of the feeder. The bird has a green crown, and a bright green back and rump. The underparts appear mostly pale grayish white. A very prominent white post-ocular stripe curves posteriorly around the black auriculars. The white chin has a few sparse green spots, but the spots become larger and denser at the sides of the lower throat and upper flanks, so that there is as much white as green in this region. The dotted green and white plumage continues dorsally onto the nape but the amount of white diminishes. The green spots on the lower flanks are less dense and more faint. The remiges and wing coverts appear to worn, looking grayish brown. The tail, largely in shadow, appears dark greenish blue.

The only hummingbird species that combines these characteristics is the female White-eared Hummingbird. The closest candidate in the entire family is Speckled Hummingbird (*Adelomyia melanogenys*) of the eastern Andes (a most unlikely vagrant to Florida), which has more evenly distributed and smaller spots below and is duller green above.

White-eared Hummingbirds breed from the mountains of southern Arizona south through the pine and pine/oak forests of highland Mexico to north central Nicaragua (AOU 1998). The northernmost populations are present only in the summer months (AOU 1998, Howell and Webb 1995, Williamson 2001). It is rare and may breed in New Mexico (AOU 1998). It is rarer still in Texas, with about 30 records (Lockwood and Freeman 2004, Lockwood 2008), most from the mountains of the Trans-Pecos, but there are three other records away from this region (Starr Co. 14-16 July; Gillespie Co., 31 July-4 August; Lubbock Co. 12-19 July 2005; Lockwood and Freeman 2004, Lockwood 2005, Lockwood 2008). The species is considered accidental in Colorado (two records, both from La Plata Co. in 2005: a female-plumaged bird 20 July-21 August, and a different female 19 June-7 August; Wood et al. 2005); Michigan (also in 2005, a female-plumaged bird in Livingston Co., 19 August; Chu 2005); and Mississippi (a female-plumaged bird in Gulfport, November 1995-4 January 1996; Turcotte and Watts 1999). The Florida record documented herein, also of a female-plumaged bird,



**Figures 1 and 2. White-eared Hummingbird in Panama City, Florida, August 2004. Photographs by Cecilia Strickland.**

falls in the July-to-August window shown by all but one (the winter record from Mississippi) of these vagrant records.

Three subspecies of White-eared Hummingbird are recognized (Züchner 1999). The northern migratory subspecies (*H. l. borealis*) is slightly larger and has grayer underparts than the two other subspecies, which are residents in the highlands of central and southern Mexico (*H. l. leucotis*) and in El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua (*H. l. pygmaea*). The only subspecies likely to reach Florida is *H. l. borealis*.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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