

**FIRST RECORD OF GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*)
IN THE EXOTIC AVIFAUNA OF FLORIDA**

VALERI PONZO

1353 Oak View Drive, Sarasota, Florida 34232

E-mail: vponzo@comcast.net

On 27-28 April 2013, a Gambel's Quail (*Callipepla gambelii*) was observed in the Gulfgate area of Sarasota, Sarasota County, by Greg and Susan Yantorno, whose sighting was posted to the "SRQ Area Bird Alerts" list. Photographs archived with the Florida Ornithological Society were obtained on 27 April by Susan Yantorno (BPA 6902a-c) and by VP (BPA 5395a-b; Fig. 1). As this observation represents the first report and record



Figure 1. Gambel's Quail at Sarasota, Sarasota County, 27 April 2013. This furnishes the first record of the species in Florida. Photograph by Valeri Ponzo (BPA 5395b).

of Gambel's Quail for Florida (Greenlaw et al. 2014), I provide additional information on its occurrence.

The quail was found in a suburban neighborhood characterized by mowed lawns and small shrubs and ornamental plants. The quail, which was not banded, was observed walking or running on the ground; it had a noticeable limp. It alternated between periods of foraging (scratching in mulch under shrubs or on lawns) and resting in concealment under shrubs.

The Gambel's Quail appeared to be larger than a Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*). It was a male by plumage, with its black face, chin, and throat bordered by white stripes. The crown was rufous with a thin black stripe at the bottom. A large black plume, rounded at the tip, hung forward over the face. The eyes were black and the short bill was gray. The remainder of the upperparts were gray; the tail was short and squared. The breast was gray and the belly was cream-colored with a large central black patch. The flanks were chestnut with white stripes. The legs and feet were unfeathered and gray. The bird was distinguished from California Quail (*C. californica*) by the black forehead, the lack of scaled underparts, and the black belly patch. The plumage suggested no hybridization with related species such as California Quail or Scaled Quail (*C. squamata*).

Gambel's Quail is resident from southeastern California and western Colorado south to northeastern Baja California and western Texas (AOU 1998). Populations have been introduced to Hawaii, Idaho, and San Clemente Island, California (AOU 1998). Due to the sedentary nature of the species and the nearly 2,000-km distance to the nearest population, I presume that the Sarasota quail escaped or was released locally; the species can be purchased online readily.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Susan Yantorno for information on the Gambel's Quail. Andrew W. Kratter, Bill Pranty, and Jon S. Greenlaw improved drafts of the manuscript.

LITERATURE CITED

- AOU [AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION]. 1998. Check-list of North American Birds, 7th ed. American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.
- GREENLAW, J. S., B. PRANTY, AND R. BOWMAN. 2014. The Robertson and Woolfenden Annotated List of Florida Birds. Florida Ornithological Society Special Publication No. 8, Gainesville.