

Breeding range expansion of the Burrowing Owl in Florida.—The Florida race of the Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto cunicularia floridana*) has extended its breeding range both north and south of the areas outlined by Howell (*Florida bird life*, New York, Coward-McCann, 1932), Sprunt (*Florida bird life*, revised edition, New York, Coward-McCann and National Audubon Society, 1954), and the A.O.U. Checklist (5th edition, 1957). The breeding localities given by Sprunt are represented in Figure 1 by dark circles. The numbered open circles represent breeding sites unrecorded by any of the above authors.

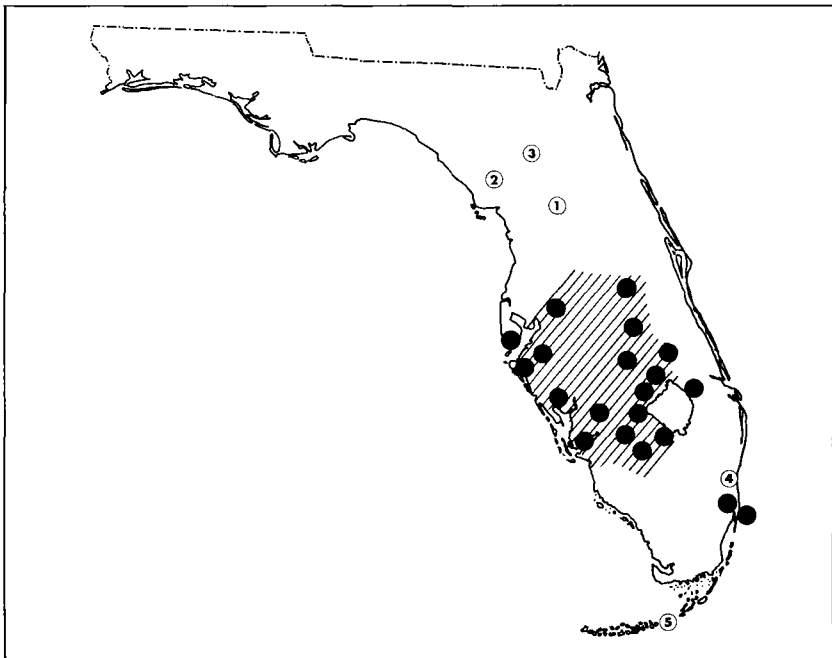


Figure 1. Breeding range of the Burrowing Owl in Florida. Dark circles are breeding localities already given by Sprunt (*op. cit.*). Numbered circles indicate recent expansion of breeding range. 1—Ocala, 2—Chiefland, 3—Gainesville, 4—Davie, 5—Marathon Key.

The first extension of the breeding range of this owl was recorded by Neill (*Florida Naturalist*, 27: 67-70, 1954). He listed five localities in Marion County, three of which were near Ocala (circle 1).

On 17 March 1962, I found a single pair five miles south of Chiefland, Levy County (circle 2). I secured the female and found that she was not yet in breeding condition. On 23 March I revisited the site with C. H. Trost and found a pair at the same burrow, likely the same male with a new mate.

The next day, 24 March, we located a colony seven miles south of Chiefland, apparently made up of four pairs of Burrowing Owls. We revisited it on 21 May and found at least six pairs, all of which appeared to be nesting. On 29 July, I

again checked the colony and noted some young birds perched at burrow entrances.

On 7 June 1962, J. E. Brogdon found a lone pair seven miles west of Gainesville, Alachua County (circle 3). The nest of this pair contained three small young. This is the northernmost definite breeding record of this race.

Several breeding specimens collected by R. W. McFarlane near Davie, Broward County (circle 4), on 30 March 1961 help to bridge the gap between the main portion of the range and the Miami area.

A single pair reared three young on Marathon Key, Monroe County (circle 5), well to the south of the previously known breeding range (Paulson and Stevenson, *Aud. Field Notes*, 6: 401, 1962).

The three new northern breeding sites listed above are located in habitats similar to those described by Neill for the five Marion County localities. In all cases the open area surrounding the burrow was fairly extensive, the grass was either grazed or mowed, and fences were close by, affording perches.

The evidence, as Neill indicates, is that these owls are taking advantage of man-made changes to extend their range. As the cattle industry in northern Florida continues to grow, causing more land to be opened for pasturage, so probably will the range of the Burrowing Owl increase.

These owls are actually reclaiming some of their prehistoric range. At a Pleistocene fossil site near Haile, Alachua County, I have found the Burrowing Owl to be one of the more common birds represented. Recently Brodkorb (*J. Paleont.*, 31: 129-138, 1957) also listed the Burrowing Owl at the Reddick, Marion County, fossil locality.

I wish to thank Dr. Pierce Brodkorb for his many useful suggestions and critical readings of the manuscript.—J. DAVID LIGON, *Department of Biology, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.*

Additions to the known breeding ranges of several species in south Texas.

—The distributional status of the following species as given in the A.O.U. *Check-list of North American birds* (5th edition, 1957) is substantially modified by the data here reported.

Least Grebe. *Podiceps dominicus brachypterus*.—The *Check-list* designates Aransas County as the eastern limit of the breeding range of this species. While sight records in the winter months have been fairly common both in Calhoun and Refugio counties since 1947, no nesting was observed until 1960. When a prolonged drought in south Texas was broken in 1957 and there followed five years of more than average rainfall, many shallow lakes and reed-bordered ponds were formed, with a great influx of breeding water birds in both Calhoun and Refugio counties. Included were the Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*), Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), Black-bellied and Fulvous tree ducks (*Dendrocygna autumnalis* and *D. bicolor*), Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*), Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*), Purple and Common gallinules (*Porphyryla martinica* and *Gallinula chloropus*), and American Coot (*Fulica americana*). In the first three years no Least Grebes were seen in summer, but in 1960 they appeared in numbers and in late July and early August I observed 15 nests in two small ponds in northern Refugio County. Most of these nests held either four or five eggs, varying in condition from fresh to hatching. No count was made of nests in Calhoun County but birds were observed on every suitable pond.

American Bittern. *Botaurus lentiginosus*.—The *Check-list* defines the southern limits of the breeding range as "locally in northern Texas (Wilbarger County)." While this bittern is never common in south Texas, occasionally one is flushed, either in summer or winter, in a suitable cat-tail or tule marsh. On 25 May 1940 I found