

trunk, it exited the hole and circling its roost tree flew quickly from one tree to another. During this period, it never ventured more than 200 yards from the roost hole. This specimen is apparently the first record of the Red-headed Woodpecker from the inland swamps of southern Florida.

References in the literature to the Red-headed Woodpecker in south Florida exhibit lack of agreement as to its past and present status. It is in order therefore, to review various records and summarize present knowledge regarding the status of this species. In doing so, it is hoped that others may be able to add useful information.

During the summer months, the Red-headed Woodpecker breeds regularly as far south as Lake Okechobee. For example, Woolfenden (1969) reported a breeding pair at Archbold Biological Station, Lake Placid. On the east coast, it has been recorded in the summer from Fort Lauderdale (Fleugel, 1962) and has been reported as breeding in that locality (Paulson and Stevenson, 1962). Sporadically, summer sightings are reported near Miami (e.g. Stevenson, 1953). From July 1966 to January 1967, one or two individuals were seen by many persons near Cutler south of Miami. A roost hole was maintained in a dead Royal Palm, but there was no clear proof of breeding (W.B. Robinson, in litt.; Stevenson, 1966). There is a single June record from the Dry Tortugas (Howell, 1932). It is of questionable validity, however, and according to Dr. William B. Robertson (in litt.) its occurrence on the Tortugas has to be regarded as "not proved."

Howell (1932:308) stated that the species is "irregularly migratory in winter, and (is) less numerous in winter in the northern parts" of the state. The extent of such migratory movements is probably governed by the severity of the winter. The disappearance from northern Florida may well coincide with their appearance in more southern parts of the state but this has not been documented. At Archbold Biological Station, the Red-headed Woodpecker is only sporadic in winter but Dr. James N. Layne (in litt.) reports that it is his impression that the species in winter tends to be more common in lower areas off the

STATUS OF THE RED-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) IN SOUTH FLORIDA. On 23 February 1970, a Red-headed Woodpecker was collected in the Big Cypress Swamp of Monroe County, Florida, near Pinecrest (Sec. 20, T 54 S, R 34 E). The specimen, an adult male, contained slight amounts of subcutaneous fat; testes were not enlarged. It is deposited as a study skin in the reference collection of the University of Miami (UMRC 6072).

Robert L. Paterson and I found this woodpecker in an area of scrub cypress swamp and were able to observe it for five minutes. During this period, it foraged actively along the trunks of cypress trees. When alarmed it flew to a dead, partially burned cypress and entered a hole located five meters above the ground. When we tapped on the

central Florida ridge. Thus localized movements appear to be the case in central Florida as well. It has been suggested that a late April record from Plantation Key may possibly indicate that some migrant Red-headed Woodpeckers winter south of the United States (Stevenson, 1960) but there is no proof of this.

Published statements concerning the winter status and abundance of the Red-headed Woodpecker in south Florida have had a much confused history. Howell (1932) and Sprunt (1954) reported the species to be a common winter resident in Miami. This is not presently the case. In fact, Mr. Louis A. Stimson (in litt.) states that it has not been common in Miami since he arrived in 1925. Furthermore, he suggests that Howell's report (quoted by Sprunt) probably refers to the Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Centurus carolinus*) which is often locally misnamed the Red-headed Woodpecker. Mr. Stimson first saw the Red-headed in Miami on 21 September 1951. Dr. Oscar T. Owre (pers. comm.) states that in the 1950's the species was not by any means absent but could be seen with some regularity at certain localities in Coral Gables. It was also recorded from Coral Gables in February and March of 1957. (Stevenson, 1957). It is still found sporadically as far south as Miami on the east coast (e.g. Stevenson, 1969) and more regularly at Naples on the west coast (e.g. Cruickshank, 1969). These sightings have all been in the coastal pinelands and hammocks. Only very rarely has it been recorded from inland sites. Three such records are those from Everglades National Park in 1958, 1963, and 1968 (Stevenson, 1958; W.B. Robertson, in litt.). The latter was an immature bird photographed by John C. Ogden. All occurred in the vicinity of Long Pine Key. This location, although inland, is an extension of the coastal ridge pinelands. The specimen reported in this note is also an inland record. It seems to be the first south Florida record from an area disjunct from coastal pinelands. It is emphasized, that the bird was found occupying a roost hole in scrub cypress.

On the basis of present knowledge, the Red-headed Woodpecker seems to be very rare in south Florida, occurring sporadically in all

seasons of the year. At present, there is probably no permanent south Florida population, although there may have been one primitively. Rather it would seem that occasional wintering birds from other regions may remain into the summer. The species seems to have always been scarce in southern Florida. When found, it is generally confined to the coastal pineland and its extensions but, as the present specimen demonstrates, may be found in the inland swamps.

One can but speculate as to reasons for its scarcity in southern Florida. That the environmental pressures of south Florida effect the distribution and abundance of certain vertebrate species is recognized if not completely understood. It is possible that in this distinctive area at the southern terminus of its range, the species is brought into competition with the ubiquitous local subspecies of the Red-bellied Woodpecker. Competition for nesting space is one possibility. In this light Dr. Oscar T. Owre (pers. comm.) reports that in 1957 Red-bellied Woodpeckers apparently evicted a pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers from a hole in the side of a wooden building on the University of Miami Campus. As far as competition for food is concerned, however, it is of interest to note that John C. Ogden of Everglades National Park saw Red-headed Woodpeckers displace Red-bellied Woodpeckers at a bird feeder on Long Pine Key (Everglades National Park files). Other than competition, the extent of preferred habitat may also be limiting



Photo by James Kem

as more and more of the pinelands have fallen to development.

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