

## FIELD NOTES

**White Ibis nesting in the Lower Florida Keys.** — The White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) is the most numerous wading bird in southern Florida forming colonies that may include tens of thousands of birds (Kushlan 1973, Wilson Bull. 58: 230-231). South of the mainland, ibis regularly form smaller colonies on keys in upper Florida Bay, the largest being on Frank Key near Flamingo which held 1500 nests in 1976. Although the colony is situated in the bay most birds nesting there feed on the mainland. The number of ibis found in wading bird colonies decreases further south, generally fewer than 50 nests occurring on Porjoe and Cowpens keys near Key Largo (Kushlan and White 1977, Fla. Sci. 40: 65-72).

In the 1940's Green (1946, Quart. J. Fla. Acad. Sci. 8: 199-265) considered the White Ibis to be rare in the Lower Florida Keys, and in the mid 1950's Hundley and Hames (1960, Fla. Nat. 33: 19-94) considered it to be a winter visitor. During the mid 1960's it was considered uncommon in winter and occasional during the rest of the year in the National Wildlife Refuges of the Lower Florida Keys (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Refuge Leaflet 150-R, 1967). Now it is regularly seen in small numbers in various locations in the lower keys. During a survey of water bird colonies in spring and summer 1976, we found 200 White Ibis nests at 5 locations in the Lower Florida Keys (Monroe Co.). We surveyed all sites from the air in mid-May, and counted nests from the ground in all but one colony in early June.

The largest colony was at Don Quixote Key, a mangrove island east of Big Pine Key. On 2 June 1976 the colony contained 107 White Ibis nests. Eggs had recently hatched in most nests and others were hatching at the time of the census. Five Louisiana Heron (*Hydranassa tricolor*), 4 little Blue Heron (*Florida caerulea*), 2 Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), and 5 Doubled-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) nests were also found in the colony. A small colony, on Marvin Key near the Snipe Keys, contained 3 White Ibis nests along with one Great White Heron (*Ardea herodias*) and 10 cormorant nests. Ibis also nested at 3 sites near Johnston Key. There were 68 nests on a mangrove island south of Johnston Key, 20 nests on a mangrove island north of Johnston Key and several nests, seen only from the air, on a small key called Pigeon Key (not the one near U.S. 1).

Although these records might be attributed to a relatively recent expansion of White Ibis nesting into the lower keys, it is more probable that ibis have nested there undetected in fairly small numbers for

some time. The relatively small number of birds nesting at each site is apparently typical of southern Florida White Ibis colonies located away from mainland feeding areas. Presumably the feeding opportunities around completely marine sites are inadequate to support large numbers of ibis. The Don Quixote site is notable for its diversity of nesting species as well as for the number of nesting White Ibis. Careful watch should be maintained over birds at this and other sites of colonial bird nesting activity, most of which fortunately are within the boundaries of Federal Wildlife Refuges of the Lower Florida Keys.

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**A Florida breeding record for the Greater Scaup.** — On 27 August 1975, in one of the Shiloh Marsh Impoundments on the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Brevard County, Florida, Biologist Tommy Hines and myself were banding Florida Ducks (*Anas fulvigula*) when our airboat flushed a brood of ducklings about 8 m in front of us. We ran down and captured by hand one of the ducklings which we identified as an immature male Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*) based on the extension of the white wing patch about halfway out onto the primaries (Bellrose 1976: 337). Cloacal examination revealed the presence of the immature penis (Hochbaum 1942). The bird was classified as a Class IIC duckling. Age spans for Greater Scaup in this plumage class were not available, but approximate mid-point age for Lesser Scaup (*A. affinis*) in Class IIC is 38 days (Gollop and Marshall 1954).

Because the brood was encountered unexpectedly, we could not obtain an accurate count of the ducklings present or look for an accompanying adult. However, at least four ducklings, all of which appeared to be scaup, were visible at once during the chase.

This late August record of a flightless Greater Scaup is the first conclusive evidence of reproduction in Florida. Sprunt (1954: 78) cites several spring records for the Greater Scaup in Florida, including 2 specimens from St. Marks, Wakulla County, on 23 and 24 May 1913. Additional spring records from the southeastern United States include one from "inland" North Carolina on 11 May (year omitted; Wray and Davis 1959: 79), a specimen reported from Gulf Shores, Alabama, on 13 April 1957, and a pair observed at close range on 16 June 1956 at Dauphine Island, Alabama (Imhof 1976: 116). In