

NOTES

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CATTLE EGRET CONSUMPTION OF DEAD BIRDS AND USE OF WINGS TO CLIMB FOR FRESH WATER

DAVID B. FREELAND

2345 Marsh Harbor Avenue, Merritt Island, Florida 32952

While observing birds drinking from "The Fountain" on Garden Key, Dry Tortugas National Park, Florida, on 5 May 2004, I watched a Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) use its wings to assist in lifting itself into position to reach the sole source of fresh water on the remote island group. This egret was one of 12 present within the walls of Fort Jefferson at the time. The bird seemed weak, although apparently not injured, possibly a result of difficulty finding adequate food on the islands, which are noted for being nearly insect-free.

"The Fountain" is a continuous source of recirculating water about 35 m inside the main gate of Fort Jefferson. An outer retaining wall of brick, approximately 1.8 m square and 40-45 cm high, creates a moat 40 cm wide. A second, inner retaining wall, approximately 75 cm square and 40 cm high, creates a second moat 15 cm wide; this is the Cattle Egrets' favored source of water. The fountain flows from a brick tower approximately 40 cm square and 23 cm higher than the inner retaining wall; its pool of water is flush with the top of the tower and is the favored drinking and bathing place for warblers, thrushes, and other passerines.

The Cattle Egret that used its wings to climb for water twice approached the outer retaining wall of the fountain, as its companion egrets often did, and tried to leap up the 45-cm barrier with a determined flap of its wings. However, this egret seemed too weak to reach the top, struck the wall mid-chest, and fell backwards to the ground. A few minutes later, it took position at the shortest section of the outer retaining wall, leaped upward and threw its left wing over the barrier, its right wingtip reaching the top of the barrier as well, as if for balance. Using the left wing for leverage, the egret slowly raised its left foot upward and placed it firmly on the top of the wall. Then, appearing to use both its left wing and left foot for lift, raised its right foot atop the barrier. Thus positioned, it was able to step easily across the outer moat to the top of the inner retaining wall, then reach downward into the inner moat for a drink. Young South American Hoatzins (*Opisthocomus hoazin*) are known for such climbing skills, but I know of no previous reference for Cattle Egrets using wings in such a manner.

In addition to this unusual behavior exhibited to obtain fresh water, I saw one Cattle Egret carry off an Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*), presumably found dead, and another eating a dead Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*). One Cattle Egret chased a dragonfly (species unknown) and captured it when it landed.

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ADDITIONAL NORTHWARD RANGE EXTENSION OF THE EXOTIC NORTHERN CURLY-TAILED LIZARD IN MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA

CHRISTOPHER L. DEAN¹, HENRY T. SMITH², RICHARD M. ENGEMAN^{3*},
AND WALTER E. MESHAKA, JR.⁴

¹Florida Department of Environmental Protection,
Florida Park Service Student Intern Program,
13798 S.E. Federal Highway, Hobe Sound, Florida 33455

²Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Park Service,
13798 S.E. Federal Highway, Hobe Sound, Florida 33455

³National Wildlife Research Center, 4101 LaPorte Ave.,
Fort Collins, Colorado 80521-2154

⁴The State Museum of Pennsylvania, 300 North Street,
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.
E-mail: Richard.M.Engeman@aphis.usda.gov

The exotic northern curly-tailed lizard (*Leiocephalus carinatus armouri*) was introduced into Palm Beach County, Florida during the 1940s and has since expanded its range both south and north into adjacent Broward and Martin counties (Duellman and Schwartz 1958, Weigl et al. 1969, Hauge and Butterfield 2000, Smith and Engeman 2002, Smith et al. 2004, Smith et al. in press). Aspects of the general ecology of *L. c. armouri* in Florida are reviewed in Meshaka et al. (2004) and Smith and Engeman (2004). On 31 August 2003, at 1645, we observed 3 adults and 6 juveniles in Port Salerno, Martin County in an area of older buildings with structural deterioration at the intersection of Salerno Road and Alternate A-1-A near the "Princess Thrift Shoppe" (27°08.783' × 80°11.834'), east side of Alternate A-1-A, immediately northeast of the intersection with Salerno Road. (One specimen 4.1 cm SVL (snout-vent length) collected by C.L. Dean, verified by W.E. Meshaka, Jr., State Museum of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, voucher no. SMP-H2108). This finding extends the species range north in Martin County ca. 11 km beyond a 7 March 2003 report (Smith et al. in press), and 22 km beyond the 1999 county record report (Hauge and Butterfield 2000, Smith and Engeman 2002), at the northern end of a relatively contiguous 90 km surveyed, occupied range (Smith et al. 2004). The Salerno Road and Alternate A-1-A site is ca. 136 km south of the most northern known locality for the species along the east coast of Florida located in Cocoa Beach (Krysko and King 2002) with one record reported between these two locations.

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REVIEW

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Endangered and Threatened Animals of Florida and Their Habitats, by Chris Scott, University of Texas Press, 2003, 448 pages; hardcover \$60, ISBN 0-292-70529-8; paperback \$29.95, ISBN 0-292-77774-4.

The plight of Florida's wildlife and wild places continues to invite description from a variety of authors. The latest approach is supplied by Chris Scott, who is identified as a federal wildlife officer, herpetologist, and former Floridian. The largest section of the book contains species accounts of endangered and threatened animals and a discussion of the threats they face. If there's a shortcoming in this section, it's Scott's choice of species to highlight. The author has focused on federally-listed species including such rarities as Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*), Bachman's Warbler (*Vermivora bachmanii*), and Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*), while ignoring some state-listed species whose plight is less well known and might have benefited from coverage. I feel that Scott's book could have been of more service to readers interested in wildlife conservation if he had devoted some space to species such as American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*), Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*), and Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) that are state-listed or not yet listed as endangered or threatened, but whose status is cause for concern because of habitat loss or degradation.

The rest of the book is devoted to topics ranging from the descriptions of various habitats to the history of environmental protection in Florida. Although Scott seems to have conducted quite a bit of research in completing these sections, it is clear that either his research or his fact-checking was faulty. These sections contain numerous errors. Those errors include everything from the number of parrot species roaming South Florida and the date of the last Florida record of Key West Quail-Dove (*Geotrygon chrysis*) to the locations of the Florida Marine Patrol and the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission on the state government organizational chart before their merger into the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, or the current name of Florida's conservation land-buying program.

Nevertheless, Scott's book contains quite a bit of useful information and readers will gain useful knowledge as long as they read carefully. The first chapter contains an overview of both the disappearance and decline of a number of species as well as some of the environmental threats they face (e.g., road kills, habitat loss, commercial exploitation). He includes a brief and rather superficial discussion about environmental pollution, which certainly degrades some habitats in Florida to the point that wildlife is affected. That follows with a chapter on the impact of exotic species on Florida's environment and some native species. Of interest are his account of the interactions between native green anoles (*Anolis carolinensis*) and brown anoles (*Anolis sagrei*) from the West Indies, and his recognition of the role of domestic pets in wildlife predation. He lists invasive plants, too, but the list is notable for the absence of mention of Chinese tallow tree (*Sapium biferum*), which is now regarded as one of the worst plant pests in the Southeast, or Japanese or European climbing ferns (*Lygodium* spp.), major threats in central and southern Florida. This is an example of a problem throughout the book: the lack of up-to-date information. Next Scott takes on Florida's population growth and its impact on wildlife; he briefly discusses some of the ecological problems caused by overenthusiastic ecotourists. What follows is a history of environmental regulations in Florida and the nation. This account is at times a bit disjointed, in some cases unfocused, and occasionally wrong chronologically. For instance, Scott refers to the "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires" slogan as being from the 1960s, when in fact it is decades older. From there he meanders into a discussion of the fate of several endangered species, such as the black-