

Bonaparte's Gull (*I. philadelphia*).

This identification was supported by John Fussell, who saw the bird on 3 February. Photographs were secured by Chris Marsh on 4 February, and a color slide has been deposited at the North Carolina State Museum of Natural History.

[NOTE: Since the time of the above observations, Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds have moved to Oklahoma. Their present address was not available at press time.—EFP]

Burrowing Owl Photographed at Huntington Beach State Park, S.C.

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On 24 June 1976, a Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto cunicularia*) was seen and photographed by me at Huntington Beach State Park, Georgetown County, S.C. (Chat 41:15). It was called to my attention by Mr. Heimerdinger, a member of CBC who was camped at the State Park.

The owl was at the north parking lot, and it had taken up temporary residence under a concrete slab that was once the cover of a septic tank. Mr. Heimerdinger and I were able to get quite close to the bird, which was giving the familiar "coo-o-o-ing" sound and bobbing up and down in typical Burrowing Owl fashion. The bird was flushed from its place just in front of the slab, whereupon it flew a short distance and on alighting, again gave the sounds and actions of the species. As I was called to Michigan that same day, I did not learn how long the owl stayed in the Park.

Photographs were taken, using a 300 mm lens on a Mamiya/Sekor camera at the closest focusing distance of about 4 m. The slides were sent to John Farrand Jr., at the American Museum of Natural History, in an attempt to determine the subspecific identification of the owl. Mr. Farrand stated that the bird was "almost certainly" the Florida subspecies, *S. c. floridana*, although he could not rule out the possibility of its being from outside the continental United States. He also stated that it definitely was not the western subspecies, *S. c. hypugaea*.

There are but three previous records of the Burrowing Owl in South Carolina. Sprunt and Chamberlain (South Carolina Bird Life, 1949, p. 306) list only a bird seen by Ivan R. Tomkins on 7 December 1943, at Bay Point, near Beaufort, S.C. This owl was identified by Sprunt and Chamberlain as a member of the western subspecies, *S. c. hypugaea*, on the basis that the Florida subspecies "... does not regularly occur north of central Florida and it is not known to be migratory, whereas the Western Burrowing Owl migrates more or less regularly southward after the breeding season." In the Supplement to the 1970 edition (p. 641) Burton refuses to give a subspecific designation. Tomkins (Oriole 26:2) saw another Burrowing Owl in the state on 3 November 1959, at the edge of US 17A, about 2 miles N of the Georgia line, Jasper County, S.C. A third owl was found by Perry Nugent on 30 December 1975, at the U.S. Vegetable Breeding Laboratory near Charleston, S.C. (Chat 40:72). These two birds were not identified to subspecies.

Without specimens, the identification of Burrowing Owl subspecies is difficult if not impossible. Consequently, the identity of the birds discussed herein will probably always remain uncertain. However, a Burrowing Owl collected by Paul Sykes on 14 February 1967, at Salvo, Dare County, N.C. (cited by Fussell and McCrimmon, Chat 38:41), proved to be a member of the Florida subspecies, *S. c. floridana*. This, coupled with the probable identity of the Huntington Beach State Park bird, increases the likelihood that all previous sightings of this species in the Carolinas represent *S. c. floridana*. The owl observed near Ft. Macon, Carteret County, N.C., by Fussell and McCrimmon during June, August, and September of 1972 (Chat 38:41) was not collected.