

ABSTRACTS FOR *CONDOR* 103(2) MAY 2001

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

**POST-FLEDGING BROODS OF MIGRATORY HARLEQUIN DUCKS
ACCOMPANY FEMALES TO WINTERING AREAS¹**

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Abstract. We describe evidence that Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) broods accompany their mothers from breeding streams to coastal molting or wintering areas. Observations indicated that all surviving female-offspring groups left breeding areas together. We later sighted some family members at the coast near each other, suggesting that they had arrived together, then separated. We observed family groups at wintering areas in August and September. Family groups tended to separate quickly, although some family members maintained contact for over two months. To our knowledge the evidence we provide is the first suggesting that female migratory ducks bring their offspring to wintering areas, a pattern similar to geese and swans. This may be facilitated by an unusual strategy of wing molt, in which Harlequin Ducks molt after migrating to wintering areas. Due to winter pairing and strong philopatry in Harlequin Ducks, migration of families may contribute to genetic differentiation among populations.

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