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## Sabal Palmetto Distribution Update

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The distribution of cabbage palms (*Sabal palmetto*) in north Florida has been characterized as isolated and widely scattered along rivers and streams (Brown 1976). Two populations, hitherto unreported in the literature, have been located in remote areas along the Suwannee River north and further inland than those previously reported.

The discovery of these two sites came about quite unexpectedly. It was on two separate canoe trips on the Suwannee River, one in June 1982, the other in June 1983, that these two populations of cabbage palms were found.

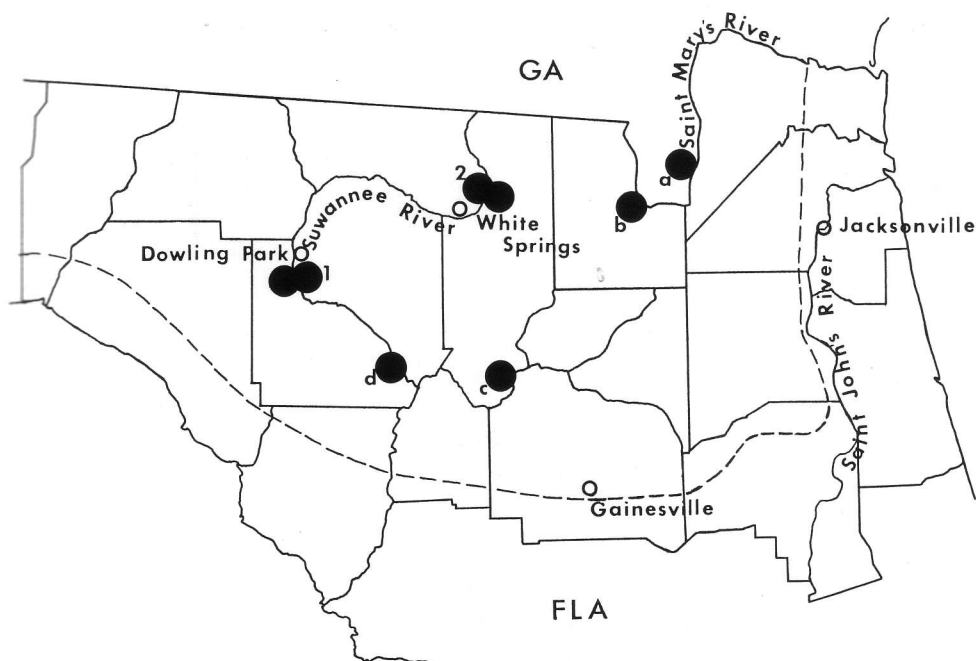
The first trip was on a 40 mile stretch of the river between Dowling Park and Branford. Within a few miles of our launch point at Dowling Park, numerous cabbage palms up to 4.5 m in height were observed on both sides of the river. Scattered plants in all age classes from seedling to reproductive were seen for several miles. The river runs in a southerly direction for approximately ten miles below Dowling Park before turning to the east. No further sightings were made after the turn to the east until reaching the Branford area where the river again is on a southerly course. Unfortunately, I did not have my camera on this trip so no photographic record of these trees exists.

The second trip, approximately one year later, was considerably further upstream on the Suwannee near White Springs. Entry point for this 15 mile canoe trip was about ten miles northeast of White Springs off U.S. 441. The purpose of this

trip was to experience Florida's only stretch of class three and four white water rapids, locally known as Big Shoals. About five miles downstream from the entry point cabbage palms were sighted on both sides of the river for several miles north of Big Shoals. Again individuals in all age classes were observed. The river at this point also has a southerly course. On a second trip through the same stretch of river in June 1984, I had my camera along and have thus recorded the species' presence in Figure 1. This population was completely



1. Mature specimen of *Sabal palmetto* on the banks of the Suwannee River, Hamilton County, Florida, June 1984.



2. Distribution of *Sabal palmetto* in northern Florida. The dotted line represents the approximate limit of the continuous range. Points a, b, c and d indicate locations of previously reported isolated interior populations. Points 1 and 2 indicate new population locations hitherto unreported in the literature.

unexpected and is quite exciting to me as it is the most remote interior population yet reported. It is approximately 75 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean, 70 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, and 55 miles north of the continuous range across the peninsula near Gainesville. (Fig. 2).

These populations further support my earlier conclusions that *Sabal palmetto* is a viable, range expanding species. I am now inclined to think that isolated popu-

lations may be present in interior south Georgia and perhaps even southeastern Alabama. If such populations do not yet occur I would expect them there in the future.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- BROWN, KYLE E. 1976. Ecological Studies of the Cabbage Palm, *Sabal palmetto*. IV. Ecology and Geographical Distribution. *Principes* 20: 148-156.