

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

New and Additional Records of Birds in the Virgin River Valley.—The Virgin River drains the highlands of Utah's Markagunt Plateau, one of the southwestern terraces of the larger Colorado Plateau, and flows in a southerly direction for 85 miles to empty into Lake Mead on the Colorado River. Zion National Park is located in the upper drainage, and a narrow canyon has resulted from the river cutting into the Navajo Sandstone. There is less resistance where the river cuts into the softer formations below the Navajo, and a wider valley has resulted. This open valley offers a line of vegetation between the Zion highlands and the semi-arid lands of the tri-state area of southwestern Utah, northwestern Arizona, and southern Nevada.

The St. George Basin (average elevation is 2750 feet), Washington County, Utah, is located about 40 miles below the narrow canyons of Zion; here are many cultivated and well-irrigated fields and a number of marshy areas that lie adjacent to the waterway. Beaver Dam (elevation, 1860 feet), Mohave County, Arizona, is situated 30 miles below St. George, at the confluence of the Virgin River and Beaver Dam Wash; the wash runs south beside the Beaver Dam Mountains of Washington County, Utah, draining their western slopes and a portion of the higher Bull Valley Mountains to the north.

We wish to thank Dennis L. Carter for allowing us to report his observations, William H. Behle for suggestions on the manuscript, and Lester L. Short (Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.) for racial identifications. Many of the following records were obtained during field research supported by National Science Foundation grant no. GB-4035. All of the specimens reported were collected by Wauer and are deposited in the museum collection of Zion National Park, Utah.

Ixobrychus exilis. Least Bittern. The first record of this species for the Virgin River Valley was a specimen obtained "from one of the small marshes near the Rio Virgin at Saint George," 20 May 1938 (Hardy, Condor, 41:86, 1939). This single specimen was the basis for the determination that the species breeds along the Colorado River north to St. George (A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds, p. 52, 1957). Woodbury, Cottam, and Sugden (Bull. Univ. Utah, 16:6, 1949) also used this single record as a basis for their description of the species as "a sparse summer resident" of the Virgin River Valley of Utah. However, until now there have been no further reports of this species within the southwestern corner of the state. Two sightings at a marsh along the Virgin River south of Washington, Washington County, during the summer of 1965, indicate summering status for this species. Russell observed one on 27 June, and Wauer found one at the same location on 28 August.

Buteogallus anthracinus. Black Hawk. Carter and Wauer (Condor, 67:82-83, 1965) reported this species nesting in 1963 at Springdale, Washington County, Utah. No young birds were observed, however, and apparently the adults deserted the nest shortly after its construction. Since then, the following noteworthy observations have been made of this hawk within the Virgin River Valley.

Only one record was obtained in 1964, when a subadult was seen south of Springdale on 9 July by Carter and David Easterla. In 1965 the first sighting was that of a lone bird south of Springdale, 3 April, by Wauer and Clyde and Lois Harden. A search the following day and later was unsuccessful. At Beaver Dam, Arizona, Russell found a pair of Black Hawks on 16 April. The birds apparently were courting, since they called continuously and soared about in the stand of cottonwood trees. A very old-looking nest was found nearby. Again, on 8 May, Russell observed similar actions and also watched the pair in coitus. Russell had two brief glimpses of single birds here on 15 May. The species was not seen again until 25 August, when Wauer found a lone juvenile bird near the place where the paired adults were seen 8 May. These records suggest a successful nesting which represents the northernmost record of such for the species.

An additional sighting is that of a single adult at Berry Spring, near Hurricane, Washington County, Utah, 27 June 1965, by Russell. It flew across the Virgin River after being frightened from the limb of a dead tree upon which it was sitting.

Gallinula chloropus. Common Gallinule. The first report of this species for southern Utah was Wauer's sighting of two individuals at St. George, 29 December 1962 (Audubon Field Notes,

2:263, 1963). Nine individuals were found at the same location on 19 December 1963, and during 1964 and 1965 the authors found the species present at two locations in the St. George Basin every month. Also, on 1, 17, and 21 August 1965 juveniles were seen at the largest of the two marshes by both authors. Common Gallinules have previously been reported to winter "from north-central California and Arizona (Tucson) south" and to breed in California and in central Arizona and in the lower Colorado Valley (A.O.U. Check-list, p. 167, 1957). This, then, is a northerly extension of the winter and summer range for the species.

Eupoda montana. Mountain Plover. A lone female (ZNPM 1633) of this species was collected four miles below Rockville, Washington County, Utah, 11 April 1965. It was found in an open irrigated field at the mouth of North Creek by C. R. Skelton who reported it to Wauer. Apparently this is the second record of the species for Utah, although there are a number of sightings for the northern part of the state. The first record is from Bear River Refuge, Box Elder County, 25 March 1946 (Van den Akker, Condor, 48:246, 1946). Woodbury *et al.* (*op. cit.*, p. 13) regarded it as a "casual migrant" to Utah. Phillips, Marshall, and Monson (Birds of Arizona, Univ. of Arizona Press, p. 33, 1964) regard it as a "rare bird" in Arizona with recent records "from September to April."

Totanus flavipes. Lesser Yellowlegs. This species is generally regarded as a fairly common spring and fall migrant throughout the tri-state area, and there are a number of records to date. However, the following two specimens represent additional knowledge of the spring and fall migration dates. A lone female was collected at the Springdale Ponds, Springdale, on 29 April 1965, and a lone male was taken in a flooded field three miles southeast of St. George on 7 September 1965. The latter was very fat and weighed 88.3 g.

Calidris canutus. Knot. Although this species is regarded as an "erratic migrant, some years recorded in large flocks up to 1500" (Woodbury *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 14) in Utah, this is the first record for southern Utah. A lone bird was found feeding with *Charadrius vociferus*, *Erolia minutilla*, and *Ereunetes mauri* in a flooded field three miles southeast of St. George, 12 September 1965. The specimen (ZNPM 1686) is a male (testes, 1×1 mm each) that weighed 113.7 g. To the south, Linsdale (A List of the Birds of Nevada, Condor, 53:234, 1951) reported only one record for Nevada, and Phillips *et al.* (*op. cit.*, p. 35) regard it as "casual" in Arizona.

Erolia bairdii. Baird's Sandpiper. An extremely fat (weight, 66.6 g) female of this species was collected in a flooded field three miles southeast of St. George on 15 September 1965. It is the first specimen (ZNPM 1694) of the Baird's Sandpiper collected in southern Utah, although Woodbury *et al.* (*op. cit.*, p. 14) call it a "common migrant through Utah." In Arizona, Phillips *et al.* (*op. cit.*, p. 35) regard it as a "Fall transient, uncommon in west to abundant in east and north." Linsdale (*op. cit.*, p. 234) reported the species to be "Transient; reported in May and August" in Nevada.

Ereunetes pusillus. Semipalmated Sandpiper. Two specimens of this species were collected in a flooded field three miles southeast of St. George on 7 September 1965. They were in company of several *Erolia minutilla* and *Ereunetes mauri*; a specimen of the latter species was also taken: a female (ovary 3×1 mm, ZNPM 1698). Both specimens of *Ereunetes pusillus* are males. The first (ZNPM 1714) weighed 32.2 g, and each testis measured 1×2 mm. The second (ZNPM 1721) weighed 34.8 g, and each testis was 4×2 mm. They represent the first specimens for the tri-state area of Utah, Arizona, and Nevada. I could find no Nevada records of the species in the literature, and Phillips *et al.* (*op. cit.*, p. 36) report only one specimen for Arizona. Woodbury *et al.* (*op. cit.*, p. 14) call it a "casual migrant" in Utah with specimens from Utah, Juab, Sevier, and Uintah counties only.

Chaetura vauxi. Vaux's Swift. Three individuals were observed at the Springdale Ponds on 11 and 13 September 1965 by Wauer and Lois Harden. Apparently the three birds remained within the area throughout this time feeding with *Aeronautes saxatalis* which were abundant throughout the month. Vaux's Swifts have been reported for the state only once before. A mummy of a single bird was found in Davis County, 28 October 1939 (Woodbury *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 18).

Colaptes cafer. Hybrid flicker. A "yellow-shafted" flicker was collected at the Terry Ranch (elevation, 1800 feet) in Beaver Dam Wash, Washington County, Utah, 28 April 1965. The

specimen (ZNPM 1641, female) was identified by Short as a hybrid of the *mearnsi* × *colaris* races.

A yellow-phased flicker was first reported (personal communication) for the Beaver Dam Wash area by Carter on 14 May 1963. There have been several sight records since, including the following observations by Russell. A pair of flickers was observed in coitus on a large limb of a cottonwood tree at the Terry Ranch on 26 March 1965. The male was "yellow-shafted" and the female was "red-shafted"; the male did not have the red nape of the typical yellow-shafted species, but was colored in all ways as a member of the "gilded" species. All of the sightings are for spring and summer only; it does appear that Beaver Dam Wash contains a regular summer population of this hybrid group.

Dendroica occidentalis. Hermit Warbler. A lone female of this species was found foraging high in the foliage of a cottonwood tree at Beaver Dam, Arizona, on the rainy morning of 17 August 1965. The collected specimen (ZNPM 1681) was very fat (weight 10.9 g) and represents the first for the Virgin River Valley. Apparently, the stormy weather, which was quite severe over the greater part of the tri-state area, brought this individual into the lowlands; most sightings during migration are for the mountains only. Although there are several reports of this species for southern Arizona (Phillips *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 29), this is the first for the northern portion of the state. In Utah Woodbury *et al.* (*op. cit.*, p. 29) reported the species as a "Migrant through southern Utah, known only from the Navajo Mt., August 11, 1935 and August 13, 1936."

Seiurus noveboracensis. Northern Waterthrush. The following records will supplement the two earlier records of the species for southwestern Utah (Fisher, N. Amer. Fauna no. 7, p. 122, 1893; Grater, Condor, 48:70, 1947). A specimen (ZNPM 1660) was collected at the Springdale Ponds on 15 May 1965. It was one of four birds seen during 14 and 15 May. One of the 15 May birds was captured, banded (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service band number 73-35856), and released. An additional record is a lone bird seen by Russell and Carter at the Terry Ranch in Beaver Dam Wash on 20 May 1964.

Piranga rubra. Summer Tanager. On 17 August 1965 an adult female Summer Tanager was observed feeding a juvenile in the foliage of a cottonwood tree at Beaver Dam, Arizona. The juvenile was collected, and the specimen (ZNPM 1680) was racially identified by Short as *cooperi*. The authors found this species present at several locations along the Virgin River drainage from 27 April (Beaver Dam) to 19 September (Santa Clara) during 1963 through 1965. It apparently breeds along the Virgin River to St. George, up Santa Clara Creek to Santa Clara, and in places along Beaver Dam Wash. In 1965 Wauer found a total of six individuals (three females, two males, and one immature) at Beaver Dam on 23 August; one female and one immature bird were seen at the Terry Ranch in Beaver Dam Wash on 25 August; and two females were seen at Santa Clara on 7 September. All records were obtained in a cottonwood-willow habitat in riverbeds or washes.

Previous published records extended this species north to Mohave Valley, Clark County, at the extreme southern tip of Nevada (Gullion, Pulich, and Evenden, Condor, 61:293, 1959). David Easterla (Condor, 68:210, 1966) found a dead female one mile west of Santa Clara on 23 July 1964.

Pheucticus ludovicianus. Rose-breasted Grosbeak. A specimen of a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak (ZNPM 1665, weight 32.2 g, and testes 0.03 g) was collected at the Springdale Ponds on 3 May 1965. It represents the first specimen for Utah. There is one earlier sight record for Utah, as Greenhalgh (Behle, Univ. of Utah Biol. Ser., 7:79, 1958) observed a lone male at Kanab, Kane County on 26 April 1935. Another sight record for Kanab is that of 2 June 1965; Wauer and Dick Riley observed a male singing from the oak brush in Cave Lake Canyon. Several Black-headed Grosbeaks (*P. melanocephalus*) were also singing from the same oak slope. Additional specimens for Utah were reported by Behle (Condor, 68:396, 1966), one from the Arches National Monument, Grand County, 26 May 1965, the other from Fish Springs, Juab County, 2 June 1965.

Phillips *et al.* (*op. cit.*, p. 179) report only four records of *ludovicianus* for Arizona; the only one for the northern part of the state, a specimen was taken at Grand Canyon Village on 22 September 1963. There is a single Nevada record. Grater (Auk, 56:191, 1939) reported observing one at St. Thomas, at the northern end of Lake Mead, Clark County on 20 June 1938.

Calamospiza melanocorys. Lark Bunting. Approximately 30 birds of this species were found at St. George on 5 May 1965; one male (weight 42.3 g, testes 0.56 g) was collected. The specimen (ZNPM 1670) represents the third record for southwestern Utah. The species was first reported for the region by Hardy and Higgins (Proc. Utah Acad. Sci., Arts, and Letters, 17:109, 1940), who noted four specimens taken at Washington, Utah, 10 May 1940. Behle (Bull. Univ. Utah, 2:73, 1943) also collected a specimen in the Beaver Dam Mountains on 6 May 1941.

Apparently the species was present throughout the tri-state area from 27 April through 15 May 1965. Wauer first observed a flock of 14 individuals at Beaver Dam on 27 April; Russell found a lone male in company with a flock of Lark Sparrows (*Chondestes grammacus*) at the Terry Ranch in Beaver Dam Wash on 8 May and another lone male at St. George on 15 May. In Arizona it is considered rare in the western part of the state (Phillips *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 191). Linsdale (*op. cit.*, p. 245) considered it to be an "irregular winter visitant" in Nevada. Apparently it is an irregular spring migrant in the Virgin River Valley.

Zonotrichia albicollis. White-throated Sparrow. A single female, of at least two individuals which were heard singing three days earlier, was taken in Oak Creek Canyon, Zion National Park, on 29 October 1965. The specimen (ZNPM 1696) weighed 23.4 g (ovary 1×1 mm), and represents the first of this species collected in southern Utah. Earlier records in southwestern Utah include three seen with a large flock of *Z. leucophrys* at Springdale on 20 November 1964 (Wauer and Carter, Birds of Zion National Park and Vicinity, Zion Natl. Hist. Assoc., p. 85, 1965), and Russell found a lone bird in company with *Z. leucophrys* at the Terry Ranch in Beaver Dam Wash on 15 May 1965. On 11 January 1966 he noted another lone bird near St. George.

Zonotrichia atricapilla. Golden-crowned Sparrow. Until now there have been only two records of this species for Utah. Both of these are from Zion Canyon; W. S. Long collected one (ZNPM 365) in Zion Canyon on 16 January 1936, and Grater observed one here on 7 March 1942 (Woodbury *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 35). Wauer found the species present at Springdale throughout the winter of 1964-65. Three individuals were banded (one each on 20 January and 15 and 24 February); the 15 February bird (band number 101-234018) was released four miles from the place of capture and was recaptured on 23 February at the same location where it was originally captured. Additional fall records include birds banded in Oak Creek Canyon, Zion National Park, on 29 October and 4, 14, 16, and 18 November 1965. A single specimen was taken here on 15 November 1965; it (ZNPM 1717) was a female (ovary 2×1 mm) that weighed 27.9 g. Russell observed an immature with a small yellow frontal patch one mile west of Santa Clara on 28 December 1965. An additional winter sighting is an adult seen with a small flock of *Z. leucophrys* at Rogers Spring, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Clark County, Nevada, by Russell on 4 February 1963.

Apparently, this species is also a spring migrant through southern Utah, as one was seen in Shunes Creek, Washington County, 22 April 1963, by Carter, and Wauer observed one at Springdale on 13 April 1964.

Melospiza georgiana. Swamp Sparrow. A male Swamp Sparrow was taken at the Springdale Ponds on 2 March 1965. The specimen (ZNPM 1629) was racially identified by Short as *ericrypta* and represents the second record for the Virgin River Valley and the third for Utah. Yarrow and Henshaw of the Wheeler Survey collected one near Washington on 23 October 1872 (Henshaw, Rept. Geog. and Geol. Expl. and Surv. West 100th Mer., 5, p. 385, 1875). A second specimen was taken near Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, on 20 February 1952 (Behle, Condor, 56:312, 1954). An additional record is of a sighting of the Swamp Sparrow near the confluence of the Virgin and Santa Clara rivers, two miles south of St. George, by Wauer, on 9 February 1966.—ROLAND H. WAUER, *Big Bend National Park, Texas*, and RICHARD C. RUSSELL, *3620 Barcroft View Terrace, Bailey's Crossroads, Virginia, 22 July 1966*.

Individual Variation in Natal Pterylosis of Red-winged Blackbirds.—Pterylosis of young passerines has in recent years received increased attention in terms of adaptation and taxonomy (see Burckhardt, Rev. Suisse Zool., 62:314-319, 1955; Wetherbee, Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., 113:339-436, 1957; Collins, Bird-Banding, 34:36-38, 1963). The following report empha-