

BIRD RECORDS FROM  
SOUTHERN NEVADA

RICHARD C. BANKS

Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife  
U. S. National Museum  
Washington, D. C. 20560

AND

CHARLES G. HANSEN<sup>1</sup>Desert National Wildlife Range  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89106

For the past several years the junior author has carried on an extensive banding program at the Corn Creek Field Station of the Desert National Wildlife Range in Clark County, southern Nevada. In this time a number of species not previously, or only seldom, reported from that state have been discovered. When feasible, specimens of these unusual species have been collected. They were prepared by Mrs. Pat Hansen, and most have been deposited in the U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C. The more important of these records are set forth below. All records are from the immediate vicinity of the Corn Creek Field Station, referred to hereafter as the Station. Additional records from southern Nevada, of birds in The Biology Museum, Nevada Southern University, were made available by George T. Austin.

The Station is approximately 22 mi. NW of Las Vegas, at an elevation of 3000 ft in the Mohave Desert. It is between the Sheep and Spring Mountains, the breeding avifaunas of which were recently discussed by Johnson (1965). The Station is an oasis in a shadscale, creosote bush, and Joshua tree desert. There are several dwellings with lawns and shrubbery. A small orchard with mixed fruit and nut trees and about 14 acres of permanent pasture are irrigated by water from Corn Creek, which flows through an artificial pond with a surface area of approximately 300 × 50 ft. A series of mesquite-covered sand dunes extends about three miles north of the Station. The nearest similar oases are approximately 15 miles to the south and 20 miles to the north. It is likely that this valley provides a natural flyway for migrant birds, leading them on a route near or through the city of Las Vegas.

White-winged Dove. *Zenaida asiatica mearnsi*. Linsdale (1951) commented that this dove was "present in summer along the Colorado River in the extreme southern end of the state", but he had no specimens. Johnson and Richardson (1952) presented a second sight record for Nevada. A number of additional records were given by Gullion et al. (1959), but the availability of specimens was not indicated. Two females were taken at the Station on 8 May 1961 (115.7 g; NSU) and 25 May 1962 (USNM). A third female was collected along the Colorado River below Davis Dam on 15 May 1965 (108.4 g; NSU). This species has been seen at the Station almost every year since 1961, but usually not more than two or three are seen at one time. Several have been banded and released.

Flammulated Owl. *Otus flammeolus flammeolus*. There have been few reports of this elusive species

in Nevada, although data presented by Johnson and Russell (1962) for the Lake Tahoe area and by Johnson (1965) for the southern part of the state suggest that it may be common where it occurs. Johnson (1965) had evidence that this species breeds in three mountain ranges in southern Nevada, including those flanking the Station. A previously unreported specimen (NSU) is a female (68.7 g), taken at 8150 ft in Clark Canyon, Charleston Mountains (=Spring Range), on 17 June 1961. Another bird was taken in a mist net at the Station on the night of 20 May 1962; this bird, a female, was very fat.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. *Muscivora forficata*. On 20 May 1962 a female was captured in a mist net at the Station and preserved to provide a specimen record. Although this species has not previously been reported from Nevada, it has been seen at the Station nearly every spring since 1960, with more than one individual occurring in some years. The regularity of its occurrence in recent years fits well with the records presented by McCaskie et al. (1967b) for southern California.

Brown Thrasher. *Toxostoma rufum longicauda*. Gullion (1957) presented the first record of this species in Nevada, a bird banded but not collected, in Eureka County. Hansen collected the first specimen from Nevada, providing the second record, on 3 October 1963. The bird, a male, had been observed for several days before it was captured in the net. The occurrence of this species in southern Nevada lends credence to the suggestion by Davis (1968) that at least some of the birds reported from southern California in recent years (McCaskie et al. 1967a) have moved west by a southern route across the desert.

Black-throated Blue Warbler. *Dendroica caerulescens caerulescens*. A male in full adult plumage was taken at the Station on 11 October 1964. It was found in an automobile parked by one of the dwellings, apparently having flown in through an open window. This species has not previously been reported from Nevada.

Hooded Warbler. *Wilsonia citrina*. A male of this eastern species was collected at the Station on 20 October 1961. This is the first record of this species in Nevada, and apparently the westernmost record of its occurrence in North America. Phillips et al. (1964) previously reported a specimen and a sight record from southeastern Arizona.

Orchard Oriole. *Icterus spurius*. An immature male was captured in a mist net in the orchard on 4 September 1965. The species has not previously been reported from Nevada.

## LITERATURE CITED

- DAVIS, J. 1968. A third specimen of the Brown Thrasher from California. *Auk* 85:128-129.
- GULLION, G. W. 1957. Miscellaneous bird records from northeastern Nevada. *Condor* 59:70-71.
- GULLION, G. W., W. M. PULICH, AND F. G. EVENDEN. 1959. Notes on the occurrence of birds in southern Nevada. *Condor* 61:278-297.
- JOHNSON, N. K. 1965. The breeding avifaunas of the Sheep and Spring ranges in southern Nevada. *Condor* 76:93-124.
- JOHNSON, N. K., AND F. RICHARDSON. 1952. Supplementary bird records for Nevada. *Condor* 54:358-359.
- JOHNSON, N. K., AND W. C. RUSSELL. 1962. Dis-

<sup>1</sup> Present address: Death Valley National Monument, Death Valley, California 92328.

tributional data on certain owls in the western Great Basin. *Condor* 64:513-514.

LINSDALE, J. M. 1951. A list of the birds of Nevada. *Condor* 53:228-249.

MCCASKIE, G., R. STALLCUP, AND P. DEBENEDICTIS. 1967a. The distribution of certain Mimidae in California. *Condor* 69:310-311.

MCCASKIE, R. G., R. STALLCUP, AND P. DEBENEDICTIS. 1967b. The occurrence of certain flycatchers in California. *Condor* 69:85-86.

PHILLIPS, A., J. MARSHALL, AND G. MONSON. 1964. The birds of Arizona. Univ. Ariz. Press, Tucson.

Accepted for publication 7 June 1968.

## FIRST RECORD OF THE BLACK BRANT (*BRANTA NIGRICANS*) FOR NEW MEXICO

JAMES L. SANDS

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish  
P.O. Box 8346 Sta. C  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108

During the last of January 1967 a single Black Brant (*Branta nigricans*) appeared at the State Waterfowl Refuge, Bernardo, Socorro County, New Mexico. The bird, which was crippled, was captured by Robert Acosta, the farm manager, and kept at the Bernardo Refuge for some time. Later it was taken to Tesuque, New Mexico, where it was cared for by William S. Huey. After being nursed back to health it was eventually donated to the zoo at San Antonio, Texas. A photographic record of the bird was made and a print is on file at the Museum of Southwestern Biology, University of New Mexico.

The AOU Check-list of North American Birds (1957) does not list the Black Brant as occurring in

New Mexico and, as far as I can determine, no records for New Mexico have been published since 1957. During the fall of 1966 a verbal report was received from personnel of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, Socorro County, New Mexico, that there were two birds staying on the refuge that appeared to be brants. The birds were on the refuge 31 October-25 November 1966. A black-and-white photograph of the birds was submitted to the Museum of Southwestern Biology, University of New Mexico. The photograph does show that the birds are brant, but it is impossible to ascribe them to a particular species. It is possible that the Black Brant captured at Bernardo was one of the birds seen earlier at the Bosque del Apache Refuge.

I would like to thank the following people for assisting in some manner with the preparation of this paper: J. S. Findley, Museum of Southwestern Biology; W. S. Huey, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish; E. Klett, U. S. Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife.

Accepted for publication 21 May 1968.

## BIRDS OBSERVED DURING A CRUISE IN THE ICE-COVERED BERING SEA IN MARCH 1968

LAURENCE IRVING,

Institute of Arctic Biology  
University of Alaska  
College, Alaska 99701

C. PETER McROY,

Institute of Marine Science  
University of Alaska

AND

JOHN J. BURNS

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

A cruise of the Scripps Institution for Oceanography research vessel ALPHA HELIX, escorted by USCGC NORTHWIND with 10 biologists from Scripps and six from Alaska passed through the ice-covered Bering Sea in March 1968 on the course outlined in figure 1. Experimental studies prevented regular watch for birds, but in the course of travel and hunting for seals many birds were observed as the ships moved through ice. The ice margin, attained at latitude 57° on 7 March, remained broken with occasional extensive polynia until ice became continuous in the northern part of Etolin Strait, 12 March. Rounding Nunivak Island, ice became heavier in progress westward toward St. Matthew Island. Polynia, sometimes several miles in extent, were rare until, moving southward 26 March, they became more frequent and extensive as the ice pans became smaller and lighter. The ship left the ice 27 March. A list of some birds observed and comments on them follows.

## SPECIES LIST

Albatross. *Diomedea* sp. On 6 March, a dark backed albatross was seen briefly about 30 mi. N of Unalaska Island. We suspect that it was the Black-footed Albatross (*Diomedea nigripes*) for which Murie (N. Amer. Fauna no. 61, 1959) and Gabrielson and Lincoln (The Birds of Alaska, 1959) found reports of occurrence north of the Aleutians only between May and October.

A fulmar. *Fulmarus glacialis*. A lone bird was sitting on a low ice hummock on 20 March.

Oldsquaw. *Clangula hyemalis*. Groups of from a few to 30 were frequently seen in flight and fishing near the margin of the ice.

King Eider. *Somateria spectabilis*. A pair was distinguished 19 March. Many distant but not identifiable flocks of flying eiders were seen near the margin of the ice in central Bering Sea. We looked hopefully but without success to see if congregations of Spectacled Eiders (*Lampronetta fischeri*) could be identified wintering near the ice margin.

Glaucous Gull. *Larus hyperboreus*. Gulls of this species were occasionally seen about Unalaska Island and intermittently over the ice after 7 March throughout the cruise. On 26 March, as the ice became more broken, Glaucous Gulls were seen circling in large numbers and alighting in scattered fashion on ice toward evening. They intermingled to some extent with Ivory Gulls (*Pagophila eburnea*), but remained aloof from the roosting congregations of Ivory Gulls.

Glaucous-winged Gull. *Larus glaucescens*. These gulls were common around Unalaska, were noted as a few individuals over open waters in Etolin Strait