

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

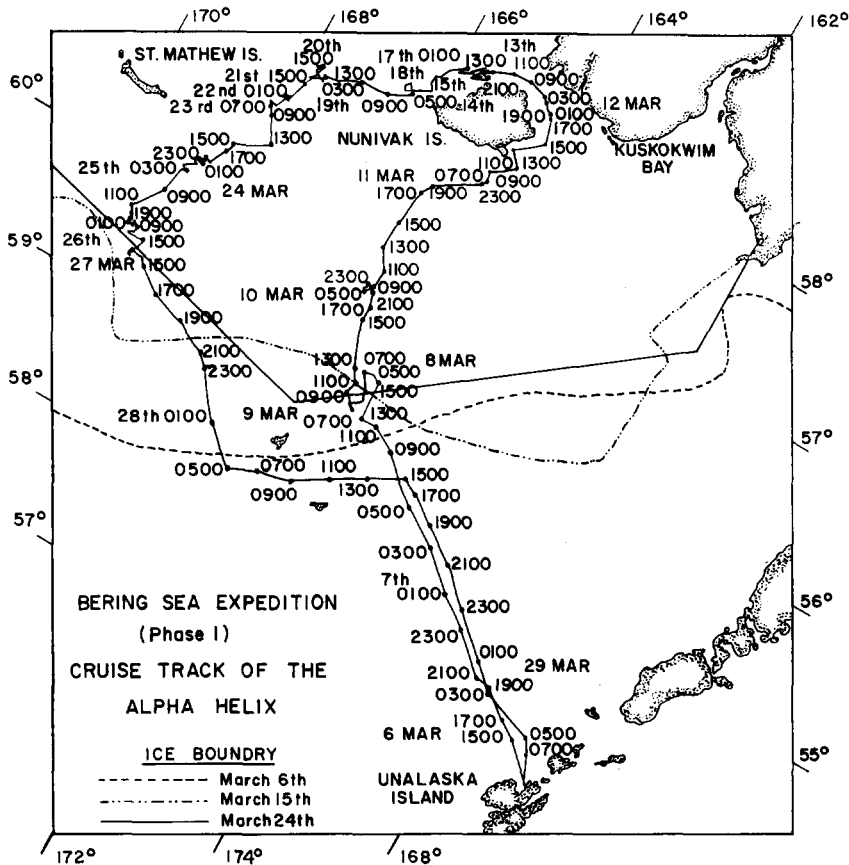


FIGURE 1. Course of Scripps Research Institution vessel ALPHA HELIX and USCGC NORTHWIND in Bering Sea, with indications of the southern ice boundary in March 1968, dates, and Bering Sea times.

(between Nunivak Island and Nelson Island) but were not noticed distant from land.

Ivory Gull, *Pagophila eburnea*. Numbers appeared 26 March at the westernmost station (about longitude 172° W) and continued to soar closely about the ships until we left the ice. At dusk several flocks of 50 to 100 roosted in rather close groups on larger ice pans apart from the more scattered Glaucous Gulls. Gabrielson and Lincoln (op. cit.) commented that only four Alaskan records of Ivory Gulls were from south of the Arctic coast. However, we have heard from resident people of occasional winter sightings of groups of three or four Ivory Gulls from shores and islands of Bering Sea. These attractive looking gulls are unafraid of man and were so numerous and orderly in behavior that we evidently encountered them in a regular wintering position near the ice margin in central Bering Sea.

Black-legged Kittiwake, *Rissa tridactyla*. On 27 March near the ice margin we saw small flocks that remained rather coherent swarms in the vicinity where the Ivory and Glaucous Gulls were so abundant.

Murre, *Uria aalge* or *Uria lomvia*. Judging from its more northern breeding *Uria lomvia* might have been expected to predominate over *U. aalge*, but we had no means for distinguishing between them. A few reported winter occurrences were mainly from land stations south of the ice (Gabrielson and Lincoln, op. cit.). Murres in swift flying flocks were in common view near the margin of ice as we entered and

left. Deeper within the ice, flocks of several hundred rose from larger polynia, and flights of many flocks gave the impression that this was the most numerous bird population wintering over the broken margin of ice-covered waters. Although we saw about 100 walrus, each some 1000 times a murre in weight, the murres undoubtedly far exceeded the living mass of walrus observed in the area.

Pigeon Guillemot, *Cephus columba*. Single birds or groups of two were frequently seen in swift flight, or swimming in open leads. Like the murres they were more often seen near the ice margin, but one was killed by collision with the radar on 22 March near our deepest penetration into the ice.

Snowy Owl, *Nyctea scandiaca*. These owls were seen on six occasions. Four birds were seen separately on 10 March while we proceeded through a nearly complete cover of detached ice pans. One was seen on 11 March, and one on 22 March some 60 miles from St. Matthew Island. It was a surprise to see these owls perched on ice in postures familiar on the tundra or slowly flying at low levels, but their appearance indicated that ventures over the ice rather far from land are not unusual.

Snow Bunting (judged to be the Common), (*Plectrophenax nivalis*). Buntings were seen several times in small groups on 12 March flying westward across Etolin Strait toward Nunivak Island.

Other buntings (nearly clear white, judged to be McKay's Snow Bunting, *Plectrophenax hyperboreus*) were seen 20 March as a few single birds and in

several small groups flying westward through the haze toward St. Matthew Island, then about 80 miles away. Occasional and usually single snow buntings reach Arctic coastal points in March, preceding by a month the irregular and protracted arrival of migrating flocks. Apparently single snow buntings can navigate their course to nesting grounds without benefit of guidance from association in flocks.

#### GENERAL REMARKS

The greatest aggregation of birds, all busily feeding, was seen within the margin of ice in central Bering Sea. In the same loose ice and polynia were numerous harbor, ringed, some ribbon, and bearded seals, and several herds of walrus. Evidently regions within the ice are important in late winter for support of large populations of birds and mammals. Bottom trawls in the polynia over the shallow (100 m) continental shelf brought up crabs, shrimp, and starfishes. The waters were rich in microplankton and the under layers of solid, heavy ice were deeply stained brown and contained many diatoms. Although the water was from  $-1.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $-1.8^{\circ}\text{C}$  and insolation had been

screened by heavy ice and snow, there had evidently been sufficient wintering fauna and flora to support many birds and mammals.

Birds are a visible index of the animal life produced at sea, and our observations suggest that on future cruises planned watches and records of sightings could provide useful indications of the distribution of marine productivity in terms of the great numbers in the winter populations of birds over the Bering Sea.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are indebted to the support of the cruise of ALPHA HELIX provided by National Science Foundation through Scripps Institution for Oceanography under leadership of P. F. Scholander. The authors traveled aboard USCGC NORTHWIND with the most cordial and effective assistance of the ship's personnel. Preparatory support was provided through NIH grant 10402-06.

This is publication no. 85, Institute of Arctic Biology.

Accepted for publication 18 June 1968.

### AERIAL EAGLE COUNT IN COLORADO

JAMES H. ENDERSON,

Department of Biology  
Colorado College  
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903

FRANK A. COLLEY,

AND

JOHN STEVENSON

Colorado Division of Game, Fish, and Parks  
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903

Between 10 January and 24 February 1967 and between 1 January and mid-March 1968 the junior authors recorded sightings of Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) made from a light plane engaged in a survey of pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*) in southeastern Colorado. In both years the plane flew parallel transects 1.6 km apart at an altitude of about 60 m, systematically covering nearly the entire southeastern quarter of the state, which is comprised of sagebrush plains, grassland, and wheat land. The majority of the eagles were seen perched on the ground or on fence posts, but some,

especially Golden Eagles, were seen in the air. Since adjacent transects were flown several minutes apart, it is possible that some eagles were counted more than once, but the observers felt this unlikely. No attempt was made to distinguish between Golden Eagles and immature Bald Eagles, and the latter, seen occasionally from the ground, were almost certainly included under the former; hence only adult Bald Eagles were recorded for that species.

In the area of about 57,000 square kilometers, 56 Golden Eagles and 19 adult Bald Eagles were counted in 1967, and 114 and 46, respectively, in 1968. These data indicated that Bald Eagles are actually fairly common winter residents on the high plains of Colorado. Except for one communal roost of 23 Bald Eagles in cottonwoods near a small stream observed in 1968, that species was uniformly distributed in the region. Sightings made in this count, and substantiated by other observations from the ground, indicate that wintering Bald Eagles in southeastern Colorado do not necessarily remain near river courses, but are most frequently seen on the open plains far from water, where they must feed largely on small mammals.

Accepted for publication 18 June 1968.

### A CALIFORNIA SPECIMEN OF THE BAR-TAILED GODWIT

R. H. GERSTENBERG

AND

STANLEY W. HARRIS

Humboldt State College  
Arcata, California 95521

On 17 July 1968 a Pacific Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica baueri*) was collected by the junior author on North Humboldt Bay, 0.5 mi. S of Arcata, Humboldt County, California. The bird had first been observed on 11 July 1968. It was again seen on 16 July feeding on the mud flats in the vicinity of many Short-billed Dowitchers (*Limnodromus griseus*), Western Sandpipers (*Erolia mauri*), and a few

Marbled Godwits (*Limosa fedoa*) and Willets (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*).

The specimen is a female in worn winter plumage, and was undergoing extensive body molt at the time of collection. The ovary was 11 mm long and showed no signs of recent enlargement. Total length was 464 mm, culmen was 107.5 mm, and the wing (flat) was 238 mm. It weighed 552.8 g and was extremely fat.

This apparently represents the first specimen for California and the second south of the Alaskan breeding grounds on the Pacific coast. Munro (Condor 37:178, 1935) and Brooks (Condor 44:33, 1942) reported a British Columbia specimen.

The subspecific identification was made by E. Eisenmann and C. Vaurie of the American Museum of Natural History. The specimen is in the Humboldt State College Collection (No. 1475).

Accepted for publication 19 November 1968.