

A PROTHONOTARY WARBLER IN INYO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

On 5 September 1970, at about 11:00 a.m., while checking for birds on the grounds of Deep Springs College in eastern California, Mike Ward and I discovered a brightly plumaged Prothonotary Warbler *Prothonotaria citrea*. The weather was cool, clear, and there was a very strong northerly wind blowing. The bird was first observed feeding alternately between an apple tree and a squash patch in a vegetable garden. While attempting to secure permission to set some mist nets in order to band the bird, it was discovered that Kim Garrett and John Dunn had independently seen the bird at about 8:00 a.m. on the same day. They also confirmed the fact that the bird was a Prothonotary Warbler. After obtaining permission from the school officials, the bird was netted, banded and photographed. Before releasing the bird the following description was taken:

A large warbler with a large bill and comparatively heavy body. Underparts: head entirely orangish-yellow down through the nape, with crown and forehead slightly tinged olive; shoulders and back burnt-orange; rump blue-gray. Underparts: chin, throat, cheeks, breast, flanks and belly bright gold; under tail coverts pure white. Wing: wing coverts bluish-gray; primaries and secondaries bluish-gray with translucent light gray along outer edges giving a frosted appearance to the wing. Tail: dark gray shading to slate at tip, large white spots on inner webs of feathers visible when fanned. Soft parts: eye black; bill long, pointed and large, upper mandible slate, lower mandible light gray; legs bluish-gray.

On the following day, 6 September, the bird was rennetted and held captive for the remainder of the day by one of the students (Mike Houston) of the college for orientation experiments. During the night the bird became very weak, and was dead the following morning. The bird was kept as a specimen (#37621, San Diego Natural History Museum), and found to be a male with the skull incompletely ossified.

The Prothonotary Warbler normally breeds in the wooded swamps of the southeastern United States. The western limit of the breeding range extends from central eastern Minnesota southward to eastern Texas, and the winter range extends from the Yucatan Peninsula southward through Central America to central Columbia and northern Venezuela (A.O.U., Check-list of North American Birds, 1957). It has occurred casually or accidentally to the west of its normal breeding range with records from Wyoming (A.O.U., op. cit.), Colorado (L. M. Bailey and R. J. Niedrach, Birds of Colorado, 1965), New Mexico (J. P. Hubbard, Check-list of the Birds of New Mexico, 1970), Nevada (F. A. Ryser, Condor, 65:334, 1963), and Arizona (A. Phillips, J. Marshall and G. Monson, The Birds of Arizona, 1964), as well as from California.

In California I know of nine records in addition to the one presented. Spring occurrences include an adult male collected 8 miles east of Shandon, San Luis Obispo County, on 22 May 1963 by E. B. McMillan (specimen deposited in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley [checked by G. McC]); one found dead in Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara, on 25 May 1953 (M. Hillman, Condor, 56:52, 1954) (this specimen was not destroyed in the 1961 fire at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, and was checked by G. McC), and one seen at sea from a boat near the Los Coronados Islands off northern Baja California on 27 May 1967 by J. Jehl (Audubon Field Notes, 21:541, 1967 - no additional details). Fall records include one seen in Morro Bay State Park, San Luis Obispo County, between 2 and 6 October 1965 by B.

NOTES



FIGURE 1. An immature male Prothonotary Warbler *Prothonotaria citrea* found at Deep Springs, Inyo County, California, on 5 September 1970.

Photo by Mike Ward

Broadbooks, E. A. Pugh and others (description on file); one seen in San Pedro, Los Angeles County, on 8 October 1965 by D. Paulson (description on file); one seen briefly on Point Loma, San Diego County, on 4 November 1967 by A. Craig and T. Taylor (Audubon Field Notes, 22:91, 1968 - no additional details); one seen and photographed at Willow Creek, on the coast of southern Monterey County, between 3 and 7 December 1967 by A. Baldrige, R. L. Branson and others (one color slide and description on file); one seen near the Cliff House in San Francisco on 30 August 1969 by V. G. DaCosta and B. Sutherland (description on file), and one seen on Point Loma, San Diego County, on 27 September 1969 by D. Bohlen, G. McCaskie, P. Devillers and others (description on file). An observation reported from Morongo Valley, San Bernardino County, in May 1963 (Audubon Field Notes, 17:435, 1963) is unsupported and considered unreliable (G. McCaskie, pers. comm.).

In each of the cases where the sight record is supported by details, I have studied the descriptions and photographs, and am convinced of their validity. The descriptions and photographs are deposited in the files of the California Field Ornithologists at the San Diego Natural History Museum. *Mike San Miguel, 610 Greenbank Avenue, Duarte, California 91010.*