

## NOTES

### AN EXTENDED SOJOURN AND A STATE RECORD OF A WANDERING TATTLER IN ARIZONA

A Wandering Tattler (*Heteroscelus incanum*), previously unrecorded from Arizona, was continuously present at the Phoenix 35th Avenue sewage treatment ponds from 18 September through 9 October 1971. First observed by Bonnie Burch, it was thereafter encountered daily. During this lengthy stay at these ponds, most of the active birdwatchers in the state had the opportunity and pleasure of observing this rarity. At all times the bird was noted to be healthy, alert, and vigorous in flight. It fed daily from the abundant animal and insect matter present along the rocky shoreline. On taking flight it frequently gave an emphatic ringing five note call, not unlike that of the yellowlegs (*Totanus sp.*). Color photographs taken by the author are on file in the Ornithology Departments of the University of Arizona and Prescott College. The following field marks were obtained from these photographs:

Upperparts: forehead, crown, nape, back, and rump, dark brownish gray; bold white superciliary line, shading to dull gray-white behind the eye, and extending almost to the nape; prominent very dark gray eyeline below the superciliary line running from the bill to the eye, and continuing behind the eye as a less dark line terminating at the nape; eye-ring present. Wings and tail: wings and tail unmarked and a uniform dark gray tinged with brown. Underparts: breast and flanks, medium gray tinged with brown and shading to white on the chin, throat, belly, and undertail coverts; cheeks, medium gray shading to white on the throat. Soft parts: bill straight, dark, and rather heavy; eye dark; legs and feet, orange-yellow.

As there were no flight photographs taken of the bird, it was worthy of note that the uniform dark coloration of the wings, rump, and tail were seen by all observers. The bird appeared one-third larger in size than the Spotted Sandpipers (*Actitis macularia*) which were frequently in association with it. Also it had the same habit of teetering, though not as often. Being wary, the bird was best observed through a telescope from a distance or from a car parked for some time on the levee above the pond.

It is well known that most North American records of the Wandering Tattler are from the Pacific Coast. The following 13 records are exceptions to this rule. Far to the east, one was seen at Port Colborne, Ontario, on 1 August 1948 (Beardslee and Mitchell, 1965), one was at Windmill Point, Ontario, on 12-15 July 1960 (Burton and Woodford, 1960), and one was observed at Monomoy, Massachusetts, on 25-30 May 1968 (Emery and Woodruff 1968). To the south of the Tattler's breeding range, a specimen was taken at Swan Lake, British Columbia (Cowan, 1939); this is the same record attributed to Tupper Creek in the A.O.U. Check-List of North American Birds (American Ornithologists' Union, 1957). There are two sight records from Alberta, one from Patricia Lake in Jasper National Park, 2 July 1961 (Salt and Wilk, 1966), and one from a lake a few miles northwest of Edmonton, June 1965 (Salt and Wilk, 1966). One was seen near the British Columbia - Alberta border west of Banff on 18

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August 1960 (Rogers, 1960). Farther south, a specimen was taken at Crater Lake, Oregon, on 27 July 1882 (Gabrielson and Jewett, 1940) and another is reported from Salton River, Baja California in Mexico (American Ornithologists' Union, 1957). The Salton Sea of California has produced four separate sightings involving seven individuals: one on 31 August 1961 (McCaskie, 1970), one on 11 May 1969 (McCaskie, 1969), four on 8 May 1971 with one remaining the following day (McCaskie, 1971), and one on 12 August 1971 (McCaskie, 1971a).

The longest layover time noted for any of the above birds was the six days for the Monomoy bird. This is brief compared to the 21 day sojourn of the Phoenix individual, and attests to the abundant food supply of the Phoenix sewage treatment ponds, and perhaps to the climatic similarity of Phoenix to the bird's wintering grounds. Also there is much similarity between the rocky shoreline of the Phoenix ponds and the Tattler's coastal shoreline haunts. Wandering Tattlers are occasionally found wintering as far north in the Gulf of California as Puerto Penasco, Sonora (Alden, 1969), just two hundred miles southwest of Phoenix.

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FIGURE 1. A Wandering Tattler that remained in Phoenix, Arizona from 18 September to 9 October 1971.

*Photo by Robert A. Witzeman*

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