

NOTES

FIRST OREGON RECORD OF THE GRAY-HEADED JUNCO

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On 22 May 1976 Caryn Talbot and I watched a Gray-headed Junco (*Junco caniceps*) for about 20 minutes as it fed among willows (*Salix* sp.) 3.2 km NE of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Headquarters, Harney County, Oregon. The bird was seen clearly several times within 6 m, under excellent lighting conditions. This not only represented the first refuge record, but also the first Oregon record.

The individual was slightly larger than the Dark-eyed Junco (*J. hyemalis oregonus*) and had ash gray coloration on the head, sides and upper breast, contrasting with white underparts. The lores and ocular region was blackish, and the white rectrices were obvious. The rusty back was observed clearly several times at close range. Collecting was impossible at this site. I am familiar with all species of juncos in North America, and have spent time observing and studying Gray-headed Juncos in Colorado, west Texas and southeastern Arizona.

The species is considered a fairly common, but rather local, breeding bird near Alto, Cassia County, in southcentral Idaho (Burleigh, *Birds of Idaho*, Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho, 1972), about 385 km SE of Malheur NWR. The nearest breeding population is in the Santa Rosa Mountains, Humboldt County, Nevada, about 180 km SE of the refuge. Other nearby nesting areas include the Jarbidge Mountains, Elko County (260 km SE) and Toiyabe Mountains, Eureka County (450 km SSE) in Nevada (Bent, *Life histories of North American cardinals, grosbeaks, buntings, towhees, finches, sparrows, and allies*, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 237, 1968). The species could also nest in isolated mountain ranges in southwest Idaho and southeast Oregon where field work has been limited. There is a report of an individual seen on Steens Mountain, Harney County, Oregon in June 1967, but details are presently unavailable (Arvil and Ellen Parker pers. comm.).

The Gray-headed Junco is a common visitor to the mountains of eastern California, breeding at Clark Mountain, San Bernardino County; Grapevine Mountains, Inyo County; and White Mountains, Mono County. Elsewhere in California it is a very rare winter visitor (Small, *The birds of California*, Winchester Press, New York, 1974; Bent 1968). An individual was seen at a feeder in Wenatchee, Chelan County, Washington from 15 to 20 January 1974 for the only report for the state, but the description was too brief to be diagnostic. Therefore, the species has been placed on Washington's hypothetical list (Mattocks et al., *West. Birds* 7:1-24, 1976).

Considering Gray-headed Juncos breed only a few km south of the Oregon border, in the Santa Rosa Mountains, it is surprising the species has not been previously recorded in the state.

Accepted 11 February 1981