

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

**Noteworthy Records of Utah Birds.**—In recent years several specimens have been added to the collection of birds at the University of Utah that constitute important distributional records. They are as follows.

*Florida caerulea caerulea*. Little Blue Heron. A male with testes 23 mm in length was taken by Douglas Day at Brown's Pond on 3rd East Street in Draper, 4300 feet, Salt Lake County, Utah, on 25 May 1963. It constitutes the second record for the state, one having been taken previously at the Bear River Refuge on 4 September 1957 (Auk, 75:214, 1958).

*Anas rubripes*. Black Duck. While the species was first seen in the state in 1872 on the Wheeler Survey by Yarrow (see Henshaw, Rep't. Geog. and Geol. Expl. and Sur. W. 100th Mer., 5:473, 1875) at Rush Lake, Iron County, there have been few observations in the intervening years. To add to the five specimens of record, one was taken on 16 October 1965, by Jerome L. Johnson 3.5 miles northwest of Farmington Bay Refuge, 4250 feet, Davis County.

*Aix sponsa*. Wood Duck. This is another rare species in Utah that was reported at an early date at Ogden by Allen (Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., 3:172, 182, 1872), but less than a dozen records have accumulated since. Some unreported specimens in the collection are as follows: a female from Ivins, Washington County, taken on 2 December 1945; a head and wing representing a female taken at the south end of Utah Lake on 27 October 1946; a male from Roosevelt, Duchesne County, taken on 4 November 1960; a male taken at the New State Gun Club at the mouth of the Jordan River, Davis County, on 22 November 1965. Apparently the species is a casual transient in Utah.

*Scardafella inca*. Inca Dove. A male was taken in extreme southwestern Utah at the Terry Ranch in the Beaver Dam Wash, Washington County, five miles north of the Utah-Arizona border on 9 July 1963. This species has not been reported heretofore from the state.

*Sayornis nigricans*. Black Phoebe. This species has long been known to occur in the southwestern part of Utah. At St. George, Washington County, it is apparently a permanent resident. A few sight records were obtained for Kanab, Kane County (Behle *et al.*, Univ. Utah Biol. Ser., 11:57, 1958) and later evidence secured of the species breeding there (Behle *et al.*, Wilson Bull., 75:454, 1964). At the same time this phoebe was reported as seen at Newcastle, Iron County. The latest extension of range in Utah pertains to one from Salt Lake City. It was seen alive by Dennis Madsen on 4 June 1963, at a residence where it entered a hole in the eave of the roof as though it were nesting. On 16 June 1965 one was found dead in a tub of water at the bottom of a drain spout. The bird was badly decomposed and it was necessary to preserve it in formalin.

*Hylocichla mustelina*. Wood Thrush. The first record for this species in Utah is a female taken at the Tracy Aviary in Liberty Park, Salt Lake City, by Calvin Wilson. It flew into a wire on 14 October 1963 and was captured. It subsequently recovered and was held in captivity until 14 January 1964, when it died and was preserved as a study skin.

*Seiurus noveboracensis notabilis*. Northern Waterthrush. To add to the half-dozen records of this rare transient in the state, a female was taken by the writer on 13 May 1960, in a willow patch beside a small pond in the desert region of southeastern Utah. The collecting station is Green Water Spring, 5400 feet, Castle Creek, 18 miles southwest of the Natural Bridges National Monument, San Juan County. It was fat and weighed 14.0 g.

*Pheucticus ludovicianus*. Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Previously this species was known from Utah only on the basis of a sight record from Kanab, Kane County, in central southern Utah (Behle *et al.*, Univ. Utah Biol. Ser., 11:79, 1958). Several records turned up during the summer of 1965 at widely scattered places. Two specimens are in the University of Utah collection. One of these flew into a window in the residence area at the Arches National Monument, 4085 feet, five miles northwest of Moab, Grand County, in southeastern Utah on 26 May 1965, and was retrieved by Dennis Carter and Robert Ferris. Its testes measured 12 × 8 mm. The other was found dead at Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge, Juab County, on 2 June 1965. This location is in the west desert, Great Basin portion of the state. The specimen came to the university through Robert Elbel and John Bushman. The testes were of breeding size but asymmetrical. The left testis measured 9 × 7 mm, the right 11 × 11 mm. On 4 June 1965 a sight record was

obtained of another Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Fish Springs. A third specimen turned up at Zion National Park in central southern Utah and is being reported on by Roland Wauer.—WILLIAM H. BEHLE, *Department of Zoology, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 20 December 1965.*

**An Addition to the Bird Fauna of the Barstow Miocene.**—In Condor of September 1952 I published a paper on the birds of the Barstow Syncline, listing the orders and the species so far as determinable. This list recorded the following: Ciconiiformes—1 specimen; Anseriformes—7 specimens, probably 5 species; Falconiformes—3 specimens (one species?); Galliformes—1 specimen; Charadriiformes—1 specimen.

On the basis of this fauna, with aid of the copious field notes of Richard Tedford, now Assistant Professor of Geology at the University of California at Riverside, a reconstruction of the local ecology was ventured. The picture included broad and shallow ponds of perhaps ephemeral nature, the waters of which might become highly mineralized in certain seasons. Since that publication in 1952 there has come to my attention only one bird specimen from the Barstow beds. Many amateurs and some professionals have visited the locality, but I have seen no record of bird remains collected until this summer (1965).

Dennis Bramble spent some weeks collecting mammals from the Barstow beds in the early summer (1965) and while there contacted an amateur, Chas. Rader, who had picked up from the surface two fragments of bird bone, one of which, a scapula, I ascribe to a grebe approximately the size of our living Western Grebe, *Aechmophorus occidentalis* (Lawrence), although it cannot be assigned to that species. Mr. Rader generously presented the specimen to me and it has been deposited in the Museum of Paleontology, University of California at Berkeley (specimen no. 71478).

The value of the specimen lies in that it adds a significant chip to the mosaic picture of the Miocene landscape (Merriam, Univ. Calif. Publ., Bull. Dept. Geol. Sci., 11:437, 1919 and Miller, Condor, 54:296, 1952). The grebe bone is from an adult bird so we are uncertain as to its resident status. The larger grebes prefer rather deeper and more permanent waters than do the smaller species, although a migrant might drop down anywhere to rest.

The "Cup of Tantalus" is so often presented to the paleontologist's lip.—LOVE MILLER, *Department of Zoology, University of California, Davis, California, 28 October 1965.*

**Confused Nocturnal Behavior of (? California) Gulls.**—Following the San Diego meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Society, I spent several days at the Holiday Lodge, four miles west of Reno, Nevada, with E. Eisenmann and G. E. Petersen. Tuesday, 21 April 1964, was fine and warm. The early part of the following day was sunny, but a strong wind soon sprang up and reached almost gale proportions. Gray clouds appeared, and by midafternoon there were snow squalls often mixed with driving dust. The wind began to decrease at sundown, and shortly before dark it was quiet but with a heavy wet snowfall.

As I was about to leave the motel dining room well after dark at 2000, one of the employees summoned two other men outside to hear "the strangest thing he had ever heard . . . thousands of 'mountain' gulls." I stepped out, and indeed a screeching flock of gulls was milling about overhead so close that one strained to see them amidst the densely falling snow. But they remained invisible. The flock would be in full cry, then recede until barely audible, then return in full cry. Near the Lodge and adjoining buildings and also at the turnoff from the main highway, there are bright lights, including a big neon sign. Presumably the gulls were confused by the glare; but with the lights of Reno a few miles away, why they should have remained milling about for what eventually amounted to two and a half hours after I first heard them is beyond comprehension. Also why should these birds start migrating on a miserable night following an even more inclement day? That very morning we had driven for 30 miles along the northern