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FIRST RECORD OF THE BLACK BRANT (*BRANTA NIGRICANS*) FOR NEW MEXICO

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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.

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BIRDS OBSERVED DURING A CRUISE IN THE ICE-COVERED BERING SEA IN MARCH 1968

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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