

Common Pauraque (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) record from Sonora, Mexico

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CURRENTLY, THE COMMON PAU-
RAQUE (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) is
not considered to have occurred in
the Mexican state of Sonora (A.O.U.
1983). For at least the past 30 years,
the northwestern limit to this species'
distribution has been believed to be
Sinaloa, the state directly south of
Sonora (Friedman *et al.* 1950; A.O.U.
1983, etc.).

On the night of May 26, 1980, we
found this species to be "common"
along the Rio Yaqui at Highway 15 in
Sonora. We heard many birds begin to
call about dusk and continue, somewhat
irregularly, to call throughout the night.
We saw one individual lying on a sandy
roadway in the beams of our headlights.
Under these circumstances, plumage
coloration was difficult to see well; how-
ever, the large size, bulky rounded an-
terior, and white patches in the wings
and tail distinguished it from night-
hawks (*Chordeiles* spp.) and the Com-
mon Poorwill (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*).

The typical call, and explosive "*Pu-
wirrr*" with the *pu* introduction rela-
tively soft and the rough *wirrr* portion
sharply accented and descending termi-
nally, was heard repeatedly. We also
heard the complete song involving sev-
eral staccato *pup* notes before the *pu-
wirrr*. Although the *puwirrr* call might
be confused with the Eared Poorwill
(*Nyctiphrynus mcleodii*), a rare, little-
known species generally associated with
higher elevations, the complete song is
unique enough to be diagnostic, so far
as we know.

The vocalizations, coupled with the
observation by observers very familiar
with the Common Pauraque from trips
to Texas and Mexico, we feel warrants
inclusion of this species in the avifauna
of Sonora.

Although observers check the Rio
Yaqui for birds at least on an occasional
basis, stops usually occur during the day
and are often brief, as most people are
eager to get to more southerly habitats.
Additionally, most western Mexico
birding trips are conducted during win-
ter and early spring months when tem-
peratures are more bearable. Thus, it
seems possible that a very local popu-
lation in this area could easily be over-
looked, especially if the population is a
recent arrival.

Although considered a resident
throughout its entire range, it is not
clear, of course, whether or not the
Common Pauraque is actually present
year-round at this location. Several other
insectivores that are considered pri-
marily resident throughout their ranges
are migratory only over a small portion
of their ranges at the extreme north-
western end (e.g., Dusky-capped Fly-
catcher [*Myiarchus tuberculifer*] and
Thick-billed Kingbird [*Tyrannus cras-
sirostris*]). Finally, although it is known
that pauraques call all year round (*pers.
obs.*), it is not known to what extent this
might vary during the winter months
across its range (for example, the extent
to which it is temperature dependent).
Birds at the northeastern portion of their
range are known to greatly reduce their

calling during the winter, confining vo-
calization to exceptionally warm nights
(Bent 1940). Thus, even if the Rio Yaqui
was visited at night during the time of
year when most birders are in the vicini-
ty, Common Pauraque might well re-
main undetected.

All in all, we can state that the Com-
mon Pauraque has occurred in Sonora,
in at least small numbers. We are un-
able, however, to establish at this time
whether or not this was a unique oc-
currence.

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