

## NOTES

### THE WHIP-POOR-WILL IN CALIFORNIA

The Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus arizonae*) has been extending its range northward and westward in recent years as evidenced by records from the Sheep Mountains in southeastern Nevada (Johnson, Condor 67:93-124) and the Hualapai Mountains in western Arizona. Phillips, et al. (The Birds of Arizona, 1964) give the range in Arizona as "common summer resident of Transition and Upper Sonoran zones of southeastern and (in recent years) central Arizona; ranges west to Pajaritos Mountains and northwest less commonly (no specimen) to the Hualapai Mountains."

I obtained the first record of the Whip-poor-will in California on 2 May 1968 when two birds were heard calling at Lake Fulmor in the Transition Zone at about 5,300 feet. Lake Fulmor is in the San Jacinto Mountains near Idyllwild in Riverside County. The dominant vegetation of the area consists of relatively dense stands of mixed conifers (*Pinus lambertiana*, *P. coulteri*, *P. jeffreyi*, *P. ponderosa*, *Abies concolor* and *Libocedrus decurrens*), oaks (*Quercus*, spp.), Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*, spp.) and Ceanothus (*Ceanothus*, spp.) with some alders (*Alnus*, spp.) and willows (*Salix*, spp.) along the stream above the lake.

On 10 May tape recordings were made for documentation of the record. These recordings were reproduced on a Sound Spectograph along with recordings of *C. v. arizonae* from the Huachuca Mountains, Cochise County, Arizona and *C. v. vociferus* from New York for song analysis at the subspecific level.

The songs of *vociferus* and *arizonae* are distinguishable in at least two ways. The former has a distinctly two-parted "Poor" note and its song is more lucid than that of the latter. Figure 1 illustrates both of these characteristics quite clearly. This spectogram was made from the Whip-poor-will recording on Peterson's *A Field Guide to Bird Songs of Eastern and Central North America*. Figures 2 and 3 are representative spectograms of *C. v. arizonae* from Arizona and the California Whip-poor-will, respectively. Differences in the middle or "Poor" note of the songs are apparent in both the California and Arizona birds when compared with the New York bird. Rather than a two-syllabled note they exhibit a wavering quality in their second note. Additionally, these two individuals, like other representatives of the *arizonae* race, have a coarser (less lucid) song than the nominate race. Both of these differences are very noticeable to the ear. For these reasons I feel that the California bird can safely be assigned to the *arizonae* race.

The original spectograms are not shown in this paper because of the difficulty in obtaining prints with enough resolution for publication. These spectograms and the original tape of the California bird have been placed in the San Diego Natural History Museum.

There were at least two calling birds in the vicinity of Lake Fulmor during May and June, 1968, both of which appeared to be territorial. It could not be determined whether or not they were mated pairs or individual birds. The last bird recorded in 1968 was one that was heard on the morning of 30 August by Harry James who is the only permanent resident in the area. Mr. James says that he has

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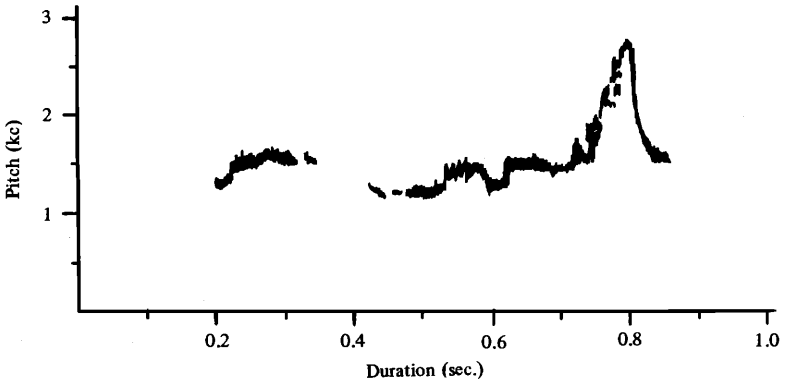


Figure 1. Spectrogram of a Song of *Caprimulgus vociferus vociferus* taken from R. T. Peterson's *A Field Guide to Bird Songs*, recorded in New York. Notice the short, but abrupt drop in pitch in the middle of the "poor" note.

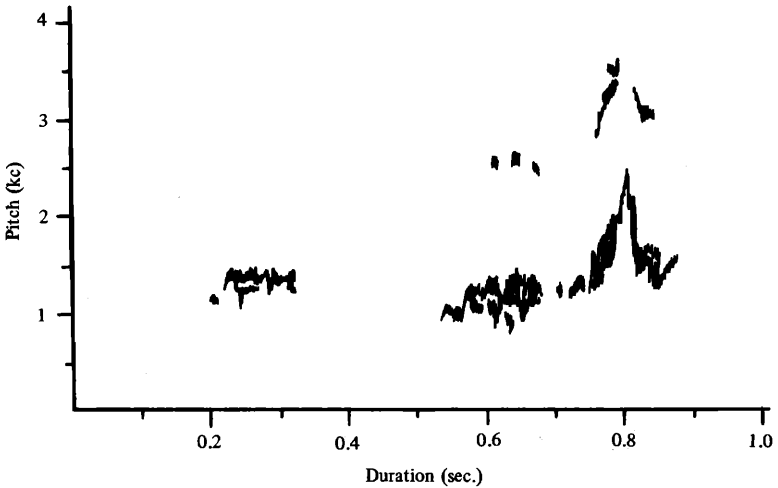


Figure 2. Spectrogram of a song of *C. v. arizonae* recorded by F. Gary Stiles in the Huachuca Mountains, Arizona on 28 April, 1969. The "poor" note is considerably harsher than that of *C. v. vociferus* (Fig. 1) and definitely not two-parted. The harmonics can be ignored when making comparisons with the other two birds because the San Jacinto recording was too faint to detect any possible harmonics and the harmonics, if present, in the New York bird may have been filtered out during editing.

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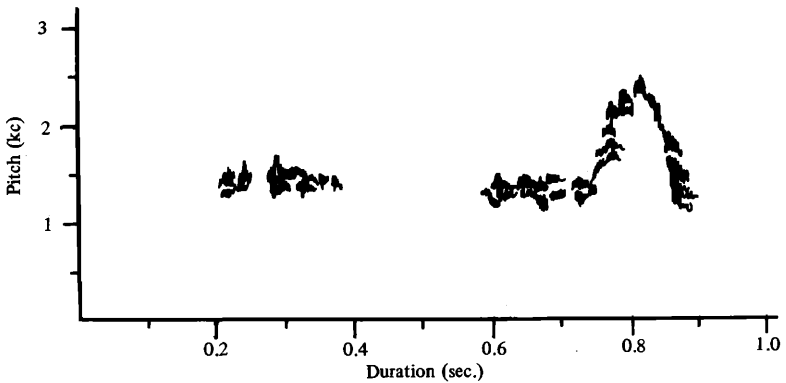
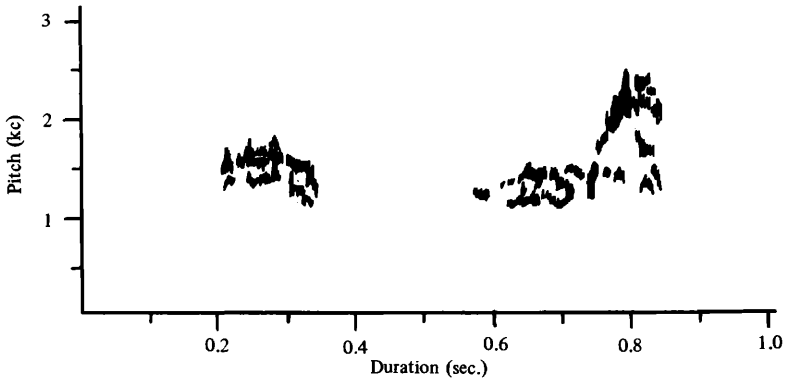


Figure 3. Two representative spectrograms of a San Jacinto Whip-poor-will song recorded on 10 May 1968 by the author. The signal was rather faint and difficult to reproduce on the Spectograph, but a few spectrograms were clear enough to enable one to observe the wavering, relatively harsh "poor" not characteristic of *C. v. arizonae*.

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heard the Whip-poor-wills in the area each summer for a number of years prior to 1968, but not realizing the significance of the record, he never reported the information to any qualified ornithologists.

There is only one record of the species' presence in the area in 1969 even though there were many interested persons on the lookout for their return. Jay Sheppard and Charles Collins heard a bird calling on the morning of 22 June near Black Canon approximately one mile southeast of Lake Fulmor. This individual was undoubtedly out of earshot of the area where the Whip-poor-wills had been heard the previous summer.

At least one bird was present in the Lake Fulmor area in 1970. On 9 June Guy McCaskie and Shumway Suffel were able to observe an individual at close range in a flashlight beam after attracting it to a tape recording of a Whip-poor-will song. Closer scrutiny of the area around Black Mountain may reveal other individuals or even a nesting pair of Whip-poor-wills in the near future. *Lee Jones, Department of Zoology, University of California, Los Angeles, California 90024.*