

NOTES

A FURTHER RECORD OF THE WESTERN WHIP-POOR-WILL IN CALIFORNIA

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On 26 September 1973 I flushed a bird from an ornamental shrub in the courtyard of the apartment complex where I live in the Belmont Shore area of Long Beach, California. Originally thinking it to be a Poor-will (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*), a regular migrant in coastal southern California, I flushed the bird several times in attempts to get a better look at it. The correct identity of the bird as a Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*) was only apparent when it crashed into a window after flying through the open door of an apartment. It was preserved as a study skin now housed in the collections of California State University, Long Beach (CSULB 4433) and proved to be a female with unenlarged ovary, light fat on the abdomen and lower back, weighing 44 g and having some light molt on the chin region. I was able to confirm the species identification by comparison with specimens at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Sub-specific identification was made at the National Museum of Natural History by Dr. Richard C. Banks who determined it to be a representative of the Western Whip-poor-will (*C. v. arizonae*). In addition to being much browner on the back than the Eastern Whip-poor-will (*C. v. vociferus*) (Banks in litt.) it has the brown bases to the otherwise black rectal bristles noted by Craig (1971) as typical of *arizonae*.

The Whip-poor-will is at present an uncommon bird of extremely local occurrence in California. A small population of *C. v. arizonae* appears to be present in the vicinity of Lake Fulmor, Riverside County (Jones 1971), a few individuals having been seen or heard annually since it was first discovered there in 1968 (Johnson and Garrett 1974). More recently the species has been heard calling in summer on Clark Mountain in eastern San Bernardino County (Johnson and Garrett 1974) and the Laguna Mountains, San Diego County (McCaskie 1971). It is thought to breed in both of these localities. In 1971 a Whip-poor-will wintered in southern California and was observed "roosting in shrubbery of a residential yard of Coronado, San Diego County from at least late December to March 25" (McCaskie 1972:655).

A single migrant male attributed to *C. v. vociferus* was captured and banded at Point Loma, San Diego on 14 November 1970 (Craig 1971). Although this bird was compared with museum material before it was released, it should be pointed out that recently Hubbard and Crossin (1974) felt that "in view of the overlap in characters between the two races, we have considerable reservation about the California record of *C. v. vociferus* reported by Craig (1971); the bird was banded and released. Even with the direct comparison to specimens that was done, one cannot rule out the possibility that the bird was not a variant of *arizonae*." If overlap of characters precludes positive subspecific identification of the San Diego bird, then the same should apply to the Long Beach specimen, and Jones' (1971) identification by spectrographic analysis of the tape-recorded song may be the most valid of the California records at the subspecific level.

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The Long Beach bird represents the first preserved specimen of this species taken in California. It is in agreement with the reported occurrence at Lake Fulmor of *C. v. arizonae*. As noted by Jones (1971) and Johnson and Garrett (1974) the Whip-poor-will is apparently extending its range northward and westward, and further evidence of its breeding in southern California should be sought. It would not be correct to even speculate as to the populational origin of the Long Beach specimen. However, it should be noted that strong easterly winds were blowing on the date of its capture, presumably having started during the night, and may well have influenced its occurrence at that coastal locality.

LITERATURE CITED

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