

A DEFINITE RECORD OF THE TRUMPETER SWAN FROM NEW MEXICO

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An adult Trumpeter Swan (*Olor buccinator*) was illegally shot and killed on Bear Canyon Reservoir in the Mimbres River Valley east of Silver City, New Mexico, on or about 23 February 1977. One of my students, Wyatt Pickering, salvaged the bird from the reservoir and although it had been partially eaten by fish or turtles, I prepared it as a study skin (DAZ 2660) which presently is housed at Western New Mexico University.

The bird's measurements (wing 648 mm, total length 1350 mm), large relative bill size, bill shape and reddish mandible edge initially suggested *buccinator*, but its weight (ca. 8618 gr, plus at least 450 gr removed by scavengers) and 22 rectrices (compared to 24 in the Trumpeter, and 20 in the Whistling Swan, *O. columbianus*) made determination on external criteria less than certain. However, longitudinal section of the sternum revealed the distinctive vertical loop in the trachea in its special bone housing—the definitive identifying character of a Trumpeter Swan. After being photographed, this section and other parts of the body skeleton were preserved. The bird's gonads were destroyed by shot, precluding sex determination.

Local fishermen reported seeing the swan, prior to its demise, for "at least a month" as it flew in, alone, from an unknown feeding ground to roost on the reservoir each evening. So far as is known, it was not seen alive by any bird student.

This is the first substantiated record of the species in New Mexico, and there is no Arizonan or west Texan record of which I am aware. Indeed, so far as I can determine, this constitutes the southernmost record for the species, at least in recent years. D. E. Merrill's report (Auk 1932:460) of a Trumpeter Swan shot along the Rio Grande near Las Cruces, N.M., in November 1931 has not been and cannot be accepted. (However, it was included without comment in J. S. Ligon's *New Mexico Birds and Where to Find Them*, Univ. of N.M. Press, Albuquerque, 1961.) Although allegedly "Mr. A. E. Archer made a skin of the specimen," there is no evidence that material was in fact preserved or properly identified.

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