

FIRST RECORD OF A PURPLE GALLINULE IN WYOMING

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On 23 September 1986, I collected a juvenile male Purple Gallinule (*Porphyryla martinica*) near Leazenby Lake, located in Albany County approximately 13 km south of Laramie, Wyoming, on the east side of U.S. Route 287. Leazenby Lake lies in a high (elevation 2240 m) grassy basin between the Laramie and Snowy ranges. According to Wyoming Game and Fish Department records (S. A. Ritter, Wyoming Game and Fish Department nongame bird biologist, pers. comm.), this specimen represents the first Purple Gallinule documented in the state of Wyoming.

The bird was found dead beneath a cottonwood (*Populus* sp.) tree after a strong wind storm. A necropsy indicated the bird died of trauma (E. S. Williams, D.V.M., Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory, pers. comm.) possibly caused by a collision in flight with the cottonwood tree or some other object. The necropsy also revealed that bird had been feeding on smartweed (*Polygonum* sp.) seeds shortly before its death. The bird's identification was verified from the specimen by W. R. Eddleman, currently Professor of Wildlife Biology at the University of Rhode Island, and from a photograph of the specimen by S. A. Ritter.

A study skin of the bird has been deposited in the Department of Zoology and Physiology Museum, University of Wyoming. The specimen was a light buffy brown overall, with a bluish-green tinge on the wings and back. There were no white streaks on the flanks as there are on the Common Gallinule or Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*). The bill and feet were olive colored. Measurements taken are as follows (W. R. Eddleman pers. comm.): weight, 150 grams; total length, 310 mm; wing chord, 173 mm; tarsus, 62.0 mm; tail, 56.0 mm; middle toe, 60.5 mm, culmen, 43.0 mm; bursa of Fabricius, 14.0 mm deep \times 3.7 mm wide.

In the continental United States, the Purple Gallinule is normally confined to the southeastern states. However, its presence in Wyoming is not a complete surprise. The American Ornithologists' Union (1983, Check-list of North American Birds, 6th ed., A. O. U., Washington, D.C.) reports that the Purple Gallinule "wanders widely but irregularly north," and the species has been recorded in some of the states surrounding Wyoming, namely, Utah, Colorado, and South Dakota.

I thank William R. Eddleman and Sharon A. Ritter for verifying the specimen's identification. William R. Eddleman also prepared the museum specimen and provided measurements of the bird. Elizabeth S. Williams conducted a thorough necropsy of it. Douglas B. Inkleby and William R. Eddleman provided helpful comments on a draft of this note.

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