

TWO NEW RECORDS OF THE FLAMMULATED OWL (*OTUS FLAMMEOLUS*) IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

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Information on the migration of the Flammulated Owl (*Otus flammeolus*) in California is minimal (Bloom 1983, Winter 1974, Collins et al. 1986). This paucity of data is perhaps due to the species' strictly nocturnal habits and its habit of not calling during the fall, making detection very difficult (Winter 1974). The Flammulated Owl is found mainly in the Transition Zone of California, most often in forests of Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), Sugar Pine (*Pinus lambertiana*), Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), White Fir (*Abies concolor*), Incense Cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*), and Black Oak (*Quercus kelloggii*) (Winter 1974, 1979, Marcot and Hill 1980). The Flammulated Owl is almost exclusively insectivorous (Marshall 1957, Ross 1969, Goggans 1985) but rarely takes small vertebrates (Johnsgard 1988).

The Flammulated Owl is now known to be a long-distance migrant, wintering in Mexico and Central America (Balda et al. 1975, Collins et al. 1986, Winter 1974). There is only one winter record for California (Stephens 1902) and two for Arizona (Simpson and Werner 1958, Monson and Phillips 1981). In California the earliest spring record is 23 March (Marcot and Hill 1980) and the latest fall record is 31 October (Winter 1974). In addition, there is a number of records of vagrant Flammulated Owls occurring far outside their normal range (Collins et al. 1986).

There are two previous fall records for the California Central Valley and here I report an additional two. Both previous lowland (elevation 4 feet) occurrences have been at Davis, Yolo County, in October. The first was of an adult female found on the University of California at Davis campus on 31 October 1936 (Emlen 1936; wing chord 135.8 mm, tail 63.5 mm, weight unknown). This specimen is deposited in the Vertebrate Museum, Department of Zoology, University of California, Davis.

The second Flammulated Owl was found near Road 25A and Highway 113, Woodland, Yolo County, on 16 October 1974 (anonymous 1979). The owl was alive and taken to the School of Veterinary Medicine where it was examined and diagnosed as having bilateral cataracts of unknown etiology.

The two new records are also from Yolo County. One was of an adult found trapped inside a large storage building along Hutchinson Drive, University of California campus, on 11 October 1984. I caught the owl with a net and held it overnight for observation. All remiges and rectrices were complete and unworn; the wing chord measured 134 mm, the tail measured 57.6 mm, and the body weight was 78 grams. This weight suggests the owl was a female (Johnson and Russell 1962, Reynolds and Linkart 1984). I placed the owl in a flight chamber to evaluate its flight ability and fed it live crickets ad libitum. It was photographed (see cover), banded (U.S.F.W. NO. 1363-80789), and released in the evening of 12 October 1984 near South Putah Creek, Davis.

The fourth Flammulated Owl was found by a concerned citizen on 3 October 1988 in Woodland. The owl had been caught by the family cat and was treated for shock at the University of California Davis Raptor Center and Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital. In spite of this care the owl died the following day. Postmortem diagnosis revealed a depression fracture of the left side of the skull, focal contusion of the left cerebral hemisphere, and pulmonary hemorrhage. The bird was hatching-year female weighing 60 grams, wing chord 133 mm, tail 55 mm. The specimen is deposited in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Biology Museum, University of California Davis, catalogue number MWFB 3227.

NOTES

Notably, all four records of the Flammulated Owl for California's Central Valley are for October, suggesting that the species is a regular if rarely detected migrant during that month.

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