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NEW AND UNUSUAL RECORDS OF BIRDS
FROM THE UINTA BASIN, UTAH¹

Merlin L. Killpack and C. Lynn Hayward

Since the publication of Twomey's (1942) account of the birds of the Uinta Basin, Utah, several new and unusual records of birds have been brought to light through our field work in that area. These records along with annotations are hereby published as a contribution of Utah ornithology.

Synthliboramphus antiquus. Ancient Murrelet.

One female was taken at Roosevelt, Duchesne County, November 12, 1955 by V. O. Walker. The bird appeared to be in good physical condition. At the time of the collection there were several days of heavy winds from the west. Specimens were reported by Gullion (1956) in northwestern Nevada at this same time.

Glaucidium gnoma pinicola. Rocky Mt. Pygmy Owl.

A female specimen was collected in a yellow pine-aspen woodland along the Uinta River about twelve miles north of Neola, Duchesne County, June 22, 1957. There was evidence from her actions that she had a nest in the vicinity. Twomey (1942: 399) listed this owl as hypothetical but did not have a positive record for the Uinta Basin.

Melanerpes erythrocephalus caurina. Red-headed Woodpecker.

Two males were collected in cottonwoods about eight miles south of Ouray, Uintah County, May 29, 1955. Twomey (1942: 19) found one dead in about this same locality. We also have an unpublished sight record of this species from near Jensen. July 27, 1937.

Thryomanes bewickii eremophilus. Desert Bewick Wren.

Twomey (1942) does not report the Bewick Wren from the Uinta Basin. We found it to be a fairly common species in the scattered pinyon-juniper woodlands east of the Green River. Two specimens were taken at Bonanza and Rainbow, Uintah County, June 18 and 22, 1954. There were numerous sight records for the same area.

Toxostoma rufum longicauda. Western Brown Thrasher.

A male was collected eleven miles northwest of Roosevelt, Duchesne County, December 29, 1954. It was feeding on the fruits of the Russian olive and was fat and in good physical condition.

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Mimus polyglottos leucopterus. Western Mocking bird.

Twomey (1942: 427) regards this species as rare in the Uinta Basin. Our observations indicate that it is a regular though uncommon resident of that area. A male and female were collected five miles west of Roosevelt, May 24 and 25, 1955. There was some evidence that they were preparing to nest. Sight observations were also made at eleven miles east of Jensen, Uintah County, June 9, 1953, two miles north of Roosevelt, May 20 to August 15, 1955, and May 6, 1956, and Rainbow, Uintah County, June 16, 1954.

Dendroica townsendi. Townsend's Warbler.

One female was taken from a flock of 50 to 60 birds 17 miles north of Neola, Duchesne County, August 24, 1957. The birds were apparently migrating in company with Pileolated Warblers. All were observed in a grove of lodgepole pines.

Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris. Starling.

Killpack and Chittenden (1952) previously reported on the winter status of starlings in the Uinta Basin. The birds are now known to be permanent residents. Several nests have been found in old woodpecker holes. A set of six eggs was collected May 15, 1954 three miles west of Roosevelt, Duchesne County. Many birds have been captured and banded. Returns on the banding have been received from North and South Dakota and Montana.

Guiraca caerulea interfusa. Western Blue Grosbeak.

A male was collected five miles east of Myton, Duchesne County, June 8, 1957. Another male was seen at the same time. The birds were singing and there were other indications of nesting in the area. From other records available to us it seems likely that this species breeds regularly although not commonly along the Colorado and Green River drainages at least as far north as the Uinta Basin. Behle and Selander (1952:31) have also recorded specimens from Vernal, Uintah County.

Acanthis flammea flammea. Common Redpoll.

One female redpoll was collected from a flock of about forty found in a pinyon-juniper woodland about eleven miles west of Roosevelt, Duchesne County, January 1, 1958. The birds were feeding on the seeds of Russian thistle. A male was seen at Roosevelt, December 28, 1956 with a flock of pine siskins feeding on sunflower seeds.

Spizella arborea ochrocea. Western Tree Sparrow.

One specimen was collected at Arcadia, Duchesne County, January 21, 1957.

Zonotrichia querula. Harris's Sparrow.

Indications are that this species is a regular winter resident in the Uinta Basin. Two males were collected three miles east of

Myton, Duchesne County, December 3 and 29, 1955 from a flock of ten to fifteen birds that were in the company of a large flock of White-crowned Sparrows. Two birds were captured and banded at Roosevelt, Duchesne County in January 1957. One of these was recaptured in the same locality in April of the same year. On December 28, 1957 a flock of about thirty Harris's sparrows was observed along the Duchesne River five miles west of Myton.

Calcarius lapponicus alascensis. Alaska Longspur.

This species was previously reported for the Uinta Basin by Killpack (1953). Additional observations indicate that longspurs are regular winter residents in the basin. Three males and one female were taken in the vicinity of Myton, Duchesne County, December 17, 1955, January 28, 1956, and February 8, 1958. The specimens were taken from small flocks that were associated with large aggregations of horned larks. Another male was collected eight miles south of Roosevelt, January 15, 1957. Four additional birds were captured and banded at Roosevelt between January 23 and January 31, 1957.

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