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SIGNIFICANT BIRD RECORDS FROM UTAH

William H. Behle¹

ABSTRACT.— New or additional records of six species of birds are reported for Utah: Red-throated Loon, Black-legged Kittiwake, Vaux's Swift, Blue Jay, Magnolia Warbler, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. All are substantiated by museum specimens. Unless reported for the first time, other records for the state for these rare birds are summarized.

Three birds either new or rare in Utah were taken in the spring of 1972 by a field party from the University of Utah to the Beaver Dam Wash in extreme southwestern Utah. In addition, specimens of three birds new to the state have been submitted to the museum in recent years by interested individuals. These six kinds are hereby placed on record in order to update the checklist of the birds of the state.

Red-throated Loon

A loon of this species, *Gavia stellata*, was first seen at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge by refuge personnel on 28 July 1973. It remained several days and was observed by many others. Becoming languid, it was eventually captured and taken to headquarters for observation, but it died on 21 August. An autopsy revealed that a catfish spine was lodged in the esophagus and had perforated the wall. By implication, the bird died from starvation. It was emaciated. However, the bird was also host to many endoparasites. It was a male. The specimen was presented to the University of Utah by Lloyd Gunther, refuge manager, and is now a study skin in the collection.

Black-legged Kittiwake

A male of *Rissa tridactyla tridactyla* was picked up dead, although in fresh condition, at the Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge, 40 miles southwest of Dugway, Juab County, Utah, on 12 March 1972, by a trapper, Jim Harrison, and was relayed to the University by John Venegoni and Lloyd Gunther, refuge managers. The specimen weighed 265 g and the testes measured 6 x 2 mm. This is the only record of the species for Utah; hence, it is of accidental status.

Vaux's Swift

A female of *Chaetura vauxi vauxi* was taken at the Terry Ranch in the Beaver Dam Wash, 2500 ft elevation, five miles north of the Utah-Arizona border, Washington County, Utah, on 19 May 1972, by William Buntin, M.D. It was a lone bird. The ova measured 0.5 mm in diameter. This is the first unquestionable specimen of record for the state. Woodbury et al. (1949:18) note the existence of a

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mummified skin found on 28 October 1939 in a stove in a cabin at the New State Gun Club or Jordan Fur Farm, Davis County, near the mouth of the Jordan River. The bird had presumably been trapped there sometime during the late spring or summer of 1939.

In addition to these two specimens there are several sight records for the species. Two were seen in a flock of other kinds of swifts and swallows on 10 May 1959 at Provona Beach, Utah Lake, near the mouth of the Provo River (National Audubon Society, 1959:391). One was seen at Utah Lake on 12 May 1963 (National Audubon Society, 1963b:422). Three were seen at the Gap, near Parowan, on 31 August 1964 (National Audubon Society, 1965:64), and three were seen at Springdale near the mouth of Zion Canyon from 11 to 15 September 1965 (National Audubon Society, 1966:77). Thus it appears that the species is a regular but uncommon transient through the state in both spring and autumn.

Blue Jay

The first specimen of *Cyanocitta cristata cyanotephra* from the state, a female, was taken by John Bushman at Holladay, Salt Lake County, Utah, 4500 ft elevation, on 30 April 1970. A jay of this species, possibly the same individual, had been observed in scrub oaks in the same area off and on since 5 January 1969. Another example was observed in the area during the winter of 1970-71. There are some earlier sight records for Utah, one by Dr. and Mrs. Carl L. Hubbs (*in litt.*) on 25 June 1950 on the Markagunt Plateau, Iron County, beside State Highway 143 near its junction with the road leading to the summit of an eminence known as Brian Head. The location was in coniferous forest immediately north of the northern boundary of Cedar Breaks National Monument at an elevation of about 10,000 ft. Another sighting in the same general vicinity was made by the late Stuart Murie (National Audubon Society, 1967:63) on 29 October 1966 at a locality that he simply designated as Cedar Mountain east of Cedar City.

Magnolia Warbler

A male of *Dendroica magnolia* was taken by the writer in a low desert shrub at the Terry Ranch, 2500 ft elevation, Beaver Dam Wash, five miles north of the Utah-Arizona border, Washington County, Utah, on 19 May 1972. It weighed 6.9 g, the testes measured 5 x 4 mm, and the bird was moderately fat. Several other species of migrating warblers were seen, but this was the only one of this species. While this is the first specimen from Utah, the species has been seen several times before. Two were observed at Salt Lake City on 14 October 1962 (National Audubon Society, 1963a:54); one at Green River, Emery County, Utah, on 30 May 1968 (National Audubon Society, 1968:561); and some at the Bear River Refuge, Box Elder County, on 26 September 1971, (National Audubon Society, 1972:98). The species therefore appears to be an uncommon migrant.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

A fourth record specimen of *Pheucticus ludovicianus* for Utah was obtained by William Buntin, M.D., at the Terry Ranch, 2500 ft elevation, Beaver Dam Wash, five miles north of the Utah-Arizona border on 19 May 1972. It was a male with testes that measured 10 x 8 mm. It was the male of a pair. Records of the species in Utah have been slow in accumulating until recent years, but it now seems that the species is of casual occurrence in the state and may breed, at least upon occasion. The first record was an observation of the species at Kanab on 26 April 1935 (Behle, et al, 1958). A second record, not heretofore recorded, pertains to a juvenile with soft mandibles and conspicuous yellow gape trapped by Calvin D. Wilson of the Tracy Aviary at his home in South Salt Lake on 4 August 1955. It was kept in a cage of native birds at the aviary until it died on 12 December. It was not saved.

The first specimen from the state was obtained by Roland Wauer (Wauer and Carter, 1965:78) at the Springdale Ponds, Washington County, near the entrance to Zion National Park on 3 May 1965. It is in the collection at the park. Wauer also saw one at Kanab (oral report) on 7 June 1965. A second specimen from Utah now in the collection at the University of Utah was killed by flying into a window at the residence area of Arches National Park near Moab, Grand County, on 26 May 1965 (Behle, 1966:396). The third specimen from the state, also in the University of Utah collection, was found dead at Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge on 2 June 1965 (ibid.). Two days later another was seen there but not taken.

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