

THIRD UTAH BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT*

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This is the third report of the Utah Ornithological Society Records Committee. It contains 23 accepted records of 21 species and 3 unaccepted records. Evaluated records are listed by common name and scientific name following nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union 1983 Checklist and the 35th supplement (1985). Information listed for each accepted record follows the format used in previous reports (see *Utah Birds* 1(2):28) except that consultants are not listed for individual records. Unaccepted records contain the same information as accepted records except for observers, who are not listed. Records submitted but not included in this report are still being evaluated by the Committee.

The Records Committee would like to thank those individuals who have submitted records to the Committee, and to the following consultants who gave generously of their time to help evaluate certain records: Jon Dunn, Ned K. Johnson, Paul Lehman, Guy McCaskie, Allan Phillips, J. Van Remsen.

The Committee greatly appreciates the assistance of Bob Walters and Tim Provan, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, for assistance in copying and circulating records.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

PACIFIC LOON (*Gavia pacifica*). Two (39-1985); 15-20 Nov 1985; Rush Lake, Tooele Co.; (JB,CM,ES,RS,JLe,RSm,KL,JD); documented: JB,ES.

The Pacific Loons were observed with Common Loons, making their smaller size and slimmer bill obvious. The crown and hind neck were lighter than the back, and the diagnostic chin strap was observed. Most Utah records of this rare Utah migrant are for November. The Pacific Loon was formerly a race of Arctic Loon, but was given specific status in 1985 (Auk 120:680).

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*). One immature (37-1985); 10 Aug 1985; west of Salt Lake International Airport, Salt Lake Co.; (ES); documented: ES.

The differentiation of this bird from the similar immature Snowy Egret was made by a combination of the following characters: grayish lores, thicker slightly decurved bill, and the slow methodical method of stalking prey. When the bird was first sighted, the observer, who has had experience observing the feeding behavior of Snowy Egrets which are common in the area, felt that the bird might be ill because of its slow gait and long periods of motionless standing.

The basal two-thirds of the bill was gray, but immature Snowy Egrets can have black, gray, or gray-based black-tipped bills. The legs were a murky greenish-yellow and uniform in color, front and back. Young Snowy Egrets have dark legs which are yellowish-green in back, but often appear greenish in the field. These last two characters (bill color and leg color) are not diagnostic

for Little Blue Heron. See *Utah Birds* 1(2):25 for additional discussion on the identification of immature Snowy and Little Blue herons. This is the fourth acceptable record for Utah.

TRUMPETER SWAN (*Cygnus buccinator*). One adult male (30-1985); 11 Apr 1985; Maeser area of Ashley Valley, NW of Vernal, Uintah Co.; (DC,SC,DZ); documented: SC.

This northeastern Utah record was of a bird wearing a red radio collar with the white letters R2. It was banded at Red Rocks NWR, Montana.

SURF SCOTER (*Melanitta perspicillata*). Three females and/or immatures (25-1985); 24 Oct 1985; Great Salt Lake near Saltaire, Salt Lake Co.; (ES); documented: ES.

The birds were differentiated from the more commonly reported White-winged Scoter by the lack of feathering on the bill, the dark crown, and lack of a white speculum, a character which was noted when the birds repeatedly flapped their wings.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER (*Melanitta fusca*). Three (40-1985); 24 Oct-Dec 1985; Great Salt Lake north of 1-80 between Tooele and Grantsville, Tooele Co.; (DM,JB,ES,RS,HS,CM,JL,JW,JO); documented: ES; photo: ES. Three females and/or immatures (41-1985); 15 Nov 1985; Farmington Bay, Davis Co.; (ES); documented: ES.

Three birds were observed on 24 Oct 1985, north of 1-80 by Dale Martin and Joelle Buffa. Over the next several weeks, repeated observations of one to six individuals were reported in the same general area by many observers. Three were reported from Farmington Bay and one from Logan, causing some to feel that Utah was experiencing an invasion of White-winged Scoters. Unfortunately, sufficient reliable data are not available to accurately assess whether that is the case. White-winged is the most commonly reported scoter in Utah. Most are singles or small groups of less than five, but as many as 100 have been seen together. Most of the Great Salt Lake is inaccessible to birders and data are sketchy. The area along 1-80 where most observations have been made was created only recently as a result of the flooding levels of the lake. The only sightings available from that area are for fall 1985 when it received heavy coverage. It is impossible to make comparative statements which are scientifically sound when baseline data are not available.

COMMON BLACK-HAWK (*Buteogallus anthracinus*). One immature or sub-adult (34-1985); 19 Apr and 26 Apr 1985; Grafton, Washington Co.; (JLG,JAG); documented: JLG; photo: JLG.

This hawk is a sporadic summer resident in the Zion area with one pair seen regularly between 1962 and 1975. See *Utah Birds* 1(3):43-47 for details of these observations.

PARASITIC JAEGER (*Stercorarius parasiticus*). One juvenile (36-1985); 8 Sep 1985; Yuba Res., Juab Co.; (SH,VJH); documented: SH.

With the exception of three records of Long-tailed Jaeger (two are specimens), all reports of jaegers in Utah are Parasitic Jaegers. This was one of several reported in the fall of 1985, including one verified by numerous photographs.

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL (*Larus glaucescens*). One first winter (18-1984); 11 Dec 1984, 14 Jan 1985, 10 Feb 1985, 17 Feb 1985; Salt Lake landfill, Salt Lake Co.; (ES,RS,BB,GB,CM,JB,SH,VJH); documented: ES.

An individual of this species was observed on four occasions at the Salt Lake landfill. There was nothing to indicate whether it was the same bird or different birds. This represents the first record of the species in Salt Lake County and followed closely the first report for Utah on 20 Nov 1984 at the Provo landfill (*Utah Birds* 1(2):30).

GLAUCOUS GULL (*Larus hyperboreus*). One second winter (26-1984); 28 Dec 1984; Salt Lake landfill, Salt Lake Co.; (ES); documented: ES. One first winter (18-1985); 11 Jan 1985; Salt Lake landfill, Salt Lake Co.; (ES); documented: ES. One adult (19-1985); 19 Jan 1985; Salt Lake landfill, Salt Lake Co.; (ES); documented: ES.

This gull is a regular winter visitor to Utah. It is interesting to note the records of gulls at different ages.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*). One (24-1984); 23-27 Apr 1984; Springdale, Washington Co.; (DG,JLG,JM,JAG,LP); documented: JLG; photo: JLG.

This dove is considered to be an uncommon summer resident of local occurrence in lower Beaver Dam Wash. It is accidental in other parts of the state. This is the first record of this species in the Zion area.

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*). Two males (35-1985); 15 Aug 1985; Coral Pink Sand Dunes, Kane Co.; (SH,JA,BL,JL,NW); documented: SH.

The second state record. Details of this sighting were published in *Utah Birds* 1(3):48.

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Polioptila melanura*). One adult male (31-1985); 9 Mar 1985; Beaver Dam Wash, Washington Co.; (ES,SH,VJH); documented: SH.

This observation was made in the same area where two were sighted in 1984 and may have been one of the same individuals.

VARIED THRUSH (*Ixoreus naevius*). One adult male, one unknown age (16-1985); 5 Oct 1985; Promontory Mtns, Box Elder Co.; (ES,RS); documented: ES.

This thrush winters from southern Alaska, southern British Columbia, and northern Idaho south through Washington, Oregon, and California to northern Baja California. Winter wanderers are observed regularly as far east as New England. Most Utah records are of single birds. Recently, one or two have been recorded annually in Utah.

LECONTE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma lecontei*). One adult male (33-1985); 9, 14, and 16 Mar 1985; Beaver Dam Slope, Washington Co.; (CM,JB,ES,RS,SH,JW); documented: SH; photo: ES.

This pale thrasher has sandy-gray plumage which contrasts greatly with the long dark tail. On 9 March, the bird was observed repeatedly for over an hour singing its melodious song from a Joshua tree top. When approached closely, the bird would drop straight to the ground and could be seen running quickly away through the sparse vegetation. This behavior is characteristic of this infrequently documented species which is seldom observed flying.

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*). One (11-1985); 2, 1985; Ogden, Weber Co; (MK); documented: MK; photo: MK. One immature (20-1985); 8 Sep 1985; Kaufman Ranch, Millard

Co.; (PL,ES); documented: PL,ES.

Although this vireo is abundant in the eastern United States, Utah has had fewer recent reports than formerly, so this species is probably being overlooked by Utah observers.

The following excerpt from Record 20-1985 of an immature Red-eyed Vireo submitted by Paul Lehman contains useful information for identifying this species.

"A large, hefty vireo with a large, flat head; bold, straight white supercilium which was bordered both above and below by thin black lines which, in turn, contrasted with gray crown, which contrasted with bright medium green back and unmarked wings; white underparts with pale yellow wash to undertail coverts; rather large vireo bill had noticeable hook to tip, brown eye (im.).

"Warbling Vireo slightly smaller, slightly smaller bill with less obvious hook; less pronounced supercilium also curves slightly up and over eye (is not straight) and lacks thin dark lines bordering it; upperparts not as green and do not contrast as much with crown."

BLACKPOLL WARBLER (*Dendroica striata*). One immature (21-1985); 4 Sep 1985; Promontory Mtns, Box Elder Co.; (PL,ES); documented: PL,ES.

This is one of the eastern warblers which most frequently strays to the west in fall migration and is most similar to the Bay-breasted Warbler. The Bay-breasted Blackpoll type has bold white tailspots and white wingbars and a dark streaked back. The underparts are not strongly marked and the head, back, and rump have greenish tones. The following excerpt from Record 21-1985 submitted by Paul Lehman contains information for field identification of immature Blackpoll Warblers.

"A rather plump warbler almost Yellow-rumped sized, but shorter tailed; yellowish throat and upper breast with dusky streaking on breast; remainder of underparts white; dull grayish-olive wash to flanks; white under-tail coverts; two distinct white wingbars and tailspots; olive-green back with rather thick dusky vertical streaks; yellowish supercilium; thin broken eyering; dusky legs contrasted with distinctly paler (fleshy-yellow) feet.

"imm./fall Bay-breasted Warbler most similar but has dark (blackish) feet, buffy undertail coverts, less streaking on breast, lime-ier [sic] green upperparts; almost all show at least a trace of buff on flanks. Pine Warbler eliminated by foot color, facial pattern, back streaking; only adult Pine has green upperparts -adult in Utah in early Sept. extremely unlikely."

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*). One adult (17-1985); 5 Sep 1985; Wah Wah Ranch, Beaver Co.; (PL,ES); documented: PL,ES.

Wah Wah Ranch in the otherwise barren Wah Wah Valley is located in the southwestern Utah portion of the Great Basin. This warbler, another of the more frequently observed eastern warblers in the west, was seen creeping along low branches of elm trees located on this isolated ranch.

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*). One adult male (12-1985); 24 Aug 1985; Ogden, Weber Co.; (MK); documented: MK; photo: MK.

This species is a rare summer resident and transient in Utah.

OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapillus*). One (14-1985); 21 Sep 1985; Ogden, Weber Co.; (MK); documented: MK; photo: MK.

This is the fourth documented record for Utah. The bird was banded and photographed by Merlin Killpack in his backyard, the same location where he banded one on 10 Oct 1911. Four days after Record 14-1985 was banded, Killpack found a dead Ovenbird (not 14-1985) which was prepared as a specimen now deposited in the BYU Bean Museum.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*). One (43-1985); 3-6 Nov 1985; Parley's Gulch, Salt Lake Co.; (JW,CM); documented: JW,CM.

Almost all Utah records are spring males in breeding plumage, but in those western states with more intensive coverage, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are recorded year around with peaks in spring and fall. Clearly, some females and fall immatures are being overlooked in Utah, undoubtedly because they closely resemble the more common Black-headed Grosbeak. See the discussion of this record in *Utah Birds* 1(3):52.

HARRIS' SPARROW (*Zonotrichia querula*). One immature (44-1985); 7 Nov 1985; Parley's Gulch, Salt Lake Co.; (ES,BB,JW); documented: JW.

This species is a regular winter visitor to Utah.

UNACCEPTED RECORDS

BUFF-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax fulvifrons*). One adult (28-1985); 7 Jul 1985; Green Canyon, Cache Co.

The extreme northern portion of the breeding range of this species barely extends into the United States. The A.O.U. Checklist (1983) lists no records outside of Arizona and New Mexico. According to Allan Phillips (litt.), there are no recent records outside of extreme southern Arizona, the breeding range being reduced from former times. The observer felt that the bird, based on its behavior, was "in close proximity to its nest." Written documentation for this record was sent to Allan Phillips and Ned Johnson, both ornithologists with extensive experience with flycatchers. Both considered the description to be too sketchy and suggested the possibility of a color variant of one of Utah's more common flycatchers. Very little information in this report was devoted to eliminating similar species. In addition, Phillips stated that if the bird were fulvifrons it was behaving strangely and was in atypical habitat. Much greater detail is necessary for a record of such ornithological significance to be accepted.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*). One (20-1984); 28 Jul 1984; Ivins Res., Washington Co.

This bird was very briefly described and lacked sufficient detail to separate it from another red bird (Simmer Tanager) of the Ivins area. The Red Cardinal is a common resident of southern and central Arizona. It has extended its range considerably since 1870 (G. M. Monson & A. R. Phillips. 1981. An annotated checklist of the birds of Arizona) and is not unexpected in Utah, especially in the southern part of the state. The only accepted record for Utah is a specimen obtained on 10 Mar 1983 in Ogden.

PURPLE FINCH (*Carpodacus purpureus*). One female (19-1984); 11 Nov 1984; Logan, Cache Co.

Purple and Cassin's finches closely resemble each other. Cassin's Finch is a common breeding

species in Utah and some remain throughout the winter. There are no accepted records of Purple Finch in Utah. Most characters used to differentiate the two species are subtle and require experience, preferably with both species. Great care should be taken, especially when direct comparisons are not possible since very few characters are diagnostic by themselves. An identification is best made using a combination of characters. This record was based on only one fieldmark, the dark malar stripe, but Cassin's females can also have a dark malar stripe. Additional details are necessary for a record of this difficult species to be acceptable.

OBSERVERS CITED: John Anderson, Bob Bond, Georgene Bond, Joelle Buffa, David Condon, Stephen Cranney, Jules Dreyfous, Dane Gifford, Jerome L. Gifford, Jewel A. Gifford, Steven Hedges, V.J. Hedges, Kim Lewis, Merlin Killpack, Jeanne Le Ber (JLe), Paul Lehman, Joe Leigh, Blame Lunceford, Dale Martin, Clyde Morris, J.R. Murphy, Louise Pettit, Ray Smith (RSm), Ella Sorensen, Richard Sorensen, H.B. Spencer, Merrill Webb, Jim Woolf, David Zalunardo.

*Source: *Utah Birds* 1(4):77-86.

