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FROM THE PRESIDENT  
Bruce J. Hayward

John Hubbard has reminded me that my 'pearls of wisdom' have not graced the pages of the Bulletin for quite awhile. Actually, I haven't had anything worthwhile to say for quite awhile. The NMOS has not been terribly active this summer and we haven't had a board meeting for 6 months. But the board did get together on 1 October. It seems that we always get to talking about money very early in the meetings. The NMOS always seems to be operating on the brink of bankruptcy. This time was no different.

Several directors felt that a free copy of each special publication should be given to each member. But to do this, we would have to raise the dues. In the end, we decided that it would be cheaper for members to pay our base cost for the first copy. They would have a year from time of publication to do this. Second copies and copies to non-members would be 20% above this price. A third price tier would be for bookstores and organizations wanting to sell our publications for profit. We plan to publish John Hubbard's Revised Check-list of the Birds of New Mexico next year, and we need money to do

this. We hope to sell enough other publications and to secure a little extra money in other ways so that we can publish the check-list without raising dues. If you should have any comments concerning style or format of the check-list, let us know.

We also need someone to compile the nest record cards for recent years and to write up a report for the Bulletin. Do I hear any volunteers? Get involved and help us out on our data retrieval system.

Coming up will be a period of great bird-watching activity. There is the Southwestern Hawk Count, being organized by Ralph Fisher in early December, the Christmas Counts a few weeks later. It's a shame that this activity is not spread out over a longer period of time. I've always thought it would be fun to have a late January count to augment information from additional areas. These counts would be good excuses to go out and commune with nature during the heart of winter.

Last of all, I would like to encourage you to take out patron memberships in the NMOS this year. We need the money, it's for a good cause, and it's tax deductible (except for the first \$5). In addition we donate one of Ralph Fisher's neat 11 x 14 color photographs for your den or living room. Think about it. And please get your renewals in on time...it saves us an awful lot of work...same price, same good service, but remember to send these to Henry Zeller this year.

#### 1977 UPDATE TO THE NEW MEXICO LIST

John P. Hubbard

Time marches on, and with its passage grows the list of birds reported from the state of New Mexico. In the last update of the full list (N.M.O.S. Bull. 3(4):17-20, 1975), I listed 424 species verified in the state, plus 48 hypothetical and 12 unaccepted—including unsuccessful introductions. Recently (N.M.O.S. Bull. 5(1):9-10, 1977), I treated only the unverified species, which numbered 48 hypothetical, 9 exotic (unsuccessful introductions or escapes), and 2 retracted species. As of this moment the overall list is again in need of revision, particularly the verified and hypothetical groups, which now stand at 434 and 47 species, respectively (the exotic and retracted groups remain unchanged, i.e., 9 and 2 species). The following species are involved in the changes on our list.

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*). Previously hypothetically recorded on the basis of a dubious specimen from Doña Ana Co., the species has been verified by an adult killed at Bear Canyon Lake. Grant Co., on or about 23 Feb. 1977. The bird was illegally shot and had apparently been present at the lake for "at least a month" before being killed. The specimen was prepared and identified by Dale A. Zimmerman, but we do not have any other details concerning it at this time.

Barrow Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*). Previously hypothetically recorded on the basis of a questionable specimen and a few sight records, this species has been verified by a male taken near Blanco, San Juan Co., 4 Jan. 1975, by Stan Boyer. The bird is mounted and on display in Mr. Boyer's barbershop in Farmington; photos are now in the N.M.O.S. Photo/Type File (no. 1975:35A-35G). Mr. Boyer also reported taking two other males at the same site on 27 Dec. 1976, but these were not saved.

Chukar (*Alectonis chukar*). Previously recorded. as an unsuccessful

introduction, this species is now considered established as a wild bird in northern San Juan Co. (Campbell, N.M. Dept. Game and Fish, Bull. No. 15).

American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*). Hypothetical, no previous report; recorded on the basis of one seen near Antelope Wells, Hidalgo Co. on 10 August 1976 by James Bednarz. This record has been evaluated by the N.M.O.S. Bird Committee, and scored as "possible".

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*). Previously recorded as hypothetical in Chaves Co., this species has been verified on the basis of a first-year bird photographed (N.M.O.S. F./T. File (no. 1976:16A-16E) at Ute Lake, Quay Co., on 29 March 1976, by Keith Giezentanner.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*). Previously recorded as hypothetical in San Juan, Socorro, Chaves, and Eddy cos; this species is now verified on the basis of 1 taken (specimen deposited at Smithsonian)--and 3 others seen--at Morgan Lake, San Juan Co., on 30 August, 1976, by Gregory Schmitt.

Costa Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*). Previously hypothetical in Grant, Hidalgo, and Dona Ana cos., now confirmed on the basis of photographs of an adult male by William Baltosser in Guadalupe Canyon, Hidalgo Co., in the period 7-22 May 1976 (N.M.O.S. P./T. File no. 1971-1A-1E); in addition, an immature male was netted, photographed and tail feathers retained (N.M.S.U. Coll.) there on 21 May (N.M.O.S. F/T. File no. 1977-2).

Blue-throated Hummingbird (*Lampornis clemenciae*). Recently (N.M.O.S. Bull. 3:19, 1975, I recommended that this species be demoted to the hypothetical list because of my doubt that Mearns' 1892 specimens had actually come from New Mexico. The specimens in question were from the Lang Ranch, which lies in the southernmost Animas Valley at the Sonora border. A minor extension of the San Luis Mts. lies at the eastern end of the ranch, although the vast bulk of that range is in Mexico. However, it does seem likely that sufficient habitat exists on time U.S. side to harbor occasional hummingbirds of this species, and I recommend that Mearns' records be accepted at face value. In addition, one or more of 3 birds was photographed at Silver City by D. A. Zimmerman in the period 17-30 Sept. 1976, to provide additional confirmation as well as the northernmost verified record in the state.

White-eared Hummingbird (*Hylocharis leucotis*). Previously recorded as hypothetical in Hidalgo Co., this species was confirmed on the basis of an adult female taken in the Animas Mts., Hidalgo Co., by J. P. Hubbard on 13 July 1976 (specimen to Smithsonian). Three adult males were seen the same day there, and single birds were recorded the next day and possibly on 4 June 1976.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*). No previous record; confirmed at Boone's Draw, Roosevelt Co., on the basis of three specimens collected on 5 and 9 Sept. 1976 by J. P. Hubbard et al. (specimens to Smithsonian; Univ. New Mexico; Delaware Mus. Nat. Hist.). All specimens were immatures in fresh autumn plumage, two being females (5 and 9 Sept.) and the other a probable female (9 Sept.).

Nutting Flycatcher (*Myiarchus nuttingi*). A bird fitting the physical and vocal characteristics of this species was seen near Bill Evans Lake, Grant Co., by D. A. and M. Zimmerman on 18 Dec. 1976. Observations were made for an extended period under very favorable conditions and by observers familiar with various North American *Myiarchus* species. Under the circumstances the Nutting Flycatcher should be added to the New Mexico hypothetical list. The

only verified U.S. record of this Mexican species is from Arizona, i.e. near Roosevelt Lake on 8 January 1952 (Phillips et al., 1964:82, The birds of Arizona. Univ. Ariz. Press, Tucson).

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*). Previously hypothetical in Sierra Co., this species was confirmed on the basis of a specimen killed by a cat in Albuquerque on 18 Oct. 1976 and now preserved in the collection at the Univ. of New Mexico. The bird is an immature female. Interestingly, another Varied Thrush was seen by Roland Wauer at Bandelier Nat'l Mon. on the day before this bird was killed.

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*). A male of this species was banded and photographed at Boone's Draw by J. P. Hubbard et al. on 28 April 1976, but unfortunately the slides have either been lost or misplaced. Consequently, the species must remain on the hypothetical list. Another male was seen at the same locality on 5 Sept. 1976.

Botteri Sparrow (*Aimophila botterii*). No previous record, now hypothetical in Hidalgo Co. One was heard singing at Rodeo on 21 June 1977, by S. H. Russell. At least 2 pair and up to 6 pair were present there through July, according to Will Moir.

#### A HYBRID WARBLER FROM NEW MEXICO

John P. Hubbard

On 29 June 1976, I collected a warbler that appeared to be an inter-specific hybrid on Sierra Grande, Union County, New Mexico. Recently, this specimen (now deposited at the Smithsonian) has been identified by Mrs. Roxie C. Laybourne and Dr. Allan R. Phillips as a hybrid between a Myrtle Warbler (*Dendroica coronata coronata*) and Pine Warbler (*D. pinus*)--an apparent first such report involving these two species. Presumably hybridization may have taken place in the zone of breeding overlap between these forms, which stretches roughly from southeastern Canada and the adjacent U.S. westward to Manitoba and Minnesota. The nearest point of such overlap to New Mexico would be about 800 miles north-northeast of our state.

The hybrid specimen was taken at 8100 feet in the Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) zone of Sierra Grande, as it fed alone in a tree. Nearby was a pair of Audubon Warblers (*D. c. auduboni*), while the only other warbler observed in the area was the Virginia (*Vermivora virginiae*)--which was rare on the mountain. The hybrid was an adult, but the gonads were shot away and thus were unavailable to sex the bird. However, it is probably a female, and the plumage is quite worn. The bird was not fat and weighed 12 grams, which is rather large for a *Dendroica*.

In general appearance the hybrid resembles a Myrtle Warbler in being grey above and whitish below, with dusky streaking on the breast. However, the crown, chin, throat, breast, mid-back, and rump are yellow to greenish yellow, and the tail has white only in the outer two pairs of feathers. The bill is rather heavy and blackish, the legs dark gray, and the eyes were brown. In the field, the above combination of characters called to mind a female or immature Cape May Warbler (*D. tigrina*), especially in the yellow under-foreparts and ventral streaking. This potential source of confusion should be borne in mind by all observers of birds. While hybrids are generally rare in nature, they are among the factors that should make all of us cautious in our identification of unusual birds in New Mexico.

## CLARK NUTCRACKERS CAPTURE TROUT

John P. Hubbard

On 22 June 1976, I watched as one or more Clark Nutcrackers (*Nucifraga columbiana*) captured small rainbow trout (*Salmo gairdneri*) at the Red River Fish Hatchery, Taos Co., New Mexico. I suspect that more than one adult was involved and that the fish were largely being fed to young nutcrackers that were perched beyond my sight in nearby trees.

The trout were small (2 to 4 inches) specimens that were being reared in open outdoor tanks. These tanks are a few feet wide and deep and many feet long, and they are constructed of concrete. At one end is piped in a supply of water, this falling 2-3 feet before contacting the surface of the water in the tank. Trout tend to concentrate at this incoming source and variously attempt to jump into that stream as though to progress upstream.

To prevent trout from leaping up into the inlet pipe, a large screen has been suspended between the latter and the tank. This is generally effective for its purpose, except for trout that leap toward the incoming water from a more downstream position. Occasionally such trout miss the screen from below but land on it as they drop downward from the apex of their leap. Such fish generally quickly flip themselves back into the tank, apparently no worse for the wear.

It is these temporarily stranded trout that the nutcracker(s) was observed to take. In each case, a nutcracker first positioned itself on the edge of the tank by the screen, where it waited until a fish became available. Then the bird quickly seized the fish and flew away with it, seldom having to wait more than a minute for each capture. I observed perhaps 10 captures in a 30 minute period, during which nutcrackers were only intermittently present. In each case the bird flew into a dense tree, where intense begging calls and then muffled noises suggested that fledgling nutcrackers were fed the trout.

Nutcrackers are omnivorous, as is typical of many other members of the crow family (*Corvidae*). Conifer seeds are among the most frequent foods, but other vegetal matter, insects, carrion, and the contents of bird nests are also consumed (Bent, U.S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 199:315-318, 1946). Small mammals and feeding station handouts, e.g. suet, grain, and bread are also mentioned as food by Goodwin (Crows of the World, Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, N.Y. 1976:168). However, I have not seen any previous reference to fish being taken for food.

According to workers at Red River Hatchery, nutcrackers have been noted taking and eating trout for some years. However, the birds are not generally regarded as a serious problem.

### NOTES AND NEWS

#### Conservation Chairman Needs Information

Two problems facing the Conservation Chairman currently are the threat to the sub-alpine habitat on the north face of the Sierra Blanca massif, and the urgency of maintaining breeding habitat for rookery nesting water birds in the upper pool area of Elephant Butte Reservoir. The threat to Sierra Blanca is occasioned by a proposal being formulated by the Mescalero Apaches to

petition Congress to transfer land to the reservation to be used for the expansion of the Sierra Blanca Ski Area which they operate. The Forest Service not long ago refused such expansion by permit. Ski areas are notoriously damaging to natural values.

On the other problem: water birds for the last several years have established and used a nesting rookery at Elephant Butte Marsh in the upper reservoir area, but various factors threaten the survival of the vegetation needed for nesting. Steps must be taken both to delay the deterioration of Elephant Butte Marsh and to identify alternative habitat, and/or to create suitable habitat in alternative locations in the reservoir area.

Any member providing information which will be useful in approaching these problems will earn the deep appreciation of the Conservation Chairman. Please send your information to Henry Zeller.

#### Copies of N.M.O.S. Bylaws

The N.M.O.S. Bylaws were revised as of 19 March 1977, following tabulation of the vote at our annual meeting in Albuquerque. Copies of the Bylaws will be available on request at the 1978 annual meeting (tentatively scheduled for Portales in April), or you may obtain them by writing the Secretary, Col. H. M. Zeller.

#### Address Changes

Several noteworthy address changes need mentioning here:

John P. Hubbard: 2016 Valle Rio, Santa Fe 87501 (988-5918)

Col. Henry M. Zeller: P0 Box 870, Silver City 88061 (538-2538)

#### New Bird Club

Dr. Lawrence Murphy has founded the Alamogordo Bird Club to further observation and study in that interesting part of the state. For further information contact him at 1835 Lamar Circle, Alamogordo 88310 (437-0554).

#### New Publication

Just issued is J. P. Hubbard's The biological and taxonomic status of the Mexican Duck, New Mexico Dept. Game and Fish Bull. No 16. This may be obtained at no cost by writing to the Department's Division of Public Affairs, Villagra Bldg., Santa Fe 87503.

#### Centerfire Bog Acquired

Centerfire Bog, a notable wetland area in Catron County, has been acquired by Mr. Randolph Jenks, a businessman and naturalist who lives in Luna and Tucson. Hr. Jenk's avowed purpose in making the acquisition is to preserve it as wildlife habitat, and we hope this includes removal of livestock grazing there. Mr. Jenks plans to restore a rent-free house at the site for one or two people to occupy as non-salaried caretaker(s). Anyone who is interested may contact Hr. Jenks at 2146 E. 4th St., Tucson, AZ 85719.

### Whooping Crane News

As of this date (Dec. 2, 1977), there are six Whooping Cranes known to be in New Mexico. Five of these are in the central Rio Grande Valley and one is in the Las Vegas ("Corny") area. Four other birds have been reported without verification in northern Mexico, which would be 10 altogether from the Grays Lake N.W.R. experiment. This is one or two birds more than expected, and it is likely that the actual figure will be less than 10.

As of early autumn 1977, eight confirmed alive Whoopers were expected to migrate to our area: 3 birds hatched in 1975, 2 birds hatched in 1976, and 3 hatched in 1977. Another bird, the "early phantom," also seems to exist, having been seen briefly in Socorro Co. in 1975, 1976 and 1977. So far, Whoopers from this experimental flock have been confirmed in Luna, Socorro, Valencia, Bernalillo, Sandoval, Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, and San Miguel cos. Unconfirmed reports come from Sierra County and Chihuahua. Birders should be alert for Whoopers anywhere in the state and should report unusual sightings to the Bosque del Apache N.W.R. (505-835-1828) at San Antonio, New Mexico.