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NEW MEXICO ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY FIELD NOTES

SEASONAL REPORT #4

JUNE - NOVEMBER, 1963

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### Summary of the Nesting Season and Fall Migration, 1963

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the 1963 nesting season was the establishment of a sizeable heronry in southeastern New Mexico. The low water level in Lake McMillan created an island 50 x 400 feet in size at Six-mile Dam. Four species: Green Heron, Common Egret, Snowy Egret, and Black-crowned Night Heron raised a total of more than 70 young, and several other species were present on the island -(R.C.Brummett).

The second nesting of the Mississippi Kite in the same area north of the Roswell Country Club is a notable event.

The highlight of the fall migration was the irruption of boreal species which occurred over much of the United States (See the February, 1964 issue of Audubon Field Notes for a more complete summary). The Red-breasted Nuthatch first appeared in northern New Mexico in August, then was reported in remarkable numbers from Ft. Bayard to Los Alamos throughout the fall and winter. Red Crossbills, which spread to Southern California and Mississippi during the fall, did not penetrate far into New Mexico but flocks were present in Los Alamos from July to September. Large flocks of Band-tailed

Pigeons were reported from many of the mountain areas during early fall. Cassin's Finches arrived in Los Alamos in mid-November and wintered in large numbers.

The other species, the Pine Siskin, which appeared in remarkable numbers in the rest of the country, was not reported in unusual numbers in New Mexico.

Common Loon

Single bird reported from Wall Lake in the Black Range 11/5 (fide BH).

Western Grebe

1 at Alamogordo Lake 8/30 (RCB).

Double-crested Cormorant

1 young raised at Harroun Lake (Eddy County) (RCB).

Green Heron

10 to 12 young raised at Lake McMillan (RCB). An immature, crippled by hunters, was brought in to Silver City from Cliff 11/23 (BH). 1 was at Espanola 11/24 (JRT).

Little Blue Heron

1 was seen 9/9 and 9/10 at Six-mile Dam, Lake McMillan (RCB).

Common Egret

1 young raised at Lake McMillan (RCB). 1 was noted at Roberts Lake, Grant County (7500') 9/22 (BH).

Snowy Egret

30 young raised at Lake McMillan (RCB).

Black-crowned Night Heron

30 young raised at Lake McMillan (RCB).

Least Bittern

1 observed at Six-mile Dam, Lake McMillan 7/9 and 7/11 (RCB).

Wood Ibis

1 was seen at Six-mile Dam, Lake McMillan from 7/11 to 7/20 (RCB).

White-fronted Goose

1 or 2 were with Snow Geese at Bitter Lake Refuge from 11/17 (VM).

Blue Goose

20 to 30 were with Snow Geese at Bitter Lake Refuge from 11/17 (VM); 3 to 5 wintered at Carlsbad (RCB).

Ross' Goose

2 were present at the Bosque del Apache Refuge from 11/8 to 12/28 (LO).

Canada Goose

3,335 seen at La Cueva Refuge in November (WSH).

Mallard

1,034 on Maxwell Lakes in October, 375 on Alamogordo Reservoir in November, 1,100 on Burford Lake in November, 1,960 on McAllister Lake in November,

10,500 on Rio Grande between Belen and La Joya in November (WSH).

Gadwall

6,840 on Burford Lake in September, 1,510 on Maxwell Lakes in October, 2,263 on Pecos River between Avalon Reservoir and State Line. 4,800 on Maxwell Lakes in November (WSH).

American Widgeon

4,505 on Wagon Mount Salt Lake in September (WSH).

Shoveler

2,750 on Burford Lake in November (WSH).

Pintail

1,140 on Stubblefield Reservoir in September, 4,055 on Maxwell Lakes in October, 2,135 on Burford Lake in October, 3,815 on Elephant Butte Reservoir in November (WSH).

Redhead

4 at Santa Fe 8/19, one left 8/21 (PRS). 1,430 on York Lakes in October (WSH).

Canvasback

2 on a pond near Regina, north of Cuba 9/2 (PRS). 1,220 on Burford Lake in October (WSH).

Ringneck

75 on Dexter Hatchery in November, 880 on York Lakes in November (WSH).

American Goldeneye

290 on Avalon Reservoir in November (WSH).

Bufflehead

1,430 on Burford Lake in November (WSH).

Ruddy Duck

2,145 on York Lakes in October, 1,525 on Burford Lake in October (WSH).

Turkey Vulture

Last seen in Santa Fe 10/6; main southward flight occurred 9/9 to 9/13 (PRS).

Mississippi Kite

Nested for the second consecutive year north of the Roswell Country Club. One young was first seen in the nest in an American Elm June 2. During period at least 8 other Kites were seen in the vicinity, 2 of which markings had the broen markings of immatures (VM).

Rough-legged Hawk

2 in typical plumage were seen at Engle, Sierra County, 11/29 (BH); 1 was seen at the Bosque del Apache Refuge 12/28, and 1 at Tyrone 12/30 (BH).

Harris' Hawk

12 nests were reported from the Carlsbad area (RCB).

Bald Eagle

4 were in the Las Vegas area the end of November (ES).

Marsh Hawk

Less common than last year in Santa Fe (PRS).

Prairie Falcon

2 were seen 20 miles north of Engle, Sierra County, 11/29 (BH).

Peregrine Falcon

1 seen 11/26 in the Las Vegas area (ES).

Harlequin Quail

A pair was flushed at Ft. Bayard 8/9 (BH).

Sandhill Crane

24,109 on coordinated count in Chaves, Eddy, De Baca, Lea, and Roosevelt counties in November (WSH).

Sora

5 or 6 were found in the drains east and south of Loving after 9/23 (RCB).

Common Gallinule

Near Six-mile Dam, Lake McMillan, 1 was seen 7/12 and 2 on 9/6 (RCB).

American Coot

2,000 were in the Las Vegas area during November (ES). 8,580 on York Lakes in October, 9,455 on Burford Lake in October, 10,200 on York Lakes in November (WSH).

Black-bellied Plover

1 bird was seen in an alfalfa field near East Grand Plains (Chaves County) 8/19 (ANC).

Upland Plover

These birds, noticed calling in flight, were common at Roswell and Carlsbad the second half of August (RCB, VM).

Solitary Sandpiper

Seen several times in the Carlsbad area in July (RCB); 1 at San Ildefonso 9/7 (JRT).

Marbled Godwit

2 at Lake McMillan 9/10 (RCB).

Sanderling

Present at Lake McMillan in small groups from 8/25 through September (RCB).

Baird's Sandpiper

8 were seen in Santa Fe 9/10, 1 on 9/13 (PRS).

Least Sandpiper

1 at Espanola 10/13 (JRT).

Long-billed Dowitcher

1 at Espanola 10/13 (JRT).

Northern Phalarope

4 were seen at Santa Fe 9/23 (PRS).

Bonaparte's Gull

3 at Lake McMillan 8/2 (RCB).

Band-tailed Pigeon

The first appearance of these birds at Cedar Crest since the summer of 1956 was noted 8/9 (McK). They were feeding on the plentiful acorn crop, and a flock of two dozen or more was present through the first week in September. A flock of 15 was reported from Las Huertas Canyon in the Sandia Mountains 8/15 (JLS) and a flock of 16 was seen 9/20 in Comanche Canyon and Magote Ridge (north and west of El Rito) (JLS). Common in Los Alamos from early August to 10/10 (WBL). A flock of 52 was seen near Holman north of Las Vegas 10/4 (ES).

Mourning Dove

Most had left Santa Fe by 9/3 (PRS).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

8 to 10 a day reported from the Carlsbad area (RCB). First heard 7/3 in Roswell where it occurs regularly in small numbers (VM); 1 was at Espanola 6/1 (JRT).

Barn Owl

1 found dead on the road in Grant County was brought in to the Game Department in Silver City in November (BH).

Flammulated Owl

1 examined alive in the hand, Jemez Mountains 8/11 (McK).

Pygmy Owl

2, not fully feathered, were seen 8/7 at Ft. Bayard (BH); 1 was in Los Alamos 11/10 (WBL).

Poor-will

Absent from Cedar Crest where it is usually heard all summer until mid-August (McK). Several observed in Eddy County in August (RCB); 1 was picked up beside the pavement in Lincoln County 8/12 (VM, AR).

Common Nighthawk

Seen as late as 10/3 in Santa Fe (PRS).

Chimney Swift (or Vaux's)

A single bird hawking over the city was reported from Carlsbad 7/4 (BH).

Rufous Hummingbird

Present in Las Vegas area 7/15 (ES).

Yellow-shafted Flicker

Usually seen sometime during the winter in the southeast region, the species was at Black River 10/25 (RCB); a single was collected 10/26 at Crossroads, Roosevelt County (BH).

Red-headed Woodpecker

1 was seen 7/5 two miles west of Dexter (BH).

Lewis' Woodpecker

Scarcer than usual in Santa Fe (PRS).

Hairy Woodpecker

1 seen 10/12 and again 11/11 in NE Albuquerque (LL).

Downy Woodpecker

1 seen at Ft. Bayard 11/19 (BH).

Eastern Kingbird

3 were in Espanola 6/1 (JRT).

Western Kingbird

7 were at San Ildefonso 9/7 (JRT).

Cassin's Kingbird

Last fall date in the Ft. Bayard area was 10/14 (BH), a late one was 10/15 in Santa Fe (PRS).

Eastern Phoebe

1 clearly observed and photographed 10/13 at Cedar Crest (McK).

Black Phoebe

Several birds were observed in mid-June and early July on the Gallinas River, south of El Porvenir near Las Vegas (JD), 1 was at Espanola 10/13 (JRT).

Coues' Flycatcher

1 of a pair seen at Pinos Altos, Grant County, was collected 7/14 (BH).

Violet-green Swallow

Last straggler in San Ildefonso 10/13 (JRT).

Barn Swallow

2 seen in Santa Fe 10/6 (PRS).

Cliff Swallow

2 were at Espanola 10/13 (JRT).

Vermilion Flycatcher

2 females or immatures were photographed at the Bosque del Apache Refuge 11/11 (McK).

Purple Martin

Several pair were evidently nesting at Tyrone 7/1; at least 5 birds were seen near Signal Peak in Grant County 7/14 (BH).

Black-billed Magpie

Back at Espanola for the winter on 10/13 (JRT),

Pinon Jay

Over 1,000 seen north of Albuquerque 11/29 (PRS).

Clark's Nutcracker

30 were counted at Kiwanis Point, Sandia Mountains 9/4 (JLS); 2 were seen 15 miles west of Mogollon 9/14 (BH); an estimated 200 birds were present in Rio Arriba County west of El Rito 9/20, apparently due to the large pinon nut crop (JLS); 3 were observed 9/28 at the Heart Bar Ranch on the Gila River (BH).

Red-breasted Nuthatch

1 seen 8/29 at Cedar Crest (McK); first noted 9/26 at Ft. Bayard where it was seen regularly through the fall in groups of 2 to 6 birds (BH); seen in early September (JD) and 10/27 in NE Albuquerque (LL); invasion during the fall at Los Alamos where as many as 10 were seen daily (JRT).

Mockingbird

Left Santa Fe early, 8/31 (PRS).

Catbird

1 bird singing in a willow thicket at Cedar Crest 6/5 and 6/6 is a first record in that locality (McK).

Brown Thrasher

1 seen in NW Albuquerque mid-November (AM); 1 in SE Santa Fe from mid-November to end of the period (fide McK).

Hermit Thrush

1 was in Los Alamos 10/11 (JRT).

Western Bluebird

A pair nesting in a bird house at Cedar Crest hatched their second brood 6/27 (McK).

Golden-crowned Kinglet

2 females first observed at Cedar Crest 11/24 were a first record at that location (McK).

Sprague's Pipit

At least 1 bird was seen 10/27 at Milnesand (BH).

Cedar Waxwing

4 at Cedar Crest 9/8 and 9/9 were the only ones seen there all fall (McK).

Starling

Flock of 300 seen at San Ildefonso, apparently passing through 11/24 (JRT).

Bell's Vireo

The bird was identified by voice and habitat one mile south of Malaga 6/13 (RCB).

Red-eyed Vireo

1 was banded at Los Alamos 9/14 (JRT); 1 was caught in a mist net at Bitter Lake Refuge 9/20 (VM, JHS, RJ); 1 was observed at Cedar Crest 9/26 (McK).

Orange-crowned Warbler

1 in Santa Fe 10/12 (PRS).

Black-and-white Warbler

A female or immature was observed going around the trunk of a tree at Cedar Crest 8/7, and was seen again 8/14, 8/17, 8/23 (McK).

Virginia's Warbler

40 or 50, a large number for the area, were feeding in a weedy valley near Cloudcroft 10/1 (VM).

Audubon's Warbler

Wintering birds were reported from NE Albuquerque from 11/11 (LL).

Townsend's Warbler

1 was in Los Alamos 10/5 (JRT),

MacGillivray's Warbler

1 on the North Fork of the Ruidoso 7/15 was an unusual seasonal occurrence



(VM).

American Redstart

A male was seen at Cedar Crest several times between 8/6 and 8/21 (McK); a male was seen 9/4 at Milnesand (BH); a female or immature was seen at Cedar Crest 9/4 and 9/5 (McK).

Yellow-headed Blackbird

Thousands were reported near Artesia 8/29 (RCB).

Red-winged Blackbird

Large flocks noted in Espanola in October; over 1,000 on 10/13 (JRT).

Orchard Oriole

Nested in decreased numbers (only four found) in Carlsbad (RCB).

Black-headed Grosbeak

Last noted in Los Alamos 9/13 (JRT).

Indigo Bunting

1 immature male was singing in a yard in Carlsbad 7/7 (RCB); a female or immature feeding on weed stalks in an arroyo at Cedar Crest 10/13 was photographed (McK).

Painted Bunting

8 nests were found in the Carlsbad area (RCB). A male was taken on 7/7 at Washington Ranch (BH).

Cassin's Finch

Large numbers wintered in Los Alamos arriving in mid-November (JRT).

Pine Siskin

6 to 8 flocks in Roosevelt County on 10/25 were unusual numbers (BH).

Red Crossbill

Present in Los Alamos from the end of July to middle of September in Los Alamos (WBL, LGH).

Green-tailed Towhee

Birds seen at Cedar Crest 6/9 and 6/27 were somewhat out of season there; they nest at a higher elevation (McK); last noted in the fall at Los Alamos 9/22 (JRT).

LeConte's Sparrow

1 observed at close range and from all angles by a group of six individuals near San Ildefonso Pond 11/24 (JRT et al).

Rufous-crowned Sparrow

1 reported from Jaral Canyon, Sandia Mountains, 11/18 (JLS).

Oregon Junco

First fall arrival in Los Alamos 10/5 (JRT); first winter report from NE Albuquerque was 11/19 (LL).

Black-chinned Sparrow

1 was seen at the entrance to Water Canyon, between Socorro and Magdalena, 7/21 (McK).

White-crowned Sparrow

1 adult and 4 immature at Cedar Crest 7/30 is an off-season record (McK); first arrival in fall at Los Alamos was 9/16 (JRT). First noted in Santa Fe 10/13 (NM).

Fox Sparrow

Seen in Las Vegas area early in August (ES).

Note: All waterfowl reported by William S. Huey are abstracted from Department of Game and Fish records.