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FIRST RECORD OF THE GARGANEY (Anas querquedula) FOR NEW MEXICO

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This paper details the first specimen and report of the Garganey (Anas querquedula), an Old World duck that is occasional in North America, from New Mexico. The Garganey breeds between latitudes 40 and 65N, from the British Isles and southern Scandinavia eastward across Eurasia to northern Japan, and winters between latitudes 35N and l5S, from the Mediterranean Sea and western Africa eastward to southern Japan, New Guinea, and Australia (A.O.U. 1983, Spear et al. 1988). There are no previous records of Garganeys for New Mexico (fide Hubbard, 1978, New Mexico Ornithological Society, 1962—1988). However, the eventual occurrence of the species in New Mexico might have been expected in view of recent Garganey records from several adjacent or nearby states, as follows: Arizona, one record (Am. Birds 42:470, 1988); Colorado, one record (Spear et al., 1988); Kansas, three records (Spear et al. 1988, Am. Birds 43:125, 1989); Oklahoma, two records (Spear et al., 1988); and Texas, one record (Spear et al. 1988).

The New Mexico Garganey specimen was shot on 23 November 1986 during the waterfowl hunting season at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge (33 30’N, 104 23’W; elevation 1,067 in), Chaves County, by James B. Montgomery, Jr. Mr. Montgomery sent the left wing of the duck to the waterfowl parts collection survey conducted annually by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The wing was examined at the Central Flyway “Wing Bee” and identified as an immature female Garganey by Elwood M. Martin of the USFWS Section of Waterfowl Harvest Surveys. Subsequently, Mr. Martin forwarded the wing to me. The specimen is currently in the collection of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Of the species of ducks found in New Mexico, the wing of a Garganey could most likely be confused with that of a Northern Shoveler (Anas clypeata), a Blue—winged Teal (A. discors), or a Cinnamon Teal (A. cyanoptera). The wing cord of the New Mexico specimen measures 189 mm (distal tip of primary 10 missing), which is considerably shorter than the average of 223 mm (Bellrose 1980) and 227 mm (Palmer 1976) for female Northern Shovelers. The coverts of the wings of immature female Garganeys are grayish-brown, not bluish to bluish—gray as in Blue—winged and Cinnamon teals (Delacour 1956, Palmer 1976). In addition, the Garganey exhibits a whitish terminal border on the distal ends of the secondaries (most conspicuous on the outer webs), a condition that is absent or very narrow in Blue—winged and Cinnamon teals. The speculum of the New Mexico Garganey is brownish—olive, in contrast to iridescent green to emerald in Blue—winged and Cinnamon teals (Delacour 1956, Palmer 1976). The shafts of the outer primaries on the New Mexico Garganey’s wing are dull whitish, similar to Northern Shoveler but lighter than the darker shafts of Blue—winged Teal and Cinnamon Teal. The feathers along the leading edge of the ventral wing coverts

on the New Mexico specimen are generally whitish, mottled with varying amounts of dark dusky on the bases and centers of the feathers, similar in coloration to Northern Shovelers; these feathers in Blue—winged and Cinnamon teals are much darker and are generally dusky-colored throughout. Finally, the greater secondary coverts of Garganeys lack the “V” markings that variously occur in the Blue-winged Teal (Dane 1968).

In their recent compilation and analysis of New World Garganey records, Spear et al. (1988) found no records of the species from North America prior to 1957. For the period from 1957 to 31 May 1985, however, they compiled a list of 86 Garganey records (representing 136 individuals), including 13 records from the interior of North America. Subsequently, at least three additional Garganey records from interior North America have been reported (Am. Birds 41:434, 1987; 42:470, 1988; 43:125, 1989)

Although the occurrence of the Garganey in New Mexico is not unexpected, its presence there in late Autumn does not conform to the usual seasonal pattern for the species in North America. Of the 16 interior records cited above, 15 occurred from March through June, with only one Autumn report, that in Kansas on 23 October 1988. In fact, for all of North America outside of Alaska, the seasonal distribution of records is (with the exception of single August and October reports) from January into June, with most occurring from March through May.

Female Garganeys constitute a minority of the records from North America outside of Alaska, probably because this sex is so readily confused with other species. Of the 40 birds analyzed by Spear et al. (1988) from North America (including the West Indies) outside of Alaska, only two were definitely known to be females: one shot at Port Alberni, Vancover Island, British Columbia (wing sent to the Canadian Wing Bee) and a specimen collected in Barbados. Thus, the New Mexico specimen represents only the third known female from this broad geographic area.

Spear et al. (1988) concluded that the majority of Garganey records for North America represented wild birds. Strong evidence that the New Mexico Garganey was most likely a wild bird is the fact that its wing has smooth-tipped feathers throughout, lacking the obvious patterns of wear often seen in captive birds. Furthermore, of the 22 persons who are licensed to raise waterfowl in New Mexico (typically done on a small scale for personal pleasure), none do so within the Pecos Valley nor do any report having Garganeys in their posession. Additionally, the New Mexico Garganey was not banded or otherwise marked for identification, as is most often the case in captive waterfowl. And, finally, there was nothing about the appearance of the bird to suggest it had been held in captivity (J. Montgomery, pers. comm.). Given the above evidence, plus the increasing frequency with which the species is being found in North America, I conclude that this specimen represents a naturally occurring immature female Garganey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank E. M. Martin for calling my attention to the Garganey specimen, and J. B. Montgomery, Jr., for providing additional information on the bird. I thank J.P. Hubbard, D. W. Stahlecker, and S. 0. Williams III for their comments and suggestions on this paper.

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BLACK SWIFT (Cypseloides niger) NESTING IN THE JEMEZ MOUNTAINS OF NEW MEXICO

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Although over the years Black Swifts (Cypseloides niger) have been found at various locations in New Mexico during both migration and summer (Hubbard 1978), there was no evidence of breeding in the state until 5 August 1987, when a juvenile was picked up in the Jemez Mountains at Fenton Lake, Sandoval Co.; that bird was rehabilitated and later released (Am. Birds 42:117, 1988). However, no nest or suitable nesting habitat was reported that year. In this paper, I report upon the 1990 discovery of the first Black Swift nests to be found in New Mexico, these discovered on the East Fork of the Jemez River at Jemez Falls, Sandoval Co., about 11 mi southeast of Fenton Lake and at an elevation of about 7,800 ft (2,375 m).

On 19 July 1990, the tape-recorded message on the New Mexico “rare bird alert” included the following message: “An update on the Black Swifts at Jemez Falls-—a nest was found. The nest had three young.” Because Black Swifts are known to lay only a single egg (Bent 1940), I decided to visit the site and investigate for myself.

I hiked to the falls on 25 July and soon found a pair of Townsend’s Solitaires (Myadestes townsendi) entering a nest at the spot described on the rare bird alert. However, upon further investigation, I discovered four occupied Black Swift nests in a large cavernous opening just to the west of the base of the falls.

At the back of the cavern, a vertical rock wall rose about 30 ft from a pool of water and a pile of driftwood logs. A dripping spring bathed the cliff in moisture but, because of the semi—darkness, only moss, algae, and a few ferns were growing there. The first nest I found was the lowest and least obscure; it was clinging to a small ledge about 12 ft above the pool and consisted of a conical pile of moss reminiscent of a large hummingbird nest. This nest was occupied by an apparently incubating adult Black Swift throughout the hour that I was present at the site (Fig. 1). After my eyes adjusted to the darkness, two more swifts were seen as they shifted about on their nests, these nests placed farther up on the cliff. A fourth was observed in an alcove at the east end of the cave.

During my observations, two swifts left the nesting cave. Both gave a “tic-tic” cry as they took to the air. The departure of the first of these birds was immediately followed by the arrival of another swift to the same nest, apparently an exchange of nesting duties. The second departure was from a very dark section of the cave in which no nest could be clearly seen, suggesting to me that a fifth nest may have been present.

Editor's Note--Hart R. Schwarz (in litt.) made eight visits to the cave from 12 August to 22 September 1990, and determined that three nests were active during that period, and that each contained one nestling. He reported that there were also at least five unoccupied nests——three easily visible and two inferred. He observed that the three nestlings fledged asynchronously: the oldest was last seen on 8 September, when it was believed to be about six weeks old; another fledged on 15 September; and the youngest was judged almost ready to fledge on 22 September. An excellent color photograph of a nestling in a nest, taken at the site on 3 September 1990 by James Black, has been submitted to the NMOS Photo File. The swifts apparently were first seen in the general vicinity of the falls by R. Butler on or about 24 June 1990 (fide W. Burton Lewis, in litt.). - S. 0. Williams III

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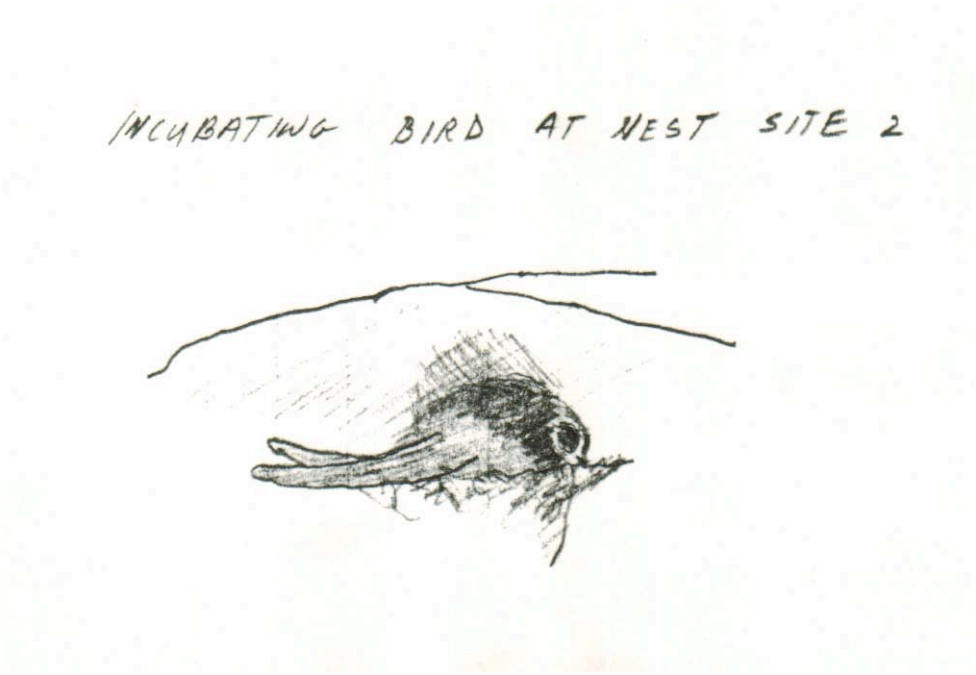

Figure 1. Field sketch by P. W. Johnson of adult Black Swift on nest in cave at Jemez Falls, Sandoval Co., New Mexico on 25 July 1990. This nest, the first of

at least four active nests found in the cave that day, was about 12 ft up on a 30 ft vertical wall, above a pool of water. First verified nest for New Mexico.

GOLDEN EAGLE PLAYS BALL?

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One afternoon in mid—February, 1990, my companion and I sighted a single subadult Golden Eagle (Aquila chrvsaetos) riding a stiff wind some 200 yds from us and about 200 ft above the canyon—grassland habitat near Rabbit Ear Mountain, Union County, New Mexico. Although that in itself was nothing extraordinary, the eagle held in its talons, directly below its body, a round object that was as dark as the bird itself. I raised 7X binoculars to identify the object and determined that it was indeed spherical and not a rodent or some other prey, unless it was a prey item formed into a “ball” and with no visible head, legs, or tail. As I watched, the eagle pecked at the object, not biting or tearing it. Then, the object plummeted downward, pursued by the eagle in a head-first, wings-folded retrieval dive. After “recapturing” the object, the eagle slowly drifted away from us. Again the round object was dropped, but this time it was not pursued by the eagle until it struck the ground, bounced four or five feet back up into the air, and then rolled and bounced its way into a bottom. There it was finally recaptured by the eagle, and subsequently carried out of sight.

As we stood there reviewing the event, several questions surfaced. Among these were (1) if the object was animal prey, how could it bounce and roll?, and (2) if it was not animal prey, what was it? Perhaps it was the rounded fruit of an Osage—orange (Maclura omifera), or a round gourd, or, perhaps, some young ranch boy’s rubber ball which amused a playful eagle.

Received 27 February 1990.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SEPTEMBER NMOS BOARD/NM BIRD FINDING GUIDE COMMITTEE MEETING

The NMOS board of directors and the group that is revising the New Mexico Bird Finding Guide held a combined meeting at 1:00 PM on 8 September 1990 at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. About 25 persons attended.

Pat Snider reported that there were still a few contributors who had yet to turn in their material; they will be contacted again. Dale Zimmerman reported that much material has been received, and that it has been necessary to edit the material extensively to keep the book to a reasonable size. Dale, Marian Zimmerman, and John Durrie are doing the editing; Jim Karo will revise the maps. Discussion followed on using photos, on whether to use taxonomic or abundance lists, on whether to list only the unusual species at a site, on the use of an introductory list, etc. Dale believed that the new guide will be about one-third larger than the present edition, and that publication will be in late 1991. Also discussed were the finances of publishing the new guide, which publishing company to use, and other matters.

The 1991 NMOS Annual Meeting site and date were discussed. Eleanor Wootten of Las Cruces invited the NMOS to meet at Dripping Springs Natural Area on 27 April. A motion to accept the invitation was seconded and approved unanimously.

The future of the NMOS Bulletin was discussed, as Sandy Williams is retiring as Editor on 1 January 1991. He plans to publish one more issue for 1990. Mary Alice noted that the bylaws call for four issues a year of either bulletins or newsletters. She proposed that a bulletin be published when sufficient professional material is available and that newsletters could keep the membership informed of meetings, etc., at other times. Drs. David Ligon and Robert Dickerman have agreed to review submitted professional papers for suitability of publication. Both Jim Travis and Rollie Goodman volunteered to help with the bulletins/newsletters. Discussion followed on including interesting observations and short articles in the newsletters.

Mary Alice announced that the data management meeting will take place 17 November 1990 at 9:00 AM at the Department of Biology, UNM. This meeting/workshop will explore the setting up of a centralized databank for ornithological records. Drs. John Hubbard and Sandy Williams of the NM Department of Game and Fish will lead the discussion.
18Written comments on the revisions to the NMOS bylaws were collected. A revised copy of the bylaws will be sent to members prior to the annual meeting where voting on the changes will take place.

The Treasurer’s report and the minutes of the 1990 Annual Meeting were read and approved. The next board meeting was scheduled for 19 January 1991 at 1:00 PM at the Department of Biology, UNM. The meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.

HIGHLIGHTS OF NMOS DATA MANAGEMENT MEETING

Several NMOS members and others interested in bird distribution data met in the Biology Building of the University of New Mexico on 17 November 1990 to discuss the establishment of a centralized data bank of New Mexico bird records.

John Hubbard of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish presented a proposal for a data management system and led the group in discussion. He persuasively argued the value and importance of a high quality, accessible data bank, which would be invaluable to agencies concerned with conservation, land use, and resource management, e.g., The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service, and NM Department of Game and Fish. The need for comprehensive bird data is great and the need is now. The principal source of data is the nearly 30 years of published NMOS Field Notes. Breeding Bird Surveys, Christmas Bird Counts, and bird banding records are other sources of valuable distribution data. John presented a format and defined data fields appropriate and adequate for an NMOS data bank. Compatibility with other in-use natural history data base systems needs to be determined.

Discussion covered other data base projects, possible computer systems, potential software, likely problems to be resolved, and the difficulties of such a project with a volunteer group. There was general agreement on the need and value of a centralized, accessible data bank. For our data bank, we will need centralized raw data storage, a method of selecting good data, data extractors, and data entry capability. John suggested that a first try be made with a few species that would be of particular interest to the Forest Service. Several volunteers offered to help.

Following the discussion, Mary Alice Root stated that the establishment of a data bank under the auspices of the NMOS along the lines put forth in the meeting would be taken up at the January board meeting.

Approximately 20 people attended the meeting, including representatives from the NM Museum of Natural History, UNM Museum of Southwestern Biology, NM Natural Heritage Program, and NM Department of Game and Fish.

1991 ANNUAL DUES NOTICE

Membership in the New Mexico Ornithological Society is open to anyone with an interest in birds. Memberships are for a calendar year. Annual dues for calendar year 1991 will be due and payable 1 January 1991. If you have not yet done so, please join or renew at one of the following membership rates: Regular $7.50; Family $10.00; Student $3.50; Supporting $30.00; Life $300.00. Checks should be made payable to the NMOS and sent to the Treasurer, Ross L. Teuber, 1612 Kentucky NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110.

NOTICE OF JANUARY 1991 BOARD MEETING

President Mary Alice Root has scheduled a board meeting for Saturday 19 January 1991 at 1:00 PM in the conference room of the Department of Biology, UNM. On the agenda will be the progress of the New Mexico Bird Finding Guide, an Editor for the NMOS Bulletin, the bylaws revision, the annual meeting, the selection of a nominating committee, plus other items that may come up. The meeting is open to the membership.

NOTICE OF 1991 ANNUAL MEETING

The New Mexico Ornithological Society will hold its 1991 Annual Meeting on Saturday 27 April 1991 at Dripping Springs Natural Area near Las Cruces. Dripping Springs (formerly the Cox Ranch) was purchased in 1988 by The Nature Conservancy and is cooperatively managed by TNC and the Bureau of Land Management. The 2,850 acre natural area, situated at the base of the Organ Mountains, includes distinctive rock outcroppings, ruins of a sanitarium and a turn—of—the—century resort, and a spring. The habitats range from Chihuahuan desert to wooded riparian areas. The A. B. Cox Visitor Center has a conference room and a bookstore. From the Visitor Center, a 1 1/2 mile hiking trail leads into a wooded canyon to Dripping Spring. Katie Skaggs, the resident naturalist, will lead a hike and present the opening talk of the papers session. Eleanor Wootten, Lorraine Schulte, Cathie Sandell, Ralph Raitt, and Katie Skaggs will be in charge of arrangements for the meeting. Dr. Raitt will organize the papers session. A call for papers will go out in January, with a deadline of 15 March for receiving abstracts. The address for abstracts is: Dr. Ralph J. Raitt, Department of Biology, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM 88003.

EDITOR'S FAREWELL

As I announced in the previous issue, this will be my final issue as Editor of the NMOS Bulletin. The position has proved to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience, but now the press of other commitments, including producing the seasonal report for American Birds four times a year, will not allow time for me to produce the Bulletin also. I am pleased that over these past 3-4 years we have brought the Bulletin up to date, publishing five volumes (Vol. 14, 1986—Vol. 18, 1990) consisting of eleven issues. I am grateful to the members who submitted papers for consideration and to the officers and board members who, over the years, provided notes, news, and announcements. I trust that the Bulletin will continue to provide a vehicle for NMOS members to publish articles of scientific merit concerning the distribution, abundance, status, behavior, and ecology of the avifauna of New Mexico and its adjacent areas, and I encourage the membership to support the new Editor or Editors in this endeavor.--S. 0. Williams III.

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