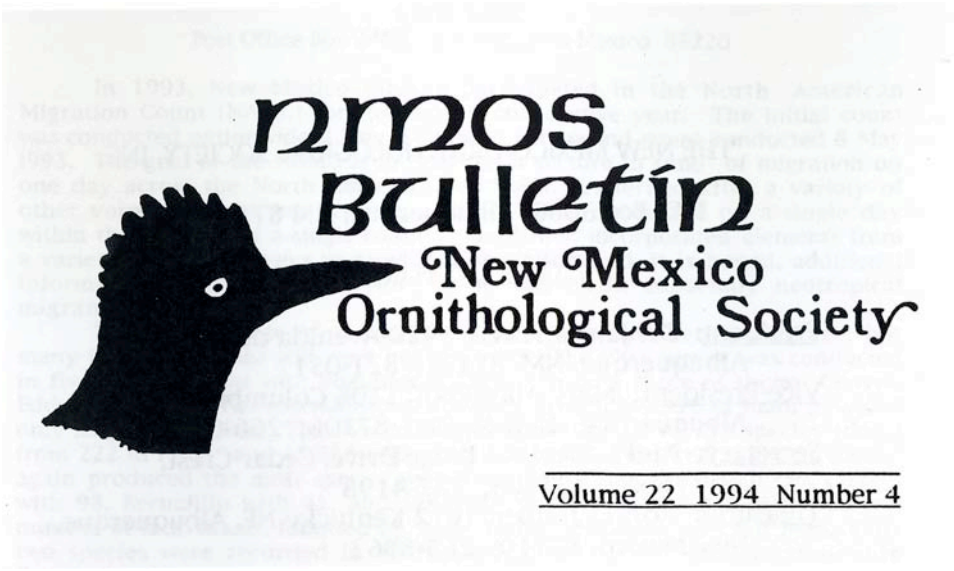

1993 NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT IN NEW MEXICO

STEVE WEST , Post Office Box 2489, Carlsbad, New Mexico 88220

In 1993, New Mexico birders participated in the North American Migration Count (NAMC) for the second consecutive year. The initial count was conducted nationwide 9 May 1992, with the second count conducted 8 May 1993. The goal of the NAMC is to provide "a picture in time" of migration on one day across the North American continent. Patterned after a variety of other volunteer counting activities, this count is conducted on a single day within the confines of a single county. The NAMC incorporated elements from a variety of other surveys to provide a new effort and, it is hoped, additional information on the status of North American birds, especially neotropical migrants.

The second year of surveys in New Mexico saw better coverage. but many important areas still were not included. The 1993 survey was conducted in five counties, but with adequate coverage in only three of them: Chaves, Eddy, and Grant. The two additional counties, Bernalillo and San Juan, provided only single-party lists. The five counts produced a total of 218 species (down from 222 in 1992) and 15,538 individuals (up 1,569 from 1992). Grant County again produced the most species with 164, followed by Eddy with 139, Chaves with 98, Bernalillo with 41. and San Juan with 13. Chaves had the largest number of individuals, followed by Eddy, Grant, Bernalillo. and San Juan. Only two species were recorded in all five counties (Turkey Vulture, Mourning Dove). Analyzing results from only the three counties (Chaves, Eddy, and Grant) with multiple parties in the field revealed that 57 species were found on all three. As in 1992, Grant County produced the highest counts for the largest number of species at 106. Overall, the counts did not produce many rarities, but did provide a good picture of migration across parts of New Mexico on 8 May 1993.

Future counts are planned for early May of each year. The 1994 count was held 14 May, and results

will appear in a future NMOS Bulletin. Those interested in taking part in an on-going count or initiating a count in a county not already covered, should contact the author at the above address. Anyone who desires a complete species list of the 1993 results can receive one by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the author.

Bernalillo County: A single-party observer found 41 species with 332 individuals in the Sandia Mountains and had highs for 9.5 species out of 218 recorded in New Mexico on that day. The .5 designation indicates a tie with another county for a species.

Chaves County: Observers found 98 species with 6,215 individuals and highs for 34 species. Good numbers of shorebirds and ducks were still present. with Chaves having high counts for 8 of 11 shorebirds noted. Over 2,300 Wilson's Phalaropes were recorded. with this species accounting for almost 38% of all birds seen in Chaves County that day. Twelve Mississippi Kites were found, the only ones recorded on these counts that day.

Eddy County: With fewer observers than in 1992 (10 versus 14), Eddy County dropped 10 species, to 139, representing 5,184 individuals. State highs were noted for 67.5 species. Coverage was again poor at higher elevations. and thus several expected species were not recorded. Large numbers of Turkey Vultures (183). Western Kingbirds (319) and Lark Sparrows (145) were found. Southeastern specialities were recorded, for the most part, in good numbers although some were lower that in 1992. Expected numbers include Snowy Plover (17), Bell's Vireo (15), and Orchard Oriole (13), while lower than expected counts included Harris' Hawk (1), Cave Swallow (108), Blue jay (1), and Painted Bunting (3). Two Caspian Terns were unexpected.

Grant County: As in 1992, Grant County surpassed all other counts in species (164), high counts for individual species (106), and number of observers (27). Also, Grant was the place to find warblers. All species and 52% of all individual warblers recorded statewide on count day were found in Grant County. Shorebirds were scarce as expected. Southwestern specialities were again well represented. These include Common Black-Hawk (9), Magnificent Hummingbird (2), Gila Woodpecker (4), Brown-crested Flycatcher (4), Gray-breasted Jay (28), Bridled Titmouse (11), Bell's Vireo (9), Lucy's Warbler (13), Red-faced Warbler (27), Painted Redstart (15), and Olive Warbler (3). Some species found in lower than expected numbers include Greater Pewee (2). Hutton's Vireo (2), and Abert's Towhee (1).

San Juan County: As part of a survey of the Chaco Culture National Historical Park, a bird list was submitted for count day. Because of limited habitat and a single-observer party, only 13 species (44 individuals) were recorded. One count high (Black-throated Sparrow) was recorded in San Juan County, and a Hepatic Tanager was detailed.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCURATE DATA

ROBERT W. DICKERMAN
Museum of Southwestern Biology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, N.M. 87131

The contribution of salvaged material to scientific collections is great. We have too much of a tendency to emphasize rarities, thus we make great ado about the first Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) specimen or one of the few Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*) specimens from the State obtained from salvaged birds. However, in reality, the most important contribution of salvaged material is in the augmentation of series of common species.

As an example, in 1989 there were about 20 specimens of Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) in the Museum of Southwestern Biology from the southwest. Today there are over 100 from New Mexico, nearly a third from the nesting season. Possibly only California is represented by a greater number of specimens. It would have been both difficult and unconscionable to have assembled this series through collecting. And it is only now with this magnificent collection that we are better able to delineate the populations nesting and wintering in New Mexico. But during this same time period numerous other Great Horned Owls were not saved, many of those because of lack of data!

A brilliant red Maserati without a motor might be beautiful, but functionally it would be useless. A specimen of a brilliant red tanager without full data also would be beautiful, but it could add little to our knowledge and scientifically would be without value.

In 1990, when I first began to deal with "salvaged" birds from New Mexico, less than 50% were accompanied with any form of information. As of early 1994, 80% or more are accompanied by some form of "data." From a few rehabilitators, 100% of the birds are accompanied by full data. But that 100% of all salvaged birds are not accompanied by complete, reliable data is unforgivable.

DATA. What are they? With a specimen, they are the information that tells us, and future generations of investigators, when, where, and by whom the bird (animal) was collected or salvaged. They allow the evaluation of credibility, the evaluation of that which is valid, i.e. a trustworthy record. Less than that would be the Maserati without a motor.

IDENTIFICATION. This is of slight importance, as the bird itself is identifiable. If the specimen is saved, within the next 100 years someone will correctly identify it, but it will not be saved if it does not have full data.

LOCALITY. It is the exact place where a bird was found that is vital. It is not the address of the person that found the bird, nor the regional office of an agency such as Carlsbad, Tucumcari or Farmington where the bird was deposited. Incidently, the exact location where the bird was originally found, should as-nearly-as-feasible be the release site if the bird survives! The locality should be specific and as detailed as possible. "Guadalupe" New Mexico is not acceptable as there are Guadalupes in at least three counties. The same is true of many often-used names (such as San Mateo or Rock Creek) that occur throughout the southwest or Mexico. Always specify exactly to which Guadalupe or Rock Creek you are referring. An example, a Great Horned Owl from a specific locality in the Guadalupe Mountains would be of critical importance, especially if accompanied with elevation or a note on habitat. One from the "Carlsbad area" is of little importance. Some individuals make short to long range migrations. Thus winter birds can illuminate migrations, though say nothing about our local nesting populations. Both of these seasonal groups of birds are important to understand, hence accurate and specific locality data are critical.

When the western USA was surveyed, a unique coordinate system was developed. The land was gridded in square-mile blocks, and these were combined into 36 square-mile townships. This "Range and Township" system was highly useful in the past, however today, with world-wide latitude/longitude coordinates increasingly used and now instantly available from satellites, the system is nearly obsolete and when possible should be avoided. Futhermore, a specimen with only range and township data would be difficult to use in a museum where appropriate maps might not be available.

Never use a locality name, such as "Roer's Bird Farm," that is not found on a readily available map. Especially valuable are names on standard road maps or towns with post offices. Use miles, or kilometers, from the nearest known locality, combined with a cardinal direction. This may be either _ miles southwest of Flatlands, or, _miles south, _ miles west of Flatlands.

DATE. The format of 6/9/93 is confusing because the first two numbers can be either month or day. Europeans do not use the American convention of month first (and we are not always consistant). In some cases the specimen might well resolve the issue by the condition of its plumage or gonads, but that would probably not be the case if the date were 4/5/93 (and if the bird were a migrant, the date might be very important indeed). Distinguishing month from day and fully specifying the year (6 Sept 1993) solves the problem. Remember, we now regularly see overlapping of the centuries. There are, in the MSB collection, a considerable number of birds collected over a century ago; thus '93 or even '75 could be ambiguous.

SOURCE. When possible the name of the person responsible for the locality and date information should be recorded. In some cases additional information might be needed, and the person who made an effort to salvage the bird should be recognized. NEVER use initials if the full name is known. K.J. Smith might be Kathleen or Kenneth. Kathleen J. Smith might be found in a telephone directory, while K.J. Smith might not. There are 31 Johnson(s) in the membership directory of the four major ornithological societies; how many Sanchez(s) are there in the Albuquerque phone book? Never use nicknames. We recently catalogued birds collected or prepared by a person whose name is/was (I believe) Arnold Edward Lupe. On various labels the name was recorded as Arnold E. Lupe, E. Lupe, Eddy Lupe, and even Ed. Lupe. A full name has a purpose in scientific documentation.

Remember, taking a few seconds to record data properly might make the difference between a dead bird becoming an information source for generations to come, or a discard. It is in your hands.

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