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SOME RECORDS SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE DISTRIBUTIONAL CHECK-LIST OF THE BIRDS OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

By J. M. EDSON

THE Distributional Check-list of the Birds of Washington, by Mr. E. A. Kitchin, is a response to a long-felt want. It supplies a list of species and subspecies of recognized occurrence in this state and furnishes a basis upon which bird students may work out the particulars of distribution, habitats, relative abundance and seasonal movements of our birds.

My own notes, amassed during a period of forty-five years of bird-observing, chiefly in the Bellingham Bay region of western Washington, have been roughly checked with this list, and herewith are presented some of the results.

As definite additions to the list I can refer to:

Eastern Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria solitaria*). (256). On May 16, 1917, a freshly-killed male of this species was picked up in Bellingham and brought to me, and is No. 448 of my collection. Dr. H. C. Oberholser, of the U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey, has examined this specimen and pronounced it *T. s. solitaria*, and not *cinnamomea*.

American Brant (*Branta bernicla hrota*). (173a). On the authority of Dr. J. Grinnell, of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at Berkeley, California, this species also may now properly be transferred from the hypothetical to the accredited list. Concerning a specimen which I recently sent him, he has written: "While it may be somewhat of an intergrade between *B. b. nigricans* and *B. b. hrota* I should say that it is so far nearer the latter as properly to be named *hrota*." The characteristic neck markings of the specimen are unequivocally those of the eastern subspecies, and the white of the lower parts is only faintly and partially clouded. This specimen with two others like it, were taken from a flock at the southern extremity of Bellingham Bay in the late autumn of 1933, and all three were secured by Mr. E. J. Booth, of Bellingham, Wash., and are now in his collection.

In my own collection also are specimens which have been identified by Dr. H. C. Oberholser and given names by him which are not included in the Washington Check-list nor in the Fourth A. O. U. Check-list. They are as follows:

Horned Lark (*Otocoris alpestris lamprochroma*). Specimen No. 746 was taken in the Grand Coulee May 19, 1931.

Hermit Thrush (*Hylocichla guttata oromela*). Specimen No. 617, male, taken at Bellingham, Jan. 21, 1927; No. 711, female, Bellingham, Oct. 10, 1930; No. 737, female, Grant County, May 14, 1931.

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia inexpecta*). Specimen No. 235, Bellingham, April 8, 1905.

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia phaea*). Specimen No. 246, Whatcom County, May 27, 1905.

To the subject of distribution as presented in the Washington Check-list, I would like to offer the following supplementary notes and comments:

Pacific Loon (*Gavia arctica pacifica*) and **RED-THROATED LOON** (*Gavia stellata*). These species are listed as "rare on inland waters." My own observations fail to confirm that view. On the contrary, many dozens of records among my notes, and hundreds of unrecorded observations, have convinced me that these species are fairly common on Bellingham Bay, Admiralty Inlet, and all the straits and channels of the San Juan Islands' group, in autumn, winter and spring. I have records dated as late as

June 20th. On May 25, 1934, I flushed a Red-throated Loon from some driftwood on the shore of Bellingham Bay. As they are ordinarily seen it is difficult to distinguish between the two. However, my impression is that the Red-throated is decidedly the more common. On a short canoe trip on Bellingham Bay made on March 9, 1895, I counted fifty of these small loons. On a similar trip Jan. 27, 1897, I counted seventy-five. Fifteen such trips gave a total of 258 of these birds. There has been a tremendous diminution of all waterfowl* since those early dates, but these loons are holding out as well as any.

Holboell's Grebe (*Colymbus grisegena holboelli*). In June, 1925, Mr. E. J. Booth and I found this species breeding at Omak Lake, in Okanogan County. Late in May, 1931, we noted a number of these birds on Moses Lake, Grant County. On August 20, 1920, I saw one of this species on Methow River, Okanogan County. These Grebes are common in the Bellingham Bay region throughout the winter, and particularly so, along in early May. I have noted the species as late as June 14th.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*). It may be of interest to note that in the Bellingham Bay region this Grebe is very common, not only in winter, but well into May. On the 5th of that month, 1920, I noted a flock of approximately 300 on the Bay. I have a record of a flock of a dozen on June 22nd.

Brandt's Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*). This species is a resident among the San Juan Islands as well as on the ocean coast, and breeds sparingly.

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*). The last reported specimen of this species taken in the United States, so far as I have been able to learn, is now in the collection of the Washington State Museum at Seattle. On December 23, 1913, I secured the skin of this Trumpeter, which had just been killed by a hunter at the head of Bellingham Bay. This specimen has been critically examined by Dr. Harry C. Oberholser and Dr. Walter P. Taylor, of the U. S. Biological Survey, and Dr. William T. Shaw, formerly of the Washington State College. They unanimously verified the identification. The specimen was subsequently donated to the State Museum.

Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*). Noted in the Check-list as "Not a common migrant (immature birds) on the west side in autumn." My observations indicate that it is one of the most common hawks in Whatcom and Skagit Counties from August to April, although the adult plumage is rare.

Texas Bob-White (*Colinus virginianus texanus*). Some effort has been made by me to work out the history of the Bob-white in Whatcom County. It has been ascertained that the species was introduced into the county at least as early as 1876, the first stock coming from Whidby Island, where it had already become established. At a later date a second shipment was brought in from Whidby. About 1885 a small consignment came, perhaps from Kansas. In 1910 a consignment of 152 of the birds from Texas were liberated in the county. In 1914, 25 pairs were received from California and set free.

From the first introduction, the species increased in numbers and followed the settlements as the clearings were made throughout the lowlands of the county. The first thirty-five years brought a general distribution of these birds in all suitable areas, and they spread into British Columbia. The winter of 1916, with its exceptionally deep snows, is believed to have been very destructive to the Bob-white, and since that time these birds have been less plentiful. Some years they appear to have been making good recovery, but latterly the increase of human population seems to have brought them more vicissitudes. At the present time the Bob-white is occasionally seen and heard throughout this lowland region, although quite scarce for several years past. When it is remembered that the egg clutch of this species is very large, it is clear that nature has provided potentiality for a rapid come-back under favoring conditions. Hence, fluctuations of abundance seem to have been anticipated.

Semi-Palmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*). In addition to ocean coast records I have a few from Bellingham Bay, together with specimens.

American Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica dominica*). This species is not wholly limited to the ocean coast, for it occurs at least at Lummi Bay, Whatcom

* (Note—There are a number of species of waterfowl not presumed to be summer residents that nevertheless are seen rather frequently in summer in the San Juan Islands region. These include the Grebes, Harlequin Duck, all the Scoters, California Murre, Marbled Murrelet and other species.)

County. On Sept. 27, 1934, I saw about 25 Golden Plover scattered about the tide flats at that point, and I took one specimen, which is No. 867 of my collection. They were in proximity to a still larger group of *Squatarola squatarola* that were at first resting on a hummock. There are previous records of *P. d. dominica* for Lummi Bay.

Black Turnstone (*Arenaria melanocephala*). Besides the ocean coast, the shores of Bellingham Bay and the Gulf of Georgia are visited by this species. I have taken specimens in both localities. A number have been taken at Semiahmoo Spit, Whatcom County.

Pectoral Sandpiper (*Pisobia melanotus*). This species is a common migrant in autumn, not only on the ocean coast, but at Bellingham Bay and neighboring waters.

Red-Backed Sandpiper (*Pelidna alpina sakhalina*). This species also is a common migrant in this region and may be found here all winter in considerable numbers. It remains with us longer than any of the sandpipers, and is exceeded in numbers only by *Ereunetes maurii*.

Long-Billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus scolopaceus*). This species, too, is frequently met with during migrations in this region. On July 28, 1928, Mr. Booth and the writer observed a flock of five at the Samish Flats, in Skagit County, and later on the same date, a flock of nine.

Bonaparte's Gull (*Larus philadelphia*). In the Bellingham Bay region I have noted this species in January and in June and throughout the seasons. It is abundant about the mouth of the Nooksack River much of the year. These gulls are most conspicuous in the still weather of late summer and early autumn when engaged in their swallow-like pursuit of flying termites.

California Murre (*Uria aalge californica*). This species is occasionally seen in summer on our inland bays and straits, as well as on the ocean coast.

Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*). Concerning the statement that there is as yet no breeding record of this species for the state, it may be remarked that there seems to be at least one record of a sort. In 1926 Mr. E. J. Booth secured an egg that in measurements, shape, ground color and markings corresponds to a certain known egg of *B. marmoratus*. It has been carefully examined by the late Mr. J. H. Bowles and other authorities, all of whom agree that it can be nothing else than the egg of this species. It was found by a logger on a mountain-side near the Skagit River.

Tufted Puffin (*Lunda cirrhata*). This Puffin breeds regularly but not abundantly among the San Juan Islands, as well as on the coast.

California Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*). In Whatcom County, Wash., the Cuckoo is a regular summer resident, although not numerous. The sly habits of the bird account for its being rarely seen. Yet, from my own door I have heard the notes of the Cuckoo every summer, with two exceptions, since 1914.

Eastern Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor minor*). Ten specimens of nighthawks in my collection, all taken at Bellingham, have been identified by Dr. H. C. Oberholser, of the U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey, as *C. m. minor*. Four of the same specimens have since been submitted to Dr. J. Grinnell, of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, and he also pronounced them *C. m. minor*.

Coast Bush-Tit (*Psaltriparus minimus minimus*). The habitat of the bush-tit as a common summer resident cannot correctly be said to extend as far north as Whatcom County. Here it is distinctly rare. In 45 years of observation I have seen it only six times in this county, and in only one instance has a nest been discovered.

Eastern Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Corthylio calendula calendula*). Among a number of "Ruby-crowns" submitted by me to the U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey and identified by Dr. H. C. Oberholser, one was returned with the inscription, *C. calendula calendula*. It was taken at Bellingham, Wash., April 8, 1905, and is No. 234 of my collection. Subsequently another (No. 524) taken in the same locality, May 6, 1921, appears obviously to be *calendula*.

California Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus gambeli*). We have a west-of-the-mountain's record for this species. A specimen was taken in the western part of Skagit County April 2, 1931, by Mr. E. J. Booth. The specimen was submitted by me to Dr. J. Grinnell, who pronounced it *L. l. gambeli*.

Cassin's Vireo (*Vireo solitarius cassini*). Referred to by Kitchin as "Common summer resident throughout the state." However, after all my years of looking for this bird in the Bellingham Bay sector, I have been able to identify this species only twice.

Kodiak Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator flammula*). I have a Whatcom County record for this species also. On November 26, 1922, my attention was called to a flock of nine of this species in a dooryard in Bellingham. They were feeding on mountain ash berries and were under observation for several days; affording excellent opportunities for scrutinizing them. Eventually I succeeded in securing one of them, which is No. 552 of my collection. It was submitted to the U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey and labeled *P. e. flammula* by Dr. H. C. Oberholser.

Nevada Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis nevadensis*). This subspecies also has appeared in western Washington. No. 677 of my collection, has been identified by the U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey as *P. s. nevadensis*. It was taken at Grays Harbor on October 19, 1929.

Gambel's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambeli*). This subspecies is not a stranger to western Washington. Specimens in my collection taken at Bellingham are as follows: No. 484, male, May 6, 1920; No. 526, female, May 6, 1921; No. 559, Dec. 15, 1922. All of these have been identified by the Bureau of Biological Survey as *Z. l. gambeli*. Two of them were recently re-submitted to the Bureau on request of Mr. S. F. Rathbun, with the same result as at first. I am confident that I have seen this sparrow in the field during migrations a number of times.

Merrill's Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia merrilli*). This is another subspecies that sometimes strays to Whatcom County. In the Song Sparrow group of my collection are two specimens which have been identified by the U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey as *M. m. merrilli*. No. 404, male, was taken at Bellingham Nov. 30, 1912, and No. 462 was taken at Bellingham, Jan. 7, 1920.

Bellingham, Washington, Jan. 5, 1935.