

## A COLLECTION OF BIRDS FROM THE LA SAL MOUNTAIN REGION OF SOUTHEASTERN UTAH

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AS part of a continuous biological survey of the state, a party from the University of Utah, under the leadership of Dr. A. M. Woodbury and the author, made a trip of ten days duration during early April of 1938 to the La Sal Mountain region of southeastern Utah. This was in the nature of a reconnaissance trip and a general collecting trip but nevertheless the author, assisted by various members of the party, secured and prepared as study skins 176 birds. This collection has much to offer in the way of distributional and systematic data. In view of the fact that Utah and neighboring states comprise perhaps the least known area of the country from the standpoint of birds, it seems well to place the data on record as a contribution to our knowledge of the birds of the state.

The time chosen for the trip was determined by the spring vacation at the University and thus was too early for gathering much data on breeding birds. This was partly compensated for by our obtaining specimens of migratory species that probably would not have been encountered later. We left Salt Lake City April 1, 1938 and made our first camp in Block Canyon near Kane Spring, San Juan County, some 19 miles south of Moab, Utah. The elevation at this point was about 5,400 feet. We had hoped to be able to collect high in the mountains in the coniferous forest but snow drifts blocked most of the roads. As a result we established base camp at the above mentioned locality and for several days worked in the surrounding juniper-piñon forest or in canyon bottoms where occasional cottonwoods were found. On April 7 and again on April 8 we reached the higher oak belt and got into some scattered groves of western yellow pine at 8,000 feet. Then on April 9 we moved to Moab and collected along the Colorado River near the town and on April 10 returned to Salt Lake City. The specimens of birds comprising the collection represent 43 species and subspecies. This report is based solely on the collection; no sight records are included. All localities mentioned are in San Juan County unless otherwise stated.

*Accipiter velox velox* (Wilson). Sharp-shinned Hawk. One specimen, a female, was collected among yellow pines at an elevation of 8,000 feet, 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office on April 8.

*Falco sparverius sparverius* Linnaeus. Eastern Sparrow Hawk. Two females collected in Block Canyon, near Kane Spring, 19 miles south of Moab, 5,400 feet, one on April 4, the second on April 6.

*Oxyechus vociferus vociferus* (Linnaeus). Killdeer. One male was shot on April 5 near our Block Canyon camp.



*Otus asio mychophilus* Oberholser. Grand Canyon Screech Owl. Two females were collected from holes in cottonwoods along the canyon bottom near our Block Canyon camp (April 3 and 5). The first one was kept alive several days in camp during which time it laid two eggs. When we dissected the bird we found three other large eggs which evidently would soon have been laid.

H. C. Oberholser has recently (*Jour. Wash. Acad. Sci.*, 27, 1937:356) described a new subspecies of Screech Owl, *Otus asio mychophilus*, with a range as follows: "Northern Arizona and southern Utah, north to north central Utah (Provo); west to southwestern Utah; south to northern Arizona; and east to central eastern Utah (Moab)." The two La Sal specimens, as compared with one topotype of *mychophilus* at hand from Grand Canyon Village, are a little browner on the back and more heavily streaked below. The heavy streaking on the breast is one of the distinguishing characters between *mychophilus* and both *inyoensis* and *cineraceus*. The La Sal specimens, as compared with representatives of *cineraceus*, are also larger and darker. Specimens from northern Utah which seem to be closest to *inyoensis* have the vermiculations on the underparts less prominent, hence the mass effect is of a lighter hue. This is also an accompaniment of the less heavily streaked condition.

*Bubo virginianus occidentalis* Stone. Montana Horned Owl. A female was taken at the Block Canyon base camp on April 6, 1938. Its nest was discovered April 2 and kept under observation until the bird was collected. It was located on a rocky ledge some 12 feet above the canyon bottom. On April 3 at 8:00 A.M. when the nesting site was visited one bird was on the nest and its mate was flushed from a piñon pine 25 yards from the nest. From numerous pellets at the base of the tree it would seem that this tree was a regular roosting site. When finally the bird on the nest was shot, it proved to be the female with a pronounced brood patch and a thick layer of oily fat beneath the skin of the brood patch. The mate was not secured, seemingly having deserted the area. Only one egg was in the nest. It rolled out and broke, exposing a large embryo.

The single specimen seems to be intermediate between the races *occidentalis* and *pallascens*, perhaps closer to the former.

*Asio wilsonianus* (Lesson). Long-eared Owl. A female was collected at Big Indian Wash, 10 miles north of Monticello, April 3.

*Colaptes cafer collaris* Vigors. Red-shafted Flicker. A female was taken at the Block Canyon location April 4.

*Sphyrapicus varius nuchalis* Baird. Red-naped Sapsucker. A total of five specimens collected; 2 males and a female from Block Canyon on April 4 and 5; a female taken at 8,000 feet, 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office, April 8; and a male from Moab, 4,870 feet, Grand County, April 9.

*Dryobates pubescens leucurus* (Hartlaub). Batchelder's Woodpecker. A single male collected in Block Canyon, April 7.

*Sayornis saya saya* (Bonaparte). Say's Phoebe. Two specimens, a male and female collected in the Block Canyon area, April 2 and 6.

*Otocoris alpestris occidentalis* McCall. Montezuma Horned Lark. Twelve Horned Larks were collected from three localities as follows: 3 males and one female from midway between Woodside and Greenriver, Emery County, April 1; 6 males and one female from 5 miles south of Crescent Junction, Grand County, April 9; and one female from Dry Valley, San Juan County, 33 miles southeast of Moab, April 4. All were breeding birds.

These specimens are indistinguishable from breeding topotypes of *occidentalis*.

*Cyanocitta stelleri diademata* (Bonaparte). Long-crested Jay. Two males, both taken in the yellow pines, 8,000 feet, 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office, April 8.

*Aphelocoma californica woodhouseii* (Baird). Woodhouse's Jay. Two females from the Block Canyon locality, April 2 and 4.



*Cyanocephalus cyanocephalus* (Wied). Piñon Jay. One female collected at the Block Canyon locality, April 4.

*Nucifraga columbiana* (Wilson). Clark's Nutcracker. A female was taken at the Block Canyon locality, 5,400 feet, April 4 and a male April 7 at an elevation of 8,000 feet 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office.

*Penthestes gambeli gambeli* (Ridgway). Mountain Chickadee. Two males collected at 8,000 feet, 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office, April 7.

*Baeolophus inornatus griseus* (Ridgway). Gray Titmouse. Having in mind that the subspecies in the area might be *plumbescens* described by Grinnell from Silver City, Grant County, New Mexico, but ranging as far north as the San Francisco Mountains of northern Arizona, a series of 22 titmouses, 9 males, 13 females, was obtained from the Block Canyon area. The type locality of *griseus* is Iron City, Iron County, Utah, a town and iron furnace site long deserted, but in the Great Basin portion of Utah. The series from the La Sal region is, however, clearly of the race *griseus*, showing no approach to the New Mexico race.

*Psaltiriparus minimus plumbeus* (Baird). Lead-colored Bushtit. A series of 18 specimens, 11 males and 7 females, was secured at the Block Canyon locality, a few each day. They are typical of *plumbeus*, having the pinkish cast on the flank feathers and brown cheeks. As compared with California specimens, there seems to be a little more brown back of the forehead.

*Sitta carolinensis nelsoni* Mearns. Rocky Mountain Nuthatch. On April 7, two males were shot from yellow pines, 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office, 8,000 feet.

*Sitta pygmaea melanotis* van Rossem. Black-eared Nuthatch. Two males and a female are represented in the collection, having been taken on April 7 and 8, 8,000 feet, 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office.

*Thyromanes bewickii eremophilus* Oberholser. Baird's Wren. Three males are present, two from the Block Canyon locality, taken April 3 and 5 and one from 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office, 8,000 feet, April 7.

*Telmatodytes palustris plesius* (Oberholser). Western Marsh Wren. A single specimen, a male, from Moab, Grand County, April 9.

*Catherpes mexicanus conspersus* Ridgway. Cañon Wren. A male was taken at Block Canyon, April 4 and a male and female at Moab, Grand County, April 9.

*Salpinctes obsoletus obsoletus* (Say). Common Rock Wren. A pair was taken April 5 at the Block Canyon locality.

*Oreoscoptes montanus* (Townsend). Sage Thrasher. A single female was shot in the vicinity of the Block Canyon camp on April 5.

*Turdus migratorius propinquus* Ridgway. Western Robin. One female was taken at the Block Canyon locality April 5 and a pair was secured from 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office, 8,000 feet, on April 8.

*Sialia mexicana bairdi* Ridgway. Chestnut-backed Bluebird. Two males were collected among yellow pines at 8,000 feet, 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office, April 8.

*Sialia mexicana occidentalis* Townsend. Western Bluebird. One male was secured among the junipers at our Block Canyon camp, 5,400 feet, April 6. It is significant to note that this individual, evidently a migrant, occurred in the lowlands while the preceding two, probably representing the resident race, were found in the habitat where bluebirds of this species normally nest.

*Myadestes townsendi* (Audubon). Townsend's Solitaire. A female was taken 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office, 8,000 feet, April 7.

*Agelaius phoeniceus utahensis* Bishop. Utah Red-wing. While at Moab on April 9 we saw many Red-wings and secured 11 males. These are identical in their characters with birds from the vicinity of Salt Lake City and are referable to the race *utahensis* recently described by Bishop (*Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist.*, 9, No. 1, 1938:1-4).



*Carpodacus cassinii* Baird. Cassin's Purple Finch. One male was collected at 8,000 feet, 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office on April 8.

*Carpodacus mexicanus solitudinus* Moore. Six males were collected throughout the week at the Block Canyon camp. The specimens were borrowed by Robert T. Moore in connection with his revision and were pronounced to be intergrades between his new race *solitudinus* and the more eastern race *frontalis* as he limits the range of the latter. (See *Condor*, 41, 1939: 191.)

*Spinus pinus pinus* (Wilson). Northern Pine Siskin. Two females were collected on April 3 and 4 at the Block Canyon locality.

*Loxia curvirostra benti* Griscom. Red Crossbill. A single male which was shot from a flock among yellow pines at 8,000 feet 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office on April 8 has been identified by Griscom as an intergrade between the races *benti* and *grinnelli*.

*Pipilo maculatus montanus* Swarth. Spurred Towhee. This species was abundant in the oak chaparral at 8,000 feet, 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office. On April 7 and 8 a series of 22 specimens were obtained, of which 14 are males.

*Junco hyemalis hyemalis* (Linnaeus) Slate-colored Junco. A male was taken at 8,000 feet, 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office on April 7.

*Junco hyemalis cismontanus* Dwight. Cassiar Junco. A male and female were taken April 3 and 6 at the Block Canyon locality among mixed flocks of juncos. These specimens were submitted to Dr. Alden H. Miller who commented that they showed more than the usual amount of *oreganus* characters.

*Junco oreganus montanus* Ridgway. Montana Junco. These were numerous but only three were collected, all males, on April 3 and 7, from the Block Canyon locality.

*Junco oreganus mearnsi* Ridgway. Pink-sided Junco. Two males were taken at 5,400 feet in the vicinity of our Block Canyon camp April 3 and 6 while two other males were taken at 8,000 feet April 7, 5 miles northeast of the La Sal post office.

*Junco caniceps caniceps* (Woodhouse). Gray-headed Junco. Six typical specimens and two hybrids with *mearnsi* are represented in the collection. Five male *J. c. caniceps* were collected at various times at the Block Canyon locality and one male was taken 5 miles northeast of La Sal at 8,000 feet, April 7. The male hybrid was also taken at this high locality April 8, but the female lower down in Block Canyon on April 6.

*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii* (Nuttall). Gambel's Sparrow. Two males were obtained April 5 at Block Canyon. They were first year birds undergoing a molt.

*Melospiza lincolni lincolni* (Audubon). Lincoln's Sparrow. Three males and 2 females were shot along the river bottom land at Moab, 4,000 feet, Grand County, April 9. These were migrant birds, not of the resident race *P. l. alticola* as Miller and McCabe (*Condor*, 37, 1935:144-60) have worked it out. These birds are large in size, too heavily streaked to be of the summer resident race and a few represent the reddish extremes that are more common in the northern race. Considerable variation is shown among the lot but it all falls within the limits of variability of the race *lincolni*.

*Melospiza melodia fallax* (Baird). Mountain Song Sparrow. Three females were secured near the Block Canyon locality on April 4 and 5 and 4 others of both sexes were collected at Moab, Grand County, April 9. All are fairly typical of *fallax*.

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