

## ANCIENT MURRELET IN UTAH

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On 8 May 1974 I discovered a specimen of the Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*) on Gunnison Island in Great Salt Lake, Utah. The carcass was found on the east shore of the island, in a bare-sand area which I walked through daily. The pectoral muscles had been removed and the entire carcass was coated with salt crystals. It appeared that the bird died in the Great Salt Lake since it was found too far from the shoreline for salt spray to account for the heavy crystalline coating. The carcass was likely removed from the water and carried to the point where I discovered it by one of the more than 15,000 California Gulls (*Larus californicus*) nesting on the island. The specimen was in an area often used by loafing gulls. The carcass was identified (with the assistance of Keith L. Dixon) through comparison with a specimen in the Biology Department collection at Utah State University.

This specimen is the fourth record of the Ancient Murrelet in Utah. The three previous observations recently were summarized by Behle and Perry (Utah Birds, Utah Mus. Nat. Hist., Univ. Utah, 1975). Each of those records occurred in November or December, during the autumnal migration. The present recovery represents the first Utah record during spring migration.

Inland wanderings of the Ancient Murrelet have been reviewed by Munyer (Wilson Bull. 77:235-242, 1965) and Verbeek (Condor 68:510-511, 1966). Those authors attribute inland occurrences to offshore storms and poor visibility along the Pacific Coast. As they pointed out, all of the 25 inland records of Ancient Murrelets occurred between late September and late April with most occurring in March and November, during the off-shore migrations of the species. The Gunnison Island specimen appears to be an exceptionally late spring record of this species inland, although the date of death is uncertain. The salt brine may have preserved the carcass for several weeks. The mummified specimen has been deposited in the collection of the University of Utah, Salt Lake City.