

NOTES

A SPECIMEN RECORD OF THE ANCIENT MURRELET FROM NEW MEXICO

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The Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliborhamphus antiquus*) occurs casually in interior western North America, with records as far inland as the upper Midwest and Great Lakes region (A.O.U. 1983). There are no previous records of this species from New Mexico (Hubbard 1978; New Mexico Ornithol. Soc. 1962-1985); however, the eventual occurrence of *S. antiquus* in New Mexico might have been expected in view of the proximity of specimen and sight records of this species in Colorado (Bailey and Niedrach 1967), Utah (Behle and Perry 1975), and Nevada (Monson and Phillips 1981). This note presents data on the first specimen of *S. antiquus* found in New Mexico.

On 6 November 1985, 4 km north of Santa Fe on U.S. Highway 84-285 near its junction with Tano Road, elevation 2195 m, Santa Fe Co., Miller found a live Ancient Murrelet sitting on U.S. Highway 285. The Ancient Murrelet made no apparent attempts to escape capture when he approached it. The specimen was taken to a local pet shop, where it was kept in an aquarium until its death the following day. When dissected, the specimen showed no apparent wounds nor did it appear emaciated. It was prepared as a skin and trunk skeleton and is now 600008 in the United States National Museum, Washington, D.C. We recorded the following data while preparing the specimen: testes Flesh Color, left 1 × 4 mm, right 1 × 3 mm; weight 172.6 g; no fat; skull less than 10% ossified; immature plumage; no body molt; total length 238 mm; maxilla Pale Neutral Gray with tip, culmen, and basal 5-6 mm Blackish Neutral Gray; mandible Pale Neutral Gray with angle of gonys, tip, and basal 5-7 mm Blackish Neutral Gray; tarsi Pale Neutral Gray with Blackish Neutral Gray line along entire length of posterior; webs, bottoms of feet, and dorsal toe joints Blackish Neutral Gray; toes Pale Neutral Gray; irides Vandyke Brown. Names of colors of soft parts are from Smith (1975, 1981). The specimen's stomach contained small bones of fish, at least part of which the bird obtained while it was in the aquarium.

Weather conditions in western North America between 28 October and 6 November 1985 were characterized, to some degree, by west to northwest winds from the northwestern United States and adjacent Canada (N.O.A.A. 1985). The direction and high velocity of winds both at the surface and at the 500-millibar height contour may explain, at least in part, this extralimital record in New Mexico of this pelagic species.

Although an Ancient Murrelet in New Mexico is an extreme extralimital and new state record, it does conform to a temporal pattern of distribution summarized by Munyer (1965) and Verbeek (1966) that most inland records of this species are in the fall (November). This species has been recorded in several of the interior western and northern United States (DeSante and Pyle 1986), but a record of this species in the Southwest is a noteworthy deviation from previously described geographic distributions of inland records of Ancient Murrelets.

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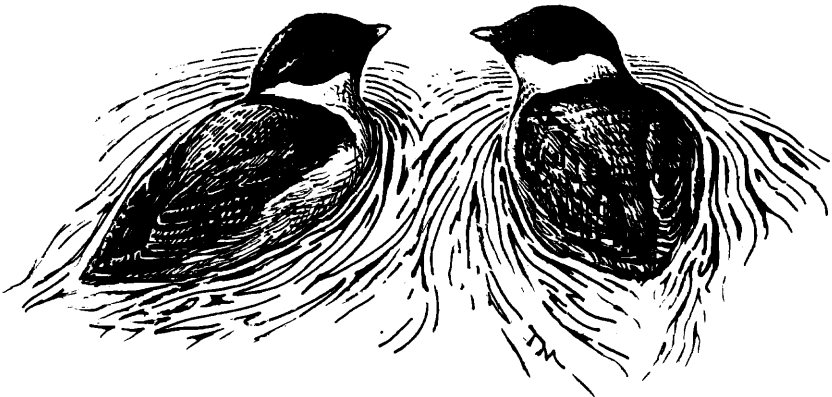
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Sketch by Tim Manolis