2012 NEVADA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT

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ABSTRACT: This report covers the 99 records reviewed by the Nevada Bird Records Committee in 2012, of which 87 were endorsed. These 99 records cover sightings from 1 June 1954 through 27 August 2012. One species is added to the Nevada list (and to the committee’s review list): the Red-bellied Woodpecker (Melanerpes carolinus). Two species are removed from the review list because of the high number of records or regularity of occurrence. The Nevada state list now stands at 489 species, of which 164 are currently on the review list.

ELEVATIONAL RANGES OF BIRDS ALONG CALIFORNIA’S PACIFIC CREST TRAIL

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ABSTRACT: Climate change is predicted to affect the ranges of montane birds differently, depending on their ecological adaptations to regional conditions. Detailed regional data on species’ distributions from a systematic survey are crucial for tracking these range shifts and for guiding conservation decisions. We systematically completed 3578 point counts along a 2736-km mega-transect by following the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) from 2 April to 8 September 2006. On this basis, we describe the elevation ranges of 74 common bird species and their habitats along the PCT by five segments: southern California, southern and northern Sierra Nevada, southern Cascade Range, and Klamath Mountains. We also identify potential sampling bias caused from seasonal variation in the detectability of birds by region. This assessment of bird distributions over a wide range can permit future efforts to gauge the responses of large numbers of common birds to land use and climate change.
A POPULATION CENSUS OF THE CACTUS WREN IN VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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ABSTRACT: The Cactus Wren (Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus) is a polytypic species widespread in the southwestern U.S. and northern Mexico. Though closer in plumage characteristics to the desert subspecies anthonyi, populations resident in coastal sage scrub on the coastal slope of Ventura County and Los Angeles County occupy an ecological niche more similar to that of the more southerly subspecies sandiegensis. Because of fragmentation of habitat associated with urbanization, the populations on southern California’s coastal slope are almost entirely isolated from those of the deserts, and apparently from each other. They are declining precipitously for reasons not entirely understood but certainly related to loss, fragmentation, and degradation of suitable habitat. In 2012, we organized a volunteer effort to map the entire population in Ventura County and found 111 active, accessible territories with at least one adult or a fresh nest. Additional areas to which we did not have access could raise this total number to 166 territories county-wide. While historically the species occurred somewhat more widely in the eastern portion of the county, all active territories now appear to be restricted to a narrow band of cactus-rich scrub at the far western edge of the Santa Monica Mountains and Simi Hills, from Point Mugu northeast through Thousand Oaks to the west side of Simi Valley, roughly tracking the distribution of large patches of prickly-pear (Opuntia spp.) and coast cholla (Cylindropuntia prolifera).

DOCUMENTATION BY SOUND SPECTROGRAM OF A CRYPTIC TAXON, VIREO G. GILVUS, IN BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO

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ABSTRACT: During June and July 2011, I audio-recorded eight Warbling Vireos (Vireo gilvus) at widely scattered sites in eastern Boulder County, Colorado, immediately east of the steep foothills of the Rocky Mountains. All eight sang songs like those of the eastern subspecies, V. g. gilvus; immediately to the west, in the steep foothills of the Rocky Mountains, Warbling Vireos sing songs like those of the western subspecies, V. g. swainsonii. The results of these observations suggest both the presence of nominate gilvus farther west in Colorado than previously documented and a sharp demarcation between the breeding ranges of swainsonii and gilvus.
ABSTRACT: Great Egrets (Ardea alba) foraging in grassy uplands near Arcata, California, used multiple strategies, foraging solitarily or in groups and commensally or noncommensally, in any of the four possible combinations. Egrets foraging commensally with cattle apparently benefited from the association on eight of the 21 observed occasions. Solitary foragers tended to use microhabitats along ditches and fences and were generally less active, made fewer errors, and captured larger prey than did group and commensal foragers. But group foragers, commensal and noncommensal foragers combined, captured more prey. Tidal fluctuations, prey types, and habitat structures likely modified foraging behaviors. There was no clear difference in rate of food intake, handling time, or foraging success by foraging strategy: a higher rate of capture of small prey by egrets foraging in groups compensated for the lower rate of capture of larger prey by solitary birds.

BOOK REVIEWS


FEATURED PHOTO

HYPERMELANISM IN AN AMERICAN Pipit

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