

THE FIRST RECORD OF THE MARBLED MURRELET FOR ALBERTA IS OF THE ASIATIC FORM

JOCELYN HUDON, Provincial Museum of Alberta, 12845 - 102 Avenue, Edmonton, AB. T5N 0M6 and PETER SHERRINGTON, RR2, Cochrane, AB.

On 28 July 1994 an Alberta Fish and Wildlife officer from Grande Prairie left a Marbled Murrelet with the Provincial Museum of Alberta.³ The bird had been found dead on the south-east shore of Saskatoon Lake north of Wembley on 2 July 1994 in an early state of decomposition with numerous pupae and maggots. Because of its condition the bird was prepared as a skeleton (Z94.14.1) and not as a skin as stated in Moore.³ Photographs of the bird were also taken that document the general appearance of the bird.³

The overall dark coloration of the bird and slim bill identify this bird as a Marbled Murrelet in breeding plumage. Its mensural characteristics indicate that it is a large Marbled Murrelet¹: total length, 285 mm; wing length (not flattened), 141 mm; bill length, 21.5 mm. According to the data in Sealy *et al.*,⁴ these values clearly identify the bird as belonging to the Asiatic subspecies of Marbled Murrelet, *Brachyramphus marmoratus perdix*. This identification is supported in the photographic evidence by the indication of a white eye ring.³

This is the first record of a Marbled Murrelet of any variety for Alberta, and has been accepted by the Alberta Bird Record Committee. Its presence in Alberta is consistent with known patterns of vagrancy of *B. m. perdix*⁵: all 14 previous records of

Marbled Murrelets east of the Rockies have been assigned to this subspecies.^{4,5,6}

The identification of the specimen's subspecies is also of significance as a recent molecular study appears to suggest that the Asiatic and American forms of the Marbled Murrelet may be different species.⁷

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4. SEALY, S.G., H.R. CARTER, and D. ALISON. 1982. Occurrences of the Asiatic Marbled Murrelet [*Brachyramphus marmoratus perdix* (Pallas)] in North America. *Auk* 99:778-781.
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