

12-1985


## The Red-Naped Sapsucker in Nebraska

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Bray, Tanya E.; Padelford, Barbara K.; and Silcock, W. Ross, "The Red-Naped Sapsucker in Nebraska" (1985). *Nebraska Bird Review*. 1232.

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#### THE RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER IN NEBRASKA

The Red-naped Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*) was for many years accorded subspecific status within Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*), but the American Ornithologists' Union recently revised this opinion, and now regards *nuchalis* as a "good" species (*Auk* 102:680). Red-naped Sapsucker can be added to the Nebraska (species) list on the basis of three specimens in the collection of the University of Nebraska State Museum (UNSM).

The breeding range of Red-naped Sapsucker includes the Rocky Mountains east of the Cascades from southwest Canada south to central Arizona and it winters in much of northern Mexico, north as far as the southern part of its breeding range (*The N.O.U. Checklist of North American Birds, Sixth Edition*, 1983).

The only records for Nebraska are three specimens in the UNSM collection, taken by Mickel and Dawson (*Wilson Bulletin* 32:74). On 13 September 1919 two birds were collected in Monroe Canyon, Sioux County: a juvenile male (ZM6310 in the UNSM collection) and an adult male (ZM6311). Another specimen male (ZM6312) was collected a few days later, on 23 September, in woods along the White River five miles north of Chadron, in Dawes County. Mickel and Dawson stated that "it is possible that this is a fairly common bird during migrations in northwest Nebraska" (*WB* 32:74).

We know of no other records for Nebraska. A sapsucker collected 29 September 1920 by C. E. Mickel in Monroe Canyon is ZM6313 in the UNSM

collection. This specimen, a juvenile male, is labeled "Red-naped Sapsucker", but is identified as *S. v. varius* in the UNSM file, and indeed appears to be an example of *varius* (see *Birding* 10:142).

In 1920 Swenk listed Red-naped Sapsucker as an "uncommon migrant westerly" (*Nebraska Blue Book*, 1920), while Haecker, Moser, and Swenk in 1945 considered it a "rare migrant in extreme northwest Nebraska" (*NBR* 13:1). Similarly, Rapp, Rapp, Baumgarten, and Moser in 1958 listed the race *nuchalis* of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker as "very rare in the western part of the state" (*Occ. Papers N.O.U.*, No. 5, 1958). None of these authors cited specific records, and presumably their designations were based on the three specimens taken by Mickel and Dawson, as no new records had been published in the interim. Recently, Richard Rosche listed Yellow-bellied Sapsucker as a casual spring and fall migrant and casual winter visitor, with but 8 records in total (*Birds of Northwestern Nebraska and Southwestern South Dakota*, 1982). There was no indication as to which races these birds belonged.

Based on the foregoing, it appears that sapsuckers in general are rare birds in extreme western Nebraska. Since there are only three documented records, none in recent years, we consider the Red-naped Sapsucker to be accidental in Nebraska. Birders should pay careful attention to any sapsuckers seen in western Nebraska and, of course, further east. Careful study of such birds and of the article on sapsucker identification by Jon Dunn (*Birding* 10:142) should yield important information on the distribution, both spatial and temporal, of Red-breasted Sapsucker in Nebraska.

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