



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

H2223

Southwest Archeological Center
Box 1562, Gila Pueblo
Globe, Arizona

October 17, 1960

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, El Morro

From: Collaborator Hargrave

Subject: Nighthawk Specimen

On August 19, 1959, Lyle Jamison found a Common Nighthawk (Chordeiles minor) dead on the paved road on El Morro National Monument. This specimen was later prepared as a study skin by Norman Messinger and is #187 in the Bird Collection at SWAC. I compared this skin with the fine series of skins of Chordeiles minor henryi at the Museum of Northern Arizona and also with two specimens of henryi in the collection at the Petrified National Monument. It became apparent to me that #187 was another subspecies. Recently I sent this specimen to Dr. Alexander Wetmore, Smithsonian Institution, who, in collaboration with Dr. Allan R. Phillips, has identified it as Chordeiles minor howelli, formerly called "Howell's Nighthawk." The identification of #187 as howelli confirmed Dr. Phillips' suspicions expressed to me on a previous examination of this specimen.

According to W. W. Cooke, as reported in Birds of New Mexico, by Florence M. Bailey (1928), the subspecies henryi formerly called the "Western Nighthawk," is a widely distributed breeder in New Mexico, including the Zuni Mountains a few miles northeast of El Morro. However, the subspecies howelli nests in the extreme northeastern part of New Mexico (as well as in Wyoming, Central Utah, and Colorado) but has never been reported from Arizona nor does Cooke (1928) report it on migration west of the Rio Grande Valley in New Mexico. The El Morro specimen thus may well be the most westerly record of a migrating nighthawk of the race howelli.

I will let you know, Mac, when I can spend more time for you on the Monument.


Lyndon L. Hargrave
Collaborator in Ornithology
and Archeology

Copy to: Regional Chief of Interpretation
Superintendent, Petrified Forest
Dr. Allan R. Phillips