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Site fidelity in Northern Waterthrush in California

The Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) (NOWA) is a Neotropical migrant that breeds across northern North America, but migrates primarily east of the Rocky Mountains (A.O.U. 1998, Dunn and Alderfer, eds 2006, Whitaker and Eaton 2014) to its wintering grounds from Mexico and the Caribbean Islands (Reitsma et al 2002) to northern South America (Loftin 1977). Not unexpectedly, most of the work on the Northern Waterthrush overwintering biology has been done in the eastern part of the US (e.g., McNeil 1982, Warkentin and Hernandez 1996).

Although many species of Neotropical migrants are found in winter in the US, little is known about their fidelity to wintering areas (Somershoe, et al. 2009). Although the Northern Waterthrush is rare across the western half of the US (Sibley 2014), individual migrants are regularly found overwintering in coastal southern CA (A.O.U. 1998). Here I report the regular occurrence and site fidelity of Northern Waterthrushes at a small coastal wetland at the mouth of Zuma Canyon in southern CA. The upper part of the wetlands is freshwater and riparian with a dense stand of willow (*Salix* sp.) mixed with an assortment of non-native vegetation. The lower part of the wetland forms a small estuary with cattails (*Typha* sp.) and bulrush (*Scirpus* sp.). Freshwater continuously flows from Zuma Creek into the small estuary from groundwater and irrigation from upstream residences. When the barrier beach is breached, the estuary becomes saline.

The banding site was located at (34°00',54.31" N, 118°49',07.74" W). Banding commenced on 12 Sep 1998 and ended on 26 Mar 2006. Banding was inconsistent but occurred primarily when wintering birds were present.

In the five and a half years banding was conducted at Zuma Marsh, there were four Northern Waterthrushes banded at this site (Table 1). Two Northern Waterthrush's were banded on 12 Sep 1998. Two other Northern Waterthrushes were banded, one on 21 May 1999 and the other on 30 Aug 2003. One of the birds banded on 12 Sep 1998 was subsequently recaptured on 25 Sep 1998, 30 Jan 1999, and 21 May 1999, indicating this bird spent the winter at Zuma Marsh. The following winter (1999-2000), this same individual was recaptured on 3 Mar. During the third winter (2000-2001), the bird was recaptured four times (23 Dec, 30 Dec, 18 Mar, and 1 Apr).

This Northern Waterthrush exhibited overwintering site fidelity, as the same bird returned to Zuma Marsh over three winters. This is not completely unexpected, as site fidelity was first described for Northern Waterthrush by Snow and Snow (1960) and later others (McNeil 1982, Kricher and Davis 1986, Norton 1992).

Multiple banding and recaptures indicate Northern Waterthrushes remained at this site for the entire winter. Although different years, the earliest capture of a Northern Waterthrush was 30 Aug, and the latest capture was 2 May, essentially eight months. The earliest date is similar to those reported in eBird [28 Aug 1988, 6 Sep 1997] (Sullivan et al 2009).

Regular sightings of Northern Waterthrushes are reported in *North American Birds* during May in southern California.

While vagrants are often reported at particular sites year after year, this serves as an example of banding confirms the same bird returning to a site in successive years.

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Table 1.

Code	band#	alpha	age	sex	loc	band date	weight	wing	note
N	1551-80385	NOWA	AHY	U	ZUMM	12-Sep-1998	17.0	74	
N	1551-80389	NOWA	AHY	U	ZUMM	12-Sep-1998	20.0	69	
R	1551-80385	NOWA	AHY	U	ZUMM	25-Sep-1998	17.0	75	
R	1551-80385	NOWA	ASY	U	ZUMM	30-Jan-1999	17.0	73	
N	1551-80638	NOWA	ASY	U	ZUMM	21-May-1999	16.0	71	
O		NOWA			ZUMM	23-Dec-1999			observed
R	1551-80385	NOWA	ASY	U	ZUMM	4-Mar-2000	17.5	75	
O		NOWA			ZUMM	21-May-2000			observed
R	1551-80385	NOWA	AHY	U	ZUMM	23-Dec-2000	18.2	75	
R	1551-80385	NOWA	AHY	U	ZUMM	30-Dec-2000			
R	1551-80385	NOWA	AHY	U	ZUMM	18-Mar-2001	17.5	75	
R	1551-80385	NOWA	AHY	U	ZUMM	1-Apr-2001	18.0	75	
N	1831-14479	NOWA	AHY	U	ZUMM	30-Aug-2003	18.8	77	

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An Observation of Two Eastern Phoebes (*Sayornis phoebe*) Nesting in Close Proximity 3.25 m Apart From One Another on a Residential Deck

ABSTRACT

Two female Eastern Phoebes (*Sayornis phoebe*) built nests 3.25 m apart from one another in May 2016 within a span of less than two weeks under a roof overhang over a deck of a residential house in Queensbury, Warren Co., New York. One nest conventionally located over a wall-mounted light fixture fledged four young while the other nest located unconventionally among vegetation in a hanging flower planter had four eggs taken from it possibly by a mammal.

INTRODUCTION

Neither Bent (1942) in *Life Histories of North American Birds* series nor Weeks (2011) in *Birds of North America Online* make mention of spacing distances of individual nests of the Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*). Much is written, however, about the unique variety of places where this species chooses to place a nest, many of them in close proximity to human activity (Bent 1942, Weeks 2011). Here we report the unusually close nesting of two female phoebes within 3.25 m of one another under a roof overhang of an outdoor deck of a residence: one a classic placement of a visible nest over a wall-mounted lighting fixture, the other concealed amid the flowers in a hanging flower planter.

OBSERVATIONS

Location. The nests were located on Woodridge Drive, Town of Queensbury, Warren Co., New York, in a wooded residential area, elevation 148 m, coordinates 431-0734. They were on a west face of the house with sliding access doors to a wooden deck facing west and south, the roof overhang 2.4 m above the deck floor extending 71 cm outward from the house. Adjacent the sliding doors leading to the deck were two wall-mounted light fixtures (see Fig. 1).

Nest Locations. Nest #1 (N1) was located atop the light fixture north (left side in Fig. 1) of the sliding doors tucked in between the top of the fixture and the house, 23 cm below the roof overhang and 20 cm from the adjoining wall of the house. It measured 14 cm wide by 7.6 cm deep, extending 10 cm out from the house. The nest cup was 3.8 cm deep. The nest was constructed of green moss and pine needles.

Nest #2 (N2) was in a flower planter hung from the roof overhang south of the sliding doors (right side in Fig. 1) 3.25 m from N1. It was 28 cm below the roof overhang concealed among hybrid *Calibrachoa* super bell flowers and measured 10 cm outer diameter, 7 cm inner diameter, 5.7 cm deep. It was constructed of fine rootlets and green moss lined with dried lawn grass clippings and deer hair.