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Abstracts

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

TWO NEW LATE PLEISTOCENE AVIFAUNAS FROM NEW MEXICO

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Abstract. We report two new late Pleistocene avifaunas from New Mexico, recovered from Sandia Cave during archaeological excavations by F. Hibben in the 1930s and the nearby Marmot Cave excavated in 2000. The fossil assemblage from Sandia Cave consists of at least 30 taxa, including seven extralimital and two extinct species, *Coragyps occidentalis* (extinct vulture) and *Ectopistes migratorius* (Passenger Pigeon). The avifauna from Marmot Cave is limited to eight taxa shared with Sandia Cave. Two new records of *Gymnogyps californianus* (California Condor) are reported from these sites, as well as new records of *Lagopus* sp. (ptarmigan), *Aegolius funereus* (Boreal Owl), and *Micrathene whitneyi* (Elf Owl) from New Mexico. Two new radiocarbon dates on fossil *G. californianus* from Sandia and Marmot cave are reported at 10 795 ± 50 and 25 090 ± 220 ^{14}C years before present (B.P.), respectively. These collections provide further evidence for mixed avian communities in New Mexico during the late Pleistocene and are similar to other cave avifaunas of comparable age from the Great Basin and Rocky Mountain regions. The birds from Sandia Cave that are shared with other fossil avifaunas include species currently found in arctic tundra, boreal, and steppe habitats, as well as open, xeric communities. This collection provides additional evidence for widespread steppe-tundra, shrub, and subalpine forest environments at lower elevations of western North America during the late Pleistocene.

Key words: fossil avifauna, late Pleistocene, Marmot Cave, New Mexico, Sandia Cave.