NOTES

UNMATED MALE CALIFORNIA GNATCATCHER FEEDS FLEDGLING BUSHTITS

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There are numerous examples of interspecific feeding in birds (Skutch 1961, 1987, Shy 1982, Welty and Baptista 1988:362). Skutch (1960) described a female Tropical Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila plumbea*) in Costa Rica that neglected her mate's building a nest to tend to a brood of Golden-hooded Tanagers (*Tangara larvata*) in a nest nearby, but there are no published accounts of this sort of activity for the California Gnatcatcher (*P. californica*), except in relation to the brood-parasitic Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*; e.g., Braden et al. 1997). this note documents one such event.

The individual involved was part of a dense population of approximately 20 pairs or territories of California Gnatcatchers in the Bonita Reservoir area of Irvine, Orange County, California. The territory occupied by this individual was unusual in that more than 90% of it was made up of mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) scrub, rather than the coastal sage scrub typical for the species (Atwood 1991; cf. Campbell et al. 1998). The territory was occupied in 1994 and 1996 (young fledged in 1996) but not in 1995 (LSA and Chambers Group unpubl. data).

In 1997, I heard two birds in this territory on 26 February, but otherwise I observed only a lone male on ten visits from 24 January through May. On 30 June and 21 July, presumably the same male appeared to be paired with a female that had been color-banded as a fledgling at the adjacent University of California, Irvine, Ecological Reserve on 10 April 1997 (D. R. Bontrager pers. comm.). Therefore I believe a single male occupied this territory alone until the arrival of the young female in June; I noted another lone male defending a territory in the same study area in the same year.

On the morning of 17 April 1997, I found the male gnatcatcher near the edge of the dense patch of mulefat. I watched the bird capture a prey item and drop out of sight into the vegetation as if to feed young. My pleasure at having detected successful nesting by a pair of gnatcatchers that I didn't even know existed turned to consternation as I realized the only other birds in the immediate vicinity were Bushtits (*Psaltriparus minimus*). Over the next several minutes I watched the gnatcatcher feed two or more receptive fledglings before the roving family group of Bushtits moved on. I detected no resistance to this supplemental feeding by any of the Bushtits, perhaps not surprising in a species well known for having helpers occasionally assist nesting pairs raise their young (Ervin 1977).

This example does not fit the generalization by Skutch (1961, 1987) and Welty and Baptista (1988:362) that the feeding of foster young of another species normally involves adults currently or recently engaged in reproduction. Shy (1982), however, summarized the potential benefits of young birds gaining experience in the rearing of young, even those unrelated to them. Because he was unmated, the gnatcatcher I discuss here was likely only a year old. In any case, perhaps those gnatcatcher surveyors who occasionally mistake Bushtits for their target species will find some solace in this account.

Michael A. Patten alerted me to Shy's important review, made helpful comments on the manuscript, and shared his more urban observation of an adult European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) feeding a fledgling House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) in Huntington Beach, Orange County, on 30 May 1992.

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A NEW SITE OF SYMPATRY OF THE CALIFORNIA AND BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHERS IN THE UNITED STATES

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Within its current range in the United States, the California Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*) frequents low scrub on the coastal side of the Peninsular and Transverse ranges in southwestern California. The closely related Black-tailed Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila melanura*) generally inhabits the Colorado and Mojave deserts within its range in southern California. Atwood (1988) discovered that both species coexist in limited areas of northeastern Baja California. This note reports a new site of sympatry of the two species on the U.S. side of the border.

I observed both gnatcatchers near the small community of Aguanga in southwestern Riverside County, California. Aguanga is located east of the city of Temecula within the coastal drainage of the Santa Margarita River. I found all gnatcatchers within 2 km of State Highway 371, between its intersection with Wilson Valley Road to the north and State Highway 79 to the south (Figure 1, Appendix). I believe my observations constitute the most inland records of a current established population of the California Gnatcatcher in southern California and the westernmost records of the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher.

I first noted the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher on 19 November 1995 with a pair in a draw 4.5 km north of the intersection of highways 79 and 371. I subsequently recorded this species in several draws immediately northwest of this intersection. The nearest previously known populations occur 45 km to the northeast in Deep Canyon