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Southern California Postscript

Received much too late to be incorporated into continental summaries, Blue List recommendations from six correspondents from the Southern Pacific Coast Region differed in few conclusions from those previously tabulated.

The following species were unanimously considered deserving of Blue-listing: White-faced Ibis, Fulvous Whistling Duck, Swainson's Hawk, Harris' Hawk, Osprey, Merlin, Gull-billed Tern, Least Tern, Yellow-billed

Cuckoo, Purple Martin, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat and Grasshopper Sparrow.

The following additional species were supported for retention by a majority of the six reporters: White Pelican, Prairie Falcon, Snowy Plover (one dissent), Burrowing Owl, Short-eared Owl and Yellow Warbler.

The following species were unanimously *disapproved* for inclusion in the list: Western Grebe, Black-crowned Night Heron, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Am. Kestrel, Hairy Woodpecker, Cliff Swallow, Bewick's Wren, Mountain Bluebird and Loggerhead Shrike. Other Blue List species had indecisive tallies.

Nominations for additions to the list by two or more reporters included: White-winged Scoter, Elf Owl, Willow Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher (*P.m. californica*), Gray Vireo, Summer Tanager, and two races of Savannah Sparrow.

A few pertinent comments:

"Harris' Hawk — Formerly fairly common along the Colorado River, but now extirpated from the state. The primary factor that has been attributed to it has been the sport of falconry."—JD.

"Swainson's Hawk—has suffered catastrophic declines in California."—JD.

"Elf Owl—habitat destruction."—GMcC.

"Willow Flycatcher—This species has suffered catastrophic declines as a breeding bird in California in the last twenty years. It no longer breeds in southern California, and is no longer found in most of its breeding range in northern California. . . .this bird has declined more than any other species on the Blue List."—JD. "Habitat destruction"—GMcC.

"Black-tailed Gnatcatcher—has a very small range; has declined from many parts of its former range; very local, habitat threatened with development."—JD.

"Gray Vireo—cowbird predation."—GMcC, SS, SC.

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A Streaked Shearwater in California

by Don Roberson¹, Joseph Morlan², and Arnold Small³

ON OCTOBER 9, 1977 we observed a Streaked Shearwater (*Calonectris leucomelas*) from a chartered pelagic birding boat in Monterey Bay, Monterey County, California. At the time of the sighting we were approximately 6-7 miles west of Moss Landing and above the south rim of the Monterey submarine canyon. The bird was initially flushed in company with two Pink-footed Shearwaters (*Puffinus creatopus*) but although similarly sized it was immediately distinctive because of the largely all-white head and pale mottled back. Roberson, on the bow of the boat, and Morlan, on the bridge, having previously studied the literature, soon suggested the probability of Streaked Shearwater. Small, having had previous field experience with this species off Japan, was able to confirm the initial identification and his shouting alerted the entire group. The bird landed on the water several times and cautious approach allowed several diagnostic photographs to be obtained.

We were in radio contact with another chartered birding boat and called them over. The Streaked Shearwater was seen well by all observers of both boats — about 80 birders in all.

It is difficult to confuse the Streaked Shearwater with any other species. Although the Northern Fulmar may have a white head, its chunky shape and heavy bill quickly differentiate it from the much slimmer, longer-winged Streaked Shearwater. The possibility of a partially albino Pink-footed Shearwater was considered, but the scaly appearance of the back caused by whitish feather edgings seemed unlike any albino. In cases of bilateral albinism, irregular white patches are interspersed among more normal feathers. Here the back feathers were paler and grayer than in a Pink-footed Shearwater. The bird was also shaped somewhat differently from a Pink-footed Shearwater, being slimmer in the body and wings, with a more pronounced angle at the wrist. Thus it was shaped and marked more like a Cory's Shearwater (*Puffinus diomedea*). In fact, the white edgings to the upper tail coverts were quite similar to some plumages of Cory's, however the white face and crown, narrowly streaked nape, and dingy horn-colored bill eliminated that species. The various field guides that picture or discuss this bird (King and Dickinson (1975), Alexander (1954), King (1967), Kobayashi (1975), Gore and Won



This photo shows the extensive white on the underwings and the white underparts (the undertail coverts were also cleanly white). Although the head is in shadow, close examination reveals the all-white head—with the dark eye conspicuously on the white face, and a dark nape. The color slide also shows pink feet and a light bill.



Although somewhat out of focus, the markings of the dorsal surface are visible: white face, pale back, white edgings to rump forming a conspicuous "U", and whitish patches on wings (probably due to molt, which caused a primary to stick out vertically at rest). In life, the back and wings showed a scaly appearance, especially clear on the grayish back. Photos by Don Roberson.

(1971), Yamashina (1961), and Slater (1971) tend to over-emphasize the streaking on the head, although King and Dickinson indicate it is seen only at close range. Several (King and Dickinson, Kobayashi, King, and Gore and Won) show the scaly-backed appearance correctly.

THE STREAKED SHEARWATER breeds on the islands off Japan, Northern China, Korea, and the Bonins, and winters to the Philippines, Borneo, and New Guinea. Vagrants have been recorded once in Ceylon and northeast Thailand (King and Dickinson, 1975), and an unsubstantiated report comes from near the Hawaiian Islands (King, 1967). It prefers offshore waters but usually within sight of land (Ornithological Society of Japan, 1974).

This is the second record for North America. The first was collected by Victor Morejohn in Monterey Bay, Monterey Co., Calif., on October 3, 1975 (*American Birds* 30: 118).

How these birds, otherwise unrecorded in the eastern Pacific, arrived in California is a mystery but it is noteworthy that our observation is close to the date of the previous record. This species has been recorded north to Sakhalin and the Kuriles, and it is possible that this bird wandered north into the Gulf of Alaska and was caught up in a southerly move-

ment of Pink-footed Shearwaters. Another possibility is that it joined a group of New Zealand Shearwaters (*Puffinus bulleri*) in the southwestern or central Pacific and traveled with them to California. Moderate numbers of New Zealand Shearwaters were in Monterey Bay on the same day.

Whatever the explanation, the presence of two individuals of this unexpected species in the last three years points to our superficial knowledge of seabird movements and the awareness pelagic birders need to possess. Almost any pelagic species is possible offshore and birders need to broaden their horizons to those possibilities. The recent increase in organized trips offshore is encouraging. Our boat was chartered by the Santa Cruz Bird Club and the second boat was organized by the Golden Gate Audubon Society, while other trips during the same time were sponsored by Western Field Ornithologists and several other Audubon societies. Continued year-round coverage may yield further important data and other unexpected species.

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First record of the Pearl Kite in Panama

by ¹Jaime J. Pujals, ²John W. Wall,
and ³David S. Wilcove

IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON on Sunday, June 12, 1977, we were birding along K-2 Road near the Empire (firing) Range in the southwestern area of the Panama Canal Zone when Pujals spotted a small raptor perched about 20 feet up in a solitary tree approximately 40 - 50 feet from the road in a field of tall grass. After momentary disbelief we identified the first Pearl Kite (*Gampsonyx swainsonii*) to be recorded in Panama.

Except for evidence of molting, the kite closely resembled the color plate illustration by Don Eckleberry of an immature Pearl Kite in *Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of the World* by Brown and Amadon (Country Life Press 1968). Buffy patches on the forehead, cheeks, sides and thighs highlighted this small raptor that was otherwise generally slaty above and whitish below. Other notable field marks were a whitish collar and a slaty partial breast band. We could not tell whether the kite had light edgings on the back or wings, the best marks for distinguishing an immature from an adult. (Blake, *Manual of Neotropical Birds*, v.1 (University of Chicago Press 1977)).

The bird was quite wary, and when we approached to within perhaps 30 feet it flew rapidly to a nearby tree. At one point, under attack from a Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*), the Pearl Kite took off for a brief evasive flight and returned to its perch. While we were observing it, the kite neither hunted nor called.

EUGENE EISENMANN BELIEVES that this bird probably came from South America rather than Nicaragua because wholesale clearing of forest in northwestern Colombia and eastern Panama has removed much of the natural barrier which formerly blocked the northward spread of open country birds such as the Pearl Kite. Moreover, a Pearl Kite was collected in 1959 near Turbo, northwestern Colombia, less than 40 miles from the Panama



Pearl Kite, Panama Canal Zone, June 12, 1977.
Photo by John W. Wall

border. (J. Haffer, Lozania [Acta Colomb. Zool.] 12:19). Eisenmann writes:

“Possibly like its ally, the White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*), the Pearl Kite may be recovering a former, more extensive range as a result of forest clearing. I suggest this because of the isolated breeding population in western Nicaragua (*leona*) which all recent authors agree is not even subspecifically distinguishable from the population found widely in South America down to the north bank of the Amazon. The lack of differentiation of the Nicaraguan disjunct population indicates that separation is fairly recent and that perhaps (as I suggested for the White-tailed Kite) the Central American and South American populations were connected through open country in Pacific Costa Rica and Panama before the Spanish conquest.”

The dry Pacific woodland mixed with savanna where we observed the Pearl Kite is one of the least disturbed examples of such habitat in Panama because it is a restricted area in the generally well protected Canal Zone. The birding potential of this and adjacent areas on the Zone's Pacific slope was amply demonstrated in the 1976 Christmas Bird Count when 297 species were recorded, only 36 below the total (record) count on the humid Atlantic side of the Zone.

UNFORTUNATELY, WE UNDERSTAND that the new Canal treaty with the Republic of Panama does not provide for the protection of any nature preserves other than Barro Colorado Island, held by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, and perhaps the partially clearcut Madden Forest Preserve. All the important birding spots in the Canal Zone including the Pipeline Road Biological Preserve near Gamboa, Achiotte Road on the Caribbean coast and the Pearl Kite area, would be turned over to Panama immediately

without restriction. If the United States Senate ratifies the treaty as proposed, the variety of habitats that make the Canal Zone tropical America's most birdable place will soon give way to marginal cornfields and cattle pastures, as has adjacent Panama. We would advise birders who have not yet visited Panama to go now while there is still a Canal Zone.

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Nesting of the Red Crossbill in Mississippi

by Randy C. Warren¹, Jerome A. Jackson², and Tom L. Darden¹

ON FEBRUARY 25, 1976 Randy Warren found a pair of Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*) on Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge in Winston County, east-central Mississippi. All of us observed the female as she constructed a nest near the top of a 17 m loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*). The terminal bud of the pine had been killed and lateral branches growing upward formed a cup that was being used for the nest. The nest tree was in a 28-30-year-old stand of loblolly with some shortleaf pine (*P. echinata*). Small dead twigs were broken for the nest by the female primarily from shortleaf pine. The male frequently visited the nest site but did not assist in construction. The female finished lining the nest on February 28 and we made daily observations after that date. We do not know how many eggs were laid or when they were laid, but incubation began on March 1. Throughout incubation the male fed the female on the nest. Occasionally she would leave with him and fly out of our view, but she always returned within about three minutes. Hatching apparently occurred on March 18. On that date and for several days thereafter the male regurgitated food to both the female and the young. The interval between feeding trips ranged between approximately one and two hours. On March 21 Jackson saw the female leave the nest at 15:15 and not return until 16:25, at which time she fed the young and settled down to brood them. From March 21 both adults fed the

young. By April 1, three young could be seen in the nest. All three young successfully fledged on the morning of April 8.

While making these observations we observed up to eleven Red Crossbills at a time within 100 m of the nest. It is possible that others were nesting, though we were unable to locate additional nests.

THIS RECORD IS OF SIGNIFICANCE because it represents only the second season that Red Crossbills have been observed in Mississippi and the first known breeding of the species in the mid-South. Imhof (*Alabama Birds*, 1962) reported a possible nesting attempt by Red Crossbills in north-central Alabama. The species has been reported from Louisiana on several occasions, but is not known to breed in that state (Lowery, *Louisiana Birds*, 1974). Other records of Red Crossbills from Mississippi include sight records in 1972 and the fall of 1975 at Noxubee Refuge, a specimen found dead on a gravel road there in October, 1972 (Jackson, *Mississippi Kite* 3:3-4, 1973), and two birds observed by Robbie Howell on March 7, 1976 in Homochito National Forest between Roxie and Meadville in Franklin County.

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