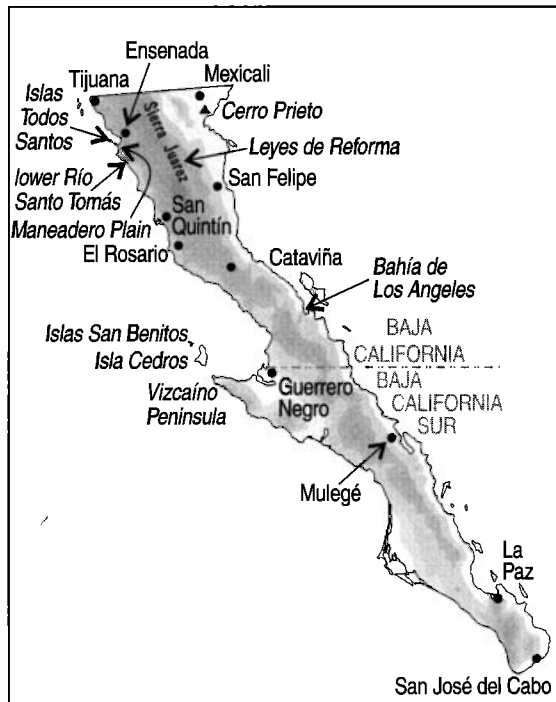


Baja California Peninsula



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Although the Region continues to be sparsely birded, we are encouraged by an increasing number of submissions. Readers will note that many species that are fairly regular spring vagrants in the western U.S. are all but unknown at this season south of the border. This undoubtedly reflects a relative lack of birder coverage in the Region in spring compared with fall and winter. Fortunately, attentive seabird researchers helped change this pattern by documenting a nice variety of birds on West Isla San Benito and elsewhere in the offshore waters. Among numerous vagrants found this season were a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and a Kentucky Warbler. Firsts included Nazca Booby for Baja California and Eurasian Collared-Dove for the peninsula.

Abbreviations: S.J. (Sierra Juárez [above 1600 m]); U.A.B.C. (Universidad Autónoma de

Baja California at Ensenada); W.I.S.B (West Isla San Benito).

SHEARWATERS THROUGH TERNS

Flesh-footed Shearwaters were reported off the s. Pacific coast of Baja California in May without details. Although expected in small numbers at this season, Howell et al. (in press. *An annotated checklist of the birds of Baja California and Baja California Sur*. ABA Monograph Series) relegated this species to the Hypothetical List because the two previous reports also lacked documentation. An imm. **Nazca Booby** that came aboard a fishing boat at 117° 45' W, 31° 45' N (approximately 50 nmi w. of Punta Banda) 27 May represented the first record for Baja California. The bird rode the boat into San Diego, where it was picked up on 29 May, "rehabilitated," and released on San Diego Bay 22 Jun (*vide* GMcC). A male Brown Booby at Is. Todos Santos 31 May (EM) was at the same location where one was displaying 27 Mar 2000.

Southern herons recorded in nw. Baja California included an ad. Little Blue Heron at El Descanso 25 May (SNGH), a Tricolored Heron and 3 Reddish Egrets on Estero Punta Banda 24 May (RAE et al.), and a pair of Reddish Egrets at a nest with 3 young on South Is. Todos Santos 31 May (EM). Presa Rodriguez, Tijuana held 3 Greater White-fronted Geese and a *parvipes/taverneri* Canada Goose 18 Mar (MAP). Unusual coastal waterfowl at the Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds 19 May included a Brant and a Red-breasted Merganser (KLG, KCM).

A Harris's Hawk at Leyes de Reforma 25 May (SNGH, RAE) was in an area where the species has been seen repeatedly in recent years, but, to our knowledge, an ad. Zone-tailed Hawk at Laguna Hanson the same day (SNGH, RAE, vt. RAH) is the first recent record in the S.J. Both species were reported in exceptional numbers in s. California over the previous 10 years.

A South Polar Skua was off Bahía San Quintín 20 May (†SW); all previous Regional records are from Jun and Oct. Two ad. Franklin's Gulls at the Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds 19 May (KLG, KCM) were in an area where the species is probably regular Black-legged Kittiwake reports included 40 at Is. Todos Santos 30 Mar (PP) and an ad. at Is. San Benitos 8–10 Feb (†EDZH). In 1985, Gull-billed Terns expanded their breeding range to include San Diego Bay, and in 1996 they were found nesting at Laguna Ojo de Liebre, but an ad. at Lagunita El Ciprés 24 May (RAE, vt. RAH, SNGH) is only the 4th



This Gull-billed Tern was found at Lagunita El Ciprés on 24 May; it furnished a fourth record for northwestern Baja California. Photograph by Robb Hamilton.

record for nw. Baja California. An ad. Elegant Tern at the Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds 19 May (KLG, KCM) was the first to be found in the interior portion of the Region.

DOVES THROUGH BLACKBIRDS

After last fall's spate of records in Arizona (*N.A.B.* 55: 84), it is probable that the **Eurasian Collared-Dove** at Campo Mosqueda in the Río Colorado delta 5 May (†JOZ et al.) arrived there "naturally." There are no previous Regional records of this exotic species, and we are not aware of any previous records elsewhere in Mexico. A White-winged Dove along the lower Río Santo Tomás 24 May (RAH) was nw. of the known breeding range; another was on W.I.S.B. 13–16 May (SW). Also at W.I.S.B., one or 2 Burrowing Owls 27–29 Mar (SW) and a female Lesser Nighthawk on 3 May (†SW) were likely spring migrants.

Although we suspect that the Hammond's Flycatcher is a fairly common spring migrant in the mountains of Baja California (matching previous lowland records from the nw. and ne.), a male at Rancho Valladares, Sierra San Pedro Mártir 11 Apr (*U.A.B.C., GRC) is the first record there to our knowledge. A migrating Cassin's Kingbird was on W.I.S.B. 5–6 Apr

(†EDZH, †SW), while a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher on I. de Cedros 15 May (†EDZH) provided the peninsula's 8th documented record and the 2nd in spring. Reports of the endangered Least Bell's Vireo (*V. b. pusillus*) included 15 singing males along the lower Río Santo Tomás 24 May (RAH et al.) and 2 singing males at the Río Guadalupe estuary 25 May (RAE et al.), both known localities. Cassin's Vireos are known to nest in the Sierra San Pedro Mártir, so 3 singing males in the S.J. 25 May (RAH et al.) suggest they may do so there as well. A Red-eyed Vireo that alighted on a boat off El Rosario 20 May (†SW) represented the Region's 3rd spring record. The Mountain Bluebird had not been recorded previously on the mainland south of Cataviña, but 3 about midway on the road to Bahía de Los Angeles 3 Mar (MF, GF) were in the same area whence there had been two unconfirmed reports earlier in the year. An American Pipit at Leyes de Reforma 25 May was quite late (SNGH et al.).

At the s. extreme of their Regional breeding range, an estimated 8 nesting pairs of Orange-crowned Warblers were along the lower Río Santo Tomás 24 May (RAE et al.); the subspecific identity of these birds is unclear (Unitt et al., *Western Birds* 26: 151). The Region's first spring Northern Parula

records consisted of a male on W.I.S.B. 14–15 May (ph. SW) and a singing male at the mouth of Río Santo Tomás 24 May (RAE, SNGH, RAH). Although Northern Parulas vagrate west mainly in spring, previous peninsular records consisted of 4 in Oct and one in early Jul. After eight or nine fall records, the Region's first spring Magnolia Warbler was a male on W.I.S.B. 18 May (†EDZH). Also on W.I.S.B. were a female Hermit Warbler 14–15 May and a Western Palm Warbler 28 Mar (both †SW). The latter provided just the 2nd spring record for the peninsula. A singing male **Kentucky Warbler** at the mouth of Río Santo Tomás 24 May (†RAH, RAE) was the Region's first in spring and just the 3rd overall. One or two male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at the mouth of Río Santo Tomás 24 May (SNGH) were preceded by just two spring records in the Region. The Region's 4th spring Indigo Bunting record was provided by a female at El Descanso 25 May (SNGH).

Tricolored Blackbird sightings included 11 on the lower Río Santo Tomás 24 May, 110–130 nesting pairs on a Maneadero Plain golf course 24 May, and approximately 50 nesting pairs at Leyes de Reforma 25 May (all SNGH et al.). Somewhat surprisingly, Great-tailed Grackles have not overtaken the Maneadero Plain—just 2–4 nesting pairs were found nesting on a golf course there 24 May (SNGH et al.). A pair of Scott's Orioles along the lower Río Santo Tomás 24 May (SNGH et al.) suggested likely breeding there.

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