

areas. A Western Tanager at S.E.S.S. 14 Jul (PAG, GMcC) was the earliest fall record for the Salton Sea region. Black-chinned Sparrows are extremely rare in the Region away from their breeding grounds, so one at Pt. Loma 5 Jun (REW) was a surprise. **Cassin's Sparrows** are casual in California, and the 3 recorded this Jun were the most since the influx of 1978; one ne. of San Juan Capistrano 1–2 Jun (DRW, JEP) was the 2nd for *Orange*, and singing birds at Castaic L. 8 Jun (BED) and S.F.K.R.P. 10–13 Jun (BB) were the first recorded in *Los Angeles* and *Kern*, respectively. Breeding of Grasshopper Sparrow on San Clemente I. was confirmed when dependent young were seen 27 Jun (BLS). A Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco in Huntington Beach, *Orange* 4–29 Jun (JEP) was at an unusual summer locality. In addition to those mentioned in the spring report, 10 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (divided evenly between coastal and interior counties) were found 5 Jun–26 Jul. At least 14 Indigo Buntings were seen during the period, and the first nesting for *Orange* was confirmed in Huntington Beach when recently fledged young were seen 19 Aug (LO, COJ). An early migrant Lazuli Bunting was in Rovana, *Inyo* 25 Jun (JLD).

Bobolinks were at F.C.R. 6 Jun (JT) and Prado Basin 18 Jun (JEP). The tale of the Great-tailed Grackle continues, with nesting confirmed during the period at Morro Bay (TME) and Oso Flaco Lake, *San Luis Obispo* (BS). Scarce along the coast, a fall migrant Scott's Oriole was on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, *Los Angeles* 27 Jul (C-TL). The **Black-backed Oriole** near Imperial Beach, *San Diego* was last documented on 3 Jul (SFB), although it was reported by an unknown observer on 4 Jul. Red Crossbills were feeding young in Ridgecrest 3 Jun, establishing the 3rd nesting for *Kern* (JSe).

CORRIGENDUM

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo in California City (*N. A. B.* 54: 423) should have been credited to MJSanM.

ADDENDUM

Blue-winged Warblers were at G.H.P. 18 May (Scott B. Terrill) and California City 21 May (Jon Fisher).

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Debby Parker (J & DP), Dharm S. Pellegrini, Dave Pereksta, James E. Pike, Jonathan H Plissner, David Vander Pluym, Thomas Rahn, James S. Royer, Michael San Miguel, Michael J San Miguel, Sylvia Schmitt (SSc), Brad K Schram, Don Schroeder, Joyce Seibold (JSe), Ryan Shaw, Brad Sillasen, Bob Smith (BSm), Gregory P. Smith, Steve Sosensky (SSo), Susan Steele (SSt), John Sterling (JSt), John R. Storrer, Brian L. Sullivan, Lee and Claudia Taylor (L & CT), Robert Theriault, John Tiffany, Larry D Tripp, Philip Unitt, Stanley Walens, Richard E Webster, **Walter Wehtje** (*Ventura*), Grant B Weyburne, Mary J. Whitfield, Judy Wickman, Bud Widdowson, **Douglas R. Willick** (*Orange*), **John C. Wilson** (*Kern*), Thomas E. Wurster, Jerry Zatorski, Dick Zembal. An additional 25+ observers who could not be individually acknowledged submitted reports this season, they have our thanks.



Baja California Peninsula



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An exciting summer season saw Black Rails resurrected from presumed extirpation on the Río San Telmo, Mexico's first nesting Gadwalls, and Black-legged Kittiwakes remaining in the tropics into July. Enticing views were had of a rail and some swallows well outside their known ranges, hopefully inspiring further exploration. The geothermal ponds at Cerro Prieto continued to support important populations of nesting terns and waders, and a couple of unseasonal passerine vagrants added spice. We received reports from only the northern quarter and southern tip of the peninsula.

Abbreviations: S.S.P.M. (Sierra San Pedro Mártir); U.A.B.C. (Universidad Autónoma de Baja California at Ensenada).

LOONS THROUGH SKIMMERS

All three regularly occurring loon species were recorded this summer, with 2 Red-throateds and 35 Pacifics at Bahía de San Quintín 14 Jun (REW; one Pacific still present 19 Jul—MSM et al.) and one to 6 Commons at Rosarito 17 Jul (GF). Apparently overwintering grebes at Bahía de San Quintín 14 Jun included 15 Eared, 105 Westerns, and 15 Clark's (REW). Another Eared was at Estero Punta Banda 20 Jul (MSM et al.).

Nesting herons at the Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds 19 May included Great Blue Heron (11+ nests, most with large young), Great Egret (103+ nests, most with small young), and Snowy Egret (65+ nests, no young visible) (KLG, KCM). A total of 4 Reddish Egrets at Bahía de San Quintín 14 Jun–19 Jul (REW, RAH et al.), 2 at Estero Punta Banda 18–20 Jul (TEW), 2 Cattle Egrets at Lagunita El Ciprés 17 Jul (DSC et al.), and up to 5 White-faced Ibis at Lagunita El Ciprés 17–20 Jul (RAH et al.) were noteworthy at this season.

At one of the Brant's primary wintering sites, Bahía de San Quintín, 18 were still present 14 Jun (REW), with 6 there 19 Jul (MSM et al.). **Gadwall** were found nesting in Mexico for the first time this season. On a reservoir just n. of Leyes de Reforma 25 May, two pairs were present, and a dumped egg was collected (RAE; *U.A.B.C.). Another one to 2 Gadwall broods were at Lagunita El Ciprés 3 Jun–17 Jul (ph. SGG; RAH et al.). Details will be published elsewhere. A female Blue-winged Teal at Lagunita El Ciprés 17 Jul (RAH et al.) and a female Cinnamon Teal below the Tropic of Cancer at Estero San José 7 Jul (AJ) were unexpected. Also at Estero San José, up to 10 Redheads were seen 1–7 Jul (AJ). Redheads nested at Lagunita El Ciprés, with at least one brood produced 24 May–17 Jul (SNGH et al.). The only previously documented nesting record for the peninsula

was from the Río del Rosario estuary in Sep 1991 (*U.A.B.C.).

The Bahía de San Quintín estuary was home to numerous aseasonal shorebirds 14 Jun: 60 Black-bellied Plovers, 11 Semipalmated Plovers, 55 Greater Yellowlegs, 175 Willets, 22 Whimbrels, 175 Long-billed Curlews, 450 Marbled Godwits, 4 Ruddy Turnstones, one Black Turnstone, 26 Sanderlings, 55 Western Sandpipers, and 225 Short-billed Dowitchers; a Wilson's Phalarope was assumed to be an early migrant (REW). More surprising were 2

SA On 14 Jun, Richard Webster rediscovered a Black Rail population long assumed extirpated on the Río San Telmo. Grinnell reported these birds in 1928 (A distributional summation of the ornithology of Lower California. *University of California Publications in Zoology* 32: 1-300), but by 1987 Wilbur (*Birds of Baja California*, University of California Press, Berkeley) judged the habitat to be lacking. (Excepting 2–3 at Bahía de San Quintín in Feb 1991 [*Euphonia* 1: 19-21], the species has been unrecorded in the Region since Grinnell's summary.) The river may have been poorly vegetated 14 years ago, but it now supports an extensive freshwater marsh dominated by species of *Scirpus*, *Juncus*, *Typha*, *Salicornia*, *Anemopsis*, and *Distichlis*, mixed with willows and tamarisk, from near Hwy. 1 to approximately 3.4 mi upstream.

On 17 Jul, Dan Cooper, Mike San Miguel, and RAH stopped at Webster's location armed with a tape of Black Rail vocalizations, eliciting several "grrr" calls from a single bird. On 19 Jul, at least 5 birds responded to tape in the river segment 1.7 to 3.4 mi inland from Hwy. 1. Most growled, but one gave the "kee-keedo" vocalization. We also heard at least one Virginia Rail, and RAH may have glimpsed a Clapper Rail (a species not known from inland locations on the coastal slope; confirmation required). Black Rails are not known to breed elsewhere in Baja California, and an inland population of Clapper Rails would be equally (if not more) remarkable, so further spring/summer investigation of the Río San Telmo is encouraged. Naturally, restraint with the use of tapes—as well as common courtesy (and common sense) in exploring this semi-remote area—are mandatory.

Wandering Tattlers at Bahía Chileno, e. of Cabo San Lucas 7 Jul (AJ).

A California Gull far s. at Bahía Chileno, e. of Cabo San Lucas 2 Jul (AJ) and different Glaucous-winged Gulls at Bahía de San Quintín 14 Jun (REW) & 19 Jul (MSM et al.) were overshadowed by up to 7 imm. **Black-legged Kittiwakes** near San José del Cabo 4–8 Jul (ph. AJ). These birds followed a winter when exceptional numbers of this species moved far s., but tropical sightings at this season may be unprecedented. A visit to the important nesting colony at the Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds on 19 May revealed 305 ad. Gull-billed Terns, with 191 nests counted and no young visible yet, 24 ad. Forster's Terns with 6+ nests, and 128 Black Skimmers with 48 nests; no Laughing Gulls or Caspian Terns were nesting at the time (KLG, KCM). At Bahía de San Quintín, 7 Common Terns were already present on 19 Jul (RAH et al.).

DOVES THROUGH BLACKBIRDS

Ruddy Ground-Doves are now at least tenuously established in the s. Cape District, with a new high count of 10 at Estero San José 7 Jul (AJ). The Calliope Hummingbird is apparently one of the rarest summer residents of the S.S.P.M., but nesting is unconfirmed; a male was in the upper La Tassajera drainage 16 Jun (REW). The peninsula's first confirmed summer Tropical Kingbird record was of one at Estero San José 7 Jul (AJ). A 15 Jun hike along the e. rim of the S.S.P.M. at 2500–2700 m yielded five Dusky Flycatcher territories (6 birds), four Warbling Vireo territories (4 birds), a silent **Red-breasted Nuthatch** (first Regional summer record), three Hermit Thrush territories (4 birds), and 5 Yellow-rumped Warblers, including a fledgling (REW). The tip of the Baja California Peninsula is a natural concentration point for migrating swallows. Present in the vicinity of San José del Cabo 1–8 Jul were a Purple Martin, up to 2 Violet-green Swallows, up to 25 Northern Rough-winged Swallows, one or 2 early Barn Swallows 7–8 Jul, and the *Petrochelidon* discussed below.

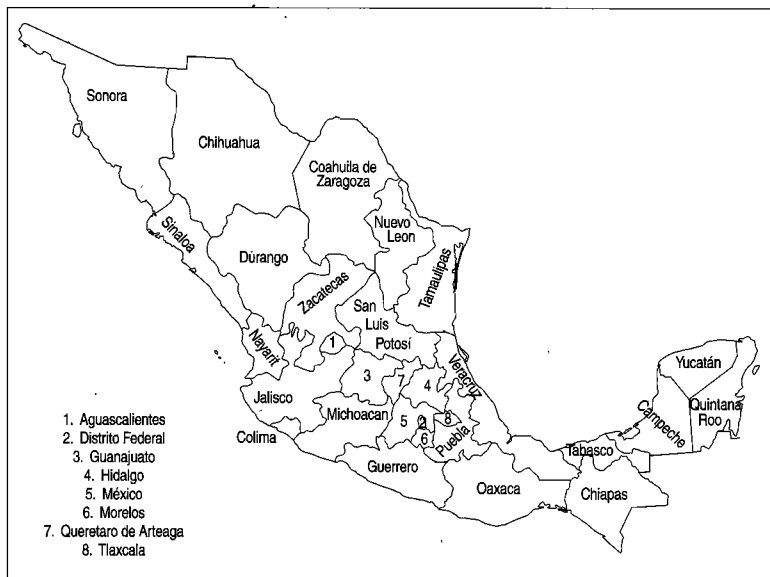
Marsh Wrens, presumably representing the newly described subspecies *clarkae* (*Proceedings of the San Diego Society of Natural History* 31, 1996), have recently been found summering at Lagunita El Ciprés, but nesting remains unconfirmed; up to 10 were there 17 Jul (MSM et al.) Four ad. and 9 juv. Orange-crowned Warblers at 1700–2500 m on the w. slope of the S.S.P.M. 14–17 Jun were considered likely post-breeding migrants or dispersants that bred elsewhere (REW); nesting is not documented in this range. Two singing male Western Tanagers were on the w. slope of the S.S.P.M. 17 Jun, at 1700

and 2000 m. One appeared to be on territory, the other prospecting. Two birds at 1770 m on 18 Jul (MSM) may have been early migrants; nesting remains undocumented on the peninsula. A female Summer Tanager at El Descanso 17 Jul (RAH, DSC) was unexpected. Two White-collared Seedeaters at Estero San José 7 July (AJ) were thought to be imm. males of one of the West Mexican forms. These birds, or their parents, may have been seen on 8 Apr, when 3 White-collared Seedeaters were reported from the same area (PP). We believe that these reports likely involve escapees. A 16 Jun walk along the w. rim of the S.S.P.M. at 2400–2600 m produced record counts of Green-tailed Towhees (7 territories, 8 birds) and Fox Sparrows (18 territories, 25 birds including 2 juvs.; REW). On 20 Jul, a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak was consorting with a male Black-headed on the lower Río Santo Tomás, but no young were seen (†RAH et al.).

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This period was very rainy in most of the country. Significant contributions to this column continue to include records of birds outside their distributions mapped in Howell and Webb (1995), as well as some early and overwintering migrants, but the warm months of June and July saw overall relatively little birding activity. Because the distribution of both resident and transient species in Mexico is still so incompletely known, the records in this report carry comparatively little commentary on their relative rarity—indeed, the first three species boldfaced below are undoubtedly regular visitors to the area but were nevertheless first local records!

SA Among 100+ Cliff Swallows at San José del Cabo 5–8 Jul were several possible Cave Swallows (AJ). Jaramillo writes: “Almost every Cliff Swallow had a rufous forehead, typical of the largely Mexican race *swainsoni* (= *melanogaster*) rather than the white-fronted birds from farther north (*pyrrhonota/tachina*). Rump color varied from pale buff to a darker cinnamon. On ads., the dark throat was obvious. Views of the presumed Cave Swallows were always somewhat distant, and none of the birds was seen perched. These rufous-fronted birds had entirely cinnamon throats and faces, which set off a dark cap. Rump color was dark. Two appeared to be in wing molt.”

“One concern is that some juv. Cliff Swallows may show cinnamon throats with almost no dark, superficially resembling Cave Swallows. I was unable to determine if the auriculars of the presumed Cave Swallows were cinnamon or dark. Cliff Swallows in juvenal plumage are extremely variable, with most but not all showing white speckling on the face or throat. Some are cinnamon on the throat, but they usually show some dark on the lower throat. The variation in *swainsoni* has not been detailed, particularly with respect to separation from Cave Swallows, so conservative field identification is necessary. The dark rumps of these birds represent a potential problem, as Caribbean Cave Swallows are dark-rumped, whereas Mexican birds are pale-rumped. However, the fact that 2 birds appeared to be in wing molt may bode well for their identification as Cave Swallows; that species typically molts on the breeding grounds, while Cliff Swallows molt on the wintering grounds and much later in the season.”

“Given the problems discussed above, it is best to consider these as tantalizing observations that need confirmation. Although the latest *A.O.U. Check-list* attributed the Cave Swallow to Baja California, Howell et al. (*Annotated checklist of the birds of Baja California and Baja California Sur*, Monographs in Field Ornithol., in press.) were unable to find any records. Observers are encouraged to look carefully at swallows in this area in the future.”