

Observer coverage was light in all but the northern portions of Baja California (see the S.A. below concerning the need for observations elsewhere). Highlights of the season included first Regional nesting records for Wood Duck and Eurasian Collared-Dove (and continued nesting of Anna's Hummingbirds in Baja California Sur), and rarities such as Harlequin Duck and White/Black-backed Wagtail.

Abbreviations: C.P.G.P. (Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds), M.F.O. (*Monographs in Field Ornithology*).

LOONS THROUGH SKIMMERS

Many migrating Pacific Loons were seen passing Punta Descanso, B.C. in Apr, but no other species were noted in significant numbers. The maximum loon count was 2675 in two hours on 6 Apr (RAE, MJI), an average of 22.3 birds per minute. An aggregation of 10,000+ Black and Least Storm-Petrels just e. of Isla San José 3 Apr included a probable Wedge-rumped; 4 Wedge-rumped were between Isla San Ildefonso and Isla Tortuga 8 Jun (all MG). Five Neotropic Cormorants at El Centenario 5 Mar (ph. MJI) was a high count for the La Paz area. American Bitterns—rare throughout the Region and not known to breed there—were at La Misión 6 Apr (MJI) and El Rosario 15 Apr (EP et al.). Three ad. Least Bitterns—also rare but presumed to breed—were found together on the Maneadero Plain 8 May (LAC, SNGH), and 3 more were along the Río Colorado 20 May (MJI, RAE). Breeding ardeids (nest numbers) at C.P.G.P. 16 May included Great Blue Heron (31), Great Egret (85), and Snowy Egret (90+; KLG, KCM). Up to 7 Reddish Egrets and four nests were at Islas Todos Santos 27 Mar–11 Jun (FG, EP). A subad. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Lagunita El Ciprés 7 May followed by an ad. there the next day (LAC, SNGH) furnished the 4th and 5th records for the northwest.

The pair of Wood Ducks that wintered at the Mexicali Zoo was found 20 May with 6 half-grown young (RAE, ph. MJI), providing the Region's first nesting record. Twenty pairs of Blue-winged Teal at Lagunas de Chametla were more than expected in B.C.S. on the late date of 23 Apr (LSa). Presumably the same female Harlequin Duck as in Mar 2003 was at La Joya 6 Mar–11 Jun (RAE et al.). The season's only Black Scoter was an ad. male at La Joya 23 Mar (RAE). Up to 3 Red-breasted Mergansers were at C.P.G.P. 26 Mar–20 May (MJI et al.). Two Harris's Hawks were at Leyes de Reforma, where a few may be resident, 16 Apr (SNGH).

S. of San Felipe, 7–8 Wilson's Plovers at Punta Estrella were presumed nesting (SNGH). A Baird's Sandpiper at C.P.G.P. 26 Mar (RAH, ph. MJI) was the Region's first in spring since C.C. Lamb collected one of "a

Baja California Peninsula



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SA Rail surveys were conducted in selected marshes of nw. Baja California for the 3rd consecutive year, this time by Palacios, Bolaños García, Rivera Campos, and Amador 12–15 Apr and 29 Apr–2 May. The highlight was 7 Black Rails in se. Bahía San Quintín 2 May. Clapper Rails were found at Lagunita El Ciprés (7), Estero Punta Banda (38), Bahía San Quintín (60), and El Rosario (12). Virginia Rails and Soras are not known to nest in these marshes; they were found at El Descanso (0, 2), Lagunita El Ciprés (1, 3), Estero Punta Banda (0, 1), lower Río Santo Tomás (0, 2), lower Río San Telmo (3, 0), and El Rosario (18, 5). No rails were recorded at Cantamar, La Misión, or lower Arroyo San Carlos (Maneadero Plain). Disturbance/habitat alteration (mostly temporary?) was evident at several locations, but perhaps most disturbing was the presence of 200 goats and their human and canine keepers in the salt marsh at San Quintín.

few” at San José del Cabo 5 Apr 1923 (*Condor* 29: 156). This is a very rare spring transient in s. California (e.g., just five Salton Sink records 27 Apr–1 Jun: Patten, M.A., G. McCaskie, and P. Unitt. 2003. *Birds of the Salton Sea*, University of California Press). Inland shorebirds in the northeast included 2 Sanderlings at C.P.G.P. 18 Apr (SNGH) and a Short-billed Dowitcher se. of Sombrete 20 May (MJI, RAE). Two Wilson’s Phalaropes at Lagunas de Chametla 12 Mar–23 Apr (MJI, LSa) presumably wintered there. Two Red Phalaropes were offshore s. of Cabo San Lucas 12 Mar (MJI). Two ad. Laughing and 2 ad. Franklin’s Gulls were at C.P.G.P. 16 May (KLG, KCM), and another ad. Franklin’s was at Lagunita El Ciprés 9 May (LAC, SNGH). A Sabine’s Gull was near Isla San Pedro Mártir 8 Apr (MG). Nesting terns (nest numbers) at C.P.G.P. on 16 May included Gull-billed (204), Caspian (66), and Forster’s (10+), plus Black Skimmers (71; KLG, KCM).

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

A White-winged Dove on the Maneadero Plain 8 May (LAC, SNGH) was out of place. Night-birds were well represented on the road to San Antonio de la Sierra, s. Baja California Sur, with Western Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Elf Owl, and Common Poorwill recorded 8 Mar–24 Apr (MJI, LSa). Anna’s Hummingbirds continued to nest at Guerrero Negro, with nearly 30 nests found since Nov and three nests still active on 28 May (ph. AG, ph. ES).

The only Hammond’s Flycatcher reported was along Hwy. 3 s. of Vallecitos 28 Mar (DSC). Vermilion Flycatchers continued their good showing in the Colorado Desert portion of the Region (cf. *M.F.O.* 3: 50); this season, 15 were seen at four locations 26 Mar–20 May (MJI et al.). Two Western Kingbirds on the road to San Antonio de la Sierra 8 Mar suspected of being a pair (MJI) were followed by one bird there 24 Apr (LSa). The species is rare in Baja California Sur and unrecorded as a breeder s. of the Vizcaino Peninsula. The endangered Least Bell’s Vireo (*V. b. pusillus*) was reported from nine

drainages this season, including new or seldom-reported locations such as Arroyo San Carlos, above the Maneadero Plain (6+ singing 27 Mar–10 Jun; DSC, RAE); El Descanso (one singing 16 Apr; SNGH); Cataviña (one singing 18–30 Apr; LSa); Rancho Agua Caliente, e. of Ensenada (one singing 9 May; LAC, SNGH); Lagunita El Ciprés (pair plus



This female Wood Duck with four (of six) ducklings at the Mexicali Zoo, Baja California, Mexico 20 May 2004 represents the first nesting record for the Baja California Peninsula region. The provenance of the adults is unknown. Photograph by Marshall J. Iliff.

male 10 Jun; RAE); and Ensenada’s Presa Emilio López Zamora (4 singing 11 Jun; RAE). A Plumbeous Vireo at the Mexicali Zoo 26 Mar (MJI, RAH) may have wintered locally, as Patten et al. (2003) recognized no verified spring records for the Salton Sink.

Although Canyon Wren and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher are probably relatively widespread in summer on the “Northwestern Coastal Slope” (i.e., the California District), both species remain unconfirmed as breeders there (*M.F.O.* 3: 10–22). In this area, Canyon Wrens were found again along the lower

stretches of the Río Guadalupe (6 Mar–10 Jun; RAE et al.) and at Arroyo San Carlos (2 counter-singing 27 Mar; DSC), and two or three pairs of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were in chaparral at Rancho Agua Caliente, e. of Ensenada, 9 May (LAC, SNGH). Where the Colorado Desert meets the Vizcaino, our two other gnatcatcher species coexist. One or two pairs of Californias and two or three pairs of Black-taileds were at the traditional location about 9 km s. of San Felipe 17–18 Apr (SNGH; cf. *Western Birds* 33: 123–124). Interestingly, no California Towhees were seen from there s. to Puertecitos 17 Apr (SNGH). The exact nature of the interface of these two deserts remains to be elucidated. A single San Lucas Robin (*T. m. confinis*) found on the road to San Antonio de la Sierra 24 Apr (LSa)—where as many as 30+ have been reported in winters past—may represent altitudinal movement, but to what extent this phenomenon exists within the resident bird populations of the Cape District mountains remains poorly known. The most unexpected bird of the season was the White/Black-backed Wagtail heard and seen in flight at El Centenario 10 Mar (†MJI). This was not the first such record for the Region, however, as there are two previous records of White (9 Jan 1882 and Oct 1984–Feb 1985) and three others not identified to species (8 Nov–3 Apr); all were seen in the s. half of Baja California Sur. Cedar Waxwings were noted at Guerrero Negro as late as 28 May (AG).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Migrant warblers on both sides of the peninsula in n. Baja California 26–27 Mar included 2 Nashvilles, 5 Black-throated Grays, and 10+ Wilson’s (DSC, RAH, MJI). On the wintering grounds, 32 Black-throated Grays were along the road to San Antonio de la Sierra 9 Mar (MJI). The only “eastern” warblers found were in the northeast: a Palm s. of San Felipe 18 Apr (SNGH) was the first for that portion of the Region, and a female Black-and-white at the Mexicali Zoo 20 May was believed to be different than the bird that wintered there (RAE, MJI). A Yellow-

SA Spring migration of landbirds on the Baja California Peninsula remains poorly known (cf. *M.F.O.* 3: 153–155). We received no reports of obvious migrants s. of Guerrero Negro, where Gutierrez reported Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Lazuli Bunting in April and May. Elsewhere in the Vizcaino Desert, the only reports were from Cataviña, where Sansone recorded Western Wood-Pewee, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Wilson’s Warbler, tanager, and bunting in Apr. With the exception of the pewee, all of these species winter in Baja California Sur. Perhaps not coincidentally, Western Wood-Pewee is known to cross at least the mouth of the Gulf of California regularly, as the subspecies *peninsulæ* breeds only in the Cape District mountains. We remain desperate for more information on spring migration, especially from the s. two-thirds of the peninsula.

breasted Chat heard at Santiago 26 Apr (LSa) feeds speculation that the species may nest sparingly in s. Baja California Sur (cf. M.E.O. 3: 146).

Similar to the robin situation, only 5 Spotted Towhees were found on the road to San Antonio de la Sierra 8 Mar (MJI), where as many as 35 were seen in Jan 2003. In the same area, 34 Chipping Sparrows on 9 Mar (MJI) served as contrast to the species' rare status in the lowlands of Baja California Sur. The latest reports of wintering sparrows in Baja California Sur included a Clay-colored at Lagunas de Chametla 28-29 Apr (LSa), Lark Sparrows still common on the road to San Antonio de la Sierra 24 Apr (LSa), and Lark Buntings at Guerrero Negro through 23 May (AG). The Grasshopper Sparrow is a rare and local breeder in nw. Baja California and probably subject to significant population fluctuations in response to rainfall. To our knowledge, one or 2 singing on Mesa la Misión 6 Apr (MJI, RAE) and 3-4 singing in alfalfa one km below Santo Tomás 8 May (LAC, SNGH) represented the first breeding season



As in much of North America, the Baja California Peninsula has become home to increasing numbers of Eurasian Collared-Doves, including the first confirmed breeders in 2004. This bird was at the Vizcaino Desert oasis of Cataviña, Baja California on 30 April 2004. Photograph by Larry Sansone.

ing at La Misión 6 Apr (MJI, RAE) and 2 lingering in the Vizcaino Desert at Bahía de Los Angeles to 19 Apr (LSa) provided updates on the geographic expansion of this species.

Ten American Goldfinches on the n. Maneadero Plain 27 Mar, including singing males, were in an area where 13 had been seen in Dec 2003 (DSC).

NON-NATIVE SPECIES

The Region's first nesting record of the Eurasian Collared-Dove came from Baja California Sur, where a pair collected nest material at Guerrero Negro in late May (†AG). Other new locations for the species included Cataviña (one 30 Apr; ph. LSa) and the Maneadero Plain (up to 4, including attempted copulation, 8 May-10 Jun; LAC et al.). A Black-throated Magpie-Jay at the Mexicali Zoo 20 May (ph. MJI) was at a new location for this common escapee.

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Anna's Hummingbirds, once essentially restricted to the California District of northwestern Baja California and islands farther south, are now found with increasing frequency in Baja California Sur. Since mid-November 2003, numerous females have been found nesting at the city park in Guerrero Negro, including this one feeding a large nestling on 28 March 2004. Photograph by Eduardo Smith/Antonio Gutierrez.

records in the Region since 1997 (M.E.O. 3: 232). A White-throated Sparrow at La Salina 6 Apr (MJI) was probably a migrant.

A count of 94 Yellow-headed Blackbirds near El Centenario 10 Apr (RC, LS) was unexpected. A Great-tailed Grackle nest-build-

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