

With coverage of some interesting areas that are under-birded during the breeding season—especially the saltworks at Guerrero Negro—the summer period produced a smattering of highlights, including a Greater White-fronted Goose in Tijuana, a Common Goldeneye in Baja California Sur, and Mexico's first summering Glaucous Gull near Ensenada.

LOONS THROUGH TERNS

Three Pacific Loons were found on saline impoundments this season: a very worn imm. at Cerro Prieto geothermal ponds (hereafter, C.P.G.P.) 2 Jun (KLG, KCM) was seen again 9 Jul (KAR, CR) and found dead 29 Aug (ph. MS, MJB, MJI); an ad. was there 9 Jul (ph. KAR, CR); and one was at the Guerrero Negro saltworks 28 Jul (AC, NA). A Common Loon was at the latter location 28 Jun (RC, AC). At the n. extent of their range on the peninsula, Least Grebes have been found at San Ignacio for over 10 years; but a pair with a full-grown juv. 27 Jul (MSM, TMcG) confirmed nesting there for the first time in more than 70 years. Clark's Grebes nested for the 3rd consecutive year at C.P.G.P. (occupied nest 20 May, nest with 3 eggs 29 Aug) and were joined by Western Grebes this year (nest building 20 May) (MJI et al.).

Among the birds observed on a seven-hour boat trip off Bahía de Los Angeles 26 Jul were a Sooty and 25 Black-vented Shearwaters, 15 Black and 100+ Least Storm-Petrels, one ad. and one juv. Red-billed Tropicbird, 35 Brown and 75 Blue-footed Boobies, and 25 Magnificent Frigatebirds (MSM, TMcG). As was true in much of the sw. United States this season, Brown Pelicans were found in greater numbers than normal in the Mexicali Valley. Peak numbers (mostly juvs.) were recorded 29 Aug: 16 at two locations in Mexicali, 28 at C.P.G.P., and 2 at Campo Mosqueda (MJB, MJI, MS). One was at San Ignacio 27 Jul (MSM, TMcG).

Two Least Bitterns at Parque de la Amistad, Tijuana 28 Aug (MJB) were at a new locality, and 12 at San Ignacio 27 Jul included many juvs. (MSM, TMcG). The imm. Greater White-fronted Goose found in Tijuana in Feb was still present 2–28 Aug (ph. MJB), representing the first summer record for the Region. Two Brant remained at the Guerrero Negro saltworks 29 Jun (RC, AC), and 4 Wood Ducks were at the Mexicali Zoo 29 Aug (MJB, MJI, MS). In nw. Baja California, nesting ducks were found at traditional locations: El Descanso (Ruddy Duck), Río Guadalupe estuary (Gadwall, Mallard), La Salina (Gadwall), and Lagunita El Ciprés (Gadwall, Cinnamon Teal, Redhead) (MJB, RAE, MJI). A male Northern Pintail at Estero Punta Banda 21 Jun–28 Jul (RAE, MJB, MJI) was unseasonal, and a Common Goldeneye at the Guerrero Negro saltworks 29 Jun (RC, AC) was Baja California Sur's first in summer.

Baja California Peninsula



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Four Red-shouldered Hawks were at San Ignacio 27 Jul (MSM, TMcG), but the species remains unconfirmed as a breeder in Baja California Sur. In the s. Gulf of California, a Wandering Tattler was at I. San José 1 Jun, and 2 Black Turnstones were there 30 May (RC, LS). The Guerrero Negro saltworks hosted numerous phalaropes: 84 Wilson's and 1100 Red-necked 29 Jun (RC, AC) and one Wilson's and 30,000 Red-necked 28 Jul (AC, NA). At C.P.G.P., 2000 Red-necked

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SA Harry Carter, Darrell Whitworth, Josh Koepke, Frank Gress, Eduardo Palacios, Laurie Harvey, and others conducted seabird monitoring for the California Institute of Environmental Studies (funded by ChevronTexaco de Mexico) Mar-Oct 2005 on the Islas Los Coronados of Baja California. Among other interesting observations, on the afternoon of 23 Mar they saw a **Cory's Shearwater** flying by, landing on, and attending an empty nest. The personnel searching the se. side of Middle Rock for crevice-nesting birds saw and heard this bird at close range; at about 20 minutes before dusk, they watched it land on an empty Brandt's Cormorant nest on the e. side, where it remained until dusk. The bird was not detected again until 18 Apr at 11:00 a.m., when it was noted sitting just below two boulders on the edge of a cliff on the e. side. When approached, the bird flushed, circled, and passed close by several times while vocalizing, before landing in the same area after observers moved away. On 2, 16, & 17 May, it circled and passed close by observers on the s., e., or n. sides of the rock but was not observed on land. On 2 May, it was first photographed, and on 17 May it joined a feeding flock that formed around a fishing boat. The only shipboard observation was on the morning of 20 May, when the bird was seen roosting with 5 Brandt's Cormorants on the e. side of the rock, before later flying by at close range and landing in the water. After being missed during shore visits to the rock on 30 May, 19-20 Jun, 19 Jul, and 21 Aug, it was found on the afternoon of 19 Sep, sitting on an empty nest (a loose pile of dried iceplant and grasses) about 1-1.5 m deep within a large crevice under the two boulders where observed on 18 Apr. After evading our attempt to capture it, the bird flew past the e. side several times, vocalizing. Personnel had searched this crevice repeatedly between 23 Mar and 20 Jun without detecting this nest, so it was certainly constructed between late Jun and 19 Sep. On the afternoon of 19 Oct, the bird was observed in the same crevice sitting on a better-constructed (but still empty) nest bowl. After evading attempts to capture it again, the bird circled and passed by the cliffs on the e. and s. sides of the rock several times with little vocalizing before departing.

The bird's behavior over at least seven months strongly resembled pre-nesting colony attendance, but the observers suspect that only one bird was present in 2005. Nesting would be far outside the range of this North Atlantic/Mediterranean species. Isolated records of Cory's Shearwaters in California in 2004 (*N.A.B.* 58: 136, 175) may reflect meanderings of this individual from a home base at the Coronado Islands, but multiple birds may be involved. There is an older (1934) record from New Zealand.



This Cory's Shearwater was observed repeatedly in the Coronado Islands of Baja California from March through October 2005 (here 2 May 2005). It represents the third record of the species in the Pacific. Photograph by D. Whitworth.

were seen 29 Aug (MJB, MJI, MS). Following the Mexicali Valley's first reports in Apr and May, 2 ad. Heermann's Gulls were at C.P.G.P. 9 Jul (ph. KAR, CR). A first-summer **Glaucous Gull** among 1500 Western Gulls congregating at El Sauzal 28 Jul (†MJI, ph. MJB, RAE) provided the first summer record for Mexico. At the Guerrero Negro saltworks, 40 Black Terns on 29 Jun (RC, AC) and 53 on 28 Jul (AC, NA) seemed impressive, but 75 were there in Jul 1996 (*Monographs in Field Ornithology* 3: 218).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH FINCHES

A male Downy Woodpecker at Playas de Tijuana 27 Aug (†MJB) was at a new locality and was the first reported in the Region since Mar 2003. A Western Kingbird at Villa Jesús Maria in s. Baja California 26 Jul (MSM, TMcG) was at a location where nesting was confirmed in 1995 (*Monographs in Field Ornithology* 3: 73, 104). In addition to a small, disjunct breeding population on the Vizcaino Peninsula in Baja California Sur (*Monographs in Field Ornithology* 3: 104), Bell's Vireos breed regularly along n. Baja California's riparian corridors. A singing male on the Maneadero Plain 21 Jun (RAE, MJB) was the first reported from that area. At Santa Inés—the known s. limit of the Baja California component of the range—a mile-long segment of arroyo held 19 birds on 3 Apr, but the presence of 3 singing males just s. of Punta Prieta on the same date (all K LW) suggests that the breeding range in Baja California may extend at least 100 km farther south. One of 2 Barn Swallows seen at the mouth of the Río Descanso 28 Jul carried a feather—possibly lining for a nest—farther down the coast (RAE, MJB, MJI). Additional late-spring and summer records, these in Baja California Sur, include one flying n. at Bahía Asunción 24 May (OJ) and 4 at San Ignacio 27 Jul (MSM, TMcG). This swallow's known breeding range extends

south along the coast almost to the international border, and in San Diego County, CA, spring migrants have been recorded as late as 23 May, fall migrants as early as 2 Jul (P. Unitt, 2004, *San Diego County Bird Atlas*). The species has been found nesting on Islas Los Coronados (*Western Birds* 8: 99; *Monographs in Field Ornithology* 3: 184), but confirmation from the mainland seems overdue. Yellow-breasted Chats breed locally on the peninsula s. to the n. Cape District; a singing bird at Mulegé on 6 Apr (KLW) was presumed to be on territory. At San Ignacio, records of a singing chat on 4 Apr (KLW) followed by 4 on 27 Jul (MSM, TMcG) suggest that the species' local status has changed little since Griffing Bancroft considered it to be a "rare" breeder there in 1928 (*Condor* 32: 43).

Several n. Baja California breeders were found either nesting or potentially nesting at new locations. Rufous-crowned Sparrows are resident locally in Baja California Sur, as well as on the coastal slope of nw. Baja California, where the southernmost published record is from Isla San Martín at 30°30' N (J. Grinnell, 1928, *A Distributional Summation of the Ornithology of Lower California*); thus a pair at Arroyo Hondo (30° 12' N, ca. 18 km n. of El Rosario) in Apr (KLW) represents an extension of the known range, albeit a modest and unsurprising one. The last confirmed breeding of Brewer's Sparrow in the Region was substantiated by a series of 3 ads. and 3 juvs. collected in the Sierra San Pedro Mártir 9-15 Jul 1905 (*Auk* 59: 317); the 19 May observation of two pairs in an expanse of Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) 7 km s. of El Condor (e. of Tecate) suggests that the species probably continues to nest in pockets of suitable habitat in the n. mountains (RAE, DSC, MJI).

A pond 18 km s. of El Condor held 25 pairs of Tricolored Blackbirds 19 May (DSC, RAE, MJI), and unprecedented numbers of

Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found nesting in the ne.: 10 singing in cattails at Mexicali Country Club 4 Apr (MJI) were followed 9 May by ca. 100 pairs nesting at a golf course east of Mexicali and another estimated 100 pairs nesting 10 km w. of Algodones n. of Hwy. 8 (both DSC). A Western Meadowlark at the Guerrero Negro saltworks 17 May (OJ) was far s. of known breeding areas, but note the 12 Jun 1991 record of one even farther s. at Ciudad Insurgentes and speculation of nesting in the expanding agricultural zone of the mid-peninsula (*Western Birds* 23: 161). Up to 3 American Goldfinches were seen 2-16 Apr at Parque Morelos, Tijuana (ph. MJB), where the species was confirmed nesting in 2000 (*Monographs in Field Ornithology* 3: 153), but none could be found there on 2 Aug after part of the park burned (MJB). Farther s., one was on the Maneadero Plain 21 Jun (RAE, MJB), and another was at Playas de Tijuana 27 Aug (MJB).

NON-NATIVE SPECIES

At least 6 Spotted Doves were at Rosarito—the Regional stronghold for the species—on 21 Jun, and on that same day, fledgling Eurasian Collared-Doves at two locations on the Maneadero Plain provided the first confirmed nestings in Baja California (MJB, RAE). A Red-crowned Parrot at Bajamar, BC 25 Jul (MSM, TMcG) furnished the first Regional report of which we are aware.

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