

A BREEDING RECORD OF THE DARK-EYED JUNCO ON SANTA CATALINA ISLAND, CALIFORNIA

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A total of 56 species of land birds has been recorded breeding on the eight Channel Islands off the coast of southern California (Diamond and Jones 1980). Many are permanent resident species breeding every year, while others are migrants or immigrants that only infrequently or briefly establish breeding populations. This dynamic equilibrium of the breeding birds of the Channel Islands has been addressed by several authors (Lynch and Johnson 1974, Jones 1975, Jones and Diamond 1976, Diamond and Jones 1980) and predicts that from time to time additions will be made to the list of breeding species (see Haemig 1986). This report documents a successful breeding of the Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) on Santa Catalina Island and the first record of this species breeding on any of the Channel Islands.

On 14 April 1986, I observed an adult Dark-eyed Junco accompanied by two juvenal-plumaged fledglings in a small gully in Renton Mine Canyon, located on the southeastern side of the island. Much of the vegetation on Santa Catalina Island has been greatly altered by man. However, the vegetation in Renton Mine Canyon consists of some of the best-recovered native island plant communities. On the south slope there is an island version of sage scrub with *Eriogonum giganteum* and a chaparral dominated by *Ceanothus arboreus*. The north slope is mostly an oak woodland made up of a variety of hybrid oaks. The canyon bottom is dominated by *Prunus lyonii* and *Quercus* × *macdonaldii*. There are some scattered introduced *Eucalyptus* on the edge of a road high on the north slope. Others present who also saw the birds were T. Martin, S. Critchfield, C. Boardman, and G. Hoffman. The two young birds were giving fledgling location notes and begging vocalizations and were attended and periodically fed by the adult. Although they appeared capable of flight, it is improbable that they were strong enough to have made an over-water flight to the island. It is most likely that they were hatched near the point of observation in Renton Mine Canyon. The attending adult had the coloration of a female of one of the races of Oregon Junco. The mainland breeding populations closest to Santa Catalina Island have been assigned to *Junco hyemalis thurberi* (Grinnell and Miller 1944).

Dark-eyed Juncos have been recorded as winter visitors on several of the Channel Islands (Garrett and Dunn 1981, pers. obs.). A single early summer observation suggested they might have bred on Santa Cruz Island but convincing evidence was lacking (Diamond and Jones 1980, H.L. Jones pers. comm.). This species has recently expanded its breeding range in coastal southern California, particularly in the Santa Monica Mountains (H.L. Jones pers. comm.); its appearance as a breeder in the Channel Islands is perhaps not unexpected. It remains to be seen, of course, if this is an isolated occurrence or the establishment of a new breeding population.

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