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### **NORTHWARD RANGE EXPANSION BY THE SHORT-TAILED HAWK, WITH FIRST RECORDS FOR NEW MEXICO AND CHIHUAHUA**

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**ABSTRACT:** We documented single Short-tailed Hawks (*Buteo brachyurus*) in the states of Chihuahua in April 2005 and New Mexico in May and June 2005. These are the first reports for both states. To put these records into historical and geographical context, we compiled published reports for western Mexico and Arizona and for northeastern Mexico and Texas; these indicate a steady northward range expansion by this species over the past half century, an expansion that may have accelerated in recent years.

### **SUMMER DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND HABITAT USE OF BLACK-NECKED STILTS AND AMERICAN AVOCETS IN CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL VALLEY**

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**ABSTRACT:** Little is known about breeding shorebirds in California's Central Valley on which conservation actions could be based. In summer 2003, we surveyed shallow-water habitats throughout that region for Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*) and American Avocets (*Recurvirostra americana*). Survey methods included ground counts, aerial surveys, and sampling of Sacramento Valley rice fields. We estimated about 30,000 Black-necked Stilts and 10,700 American Avocets in the Central Valley, exclusive of Suisun Marsh. The proportion of stilts and avocets, respectively, within four subregions were Sacramento Valley 74% and 37%, delta 1% and 1%, San Joaquin basin 2% and 7%, and Tulare basin 23% and 56%. The ratio of stilts to avocets was 5.6:1 in the Sacramento Valley, 1.1: in the San Joaquin Valley. The Sacramento Valley held 64% of all stilts and avocets, the Tulare basin 32%, the San Joaquin basin 3%, and the delta 1%. Key habitats were rice fields (73%), managed wetlands (10%), and sewage ponds (6%) for stilts, and rice (35%), managed wetlands (32%), agricultural evaporation ponds (14%), sewage ponds (9%), and agricultural canals (6%) for avocets. Rice held 98% of

all stilts and 93% of all avocets in the Sacramento Valley. The Tulare basin had five habitats that held >10% of its total for at least one of the species and was the only region where agricultural evaporation ponds, agricultural canals and ditches, and water-storage facilities supported large numbers of shorebirds. Overall, >80% of all stilts and avocets in the Central Valley were found in environments created for agriculture, water management, or industry, where they may be exposed to toxins. Their reliance on these artificial environments is risky, as future changes to serve human economies may reduce the value of such habitats to wildlife. Thus there is a need to restore and enhance high-quality wetlands in the Central Valley to counter historic losses and potential future loss of other shallow-water habitats of uncertain reliability and quality.

## **GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION IN CACTUS WREN SONGS**

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**ABSTRACT:** We compared Cactus Wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) songs recorded in three regions of coastal southern California (Ventura and Los Angeles counties, Orange County, and San Diego County), Baja California, and the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts. On the basis of four measures of the fine structure of individual notes, songs of wrens from Baja California south of 31° N latitude were most distinct; songs of birds from the three regions of coastal southern California were similar and most like songs given by birds in Baja California. Cactus Wrens in coastal southern California are geographically isolated, morphologically different, and differ in song behavior from those in Baja California. Compared with Sonoran and Chihuahuan desert populations, Cactus Wrens in coastal southern California are geographically isolated, differ in song behavior, and occur in a unique and unusual ecological setting. These characteristics suggest that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should reconsider its 1994 decision denying coastal Cactus Wrens protection under the Endangered Species Act because the population was deemed to not meet the definition of a “distinct population segment.”

## **EVIDENCE OF DOUBLE-CLUTCHING BY BRANDT’S CORMORANTS ON ALCATRAZ ISLAND, CALIFORNIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** Double clutches of eggs in the same season are rare among seabirds and, to our knowledge, never recorded heretofore in Brandt’s Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*). We report here seven cases of second clutches for this species observed at a colony recently established on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, California. Chicks

hatched from two of the seven second clutches, but no chicks survived to fledge. Over eight years of observation (1997–2004), second clutches were laid from 2000 to 2003 only.

#### **NOTES:**

#### **NOTEWORTHY BIRD RECORDS FROM SINALOA, MÉXICO**

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#### **INTERMEDIATE EGRET (*EGRETTA INTERMEDIA*) IN THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS, ALASKA**

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#### **BOOK REVIEWS:**

**Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Conservation in Northern Mexico**, edited by Jean-Luc E. Cartron, Gerardo Ceballos, and Richard S. Felger. 2005. Oxford University Press. 514 pages. Hardback, \$99.50. ISBN13: 978-0-19-515672-0, ISBN10: 0-515672-2.

**Birds of Lane County, Oregon**, edited by Alan L. Contreras. 2006. Oregon State University Press. 366 pages. 130 black-and-white photos, illustrations, and figures. Paperback, \$20.00. (ISBN 0-87071-180-6).

#### **FEATURED PHOTO:**

#### **LEUCISTIC GREBE AT MONO LAKE —AN IDENTIFICATION CHALLENGE**

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