

## **Western Birds abstracts Vol. 39. No. 2.**

### **NEST SPACING IN ELEGANT TERNS: HEXAGONAL PACKING REVISITED**

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**ABSTRACT:** Within an important breeding colony in southern California, Elegant Terns (*Thalasseus elegans*) nest in one to several tightly packed clusters. Inter-nest distances within these clusters average 31.2 cm. This value is less than that reported for the larger-bodied Royal Tern (*T. maximus*) and Great Crested Tern (*T. bergii*). For Elegant Terns, the modal number of adjacent nests was six (range 5–7). This type of nest arrangement has been previously described as hexagonal packing and now appears to be typical of all *Thalasseus* terns for which data are available.

### **REASSESSMENT OF TROPICAL PARULA SUBSPECIES IN BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR**

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**ABSTRACT:** Three records of the Tropical Parula (*Parula pitiayumi*) from southern Baja California Sur in the 1920s have long been considered to represent the endemic Socorro Island subspecies *graysoni*. After discovering an adult female Tropical Parula in the same area in May 2006 that did not appear to be *graysoni*, we examined specimens and the literature, finding that the two 1920s specimens are not *graysoni* but most consistent with subspecies *insularis*, occurring primarily on Nayarit's Tres Mariás Islands. The pattern of yellow on the throat, distinct white wing bars, and distinct white tail spots preclude *graysoni*; the relatively small white tail spots and longer tarsi and tails suggest *insularis* rather than *pulchra* of mainland western Mexico.

### **HABITAT FRAGMENTATION AND SCRUB-SPECIALIST BIRDS: SAN DIEGO FRAGMENTS REVISITED**

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**ABSTRACT:** We resurveyed six fragments of scrub vegetation near San Diego for eight scrub-specialist bird species sampled in two previous studies (Soulé et al. 1988 and Crooks et al. 2001) to determine if species' distributions are changing over time and whether previously reported patterns of occurrence are persisting. We found that these habitat fragments tended to lose resident populations of scrub-specialist birds over the last 20 years, that the number of species detected was positively related to area, that extirpations were negatively related to area, and that local recolonizations were negatively related to the isolation of the fragment. In addition, sensitivity to fragmentation seems to be related in part to differences in body size and dispersal capability.

**NOTES:**

**FIRST DOCUMENTED BREEDING COLONY OF CASPIAN TERNS ON THE  
COPPER RIVER DELTA, ALASKA**

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**CASPIAN TERNS NESTING IN ALASKA: PROPHECY, SERENDIPITY,  
IMPLICATIONS REGIONAL CLIMATE-RELATED**

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**BREEDING BEHAVIOR AND DISPERSAL OF RADIO-MARKED  
CALIFORNIA CLAPPER RAILS**

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**BOOK REVIEWS:**

**Birds of the Aleutian Islands, Alaska**, by Daniel D. Gibson and G. Vernon Byrd. 2007. Nuttall Ornithological Club and American Ornithologists' Union. 351 pages, 33 color photographs. Hardback, \$40.00. ISBN 978-0-943610-73-3

**Birding Colorado: Over 180 Premier Birding Sites at 93 Locations**, by Hugh Kingery. 2007. Globe Pequot Press, Guilford, CT. 336 pages. Paperback, \$19.95. ISBN 978-0-7627-3960-8

**FEATURED PHOTO:**

**GREAT GRAY OWLS NESTING IN FRESNO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

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