

# Notes on some northern birds wintering on the Pacific coast of Guatemala

by Robert A. Behrstock<sup>1</sup>

On December 30 and 31, 1975 and January 1, 1976, I observed birds near Puerto San José, Department of Escuintla, Guatemala, and Iztapa, 8 km to the east. Three species were seen for which there are few or no records for the Pacific coast of Guatemala.

The occurrence of Black Skimmers (*Rynchops niger*) in Guatemala has been based on one record from the Pacific coast (Salvin and Godman 1903:417 cited in Land 1970, *Birds of Guatemala*:114). On Dec. 30 at 1300 hrs I saw many Black Skimmers standing on the dikes of the salt ponds about 2 km east of Puerto San José. On Jan. 1, I counted at least 600 individuals as they flew over the ponds. I obtained several photographs of these birds. The individuals photographed had white tails characteristic of the northern race *R. n. niger*.

Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) winter primarily from Panama and the Guianas through central Chile, with stragglers reported from California to Patagonia. They have been rarely reported from Guatemala in winter (Land, op. cit.:258). On Jan. 1, 19 Barn Swallows were observed at the salt ponds outside Puerto San José. The birds were perched with Rough-winged Swallows

(*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) on wires over the salt ponds. The Barn Swallows were undergoing molt, but the shiny deep blue back, elongated tail, and orange breast were visible to varying extents on all birds.

Land (1970) listed no records of Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) from the Pacific slope of Guatemala and considered it rare even on the Caribbean slope. On Dec. 31, an apparently adult male Prothonotary Warbler was observed on the edge of the Chiquimulilla Canal about 2 km east of Iztapa. It was observed from a distance of 3–5 m in strong light with 8 × 40 binoculars, all field marks were carefully noted. The bird was foraging 1–2 m above the water on the outer branches of a mangrove.

I wish to thank Stanley W. Harris, Dept of Wildlife Management, Humboldt State University; Lloyd F. Kiff, Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology; and Eugene Eisenmann, The American Museum of Natural History, for reading the manuscript and making helpful suggestions.

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