

NOTES

OBSERVATIONS ON ISLA GUADALUPE IN NOVEMBER 1989

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Isla Guadalupe (29° N, 118° 17' W) is located off the west coast of Baja California, México. The history and status of its avifauna, as well as a brief description of the island, have been given by Jehl and Everett (1985). Additional recent observations have been reported by Dunlap (1988) and Oberbauer et al. (1989).

In this note we report on birds observed on and near Isla Guadalupe on 23 November 1989. Our time ashore lasted from 1000 to 1500 hours, during which we traveled about 60 km (round trip) by car from Melpomene Cove, at the southern end of the island, to the large barren area north of the remnant of the cypress forest, in the high central region. En route we also visited Campamento Weste.

At the start of the trip air temperature was in the low 20s (°C) and the visibility was several kilometers. By the time we arrived at the cypress forest, the temperature had dropped several degrees and become cold, it was misty and windy, and visibility had decreased to 100 meters.

An annotated list of birds observed is presented below:

Laysan Albatross (*Diomedea immutabilis*). We saw four individuals roosting on a barren rocky area at Melpomene Cove, while two were flying over. A breeding colony was discovered in the same place in 1986 (Dunlap 1988) and discussed by Everett (1988). This same colony was also reported on by Pitman (1988) and Oberbauer et al. (1989). We assumed that the birds sitting on the ground were incubating but did not attempt to confirm this because of possible disturbance.

Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*). We saw several individuals flying close to the ship at night, near the north end of the island. These storm-petrels are regular breeders in the area, and their status was discussed by Jehl and Everett (1985).

American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*). Several individuals, both females and males, were seen along the road. This is a common species of the island (Jehl and Everett 1985).

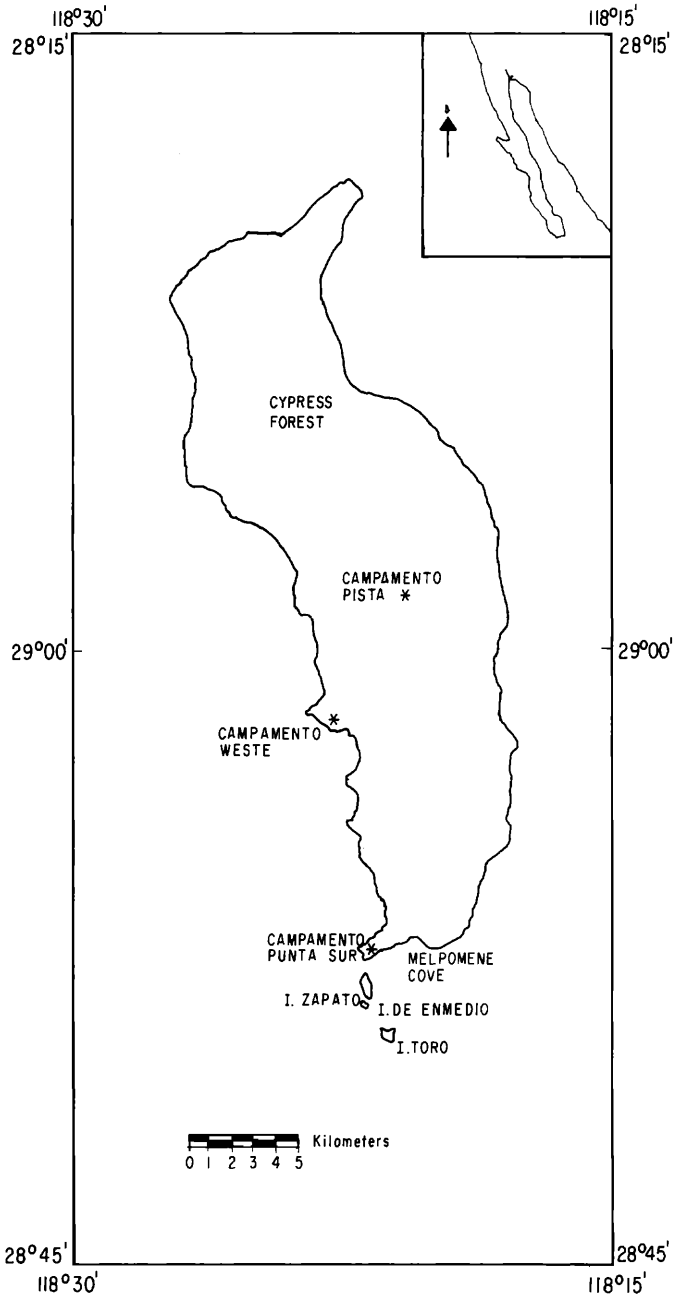
Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*). We saw two on the sandy beach of Campamento Weste.

Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*). We saw a few flying between Isla Zapato and Isla Toro off the south end of the main island, in a mixed flock with Western Gulls (*Larus occidentalis*). These gulls were identified by their pale mantle, small size, and ringed yellow bill. Jehl and Everett (1985) reported only two previous sight records, one of them questionable.

Western Gull (*Larus occidentalis*). This species is resident on the island (Jehl and Everett 1985), but its abundance may be augmented by mainland birds during the winter (W. T. Everett pers. comm.). We saw several between Isla Zapato and Isla Toro.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*). We saw two individuals near Campamento Pista, in the high central area, on rocky ground with some herbaceous cover. This species has been collected only once on the island, on 10 June 1953 (Howell and Cade 1953).

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Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*). This is a common resident of the island (Jehl and Everett 1985). We saw several near Campamento Pista, in rocky herbaceous habitat.

Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*). Although this species is reportedly abundant on the island (Jehl and Everett 1985), we saw only two individuals: one at Campamento Punta Sur and one in a barren area north of the cypress forest.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*). We saw a male standing on small rocks at the side of the road in a barren area between Campamento Pista and the cypress forest. The only other record is of a male observed on 4 March 1886 (Bryant 1887).

Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*). This seems to be a rare species on the island (Jehl and Everett 1985). We saw one individual in a eucalyptus tree at Campamento Pista.

Phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*). This is a new species for the island. We saw a male and a female near the small water pond (about 100 square meters) by Campamento Pista.

European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). Several at Campamento Pista, in a mixed flock (about 15 individuals of each species) with Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*).

Warbler (*Dendroica* sp.). A *Dendroica* warbler of undetermined species in a eucalyptus tree at Campamento Pista.

White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*). One individual in a eucalyptus tree at Campamento Pista. This is the second Guadalupe record for the species, although it is probably regular in migration (Jehl and Everett 1985).

Guadalupe Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis insularis*). Two individuals in the cypress forest.

Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*). One individual seen on a barbed wire fence near Campamento Pista, and another heard in the old goat fence-trap, approximately halfway between Melpomene Cove and Campamento Pista, on the high central area. This species has not been recorded on the island since 22 March 1886 (Bryant 1887).

Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). Several individuals at Campamento Pista, mixed with the starlings. This species is new to the list of birds of the island.

House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*). Several on a barbed wire fence near Campamento Pista.

The locality at which we recorded the highest number of bird species was Campamento Pista. This camp is inhabited by a marine in charge of the landing strip, and includes a few huts and a garden with some eucalyptus trees and other introduced plants. It also had, at the time of the visit, a water pond nearby. These two facts likely contributed to the variety of birds at the site. Our observations add two species to the island's list of known birds, and include some not recorded since the end of the last century and others considered rare.

Habitat destruction by goats and predation by feral cats have been important factors in causing the extinction of some birds and decimation of the populations of others (Howell and Cade 1954). We observed many goats (between 200 and 300 animals, in four herds) over the entire area, except near Melpomene Cove. The goats were very wary, as a result of continuous, though low-intensity, hunting. We saw also two packs of feral dogs (three and seven animals). These are said to be very aggressive, and are surely another important factor of predation.

← Figure 1. Isla Guadalupe, Baja California, Mexico, showing localities visited on 23 November 1989.

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