

FERRUGINOUS HAWK AND PINE SISKIN IN THE SIERRA DE LA LAGUNA, BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR; SUBSPECIES OF THE PINE SISKIN IN BAJA CALIFORNIA

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From 20 January to 1 February 1990 we crossed the Sierra de La Laguna, studying the winter birdlife of this isolated mountain range lying between La Paz and Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur. From 27 to 30 January we camped at La Laguna (23°30'N, 109°59'W, elevation 1650 m), an open valley surrounded by wooded mountains and a prominent locality in the history of the exploration of Baja California's biota.

Throughout our stay at La Laguna an immature light-phase Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*) perched conspicuously atop the oak (*Quercus devia*) trees scattered about the valley floor and occasionally cruised about, foraging. We had many good views of its whitish head, underparts, and tail, and long tapered wings, over the four days. The light-phase immature is by far the most frequently seen plumage of the Ferruginous Hawk toward the southern end of the species' usual winter range in southern California.

The Ferruginous Hawk has been reported only once previously in Baja California Sur, by Brewster (1902), who collected two specimens on 27 and 28 November 1887 "on the summit of the Sierra de La Laguna." Eduardo Palacios, Lucia Alfaro, Gary Page, and Lynne Stenzel saw two adults along the southeast shore of Laguna Ojo de Liebre, Baja California Sur, on 9 January 1991 (E. Palacios pers. comm.). Otherwise, the species is known in Baja California as a scarce winter visitor occurring south only to El Rosario (Wilbur 1987). In mainland Mexico it has been recorded as far south as the states of Guanajuato and Hidalgo (Friedmann et al. 1950).

Early on the morning of 28 January Unitt was surprised to hear the ascending "zipper" call of the Pine Siskin (*Carduelis pinus*) and to see three of the birds flying high overhead along the southeast margin of the valley. Later in the morning Rodriguez and Castellanos independently encountered and identified the birds nearby along a creek leading into the valley through the pine-oak woodland. Finally, Unitt and Thomas A. Scott saw one of the birds well as it perched in the treetops along this creek with a flock of about 25 Lesser Goldfinches (*C. psaltria*). The siskin was about the same size as the goldfinches but its heavily brown-streaked plumage and the yellow stripe along the base of its remiges were plainly visible.

Rodriguez visited the Sierra de la Laguna again from 5 to 13 March 1992. He noted one Pine Siskin perched atop an oak in the Palo Extraño area (23°31'N, 109°56'W, elevation 1640 m) on 12 March.

There is only one previous record of the Pine Siskin for Baja California Sur, of a specimen collected by Lyman Belding (1883) at La Paz on 3 March 1882. Otherwise, the Pine Siskin is known in Baja California south only to the Sierra San Pedro Martir, some 950 kilometers to the northwest, where it is a common breeding resident.

Grinnell (1928) identified Belding's specimen from La Paz as *C. p. pinus*, the small, heavily streaked subspecies breeding over the Pine Siskin's range in Canada and the United States, rather than *C. p. macropterus*, the larger, less streaked subspecies breeding over the species' range in mainland Mexico.

NOTES

The fifth edition of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds (1957) ascribed the Pine Siskins breeding in the Sierra Juárez and Sierra San Pedro Mártir, northern Baja California, to *macropterus*, but Unitt's study of specimens in the San Diego Natural History Museum (SDNHM) and the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), New York, does not bear this out. *C. p. macropterus* differs from nominate *pinus* by its average longer wing, more extensive yellow in the tail, and more softly streaked underparts (allowing for plumage wear, which makes the streaking more distinct). There is some overlap between the subspecies in all three characters; only with all three considered simultaneously can *pinus* and *macropterus* be distinguished. The wing chords of 23 male *pinus* from Alaska (2 specimens), British Columbia (1), Idaho (1), Wyoming (1), Oregon (15), and northern California (2) average 73.4 mm, ranging from 69.9 to 76.4 mm; 5 male *macropterus* from Las Vigas, Veracruz, average 76.2 mm, ranging from 74.2 to 78.5 mm (a comparison of females was not made, there being only one female *macropterus* in AMNH). Six males (5 SDNHM, 1 AMNH) from the Sierra Juárez and Sierra San Pedro Mártir average 73.8 mm, ranging from 73.0 to 76.1 mm, thus falling entirely within the range of nominate *pinus*. Yellow in the rectrices falls entirely within the range of variation in *pinus*. All of the *macropterus* from Las Vigas were collected in April, whereas all but one of the siskins from the sierras Juárez and San Pedro Mártir were collected in June and July, so the streaking on these birds is not directly comparable. Nevertheless, the streaking on the Baja California birds is typical of that of siskins from the U.S. in the same advanced stage of plumage wear. Therefore we suggest that Baja California be included in the range of *C. p. pinus* rather than of *C. p. macropterus*.

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