

## NOTES

### FIRST RECORD OF THE GRAY SILKY-FLYCATCHER FROM BAJA CALIFORNIA, MEXICO

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On 7 October 1994 we collected an adult female Gray Silky-Flycatcher (*Ptilogonys cinereus*) at Arroyo El Medano, also called Arroyo Cantamar, about 1.5 km northeast of the town of Cantamar, Baja California, Mexico (32° 14' 10" N, 116° 54' 40" W, elevation 15 m). This species has not been previously recorded in Baja California (Grinnell 1928, Wilbur 1987), and the nearest known resident population is located in southeastern Sonora (28° 20' N, Phillips 1991) approximately 750 km from the site reported here.

The Gray Silky-Flycatcher's known distribution extends along the highlands (elevation 1000–3500 meters) from the northern Mexican states of Sonora, Sinaloa, Chihuahua (southern), Durango (western), Zacatecas, Nuevo León (central), and Tamaulipas (southwestern) south to central Guatemala (Friedmann et al. 1957, Edwards 1972, A.O.U. 1983, Howell and Webb 1995). The species has been recorded as a winter visitor near Alamos, Sonora, and at several coastal localities near San Blas, Nayarit (Phillips 1991). If the species occurs naturally in northern Baja California it is only as a rare vagrant.

Edwards (1972), A.O.U. (1983), and Howell and Webb (1995) noted that *P. cinereus* is a resident species, often seen in small flocks in mountain forests of pine, oak, and juniper, rarely in arid scrub. Like waxwings and the Phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*), it perches upright on upper branches, feeding on small fruits, especially mistletoe. Our specimen of *Ptilogonys cinereus* was collected perching on a Western Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) parasitized by Big-leaf Mistletoe (*Phoradendron tomentosum* var. *macrophyllum*). Other representative riparian plants around the collecting site are the Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and Mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) (Wiggins 1980).

We identified the specimen as a Gray Silky-Flycatcher (Figure 1) by the following diagnostic combination of features (Ridgway 1904, Blake 1953, Edwards 1972): occipital crest, white eye-ring, wings and tail black, lateral rectrices with a broad white median patch, belly white, crissum yellow, and head, throat, and back brownish gray. Measurements of the specimen are total length 215 mm, wingspan 250 mm, and tail length 100 mm. Our specimen (UABC 667) is deposited in the Bird Collection, Laboratorio de Vertebrados, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Ensenada.

The specimen did not show evidence of feather wear, broken claws, or injuries at the base of the bill, features that would betray the possibility of our specimen's having been an escaped cage bird. We interviewed several bird dealers in Ensenada and Tijuana to determine if this species is offered for sale as a pet. They told us that it has not been seen as a cage bird in these cities. Also, this frugivorous species is not commonly kept caged because it is extremely hard to feed (cf. Lasley and Pincelli 1986).

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Gray Silky-Flycatchers have been observed on several occasions in Alta California, but they have been considered escaped cage birds (P. Unitt pers. comm.). In addition, this species has been recorded, reportedly as a natural vagrant, at Patagonia, near Nogales, Arizona (17 July 1980, Lasley and Pincelli 1986) and Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, Cameron County, Texas (31 October 1985, DeBenedictis 1991). Most vagrant Mexican landbirds in Alta California characteristically show up in autumn or winter (Lasley and Pincelli 1986). Similarly, our *Ptilogonys cinereus* was collected in the autumn and was probably a natural vagrant.

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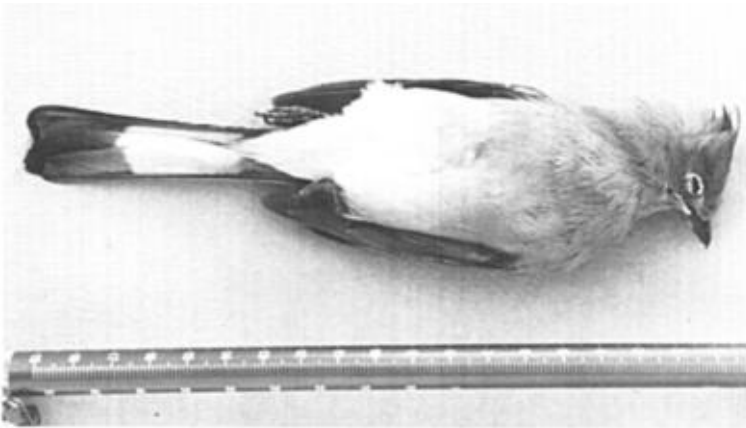


Figure 1. Adult female (total length 215 mm) Gray Silky-Flycatcher (*Ptilogonys cinereus*) collected at Arroyo El Medano, Baja California, Mexico, 7 October 1994.

Photo by Gorgonio Ruiz-Campos

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