A concentration of Mountain Plovers *Charadrius montanus* in San Luis Potosí, Mexico

Héctor Gómez de Silva G., Rodrigo A. Medellín Legorreta, Miguel A. Amin & Saúl Aguilar

The Mountain Plover *Charadrius montanus*, which breeds in the shortgrass prairie mainly east of the Rocky Mountains in the U.S.A., is known to winter in south-western U.S.A. and northern Mexico, often in medium-sized to large concentrations in open grasslands and farmland. However, there have been few published records of flocks of this species in Mexico. The species is now listed by BirdLife International as Vulnerable¹, following information published in Knopf & Miller³, suggesting that there was a 63% decline in numbers between 1966 and 1991. Thus, Wege & Long⁷ stated that "priority sites need to be identified in Mexico for wintering *C. montanus*". Previously, *C. montanus* has been recorded in San Luis Potosí by Mellink⁵, with small
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numbers seen in farmland at Las Joyas (22°06'N 101°44'W, c.2,120 m). Here we report on a sight-
ing of a concentration of this species in the El Manantial prairie-dog town, near San Vicente, northernmost San Luis Potosí, on 21 December 1994.

El Manantial is the last remaining colony of the threatened (and endemic) Mexican Prairie-
dog Cynomys mexicanus in San Luis Potosí4, and is at the southernmost end of the distribution of this genus². It covers roughly 392 ha of grass-
land amid an extensive creosote-bush Larrea tridentata plain, in the privately owned Rancho Santa Ana, at c.24°08'N 100°57'W, and 1,750 m
above sea-level.

While walking a transect of the prairie-dog town in order to make a rapid assessment of the prairie-dog population, we counted at least 33
C. montanus. We estimate that we were only able to detect plovers in 30-50% of the area of the prair-
rie-dog town, and, if evenly distributed, the true number of birds present could have been 60-100
individuals.

We do not know if the same individuals are present at this locality all winter, or even each year. However, we suggest that El Manantial
warrants further study as it may be a priority area for the conservation of this species, as well as for Cynomys mexicanus. Furthermore, this area is
within the range and habitat of the endangered Worthen's Sparrow Spizella wortheni1,6, and further study may show it to be present, at least
during part of the year.

References
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Héctor Gómez de Silva G., Rodrigo A. Medellín Legorreta, Miguel A. Amín & Saúl Aguilar
Centro de Ecología, Apartado Postal 70-275, Ciudad Universitaria, UNAM, C.P. 04510, México, D.F., Mexico