

## Updates to the avifauna of Oaxaca, Mexico

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Se presentan registros significativos de las siguientes especies, resultado de una visita a Oaxaca en diciembre de 1995: *Amazona oratrix* (dos subadultos al este de San Josi Estancia Grande en el extremo oeste de Oaxaca), *Eupherusa cyanophrys* (un macho en la Ruta 175, el camino Oaxaca–Puerto Angel en el bosque nublado que cubre un afluente del río Jalatengo a 1,540 m), *Sayornis phoebe* (uno en un pequeño bañado al costado del camino en la intersección de la Ruta 200 con el camino a Bahía de la Cachahua en el oeste de Oaxaca es aparentemente el primero en la vertiente pacífica de Oaxaca y, a c.16°N, el registro más austral de la especie), *Regulus satrapa* (dos pequeños bandos en el bosque a lo largo del camino La Cumbre a 2,800 m fueron el segundo registro para el estado), y *Melospiza kieneri* (uno más bajo de las ruinas Yagul, 40 km al sudeste de la ciudad de Oaxaca, es el primer registro publicado del valle de Oaxaca).

### Introduction

The avifauna of Oaxaca is comparatively well known<sup>1</sup>, but updates and additions may be useful to field ornithologists and conservation efforts. Here interesting records obtained during a short visit to the state and nearby areas in December 1995 are reported, along with those of two threatened species, updating information in Howell & Webb<sup>4</sup> and Collar *et al.*<sup>2</sup>. Continued status reports on these rare species may aid their conservation.

### Yellow-headed Parrot *Amazona oratrix*

A pair of interacting and noisy subadults (yellow crown and face but retaining green on the nape) twice flew by at close range in dense, scrubby thorn-forest just east of San Josi Estancia Grande in westernmost Oaxaca on 27 December 1995. This species, threatened by the avicultural trade, was considered “uncommon and local”<sup>1,2</sup>, but Howell & Webb<sup>4</sup> state that the only confirmed records on the Pacific slope in the past decade are from southern Jalisco and Michoacán states. This pair were located in extensive xerophytic vegetation along Highway 200 at km post 233. The thorn-forest here is fragmented by clearance for grazing but still has populations of thorn-forest bird species such as West Mexican Chachalaca *Ortalis poliocephala* and White-lored Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila albiloris*. This location is close to traditional sites mentioned by Binford<sup>1</sup> and the lack of Oaxaca records during the last 10 years may be a reflection of a relative dearth of observers in this area.

### Blue-capped Hummingbird *Eupherusa cyanophrys*

Also known as the “Oaxaca Hummingbird”<sup>6</sup>, it is listed as “vulnerable and needing attention”<sup>2</sup>. Binford<sup>1</sup> stated that it occurred “at numerous lo-

calities along Puerto Angel Road and Puerto Escondido Road” and S. N. G. Howell, cited in Collar *et al.*<sup>2</sup>, reported finding 15 at the town of La Soledad in April 1988. Observers searching for sites, however, may be hampered by the fact that La Soledad does not appear on many Oaxaca state maps.

A male was found on 25 December 1995, just below km post 181 on the Oaxaca–Puerto Angel Road (Highway 175), in cloud forest cloaking a side branch of the Río Jalatengo in otherwise open pine-oak woodland at 1,540 m. Appropriate habitat appears widespread along this road, and La Soledad proved to be located just below the site of this observation, near km post 185.

### Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*

One was discovered foraging over a small roadside marsh at the intersection of Highway 200 and the road to Bahía de la Cachahua in western Oaxaca on 27 December 1995. DR took written details and identifiable photographs were taken by Bob Tinkle. This species winters in the interior and on the Gulf slope of Mexico with few as far south-east as the Yucatan Peninsula<sup>4</sup> and Belize<sup>7</sup>. Binford<sup>1</sup> lists two specimens taken at Tapanatepec in easternmost Oaxaca. Patten<sup>5</sup> summarised records from north-west Mexico, while Howell<sup>3</sup> described one from Colima. This record is apparently the first on the Pacific slope of Oaxaca and, at c.16°N, the southernmost record of the species.

### Golden-crowned Kinglet *Regulus satrapa*

Two small flocks were located in firs along the La Cumbre road at 2,800 m on 22 December 1995. Binford<sup>1</sup> lists one record in Oaxaca from nearby La Parada, while Howell & Webb<sup>4</sup> indicate no recent state occurrences. This species may be

overlooked in suitable habitat at higher elevations, as Howell<sup>3</sup> suggested was the case in Jalisco. However, since the records presented here were during the non-breeding season, they may represent only a southern incursion in winter 1995–1996.

**Rusty-crowned Ground-sparrow** *Melospiza kieneri*

DR observed one in dense thorn thickets below Yagul ruins, 40 km south-east of Oaxaca City, on 21 December 1995. The same brush held dense flocks of Lark *Chondestes grammacus* and Clay-colored Sparrows *Spizella pallida*, but the ground-sparrow did not appear to be consorting with them. The species is known from arid subtropical oak and juniper scrub in western Oaxaca<sup>1</sup> but this bird appears to have been a vagrant, c.80 km east of its known range, and is the first published record from the Oaxaca Valley floor.

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