

UNUSUAL RECORD OF BONAPARTE'S GULL IN THE SIERRA SAN PEDRO MÁRTIR, BAJA CALIFORNIA

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On 11 December 2015, during a snowstorm, De León-Girón found a Bonaparte's Gull (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) unable to fly and at the point of starvation near the ranger office of the Sierra de San Pedro Mártir National Park. The location is 30° 59' N, 115° 33' 21" W, at an elevation of 2518 m, and the vegetation is coniferous forest dominated by *Pinus jeffreyi* (Delgadillo-Rodríguez 2004). The bird died two days later. The specimen, an adult male, was prepared and deposited at the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC 2072; Figure 1). The pectoral mass of the dissected specimen confirmed the starved condition of this individual when it was found in the park during the snowstorm. Measurements include total length 360 mm, wingspan 725 mm, tarsus 35 mm, wing length 237 mm, tail 106 mm, exposed culmen 29 mm, and mass 115 g, barely half the mean of 222 g reported for males by Burger and Gochfeld (2002).

In spite of numerous records of the species at and near sea level along both coasts of the Baja California peninsula, previous records from the interior of the peninsula are few, with none published before Wurster et al. (2001). None are from the Sierra San Pedro Mártir or as high as 2518 m. Those in mountain habitats, from elevations <1620 m at Laguna Hanson in the Sierra Juárez (one on 11 May 1997; four on 6 April 2000; Wurster et al. 2001) and Rancho Japá (14 May 2007, R. A. Erickson, via www.ebird.org), presumably represent spring migrants crossing from the Gulf of California to the Pacific coast. The date of our specimen suggests it was a fall migrant or winter visitor. Bonaparte's Gulls winter irregularly just north of the international border on the inland reservoirs of San Diego County (Unitt 2004), all at elevations below 920 m except for one report of one individual from Lake Cuyamaca (elevation 1412 m), 10–18 December 2016 (photo by M. Colobianchi at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S32955657>).

Ruiz-Campos and De León-Girón (2017) described a similar situation with the record of five Pacific Loons (*Gavia pacifica*) on this sky island at an elevation of 2428 m, during a snowstorm on 15 November 2015. A month earlier than our Bonaparte's Gull, they presumably represented fall migrants crossing from the Pacific coast to the Gulf of California, retracing a path opposite the route by which the Pacific Loon departs the gulf in spring (Huey 1927). In this context, Grinnell (1928:55) had suggested the existence of a possible migratory route between the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of California that crosses the mountain ranges of the northern Baja California peninsula. In both cases cited above, energetically spent individuals were downed by strong winds into unexpected habitats during the snowstorms.

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NOTES



FIGURE 1. Male Bonaparte's Gull (UABC 2072) in lateral, dorsal and ventral view, collected 11 December 2015 at 2518 m in San Pedro Mártir National Park, Baja California.

Photos by Gorgonio Ruiz-Campos

specimen. Richard A. Erickson and Daniel D. Gibson made very useful comments that improved the clarity of the manuscript.

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