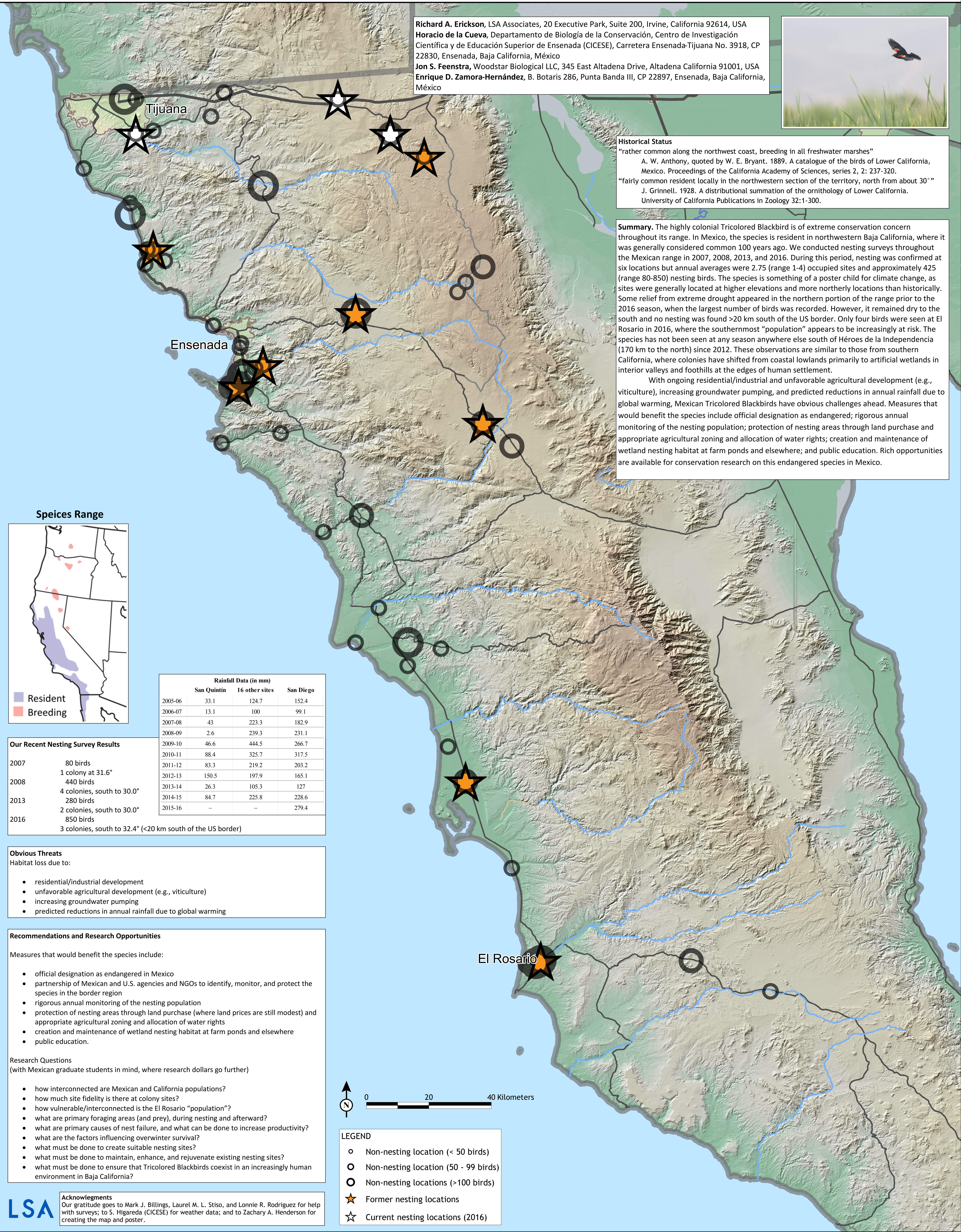


On the edge of extinction: Can the Tricolored Blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*) persist in Mexico?



Water levels and wetland conditions vary greatly from year to year at Presa Rodríguez, which provides water for the City of Tijuana. Wetland conditions were excellent in 2016, when approximately 230 Tricolored Blackbirds nested successfully at two locations on the lake. Nesting was also confirmed in 2002 and 2008, but did not occur in 2007 and 2013.

Other species of regional conservation concern known to, or believed to, nest at the reservoir at least intermittently include Western Grebes (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) and Clark's Grebes (*A. clarkii*), Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*), Least Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), Clark's Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus palustris clarkiae*), Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*), and Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*).

Photo 3 May 2016 by Richard A. Erickson



Tricolored Blackbirds have nested at two locations at Ciénega Redonda, including this public use park setting (parque recreativo) where approximately 75 birds nested successfully in 2016.

Photo 1 May 2016 by Richard A. Erickson



The main marsh at Ciénega Redonda hosted approximately 250 nesting Tricolored Blackbirds in 2013 and 2016, but the effort was largely unsuccessful in 2016.

Photo 1 May 2016 by Richard A. Erickson



At >1200m elevation in the Sierra de Juárez, Rancho Japá (shown here) and Rancho Tres Pozos (2005 only) are the highest known nesting sites for Tricolored Blackbirds in Mexico. Approximately 300 birds were mostly unsuccessful at several patches of emergent marsh on this reservoir in 2016. Nesting was confirmed below the dam in 2008, but did not occur in 2007 and 2013.

Photo 1 May 2016 by Richard A. Erickson



The agricultural Ojos Negros Valley has consistently supported large numbers of Tricolored Blackbirds, but nesting habitat is generally lacking and the species has not been confirmed nesting since 1885. Active creation of nesting habitat might be very effective there. With a little help, a sump like the one shown here could support nesting birds.

Photo 4 May 2013 by Jon S. Feenstra



In the saddle between the Sierras de Juárez and San Pedro Mártir, as many as 100 Tricolored Blackbirds nested at the reservoir at Héroes de la Independencia from 1997 to 2008. Trees have since grown up at the colony site below the dam, making conditions unsuitable for nesting.

Photo 2 May 2016 by Richard A. Erickson



At the south end of the species' range, Tricolored Blackbirds have been known from the El Rosario area since at least 1906, but nesting was not confirmed until 2008 when 200 birds were so engaged. Nesting was confirmed along the Arroyo de El Rosario again in 2013 (colony site shown here), but since then numbers have plummeted in the area, with only four birds seen south of Héroes de la Independencia in all of 2016.

Photo 3 May 2013 by Jon S. Feenstra