

Sinaloan Maritime Scrubland

Mangrove swamps of considerable extent occur in the Boca del Yaqui region of the Sonoran Coast, i.e., from due south of Ciudad Obregón to west of Potám. Other small, discontinuous areas are in protected bays, lagoons, and estuaries on the coast northward to near Punta Sargento (29° 18'N) and on the Gulf Coast of Baja California northward to just south of Bahía de Los Angeles (29° 05'N) (Felger and Lowe, 1976). Mangroves are rare or absent north of 27°00'N on the Pacific side of Baja California (Hastings et al., 1972).

Species present may be all or any of Black Mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*), Red Mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), and White Mangrove (*Languncularia racemosa*). The lack of other plant associates is often conspicuous, and delineation of these tideland communities is abrupt, with little integration with adjacent strand, tidemarsch, and/or desertscrub (salt-bush) communities (Fig. 190, 191).

As many of their names imply, several bird species are closely associated with Sinaloan maritime scrub—the Mangrove Cuckoo (*Coccyzus minor*), Mangrove Swallow (*Iridoprocne albilinea*), Mangrove Warbler (*Dendroica erithachorides*), and others such as Tiger Bittern (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*), Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*), Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*), and Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaia*). Two particularly abundant nesting birds in mangrove swamps are White-winged Dove and Clapper Rail.

The value of these wetlands as nurseries and feeding grounds to a host of marine life is well known. Juveniles and young adults of commercial and sport fishes are common, e.g., snappers (*Lutjanus* spp.). The Giant Jewfish (*Epinephelus itajaro*), which may achieve weights of 450 kg in open waters of the Gulf, occurs as young only in mangrove-vegetated esteros (Thomson, 1973).



Figure 190. Sinaloan maritime scrubland and "barrier" strand bordering the Sonoran Desert, Sonora, Mexico. A northern outlier of the more extensive mangrove swamps farther south at Punta Sargento, this scrubland is composed mainly of Black Mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*). Photograph by Richard L. Todd.



Figure 191. Interior view of Sinaloan maritime strand and scrubland near Punta Sargento, Sonora, Mexico. Note the "chaparral-like" landscape physiognomy and simplicity in overstory species composition (*Avicennia germinans*).