

MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

/ David DeSante, Arthur Wang

The weather for this season was somewhat of an enigma. A very cold, exceptionally wet December was followed by an exceptionally dry January and February, with rainfall increasing somewhat in March. Yet the total effect was of a nearly average rainfall for the season. The most tragic news of the period was the massive oil spill in San Francisco Bay on Jan. 16, caused by the collision of two tankers nearly underneath the Golden Gate Bridge. A Calif. State Dept. of Fish and Game news release of Feb. 15 said that more than 6000 waterfowl were killed by the oil, of 116,000 found to be present in the bay on a Jan. 11-12 census. Thousands of volunteers devoted tens of thousands of man-hours to the grim task of cleaning these birds but, sadly, to little avail. Apparently Com. Murres, W. Grebes, and scoters were the hardest hit. The Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory is presently conducting a detailed study of this disaster. To quote from Alan Baldrige, "While we may bemoan these figures, Californians have yet to experience the chronic and constant oil spills which are a feature of the West European coasts and the Baltic and which have drastically reduced popu-

lations of all alcids and of scoters, eiders and Oldsquaws. All of this in spite of international attempts dating from 1920 to control oil pollution. The volume of tanker traffic just keeps growing and outpacing improvements in loading techniques."



LOONS, GREBES, TUBENOS—The loon migration peaked later than usual, with 2000 per hour seen flying south off Pt. Pinos on Dec. 2. The vast majority were Arctic Loons (AB). For the fourth straight year Yellow-billed Loons were found in the Region. One immature found at Moss Landing on Jan. 23 (RG, JG) was seen by dozens of observers until it was found dead on Mar. 6 (LJ, specimen to MVZ, Berkeley). The survival rate of these birds seems very low; this is the third one found dead. A second Yellow-billed Loon was also at Moss Landing on Jan. 26 (RS, D. Gaines); an immature was at Inverness (Tomaes Bay) on Jan. 25 (RS); at least 1 wintered at Bodega Bay (GSS, WMP, BAMcL). An inland Arctic Loon was reported from Crystal Springs Reservoir (Feb. 3, DDeS). Red-necked Grebes were scattered along the coast in normal numbers, with a high of 29 on the Monterey Christmas Bird Count (*infra*, "CBC"). One was at the south end of San Francisco Bay on the San Jose CBC, a location unusually far from the ocean. In addition there were reports of 5 birds on 3 inland freshwater lakes, but all without substantiating details. Far inland reports of Horned Grebes were 1 from Quincy, Plumas Co. (Mar. 28, JT, TM, Bill Clow), and 1 from Barrow Wildlife Refuge, Oroville (Feb. 20, MLeC). On the coast, the major winter influx arrived in Monterey on Dec. 3 (AB). The largest flocks of W. Grebes reported on the coast were 2 flocks of 1200 and 2500 birds off St. George Light-house, Del Norte Co. (Mar. 21, ODS); inland 75 were at Hogan Reservoir, Calaveras Co.

(Mar. 7, DMS). Two Black-footed Albatrosses were noted on the Monterey CBC (Dec. 30, GH, AB); 1 was in Monterey Bay on Feb. 20 and 4 were there Mar. 16 (AB). Only 15 Fulmars were reported, all from Monterey Bay in Dec. and Jan. The earliest Pink-footed Shearwater in several years was found in Monterey Bay on Feb. 10 (AB). Sooty Shearwaters were more numerous than usual in Monterey Bay, with 13 on Dec. 30, 28 on Feb. 10, increasing to 100 by Mar. 3 (AB). There were 14 on the Centerville Beach CBC (Jan. 3, DA). The formerly common Slender-billed Shearwater was found in Monterey Bay for the first time in several years with 1 on Feb. 21 (LCB, DDeS, et al.) and a probable sighting on Feb. 10 (AB). More Fork-tailed Petrels were recorded in a single day in Monterey Harbor than in the entire region over the last ten years. Following prolonged NW gale force winds on Mar. 1, 250+ were in the harbor, dancing on the waves, flying over and under the piers, even being hit by cars (AB, RLeV, Eds., et al.). The following morning was calm, but at least 8 were still around for a few hours (EAP). Two were there on Mar. 6 (LJ) and a dead individual was found on the beach on Mar. 10 (MA). There was also a surprising report of another Fork-tailed Petrel found dying in downtown Hayward in late Feb. (fide RS).

PELICANS, HERONS, IBIS—An amazing total of 395 White Pelicans was recorded on the Pt. Reyes CBC Jan. 2, but the only other coastal report was of 1 at Moss Landing. Inland numbers were low until March, when 55 were at the Yolo Bypass (Mar. 6, R. Loveless, fide BK), 50+ at San Luis Wasteway (Mar. 2, ROW), 200+ at Los Banos (Mar. 27, ROW), and 200 at San Luis N. W. R. (Mar. 28, USFWS). Brown Pelicans were virtually absent from San Francisco Bay (RS), but maintained fairly good numbers on the coast with 361 on the Pt. Reyes CBC and 192 on the Monterey CBC. In Palo Alto 1500 Double-crested Cormorants were seen in the air at one time on Jan. 16 (VR). Aubrey Burns reported that on the West Marin I. heronry off San Rafael, which he has censused each Mar. 31 for the past four years, there were only 32 Snowy Egrets, compared to an average of 123 in 1968-1970. Once again Cattle Egrets appeared with a herd of sheep in Watsonville, where 9 were seen Mar. 6-12 (MH, NH, VA, et al.); these had probably been present for several weeks. The geometric progression of sightings did not continue, however, as the only other record was a single bird with Snowy Egrets at Berkeley Aquatic Park (Jan. 25, BR). Winter roosts of Black-crowned Night Herons included 300 in Palo Alto (Jan. 10, Eds.), 150 at San Luis N. W. R. (Dec. 15, USFWS), and 800+ at Gray Lodge (Jan. 23, RAR, RLeV). There was the normal scattering of Am. Bitterns on the coast; inland 45 were seen at Los Banos on

Mar. 20 (AB, MA). White-faced Ibis were reported only from Los Banos, where 200+ wintered (ROW).

SWANS, GEESE—It was a great year for Whistling Swans, both inland and on the coast. In December there were "flocks" in the foothills above Sacramento (RLeV); at San Luis-Kesterson-Merced N. W. R., 420 was the peak (Jan. 17-23); the peak at San Luis Wasteway was 122 on Jan. 10 (ROW); 1200 were in the Terminus area (Feb. 19, ABu); 90 appeared for the first time in e. San Joaquin Co. (Mar. 3, DMS). On the coast swans were found on most CBCs: 1200 in Centerville Beach (stayed to Mar. 9); 26 in Oakland; 90 at Pt. Reyes. On San Luis-Merced-Kesterson N. W. R., geese peaked at 34,050 Jan. 10-16. Canada Geese peaked at 16,075 (Jan. 3-9); White-fronted, 1250 (Feb. 21-27); Snow, 7750 (Jan. 24-30); Ross', 12,050 (Jan. 10-16) (USFWS). Two Blue Geese were near Delevan N. W. R. on Jan. 23 (RLeV, RAR). An unusual wave of White-fronted Geese, accompanied by a few Snows, hit the coast at the end of January and stayed through early February. On Jan. 25 there were 250 White-fronted in Bolinas Lagoon and 35 in Tomales Bay (RS). In the following week there were 30 in San Lorenzo and 135 in Hayward (BR), 60 in Berkeley (RAR), and 75 in Bodega Bay (BDP). Binford reported 11 at Ano Nuevo Pt. (Feb. 5), 25 in Alviso (Feb. 6), and 105 still in Bolinas Lagoon on Feb. 7. One was at King Salmon, Humboldt Co., on Feb. 25 (C. Crane, fide DA) and one was at Pescadero Mar. 20 (RG). The biggest group of accompanying Snow Geese was 17 in San Leandro in early Feb. (BR). A single adult Ross' Goose spent February and early March avoiding celebrities on the Pebble Beach Golf Course (AB).

DUCKS—Peak numbers of ducks at San Luis-Merced-Kesterson N. W. R. included 71,325 Mallards (Dec. 13-19), **45,400** Gadwalls (Dec. 6-12), declining to 650 Feb. 28-Mar. 6 and back to 18,025 Mar. 28-Apr. 3; 204,700 Pintails (Dec. 6-12); 128,650 Green-winged Teal (Dec. 13-19); 5300 Cinnamon Teal (Feb. 21-27); 144,200 Am. Widgeon (Jan. 3-16); and 151,475 Shovelers (Dec. 13-19) (all USFWS). On Searsville L., Stanford, 75 Gadwalls wintered (DDeS) and at Coyote Hills there were up to 120 in early December (RS). A ♂ Pintail x Mallard hybrid wintered in Berkeley Aquatic Park (GH, RS, et al.). One or 2 ♂ Com. Teal wintered in Eureka for the fourth consecutive year in that area (RG, RLeV, RAR et al.). At least 18 ♂ Blue-winged Teal wintered at the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor (DDeS, VR) and at least 2 pairs were at Coyote Hills (RS). Spring migrants were found at Tubbs I. on Mar. 28 (4, BAMcL) and in Chico on Mar. 29 (one, TM). There were 8 reports of Eur. Widgeon, 4 from the interior and 4 from the coast. The biggest concentration of Wood Ducks reported was 83 on the Oakland CBC, and the biggest flock of Redheads was 24 on Laguna L., Marin Co.

(Jan. 14, WMP). In the Palo Alto area, a peak of 550 Ring-necked Ducks on Searsville L., Jan. 9 declined to 175 in early Feb. as 115 moved to nearby Lake Lagunita and up to 200 moved to Felt Lake (DDeS). One of the highlights of the season appeared with the Ring-necked Ducks on Felt L. Feb. 4. This was a drake **Tufted Duck** discovered by Jack Nisbet, photographed by R. L. Branson, and seen by almost every serious "lister" in the state. It was last seen Mar. 7. A total of 27 Barrow's Goldeneyes was reported from six locations, including 18 on L. Merritt on the Oakland CBC, and 2 at Barrow Wildlife Refuge, Oroville (Feb. 20, MLeC). Nine Oldsquaws were found in seven locations, including 3 sightings inside San Francisco Bay. There were 14 Harlequin Duck reports from six places, 12 from four typical coastal locations, 1 from Richardson Bay (Dec. 16, ABu, WMP), and 1 from Belvedere (Dec. 28, WMP). The **King Eider** ♀ reappeared in Monterey Harbor Jan. 1 and was seen by literally hundreds of birdwatchers until at least Mar. 28. Small numbers of Com. Scoters were seen in the usual coastal locations, with 100 on the Pt. Reyes CBC. Mergansers were well reported with 37 Hoodeds in 11 locations and 59 Commons in nine locations, plus 157 on the Oakland CBC.

CONDOR, HAWKS, FALCONS—On the first field trip of his ornithology class, Dave DeSante ran into a sub-adult **California Condor** on Jan. 10 on the Stanford campus near Palo Alto, the first record from Stanford since 1904. It stayed until Jan. 12 and was photographed roosting in a eucalyptus with its head below its legs and rain water dripping from its bill, looking like an imitation of Snoopy imitating a vulture. Equally amazing was an adult seen in Pebble Beach on Jan. 28 (Thomas Robinson). Five more were reported from the Sierra foothills: an adult n.e. of Springville, Tulare Co. on Dec. 24 (F. G. Lillard), a sub-adult and an unclassified in Hospital Canyon e. of Westley on Feb. 1 (Murray Hall), and an adult and an immature on a deer carcass in Balch Camp e. of Fresno on Feb. 25 (Ray Kramer; all condor reports fide SRW). White-tailed Kites seem to be increasing in numbers and extending their range to the very edges of suburbia both on the coast and in the interior. The Centerville Beach CBC recorded 34 and in Oroville, Ron Woodhouse found three nests and 3-4 other pairs in an area four miles square. The Pt. Reyes CBC set a new national high of 406 Red-tailed Hawks, which shows what wonders can be achieved with 51 parties. Eight Swainson's Hawks were seen flying north in Oroville on Mar. 20 (MLeC, fide EAP). Five Rough-legged Hawks were reported from three coastal locations and 7 more were in seven interior locations; this is about average. Likewise 5 Ferruginous Hawks were in two coastal locations and 11 in ten interior spots. There were 32 Golden Eagle sightings from 17 places; three coastal locations

included 7 on the Pt. Reyes C B C. Of 15 Bald Eagles in 11 locations, all but two were from the interior. Sixteen Ospreys were in 12 areas; 4 single birds were away from the coast, one wintering as far north as Oroville (MLeC, JT). Six Prairie Falcons, all from the interior, included 2 pairs, one nesting in cliffs; 11 Peregrines, all coastal, included 3 from the Farallons (PRBO); 15 Pigeon Hawks were from six coastal and seven interior localities. The 28 C B Cs in the Region reported a total of 154 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 119 Cooper's Hawks, 23 Golden Eagles, 12 Bald Eagles, 5 Prairie Falcons, 7 Peregrine Falcons, and 7 Pigeon Hawks.

GROUSE, CRANE, COOT—Ruffed Grouse, rare and local in the region, was seen at Prairie Creek (MK) and N. Trinity Mt. (DA). The peak of Sandhill Cranes at Merced N. W. R. was 1554 on Feb. 24 (USFWS). Betty Kimball's compilation of the departure of cranes from the Thornton area totalled 4405 between Feb. 21 and Mar. 16, including 1300 on Feb. 21, 1480 on Mar. 2, and 1240 on Mar. 6. At San Luis-Merced-Kesterson N. W. R., Am. Coot peaked at 26,500 Feb. 28-Mar. 6 (USFWS).

SHOREBIRDS—A remarkable 82 Black Oystercatchers on the Monterey C B C included a single flock of 29 at Pt. Lobos. On the Pt. Reyes C B C 92 Semipalmated Plovers was considered exceptional. Mountain Plovers were found near Merced N. W. R. (50, Jan. 16-Feb. 19, RG, RS, Eds.), between Davis and Woodland (50-55, Jan 27-Feb. 6, TM), and at Ano Nuevo Pt. (1, Feb. 27, Mike San Miguel fide DDeS); they are very rare on the coast. The only Am. Golden Plover reported was at Pt. Pinos on the Monterey C B C (Dec. 30, RS). The largest concentration of Long-billed Curlews reported was 1000+ on Tubbs I. Jan. 28 (BAMcL). Single Spotted Sandpipers at San Luis Wasteway (Jan. 7, ROW) and Concord (Dec. 26, LF) were considered unusual. There were 2000 Willets at Hayward Feb. 20 (BR). In addition to the usual scattering of wintering Lesser Yellowlegs, 18 were at Joice I. Refuge Feb. 13 (BAMcL). Knots were reported in good numbers with 102 on the Oakland C B C, 80 wintering at the Dumbarton Bridge (RG), and a peak of 500 in Hayward on Mar. 10 (BR). Thirteen Rock Sandpipers in four locations included single birds seen into Jan. on the Farallons (J. Lewis, PRBO) and in Pacific Grove (W. Reese, MA, et al.). On his Hayward census, Bob Rodrigues found an average of 300 dowitchers (range 105-775) before March, then an average of 1816 (range 726-3500) from Mar. 8 to Mar. 30. On the Pt. Reyes C B C, 116 dowitchers, all considered Long-billeds, were regarded as unusual. The high count for Marbled Godwits in Hayward was 2800 on Feb. 22 (BR). There were 200 Sanderling at Prairie Creek on Mar. 15 (MK). No wintering phalaropes were reported.

JAEGERS, GULLS, TERNS—Eleven Pomarine Jaegers in Monterey Bay on Jan. 17 was the

winter high count (AB). An adult Parasitic off Pacific Grove on Dec. 23 was considered "very rare in winter this far north" (AB). There were at least ten reports of imm. Glaucous Gulls, including probably 3 south to the Monterey Peninsula. A Glaucous-winged Gull was at the Sacramento dump on Feb. 20 (R&RL, fide BK). Around Oroville and on the American R. in Sacramento Co., Herring Gulls were reported as abundant wherever salmon were spawning, but otherwise rare in the Central Valley (JT). The Pt. Reyes C B C total of 1619 Ring-billed Gulls was several times more than normal, but this did not seem to be reflected elsewhere. Mew Gulls were exceptionally abundant on the Monterey, Oakland, and Pt. Reyes C B Cs, with 1187, 1281, and 6493 respectively. Two were seen in W. Sacramento on Feb. 6 (TM, JT, fide BK). The first regional winter record for **Franklin's Gull** was an immature found by John & Susan Luther at the Dumbarton Bridge on Dec. 27. It was seen for one week and photographed (RR). Southbound Bonaparte's Gulls passed Pt. Pinos at the rate of 200/hr. on Dec. 2 (AB). The first big influx of Black-legged Kittiwakes in Monterey Bay was on Jan. 13, quite late. The maximum recorded was 2788 on Feb. 10 (AB). The Oakland C B C recorded a Black-legged Kittiwake and an unusually high total of 94 Forster's Terns. A *Sterna*, sp., off Jenner on Dec. 26 was considered far north (BDP). A Caspian Tern on the Samoa Peninsula on Mar. 12 was early (DA).

ALCIDS—Common Murres were seen flying south off Pt. Pinos at the rate of 400/hr. on Dec. 2 (AB). On Monterey Bay 332 were seen on Jan. 17 and 365 on Mar. 16 (AB). On the Flat Iron Rock breeding colony in Trinidad Bay, 95% of the 5000 murres were in breeding plumage on Feb. 6 (RAR, RLeV). Nine Marbled Murrelets were seen from a boat off the Sonoma Co. coast on Dec. 26 (BDP); 2 were off Pigeon Pt. and 1 off Ano Nuevo Pt. on Jan. 30 (LCB), and on the same day 12-16 were off Trinidad, all in pairs, but all in winter plumage (TM, S. Harris, et al.). Up to 9 Ancient Murrelets were seen in Monterey Bay in Jan. (AB, AW). In Monterey Bay, 106 Cassin's Auklets on Jan. 17 decreased to 9 on Mar. 16; Rhinoceros Auklets, abundant by Jan. 1, peaked at 3719 on Feb. 10 and declined to 831 by Mar. 16 (AB). Two Cassin's Auklets were on Rodeo Lagoon in stormy weather on Mar. 14 (ST).

DOVES, ROADRUNNER, OWLS—A Mourning Dove was seen Feb. 6 in Arcata where they are supposedly rare in winter (RAR, RLeV, LCB, et al.). Roadrunners are becoming increasingly rare and local in n. California: 1 in Carmel Valley Dec. 30 (DDeS) and 1 near Fresno Jan. 15 (RLeV) were the only ones reported. There were more reports than usual of the rather secretive small owls. Some of the more interesting are: Screech Owl—1 found dead, apparently caught on a barbed wire fence, near Auburn Feb. 25 (M.

Armour, fide BK); Pygmy Owl—1 photographed at the Hogan Reservoir Picnic Area, Calaveras Co., at a low Sierran foothill elevation Jan. 8 (DMS); Saw-whet Owl—1 perched on a garbage can in a yard in Orick, Humboldt Co., Dec. 16 (MK), 1 photographed in Garin Woods, Hayward, Mar. 24 for the first local record (RAR), several heard calling during the winter in at least four locations in the Santa Cruz Mts. where they were previously considered rare (J&RG, RAR, DDeS, et al.), and several heard calling regularly in Redwood Regional Park, Oakland, during late March, with 5 seen together in the headlights of a car and 2 others calling nearby on Mar. 22 (ST, DE). There were three reports of the uncommon Spotted Owl: 1 heard calling at Tomales Bay State Park Dec. 12 (RLeV), 1 on the West Sonoma Co. CBC, and one tape-recorded on the Santa Cruz CBC. It was a very good winter for Short-eared Owls; they were found in numbers along the entire coast from Ft. Dick, Del Norte Co. to Monterey Co. and no less than 18 were present at various locations in the Central Valley. A Long-eared Owl, present in Arcata during mid-January (R. Macintosh, S. W. Harris, et al., fide DA), was the first Humboldt Co. record.

POOR-WILL, SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS—Two Poor-wills were found on the Monterey CBC, 3 more were found feeding along a road east of Calaveras Reservoir Mar. 7 (DDeS), and 2 were calling at dusk Mar. 21 in Garin Woods, Hayward, for the first local record (RAR, TS). Wintering White-throated Swifts seem to be growing more common in our Region; flocks were present as usual at Stanford and Sausalito (DDeS) and small numbers were seen at several other coastal points and in the Central Valley, where they are rare in the winter. The first migrant flocks were recorded at Hayward Feb. 19 (RAR). An early ♂ Black-chinned Hummingbird was present from Mar. 1 on in Sacramento (B. Kaminsky, fide BK). Two *Selasphorus*, sp., hummingbirds were found on the Monterey CBC. Ornamental plantings have apparently allowed a few of these birds to survive the winter here. The earliest ♂ Allen's Hummingbirds were reported in coastal areas at normal times in late January and early February. By mid-March they were generally abundant. Male Rufous Hummingbirds seemed to arrive first in the Central Valley: first week of February in Chico (MLeC), Feb. 17 in Auburn (J. Fitch, fide BK) and Feb. 20 in Oroville (MLeC); and later on the coast: Mar. 3 in Pacific Grove (AB), Mar. 6 in Santa Rosa (BAMcL), and Mar. 7 in Lafayette (LF), although 1 was seen Feb. 7 at the Carmel Mission (VR). Most observers, however, considered the bird to be less common this spring than usual.

WOODPECKERS—Red-shafted Flickers were considered by almost all observers to be more abundant than usual this winter. Similarly, there were

more reports of "yellow-winged" flickers than usual: 15 "pure" and 12 "hybrids". Pileated Woodpeckers seemed to be holding their own in the Region and reports from at least two locations in Sonoma Co. are encouraging (BAMcL). The increase in the number of E. Fox Squirrels in Lafayette was considered to be a factor in the decline of Acorn Woodpeckers in that area (LF). Such population changes should be watched in the future. Exceptional numbers of Lewis' Woodpeckers invaded the e. edge of the Central Valley. At least 46 were seen in the Stockton-Sacramento area (DMS). None, however, reached the coast. "Red-breasted" Sapsuckers were exceedingly common and widely distributed this winter. Variation in head pattern of these birds is so enormous that all five individuals on an eight acre study plot on Jasper Ridge, Stanford, could be easily recognized (VR). The number and variety of birds utilizing the sap or trapped insects in sapsucker holes at Stanford was most interesting. At least four Myrtle Warblers, one Ruby-crowned Kinglet and one Anna's Hummingbird regularly used this food supply (VR, DDeS). Records of other birds using this food supply should be kept in the future. Williamson's Sapsuckers were reported as more common than usual at the south end of L. Tahoe (ST, DE).

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS—A **Tropical Kingbird** present since October at Pebble Beach remained at least until Dec. 30 (EAP, D. Gaines, et al.). This appears to be the sixth record of this species attempting to winter in our Region. A **Western Kingbird**, the first winter record for the Region, was seen at Asilomar Beach, Pacific Grove, Dec. 23 (EAP et al.). Two other "yellow-bellied" kingbirds were reported on the Pt. Reyes CBC. As is normal, W. Kingbirds had arrived in numbers in the s. San Joaquin Valley by the end of March (MEM, RHG). The first Cassin's Kingbird was seen in the Arroyo Mocho, s. of Livermore, Mar. 30 (ST). A light-breasted *Empidonax*, sp., flycatcher was seen in Golden Gate Park Feb. 16 (ST). The bird appeared to be a Hammond's-Dusky type but the possibility of a wintering Least should not be overlooked. A similar bird was seen last winter in Monterey (AFN 24: 536). A **Western Flycatcher** was well described from Berkeley Jan. 3 (AW). There still appears to be no winter specimen from this Region. Wintering Violet-green Swallows appear to be increasing in proportion to wintering Tree Swallows; they were the predominant wintering species in the Monterey (RS) and Santa Rosa (BDP, BAMcL) areas. Eight seen Jan. 1 along the Feather River near Oroville, Butte Co., were very far north. Probable early migrants arrived in coastal areas between Feb. 6 and 19 (RAR, VR, LF, BAMcL et al.). After early March they were generally abundant. Good numbers of apparently migrant Tree Swallows were seen in the Central Valley and lesser numbers were found

along the coast in late January. The earliest Rough-winged Swallow was one at L. deValle, Alameda Co., Mar. 2 (WMP et al.); a very early Barn Swallow was at Felt L., Stanford, on Feb. 22 (RLeV); a very early flock of 45 Cliff Swallows was under a bridge near Sacramento Feb. 14 (LCB, RAR, et al.). The main flight of these three species began uniformly throughout coastal areas Mar. 13-16. Similarly the first Purple Martins returned to downtown Sacramento Mar. 16 (A. Meuser, fide BK).

CORVIDS, PARIDS, NUTHATCHES, DIPPER, WRENS—Gray Jays were reported more often than in any previous year from the North Coast area at Prairie Creek, Ferndale, and Hooper Valley. Eight reports of at least 19 individuals were received between Dec. 18 and Mar. 19 (DA, MK). Pre-breeding dispersal or migration of Com. Crows occurred Mar. 3-31 n. up the San Francisco Peninsula (VR, DDeS) and w. to Santa Cruz (RJR). This is the fourth consecutive March this movement has been noticed. Chestnut-backed Chickadees continued to spread e. in the Lafayette-Mt. Diablo area (LF), while Plain Titmice continued to spread w. in the Marin-Lake County area (Pt. Reyes CBC, BAMcL). Mountain Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches "irrupted" into the n. Sierra foothills after the first heavy snows in December (BKl). However Red-breasted Nuthatches were almost absent on the coast and in the Central Valley. Dippers were found in several unusual lowland localities: Sunol Valley, Alameda Co., Dec. 5 (L. Nelson, fide VH), Hayward Dec. 27 (RS), Alum Rock Park, San Jose, Dec. 27 (VH), Comanche Dam near Stockton Dec. 28 (DMS), and Folsom Lake Feb. 27 and Mar. 7 (R & RL.) A half-completed nest was found in Stevens Creek Park near San Jose on Mar. 14 (LCB, TC) and the species was found in two other locations in the Santa Cruz Mts. (fide DDeS). House Wrens are very rare in winter in the n. Sacramento Valley; 1 Dec. 17 near Chico and 1 Mar. 5 near Nicholas, Sutter Co., were remarkable (TM). Migrant House Wrens were common near Stockton by Mar. 21 (DMS). A Winter Wren Dec. 19 along the American R. is one of the few winter records for the Sierra foothills (R&RL).

MIMIDS, THRUSHES, SYLVIIDS—Mockingbirds continued to spread n. in n.w. California. They have become a common wintering bird in the Santa Rosa area (BDP, BAMcL) and 1 was seen in Crescent City Dec. 6 (RLeV). It was generally considered an excellent year for Robins and a good year for Varied Thrushes, especially in the coastal areas n. of San Francisco. The light snowfall and warm weather allowed Robins to move higher in the Sierras than usual, e.g. 6500' in Yosemite Feb. 14 (AW). A most interesting account was of several thousand Robins in orchards near Reedley until a January spray-

ing of the orchards; after that they could only be found in the town (RHG). Exceptionally large numbers of Hermit Thrushes wintered along the coast. The winter population on Jasper Ridge, Stanford, was four times that of last winter (VR). Contrary to the status of other thrushes, W. Bluebirds were rather scarce this winter both on the coast and in the Central Valley (DMS). Only one wintered in the Stanford area, where they are usually fairly common (DDeS). Mountain Bluebirds wintered fairly commonly in the open foothills around the Central Valley. There were also 2 coastal sightings of 5 birds. Townsend's Solitaires were reported from the Humboldt Bay area, where they are uncommon during the winter (DA). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, always rare in winter, were reported: single birds were on the Pt. Reyes and Monterey CBCs and 4 were near Lafayette Reservoir Dec. 24, with at least 1 until Mar. 7. The first migrants on Jasper Ridge arrived Mar. 28 (VR). Disappointingly few Golden-crowned Kinglets were found during the winter after a very good fall invasion. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were very abundant and widespread as usual.

WAXWINGS, PHAINOPEPLA, SHRIKES, VIREOS—Cedar Waxwings were very common in December and early January, but dropped off sharply as the mediocre berry crop was devoured. Phainopeplas wintered in good numbers in the foothills of the Sierras in Amador and Calaveras Counties. Ten were found on the Wallace-Bellota CBC (DMS). A few were also seen during the winter in the Lafayette-Concord area (LF). Northern Shrikes were "quite common or often seen" in Del Norte and Humboldt Counties, where they often winter in small numbers (DA, RLeV). The following immatures were also found: 1 in Sacramento Dec. 12 (R&RL), 1 in Butte City Dec. 29 and another along Butte Creek on the Colima-Butte Co. line on the same day, and 1 at Limantour Spit, Pt. Reyes, Jan. 1 (GMcC, et al.). Northern Shrikes are exceedingly rare on the central California coast and in the Central Valley. A Hutton's Vireo was seen in W. Sacramento Dec. 27 (TM, JT) and another in the Delta Feb. 13 (BAMcL); they are probably regular in very small numbers on the Valley floor in winter. A **Solitary Vireo** was present at Olema Marsh, Marin Co., in late Dec. (J. Winter), but could not be found afterward; this is only the fourth winter record for the Region. Early spring migrants occurred Mar. 28 at Jasper Ridge (VR) and Mar. 31 at Lafayette (HCA). A very early Warbling Vireo was seen in Palo Alto on Mar. 7 (RS, DDeS).

WOOD WARBLERS—A Black-and-white Warbler, very rare in winter, was seen at the Carmel River Mouth Dec. 30 (MP, R&JG). Another one, possibly an early migrant, was found in Tilden Park, Berkeley, Mar. 28 (W. Lawson, ST) and remained until at least Apr. 2 (RS). A **Tennessee**

Warbler was found in Monterey Dec. 30 (RS, J. Whetstone); it was either a very late fall migrant or constitutes the first winter record for the Region. Orange-crowned Warblers were much less common than usual this winter, probably due to the very cold December weather. Although a very early singing Orange-crowned was present in Garin Woods, Hayward, on Feb. 19 (RAR), the main influx did not arrive until late March, nearly two weeks late. A very late Nashville Warbler was banded on South Farallon Dec. 6 (PRBO); another late migrant or wintering bird was present at Santa Cruz on Dec. 5 (DDeS, D. Gaines); 2 more were reported on the Monterey C B C—they are very rare in winter. An early migrant Nashville was in Carmel Mar. 26 (RS). Two very early singing ♂ Yellow Warblers were found in Arroyo Mocho Mar. 30 (ST). Nearly every observer commented on the relative abundance of Myrtle as compared to Audubon's Warblers this year. On Jasper Ridge Myrtles outnumbered Audubon's 156 to 11 (VR), while this was the first year Myrtles outnumbered Audubon's in many places in Palo Alto (DDeS). Myrtle Warblers were common not only along the coast but also in the Central Valley; small flocks were found at several places along the Sacramento R. (JT), and in some locations in the Sacramento area they were nearly as common as Audubon's (BK). Audubon's Warblers were common in orchards in the Reedley area until the January spraying, and then were found only along the river (RHG). Four individual Black-throated Gray Warblers were reported by reliable observers, 1 each on the Pt. Reyes, Monterey, Oroville, and Stockton C B Cs—more records than usual for this very rare winter bird. The Townsend's Warbler present in Sacramento last period remained until Dec. 12 (TM), while another was present in W. Sacramento Dec. 27 (TM, JT). There are now three winter records for the Central Valley. A single Hermit Warbler on the Monterey C B C was the only one reported, while the only winter record of Palm Warbler was a bird present at the Alameda Naval Air Station until Dec. 5 (RS). A very late or wintering MacGillivray's Warbler was captured at Reedley Dec. 17 (RHG). Wilson's Warblers arrived late and in small numbers this year at the very end of March. Only 2 were recorded before Mar. 27: 1 Mar. 13 in Carmichael, Sacramento Co. (JT), and one Mar. 21 at Ft. Bragg, Mendocino Co. (RC).

ICTERIDS, TANAGERS—Exceptionally large numbers of Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found wintering in the Central Valley and Delta. Three near Sacramento Dec. 27 (JT, TM), 125 near Antioch, Contra Costa Co. Jan. 22 (WMP, ABu, et al.), 100 near Gray Lodge Feb. 7 (ST, DE) and 200 in the Delta Feb. 13 (BAMcL) were all in mixed blackbird flocks. However, the champion sighting was Jan. 5 near Lodi, "the largest cloud of mixed blackbirds in my experience; over 50 percent Yellow-headed, the rest Red-winged, running into the tens of thousands" (D. Fry, fide BK). Incredible!! A ♀ was at the mouth of the Carmel

R. Mar. 26 for one of the few coastal records (RS). A Hooded Oriole ♀ in Yuba City Jan. 30–Feb. 18 was photographed for the third winter record for the Central Valley (PH, TM). An immature ♂ was at Asilomar, Pacific Grove Mar. 15 (RS). An immature ♂ Bullock's Oriole was present until at least Mar. 15 in Greenwood Park, Pacific Grove, the only oriole there this year (RS, R&JG), and an adult ♂ was seen on the Reedley campus Jan. 11 (RHG). This species is generally regular in very small numbers in the winter. The first migrants were seen at both Los Banos (ROW) and at Lafayette (LF) on Mar. 21. Brown-headed Cowbirds continued to increase in the winter in the Region. Careful scrutiny of blackbirds, especially at dumps and sewage outlets, will probably produce even more. Only three reports of wintering W. Tanagers were received, all from coastal counties. A ♀-plumaged Summer Tanager wintered at a feeder in Pacific Grove (M. Nelson, Eds., et al.) and another ♀ was present in Carmel on Dec. 30 (A. Follis); these represent only the ninth and tenth winter records for the Region.

GROSBEAKS, FINCHES—An immature ♂ **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, only the fourth winter record for the Region, was in San Francisco Dec. 5–15 (A. Follis, VH, et al.). The only Evening Grosbeaks recorded away from the Sierra were a ♂ in East Oakland Dec. 15 (RS), 3 in Hayward in late December (fide RS) and 15 on the Centerville C B C. The only Cassin's Finch found away from the Sierras was one well-described on the Pt. Reyes C B C. Good numbers of Purple Finches were found in coastal areas after last fall's excellent flight. They were also more common than ever before on the floor of the Central Valley, where they are usually quite uncommon. Individuals and flocks of up to 20 were regularly reported from Yuba City, Carmichael, Sacramento, and Dinuba, Tulare Co. (TM, JT, RLeV, RHG). In marked contrast, numbers of Pine Siskins were lower than almost any other year in the memory of most contributors both on the coast and in the Central Valley. Similarly, Am. Goldfinches were scarce, but Lesser Goldfinches seemed to be near normal numbers. Small numbers of Lawrence's Goldfinches were present in the s. San Joaquin Valley near Reedley (RHG) and an adult ♂ was seen Dec. 30 in Chico, where it is considered very rare in winter (JT). At least 15 were present in the Arroyo Mocho, south of Livermore, Mar. 30 (ST). There were very few sightings of Red Crossbills during the season; 35 in the early winter near Angwin and at least 20 after Jan. 30 on the Monterey Peninsula (AB) were the largest numbers reported.

SPARROWS—A Green-tailed Towhee was seen Jan. 2 on Pt. Reyes (J. Lane, W. Hetrick)—a very rare coastal winter record. A Grasshopper Sparrow was found near Santa Rosa Dec. 27 (DE, ST); there are very few winter records for this secretive species. A **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was found and photographed at the e. end of the Dumbarton Bridge near Newark Dec. 27 (BR). This bird and

possibly a second were present until at least Feb. 20 (RAR, ST, DE). This is the third time this species has been found in this same location and is the seventh record for the Region. Single Vesper Sparrows were found Jan. 25 w. of Petaluma and Jan. 28 at Tubbs I., both in Sonoma Co. (BAMcL). This species is very rare west of the Central Valley in winter. A flock of 500 Lark Sparrows was found in the Arroyo Mocho Mar. 30 (ST), an exceptional number for this Region. Scattered reports of Rufous-crowned Sparrows were received from the normal Sierra and coastal foothill locations, but one on the floor of the Central Valley in Carmichael Mar. 13-15 was unusual (JT). Over the past several years the number of Slate-colored Juncos reported in the Region has increased so that 10-15 is now considered normal for a winter. This increase has been attributed to the greater number of careful observers in the field. How then does one explain 61 apparently "pure" Slate-colored Juncos reported during this winter?! This includes 35 on 12 of 28 C B Cs. No fewer than 22 were found in the Central Valley and surrounding foothills, where they are rarely reported. In contrast, no Gray-headed Juncos were reported this year. Two Chipping Sparrows at Gray Lodge Dec. 29 (TM) and 1 at Pacific Grove in December (W. Reese) were n. of their usual winter range. Three reports were received for the very rare Harris' Sparrow: an immature at Requa, Del Norte Co., Dec. 6 (RLeV, et al.), another immature Feb. 7 near the Sacramento N W R and an adult the same day near Gray Lodge (ST, DE). Analogous to the Slate-colored Juncos, 29 White-throated Sparrows recorded this winter was about three times the normal number; 7 of these were from the Central Valley. The western *Zonotrichia* and Fox Sparrows were generally reported in slightly better than normal numbers. An "Eastern" Fox Sparrow was present in Santa Rosa Dec. 7-Feb. 3 (BAMcL). Two Swamp Sparrows in Olema Marsh from at least Jan. 2 to Mar. 23 were the only ones reported (RS, ST, DE, et al.). A Snow Bunting was photographed on Blank Rock off Trinidad, Humboldt Co., Jan. 30 (T. Osborne, TM, T. Rodgers). This represents only the sixth record for the Region.

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