

SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION **/ Guy McCaskie**

The weather this spring was unusual in that no major storm fronts pushed south along the coast to this Region, as is normal. Instead we had day after day of warm sunny weather, and by the end of the period the country-side was showing the results of the small amount of rain so far received.

The major movement of migrants occurred during the last two weeks of April and the first week of May, with impressive numbers of most species encountered during the weekend of Apr. 29-30. By the end of May virtually all our regular West Coast migrants had passed through, although species such as W. Wood Pewee, Traill's Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler and Wilson's Warbler were still to be found. Observers afield, especially in the eastern portion of the Region, were rewarded with an impressive number and variety of stragglers from far-

ther east during late May and early June. One has only to count the number of vagrants reported during the Memorial Day weekend, and guess at what was present but not found, to figure the numbers of these stragglers reaching California this spring. This late spring influx of stragglers is a normal phenomenon in the West, but it takes knowledgeable observers specifically looking for vagrants to prove it.

The early arrival dates for some of our key migrants were: Lesser Nighthawk, Mar. 18 at the Salton Sea; Vaux's Swift, Apr. 11 at Encino, Los Angeles Co.; W. Kingbird, Mar. 11 at Valley Center, San Diego Co.; Ash-throated Flycatcher, Mar. 4 at Corn Springs, Riverside Co. (possibly a wintering bird), Apr. 4 at Santa Barbara and Apr. 5 near Victorville, San Bernardino Co.; Traill's Flycatcher, Apr. 22 in Morongo Valley, San Bernardino Co. and Apr. 23 at the Salton Sea; W. Flycatcher, Mar. 12 in San Diego and near Solvang, Santa Barbara Co.; W. Wood Pewee, Apr. 22 near Holtville, Imperial Co.; Olive-sided Flycatcher, Apr. 29 at the Salton Sea and in Morongo Valley; Swainson's Thrush, Apr. 14 near Azusa, Los Angeles Co. (a little early) and Apr. 26 in Santa Barbara; Bell's Vireo, Mar. 19 near San Diego; Solitary Vireo, Apr. 8 at the Salton Sea; Warbling Vireo Mar. 4 at Corn Springs (quite early), Mar. 10 in W. Los Angeles and Mar. 12 in four other localities; Nashville Warbler, Mar. 25 in Placerito Canyon, Los Angeles Co. and Mar. 26 in Morongo Valley; Yellow Warbler, Mar. 24 near San Diego; Black-throated Gray Warbler, Mar. 18 near Pt. Mugu, Ventura Co. (quite early) and Mar. 25 in Placerito Canyon; Hermit Warbler, Apr. 16 in Santa Barbara and Apr. 17 in Tuna Canyon, Los Angeles Co.; MacGillivray's Warbler, Mar. 18 near Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo Co. (early), Apr. 8 at the Salton Sea and Apr. 10 in Tuna Canyon; Yellow-breasted Chat, Apr. 14 in Santa Barbara and Apr. 15 near San Diego; Wilson's Warbler, Mar. 12 near San Diego and Mar. 18 at the Salton Sea; Hooded Oriole, Mar. 13 in San Diego and in Escondido, San Diego Co.; Bullock's Oriole, Mar. 12 in San Diego and Escondido; W. Tanager, Apr. 7 in Tuna Canyon (quite early), Apr. 10 (still early) and Apr. 14 in Santa Barbara; Black-headed Grosbeak, Mar. 27 at the Salton Sea and Mar. 29 in Santa Barbara; Blue Grosbeak, Apr. 15 near San Diego; Lazuli Bunting, Apr. 7 on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, Los Angeles Co. (quite early) and Apr. 14 in Santa Barbara; Black-chinned Sparrow, Mar. 20 in Sespe Canyon, Ventura Co..

LOONS, ALBATROSSES, SHEARWATERS, PETRELS — Common Loons are relatively scarce away from the coast in this Region, but about 10 individuals were found around the Salton Sea Apr. 23-May 7. Two Red-throated Loons, a species previously unrecorded away from the coast in this Region, were found on Baldwin I. in the San Bernardino Mts. May 27 (LRB). A Black-footed Albatross seen near Santa Barbara I. June 3 was the only one reported. Sooty Shearwaters were abundant along the shore of Ventura and Santa Barbara Cos. during May with counts of 15,000 and 45,000 made from shore May 14 & 20 respectively. A Manx Shearwater off Santa Barbara May

20 was unusual since the species normally occurs only during the fall and winter in California waters. A Fulmar near Santa Barbara I. June 3 was very late, but the record follows a winter during which numbers occurred off s. California. Some 150 Black Petrels and 2 Leach's Petrels were seen during a boat trip from San Diego to San Clemente I. June 3, but no petrels were found on other birding boat trips this spring.

HERONS — A Reddish Egret in full breeding plumage was seen near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co. Apr. 15-16 (EAC, GMCC); this species is very rare in California, normally appearing during the fall and occasionally remaining to winter; records of birds in breeding condition during the spring are few indeed.

GEESE, DUCKS — Black Brant were first noted at the Salton Sea as spring migrants in 1963, and have been found annually since, although numbers have varied from year to year. This year there appear to have been two distinct periods of movement for Black Brant through the Salton Sea: Mar. 12-27 and Apr. 29-May 13 with peak numbers of 17 on Mar. 12 and 15 on May 6. In addition a single bird was seen at Scissors Crossing in e. San Diego Co. Mar. 19. Fulvous Tree Ducks appeared to arrive in the Imperial Valley during late March, with 4 noted Mar. 24 and 12 three days later; this is a normal date for the first spring migrants. Seven ad. ♂♂ Blue-winged Teal were reported seen during April and the first half of May, with most coming from the area of the Salton Sea; a few of these birds are regularly found with Cinnamon Teal migrating through the Region. Each spring a few Surf Scoters appear on the Salton Sea, undoubtedly birds moving north from wintering grounds in the Gulf of California; this spring one was at Salton City Apr. 8, 1-2 were there May 7-29, and one was at the north end of the sea May 19.

HAWKS — Away from the extreme n.e. portion of the Region, where a few Swainson's Hawks still nest, there were only two reports of migrants—one over Riverside, Riverside Co. Apr. 15 and one near San Juan Capistrano Apr. 22. Numbers of these birds migrating through s. California have declined drastically during the past ten years. A badly decomposed Harris' Hawk was found near Ramer I. in the Imperial Valley Apr. 29 (SC); this species formerly nested in the area, but has not been seen there since 1952. A single Peregrine Falcon seen at the s. end of the Salton Sea Apr. 23 had probably wandered north from the Gulf of California.

QUAIL, RAILS — A Mountain Quail was heard in Tuna Canyon of the Santa Monica Mts. May 6; this species was formerly unrecorded here, but has been noted 2 or 3 times in the past four years. Single Clapper Rails were noted around Morro Bay during April and May indicating it may still nest there; recent surveys suggest the species might have been extirpated around the bay.

SHOREBIRDS — The Piping Plover that wintered around Goleta, Santa Barbara Co. was present until at least Apr. 22 (RW *et al.*); this bird has now been seen by virtually all the active birders of California, and

none question its identity, and many are going as far as identifying it as a bird of the western race *circumcinctus*. It was frequently possible to compare the bird directly with the Snowy and Semipalmated Plovers also present, though it frequently remained alone. A single Am. Golden at the mouth of the Santa Clara R., Ventura Co. May 14 was the only one reported; the species is rare in spring, but we normally have more than one sighting. Each spring a few Ruddy Turnstones are noted around the Salton Sea and this year was no exception with one at the south end of the sea Apr. 23, twelve at the north end of the sea Apr. 29 and four there May 6; this species is much more numerous along the coast. A flock of over 100 Lesser Yellowlegs present near Calipatria, Imperial Co. Apr. 22 illustrates how numerous this species really is in s. California. A Solitary Sandpiper, always rare during the spring, was seen at Tuna Canyon in the Santa Monica Mts. Apr. 10. A **Wandering Tattler**, a casual straggler away from the Pacific coast, was studied at Salton City on the west shore of the Salton Sea May 7 (GMcC). Knots were found regularly on the Salton Sea Apr. 8-May 19 with a high count of 300 at the north end of the sea May 6; along the coast comparable numbers can only be found around San Diego, the species being quite scarce elsewhere. A most unusual report was that of a Pectoral Sandpiper at Newport, Orange Co. Apr. 29 (JAJ); there are only a handful of verified spring reports for California. Stilt Sandpipers were present at the south end of the Salton Sea as usual, with 3 or 4 noted regularly between Apr. 8 and May 6. A Sanderling at Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley was unusual, but they are now considered regular migrants at the Salton Sea and must undoubtedly occur elsewhere away from the coast. Red Phalaropes were extremely scarce along the coast this spring, but a ♂ in breeding plumage was well studied at the north end of the Salton Sea May 29 where the species is casual.

GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS — Two second-year W. Gulls (*L. occidentalis livens*) at Salton City May 13 were early wanderers from the Gulf of California. Franklin's Gulls are now found regularly in California, although it was not too long ago that the species was considered accidental. This spring 2 were near Westmorland, Imperial Co. Apr. 8, 4 were near Calipatria, Imperial Co. Apr. 29, 5 were at the north end of the Salton Sea Apr. 30, and 6 were at the south end May 20; most interesting was the discovery of a flock of at least 10 adults on Baldwin L. in the San Bernardino Mts. May 7 with 3 still present at the end of the period. An ad. **Heermann's Gull** in Desert Center, Riverside Co. May 21 (JD *et al.*) was certainly out of habitat, and represents one of the very few records of the species away from the coast. Four Gull-billed Terns at the south end of the Salton Sea Mar. 25 were the earliest reported, but this is a normal arrival date. There appears to be no documented record of an Arctic Tern from California during the spring, although it has previously been reported; on June 3 six terns believed to be of this species were seen between Long Beach and Santa Barbara I., and three more were seen between San Diego and San Clemente I. on the same day; adults with short red bills, gray extending well up into the face, and having the sil-

houette of Arctic Terns were included in the sightings. A **Black Skimmer** at Playa Del Rey, Los Angeles Co. Apr. 24 (HB *et al.*) is the fourth found along the coast of this Region; two at the north end of the Salton Sea Apr. 30 (EAC *et al.*) were still present at the end of the period. Black Skimmers have been found annually on the Salton Sea since 1968.

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS — White-winged Doves are common breeders of the low desert regions of s. California, but are scarce to the north; this spring individuals were found at Scotty's Castle (one, May 28) and Furnace Creek Ranch (two, May 27), at Kelso, San Bernardino Co. (two, May 28), and at Corn Springs (two, Apr. 29). Whip-poor-wills had returned to the area of L. Fulmor in the San Jacinto Mts. by Apr. 28 where they are suspected of nesting; in addition the species was heard along Strawberry Creek, some 5 mi. to the southeast, in late May, and around nearby Humber Park on June 5. A **Chimney Swift** was identified at Oasis, Mono Co. May 20 (GSS *et al.*), one was studied at the north end of the Salton Sea May 20 (RLeV *et al.*), and another was seen flying over Encino Reservoir, Los Angeles Co. May 26 (JD & RW); this species apparently reaches s. California regularly in limited numbers, but positive identification is most difficult. A flock of 50 Black Swifts over Goleta May 4 was the only large gathering reported this spring. Noteworthy was the discovery of a calling Elf Owl at Corn Springs Mar. 18, and the verifying of a pair present into May; this species formerly nested at nearby Cottonwood Springs, but that locality was the only place the species occurred west of the Colorado R. Valley.

Broad-tailed Hummingbirds are known to nest in the White, Panamint, Clark and New York Mts. along the eastern border of California, but are virtually unknown from elsewhere in the State; this spring a ♂ was found near Big Pine in the Owens Valley May 28 (TH) and another was noted only Arrestre Creek in the San Bernardino Mts. May 13 (KG). Calliope Hummingbirds were exceptionally numerous throughout the Region, being reported commonly along the coast and in the Imperial Valley, and were even noted in Death Valley. An Acorn Woodpecker at Yucca Valley, San Bernardino Co. May 16 was little to the east of its normal range, and another at Westguard Pass in the White Mts. May 8 was a long way from home. Lewis' Woodpeckers remained late after last winter's influx with two noted in the Imperial Valley Apr. 29 and one still at Furnace Creek Ranch May 28.

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS — An E. Kingbird was seen at 10,000 ft. in the White Mts. May 28, one was found at Mesquite Springs in Death Valley May 27, and a singing bird was discovered in Morongo Valley June 4; a few E. Kingbirds appear to migrate regularly along the eastern border of California, but all records are worth reporting. A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, a casual straggler to California, was carefully studied in Morongo Valley May 28 (ST, LJ *et al.*). A Wied's Crested Flycatcher banded in Morongo Valley Apr. 31 was the first noted there this spring; one or two pairs regularly nest at this isolated outpost at the northwestern ex-

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treme of its range. A Purple Martin seen flying with other swallows at Oasis May 27 was in an area where few, if any, records exist.

WRENS, THRASHERS — A singing Cactus Wren was observed near Teakettle Junction at the northern end of Death Valley May 11; this species is sparse in the northern portion of its range, and is previously unrecorded north of the Argus Mts. of s. Inyo Co. A singing Bendire's Thrasher was found at the Brock Experimental Ranch near Holtville Apr. 30; this locality is outside the bird's normal range and habitat.

VIREOS, WARBLERS — A Hutton's Vireo, a sedentary species with minor dispersal movements in the fall, was studied at Deep Springs, Inyo Co. May 13, a locality well to the east of its normal range. Eleven Black-and-white Warblers reported were more than usual; virtually all were found during May, and all were in the eastern portion of the Region—Deep Springs, May 14; Scotty's Castle, May 9 & 26; Mesquite Springs, May 26-27; Furnace Creek Ranch, June 2; Wild Rose in the Panamint Mts. May 27; Yucca Valley, May 13 & 31; Morongo Valley, May 1 and 14-21; Finney L. in the Imperial Valley, Apr. 29. A ♀ **Golden-winged Warbler** was carefully identified at Deep Springs June 5 (RS); there are only three previous reports (two specimens) of this species from California, but one of these was for the spring period (May 26, 1963). Four Tennessee Warblers, normally very scarce or absent in the spring, were found in the eastern portion of the Region in late May—1 Deep Springs, May 21; 2 Furnace Creek Ranch, May 20; 1 Morongo Valley, May 28. Single migrant Virginia's Warblers were noted at Finney L. May 7, Morongo Valley Apr. 29, and Tecopa Hot Springs, Inyo Co. Apr. 15 & May 8; careful searching in recent years has shown a few of these birds regularly occur along the eastern border of California. In addition single birds were seen around Westguard Pass in the White Mts. May 26 & 29; this species is known to be a rare breeder in the White Mts.

The only Parula Warbler reported this spring was a ♀ at Morongo Valley May 19 (RS & RLeV); unlike most other vagrant warblers to California, this species occurs more often in spring than fall, and is now being recorded annually. A ♀ **Magnolia Warbler**, a somewhat regular spring and fall straggler to California, was present at Deep Springs May 25-26 (DDeS) being netted and photographed. Most unusual was a ♀ **Cape May Warbler** at Oasis, Inyo Co. May 27 (GMcC, LJ *et al.*); this is an extremely scarce straggler to California with only one other spring record (June 30-July 2, 1971). Another real rarity was a singing ♂ **Bay-breasted Warbler** at Oasis May 28 (RS, DDeS *et al.*), apparently the fourth spring record for California. Normally a few Ovenbirds are found each spring but one picked up dead in Goleta June 6 (WA) was the only one reported. This spring five N. Waterthrushes were found in the eastern portion of the Region—Deep Springs, May 24-27; Bennett's Wells in Death Valley, June 3; Yucca Valley, May 11-16; Morongo Valley, Apr. 29-May 3 and May 19. This species is apparently regular through this area each May in small numbers, there now being many

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records. A ♀ Hooded Warbler was carefully studied at Deep Springs June 10 (GMcC); this species is a very rare straggler to California, but at least seven previous spring records exist. At least 19 Am. Redstarts were noted in the eastern portion of the Region during the last half of May and the first week of June, with most occurring in the Death Valley area and northward during May 20-June 10 period, as is normal. An ad. ♂ Am. Redstart near Goleta Apr. 22 was probably the same bird found there in December, having successfully wintered.

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES, TANAGERS — In recent years Bobolinks have been found regularly in the northeastern portion of this Region in late May and early June; a ♀ at Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley May 20 was joined by a second the following day, and another ♂ was at Deep Springs May 27. A first year ♂ Orchard Oriole was carefully studied at Deep Springs May 21 (JW *et al.*); this is a relatively scarce straggler to California, but is proving to be more common than formerly suspected. A Scott's Oriole in San Diego Mar. 20 was a little west of its normal range, and another near Westguard Pass in the White Mts. May 21 was near the northern limit of its range in California. Single ♀ Boat-tailed Grackles were seen at two localities along the southern shore of the Salton Sea during April—one at Rock Hill, Apr. 8-23 and one at Red Hill, Apr. 23. This species reached the lower Colorado R. Valley in 1964 and was nesting by 1969, but has been much slower in establishing itself in the Imperial Valley. Two or three pairs of Hepatic Tanagers were found along Arrester Creek in the San Bernardino Mts. May 11 (GSS), and at least one pair has been present since; there are three previous spring and summer records for this locality and nesting should be watched for. Summer Tanagers nest in a few localities of s.e. California, and were back on territory by the first of May. Away from these nesting localities Summer Tanagers are scarce, and it is likely many of the records pertain to birds of the eastern race *rubra*. This spring produced a ♂ seen in Arcadia, Los Angeles Co. May 22, and six individuals seen north of the bird's known breeding range—a ♂ at Deep Springs, May 13-14 and June 10; a ♂ at Furnace Creek Ranch May 27 and June 10; a ♀ at Clark Mt. May 28; a ♂ at Yucca Valley, June 4.

FINCHES, SPARROWS — Two or three reports of ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are normally received each spring but six ♂ were found this year, all being in the eastern portion of the Region—one at Deep Springs, May 24-26; one at Furnace Creek Ranch May 20-21 and 2 there June 2; one at Kelso, May 28; one near Desert Center, May 20. Four birds believed to be ♀♀ Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were also reported from the same area, but field identification of females is subject to error, although no doubt an equal number of females are to be expected. A minimum of 14 Indigo Buntings were reported from the high desert portions of the Region May 20-June 10, with half being found during the May 26-28 period; this species is found regularly at the oases of e. California each spring and early summer, and nesting should be watched for. A ♀ plumaged "Painted Bunting" was carefully studied in Morongo Valley May 4 (JF); there are only six previous records of ap-

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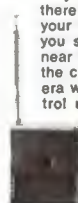


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parently wild birds from California, and all were in "♀ plumage" during the fall. In addition an ad. ♂ was seen at a feeder in Imperial Beach Apr. 18, and another was at a feeder in Santa Monica May 22-23, but both are best treated as escapes; records of ad. ♂♂ in California form no pattern, being scattered randomly throughout the year, and some have shown obvious signs of having been in captivity. Two Dickcissels were seen together at Furnace Creek Ranch May 27 (RS, DDeS *et al.*); this is an extremely rare spring straggler to California with only two previous records for the Region. The Lark Bunting reported wintering on the Palos Verdes Pen. was last seen Apr. 19. A Slate-colored Junco in Morongo Valley May 6 was somewhat late. A singing ♂ Black-chinned Sparrow at Brock Ranch near Holtville Apr. 22 and another at Finney L. near Calipatria May 13 appear to be the first records for the Imperial Valley. A Harris' Sparrow appeared at a feeder in Pasadena Apr. 19, and an exceptionally late individual was found near Westguard Pass in the White Mts. May 28. A wintering White-throated Sparrow was present at a feeder in San Pedro until at least Apr. 19, and another was seen at Furnace Creek Ranch Apr. 6.

CONTRIBUTORS — Waldo Abbott, Ernest R. Abeles, Keith Axelson, Bob Bender (BBE), Charles H. Bernstein, Leo R. Best, Irving H. Black, Bruce Broadbooks (BBR), Hank Brodtkin, Eugene A. Cardiff, Steven Cardiff, Barbara A. Carlson, Herbert Clark, Leslie Cook, David De Sante, Albert Driscoll, Jon Dunn, Jim Fairchild, Robert Fleischer, Alice Fries, Kim Gar-

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