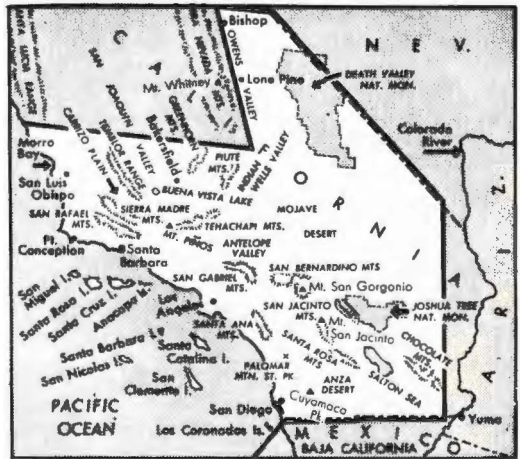


## SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION / Guy McCaskie

The winter rains finally let up in early April and, as a result of the excessive moisture, the entire countryside appeared lush and green with a spectacular display of wildflowers on the deserts. Consequently, there was feed and water available everywhere and migrants did not appear to concentrate as much this spring as they have in the past. Most observers felt migrants were scarce in the eastern portions of the region; however, large numbers of migrant flycatchers, vireos, and warblers were present along the coast during a period of heavy overcast in early May.

As usual a variety of eastern species appeared during late May and early June with an amazing 13 species of warblers over and above 15 western species. Some of the more unusual discoveries included Mississippi



Kites in Death Valley, a Golden-winged Warbler at Deep Springs, and a Kentucky Warbler and Scarlet Tanager on the Channel Is.

Searching for pelagic birds during May proved to be productive, for birds were quite numerous and a good variety of species was encountered. Among the more noteworthy sightings was a South Polar Skua off San Diego and three Horned Puffins around the Channel Is. (see cover).

The early arrival dates for some of our key migrants were: Wilson's Phalarope, Apr. 8 at the Salton Sea; Com. Tern, Apr. 14 in San Diego; Least Tern, Apr. 9 in Oceanside; Elegant Tern, Mar. 24 in San Diego; Black Tern, Apr. 29 at the Salton Sea; Lesser Night-hawk, Apr. 8 at the Salton Sea; Vaux's Swift, Apr. 19 over Santa Barbara; Black-chinned Hummingbird, Apr. 12 in San Pedro; W. Kingbird, Mar. 17 at the Salton Sea; Ash-throated Flycatcher, Apr. 6 in Santa Barbara; Willow Flycatcher, May 5 in Santa Barbara; W. Flycatcher, Mar. 18 in Topanga Canyon; W. Wood Pewee, Apr. 15 at the Salton Sea; Olive-sided Flycatcher, Apr. 9 in Arcadia; Swainson's Thrush, Apr. 20 in Santa Barbara; Bell's Vireo, Mar. 24 in San Diego; Solitary Vireo, Apr. 7 in San Pedro; Warbling Vireo, Mar. 19 in Santa Barbara; Nashville Warbler, Apr. 8 in both Los Angeles and Santa Barbara; Yellow Warbler, Mar. 31 in San Diego; Black-throated Gray Warbler, Mar. 22 in Santa Barbara; Hermit Warbler, Apr. 19 in Santa Barbara; MacGillivray's Warbler, Apr. 13 in Arcadia; Yellow-breasted Chat, Apr. 15 in Santa Barbara; Wilson's Warbler, Mar. 3 at Malibu; Hooded Oriole, Mar. 24 near Imperial Beach; Scott's Oriole, Apr. 1 in Anza-Borrego State Park; N. Oriole, Mar. 18 near Imperial Beach; W. Tanager, Apr. 16 in Santa Barbara; Black-headed Grosbeak, Mar. 24 near Imperial Beach; Blue Grosbeak, Apr. 28 in San Diego; Lazuli Bunting, Apr. 15 in Santa Barbara; Black-chinned Sparrow, Mar. 24 in San Diego.

**LOONS, GREBES**—A few Com. Loons regularly migrate through the interior of California, so one on Big Bear L. in the San Bernardino Mts. May 6 was not too unusual. However, an Arctic Loon on Franklin Canyon Res., L.A. Co., Apr. 27 was most unusual since very few interior records exist. A Horned Grebe at Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley Apr. 14-21 was the only one found inland this spring.

**SHEARWATERS, STORM PETRELS**—Pink-footed and Sooty Shearwaters were found in fair numbers off the coast throughout May as expected, but 30 Manx Shearwaters off San Diego May 19 were unusual, since they normally remain in Mexican waters until the late summer. An Ashy Storm-Petrel off San Diego May 19 was quite far south for that date. Black Storm-Petrels were common off San Diego May 19, and two were noted off Santa Barbara May 13.

**CORMORANTS**—Six Double-crested Cormorants on Big Bear L. May 6 were at a rather high elevation and one at Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley Apr. 14-16 was at an equally unlikely locality.

**HERONS**—Cattle Egrets are now common residents at the Salton Sea and have been regular fall and winter visitors to the coast; ten in Cerritos, L.A. Co., May 20, and 35 at Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., Apr. 14 were unusual numbers for coastal localities in spring, and two at Yucca Valley, San Bernardino Co. were the first for that area of California. A lone Least Bittern at Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley June 3 was at an unusual locality.

**GEESE, DUCKS**—As appears to be normal, a few Black Brant passed through the Salton Sea during April and May; however, one at Whittier, L.A. Co., Mar. 11 was unexpected. Blue-winged Teal were reasonably common, being found with Cinnamon Teal, for over 40 individuals were reported within the region. A Wood Duck at Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley June 9 was exceptionally late. The only Oldsquaw reported was inland on L. Cachuma, Santa Barbara Co. Apr. 15 (Kim Aanerud, *vide* RW). A Surf Scoter at Salton City on the Salton Sea Apr. 22 and another on Little Rock Dam, L.A. Co. Apr. 15 were both away from the coast. A White-winged Scoter at the north end of the Salton Sea Apr. 23 and May 5 was also inland where it is very rare.

**HAWKS**—Two Mississippi Kites appeared at Furnace Creek Ranch May 21, both were still present the following day, but thereafter only one could be found through June 3 (HK, M & NP *et al.*); this represents the fourth record for California. A Broad-winged Hawk at Furnace Creek Ranch Apr. 21 (GMcC, SS *et al.*) gives us the first spring record of this hawk in California. Small numbers of Swainson's Hawks were seen in the n.e. corner of the region where a few still nest, but one noted in the Antelope Valley, L.A. Co. Apr. 28 and another seen over Riverside Apr. 7 were the only migrants reported. A Peregrine Falcon in Cottonwood Canyon of the Panamint Mts. Apr. 16, one over Furnace Creek Ranch June 1, and another on Pt. Loma, San Diego Co. May 20 were the only birds reported away from known eyries. A Pigeon Hawk at Agua Caliente, San Diego Co. Apr. 1 and another at the south end of the Salton Sea Apr. 12 were late for S. California.

**SHOREBIRDS**—An Am. Oystercatcher was seen on Anacapa Is. May 13 (RW *et al.*) and another was found on the Los Coronados Is. May 19 (GMcC *et al.*). Two Black Oystercatchers on the L.A. Harbor breakwater in May were a little out of range. There are few records of Semipalmated Plovers from the n.e. portion of the region, hence one in Death Valley Apr. 14-15, and 16 near Big Pine Apr. 28 are of interest. Likewise a Snowy Plover in Death Valley Apr. 14-15, and 8 near Big Pine May 12 add to the few records for the area. The only Am. Golden Plovers noted this spring were one on Newport Bay Apr. 30 and another in Goleta, Santa Barbara Co. May 22. A Ruddy Turnstone at the south end of the Salton Sea Apr. 29 and two there May 5 were the only ones reported away from the coast. Four Whimbrel in Bishop Apr. 15 and another near Big Pine Apr. 29 were in an area

from which few records exist. A Solitary Sandpiper, always rare in spring, was near San Diego Apr. 5 and 1-2 were around Yucca Valley Apr. 22-May 6. As usual a few Knots passed through the Salton Sea during late April and early May with a maximum of 15 on May 12; this is the only inland locality in California where this species regularly occurs. A Baird's Sandpiper, exceptionally rare in spring, was photographed near Imperial Beach May 5 (EAC, SC). A flock of 7 Stilt Sandpipers at the south end of the Salton Sea May 12 constitutes the only report this spring. A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was carefully studied at the north end of the Salton Sea May 5 (GMcC, SS); a very rare but probably regular spring migrant through this area. Red Phalaropes were found off San Diego May 19 but not elsewhere off the coast earlier in the month.

—S.A.—

**JAEGERS, GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS**—A South Polar Skua (*Catharacta maccormicki*) was well seen about 35 mi. off San Diego May 19 (GMcC *et al.*); regardless of what appears in the A.O.U. Checklist and other publications covering birds of the Pacific Coast, the South Polar Skua appears to be the only skua collected along the west coast of North America (Devillers, in press). The South Polar Skua is generally treated as a separate species from the other forms of skuas occurring in the Southern Hemisphere since it is known to nest sympatrically with at least one of those forms. *Catharacta skua lonnbergi*, without apparently interbreeding. Three color phases, dark, intermediate and light, are known for *Catharacta maccormicki*, whereas the other forms of skua have monotypical plumages. Birds in the light phase plumage are easily identifiable in the field since no other form of skua approaches the paleness of these individuals. The bird seen off San Diego was a very pale individual having an almost straw-colored head and breast with some golden feathers visible on the nape.

An exceptionally late Glaucous Gull was seen flying north past Pt. Loma, San Diego Co. May 20. A second-year Western Gull (yellow-legged) at Salton City Apr. 22 was very early for the Salton Sea. Remarkably the only Franklin's Gull found this spring was a beautiful adult in Bishop May 15 (JMF). A Bonaparte's Gull near Big Pine Apr. 28 was unusual for the area. As is expected, a few Sabine's Gulls were found off the coast in May. Com. Terns were noted on the Salton Sea Apr. 18 & 23 at the same time numbers were building up along the coast. At least ten Arctic Terns were well studied off San Diego May 19 (GMcC *et al.*); there are very few spring reports for California, and none documented by specimens. Four Black Skimmers were back at the Salton Sea, where the species nested last year, by May 12 (DV?) and one was seen along the coast on San Diego Bay May 12 (EAC, SC).

**ALCIDS**—Earlier suspicions that larger-than-normal numbers of Com. Murres reached Southern California waters last winter were reinforced by the sighting of unusual numbers this spring—30 off Oxnard May 13, 30 off San Pedro June 8 and 40 off Torrey Pines State Park, San Diego Co. Apr. 29. Pigeon Guil-



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lemon was found nesting commonly on Anacapa I. and Santa Barbara I. in May, the southern limit of its range. Xantus' Murrelets are undoubtedly nesting on all the Channel Is. and were noted in good numbers in the waters around these islands during May. A Rhinoceros Auklet off San Diego May 19 was late. Most unexpected was the photographing of a **Horned Puffin** near Santa Cruz Is. May 13 (GMcC *et al.*) followed by the sighting of two more around Santa Barbara I. May 20 (LJ); prior to this only two records exist for apparently healthy birds seen on the open ocean off California though a few dead birds have been found along our beaches.

**DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS**—Banded-tailed Pigeons lingered in the coastal lowlands until late April. A White-winged Dove at Laguna Beach, Orange Co. May 13 and another around Goleta in April and May were on the coast where it is rare; one in Kelso, San Bernardino Co. May 26 was fairly far north. Two Inca Doves seen in Twenty-nine Palms, River side Co. May 19 (BE) were far outside their very limited range in California. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo, now very rare in California, was found on Santa Barbara I. June 1 (KG); a most unusual locality. Whip-poor-wills had returned to the San Jacinto Mts. by May 4 when at least one bird was heard calling. A Lesser Nighthawk on Santa Barbara I. May 20 was unusual. Again **Chimney Swifts** appeared over Encino with two noted May 31 (JD) and one still present the following day (GSS); this species is being reported each spring nowadays. An Anna's Hummingbird at Wildrose in the Panamint Mts. May 31 was outside its normal range. Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were displaying in the White Mts. Apr. 20 despite the wintry appearance of the area.

**WOODPECKERS**—A Com. Flicker exhibiting the characters of the "Gilded Flicker" was seen at a nesting hole near Cima, San Bernardino Co. May 19; this form appears to be resident in this area of California

in limited numbers. Lewis' Woodpeckers lingered in some coastal and mountain localities until late April after having wintered; 200 together at Furnace Creek Ranch Apr. 8 must have been migrants moving north. A White-headed Woodpecker at Furnace Creek Ranch Apr. 8 (Dr. D. Baepeler, *vide* CL) was most unusual since it rarely strays from the mountains.

**FLYCATCHERS**—A few E. Kingbirds must have moved through eastern California in early June, for single birds were seen at Deep Spring, Inyo Co. June 8, Scotty's Castle in Death Valley June 9, Furnace Creek Ranch June 5, and at the south end of the Salton Sea June 4. A Cassin's Kingbird at Baldwin L. in the San Bernardino Mts. May 13 was at a rather high elevation. Wied's Crested Flycatchers had returned to Morongo Valley, the n.w. limit of the species' range, by May 6; one at Furnace Creek Ranch May 23 (JD, BB) was north of its recorded range. An E. Phoebe at Furnace Creek Ranch May 21 (HK) was most unusual since spring records for California are virtually unknown.

**NUTCRACKERS, WRENS, THRASHERS, THRUSHES**—Three Clark's Nutcrackers were in Santa Barbara during most of April and two remained in Morongo Valley until at least May 6; remnants of last fall's flight. A Winter Wren seen in Cottonwood Canyon of the Panamint Mts. Apr. 16 was in an area for which few records exist. A Bewick's Wren, believed to be of the race *leucophrys*, was studied on San Clemente I. Apr. 15 (LJ); this form has not been reported since around 1940, and was presumed extinct since goats had eaten nearly all the brush on the island. A Brown Thrasher, a casual straggler to California, was seen on Pt. Loma in San Diego Apr. 5 (ET) and another was photographed in Oceanside, San Diego Co. Apr. 24 (DH). Bendire's Thrashers were present around Cima in e. San Bernardino Co. where they are common, after late March, and one was seen near Cottonwood Springs, Riverside Co. where it is scarce, May 13. The large number of Varied Thrushes in S.



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**WARBLERS**—Two Black-and-white Warblers near Westmoreland, Imperial Co. Apr. 29, one at Deep Springs May 22, two around Goleta June 1-3, and one at sea off San Diego May 15 were the only individuals of this regular straggler reported this spring. A ♂ **Golden-winged Warbler** at Deep Springs May 20-21 (JL, TH and others) represents the fifth record for California. A Tennessee Warbler banded on Camp Pendleton, San Diego Co. May 11 was the only one reported this spring. Remarkably only one Virginia's Warbler was reported, a bird at Yucca Valley, San Bernardino Co. May 20. Lucy's Warblers were found on breeding territory in Death Valley in late March but were not noted around nearby Tecopa until Apr. 14. N. Parulas are regularly found in California during the late spring; this year one was at Oasis, Mono Co. May 27 (JVR, JL *et al.*) and another was at Furnace Creek Ranch May 30 (RS). A ♂ **Cape May Warbler**, the third reported in California during spring, was well studied at Toll House Springs in the White Mts. May 28 (JMF). Most unusual was the appearance of three Chestnut-sided Warblers, one at Deep Springs June 1 (GMcC), another there June 8 (GSS, HBA), and one on the Palos Verdes Pen., L.A. Co. June 10 (RB). A ♂ **Bay-breasted Warbler** was studied in Morongo Valley May 20 (M. Chamberlain, *vide* JVR). A Palm Warbler, exceptionally rare in spring, was found on Santa Barbara I. May 12 (LJ). Single Ovenbirds were seen at Oasis May 26 (JD *et al.*). Wildrose in the Panamint Mts. May 27 (GMcC) and in Beverly Hills, L.A. Co. June 3 (R. Newman, *vide* GSS); a few of these birds are found each spring.

Northern Waterthrushes probably migrate through California regularly each spring and fall but numbers are very small; one in San Diego April 25-26, another banded on Camp Pendleton Apr. 29, one studied on San Nicolas I. June 1, and a fourth at Furnace Creek Ranch May 27 were the only ones reported. A ♂ **Kentucky Warbler** on Santa Barbara I. June 1 (KG) is the fourth found in California. Unprecedented were three **Hooded Warblers**, a ♂ at Dos Cabezas Springs in Anza-Borrego State Park May 11 (W. Schumman, *vide* GSS), a ♀ in Santa Ana, Orange Co. May 12 (EBH), and a ♂ at Oasis May 28 (SS, GMcC *et al.*). At least a dozen Am. Redstarts were seen in the n.e. portion of the region, where they appear to be regular migrants, during the last half of May; in addition four were found along the coast with one in Santa Ana May 12, one in Santa Barbara May 14, one at sea off San Diego May 16, and another on Santa Barbara I. May 12. Most unusual was a **Painted Redstart** in Cottonwood Canyon of the Panamint Mts. Apr. 13-16 (RS), the only record to date for this area of California.

**BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES, TANAGERS**—Single ♂ Bobolinks at Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley May 26 and June 9 were expected since small numbers apparently pass through this area each spring; however, one on San Nicolas I. June 3 (LJ) was a surprise. Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found on San Nicolas, Santa Barbara, and Anacapa Is. where they would not be expected, in late April and May. Two Orchard Orioles were at Scotty's Castle in Death Valley May 30 (RS) and another was at nearby Mesquite Springs the following day supporting the theory that

it is a regular visitor to California. Four Orioles exhibiting the characters of *I. g. galbula* were noted in the northeastern corner of the region with one in Big Pine Apr. 28, one at Deep Springs May 22, one at Oasis May 26-28, and another at Scotty's Castle May 26. A ♂ Great-tailed Grackle at Yucca Valley May 20-28 (HBr, LCB), a ♀ at Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley May 21 (HK) and another ♀ at Panamint Springs, Inyo Co. May 27 (SS *et al.*) were all far to the north and west of their present range in California. A ♀ **Scarlet Tanager**, only the fourth spring record for California, was well studied on San Nicolas I. June 1 (LJ). Summer Tanagers had returned to Morongo Valley, where they regularly nest, by May 5, and were found at nearby Whitewater a week later. Migrants (race questionable, but possibly *rubra*) were noted at Agua Caliente Springs in Anza-Borrego State Park May 27, on San Nicolas I. June 3, and Deep Springs June 9.

**FINCHES, SPARROWS**—Seven ♂♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported this spring with one at Deep Springs May 19-21 (JD GSS *et al.*), one at Borrego Springs May 27 (JM), one in Santa Barbara June 7 (RW), one in Montecito June 2 (D. Summer, *vide* RW), one at Star Ranch Audubon Sanctuary May 12 (LAS), and two on Santa Barbara I. May 20 (LJ); this species is found regularly in limited numbers. Indigo Buntings were again found in small numbers with six along the eastern border of the Region May 15-June 9, one at Japatul Valley, San Diego Co. May 21, and four on the Channel Is. May 12-June 1. A **Dickcissel** at Furnace Creek Ranch June 1 (GMcC) represents only the fourth found in spring within this Region. Evening Grosbeaks were swarming across the n.e. portion of the region during the last half of May; probably the birds seen passing south through this area last October. A flock of 18 Red Crossbills in Santa Barbara Apr. 20-May 15 was unexpected. Harris' Sparrows continued to draw attention by their presence with eight reports involving 21 birds, mostly in the e. portion of the region, being received; interestingly, late individuals were one in Oceanside Apr. 27, one near San Bernardino May 6, and a wintering bird still present in Big Pine June 8. Single White-throated Sparrows were noted around San Pedro Apr. 21 and May 4 and another was in Oceanside Apr. 24.

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