

SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION / Guy McCaskie

A relatively rainless winter and spring left the Region quite dry, and this no doubt had an adverse effect on breeding birds. Lazuli Buntings for instance were completely absent from an area near San Diego this sum-



mer, an area where some 15 pairs nested last summer. However, without statistical data from large areas of the Region, it is impossible to tell if such obvious declines in a very local area apply equally to the entire Region. It is possible that the population of Lazuli Buntings using the area in question near San Diego merely shifted to another area for nesting this summer.

Southern California did record its first nesting Painted Redstarts this summer, and it may not be too long before the *Pyrrhuloxia* is added to the list of birds breeding in the State.

LOONS, GREBES—A Com. Loon in Santa Barbara during June and July was clearly summering, but one at Morongo Valley, San Bernardino Co. June 2, and another at the south end of the Salton Sea (hereafter S.E.S.S.) June 20 were most likely tardy spring migrants. Two Arctic Loons in full summer dress at the north end of the Salton Sea (hereafter N.E.S.S.) June 22 (GMcC) were most unusual since the species is extremely rare away from the ocean in California. Eared Grebes again failed to nest in the Big Bear/Baldwin L. area even though a number of birds were present. Juvenile W. Grebes were seen accompanying adults on L. Havasu on the Colorado R. July 31, and the species breed successfully on Sweetwater Res. in San Diego; these appear to be the only localities in this Region where W. Grebes still nest. An ad. Pied-billed Grebe was accompanied by three young on the early date of Mar. 16 at San Elijo Lagoon, San Diego Co.

SHEARWATERS—Sooty Shearwaters were in the "hundreds of thousands" along the coast of San Luis Obispo Co. June 25-July 10, and all appeared heading north. No other concentrations of pelagic birds were reported during the season.

TROPICBIRDS, PELICANS, FRIGATEBIRDS—An imm. Red-billed Tropicbird was seen on the water just off Avalon, Catalina I. July 9 (LJ). Brown Pelicans successfully nested on the Los Coronados Is. in the spring; they appeared rather scarce on the coast south of Los Angeles, but flocks of up to 150 were regular in San Luis Obispo Co. An imm. Brown Pelican at N.E.S.S. May 25 was early for this inland locality, but no more than ten appeared to be on the Sea by the end of July; less than we have been accustomed to in recent years. A number of Magnificent Frigatebirds were seen along the coast with two (ad. ♀ and immature) at Cayucos, San Luis Obispo Co. July 7-8 (FT), single immatures at Pt. Dume, L.A. Co. July 14 (LJ), King Harbor, L.A. Co. July 15 (SW), on the Palos Verdes Pen., June 20 & 26 (SW), Terminal I., July 4 (SW), Laguna Beach, Orange Co. June 29 (JAJ), Pacific Beach, San Diego Co. July 5 (*fide* Joe Jehl), and at Imperial Beach, San Diego Co. July 16 & 20 (GMcC). In addition an immature was seen over Imperial Dam on the Colorado R., July 5 (SEL); two immatures were at N.E.S.S. June 17 (VR) and what were probably the same two were at S.E.S.S. July 20-21 (MP), and single immatures were at S.E.S.S. July 22 (MP) and at N.E.S.S. July 27 (BB, GSS).

HERONS, STORKS, IBIS—Fifteen active Great Blue Heron nests successfully produced young in a residential area of San Diego, indicating that seclusion is not required for breeding. Some 850 Cattle Egret nests were under study at S.E.S.S. among which were scattered about 100 Snowy Egret nests. Black-crowned Night Herons still nest in residential areas of San Pedro (20 pairs at Harbor Lake Park) and San Diego (25 pairs on Pt. Loma and 10 pairs in Imperial Beach). Least Bitterns were relatively numerous along the lower Colorado R. and around the Salton Sea; a few were noted in coastal San Diego Co. where they are expected, but one dead on the highway near San Luis Obispo in early July was somewhat unexpected. A Wood Stork at Finney L. in the Imperial Valley May 24 was the first noted this summer; numbers built up to about 75 at S.E.S.S. in late July, one was at N.E.S.S. July 8-31, and some 60 were near Palo Verde on the Colorado R., July 26. White-faced Ibis continue to decline with four near Palo Verde June 20, less than ten around S.E.S.S. throughout the summer, and five at Newport Bay in July being the only ones reported.

GEESE, DUCKS—Between one and six Black Brant were present at N.E.S.S. through July 31; stragglers from spring. A pair (one crippled) of White-fronted Geese spent the summer at N.E.S.S. illustrating the strength of the pair bond in these birds. Fulvous Tree Ducks were exceptionally scarce at S.E.S.S. this summer, and reported nowhere else. At least 12 broods of Mallards were seen on Camp Pendleton in coastal San Diego Co., one of the few areas where ducks can breed undisturbed on the coast south of Los Angeles. A pair of Gadwall with ten ducklings was seen in Carlsbad, San Diego Co. June 8 (AF) and over 20 adults were at Baldwin L. in June and July (SW). A pair of Pintail with ten ducklings was seen on Camp Pendleton June 28 (AF), and two broods each of Cinnamon Teal and Redhead were noted there during the summer.

A ♂ Oldsquaw seen on San Diego Bay June 16 was probably summering locally. A ♂ Harlequin Duck at Playa del Rey, L.A. Co. well into July was clearly summering. A few White-winged Scoters were reported with the summering Surf Scoters along the coast, and as many as four Surf Scoters were found at Salton City on the Salton Sea during July (BB, GSS *et al.*). As usual a few Red-breasted Mergansers remained through the summer on the Salton Sea; all very bedraggled-looking by late July.

HAWKS—A pair of White-tailed Kites nesting near Lancaster, L.A. Co., in April (AS) was east of the species' normal range. Of 12 Red-tailed Hawk nests found in San Diego Co. ten were successful, one being robbed by man and the other abandoned (AF). However, only four Red-shouldered Hawk nests out of eleven found in the same area were successful, most failures resulting from land-clearing and tree cutting operations; a nest near Victorville, San Bernardino Co. May 10 (RS) was at an interesting locality. One or two Swainson's Hawks near Big Pine in the Owens Valley during July were the only ones reported. A few Ospreys were evidently present on the coast of Orange and San Diego Cos. throughout the summer as well as one at N.E.S.S. and another around Imperial Dam on the Colorado R. Most encouraging were the reports of a pair nesting on L. Casitas in Santa Barbara Co. (S.B.A.S.), and another pair nesting on Tinnemaha Res. near Big Pine (TH).

RAILS—Black Rails are evidently more widespread in s.e. California than previously suspected, for besides being relatively common around Imperial Dam on the lower Colorado R. one was heard calling from the marshes at the mouth of the Whitewater R. at N.E.S.S. Apr. 27 (GLB), another was heard near Calipatria May 31 (DVT), and about six were calling from a small marsh in Anza Borego Desert S.P. June 8 (JB).

SHOREBIRDS—Two Black Oystercatchers at Goleta, Santa Barbara Co. June 24 (S.B.A.S.) were at an unusual locality. Three juv. Snowy Plovers at L. Elsinor, Riverside Co. Apr. 23 (AF) are proof that the species breeds at this inland lake. A Ruddy Turnstone at Furnace Creek Ranch May 30 (RW) was the first found in Death Valley. A Red Knot at S.E.S.S. July 13 was the only one found away from the coast. A Dunlin spent the entire summer at the N.E.S.S., most unusual in June and July. Seven Stilt Sandpipers at S.E.S.S. July 27 (GSS *et al.*) were the first reported for the fall. Three N. Phalaropes had returned to the Salton Sea by June 17; it is amazing how early fall migrant phalaropes appear in s. California with both Northern and Wilson's present in the "hundreds" by July 1.

JAEGERS, GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS—The only jaegers reported were a single Pomarine near Pt. Ferminé July 9 and another near San Clemente I. two days later. Western Gulls (yellow-legged) arrived on the Salton Sea in late June, with 20 counted on June 22, and built up to around 50 by the end of the period; these are regular post-breeding wanderers from the Gulf of California. Juvenile California and Ring-billed Gulls

arrived in s. California in late July, with both species noted on the Salton Sea July 27. Laughing Gulls were first noted on the Salton Sea June 22 and increased to about 50 by the end of the period. Four Franklin's Gulls at N.E.S.S. June 22 (GMCC) and another there July 8 (HK) were the only ones found this summer. On June 17 an ad. Heermann's Gull was seen at N.E.S.S. (VR), then three were found at Salton City June 20 (GSS), and another at S.E.S.S. June 22 (GMCC); this species is a casual straggler to the Salton Sea, and five individuals in this short a period are unexpected. Three or four summering Black-legged Kittiwakes were at Santa Barbara and Malibu throughout June and July. Most unusual was a Sabine's Gull at Imperial Dam on the Colorado R. June 22-23 (GMCC).

Gull-billed Terns evidently nested at both ends of the Salton Sea with 25-30 pairs at S.E.S.S. and 5-10 pairs at N.E.S.S. a number of juveniles being noted in both areas during July. Fall migrant Com. Terns were first seen on the Salton Sea July 13, and the species was common on the coast by the end of the month. Least Terns continue to nest in San Diego Co., with 145 nests on Camp Pendleton, 12 at San Elijo Lagoon, 40 on Mission Bay, and 80 at the s. end of San Diego Bay. Some 200 pairs of Elegant Terns successfully nested on San Diego Bay, the only such nesting colony in the U.S.

Up to 20 Black Skimmers were present on the Salton Sea throughout the period; three active nests were found at the mouth of the New R. at the S.E.S.S. July 27 (GMCC), the same day two flying young were seen begging food from adults at the mouth of the Whitewater R. at the N.E.S.S.

CUCKOOS, DOVES, OWLS, GOATSUCKERS, SWIFTS—Yellow-billed Cuckoos, now quite rare and very local in California, were found in small numbers (5-6) around Laguna Dam on the Colorado R. in June and July, the only locality in this Region where the species is regularly found; one at Finney L. in the Imperial Valley July 5 (LCB) was the first seen in that area in over 15 years. A Band-tailed Pigeon in Morongo Valley July 8 (HK) was somewhat out of range. A Ground Dove nest with two young in Valley Center, San Diego Co. Aug. 17 (AF) proved the first breeding record for that area.

Remarkable was the report of 100+ Barn Owl nests found on Camp Pendleton (AF). Many Pygmy Owls were sighted in the Santa Barbara area during the summer (S.B.A.S.) suggesting nesting locally. Spotted Owls were found nesting in the Los Padres National Forest near San Luis Obispo (FT), an adult was seen with two juveniles in the San Jacinto Mts., June 15 (VR), two young were photographed in the Santa Ana Mts., June 10-11 (CS), and two young were seen with an adult in the Laguna Mts., July 13 (GMCC). Single Long-eared Owls were seen near China L., Inyo Co., May 18 (R&KH), at Wildrose in the Panamint Mts., May 25 (RS), and on Santa Barbara I., July 5 (LJ); a nest was found at Oasis, Mono Co., in late May (VR), two nests were seen in Morongo Valley during May (EAC), and another nest was located at Yaqui Wells in Anza Borego Desert S.P. in early June (JB). A nesting Saw-whet Owl was sound in Cerro Alto Campground near San Luis Obispo (FT), and the species is believed to have nested on Santa Cruz I. (LJ).

A calling Whip-poor-will was heard off and on throughout the period at L. Fulmor in the San Jacinto Mts. (LCB, VR, LJ) where nesting is suspected; two more were heard on Clark Mt. in e. San Bernardino Co. June 22-23 (KG, BP). Two Lesser Nighthawks were seen at Goleta in June (S.B.A.S.); this species is unusual on the coast this far north. Two Black Swifts over Big Pine in the Owens Valley June 22 were probably on a feeding forage from a nesting site in the nearby Sierra Nevada, but ten there on July 30 were more likely to have been migrants; two pairs were found nesting at Santa Anita Falls above Pasadena in July (GSS). Unexpected was a Chimney Swift flying with Cliff Swallows at Laguna Dam on the Colorado R. June 23 (GMcC).

HUMMINGBIRDS, WOODPECKERS—Black-chinned Hummingbirds were found nesting by mid-April, with a pair seen nest-building on the Palos Verdes Pen. Apr. 12 (J & DM); one female was seen building a third nest after having fledged two broods. Interesting was the sighting of two females battling for the possession of a newly-built nest Apr. 15 & 16, with both birds seen on the nest on the 15th. Costa's Hummingbirds were nest-building in Los Angeles Co., as early as Jan. 5, with young flying by Feb. 18. Anna's Hummingbirds were nesting in late November and young were still to be found in a nest on May 15; a nest at Agua Caliente Springs in e. San Diego Co. May 6 (AF) was at an unusual locality. The Allen's Hummingbird population on the Palos Verdes Pen. was seen gathering nesting material as early as Nov. 10, and 46 nests by some 15 females produced 25-30 young prior to July 19; two females were known to have nested three times (SW, J&DM).

Far out of normal range was an Acorn Woodpecker on Clark Mt., May 5 (A. Driscoll, *fide* SC), however, others appeared to wander into e. California this spring.

CHICKADEES THROUGH KINGLETS—Chestnut-backed Chickadees are now nesting as far south as Dumes L. on the coast, where a pair with four young was observed (S.B.A.S.). A pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches nested at Running Springs in the San Bernardino Mts., and the species may also have nested on Clark Mt., in the e. part of the county. A Gray Catbird was studied at Furnace Creek Ranch May 30 (RW); the species is extremely rare in California, but another was seen in the same general area this spring. Two pairs of Bendire's Thrashers were found nesting around Yucca Valley in April (AS, GSS), two pairs were seen near Twenty-nine Palms Apr. 25 (GLB), and in Joshua Tree National Monument a male was seen singing on territory at Salton View Apr. 13 (JM), a pair with three young was observed in Hidden Valley Camp Ground May 28 (RR), and another pair with four young was found on Ryan Mt., June 1 (RR); this is more than the average number of reports away from e. San Bernardino County. American Robins appeared to be common around much of Los Angeles all summer, and the species is no doubt increasing as a breeding bird in the coastal lowlands of s. California, thanks to the suitability of well-watered suburban communities. Unexpected was the discovery of two or three singing ♂♂ Hermit Thrushes in Trabuco Canyon of the Santa Ana

Mts., June 10 (CS). A singing ♂ Ruby-crowned Kinglet in the Laguna Mts., May 30 (GMcC) was a little south of the species' known breeding range.

FLYCATCHERS—Two or three Cassin's Kingbirds were seen on the lower portions of Clark Mt., June 22-23 (KG, BP); previously unreported in this area of California, but known to nest in areas both north and south of the locality. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was collected near Blythe, Riverside Co., June 13 (Bertin Anderson, *fide* JHS); this is a rare straggler to California. Wied's Crested Flycatchers were relatively common along the Colorado R., where large trees still remain, but two pairs at Morongo Valley were the only ones found to the west of the river. A Dusky Flycatcher nest in the Laguna Mts. of San Diego Co., July 13 (GMcC) establishes a new southernmost breeding locality, the species not previously known to nest south of the Santa Rosa Mts. Away from the Colorado R., the only breeding Vermilion Flycatchers were birds of a pair in Morongo Valley; since the land at Morongo Valley has been allowed to go from irrigated alfalfa back to desert scrub, Vermilion Flycatchers have steadily declined at that locality.

Again Barn Swallows nested at S.E.S.S. with young from a second nesting still in the nest Aug. 13. Purple Martins are steadily declining in this Region, the total number of birds reported being 2-3 in the Santa Ynez Valley after Mar. 15 (early) and 10-15 at Nojoqui Falls, Santa Barbara Co., in April and May (S.B.A.S.), six in the Santa Ana Mts. in early June (CS), two at L. Fulmor in the San Jacinto Mts. in May and June (GSS), and two pairs nesting in Pine Valley, San Diego Co. in June (GMcC); this species was formerly common throughout the mountains of s. California, even nesting down into some of the residential areas of the coastal lowlands.

VIREOS, WARBLERS—Bell's Vireos continue to decline, but were found in small numbers at Morongo Valley (one pair), around Azusa, L.A. Co. (three pairs), at Imperial Dam on the Colorado R. (one pair), and around San Diego (three pairs); predation by Brown-headed Cowbirds is suspected of being a major factor affecting the vireo's numbers. Gray Vireos appeared to be holding their own in the e. portions of the San Bernardino Mts., with up to three adults seen in a day during May and June, and two juveniles in July; a pair on Clark Mt., June 22 were the only birds reported away from the San Bernardinos. A Red-eyed Vireo at Deep Springs May 30 (RW) should have been included in the spring report.

A singing Black-and-white Warbler in Tepusquet Canyon near Santa Barbara July 7 (AH) must have been a straggler left over from spring. The Nashville Warbler has not yet been found nesting south of the Sierra Nevada in California, however, each summer individuals are reported in the higher mountains of this Region; the summer at least six singing females were located in the San Bernardino Mts. during early June (SW). Two or three Virginia's Warblers were seen on Clark Mt. in e. San Bernardino Co. June 23-30 (KG, BP, GMcC) where they are known to nest. A ♂ Magnolia Warbler hit a window on the Palos Verdes Pen., June 20 (SW—Cal. State Univ., Long Beach). Three (2 singing ♂♂

and a ♀) Hermit Warblers, a species not yet known to nest south of the Sierras, were at Buckhorn Campground in the San Gabriel Mts. June 15 (VR). A ♂ **Blackpoll Warbler** at Oasis, Mono Co. June 8 (TH) was clearly a spring vagrant, being one of the impressive number of stragglers reported in late May and early June of this year. Another spring record of the Ovenbird was that of one at Scotty's Castle in Death Valley May 30 (RW). MacGillivray's Warblers have been found regularly defending territories in the s. California mountains, but a nest is still to be found; this summer singing males were found at Buckhorn in the San Gabriel Mts., June 11 & 14 (GSS, AH), and at Hanna Flats and along the upper portions of Arrastre Creek in the San Bernardino Mts. throughout June (GSS, SW, KG). A ♀ Am. Redstart was seen in San Pedro July 9 (J & DM); most unusual at this time of the year. The two **Painted Redstarts** in the Laguna Mts. were present through June, and a nest with four young was discovered July 6 (PU); it had been deserted a week later, but the adults were still present in the area July 29 (DDeS); this is the first nesting record for this species in California. The ♂ Painted Redstart at the South Fork Campground in the San Bernardino Mts. was still present July 15 (EAC).

BLACKBIRDS, TANAGERS—Up to four Great-tailed Grackles at Ramer L. in the Imperial Valley after Apr. 27 were the only ones reported west of the Colorado R. Valley. As usual a few Bronzed Cowbirds were found along the Colorado R. Valley, however, a pair in Jacumba, San Diego Co. June 23-July 17 (GMCC *et al.*) was unusual, and a juvenile in company of Brewer's Blackbirds there July 13 indicated successful breeding. Hepatic Tanagers could not be found around Arrastre Creek, but at least one pair was on Clark Mt., in late June (KG *et al.*). A few Summer Tanagers were still to be found along the Colorado R. Valley, one pair nested at Brock Ranch, Imperial Co., and two pairs nested in Morongo Valley.

FINCHES, SPARROWS—A ♂ **Pyrhuloxia** was caught near Palo Verde, Imperial Co. July 14 (Gary Stacey, *fide* JHS), and a singing male was discovered near Westmorland, Imperial Co. July 18 (DR); this species was unrecorded in California until just recently. A ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Running Springs in the San Bernardino Mts. May 24 (Doug Williams, *fide* SC) and another near Santa Barbara June 19 (S.B.A.S.) were probably spring migrants. The only Indigo Bunting reported was a female at Deep Springs June 22 (KG, BP). A ♂ Red Crossbill on Mt. Pinos July 6 (BB) is interesting since very few summer records exist for the area, however, a male and two immatures in Monterey Park, L.A. Co., July 15 (*fide* GSS) were most unusual since local nesting is suggested.

A Green-tailed Towhee in Santa Barbara July 29 (S.B.A.S.) was most unusual for that date, the species being restricted to the higher mountains as a breeding bird in this Region. Grasshopper Sparrows were found on nesting territories near San Simeon, San Luis Obispo Co., in May and June (FRT), juveniles along with adults were present at 3700 ft. elev. in the Santa Ynez Mts. near Santa Barbara during June and July

(RW), a few were seen in Puente Hills, Orange Co. in June (GSS), and 10-15 pairs nested near San Diego in May (GMCC). A pair of Dark-eyed Juncos was feeding young at Nojoqui Falls, Santa Barbara Co. May 24 (AH), and an active nest was discovered in the Santa Ana Mts., June 10 (CS); both areas recently colonized for breeding. Gray-headed Junco was the only junco seen on Clark Mt. in late June (KG *et al.*), and clearly nested, since juvenile birds were noted. Some 20 pairs of Black-chinned Sparrows were on territory at Cuesta Summit near San Luis Obispo in May and seen feeding young in June.

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