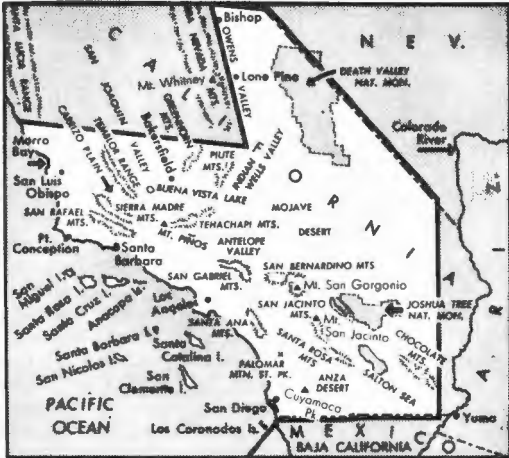


## SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION / Guy McCaskie

The spring migration period proved more exciting than usual, with many of the summer visitors arriving relatively early, large numbers of birds being present in early May, and a great variety of rare and unusual species occurring throughout the period.



A series of storms in late April and early May, the period of peak movement for most West Coast migrants, grounded large numbers of landbirds. As a result most observers commented on the large numbers of flycatchers, vireos, warblers, orioles, tanagers and buntings present during the first half of May. These large numbers were every bit as prevalent inland as they were along the coast.

As usual a number of eastern species of landbirds was to be found in late May and early June. Warblers make up the bulk of these vagrants, and together with our regular West Coast migrants a total of 34 species was found, more than reported for the entire state by Grinnell and Miller (*Distribution of the Birds of California*, 1944). It is in this movement of vagrant warblers that most of the really rare and exciting finds were made, although such outstanding rarities as Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Little Gull, Veery, and Le Conte's Sparrow were also reported.

The early arrival dates for some of our key migrants were: Wilson's Phalarope Apr. 9, Salton Sea; Northern Phalarope Apr. 19, Del Mar; Common Tern Apr. 20, San Diego; Least Tern Apr. 10, San Diego; Elegant Tern Mar. 12, San Diego; Black Tern Apr. 19, Salton Sea; Lesser Nighthawk Mar. 22, San Diego; Vaux's Swift Apr. 13, San Diego; Ash-throated Flycatcher Apr. 9, Salton Sea and Big Pine; Willow Flycatcher Apr. 30, Isabella Lake; Hammond's Flycatcher Mar. 25, Los Angeles; W. Flycatcher Mar. 19, San Diego; W. Wood Pewee Apr. 9, Salton Sea; Olive-sided Flycatcher Apr. 20, Pasadena; Swainson's Thrush Apr. 21, Morongo Valley; Bell's Vireo Apr. 3, San Diego; Solitary Vireo Apr. 2, Anza Borrego Desert; Warbling Vireo Mar. 19, San Diego; Nashville Warbler Apr. 2, Anza Borrego Desert; Yellow Warbler Apr. 7, San Diego; Black-throated Gray Warbler Mar. 31, Lakeview; Hermit Warbler Apr. 12, San Diego; MacGillivray's Warbler Apr. 2, Anza Borrego Desert; Yellow-breasted Chat Apr. 13, San Diego; Wilson's Warbler Mar. 19, San Diego; Scott's Oriole Mar. 13, Morongo Valley; Hooded Oriole Mar. 11, Imperial Beach; N. Oriole Mar. 19, San Diego; Western Tanager Apr. 9, Salton Sea; Black-headed Grosbeak Mar. 30,

Los Angeles; Blue Grosbeak Apr. 14, Morongo Valley; Lazuli Bunting Apr. 1, San Diego; Black-chinned Sparrow Apr. 3, San Diego.

**LOONS**—Paul Lehman's seabird surveys from Goleta Pt., Santa Barbara Co., counted some 5000 Com. Loons, 23,000 Arctic Loons and 5500 Red-throated Loons during the period; this well represents the relative abundance of the three species in S. California waters during the spring. A large loon seen flying N past Pt. Dume, Los Angeles Co., Apr. 20 (KG) exhibited all the characters of a breeding-plumaged Yellow-billed Loon, a species for which there is but one regional record.

**ALBATROSSES, SHEARWATERS, STORM-PETRELS**—The only Black-footed Albatrosses reported were single birds off Santa Cruz I., Apr. 18 & 25 (JA) and two off San Diego May 14 (PU). A N. Fulmar off Ventura Apr. 23 (KG) was unexpected, considering how rare the species was during the winter. A Flesh-footed Shearwater, rare in California waters, was found off Ventura June 5 (KG). The only Leach's Storm-Petrel reported was a white-rumped bird off San Diego May 14 (PU). An Ashy Storm-Petrel was seen off San Diego May 14 (GMC); a few occur in these waters during May every year.

**ANHINGAS, FRIGATEBIRDS**—The ♀ Anhinga remained on Sweetwater Res., in San Diego until May 30 (WTE). An imm. Magnificent Frigatebird was seen soaring over Chino, San Bernardino Co., Mar. 23 (BBI); a surprising location and amazing time of year.

**HERONS**—Five ad. Little Blue Herons were found during May with one at Goleta, Santa Barbara Co., May 14–18 (PL, BS), one at McGrath S. P., Ventura Co., May 27 (LRB), a single bird at the north end of the Salton Sea (hereafter N.E.S.S.) May 7 (DM), another at the south end of the Salton Sea (hereafter S.E.S.S.) May 20 (PL), and a totally unexpected bird at Oasis, Mono Co., May 30 (DRU). A Cattle Egret at Stovepipe Wells in Death Valley May 24 (DRO) was at an interesting locality. An ad. Reddish Egret, a rare straggler to



*Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Irvine, Calif., May 11, 1977. Photo by Don Hoechlin.*

California, was around Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., Apr. 24–May 14 (DM, EAC) and another was at Pt. Mugu, Ventura Co., May 20–22 (LJ). One of the wintering Louisiana Herons remained around Imperial Beach to Apr. 28 (*vide* PU); unexpected was an adult at Penasquitos Lagoon June 1 (D&LD) and another at Goleta June 2 (PL, BS). Totally unexpected was an ad. Yellow-crowned Night Heron at Irvine, Orange Co., May 11 (D&BH, ph. S.D.N.H.M.), only the sixth ever found in the region.

**GEESSE, DUCKS**—Black Brant were moving N along the coast during March and April with a high count of 10,000 made from Goleta Pt., Mar. 29 (PL). Inland a flock of 50 Black Brant was seen flying W over the Laguna Mts., near Julian, San Diego Co., Mar. 13 (GMcC) and 50 were at the N.E.S.S., Apr. 9 (GMcC). A Brant was seen from Goleta Pt., Mar. 29 (PL); one or two are found with "Black" Brant every year. The Ross' Goose remained on L. Miramar near San Diego to at least Apr. 6 (PU), which is late for the species to be present in S. California.

A Mallard x Black Duck was at S.E.S.S. May 15–20 (GSS, LJ); an unexpected hybrid for California. An Oldsquaw flying past Goleta Pt., Apr. 11 (PL) was the only one seen along the coast, however, two were at N.E.S.S., Apr. 16 (GSG), another was at nearby Salton City Apr. 27 (AS), and two more were seen along the Colorado R., n. of Blythe Mar. 19 (KVR); this species is rare inland. Thirty-two Black Scoters were seen moving N past Goleta Pt., Mar. 2–Apr. 19 (PL) and a late individual was at Port Hueneue, Ventura Co., May 2 (JA, LJ). Only 31 White-winged Scoters were seen from Goleta Pt. during the period indicating how scarce the species was in S. California during the past winter; one at Imperial Dam on the Colorado R., Apr. 22–23 (KVR) was the only one found inland. A ♂ Hooded Merganser at Malibu, Los Angeles Co., Apr. 24 (H&PB) appeared late, but the female at Santee, San Diego Co., May 28 (CGE) was exceptionally late.

**HAWKS, FALCONS**—An imm. Goshawk at Westguard Pass in the White Mts., Apr. 4 (CH) was a little outside its normal summer range. Small numbers of Swainson's Hawks were noted in the e. part of the region Apr. 2–May 15 but no large flocks were reported. An imm. Bald Eagle near McKittick, Kern Co., May 7 (GWK) was unexpected. An imm. Peregrine Falcon in San Diego May 16 (CGE) was late for a wintering bird. Two Merlins at Goleta Apr. 16 (PL) were the latest noted this spring.

**OYSTERCATCHERS, PLOVERS, SANDPIPERS**—An Am. Oystercatcher was at Frazier Pt., on Santa Cruz I., June 5 (JA) and the Anacapa I. bird was seen Mar. 6 (DRo), Apr. 23 (KG), and May 1 (PL). A Black Oystercatcher was on Pt. Loma, San Diego Co., Apr. 26 (MT); very few are recorded along the coast of S. California. Three Semipalmated Plovers in the Saline Valley May 7 (TH) and another at Furnace Creek Ranch (hereafter F.C.R.) May 24 (DRo) are of interest because few records exist for this area of California. A Mountain Plover at Goleta Apr. 5 (PL, BS) was exceptionally late and in an area for which there is but one previous record. A wintering Am. Golden Plover remained in Goleta to May 6 (PL). Single migrants were seen along the coast at San Diego May 14 (EAC), near Newport Apr. 23 and Santa Barbara Apr. 25 (LRB), and another found inland at S.E.S.S., May 15 (GMcC).

A Whimbrel in Afton Canyon, San Bernardino Co., May 16 (EAC, SC) was in an area for which few records exist. Two Solitary Sandpipers were in Afton Canyon Apr. 24 (SC), three were near Lucerne Valley, San Bernardino Co., Apr. 30–May 2 (GNV) and another was at Ford's Dry L., San

Bernardino Co., May 3 (SC); this species is always scarce in spring. A flock of 30 Ruddy Turnstones at N.E.S.S., May 7 (GMcC) was a large number for an inland locality. A Black Turnstone, accidental inland, was at Salton City May 7 (GMcC, ph. S.D.N.H.M.). A breeding-plumaged Surf-bird at Goleta June 2 (PL) was exceptionally late for a migrant. Six Red Knots at Salton City May 1 (GMcC) and two more there May 7 (GMcC) were the only ones found inland this spring. Sanderlings reached peak numbers on the Salton Sea during early May with 50 seen May 7 (GMcC); this species is rarely found inland in California away from the Salton Sea so two on L. Elsinore, Riverside Co., May 5 (SC) are of interest. Two Semipalmated Sandpipers were found at S.E.S.S., May 20 (PL) and one of these was still present May 24 (DM); one or two of these birds can be found on the Salton Sea every May if searched for. Unexpected were two Baird's Sandpipers at Baker May 4 (SC), one at S.E.S.S., May 15 (GMcC) and four there May 20 (PL); this species is exceptionally rare in California during spring with but a handful of documented records in April and May. Stilt Sandpipers were present at S.E.S.S., Apr. 9–May 20, with a high count of 70 there May 15–17 (LJ); two at Goleta Apr. 14 (PL, BS) were unexpected since there is only one previous coastal record for California during the spring. A Red Phalarope was found inland at S.E.S.S., May 17 (LJ, GSS).

**SKUAS, GULLS, TERNS**—A South Polar Skua was seen off San Diego May 14 (GMcC), another was found off Santa Barbara I., May 22 (LJ) and five were seen there June 5 (KG); it is becoming clear that small numbers of these birds appear in S. California waters during late May and early June every year. An imm. Glaucous Gull was in Santa Barbara Mar. 13–Apr. 18 (LRB, PL), another was at McGrath S. P., Apr. 23 (KG) and a third was in Long Beach Apr. 7 (VR); this species is normally quite rare in S. California with most gone by late March. A late Thayer's Gull was seen inland at S.E.S.S., May 20 (PL). A Mew Gull, rare inland, was at S.E.S.S., Apr. 9 (DRo). A Franklin's Gull was seen at Pt. Dume, Los Angeles Co., Mar. 30, Apr. 5 & 19 (JD, KG) and another was at N.E.S.S., Apr. 30 (DM); a few are normally found every spring. Bonaparte's Gulls were found inland in unprecedented numbers with over 150 at S.E.S.S., May 27 (DVT), up to eight at F.C.R., May 20–29 (DRo) and up to nine at Oasis, Mono Co., May 23–30 (DRo) giving an idea of the numbers frequenting the e. part of the region. Most exciting was an imm. Little Gull in



Little Gull, Goleta, Calif., Apr. 17, 1977. Photo by Robert Copper.

Goleta Apr. 14–22 (PL, BS); there are only three previous records for the region. Black-legged Kittiwakes became common along the coast during March and April with some still remaining at the end of the period: 500 were present in King Harbor, Los Angeles Co., Apr. 4 (BBR) giving an example of the numbers involved. Sabine's Gulls were more scarce than usual with four off San Diego May 14 (GMcC) and 40 off Ventura June 5 (KG) being the only ones reported.

A Gull-billed Tern at S.E.S.S., Mar. 24 (DVT) indicates the normal spring arrival date for the species to the Salton Sea. Again Arctic Terns were seen in S. California waters with three off San Diego May 14 (GMcC) and 15 off Ventura June 5 (KG); it is now clear small numbers of these birds move N along the West Coast during late May and early June.

ALCIDS—Common Murres appear to be increasing in numbers along the S. California coast and 266 seen from Goleta Pt. during the period (PL) would help to substantiate this impression. An Ancient Murrelet off Goleta Pt., Mar. 31 (PL, JD) was the only one reported. A breeding-plumaged Tufted Puffin was near Santa Barbara I., June 5 (SC); this species is rare in S. California waters.

PIGEONS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS—Two Band-tailed Pigeons in the New York Mts., San Bernardino Co., May 30 (SC) were e. of their normal range and one on San Nicholas I., June 5 (LJ) was w. of its normal range. Small numbers of White-winged Doves were found throughout San Bernardino County during May with up to three May 20–June 4, as far north as F.C.R. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was at Ft. Piute in the Piute Mts., San Bernardino Co., May 25–28 (SF&KLB, DM); this is as early as the species ever reaches California. Most interesting was the finding of two migrant Flammulated Owls, with one at Deep Springs May 18 (KG) and the other at the base of Cottonwood Creek near Oasis May 26–27 (PU); there are virtually no previous records of migrants for California. A Com. Nighthawk at Mesquite Springs in Death Valley May 28 (EC) and another at F.C.R., May 29 (PL) were both clearly migrants, and indicate the normal arrival date for this species in California. A few Black Swifts were reported from along the coast during the overcast weather of May, but two over the Saline Valley, Inyo Co., May 7 (TH) were most unusual. Calliope Hummingbirds were more numerous than usual along the coast with at least ten found in San Diego County Apr. 10–23 (PU, EC); in addition the species was seen in Imperial County during April (WTE) and in Inyo County during May.

WOODPECKERS—A ♀ "Gilded Flicker" was near Cima, San Bernardino Co., May 20 (SC) and another was found there June 9 (SC); this form is becoming decidedly scarce in California. A Lewis' Woodpecker near Blythe Mar. 17 (KVR) was in an interesting locality. Totally unexpected were a Downy Woodpecker at N.E.S.S., Apr. 4 (MZ) and another in Afton Canyon Apr. 17 (EAC \* S.B.C.M.); both localities are well to the east of the species' normal range in California and it will be interesting to learn the racial identification of the collected bird.

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS—An E. Kingbird at F.C.R., May 27–30 (SF&KLB) and another at Oasis June 5 (H&PB) were the only two reported; small numbers occur in e. California every spring. Unprecedented were three Tropical Kingbirds, with one in Goleta Apr. 17 (LRB), another in San Pedro May 15 (JM), and the third at Afton Canyon May 1 (SC); whether these were southbound from more northerly wintering localities or spring overshoots

is subject to speculation. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, rare at any time of the year in California, was at Oasis May 31 (JS). A Wied's Crested Flycatcher was near Needles Apr. 30 (DE) and another was in Morongo Valley May 1 (KG) indicating arrival dates for this year. A Least Flycatcher was well seen and heard at Scotty's Castle in Death Valley May 24 (PL, DRo); this species is now being found annually in California and there is an ever-increasing number of observers familiar with the finer points of *Empidonax* flycatcher identification. A ♂ Vermilion Flycatcher near Santa Barbara Apr. 7–9 (*vide* GH) was n.w. of its normal range. A ♂ Purple Martin in Afton Canyon May 9 (EAC) and two males over the Saline Valley May 7 (TH) were all in an area for which few records exist.

#### THRASHERS, THRUSHES, WAXWINGS, KINGLETS

—A Gray Catbird was at Scotty's Castle May 26 (PU); this species is proving to be regular in very limited numbers along the e. border of the region in late May and early June. A Brown Thrasher, rare in spring, was at Oasis June 8 (DDeS). A Bendire's Thrasher at F.C.R., May 28 (KG) and another at Mesquite Springs May 23 (GMcC) were both north of their normal range. A Veery was well studied at Oasis May 29 (BDP); there is but one previous record for the region and that was during the fall of 1974. A Golden-crowned Kinglet was found in the New York Mts., Apr. 5 (VR) and a late individual was seen on Pt. Loma Apr. 14 (EC). A flock of 12 Bohemian Waxwings was found in San Bernardino Mar. 30 (EAC, SC).

VIREOS, WARBLERS—A Hutton's Vireo at Butterbread Springs, Kern Co., Apr. 24 (LJ) and another near Big Pine May 4 (TH) were both outside the species normal range. A ♂ Yellow-throated Vireo was in Morongo Valley Apr. 30–May 1 (R&MW, KG) and another male was there June 13 (SC); this species is an exceptionally rare straggler to California. The only Red-eyed Vireo found this spring was one at Deep Springs May 28 (BDP). More than 20 Black-and-white Warblers were found May 2–June 5 with the vast majority occurring along the e. edge of the region May 20–30. Two ♂ Prothonotary Warblers were found with one near Imperial Beach June 1–8 (GMcC) and the other at Oasis June 11 (TH). A Worm-eating Warbler, extremely rare at any time in California, was at Yucca Valley, San Bernardino Co., May 14–16 (E&AM, EC). A ♂ Golden-winged Warbler was at Oasis May 31 (VR, JM) and another male was on San Nicholas I., June 4 (LJ); this species appears to be on the increase as a straggler to California. A ♂ Blue-winged Warbler at Ft. Piute May 28 (VR) was only the third ever found in spring here in California. As is now expected a few Tennessee Warblers passed through the region with almost 30 seen May 10–June 7. Five migrant Virginia's Warblers were seen at desert oases in the n.e. part of the region May 19–28. Nine N. Parulas were reported with a male near Blythe May 28 (KVR), a female at Kelso May 29 (EAC, SC), a male at F.C.R., May 29–30 (KG), a female at Mesquite Springs May 22–26 (TH) and five around Oasis May 27–June 5; this species occurs in similar numbers every spring.

Unexpected were three Cape May Warblers with a male at F.C.R., May 30 (LRB), a female on Pt. Loma June 1–3 (EC) and a male there June 9 (PU). A ♂ Black-throated Green Warbler, very rare in spring, was at Deep Springs May 29 (PL). Most exciting was a ♂ Grace's Warbler, the fifth ever seen in California, singing on Clark Mt., San Bernardino Co., May 21 (VR, SC). Five Chestnut-sided Warblers were reported with a male at F.C.R., May 26 (PL), a male at Deep Springs May 27 (CH), a female at Oasis May 30 (JM), another female there June 5 (H&PB) and the fifth on

Pt. Loma June 5 (D&LD); this would appear to be an average number for the spring period. Three Bay-breasted Warblers were reported with a male at Morongo Valley June 3 (SC), another male at F.C.R., May 28 (VR) and a female on Santa Barbara I., June 5 (KG). A ♂ Blackpoll Warbler, still considered rare in spring, was on Clark Mt., May 20 (JK), another male was at Deep Springs May 27–28 (DP, BDP) and a third male was at Oasis May 30–31 (DRo). One of the wintering Palm Warblers in Goleta remained to Apr. 24 (PL) and another wintering bird was seen there Mar. 16 (PL); a Palm Warbler at F.C.R., May 28 (DM) was clearly a spring vagrant.

The Ovenbird that wintered in Riverside was last seen Apr. 9 (SC). Ten Ovenbirds were found May 15–June 5, which may be slightly more than average for the spring period. Over 15 N. Waterthrushes were seen in the e. part of the region May 1–29. A ♀ **Kentucky Warbler** was well seen at Ft. Piute May 27 (VR, SC) and a singing male was found at Oasis June 8 (DDeS); there are only two previous records of the species for the region. A ♂ **Mourning Warbler** was well studied at Mesquite Springs in Death Valley June 4 (KVV); there are only three previous records of the species for the region. Unprecedented was a ♀ **Red-faced Warbler** on Pt. Loma May 21–24 (JB, ph. S.D.N.H.M.) and a male at Morongo Valley June 4 (CBI, DM). Normally one or two Hooded Warblers are found each year so eight comes as a surprise with two males at Iron Mt. Pump Station, San Bernardino Co., May 2 (MY), a male in Kelso Apr. 15 (SC), a female at Deep Springs May 29 (GMcC), a male there June 8 (DDeS), a male at Oasis May 23 (DRo), another male there May 29 (EC) and a male in La Jolla, San Diego Co., May 20 (JTM). About 60 Am. Redstarts were found this spring, with most in the n.e. part of the region May 20–31.

**BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES, TANAGERS**—As usual a few Bobolinks moved through the n.e. part of the region with about 20 seen at F.C.R., May 20–June 4 and a male at Oasis June 5 (KVV); a male near Imperial Beach June 3 (*vide* PU) was the only one seen along the coast. A ♂ *Baltimore* Oriole in Imperial Beach Apr. 7 (GMcC) and another male in Goleta Feb. 7–Apr. 23 (PL) probably wintered locally, but a male in the Saline Valley May 7 (TH) and another male at Essex, San Bernardino Co., May 23 (SF&KLB) were spring vagrants. A ♀ Rusty Blackbird was found in Goleta on the late date of Apr. 12 (RJ, ph. S.D.N.H.M.). A Com. Grackle, still decidedly rare in California, was at Scotty's Castle in Death Valley May 28 (JM, DP) and another was at Deep Springs May 30–June 8 (BDP, DDeS). Great-tailed Grackles continue to expand their range in California with a pair at F.C.R. from May 18 to the end of the period (D&BH) and a female near Lucerne Valley Apr. 30 (GNV) marking the n. and w. limits of the records this spring. A ♀ Bronzed Cowbird at Kelso May 25 (SF&KLB) gives us the northernmost record to date. There were four Hepatic Tanagers found at desert oases this spring with a male in Morongo Valley Apr. 19 (R&MW), two females at Ft. Piute May 27 (VR, SC) and another female at F.C.R., May 28 (KG). Eight Summer Tanagers found in the n.e. part of the region May 21–June 5 along with five on the coast May 29–June 8 were all probably birds of the nominate race that had strayed too far W.

**FINCHES, SPARROWS, LONGSPURS**—Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were more numerous than usual with nearly 40 reported May 11–June 13. Similarly Indigo Buntings were relatively numerous with 35 seen Apr. 24–June 13. A ♂ Purple Finch on San Nicholas I., June 5 (LJ) was certainly lost. The only Evening Grosbeaks reported were two on

Clark Mt., May 21 (DRo), one at F.C.R., May 23 (VR) and another in Big Pine May 13 (TH). Up to four Lark Buntings, a scarce bird in California, were near Campo, San Diego Co., Apr. 4–29 (GSS, LRB). A **Le Conte's Sparrow** at F.C.R., May 21–24 (GMcC) was the first to be found in California during the spring. A Gray-headed Junco at Cima, San Bernardino Co., Apr. 16 (SC) was probably a migrant. A Harris' Sparrow in Morongo Valley May 7 (R&MW) and another in Redlands May 11 (SC) were the latest reported this year. Wintering White-throated Sparrows were reported through April, with one remaining in Julian, San Diego Co., to May 11 (LT); one at Scotty's Castle May 23 (PU) and another at Deep Springs May 25–June 5 (GMcC, H&PB) were exceptionally late. A Clay-colored Sparrow, rare in spring, was in Long Beach May 28 (RS). The only Swamp Sparrow reported was one in Kelso Apr. 22 (SC). Totally unexpected was a ♀ Lapland Longspur in Kelso June 9 (SC, \* S.B.C.M.); this must be one of the latest records for the contiguous states.

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