

## SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

/Guy McCaskie

The summer was somewhat hotter than usual with a prolonged warm spell in June and virtually no rainfall during the entire period. An increased interest in studying shorebirds resulted in the discovery of a number of unusual species during July, including one new to California. The most significant event, however, was the appearance of the long-awaited *Birds of Southern California* by Kimball Garrett and Jon Dunn (published by Los Angeles Audubon Society) which gives us a summary of the status and distribution of all 500+ species occurring in this Region through 1980.

**LOONS, GREBES** — As expected all three regularly occurring species of loons were found summering along the coast with the Arctic Loon being the most numerous (163 between Pt. Sal and Pt. Arguello, Santa Barbara Co., throughout the period—PEL). Two or three Com. Loons on L. Cachuma, Santa Barbara Co., during June and July (PEL) were the only loons found inland. A Red-necked Grebe at Pt. Mugu, Ventura Co., July 9-25 (REW) was the first to be found in s. California in summer. A Horned Grebe in Goleta, Santa Barbara Co., April through June 26 (JD) was one of very few to remain into June. At least 50 young Eared Grebes were near Lancaster, Los Angeles Co., July 24 (JD), 500 pairs successfully nested on Baldwin L., in the San Bernardino Mts., and at least six pairs nested at the Santa

Clara R. estuary, Ventura Co. (hereafter, S.C.R.E.) this summer.

**SHEARWATERS, STORM-PETRELS** — A N. Fulmar found recently dead on a beach at Morro Bay July 22 (GS) had undoubtedly lingered this far s. since winter. Fifteen Pink-footed Shearwaters visible from Pt. Mugu June 1 (REW) were unusually close to shore. A Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel 0.5 mi off Goleta July 10 (JA) established the first summer record for s. California.

**PELICANS, CORMORANTS, FRIGATE-BIRDS** — Two Brown Pelicans at the n. end of the Salton Sea (hereafter, N.E.S.S.) June 7 (DP) were the first to arrive at this inland location this summer but no more than seven were present at the end of the period. A small



(REW), a third near Lancaster July 17 (KLG) and a fourth at S.E.S.S., July 19 (BD, MH) were the first adults ever found in California in fall; the first of the juveniles was one at the Santa Ynez R. mouth July 22 (PEL).

Anad. **Rufous-necked Stint** at S.C.R.E., July 12-17 (E. Navojosky & D. Koeppl, ph., S.D.N.H.M.) and another S.E.S.S., July 19 (BD, MH) were only the third and fourth to be found in California. An ad. **Baird's Sand-**



Adult **Rufous-necked Stint**, Santa Clara River estuary, Ventura Co., Calif., July 12-17, 1981. Photo/Jim Greaves.

piper at Atascadero State Beach, San Luis Obispo Co., July 9 (GS) and three near Lancaster July 17 (KLG) were the earliest to arrive this fall with at least 30 (mostly juveniles) reported by July 31. Two **Pectoral Sandpipers** at Oso Flaco L., San Luis Obispo Co., June 2 (JR) were exceptionally late spring migrants; one at S.C.R.E., June 4-11 (REW) was possibly summering locally and one in Goleta July 18-20 (PEL) was an early fall migrant. A **Dunlin** on Morro Bay July 3 (JR) was probably summering locally since fall migrants do not arrive before September. An ad. **Curlew Sandpiper** on San Elijo Lagoon July 4 (GMCC, ph., S.D.N.H.M.) was only the sixth to be found in California. An



Adult **Curlew Sandpiper**, San Elijo Lagoon, San Diego Co., Calif., July 4, 1981. Photo/Herbert Clarke.

ad. **Stilt Sandpiper** at S.E.S.S., July 13 (GMCC) was the only one found on the Salton Sea but one was along the coast in Carlsbad, San Diego Co., July 12-15 (EC). A ♂ **Ruff** on Bataquitos Lagoon, San Diego Co., July 13-20 (JO) was the earliest fall migrant to be found in California.

**GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS** — An imm. **Glaucous-winged Gull**, rare inland, was at S.E.S.S., June 20 (JO). Three **Herring Gulls** at the Santa Maria R. mouth June 12 (LB), another there May 20-Aug. 16 (PEL) and a fourth at N.E.S.S., June 7 (DP) were the only ones found this summer. An imm. **Thayer's Gull** at N.E.S.S., June 7 (GMCC) established the latest record for the Region. An imm. **Mew Gull**, rare in summer, was on

Morro Bay throughout July (JMcD, ph., S.D.N.H.M.), one was at the Santa Maria R. mouth June 2-July 24 (REW) and a third was near there June 2-12 (REW). Six ad. **Laughing Gulls** at N.E.S.S., June 7 (DP) were the first of the post-breeding birds to arrive this year. An imm. **Franklin's Gull** at Oso Flaco L., June 12 (PEL) and two adults at S.E.S.S., June 27-July 13 (MAP) were the only ones found this summer. The imm. **Heermann's Gull** present at S.E.S.S., throughout the winter was still there June 20 (JO). One hundred twenty-five **Gull-billed Terns** (including 25 juveniles) at the Salton Sea July 18 (GMCC) provided the highest one-day count this summer; this species appears to be on the decline in California. A sub-adult **Arctic Tern** between Ventura and Santa Barbara I., July 11 (REW) was one of a very few found in s. California in summer. Three **Least Terns** were at N.E.S.S., June 6-7 (BD); this species is a casual straggler at the Salton Sea. **Black Skimmers** were found nesting only in the San Diego area (25+ pairs—EC) with virtually none present on the Salton Sea; away from San Diego at least three were around S.C.R.E., throughout the summer (REW), two were at Pt. Mugu June 21 (REW) and another was there July 30 (REW).

**ALCIDS** — A build-up of Com. **Murres** off Vandenberg A.F.B., occurred in late July with 5000 counted off Pt. Sal Aug. 9 (LRB); flightless young accompanied by adults off Pt. Sal July 22 (PEL) and off the Santa Ynez R. mouth July 29 (PEL) suggested nesting somewhere closer than Monterey County; one at Huntington Beach, Orange Co., July 14-26 (R&MW) was quite far s. Two **Marbled Murrelets** near Cayucos July 27 (TME) were only a short distance s. of suspected nesting localities in Monterey County. At least seven breeding-plumaged **Rhinoceros Auklets** at Pt. Arguello all summer (REW), with four seen to enter and/or leave burrows, gives us strong evidence that the species is nesting at that locality; one off La Jolla July 25 (EC) was quite far s. A living **Horned Puffin**, a rare straggler to California, was captured on a Santa Barbara beach June 11 (PEL, \*S.B.M.N.H.).

**CUCKOOS THROUGH SWIFTS** — Encouraging was the discovery of as many as 24 pairs of **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** along the s. fork of the Kern R., e. of Isabella Res., this summer (RAB); one in San Juan Capistrano, Orange Co., June 21 (BS) was one of very few seen along the coast in recent years. The locating of nine territorial pairs of **Screech Owls** at desert oases in w. Riverside and s.w. San Bernardino cos. last spring (RMCK) would indicate the species is relatively common in this area of California. A **Great Horned Owl** on Santa Barbara I., July 11 (REW) appears to be the first ever found on the Channel Is. A **Pygmy Owl**, scarce in s. California, was at Vincent Gap in the San Gabriel Mts., July 12 (BD). A pair of **Long-eared Owls** accompanied by 3-4 young at 7500 ft on Mt. Pinos Aug. 1 (KLG) were unusually high in the mountains. Calling **Whip-poor-wills** near Big Pines in the San Gabriel Mts., June 17-23 (KLG) and at Angelus Oaks June 12-July 29 (DRW, BD) strongly suggested nesting at those localities. A calling Com. **Nighthawk** over Escondido,

San Diego Co., July 11 (KW) was far from any known area of regular occurrence. A **Black Swift** over Bolsa Chica June 10 (REW) was a late spring migrant. A **Chimney Swift** over Westwood, Los Angeles Co., July 9 (KLG) and 15-20 over Burbank, Los Angeles Co., July 4 (JD) were the only ones reported this summer; however, a *Chaetura* near Morro Bay July 17 (JR) could have been this species.

**KINGFISHERS, WOODPECKERS** — At least ten pairs of **Belted Kingfishers** were reported with nests found around Morro Bay (three), along the upper Santa Ynez R. (two) and at the Ventura R. mouth (one). The female of a nesting pair of Com. **Flickers** near Banning, San Bernardino Co., during May appeared to be "Yellow-shafted" (RMCK). Twelve **Yellow-bellied (Red-breasted) Sapsuckers** on Big Pine Mt., June 29-July 1 (PEL) gave us the first evidence of nesting in Santa Barbara County; five pairs on Mt. Palomar, San Diego Co., all summer (RH) were at the s. limit of the species' range. Sixteen **White-headed Woodpeckers** on Big Pine Mt., June 29-July 1 (JD) are the first to be recorded in Santa Barbara County in summer.

**FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS** — A pair of **Willow Flycatchers** (nest located) in Morongo Valley, San Bernardino Co. (EAC), five singing males (one nest located) along the Santa Margarita R., San Diego Co. (LRS) and a singing male near Imperial Beach May 2-June 21 (EC) were the only ones believed nesting in the Region. Seven **Dusky Flycatchers** on Big Pine Mt., June 29-July 1 (PEL) indicated the species nests at that locality. The presence of four singing **Olive-sided Flycatchers** around Santa Barbara during June and July (PEL, LB) suggested that the species may be nesting locally. Two pairs of **Vermilion Flycatchers** at Morongo Valley in June (EAC) were the only ones known to be nesting in California; this species was formerly much more common and widespread. A small colony of **Cliff Swallows** under a highway bridge in Little Rock (KLG) appears to be the first recorded occurrence of nesting in the Antelope Valley.

**CREEPERS THROUGH KINGLETS** — A singing **Brown Creeper** in Santa Barbara July 7 (PEL) was believed to be nesting locally; this species is known to nest along the coast s. to Monterey County but no farther s. A ♂ **Bendire's Thrasher** near Pioneer Town on the e. slope of the San Bernardino Mts., June 6 (EAC) was in an area where the species is considered rare. Two singing **Hermit Thrushes** at San Marcos Pass during June and July (PEL) and six more (one defending nest) at Refugio Pass throughout June (LB) were the first to be found in Santa Barbara County in summer. Thirty **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were found on Big Pine Mt., June 30-July 1 (JD) indicating that the species is a relatively common breeder at that location; two on Reyes Peak, Ventura Co., June 6 (REW) were in an area where considered rare in summer.

**VIREOS, WOOD WARBLERS** — Bell's **Vireos** were relatively common along the upper Santa Ynez R., and nearby Mono Cr.,

in Santa Barbara Co., this summer with 60 singing males and 120 offspring (JMG). A territorial ♂ Solitary Vireo along Big Rock Cr., on the n. slope of the San Gabriel Mts., June 23 (KLG) and a pair building a nest on Santa Rosa Mt., June 6 (EAC) were of the gray race *plumbeus*, at the extreme w. limits of this form's expanding range. A ♂ Red-eyed Vireo at Oak Canyon Nature Center, Orange Co., June 18 (DRW) was a late spring vagrant.

A Black-and-white Warbler at Oak Canyon Nature Center June 6 (DRW) was a late spring straggler, another at 6800 ft in the San Gabriel Mts., June 23 (KLG) may have been only the second ever found in the mountains and a third in Goleta June 8-Aug. 10 (KB) was one of very few recorded summering in the Region. A Lucy's Warbler near Imperial Beach July 28-Aug. 3 (PU) was an exceptionally early fall vagrant. A ♂ N. Parula in Santa Barbara Apr. 30-July 14 (LB) spent much time displaying to a ♀ Yellow-throated Warbler at the same location May 11+ (LRB); unfortunately, a lack of response by the latter put an end to California's best chance for a Sutton's Warbler! An Ovenbird in Santa Barbara June 20 (JMG, \*S.B.M.N.H.) was a very late spring vagrant. Two singing ♂ MacGillivray's Warblers on Big Pine Mt., June 30-July 1 (JD) indicated nesting at that location. A ♀ Hooded Warbler on Pt. Loma June 2 (CGE) and a male at Coon Cr., adjacent to Morro Bay June 17 (JR, ph., S.D.N.H.M.) were late spring vagrants.

**BLACKBIRDS, TANAGERS** — A ♀ Great-tailed Grackle at Doheny Beach, Orange Co., June 28 (BS) was one of very few ever found on the coast of California. A bright ♂ Scarlet Tanager, only the seventh to

be found in s. California in spring, was in Los Osos, San Luis Obispo Co., June 3-4 (CJT, HJB). A ♂ Hepatic Tanager on Clark Mt., June 28 (RMCK) and a pair along Arrastre Cr., in the San Bernardino Mts., May 31 & June 21 (RMCK) were at known nesting localities. A Summer Tanager in Carpinteria June 6-7 (PEL) and another near there June 6 (PEL) were late stragglers; at least six pairs along the s. fork of the Kern R., immediately e. of Isabella Res., during June and July (RAB) extend the species' breeding range to a new n.w. limit.

**FINCHES, SPARROWS** — A ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Morro Bay June 20 (JMcD), four in the Santa Barbara area May 25-July 26 (JMG, NSC, KB) and a sixth at Rincon Pt., Ventura Co., June 6 (PEL) should all be treated as spring vagrants. A pair of Indigo Buntings was attending a nest with 3 eggs in Morongo Valley in early June (EAC) and single males near Weldon May 18+ (RAB) and July 10 (RAB) could also have been breeding. Unexpected were two Evening Grosbeaks on Figueroa Mt., Santa Barbara Co., June 17 (PEL) and four more on Big Pine Mt., July 1 (JD). A small number of Purple Finches, including adults feeding young, near Malibu, Los Angeles Co., appear to furnish the first evidence of nesting at sea-level this far s. Two Cassin's Finches on Figueroa Mt., June 17 (PEL) were outside the species' known breeding range. The presence of Pine Siskins at 3 locations around Morro Bay all summer suggested nesting in that area; breeding is undocumented along the coast s. of Monterey County. A singing Sage Sparrow at Pt. Sal May 13 (PEL) was believed to be on territory; this species is uncommon and local along the immediate coast. Nesting Dark-eyed Juncos in Topanga

Canyon, Los Angeles Co. (KLG) mark the s. limit for breeding along the coast. The finding of 11 Fox Sparrows on Big Pine Mt., June 29-July 1 (JD) established another breeding location for this species in s. California.

**CONTRIBUTORS** — Kevin Aanerud, Jon Atwood, Larry R. Ballard, Robert A. Barnes, Linda Belluomini, H.J. Bender, Louis Bevier, David Bontrager, Karen Bridgers, Bruce Broadbrooks, Eugene A. Cardiff (co-ordinator for San Bernardino County), Jim Coatsworth, Elizabeth Copper (co-ordinator for San Diego County), Nancy S. Crawford, Brian Daniels, Jon Dunn, Thomas M. Edell, Claude G. Edwards, Tom Frillman, Kimball L. Garrett (co-ordinator for Los Angeles County), Jesse Grantham, James M. Greaves, Rob A. Hamilton, Robert B. Hansen, Marlon Harms, Mitch Heindel, Diana Herron, Roger Higson, Paul Jorgensen, Helen J. Kahn, Paul E. Lehman (co-ordinator for Santa Barbara County), John McDonald, Robert McKernan, Tom Meixner, Jerry Oldenettel, Dennis Parker, Eleanor B. Parsons, Michael A. Patten, Arleta F. Patterson, Sylvia J. Ranney (co-ordinator for Orange County), David Rawlins, Royce Riggan, Jim Royer (co-ordinator for San Luis Obispo County), Larry R. Salata, Brad Schram, Trudy Siptroth, Greg Smith, G. Shumway Suffel, C.S. Taylor, Ric Thowless, Ken Weaver, Richard E. Webster (co-ordinator for Ventura County), Douglas R. Willick, Russell and Marion Wilson (R&MW), Philip Unitt. Photograph on file (ph.), specimen (\*), Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (S.B.M.N.H.), San Diego Natural History Museum (S.D.N.H.M.).-GUY McCASKIE, San Diego Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, P.O. Box 1390, San Diego, California 92112.