SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION /Guy McCaskie

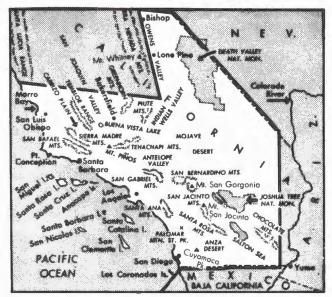
The summer was somewhat hotter than usual with a prolonged warm spell in June and virtually no rainfall during the entire period. An increased interest in studying shorebirds resulted in the discovery of a number of unusual species during July, including one new to California. The most significant event, 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 un-doubtedly 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



population of Pelagic Cormorants on Pt. Arguello all summer (REW) was clearly nesting (population not censused due to inaccessability) and was at the s. limit of the species' breeding range on the coast. Magnificent Frigatebirds were somewhat scarce with six sightings reported along the coast from San Diego to Santa Barbara June 28+ (PEL, KLG, RT) and single birds at the Salton Sea July 13 (GMcC) & 28 (KA).

HERONS - An imm. Little Blue Heron near Lancaster June 7-10 (KLG) was a late spring vagrant in the desert; single adults at the s. end of the Salton Sea (hereafter, S.E.S.S.) June 17 (RH) & July 13-18 (GMcC), along with two adults at nearby Seeley June 20 (JO) were in an area where breeding is likely, and a pair again nested near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., fledging three young at the end of July (GMcC). An imm. Reddish Egret in San Diego July 17+ (JC) was exceptionally early. About 20 pairs of Snowy Egrets again nested near Imperial Beach (EC) and were the only breeding birds found away from the Salton Sea. At least one breeding-plumaged Louisiana Heron at N.E.S.S., May 10-July 13 (GMcC) suggested the possibility of nesting, which should be investigated; an adult at Bolsa Chica, Orange Co., June 10 (REW) was late and another adult on Morro Bay July 8-12 (JR, ph., S.D.N.H.M.) was exceptionally far n. as well as being unseasonable.

A Least Bittern near Cayucos, San Luis Obispo Co., July 20-Aug. 6 (TME), two on Laguna L., near San Luis Obispo July 7 (JR). two in Santa Barbara throughout the period (KA), one at S.C.R.E., May 3-June 8 (BD), one in Long Beach, Los Angeles Co., all summer (KLG) and a pair feeding young in El Monte, Los Angeles Co., in early August (Mickey Long, fide GSS) were of interest since the species is rare along the coast n. of San Diego County; one near Weldon, Kern Co., July 15-16 (RAB) appears to be the first to be found in the Kern R. valley. Single Am. Bitterns near Lancaster June 28 (JD), near Oceanside, San Diego Co., June 18 (CGE) and at San Elijo Lagoon, San Diego Co., July 12 (EC) were in areas supporting suitable habitat for nesting. Up to 11 Whitefaced Ibises were at S.C.R.E., all summer (REW) and 20+ were present in coastal San Diego County (EC) throughout the period; however, none were known to nest, most of the birds being in non-breeding plumage.

DUCKS — At least one pair of Wood Ducks nested at L. Cachuma (PEL) and a pair on L. Sherwood, Ventura Co., Apr. 25 (REW) was believed to be nesting; this species is a scarce breeder in s. California, A 9 Wood Duck

at L. Henshaw, San Diego Co., June 21-30 (RH) was exceptionally far s. for this time of the year. Three Ring-necked Ducks were on L. Cachuma all summer (PEL) and another was on Baldwin L., June 20 (KLG); this species is rare in summer. A Canvasback, scarce in summer, was near Santa Maria, Santa Barbara Co., July 13-28 (REW), one was at Pt. Mugu throughout the period (REW), another was near Lancaster June 23 (JD), one was on Baldwin L., June 20-July 27 (KLG), and seven were at N.E.S.S., during June and July (GMcC, LB). A Bufflehead near Lancaster June 23 (KLG) was the only summering bird of the species reported. A group of 110 White-winged Scoters between Pt. Sal and Pt. Arguello throughout the period (PEL) was a large concentration for summer, but individuals were found as far s. as Imperial Beach, indicating that more than the average number of non-breeding birds summered.

HAWKS — A Sharp-shinned Hawk in coniferous forest at Upper Big Rock Cr., in the San Gabriel Mts., June 23 (JD) and another in Juniper-Joshua tree habitat near Phelan July 29 (KLG) were two of a very few recorded in summer, the latter being the first in such atypical habitat. An ad. Redshouldered Hawk at 9500 ft w. of Lone Pine, Inyo Co., July 25 (RMcK) was unusually high in the mountains. An ad. Swainson's Hawk near Desert Center, Riverside Co., July 4 (KLG) suggested the possibility of nesting in that area. A pair of Zone-tailed Hawks again attempted to nest on Santa Rosa Mt., Riverside Co., but failed and was last seen around the nest June 21 (EAC). An imm. Golden Eagle near Santa Maria July 29 (REW) was one of a very few ever found along the coast in summer. A Peregrine Falcon was at S.E.S.S., July 13-19 (MH) and another was at N.E.S.S., July 28 (LB); one or two are found around the Salton Sea each summer.

RAILS, GALLINULES — A Black Rail calling at N.E.S.S., June 20 (JO) was only the second to be reported from this locality; unfortunately, the marsh was leveled by the Coachella Irrigation District the following week. Two family groups of Com. Gallinules

near Santa Maria Aug. 13 (LB) gives us conclusive evidence of nesting in that area, and a pair raised one young in Saticoy, Ventura Co. (REW); breeding records from along the coast n. of San Diego County are few indeed.

SHOREBIRDS - A Black Oystercatcher in the Santa Barbara/Goleta area July 11 (LB) and up to three at Pt. Mugu all summer (REW) were s. of the species' normal range along the coast. Two Semipalmated Plovers on Baldwin L., July 27 (KLG) were at an unusual locality. An Am. Golden Plover near Santa Maria June 2 (REW) was probably a late spring migrant; one at S.C.R.E., June 19 (REW) was of ambiguous status, but single birds near Santa Maria July 31 (PEL), in Goleta July 19-25 (LRB) and in San Diego July 31 (EC) were all fall migrants. A flock of 184 Black-bellied Plovers on L. Henshaw July 31 (RH) comprised an exceptional number for such a location. Three Whimbrels at Harper Dry L., San Bernardino Co., July 25 (BD) and one near Lancaster July 24 (REW) were of interest since few are found inland in fall away from the Salton Sea. A Solitary Sandpiper near Winterhaven, Imperial Co., June 7 (EC) was exceptionally late; an adult at S.E.S.S., July 28 (KA) and another near Weldon July 29 (RAB) were the first fall migrants noted this year. A pair of Spotted Sandpipers accompanying a flightless young at L. Hodges, San Diego Co., July 26-30 (EC) established the southernmost nesting record for California.

An ad. Polynesian Tattler near Lancaster July 23 (JD, ph., S.D.N.H.M.) was the first to be recorded in North America outside of Alaska; the bird had an unmarked white belly and undertail coverts, with fine gray barring on the breast and along the sides, and gave a 2-note upslurred whistle call-note. A Ruddy



Polynesian Tattler, near Lancaster, Los Angeles Co., Calif., July 23, 1981.

Turnstone, rare anywhere inland away from the Salton Sea, was on Isabella Res., Kern Co., July 31 (RAB), and single birds were found near Lancaster July 25 (BB) & 29 (KLG). Three Surfbirds at Purisima Pt., Santa Barbara Co., July 13 (REW), one at S.C.R.E., July 23 (REW) and two at La Jolla. San Diego Co., July 25 (JO) were the earliest fall migrants reported this year. Two Red Knots were at Salton City, Imperial Co., July 19 (BD) and a flock of 15 was at S.E.S.S., July 28 (LB); small numbers pass through the Salton Sea each fall. A Sanderling, rare inland away from the Salton Sea, was near Lancaster July 23 (JD) and was joined by a second the following day (JD). A Semipalmated Sandpiper in Goleta July 2 (PEL), another at Bolsa Chica, Orange Co., July 7

(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. Koeppel, 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 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 Longeared 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 sum-

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 & Redeyed 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 9 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 & Rosebreasted 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 moreon 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.

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