

## SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

/Guy McCaskie

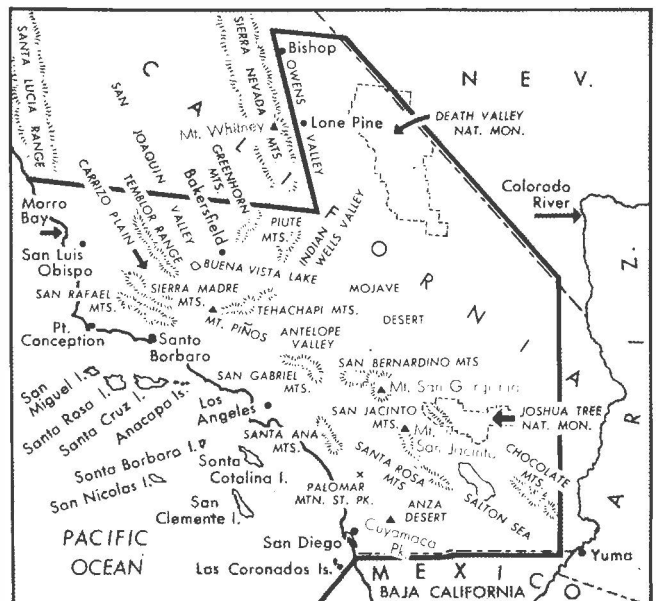
The summer was hotter than normal with moist tropical air bringing unseasonable rainfalls during July. Among the water birds were some unseasonable reports of ducks and an interesting array of early fall migrant shorebirds. Landbirds were somewhat uneventful.

ABBREVIATIONS — N.E.S.S.—north end of the Salton Sea, Riverside Co.; S.E.S.S.—south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial Co.; S.D.N.H.M.—San Diego Natural History Museum; S.C.R.M.—Santa Clara River mouth, Ventura County. *Birds of Southern California* by Kimball Garrett and Jon Dunn (1981) is the standard reference for the status and distribution of the birds in this Region. As virtually all rarities found in s. California are seen by numerous observers, only the observer initially identifying the bird is included. Documentation is on file for all rarities listed in the report.

LOONS, GREBES — As usual, small numbers of Com. Arctic and Red-throated loons spent the summer along the coast with Arctic Loons being the commonest and Red-throated Loons the scarcest. A Com. Loon on L. Isabella, Kern Co., June 2 (JH) and another on L. Henshaw in the mountains of San Diego Co. all summer (RHi) were at unusual localities. A bedraggled Red-throated Loon on L. Henshaw Aug. 8 (RHi) had undoubtedly summered, and was one of very few found inland at this time of the year. Western Grebes again nested on Laguna L., near San Luis Obispo (JMcD) and two pairs raised young on the Kern N.W.R., near Delano, Kern Co., during June (GI).

SHEARWATERS — Manx (Black-vented) Shearwaters appeared off the coast much earlier than normal with "hundreds" visible from shore in La Jolla, San Diego Co., by the end of July (GMcC) and individuals found n. to San Luis Obispo Co. (two off Shell Beach July 27 (BS) and one off Cayucos July 23 (TME)).

PELICANS, CORMORANTS, FRIGATEBIRDS — An influx of Brown Pelicans to the Salton Sea occurred in late June, with 30 counted at N.E.S.S., June 23 (RMcK) and 40 present on that inland body of water throughout July (GMcC). An **Olivaceous Cormorant** at N.E.S.S., July 30 (SS) may well have been the individual frequenting this locality a year ago. An imm. Magnificent Frigatebird at Ocean Beach, San Diego Co., July 18 (CH), two over Rincon Pt., Ventura Co., July 31 (TO'N), one at Goleta, Santa Barbara Co., July 25 (MW) and one at Shell Beach, San Luis Obispo Co., July 27 (KS) were the



only ones seen along the coast; at the Salton Sea 1-2 were at N.E.S.S., June 20-25 (JLD), another was there July 3 (DRW), and another was there July 23-25 (RMcK).

HERONS, STORKS — Again Little Blue Herons nested near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., with a pair seen feeding three young June 26 (GMcC); an adult at N.E.S.S., July 23 (RMcK) was the only one seen away from the San Diego area. Some 50 ± pairs of Cattle Egrets nesting at Guajome L., near Oceanside, San Diego Co. (LaS) gave us another breeding locality for this species, and four in flight over the summit of Mt. Palomar, San Diego Co., July 30 (RHi) were at an unusual locality. The ad. Yellow-crowned Night Heron seen off-and-on around San Elijo Lagoon, San Diego Co., since October 1981 was present July 6+ (SW). A pair of Least Bitterns successfully nested near El Monte, Los Angeles Co. (NA) and two were found in Goleta July 2 (DB); this species is rare along the coast n. of San Diego County. A Wood Stork, now accidental along the coast, was at Carpinteria, Santa Barbara Co., June 5-Aug. 1 (JC).

GEESE, DUCKS — Up to five Brant attempting to summer at



Female King Eider found summering in the Ventura Marina, Ventura, Calif. Photo/Kevin J. Zimmer.

N.E.S.S., evidently succumbed to the heat in late June (GMcC), but two at S.E.S.S., Aug. 13 (GMcC) were evidently more successful. Up to four Fulvous Whistling-Ducks on the Kern N.W.R., during the period (GI) were the only ones found away from S.E.S.S.; this species has become alarmingly scarce in s. California in recent years. A pair of Blue-winged Teal at Upper Newport Bay, Orange Co., June 22-26 (DRW) could have been nesting; a male at Kern N.W.R., June 14 (RHs) was at an unusual locality. A ♀ Pintail accompanied by six young at Pt. Mugu, Ventura Co., June 19 (LB) documented nesting for that locality. Two Ring-necked Ducks, casual after mid-June, near Lancaster, Los Angeles Co., July 23 (BB) and another near Elk Hills, Kern Co., Aug. 9 (JH) had evidently summered locally. Four Canvasbacks on Baldwin L., in the San Bernardino Mts., June 10-11 (DRW) may have been summering, but one at Pt. Mugu from May to July 17 (LB) and two at S.E.S.S., Aug. 13 (REW) were clearly summering; this species is considered rare to casual at this time of year. A pair of Canvasbacks accompanied by eight young on Kern N.W.R., Apr. 23 (MOC) documented the first record of nesting in s. California. Two Greater Scaup, virtually unknown in summer, were at Pt. Mugu July 17 (PEL) and another was at Bolsa Chica, Orange Co., July 16 (DRW). Two Bufflehead, casual in summer, were on L. Isabella July 3 (REW), another was at Pt. Mugu July 17 (LB) and a fourth was on Finney L., near S.E.S.S., July 2 (DRW). A ♀ **King Eider** present on the open ocean off Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo Co., Apr. 17-18 (PGS) was most likely a spring migrant, but a female seen in the Long Beach Harbor July 8 (DM) and another (flightless) in the Ventura Marina July 23+ (BMcl, ph. S.D.N.H.M.) were clearly summering; there are no previous summer records for s. California, and only one recorded occurrence for the Region prior to the 1982-83 winter. A White-winged Scoter, rare on the Salton Sea in summer, was at N.E.S.S., June 5+ (REW). Two Surf Scoters were at N.E.S.S., June 5-25 (GMcC) and another was at nearby Salton City June 5-July 9 (REW); one or two are found each summer on this inland body of water. A Com. Merganser on Otay L., near San Diego June 15 (REW) was one of a very few to be found away from the Colorado R., in summer.

**HAWKS** — A one-year old Mississippi Kite remained along Dulzura Cr., e. of Otay L., San Diego Co., June 12-July 30 (DPo); this was the first to remain in California through the summer, but I believe the species will eventually nest. The only Swainson's Hawks reported were one near Plaster City, Imperial Co., June 11 (CGE) and another near Bakersfield, Kern Co., July 19 (RHs). A Marsh Hawk nest was destroyed by a hay cutter near Lakeview, Riverside Co., June 20 (AMC); this species is now a very scarce and local breeder in s. California. At least two Ospreys were present at N.E.S.S., throughout the period (GMcC) and may have nested. A Peregrine Falcon at S.C.R.M., July 4 (LB) and another near San Diego June 14 (BF) were believed to be wild, but one or two around downtown Los Angeles during the period were certainly from captive stock; as more Peregrines are released into the wild it is going to become next to impossible to separate true wild birds from those released from captivity.

**SHOREBIRDS** — An ad. **Mongolian Plover** at S.C.R.M., July 26-Aug. 2 (AST) was most likely the same bird present here a year ago (*Am. Birds* 37:224, 1983). An exceptionally early Mountain Plover was near Lancaster July 30 (EAC). A breeding plumaged Am. Golden Plover near Lancaster June 12 (BWK) was evidently an exceptionally late spring migrant, and another at S.C.R.M., July 9 (TW) was judged to be an early fall migrant. A juv. Greater Yellowlegs near Lancaster July 29 (JLD) was about 3 weeks earlier than expected for a young bird of the year. A Solitary Sandpiper near Del Mar, San Diego Co., July 23 (DK) and another near Lancaster July 24 (FH) were the earliest of the fall migrants reported this year. Three pairs of Spotted Sandpipers nested at San Elijo Lagoon this summer (DK), this location being at the s. extreme of the species' breeding range. A Wandering Tattler at the Santa Maria R. mouth July 16 (LB) and another at Pt. Mugu July 17 (PEL) were both judged to be early fall migrants. A Ruddy Turnstone near Lancaster July 31 (KLG) was the only one found inland. Common Snipe do not normally arrive in s. California before early August, with the first reaching the coast in late August; hence, single birds near Lancaster July 9 (BB) & 24 (JLD), and another near Imperial Beach Aug. 20 (GMcC) were early. A Surfbird, casual in June, near San Simeon, San Luis Obispo Co., June 7 (GPS), three at Carpinteria June 10 (RAH) and four more near Imperial Beach June 26-July 16 (REW) were all believed to be summering locally. Nine Red Knots at S.E.S.S., July 3 (MH) were early fall migrants, and two near Lancaster July 24 (REW) were the only ones found inland away from the Salton Sea. An ad. Sanderling near Lancaster July 24 (JLD) was the only one found inland away from the Salton Sea. Single Semipalmated Sandpipers at S.C.R.M., July 21 & 23-31 (PEL), and a third near Cayucos, San Luis Obispo Co., July 26-29 (TME) were the first of the juveniles to reach s. California this fall.

Three ad. W. Sandpipers near Lancaster June 19 (KLG) were early migrants, this species being relatively common by the end of the month, but juveniles not appearing until the last week of July. An ad. Rufous-necked Stint near Lancaster July 23-29 (BB) was the fifth to be found in s. California. A juv. Baird's Sandpiper at S.C.R.M., July 21 (PEL) was the first for the fall. Two ad. Pectoral Sandpipers, exceptional before September, were in Goleta July 17 (AB). Six Silt Sandpipers at S.E.S.S., July 25 (BGP) were the first of the fall migrants to be found this year, and one at Batiquitos Lagoon, San Diego Co., July 31 (GMcC) was along the coast where considered casual. A ♂ Ruff near Imperial Beach June 26 (GMcC) was the first to be found in California during June, and was followed by another male at the same location July 23-Aug. 7 (DD). Two Red Phalaropes near Lancaster July 9 (BB) were far inland. Some 400 Wilson's Phalaropes, virtually all being ad. females, near Lancaster June 19 (KLG) were clearly fall migrants, and illustrate just how early these birds move S.

**JAEGERS, GULLS** — A S. Polar Skua, rare but regular off s. California during the late spring, was seen off San Diego June 4 (REW). The Glaucous Gull found at N.E.S.S., May 14 was still present Aug. 13 (GMcC) and was only the second ever known to summer in s. California. The major influx of W. (Yellow-footed) Gulls from the Gulf of California to the Salton Sea occurred in early July with 75, including 20 juveniles, present on the Salton Sea July 9 (GMcC). At least two Herring Gulls, an exceptionally rare bird in s. California during the summer, remained around N.E.S.S., throughout the period (GMcC) and another was in Ventura June 16 (REW). An imm. Thayer's Gull at N.E.S.S., June 11 (GMcC) was the first to be found in s. California in summer. An ad. Laughing Gull at Venice, Los Angeles Co., June 22 (CTC) was one of very few found along the coast. Up to five Franklin's Gulls were near Lancaster June 1-July 9 (KLG), up to six were around N.E.S.S., throughout June (GMcC), one was there July 30-31 (SS) and another was at the Santa Ynez R. mouth, Santa Barbara Co., June 29 (LB). Bonaparte's Gulls were more numerous than usual through the summer with up to 28 inland near Lancaster (KLG) and about 100 around N.E.S.S. (GMcC) during June and July, and similar concentrations along the coast during the same period. An ad. Heermann's Gull, a rare and irregular post-breeding visitor to the Salton Sea, was at N.E.S.S., July 31 (BGP). An ad. Sabine's Gull in Del Mar June 2 (DD) and another at Pt. Mugu June 26 (LB) were both onshore.

**PIGEONS, OWLS, GOATSUCKERS** — A Band-tailed Pigeon near Blythe, Riverside Co., July 10-11 (SC), another in Whitewater Canyon,

Riverside Co., July 1 (DCM) and a third in Rancho Santa Fe, San Diego Co., June 20 (LuS) were all away from areas of normal occurrence. A Pygmy Owl, a poorly known species in s. California, was near Big Pines in the San Gabriel Mts., July 3 (KLG), two more were at Chantry Flats in the same mountains throughout June (KLG), and another was on Mt. Palomar June 4 (CGE). Six Elf Owls on the Soto Ranch n. of Needles, San Bernardino Co., Apr. 16+ (WCH) and one near Blythe Apr. 21+ (WCH) is believed to be the total breeding population now remaining in California. A Whip-poor-will near Big Pines in the San Gabriel Mts., June 19 (KLG), two at Angeles Oaks in the San Bernardino Mts., during May and June (DRW) and two more at L. Fulmor during the same period (EAC) were all believed to be on nesting territories; small numbers occur in the mountains of s. California each summer, but an actual nest and/or recently fledged young have yet to be found.

**SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS, WOODPECKERS** — Up to nine Chimney Swifts were about Exposition P., Los Angeles June 23-Aug. 1 (KLG), two were over W. Hollywood, Los Angeles Co., July 9 (JA) and up to six were present in Arcadia, Los Angeles Co., during much of June and July (MSanM), but none were believed to be nesting. At least one pair of Allen's Hummingbirds nested near the Santa Ana R. mouth, Orange Co. (DRW); this is a recently colonized area, and marks the s. limit of the species' breeding range on the coast. A ♂ Calliope Hummingbird on Mt. Palomar throughout July (RHi) was s. of the species' breeding range. Five active Yellow-bellied (Red-breasted) Sapsucker nests on Mt. Palomar (RHi) was a good number for that area, and a nest found on Cuyamaca Peak, San Diego Co., July 6 (CGE) extended the breeding range S a few more miles.

**FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS** — A Cassin's Kingbird near Blythe July 16-17 (SC) was one of very few ever to be found in this area of California. Say's Rheobes are now exceptionally rare along the coast in summer; hence, two or three (including juveniles) near Irvine, Orange Co., May 11+ (DRW), a pair nesting near Escondido in June (KW), and one in Santee near San Diego July 27 (CGE) were of note. Purple Martins are now found nesting at only a limited number of locations in s. California; hence, the monitoring of numbers at these locations is of importance — 17 were at Nojoqui Falls P., Santa Barbara Co., during July (PEL), up to 45 (including young of the year) were near Arcadia, Los Angeles Co., throughout the summer (FH), 45 pairs nested on Mt. Palomar (RHi), and 20 were around Cuyamaca Peak July 6 (CGE).

**RAVENS THROUGH VIREOS** — Two Com. Ravens over Carpinteria July 9 (TW) were in an area where considered casual to accidental. Four Red-breasted Nuthatches on Big Pine Mt., Santa Barbara Co., June 19-20 (JEL) were in an area where believed to be rare, and a pair on Cuyamaca Peak July 6 (CGE) was outside the species' known breeding range. Two Rock Wrens in Goleta June 8 (TW) were the first to be found in that area in summer. Encouraging is a report of 67 pairs of Bell's Vireos nesting along the Santa Margarita R., in San Diego Co.; only 10% of the nests were parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds, with extensive trapping conducted (244 cowbirds trapped), compared to 50% of the nests being parasitized a year ago prior to the instigation of a trapping program (LaS). A ♂ Red-eyed Vireo, a casual spring vagrant, was near Weldon, Kern Co., June 16-19 (RHa).

**WOOD WARBLERS** — The nesting of Nashville Warblers in the San Gabriel Mts., was finally documented when a pair was seen feeding two recently fledged juveniles near Big Pines July 17 (KLG). A ♂ N. Parula at Montana de Oro S.P., near Morro Bay June 15 (DS) was a late spring vagrant. A pair of Yellow Warblers nesting near Needles (WCH) was one of very few to be found breeding along the Colorado R., in recent years. An Ovenbird at Butterbread Springs, Kern Co., July 17 (GAK) was the first to be found in s. California in mid-summer. A ♂ Hooded Warbler on San Nicholas I., May 22 (BSS, ph. S.D.N.H.M.) was the first to have been found on the Channel Is. At least two pairs of MacGillivray's Warblers were at Cero Alto, San Luis Obispo Co., during June (TME), and if nesting, would establish the s. limit for breeding along the coast. An Am. Redstart on Pt. Loma in San Diego June 19 (M&DH) was a late spring vagrant.

**BLACKBIRDS THROUGH SPARROWS** — Some 40-60 pairs of

Tricolored Blackbirds nesting in California City, Kern Co. (MOC) were a little to the e. of the species' known breeding range. A Brewer's Blackbird at Lost L., on the Colorado R., June 9 (WCH) was in an area where unrecorded in summer. At least three pairs of Great-tailed Grackles were found nesting in the Prado Basin near Riverside Apr. 22 (KK), this location being within the coastal lowlands. A pair of Hepatic Tanagers along Arrastre Cr., in the San Bernardino Mts., during June (RMcK) was at the very location where California's first nest was found in 1972 (*Am. Birds* 26:907, 1972). The only Rose-breasted Grosbeaks reported were a male at Montana de Oro S.P., near Morro Bay July 17 (KK) and another in Santa Barbara July 5 (CL). A ♂ Blue Grosbeak at the summit of Mt. Palomar (elev. 5000 ft.) June 11-July 21 (RHi) was at an unusually high elevation. A ♂ Indigo Bunting near Weldon July 2 (REW) and another near Blythe July 12 (KC) were both believed to be on nesting territories. Two Pine Siskins at Morro Bay June 7 (GPS) were in an area where nesting could occur. A Red Crossbill, rare and erratic in s. California, was on Figueroa Mt., near Santa Barbara July 6 (DW) and four more were seen on Mt. Pinos July 27 (BGP). A Sage Sparrow, which appeared to be of the pale interior race *canescens*, seen on the coastal side of the San Gabriel Mts., July 17 (KLG) was probably a post-breeding wanderer. An apparent family group of five Brewer's Sparrows in low montane chaparral near Big Pines in the San Gabriel Mts., July 24 (KLG) was well away from known nesting areas, and best considered post-breeding wanderers. A pair of White-crowned Sparrows accompanied by three juveniles on Mt. Palomar July 18 (RHi) would certainly suggest local nesting, but, apart from a small breeding population on Mt. San Geronimo in the San Bernardino Mts., this species is unrecorded as a breeding bird in s. California.

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