

MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

/Ron LeValley and Kenneth V. Rosenberg

This winter could almost be considered two seasons as the wettest December on record was followed by the driest January in history. The only storm of ornithological interest was a strong windstorm in the San Francisco Bay area December 3, that blew many Red-throated Loons and Red Phalaropes away from their normal coastal haunts. Ocean surface temperatures cooled to near normal towards the end of the period but the legacy of El Niño persisted in the form of lowered seabird populations, especially in Monterey Bay (AB).

The grounding of many passerines by the December 3 storm and the arrival of a migrant wave on the Farallon Islands December 16, were further evidence that many birds are still in passage through our Region well into the winter season. The combined effects of the spring-like January and the widespread blooming of eucalyptus and other ornamental trees promoted the successful wintering of a widespread variety of migrants and vagrants. The bird list from Golden State Park, San Francisco could be more befitting of a Mexican town square, and after identifying several rare warblers, tanagers and grosbeaks, observers at Inverness counted 409 individual warblers leaving a single eucalyptus tree at dusk!

ABBREVIATIONS — C.B.R.C. = California Bird Records Committee, C.V. = Central Valley; F.I. = S.E. Farallon Island; P.R.B.O. = Point Reyes Bird Observatory; S.F. = San Francisco; † = description on file; ph. = photo on file. All observations at Palomarin (near Bolinas) and F.I. should be credited to P.R.B.O. References to the *GULL* refer to Golden Gate Audubon Society's publication, whose observations column is written by S.F. Bailey. Italicized names refer to counties.



LOONS THROUGH TUBENOSSES — The above-mentioned Dec. 3 storm deposited Red-throated Loons all over the S.F. Bay area and at a few inland localities. Exceptional records included one found dead at Jameson Canyon, Napa Dec. 5 (MRI); one to two at L. Shastina, Siskiyou from mid-December to mid-January (RE, MR *et al.*); and one reported near Monticello Dam, Solano Jan. 28 long after the storm (*fide* TM). An impressive inland concentration of Arctic Loons was on L. Shastina in late December when up to ten were present (RE, MR *et al.*). Another was at Anderson Marsh, Lake Dec. 16-17 (ES). As usual a few Horned Grebes were detected on inland waters but much less expected were Red-necked Grebes at the following locations: one to two at Anderson Marsh, Lake Dec. 17-20 (ES); one n. of Hwy 37, Vallejo Dec. 31

(JL); two on Lake of the Pines, Nevada Jan. 1 (JML *et al.*); and one at Cader Lane Ponds, Sonoma Feb. 25 (*fide* GULL). Camanche Res., hosted 1500+ W. Grebes Feb. 11 for a notable inland concentration (T & AM).

A **Short-tailed Albatross** photographed 40 mi w. of Pt. Sur Dec. 2 or 4 (R. Pitman, *fide* GULL) was one of the more exciting sightings of the winter. Single Laysan Albatrosses were sighted Dec. 7, 15 mi w. of Crescent City (GL) and near F.I., the latter furnishing the first island record (P.R.B.O.). Northern Fulmar numbers declined steadily through the winter off Monterey after last Fall's notable numbers (AB, DLS). A **Cook's Petrel** found dying in a Santa Cruz backyard Nov. 17 was the first California specimen (DLS, *fide* GULL). An extremely late Buller's Shearwater was well-described from off the Klamath R., Dec. 20 (GL). The fall invasion of Short-tailed Shearwaters continued through the winter providing the highest numbers since at least 1966 in Monterey Bay (AB, SFB, DR *et al.*). The peak was Jan. 8 when 130 were counted and 60 were still present Feb. 26 (AB, DLS). Ashy and Black storm-petrels lingered very late into the winter when five Ashies were found among 600 Blacks off Moss Landing Dec. 29 (SFB, KHai) and ten Blacks were induced to stay by the warm waters until Jan. 8 (AB, DLS).

PELICANS THROUGH IBISES — Brown Pelicans were present in moderate numbers in much of the Region: 200 wintered in Monterey Bay (AB); 100 wintered around F.I.; 25 were off Abbott's Lagoon Dec. 17 (LCB) and 60 were near Hayward Dec. 18 (HLC). These are impressive winter concentrations for recent years and are likely associated with the warm waters, although we may be witnessing the return of pre-pesticide "normal" winter numbers. A nighttime roost of Double-crested Cormorants s. of Elk Grove, Sacramento had a peak of 445 Jan. 1 (B & HK). The cormorants began using the roost in August with numbers building until November and remaining steady through the winter period.

Cattle Egrets staged the best show in recent years as observers throughout the Region reported flocks of 30-100 birds. Following 2 years of slightly declining numbers, this winter has raised the question of whether this species has finished its invasion of the W. and is exhibiting "normal" fluctuations or had merely experienced a temporary slowdown of its expansion. Our normal winter locations for White-faced Ibis produced 100 at Colusa N.W.R., Dec. 29 (BED) and 125 at Merced N.W.R., Feb. 17-18 (RJB, BE). Away from its normal haunts was a juvenile at Elkhorn Slough, Monterey Jan. 1 (BW, DR).

WATERFOWL — A Fulvous Whistling-Duck at Merced N.W.R., Feb. 1+ (RJB) was either a wintering bird or a very early migrant as most spring arrivals are in May. A **Whooper Swan** discovered by K. Zediker one mi n. of Grimes, Colusa Jan. 17 accompanied 1400 Tundra Swans and apparently left with them after Jan. 19 (†TB, BED, †RAE, †RS *et al.*). Although the possibility that this individual was an escapee cannot be eliminated, its occurrence correlates with this year's unprecedented "Asian invasion" (see Brambling and Rustic Bunting below). If accepted as a wild individual by the C.B.R.C., this would constitute the first record for California and w. North America s. of Alaska. As has been the case for the last few winters, a few each Greater White-fronted Geese, Snow Geese, and Ross' Geese were detected at coastal locations. Blue-phase Snow Geese were found in small numbers among large flocks in the C.V., and, as observer awareness increases, the blue-phase of the Ross' Goose was reported from Gray Lodge W.A., with singles Jan. 1 (†JML *et al.*) & 14 (CY) and from Merced N.W.R., with two Feb. 11 (AB, †BW) and one Feb. 28 (RS). A single Emperor Goose was at the n. limit of the Region on Hunter Rock Jan. 13-16 (*fide* PS) and on nearby Prince I., Feb. 25 (*fide* JAR). A max. of 101 Aleutian Canada Geese wintered for the 2nd year near San Pablo Res., Alameda (RWL).

Birds with characteristics of the Eur. Green-winged Teal were found at Sacramento N.W.R., Jan. 21 (†SE) and along Santa Fe Grade, Merced Feb. 11 (JRI). A large and notable concentration of 4364 Gadwall was found at the Mountain View Sewage Plant Jan. 25 (HLC, RWL). Aerial mid-winter surveys of diving ducks in the s. S.F. Bay found 14,860 Canvasbacks and 93,075 scaup of both species; their numbers were up significantly over last years counts (RWL). A Ring-necked Duck gathering of 2000-3000 at Marsh Creek Res., Contra Costa Jan. 26-28 (JRI) was a large number. A possible Tufted Duck x Lesser Scaup hybrid spent Jan. 16-28 on a farm pond near Clements, San Joaquin (†DY, †JML, SS). Descriptions of this bird are being

evaluated by the C.B.R.C. A ♀ Tufted Duck was reported near the Hyde St. Pier, S.F., Feb. 13 (*fide GULL*). Inland Greater Scaup, always unusual, were reported as follows: two Dec. 20, Fall R., *Shasta* (B & CY); one Dec. 27, Folsom L. (*fide JML*); one Dec. 27, Los Banos (BBAR, BL); and a female with the above mentioned Tufted Duck x Lesser Scaup near Clements Jan. 22 (DY). A ♀ **King Eider** was at the Berkeley Pier Dec. 18 (KFC) for the 2nd consecutive year. Single ♂ Harlequin Ducks wintering at Moss Landing and in the Pacific Grove area of Monterey (DR *et al.*) and around F.I., were the only ones reported s. of known haunts along the *Del Norte* coast. Oldsquaws were reported from 12 locations including an imm. male Dec. 15-26 at the unlikely inland location of the Stockton Sewage Ponds (DY). Two ♀ White-winged Scoters were inland at L. Hennessey, *Napa* Feb. 27+ (BDP). Over 700 Com. Goldeneyes near Outer Ravenswood Slough, *San Mateo* Jan. 25 (HLC) were part of the healthy 1435 counted in s. S.F. Bay during the mid-winter census (RWL). A ♀ Barrow's Goldeneye at Elkhorn Slough, *Monterey* Jan. 1+ (DR) was out of place. The Smew was back for the 3rd winter in Foster City. This year it arrived Dec. 19 (WB) and was last seen Jan. 22 (KHai). Notable concentrations of Com. Mergansers were 76 on Lake of the Pines, *Nevada* Jan. 2 (JML *et al.*) and 500 at L. Almanor Jan. 31 (DAA). Inland Red-breasted Mergansers were at Clearlake P., *Lake* Dec. 26 and at the O'Neill Forebay, *Merced* Feb. 26 (ALE+).

RAPTORS THROUGH RAILS — More than the usual number of Ospreys were found wintering in the Region; one at Stone Lagoon, *Humboldt* Jan. 8 (GL, GS, RAE) was the most n. and an extraordinary 13 were at L. San Antonio, *Monterey* and L. Nacimiento, *San Luis Obispo* at the s. border of the Region Jan. 7 (*fide AB*). A Black-shouldered Kite was at the margin of its range at Lower Klamath N.W.R., Feb. 4 (CSt, RE). Bald Eagles were widely reported from nearly every county in the Region but 52 from the above mentioned Lakes San Antonio and Nacimiento deserves special mention. This may be the largest wintering area for Bald Eagles in the contiguous Pacific states outside of the Klamath Basin. AN. Goshawk photographed at Ancil Hoffman, *Sacramento* Jan. 12 (EH *et al.*) constituted one of the few records for the floor of the C.V. Elsewhere another was near Elk Creek, *Glen* Feb. 7 (JL) near the s. limit of their distribution in the coastal mountains. A very rare dark-phase Broad-winged Hawk at the Marconi Cove Marina, *Marin* Dec. 1-9 (*fide GULL*) was unfortunately seen by only a few people. Light-phase individuals were found at L. Merced Dec. 21-Jan. 20 (*fide GULL*) and in Carmel Valley Dec. 30 (JML). A dark-phase ad. **Swainson's Hawk** was described near Thornton, *San Joaquin* Dec. 17 (†DY). Although North American winter records for this species are virtually unknown away from s. Florida and Texas, there is an adult specimen from Merced December 2, 1932 (see Browning, AB 28(5):865-867). Although we agree that winter records should be viewed skeptically, the supporting details of this sighting are intriguing. A Red-tailed Harlan's Hawk was near Manson and Pass Rds., *Sutter* Jan. 14 (B & CY). Ferruginous Hawks were well-reported from typical locations throughout the winter while Rough-legged Hawks were scarce away from the n.e. corner of the Region. An impressive 1500 Am. Kestrels were estimated wintering in the Livermore Valley—Altamont Pass area (ALE *et al.*). Our other regular falcons were reported in typical small numbers throughout the Region.

Several of 11+ Wild Turkeys near Hwy 162 n.w. of Elk Cr., *Glen* Jan. 20 showed much white dorsally suggesting that these introduced birds are interbreeding with domestic stock (JL). Sixteen Black Rails counted at the Petaluma R. Marsh, *Sonoma* Jan. 18 were considered to be only a fraction of the local population (JE). The S.F. Bay Bird Observatory has color-banded 186 Clapper Rails in the s. S.F. Bay in an effort to monitor the movements of this endangered subspecies. Persons observing color-banded Clapper Rails are encouraged to report sightings to the S.F. Bay Bird Observatory or the s. S.F. Bay N.W.R. A small marsh along Lone Tree Rd., Anderson, *Shasta* carefully surveyed for rails Jan. 6 yielded 18-22 Virginia Rails and four to six Soras (BY, BV). An Am. Coot "exactly resembling the Caribbean Coot" was studied at L. Merritt Feb. 11 (JM) casting further doubt on the specific status of that form. The Sandhill Crane at Inverness, *Marin* was still present at the end of the winter period (JE, JW) while another was reported on Pt. Reyes Feb. 27 (*fide GULL*).

SHOREBIRDS — Black-bellied Plovers regularly winter in the s.

C.V., but 100 at the Davis Sewage ponds Dec. 29 (JML) and 35 in the Sutter Bypass, *Sutter* Jan. 27 (BED) were high numbers for the n. C.V. Two lesser Golden-Plovers wintering at the Lodi Sewage ponds were at a location where one wintered last year. Good concentrations of Mountain Plovers were found along Little Panoche Rd., *San Benito* where 471 were counted (BS) and w. of Davis where 289 were present Feb. 5 (JML). Black-necked Stilts and Am. Avocets winter in small numbers between Colusa and Sacramento N.W.R.s (BED) but are considered rare elsewhere in the n. C.V. Eight Am. Avocets w. of Davis Dec. 29 (JML) were therefore noteworthy and two stilts at Gray Lodge W.A., Feb. 6 and 15 more at El Macero, *Yolo* on the same day (EH) were thought to be spring migrants. The first Regional winter record for **Solitary Sandpiper** was discovered Jan. 22 near Inverness, *Marin* (†DS, JE, RS, ph.) and was present at least through Feb. 29. A Willet at Lower Klamath N.W.R., Feb. 4 (CSt) was certainly out of place for the winter season. A Wandering Tattler on the n. jetty of Humboldt Bay Feb. 19 (KVR) was probably wintering where few do; spring migrants usually appear in late March. A partial albino Surf-bird frequented a Pacific Grove shoreline near where an identical bird was seen on December 30, 1981 (AB). Two Sanderlings at the Stockton Sewage ponds Dec. 21 (DY) were passing through but what of 60 reported from the Hollister Sewage ponds, *Monterey* Feb. 4 (K & KVV)? Ten W. Sandpipers 8 mi n. of Sacramento Dec. 4 (T & AM) were very late for migrants and possibly wintering; 20 wintered at Merced N.W.R. (RJB). Western Sandpipers do not winter annually in the interior portion of our Region. Rock Sandpipers were found at Crescent City Harbor Dec. 18 (MR, RE); Bodega Head Dec. 18 (JW); Princeton Harbor, Half Moon Bay Dec. 1-Feb. 16 (BS, PJM, HG); and Pebble Beach near Pescadero Dec. 29+ (BS). Red Phalaropes were blown onshore by the Dec. 3 storm with one at Stockton sewage ponds Dec. 4 (DY) the farthest from the coast. They were present in Monterey Bay until Jan. 8 (AB) and an oiled individual was at Stone Lagoon, *Humboldt* Jan. 15 (RLv).

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS — Up to 12 Pomarine Jaegers were in Monterey Bay Feb. 4-26 (KHai, AB, JM, DLS). Both adults and immatures were represented in this good winter showing. A single Parasitic Jaeger, rare in winter, was on Monterey Bay Jan. 21 (AB, DLS). The only Franklin's Gull of the season was last seen at the Stockton sewage ponds Dec. 10 (JM). Both the Little Gull and the Com. Black-headed Gull were present throughout the winter at the Stockton sewage ponds (DY *et al.*). An imm. Little Gull was present for only one day near Ferndale Jan. 1 (GS, GL). Heermann's Gulls were present around F.I., in higher than normal numbers with a peak of 17 on Feb. 28. Mew Gulls, always unusual inland, were reported as follows: 47 in s. Sacramento Dec. 18 and 40 in w. Sacramento on the same day (T & AM); one at the Sacramento City dump Dec. 22 (T & AM); one near Johnstonville, *Lassen* Dec. 29 (T & AM); one found dead at Merced N.W.R., Jan. 17 (RJB); one in w. Sacramento Feb. 20 (T & AM); one at the Hollister sewage ponds Feb. 27 (RS); and two in Sacramento Feb. 28 (T & AM). Topping all these reports though were an estimated 10,000 at L. Hennessy, *Napa* Feb. 25 (*fide GULL*). Two Thayer's Gulls at Lake of the Pines, *Nevada* Jan. 2 (JML) were in an area from which there are few records. A W. Gull at the Yolo landfill Dec. 18 (†BWb) added another to the extremely few inland records for this species. At least nine Glaucous Gulls reported from the Region were highlighted by two adults; one at Freshwater Lagoon, *Humboldt* Nov. 29+ (GS, RAE *et al.*) and another at the Sacramento City dump Dec. 22 (TM, BWb). Black-legged Kittiwakes were present in very small numbers through most of the winter until 130 were found in Monterey Bay Feb. 26 (AB, RS, DR). Their influx correlated with cooling ocean water temperatures (AB).

An extremely late Elegant Tern was at Millerton, *Marin* Dec. 14 (RS). Also very late were an ad. Com. Tern at Tomales Bay Dec. 2 (GW) and an immature at the Salinas R. mouth Jan. 4 (†PJM). Forster's Terns are uncommon on the coast n. of *Sonoma* so 75 at Bodega Bay Dec. 3 (BDP) were noteworthy as were nine at Arcata Feb. 9 (KVR). Perhaps even more surprising was one at Port of Sacramento, *Yolo* Feb. 20 (T & AM) as they are essentially unknown as winter visitors inland. Rhinoceros Auklets were considered below their pre-El Niño numbers in Monterey Bay this winter (AB) but 2500 were seen leaving the Bay at dawn Feb. 27 (RS).

PIGEONS THROUGH OWLS — The only mid-winter concentra-

tions of Band-tailed Pigeons reported were flocks of 50-120+ in berry-producing chaparral on Mendocino N.F., in mid-January (SE). This species returned to the n. counties by late February. Twenty-one Mourning Doves on the Crescent City CBC, Dec. 18 was a high winter count for *Del Norte* (fide RAE), likewise 50+ at Inverness Feb. 17 (JE) were notable. Both live and dead Com. Barn-Owls were reported in high numbers from C.V. locations.

Intriguing was the news that all radio-collared Spotted Owls on a study area in *El Dorado* (including six ads.) "migrated" to foothill regions (700-2500 ft) in November and returned to their 4000-5000 ft breeding range in early March (SAL). Crescent City's Barred Owl began calling again Feb. 17 (RAE *et al.*), and at Salyer, *Trinity*, two birds were calling simultaneously in late February (C. Sisco.). Yet another individual of this recent Regional resident was heard in Willow Cr., *Humboldt* in late February (fide J. Mattison). Aside from a small roost in *Sutter* the only Long-eared Owls found were singles in S.F. Jan. 4 (LCB), Coyote Hills Reg. Park Jan. 16-28 (SFB) and throughout the period at Pt. Reyes (fide JE). There is no doubt that Short-eared Owls are much reduced from the large numbers noted in this Region only a few years ago. This winter a total of 13 birds was reported from 6 specific locations, and many active observers emphasized that they saw none all season. However the presence of 50+ near the Oregon border at Lower Klamath N.W.R., in late November (RLeV) raised the question of whether populations are actually decreasing or if they are merely shifting their winter distribution away from heavily birded coastal and C.V. areas.

NIGHTJARS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — As usual, five to six Com. Poorwills at Palomarin emerged from hibernation on warm days to feed, especially in late February. The same phenomenon may explain the presence of 2 flocks (30-35 birds each) of Vaux's Swifts n. of Orick, *Humboldt*, seen foraging over redwoods off and on throughout the period (GS, RAE *et al.*). Elsewhere, two to four were seen with swallows at Pescadero Marsh Jan. 12-14 for the 3rd consecutive winter (PJM, T & AM). White-throated Swifts were more numerous than usual on the c. coast, with a notable concentration of 200 at Pescadero Marsh Jan. 12 (PJM). There were 2 Costa's Hummingbird reports without details: a male at San Rafael Dec. 3-31 (fide GULL), and one at Los Banos in late December (fide KFC). A ♀ Rufous Hummingbird banded Feb. 18 was among the earliest ever at Palomarin, although two reached Orick by Feb. 20 (DY). For the 3rd consecutive year an Alamo, *Contra Costa* feeder hosted a ♂ Allen's Hummingbird on the early date of Jan. 13 (JRI) and eight Allen's at L. Merced Jan. 31 was a notable early count (PJM).

Lewis' Woodpeckers were numerous in foothill and valley regions from *Tehama* to e. *Santa Clara*, with the largest count being 81 at Red Bluff Dec. 19 (B & CY). An ad. ♂ "Yellow-bellied" Sapsucker (*S. v. varius*) made a very rare appearance at Napa Jan. 10 (fide GULL); there are fewer than 10 records of this form in our Region. The "Red-naped" form (*S. v. nuchalis*) appeared at Phoenix L., *Marin* Dec. 31 (fide GULL) and Sacramento Feb. 26 (†T & AM), and the one found in November at Golden Gate P., S.F. remained through the winter (LCB *et al.*). A Red-breasted Sapsucker was unusual in winter at 4000 ft in Yosemite Valley Jan. 15 (JE). A ♀ Williamson's Sapsucker with the Red-breasted (JE) and a male at 4500 ft at L. Almanor, *Plumas* Jan. 21-29 (DAA) added to our scanty knowledge of this species' winter distribution. About five pure "Yellow-shafted" and two intergrade flickers were reported.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS — *Monterey's E.* Phoebe returned to Estero Cemetery for its 4th winter Nov. 27-Mar. 12 (DR *et al.*). A great surprise was the discovery of a **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** at Arcata Jan. 13-Mar. 12. (M. Higley, ph., KVR, †RAE, †RLeV). This represented the northernmost occurrence for this species and joined a flurry of fall-winter sightings farther s. A Cassin's Kingbird at Los Banos, *Merced* Dec. 27 (KFC) was recorded there for the 2nd consecutive winter.

Tree Swallows wintered in small numbers throughout the lowlands, n. to *Butte* in the C.V., and *Humboldt* on the coast. As usual, a few Violet-green Swallows also wintered, establishing first such records at Los Banos Dec. 27 (KFC) and Palomarin Jan. 18. More exceptional were three Barn Swallows at Pt. Reyes Jan. 10 (†DC, KCo), and another



Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Arcata, Calif., Jan. 13-Mar. 12, 1984. Photo/K.V. Rosenberg.

at Bolinas Jan. 22 (DS). Four N. Rough-winged Swallows were early at Sacramento Feb. 8 (fide TM), as were 75 in Fresno Feb. 4 (S. Shubert).

JAYS THROUGH CREEPER — Mixed flocks of Clark's Nutcrackers and Steller's Jays moving through conifers in Yosemite N.P., Jan. 14 were an interesting association to observe (JE). Also intriguing was a nutcracker with a bill twice the normal length and decurved, that resourcefully harvested pine seeds from beneath the snow at Chester, *Plumas* Dec. 30 (DAA). The status of a Black-billed Magpie in residential Concord, *Contra Costa* Jan. 15-Mar. 11 (†JRI *et al.*) was certainly questionable, but the possibility that this unworn individual arrived on its own cannot be ruled out. Twelve Com. Ravens at Sacramento N.W.R., Feb. 16, and two at Knights Landing, *Yolo* Feb. 5 (JML *et al.*) were rare C.V. floor occurrences.

After their mini-invasion last fall, Mountain Chickadees lingered in coastal *Del Norte* with up to seven birds accounted for in December, one until Jan. 23 at Requa (all RAE *et al.*), and one until Feb. 17 at Klamath (JML *et al.*). On several occasions, 3 species of chickadees were observed in the same bush! Other lowland Mountains of note were 30 at Honey L., *Lassen* Jan. 29 (B & CY), three at Summit City, *Shasta* Feb. 26 (BV), and an extreme individual reaching Stockton Dec. 17 for a first *San Joaquin* record (DY).

Red-breasted Nuthatches were widely reported from *Sonoma*, *Monterey*, *Santa Clara*, and *San Joaquin*, and were considered "ubiquitous" at the same time at 4000-7000 ft in Yosemite N.P. (JE). A White-breasted Nuthatch at Smith R., Dec. 18 (GL) furnished a first winter *Del Norte* record. Another visited a Hayward yard Jan. 24 (HLC) and a stray Pygmy Nuthatch appeared in urban *Santa Clara* Dec. 18 (fide WB). A few Brown Creepers wandered to lowland sites in *Shasta*, *Sutter* N.W.R., and Sacramento, while remaining common at 4000-7000 ft in Yosemite N.P.

WRENS THROUGH THRUSHES — A Rock Wren wintered at Pacific Grove Jan. 12+ (AB, DR *et al.*). House Wrens wintered in small numbers in the C.V. n. to *Colusa* and on the coast of S.F. An individual on F.I., all season, had been banded there Sept. 29. Of local interest were Winter Wrens on the C.V. floor at Sacramento Dec. 18 (3) & Feb. 28 (T & AM), and Sutter Bypass Jan. 27 (BED), as well as singles above their usual wintering elevation at Yosemite Valley Jan. 15 (JR) and Grover Hot Springs S.P., *Alpine* Jan. 8 (EH).

As with other montane species, Golden-crowned Kinglets spread into lowland areas in moderate numbers while remaining common at Yosemite N.P., and on the n.w. coast. Most lowland reports were from *Yolo* to *Merced* and w. to *San Mateo*. About nine Blue-gray Gnatcatchers wintered on the coast n. to *Marin* and inland at L. Solano.

Western Bluebirds did not wander to the lowlands in any numbers, and Mountain Bluebird reports from their usual wintering stations were mostly of single males or very small flocks. Five Mountains on Skyline Blvd., established a first *San Mateo* record Feb. 3 (BS). Noteworthy Townsend's Solitaires included three at F.I., Jan. 27, two at Moss Landing Jan. 14-Feb. 19 (AB, DR *et al.*) and Pacific Grove Jan. 27 (AB), and one near Fresno Jan. 24 (RG). Seven Hermit Thrushes were

part of a late migrant wave on F.I., Dec. 16.

Highlighting the menagerie of vagrant and lingering passerines in Golden Gate P., S.F., Dec. 21 was the Region's second Wood Thrush (†JM, pH., AGH, †HG, †KHai *et al.*). Having chosen a hedgerow of ornamental shrubs as its winter home, this bird remained until Feb. 4, undaunted by the frequent gaze of birders on their hands and knees. One wintered at Phoenix, Arizona in 1972 but there are no previous winter records for California. This was a flight year for berry-loving Am. Robins and Varied Thrushes. The majority of these avoided the n. coast, where migrant flocks were noted last fall, and settled from *Marin* to *San Mateo*, e. to *Sacramento* and *Merced*. Most notable among the many reports were 50 robins arriving with other migrants on F.I., Dec. 16, a single Varied Thrush near Fresno Feb. 25 (RG) and both species in Yosemite N.P., Jan. 12-16 (JE). Both species also frequented chaparral habitat in Mendocino N.F., until late January when numbers declined sharply (SE).

MIMIDS THROUGH VIREOS — A Sage Thrasher wintered at Walnut Creek, *Contra Costa* Dec. 1-Jan. 31 (†JRi, JM *et al.*). A California Thrasher at Yosemite Valley Jan. 15 was not surprisingly a local first (JE).

The only reports of Bohemian Waxwings were in *Lassen*: ten recognized by call at Honey L., Dec. 29 (EH) and a single bird with 200 Cedars Jan. 27 at Susanville (BY, BV). Cedar Waxwings joined the robins and thrushes in invading the c. coast and valleys in large numbers. A group of seven joined the other arrivals on F.I., Dec. 16. Phainopeplas were widely reported from foothills around the C.V., but of special interest were singles on the valley floor at Sacramento Feb. 3 (S. Hayes) and 8 mi n. of there Dec. 4-18 (T & AM).

Besides 8 Great Basin reports (low) and about 7 on the n. coast, a N. Shrike reached Chico, *Butte* Jan. 1 (T & AM) and another was in burned chaparral 5 mi e. of Alder Springs, *Glenn* Feb. 16-22 (†SE). The only Loggerhead Shrike reported from the Great Basin was at Honey L., Jan. 27 (BY, BV). A Solitary Vireo lingered at Pt. Reyes Dec. 17 (*fide GULL*) and a singing Hutton's Vireo was surprising at Sacramento Feb. 26 (T & AM).

WOOD WARBLERS — Seventeen species of warblers occurred in the period, although many individuals were evidently still migrating in December. Nonetheless, several species wintered in larger than usual numbers, and a single tree in an Arcata yard hosted 6 species in January and February. Of eight Tennessees, one was a late arrival at F.I., with other migrants Dec. 16, and only two were seen in January. Of 19 Nashville Warblers on or near the coast, about eight remained through the winter n. to Arcata. Ten Yellow Warblers, including three together in Golden Gate P., S.F., Dec. 21-Jan. 31 (†PJM) and three different birds near Ferndale, *Humboldt* Dec. 10-Jan. 28 (JST *et al.*) were unprecedented winter numbers. A ♀ Black-throated Blue Warbler at Carmel, *Monterey* Dec. 30-Feb. 4 (†JML, DR, LCB) furnished only the 2nd Regional winter occurrence. Similarly, a Hermit Warbler on the Centerville CBC, Jan. 1 established a first *Humboldt* (and n. coast?) winter occurrence; this species is regular in winter only in a narrow coastal strip from Pt. Reyes to Monterey. Among the late migrants associated with storms Dec. 3 was a Prairie Warbler at Bolinas (RS). A total of 55 Palm Warbler reports reflected good coverage of the outer coast; one was inland at Elkhorn Ferry, *Yolo* Dec. 28-Jan. 21 (†T & AM).

Other rare-but-regular warblers included 14 Black-and-whites distributed along the entire coast, six Wilson's n. to Pt. Reyes, and two Am. Redstarts. Much more unusual, if documented, was the Worm-eating Warbler seen in S.F., Jan. 17 (*fide GULL*); there are 3 previous Regional winter records, but none after December. Three different N. Waterthrushes were also unprecedented for winter: one at Monterey Dec. 1-Feb. 4 (LCB, DR), one at Pescadero Marsh, *San Mateo* Jan. 1-12 (PJM), and one discovered late at Crescent City Mar. 6 (GL, RAE) for a 2nd *Del Norte* record. Lastly, a Com. Yellowthroat was at Arcata Jan. 13 for a rare n. coast winter occurrence (M. Higley).

TANAGERS THROUGH LONGSPURS — A ♂ Summer Tanager wintered at Golden Gate P., S.F., Dec. 3 through January (*fide GULL*) and was joined by a female Dec. 21 (LCB). At least 13 W. Tanagers were located in December near the coast n. to Sebastopol, *Sonoma*, and

inland at Sacramento. There was only one later report: Feb. 4 at Monterey (LCB). Similarly, of about four Black-headed and seven Rose-breasted grosbeaks on the c. coast in December, only three Rose-breasted lingered to mid-January.

A Brown Towhee at Los Banos, *Merced* Dec. 27 had dispersed from the foothills to an area with no previous records (KFC). Rufous-crowned Sparrows were in high numbers in usual haunts and one was along Skyline Blvd., n. *San Mateo* Dec. 21 (RS) where very rare. American Tree Sparrows were well reported from Great Basin locations with 17 being a high count at Honey L., Jan. 27-29 (T & CY, BV). Elsewhere, singles established a first winter record for F.I., Jan. 8, a 2nd *San Mateo* record at Pescadero Marsh Jan. 12 (PJM), one was near Loleta, *Humboldt* Jan. 1 (T. McKay), and two reached Watsonville, *Santa Cruz* Jan. 2 (PJM). Chipping Sparrows near Orick, *Humboldt* Dec. 1 (GS) and Santa Rosa Dec. 18 (LCB) were late, and a Clay-colored Sparrow near Ferndale, *Humboldt* Jan. 1 provided one of very few Regional winter records (LD, RLeV).

A high count of Vesper Sparrows was 40 on Little Panoche Rd., *San Benito* Feb. 12 (JRi *et al.*) and highest ever counts of Sage Sparrows were obtained on several CBCs. One Sage Sparrow strayed to Merced N.W.R., Feb. 1-3 (RJB). A lone Lark Bunting wintering on W. Butte Rd., *Sutter* Dec. 21-Feb. 8 was variously reported as a male and a female (m.ob.). Sharp-tailed Sparrows appeared at their favorite sites with two at Bolinas, *Marin* Dec. 31+ (one with a band) and one at Palo Alto Baylands, *Santa Clara* Jan. 16-18 (all, *fide GULL*).

Fox Sparrows were considered more common and vocal than usual in many areas; one bright rusty bird (*iliaca*) was at Watsonville, *Santa Cruz* Jan. 2 (†PJM). At least 30 Swamp Sparrows were on the c. coast in December, with small numbers seen all winter at traditional locales. Farther n., about five wintered in coastal *Humboldt* and one was near Smith R., *Del Norte* Dec. 18-19 (RAE *et al.*). Roughly 35-40 White-throated Sparrows were reported, including four in the Sacramento area and one at Snelling, *Merced* (RJB). Two or three identical leucistic White-crowned Sparrows in a flock of 100 at Pt. Reyes Dec. 17 were presumably from the same brood. Near Arcata, a hybrid White-crowned x Golden-crowned Sparrow was studied and photographed Feb. 6-8 (JSt). This winter's Harris' Sparrows were at F.I., Dec. 4, Santa Rosa Dec. 7 (LCB), Pebble Beach, *Monterey* Nov. 24-mid-December (*fide DR*), Smith R., *Del Norte* Dec. 18 (RAE), Honey L., *Lassen* Dec. 30 (EH), S.F. Zoo in mid-January (*fide GULL*) and Carmel Valley Jan. 21-Feb. 12 (JML, DR *et al.*).

A Gray-headed Junco furnished a first *San Joaquin* and only a second C.V. record at Stockton Dec. 13 (†DY). Southerly Lapland Longspurs included several wintering at Hayward, *Alameda* (JRi *et al.*) and one at Redwood Shores, *San Mateo* Dec. 2 (BS).

S.A.

This winter's "Asian invasion" brought 2 new passerine species to California. An uncooperative **Rustic Bunting** at Stone Lagoon, *Humboldt* Jan. 7-8 (†GS, †RAI, †GL *et al.*) was seen by only 8 people but photographed for the first definite record for the lower 48 states. Another individual apparently wintered on Vancouver I. (see Northern Pacific Coast Region, this issue) but previous North American records outside of Alaska (November 1965, San Bernardino County, California and October 1971, Queen Charlotte I., British Columbia) have been considered questionable (Roberson: 1980, "Rare Birds of the West Coast"; Garrett & Dunn: 1981, "Birds of Southern California"; A.O.U.: 1983, "Check-list of North American Birds"). A tip to the local press mushroomed into a full scale media event as newspapers across the country mentioned the sighting.

In contrast to the Rustic Bunting, a **Brambling** at Crescent City Feb. 5-Mar. 28 (†JAR, †RAE *et al.*) was seen by hundreds of people and came as a great relief to those with some sense of California pride. Several nearby states had previous records and this winter provided sightings throughout the West (see this issue).

ICTERIDS THROUGH FINCHES — A total of 30,000 Tricolored Blackbirds was estimated from *Glenn*, *Colusa*, *Sutter*, and *Butte* (BED). Away from their normal wintering area in the C.V., three different

Yellow-headed Blackbirds were at S.F. area lakes in January (*fide GULL*). A ♀ Rusty Blackbird discovered Nov. 30 near Orick, *Humboldt* remained throughout the period (GS *et al.*) establishing the first winter record for the n. coast.

Very rare in winter were three Hooded Orioles in *Santa Clara*: different males at San Jose Dec. 18 & Jan. 5, and a female at Palo Alto Dec. 29 (all, *fide* WB). Three N. (Baltimore) and one N. (Bullock's) orioles shared a eucalyptus tree with three W. Tanagers at Pacific Grove Dec. 29-30 (LCB, BDP). Elsewhere, two "Bullock's" were in S.F. (LCB, RAE *et al.*), two others were at Orange Memorial P., *San Mateo* (RS), and one wintered at Arcata (*fide* JSt).

Red Crossbills did nothing drastic this winter; the few reports came from Yosemite N.P., Golden Gate P., S.F., and several other coastal locations. Pine Siskins were numerous in the C.V., but scarce on the coast at Palomarin. A concentration of 400 Lesser Goldfinches with 100+ siskins along W. Butte Rd., *Sutter* Jan. 7 illustrated their potential abundance in the C.V. (KHai). Forty-five Evening Grosbeaks along Gazos Creek Rd., Dec. 29 was a large group for *San Mateo* (BS). Elsewhere, this species was scarce or absent in most areas, perhaps because 1000+ were vacationing at South L. Tahoe, *El Dorado* in February and early March (CSw, RS).

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