

## MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

/John Sterling and Kurt F. Campbell

Summer's swelter dominated the Region through the first half of the fall, but by November we were receiving almost continual rains and temperatures significantly below normal (but no hard frosts in the lowlands). Better-than-average upwelling kept sea surface temperatures 1-3°C below normal for September, with October near normal. A single strong migrant wave was evident on the Farallones, but *what* a wave! Some 1700 landbirds arrived there October 2, both western species and many vagrants. For no other fall in the Region's history would the cliché, "quality not quantity" have been so accurate. Many regular 'vagrants' were down in numbers, yet the great variety of truly first-rate birds (many seen by few birders) made for a stunning overview of the rarer landbirds.

All sightings from Palomarin and S.E. Farallon Island should be credited to Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory. A dagger (†) indicates that documentation is on file with the Regional Editors.

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; Gray Lodge = Gray Lodge State Wildlife Area. References to the *Gull* refer to Golden Gate Audubon Society's publication, whose observations column is written by Stephen F. Bailey. Italicized names refer to counties.



**LOONS THROUGH TUBENOSSES** — The inland Arctic Loon found summering at Iron Gate Res., *Siskiyou* (MR) remained through the end of the fall. Last fall a bloom of pelagic red crabs (*Pleuroncodes plan-*

*ipes*) was detected for the first time off F.I., and this fall the phenomenon appeared again in larger magnitude but attracted only 50+ Arctic Loons in contrast to last year's 4000 (PH). An unusually pelagic Pied-billed Grebe was found 4 mi offshore in Monterey Bay Sept. 7 (JML, EH). As usual only a few Horned Grebes were reported inland with 12 on Camanche Res., Oct. 7 (DY) a notable concentration. Light-phase W. Grebes are scarce along the coast; one at Elkhorn Slough, Sept. 12 (DR) and another along the Mad R., Nov. 4 & 18 (KVR, JSt) were the only ones reported. Observers should look for this form on the coast as its status is not completely understood. Anchovies attracted large flocks of Brown Pelicans with 1000-3000 off Pescadero Aug. 19 (WB) and F.I. 's all time high of 5220 Sept. 4 (PH, P.R.B.O.).

Northern Fulmars arrived early with five on Monterey Bay (over-summering birds?) Aug. 3 (JD) with numbers increasing to 75+ Oct. 20 (JM *et al.*) and 400 Nov. 11 (JML *et al.*). Low numbers of Pink-footed Shearwaters were recorded, but in Monterey Bay 350 Sept. 12 (JD *et al.*) and 150 Sept. 19 (RS *et al.*) were normal counts. As usual, a few rare Flesh-footed Shearwaters were found with one on Monterey Bay Sept. 1, 3, & 12, and two Oct. 13 & 20 (AB, BDP, JD, SFB *et al.*). Another off Ft. Bragg Oct. 7 (JSt) may represent a first *Mendocino* record. Very few Buller's Shearwaters were found as they were absent near F.I. until a few hundred appeared during the last week of October (PH). Elsewhere numbers varied from an early one off Crescent City Aug. 18 (JSt) to a high of 35 on Monterey Bay Nov. 11—the last recorded date (JML, DLS, AB). Sooty Shearwaters were nearly absent on some pelagic trips, but huge numbers were associated with an anchovy run: 103,000 off Pescadero Sept. 2 (WB), 8800 in 5 min. at F.I., Aug. 28 (PH, P.R.B.O.) and 75,000 in 2 hours off Pt. Reyes Sept. 2 (LCB, BDP). Arriving at Monterey Bay in mid-September with two Sept. 19 (RS), Short-tailed Shearwaters were seen until Oct. 20 with five to eight as the high count (JM).

This fall's most spectacular pelagic event was the unprecedented invasion of Black-vented Shearwaters. About 100 were on Monterey Bay Aug. 22 (DLS) and increased to 4000 Oct. 20 (JM). Large numbers were commonly spotted from shore from Monterey to Pt. Reyes with high counts of 1000 in 5 min. off Pescadero Oct. 14 (WB), 1100 from Pt. Reyes Sept. 29 (LCB) and 2000 there Oct. 3 (JE). Northward, 10 were off Ft. Bragg Oct. 7 (JSt), and one off *Del Norte* Sept. 27 (GSL) provided a first county record.

Wilson's Storm-Petrels were again found on Monterey Bay with singles Aug. 26-Oct. 7 (DR *et al.*), and two Sept. 16 (JM, JML *et al.*). In contrast to last fall's invasion, only one Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel was encountered—Sept. 16 at Cordell Banks (BDP). The large rafts of Ashy and Black storm-petrels on Monterey Bay were found Aug. 26-Nov. 11 and peak numbers were on Oct. 7 with 8000 and 6000, respectively (JML, DLS, AB). Although fewer were present than in last year's unprecedented invasion, Least Storm-Petrels were found on Monterey Bay in good numbers Aug. 18-Oct. 14 with peaks of 200+ Sept. 16 & 19 (JM, RS).

**BITTERNS THROUGH IBISES** — Five Least Bitterns were reported from the C.V. where they are present in small numbers: three adults and one immature at S. Wilbur Flood Area, *Kings* Sept. 1 (GG) and one at Sacramento N.W.R., Oct. 14 (NG). Single Great Egrets at L. Almanor Aug. 25 and Oct. 26 were locally rare (DAA), and Snowy Egrets were at the n. end of their coastal range with four Aug. 13-18 at Smith R., and five at L. Talawa Oct. 6 (RAE *et al.*). They have been increasing tremendously in *Humboldt* in the last decade and an increase in *Del Norte* seems likely. Cattle Egrets staged an invasion to the coast in mid-November that increased into the winter. Flocks of 20-60 were encoun-



tered at 7 locations, including 29 on F.I. in late November. Smaller groups were scattered all along the coast, and high counts were of 220 at Prunedale (RS) and 96 in Arcata (JSt). White-faced Ibis numbers fluctuated at Colusa N.W.R. through the period with a peak of 125 Dec. 1 and as few as one to three on several dates (GM). Other peak numbers from C.V. locations included 90 at Delevan N.W.R., Oct. 25 (*fide* GM), 30 at S. Wilbur Sept. 19 (GG), and 220 in and near Merced N.W.R., Nov. 24 (KFC). At Honey L., 14 were present Aug. 18 (TM). Single coastal vagrants were at Salinas Sewage Ponds Sept. 12-17 (H. Hall, DR *et al.*), Elkhorn Slough Sept. 8 (DSe), and Davis Sewage Ponds Aug. 18-30 (*fide* TM); one at Durham Ferry P., Aug. 17 provided the first *San Joaquin* record in many years (DY).

**WATERFOWL** — Uncommonly seen on the coast, single Snow Geese were found at Laguna Beach Oct. 19 (DG), and one at Crespi Pond Monterey Nov. 2+ joined one to two Ross' Geese found Oct. 25+ (BW, DR *et al.*) Other coastal Ross' Geese were at Castle Rock with one Nov. 3-4 and two Nov. 5-12 (*fide* RAE), two immatures at San Lorenzo R., Santa Cruz Nov. 30+ (BLaB *et al.*) and four in Napa Nov. 20 (MRi). Different individual Brant were rare inland at Tulalake N.W.R., Nov. 13 & 18 (MR). Eleven Eur. Wigeons were reported from the S.F. Bay Area, with an early date of Sept. 22 at Bolinas Lagoon (RS). Only two were reported from traditional C.V. locations where the bulk of sightings normally center. A good concentration of inland Greater Scaup was a migrant flock of 15 at the Stockton Sewage Ponds Oct. 5 (DY). Several Harlequin Ducks were reported with singles at Moss Landing Oct. 20 and Nov. 10 (JM *et al.*) and Natural Bridges, Santa Cruz Nov. 23 (DG), and two at Big Sur Sept. 30-Oct. 6 (BT, DR *et al.*). Peak numbers at Point St. George were 10, Sept. 4 and nine Oct. 21 (RAE). Six Oldsquaws found on the coast was normal but one at Abbott's Lagoon Sept. 9 (RS) probably summered locally. Black Scoters arrived at Pt. Reyes Sept. 22 (BDP, LCB), and a female shot at Tulalake N.W.R., Oct. 31 (*fide* MR) was most unusual. Many of our rare waterfowl records come from hunters' bags, and since many hunters' records are probably never reported, we may only have a sketchy knowledge of rare waterfowl patterns, especially from inland concentrations. Other rare inland scoters included three Surfs at Capco L., Siskiyou (CY, RE) and one White-winged shot at L. Almanor for what may be the first *Plumas* record. Salinas Sewage Ponds, 7 mi inland, had five Surf and seven White-winged scoters Nov. 7 (DR), and a pelagic trip spent several hours 1-2 mi off Monterey and reported no scoters Sept. 9 (JML). Summering populations may be very local in that area. Only 2 reports of Barrow's Goldeneye was low with a pair at Berkeley Nov. 13 (DSi) and one inland at Redding Nov. 23 (BV). A locally rare Hooded Merganser was at the Stockton Sewage Ponds Oct. 12 (DY).

**RAPTORS THROUGH CRANES** — Migrating Ospreys were at locations where they are uncommon: Elkhorn Slough Sept. 8-12 (JD), Carmel R. mouth Sept. 10 (BW), Salinas Sewage Ponds Sept. 18+ (BT), and Hayward shoreline Sept. 24 (BR). A Black-shouldered Kite on Point St. George Sept. 13 was the "first seen there in months" (RAE) and signaled a big influx to the coast (two on F.I.). Groups of 30 and 40 were noted, and numbers were reported as high from the S.F. Peninsula to Arcata (m.ob.). Immature Bald Eagles at Santa Clara Oct. 1 (BBa) and Palo Alto Nov. 3 (D. Stovel), and an adult at Del Valle Dam, Alameda (AE) were at interesting locations; six others on the n. coast were expected. A N. Goshawk at Pt. Diablo was a rare coastal migrant Oct. 15 (*fide* CF). Reaching the n. limit of their range, Red-shouldered Hawks were found in Siskiyou Sept. 11, 15 & 17 (RE, MR). Point Diablo had fewer Broad-winged Hawks than normal as only nine were seen (*fide* CF), including three Sept. 28 (LCB, KFC). One in Monterey Nov. 5 (DR) furnished the only other report. Two large groups of Swainson's Hawks were encouraging with 12 at San Luis N.W.R., Aug. 5 (JD) and 27 migrating at Woodland (ML). Very few immatures were seen in the San Joaquin Valley despite a good breeding population (DY). Migrants at Pt. Diablo Sept. 21 (*fide* CF) and at Oakland Oct. 27 (late—JL) were locally rare. A "Harlan's" Hawk was reported from McArthur, Shasta Oct. 16+ (BY, BV). Typical numbers of Ferruginous Hawks were inland, but a high of 14 on the coast included two in Humboldt where rare, Table Bluff Sept. 30 (KVR) and Blue L., Nov. 6+ (J. Brack). This fall was the best for coastal Rough-legged Hawks in years as 30 were reported from Marin and Sonoma, and numbers were

high in Humboldt and Del Norte. Merlins also made a good showing with 53 sightings beginning with an early one Sept. 12 at Pt. Reyes (RS). An exceptional record of a Peregrine Falcon of the Siberian race *harterti* was reported on F.I., Sept. 26 without details (PH, P.R.B.O.).

Seven Black Rails were seen at the s. end of Tomales Bay Nov. 21-25 (JE). An easier-to-see relative, a Sandhill Crane, was spotted flying over the Arcata Bottoms Nov. 15 (PP) for one of few n. coast sightings, of which nearly all have been in the last 4 years. Away from the coast on Patterson Meadows, Warner Mts., a family group was observed Aug. 25, which may establish the first breeding record for that range (JW).

**SHOREBIRDS** — Lesser Golden-Plovers were scattered along the coast Aug. 18-Nov. 17 with an equal number of *dominica* and *fulva* identified. Unlike other years reports from the C.V. were mostly of *fulva*: three at Lodi Sewage Ponds Sept. 2-11 (K. Salzman, DY) and one at Hacienda, Kings Sept. 18 (RG, GG). Two others were not identified to race: Woodland Sugar Ponds Sept. 30 (TM), and Davis Sewage Ponds Sept. 23-Oct. 26 (TM *et al.*). Mountain Plovers are very local in the C.V., and one near the Sacramento Airport Nov. 24 was unusual in the county (D. Shaw, *fide* TM). Unlike most falls, coastal vagrants were not reported.

Brooks I. in S.F. Bay, Contra Costa was the site for "rocky shorebirds" rarely encountered in that county. Two adult and one imm. Black Oystercatchers, a Wandering Tattler, and 17 Surfbirds were there Sept. 16 (BR). Four Black-necked Stilts was a good number for Bodega Bay Sept. 1 (KFC) as they are unusual n. of S.F. Bay on the coast. These were possibly from the breeding colony at Cader Lane, Petaluma, but it remains unclear where stilts n. of Sonoma originate. Fewer Lesser Yellowlegs were reported than normal, and lack of habitat was thought to be responsible for low numbers in Del Norte, San Joaquin Valley, and Palo Alto (RAE, DY, WB). Only 2 locations had good concentrations—Tulare with 50+ (GG) and Humboldt Bay with 40 (JSt). Both of these areas had more last fall. Seven coastal Solitary Sandpipers was a good showing Aug. 17-Oct. 19, with one at outer Pt. Reyes Sept. 26-29 (LCB, RS *et al.*) being the first for that heavily-birded locality. Two others were found inland, Aug. 27 at Mono L. (DS) and at Lundy Pass at an elevation of 10,230 ft, Aug. 26 (DS)—the same individual? At Honey L., Marbled Godwits were in good numbers with 21 on Aug. 19, and perhaps the first Lassen Ruddy Turnstone was an adult there Aug. 18 (T & AM). Four other inland sightings were: Petaluma Aug. 25-Sept. 3 (BDP, KFC), Sears Pt., Aug. 26 (JLo), Hacienda Sept. 18 (RG, GG) and Woodland Sept. 1 (*fide* TM). Also rare but regular inland, Sanderlings were noted with one at Lodi Sewage Ponds (DY) for *San Joaquin's* first September record, two at Hacienda Sept. 18 (RG, GG) and four more at Jackson Farms, Kings (GG).

A minimum of 14 Semipalmated Sandpipers Aug. 4-Sept. 29 was a poor showing although seven in Monterey was "better than most years" (DR). The last record was late and of the only adult reported, at Salinas R. mouth (RS, P.R.B.O.). Average numbers of Baird's Sandpipers migrated through Aug. 5-Sept. 23; one at the Mad R. mouth Oct. 11 was late (JSt). Large flocks of Pectoral Sandpipers were reported, with 100 at the Salinas Sewage Ponds Sept. 15 (JML, DR *et al.*), 89 on the Hayward shoreline Sept. 22 (BR), 50 on L. Talawa Sept. 22 (RAE, SS), 40 at Wilbur, Kings Sept. 18 (RG), and 30 at the Tulare Sewage Ponds Sept. 13 (GG). It was another good fall for Sharp-tailed Sandpipers as seven were seen, with two at Mountain View Forebay for the 2nd Santa Clara record (P. Browning) and singles at Elkhorn Slough Sept. 3-16 (WR, DR), Salinas Sewage Ponds Sept. 2 (BW), F.I., Sept. 9 (PH, ph. P.R.B.O.), Watsonville Sewage Ponds for a first Monterey record Oct. 6-21 (DG, JM), and at S. Humboldt Bay Oct. 18 (KI, KVR, RAE). A Dunlin at Abbott's Lagoon Aug. 18 apparently summered (KFC). Siskiyou's 2nd Stilt Sandpiper at L. Shastina Oct. 5 (MR), one at Smith R., Sept. 17 (RAE, GSL) and one at Zmudowski State Beach Sept. 1 (WR) provided the only reports. Cader Lane in Petaluma is becoming a traditional site for Buff-breasted Sandpipers with one immature for the 3rd fall in a row Aug. 25 (BDP). Three found at the Salinas Sewage Ponds Sept. 15-25 (ML *et al.*) established a new locality for this species that seems to favor specific sites in migration. Ruffs were found in typical locations, with a juvenile at the Salinas Sewage Ponds Sept. 15-22 (JML *et al.*), a rare adult at S. Humboldt Bay Oct. 16-24 (KI *et al.*), a juvenile at Watsonville Sewage Ponds Oct. 19-26 and another inland at Merced N.W.R., Nov. 29+ (RBa *et al.*) where they are being found in increasing regularity. A Wilson's Phalarope at the Stockton Sewage Ponds



Nov. 15 was late (DY). Red-necked Phalaropes were well studied at Bodega Harbor Aug. 4-Sept. 18, and 91 of 92 identified to age by plumage were found to be juveniles. Speculation is that adults migrate offshore (KFC). No Red Phalaropes were reported on the coast.

**JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS** — Few Parasitic Jaegers were reported with five on Monterey Bay Oct. 7 (JML, EH) being the high count. This was the lowest in years. However, a maximum of 11 Long-tailed Jaegers on 7 trips on Monterey Bay was a good showing with three Sept. 12 (JD) and Oct. 7 (JML, EH). Five S. Polar Skuas there Sept. 23 (BBa) were remarkable, and three were also seen off Trinidad Sept. 27 (GSL) and off Ft. Bragg Oct. 7 (JSt).

On the coast, seven Franklin's Gulls were found Aug. 17-Oct. 23, which was typical. One was inland at L. Shastina Oct. 24 (CY, RE), and another at the Stockton Sewage Ponds Oct. 17+ was joined by the Little and Com. Black-headed gulls Oct. 26 & 20 respectively (DY). This was the 7th year that the latter 2 species were found there (same individuals?). Off Ano Nuevo, 5000-10,000 Heermann's Gulls converging on anchovies Sept. 19 (WB) was a spectacular concentration, with few precedents for the Region. A juv. Mew Gull at Yreka Oct. 12-19 (CY, RE) was truly inland, where there are few records. Elsewhere, single adults were along the Sacramento R. at Nimbus Fish Hatchery Nov. 3 and Walnut Grove Nov. 12 (TM). Also inland where rare were Thayer's Gulls at Yreka Oct. 19 (CY, RE, MR), and three at Nimbus Fish Hatchery Nov. 3 (T & AM). An exceptionally inland W. Gull was described from Hacienda, Kings Aug. 7 (GG). Inland birds are very rare. On F.I., W. Gulls were present in incredible numbers Nov. 10-23 during the pelagic red crab bloom (PH, P.R.B.O.). A Glaucous-winged Gull, unusual inland but annually found there, was at Redding Oct. 29 (JSt). The usual small numbers of Glaucous Gulls were found with singles at Salinas R. mouth Oct. 24 & 26 (DG) and Trinidad Nov. 15 (SH *et al.*). A juv. Sabine's Gull along the Hayward shoreline Sept. 20 (BR) was unusual, and 143 off Monterey Sept. 28 (AB *et al.*) was the high count.

Although this fall's influx of Elegant Terns was smaller than last year's unprecedented invasion, large flocks were seen, with up to 3000 at Bolinas Lagoon, 1250 at Bodega Bay (NTC), and a record high of 120 for F.I. (PH, P.R.B.O.). Three reached Crescent City for the 3rd fall in a row (RAE). A Com. Tern at L. Shastina Oct. 5-9 (CY, RE, MR) provided the "first *Siskiyou* record away from the Klamath Basin." Good numbers of Forster's Terns were at Crescent City where they are uncommon at best. Five there July 28-Sept. 20 were surpassed by three on the very late date of Nov. 13 (GSL). Rarely seen in migration, a Least Tern was at Moss Landing Aug. 2 (BW). Two Black Terns were at the Davis Sewage Ponds Aug. 26-29 (TM). They are becoming scarcer in the C.V. and have "become very rare locally" (TM). Two Black Skimmers were found at Elkhorn Slough where they have been seen in past years, Sept. 8-15 (DR, GMcC) with one remaining until Oct. 13 (BLaB).

At Ano Nuevo, Marbled Murrelets were found in healthy numbers with 61 Aug. 25 (JML). Both Xantus' and Craveri's murrelets were found again on Monterey Bay but in fairly low numbers with 15-20 and two being the respective maximum counts. Elsewhere Xantus' Murrelets were found in *Del Norte* for the 2nd and 3rd times with two Aug. 18 (RAE *et al.*) and two Sept. 27 (GSL). Two more off n. *Humboldt* Sept. 27 (GSL) provided one of few county records. A well-described Craveri's Murrelet off Bodega Head Sept. 10 (NTC) was very far n. Tufted Puffins were unsuccessful breeders on F.I., as last year, and one remained very late until Oct. 2 (PH, P.R.B.O.).

**DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS** — Four coastal White-winged Doves Aug. 23-Oct. 9 was down from last year's high, but most of the Regional records have occurred in the last 4 years. The few notes on Mourning Doves were of low numbers (DY, P.R.B.O., KFC). A Flammulated Owl on Valentine Ridge, *Tehama* Nov. 18 (†CB *et al.*) provided our latest Regional record by 18 days. A Burrowing Owl at the Crescent City harbor Sept. 14 (RAE) was early for the immediate coast. Two ad. Long-eared Owls along with two juveniles were in Little Grizzly Valley, *Plumas* Aug. 14-16 (JW). A modest irruption of Short-eared Owls brought us records of 43 ±, mostly coastal, with one Sept. 13 at Coyote Hills, *Alameda* (BR) the earliest. Two juv. N. Saw-whet Owls near Golden Trout Camp, *Inyo* Aug. 13-14 (†MLo *et al.*) were from an area with virtually no records. The 10,100 ft elevation was

remarkable, although the circumstances otherwise fit most Sierran nest records: open pine forest on the e. slope. A Lesser Nighthawk at the Watsonville sewage ponds Aug. 25 (*fide Gull*, no details) would be one of very few coastal fall records; a Com. Nighthawk heard well over Pt. Diablo Aug. 28 (JR) was almost as unusual. Most of our 35+ November to February Com. Poorwill records are from *Marin*, making one Nov. 28 at Palomarin less surprising. Two Chimney Swifts were carefully observed and described 3 mi s. of Big Sur Aug. 19-26 (†DR *et al.*); no notes were received for a Chimney Swift reported from F.I. on the exceptional date of Oct. 2.

Reports are received each fall of "♀" *Selasphorus* hummingbirds apparently identified as Rufous or Allen's by assumptions the observers make of each species' status in their area. Yet much in the literature is wrong, and what is known is sketchy. Except in well-seen or displaying ad. males or birds proven to be nesting (thus Allen's), extreme caution in species identification should be the rule. Allen's *do* occur inland, and Rufous Hummingbirds *do* migrate down the coast. Acceptably documented records of Allen's in the Region after late August are few (*e.g.*, October specimens labeled "Allen's" recently proved to be Rufous, *fide* DR). Of *Selasphorus* closely studied in *Monterey* Aug. 25-Sept. 30 the few identified were Rufous Hummingbirds (†DR), as were three whose outer tail feather widths were examined at very close range Aug. 12-23 in Bodega Harbor (KFC). Much still needs to be learned here. Reports of Lewis' Woodpeckers totalled only seven individuals Sept. 25-Nov. 29, most or all migrants. A "Red-naped" Sapsucker returning to winter in S.F., Nov. 3 (*fide Gull*) furnished the only report of that form. A ♂ Nuttall's Woodpecker frequented Lee Vining, *Mono* (where very rare) all fall (DDeS).

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WRENS** — Four W. Wood-Pewees were late Oct. 9-18. Two were inland, with the last, at Oak Grove P., *San Joaquin* (DY) the Region's latest-ever by a day. All were Westerns by presumption only. Willow Flycatcher reports totalled 40 (about average) Aug. 10-Sept. 27. Of 7 Least Flycatcher reports, 4 were adequately documented: Sept. 24, Lanphere Dunes, *Humboldt* (†JSt); Sept. 30, outer Pt. Reyes (†TM, JM *et al.*); Oct. 6, Carmel R. mouth (†DR *et al.*); and Oct. 14, Watsonville Sewage Ponds (†KVV). The *Humboldt* record was said to establish the 2nd n. coast sighting, the *Monterey* bird their 3rd. One Hammond's Flycatcher was coastal Sept. 12 at Año Nuevo (GJS), as were three Dusky Flycatchers: Sept. 1 on the Hayward shoreline (BR), Sept. 10, Rodeo Lagoon (†JE), and Sept. 21, outer Pt. Reyes (RS). A Gray Flycatcher on outer Pt. Reyes Oct. 1 (†KFC) apparently provided our latest non-F.I. record, while one visited the latter locale Sept. 13. An Ash-throated Flycatcher at Lanphere Dunes was remarkable on Oct. 25 (JSt); observers are urged to regard all *Myiarchus* sightings after Sept. 1 with a critical eye—and document (including any vocalizations). Our 13th Great Crested Flycatcher was at the Big Sur R. mouth Sept. 30 (†BT), but it established only the 4th record away from F.I. (and a first for *Monterey*). The 13 Tropical Kingbirds Sept. 20-Nov. 15 were slightly fewer than the recent average. Six W. Kingbirds were reported coastally Sept. 1-23; the last in the interior were two Sept. 16 near Auburn, *Placer* (BB). Only our 2nd fall report in 3 years, an E. Kingbird was at Seaside, *Monterey* Sept. 19 (BE, DR). The *Eurasian Skylark* returned for its 7th winter at Pt. Reyes Oct. 27 (JM).

Purple Martins were last reported Aug. 27 coastally (Lake Earl—RAE) and Sept. 13 in the C.V. (Sacramento—BK); these both appeared to be very early dates for their regions. Both Tree and Violet-green swallows appear to stage in large flocks in lowland areas at the outset of migration; 1000+ Violet-greens above 5 coastal canyons at Big Sur, *Monterey* Aug. 5-19 (DR) may be found to be typical at that time and place. Such early, large flocks of Tree Swallows are mostly noted in the C.V. Amazing was a Nov. 7 Bank Swallow over Arcata (†JSt). The closest records on file are 5 for Oct. 7-28, 2 of which were coastal. Nine Clark's Nutcrackers on High Divide, *Del Norte* Oct. 2 (GSL) was a big group for the coast, but dwarfed by 200 ± in one flock near Chester, *Plumas* Nov. 30 (DAA)—apparently the Region's largest report ever. In contrast to last fall's coastal irruption of Mountain Chickadees, none was reported this season. P.R.B.O. recorded their 3rd and 4th Rock Wrens at Palomarin Sept. 23 & 26, and their 4th and 5th Marsh Wrens Sept. 28 and Nov. 28. All could well have indicated migration and not just local dispersal.



**MUSCICAPIDS** — Many have considered the magical Farallon Islands' best record to have been the Dusky Warbler that appeared Sept. 27, 1980 (AB 35:223), and have assumed that if any bird deserved the appellation "accidental"—not to be expected again—that one did. Thus it was stunning to the Region's birders when Luther discovered our 2nd **Dusky Warbler**, this one Sept. 28-29 in Hayward, *Alameda* (†JL, †JM, †RAE, †m.ob.). Over 200 birders viewed it the 2nd day, and the volume of film used in documenting it should have been enough to boost the value of Kodak stock significantly. The possibility of an escapee appears nil. Although Swainson's Warbler (still unrecorded in California) was at first considered, it appears at this time that other possible species, including *Locustella* spp. and other *Phylloscopus* spp., have been eliminated; the record is now under review by the C.B.R.C. This was apparently the first mainland record in North America.



*Dusky Warbler (Phylloscopus fuscatus) in Hayward, Calif., Sept. 28, 1984. Second North American record south of Alaska. Photo/Arnold Small.*

Golden-crowned Kinglets apparently had a good fall, with September to November banding totals at Palomarin 97% of last year's influx. This year however they seem to have appeared later: September bandings were below 10% of last September's. The first observer reports were for Oct. 2 (*San Mateo*—PJM, and Pt. Reyes—JE). Surprisingly, 110 on Willow Creek Rd., *Sonoma* Oct. 25 (KFC *et al.*) made the largest report on file for the Region, but many reports contained only statements such as "ubiquitous" and "excellent numbers." After describing last fall's 88 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers noted at Palomarin as "exceptional", what do you say about this year's 154? Elsewhere 17 were noted coastally through the period, with one Oct. 27 at Fairhaven (KVR) being about the 10th for *Humboldt* in 5 years, and about the 12th there ever. This suggested a non-cyclic increase; the next 3-4 years should tell. October 13 is about par as a first arrival for Mountain Bluebirds in the lowlands; two were near Oroville, *Butte* on that date (TM). Townsend's Solitaires occasionally flock in fall, generally in response to an abundant local food supply; 30-40 among junipers at Kirkwood Meadows, *Amador* Oct. 6 (DY) furnished an example. Three visited the S.F. Bay area Oct. 24-Nov. 19. The Region's 2nd-latest Swainson's Thrush was at F.I. on the impressive date of Nov. 15. The latest was Nov. 24, 1975 (also F.I.), not previously published here. The few reports of Am. Robins indicated below-average numbers early and above-average numbers late in the period, coastally. At Palomarin P.R.B.O. reported "an incredible influx [of Varied Thrushes] this fall. Perhaps the biggest flight year ever." Yet other reports, Oct. 13+, gave no indication of this elsewhere; will winter clarify?

**MOCKINGBIRDS THROUGH VIREOS** — More than 20 N. Mockingbirds were reported from the immediate coast, *Marin* to *Del Norte*, apparently the most ever. They are surely still on the increase in our Region. Two Sage Thrashers on F.I. were typically timed for there: Oct. 2-3 and Oct. 3. A Brown Thrasher was at Ft. Ord, *Monterey* Oct. 14 (J. Sinclair, *fide* DR); 40% of our records are for October. An imm. **Red-throated Pipit** Sept. 29 at the Salinas sewage ponds (HC, †DR) was within the range of our few previous records (all coastal); details were

sent to the C.B.R.C. First migrant Cedar Waxwings were one immature on outer Pt. Reyes Sept. 8 (LCB) and eight at Sacramento N.W.R., Sept. 11 (NG). A *Phainopepla* on F.I., Sept. 26 was the 2nd ever recorded there.

#### S.A.

Only a few years ago, few would have believed that several Siberian vagrants would vie for the 'season's best bird,' but this fall's skylark and Dusky Warbler took a back seat to North America's 4th (and first non-Alaskan) **Brown Shrike** (*Lanius cristatus*) at F.I., Sept. 20 (†PP, *fide* P.R.B.O.). A heavily-barred immature, it was photographed, measured and banded during its full-day's stay, and a selection of feathers was secured for comparison with specimens. It was wary and vocal. Red-backed and Isabelline shrikes (*L. collurio* and *isabellinus*) seem to have been solidly ruled out, and as of this writing it appears most likely the bird was of the nominate, northeasternmost race (apparently unlike the only North American specimen). Clearly, few of the Siberians capable of reaching Alaska can be called impossible for us. What's next?



*Brown Shrike (Lanius cristatus) on Southeast Farallon Island, Calif., Sept. 20, 1984. First North American record south of Alaska. Photo/Phil Henderson.*

Eleven N. Shrikes from Pt. Arena, *Mendocino* north made the best n. coastal fall showing yet. The only other report was also coastal: Palomarin's 2nd-ever sighting, an immature Oct. 23-Nov. 1 (killed when it struck a window) was also the first record this fall. A single Loggerhead Shrike at Cape Mendocino, *Humboldt* (*fide* JSt) from September to Oct. 20 filled the n. coast's quota. Remarkably, two Solitary Vireos of the e. form (*V. s. solitarius/alticola*) were reported: Sept. 27-Oct. 2, Pt. Reyes (†KFC, †JE *et al.*) and Oct. 6, n. *Mendocino* (†JSt). This brought the Region's total to 11 ± records, all Sept. 10-Nov. 5 and all *Marin* or F.I. until this year's last. A "Plumbeous" Solitary Vireo Oct. 13 on Coyote Cr. at Oakland Rd., *Santa Clara* (PLaT) was very near last fall's record. Observers are cautioned to rule out other gray vireos as well as other forms of Solitary Vireo when documenting a record. Sixteen Hutton's Vireos in *San Joaquin* and the Sacramento area (Aug. 13+) made a good fall showing there. Full details should accompany reports of Philadelphia Vireo, as this form is easily and frequently misidentified (*e.g.*, see AB 37:230). One Oct. 6-7 at Carmel R. mouth was not (†GMcC *et al.*), but 2 other reports lacked details. Single Red-eyed Vireos visited S.F., Sept. 26-28 (*fide* Gull), and Inverness Sept. 28 (RS). A "**Yellow-green**" Red-eyed Vireo at Fairhaven, *Humboldt* Oct. 9-10 (†JSt) was our 3rd or 4th; current research suggests this form is indeed a valid species (*fide* N. K. Johnson).

**WOOD WARBLERS** — Many (but not all) "eastern" warblers were down in numbers, especially in September. Of our 5 most common such species, Tennessee, Palm and Blackpoll warblers were at about one-half their average numbers, Am. Redstarts were down 60%, and Black-and-



white Warblers were in nearly normal force. Spans in parentheses below are of arrivals only. A nice 'yard bird' was a well-described **Blue-winged Warbler** in Lafayette Sept. 29 (†LF), for one of few Regional records (see last issue). All 15 Tennessee Warblers (Sept. 15-Oct. 14) were coastal. Virginia's Warblers had an average showing, with four: Sept. 25 and Oct. 8, F.I.; Oct. 11, Fairhaven (RM, JSt); and Nov. 3-4, Pine Gulch Cr., *Marin* (†JML *et al.*). There were no N. Parulas reported, for the first fall since 1971! Yellow Warblers lingered at least to Nov. 13 & 21 at S.F. (PJM) and near Ft. Dick, *Del Norte* (RT), respectively. Chestnut-sided Warblers (Sept. 14-Oct. 20) were about as expected with 16-18 on the immediate coast. Seven or eight Magnolia Warblers (Sept. 16-Oct. 11) were all F.I. or coastal *Marin*, and one-half the average number. A Cape May Warbler Sept. 27 at Moss Beach, *San Mateo* (*fide Gull*) was our only one. Six Black-throated Blue Warblers were coastal (Sept. 23-Oct. 10), while the first Mono Basin record was Oct. 14 in Lee Vining Canyon (DDeS). The first "Myrtle" Warbler was in Crescent City Sept. 27 (RAE), while "Audubon's" Warblers at Palomar Aug. 18 & 24 were very early. Black-throated Gray Warbler migration was evident from Aug. 4 (Palomar) on, with 7 reports in November (5 coastal). Single Townsend's Warblers at 6 locales in August (3 coastal) were more than usual. An early Hermit Warbler was in Pacific Grove Aug. 4 (JD). A Black-throated Green Warbler was on F.I., Sept. 20.

Of four or five Blackburnian Warblers (Oct. 3-Nov. 17), one was as far inland as Saratoga, *Santa Clara* (†RJP) on the latter date. An *albiflora* Yellow-throated Warbler at the Salinas Sewage Ponds Nov. 9-11 (†BW, †JML, †ML) was our first in fall since 1978. An above-average showing of Prairie Warblers (10, Aug. 19-Oct. 28) included one in the Hall Natural Area, *Mono* Sept. 25 (†B. Engstrom, *fide DDeS*). Palm Warblers (46-48, Sept. 22-Nov. 25) were all coastal, and our poorest showing in 8 years. Bay-breasted Warblers were Oct. 2 & 3, F.I., and Oct. 3-5 at outer Pt. Reyes (†JE). We turned up the fewest Blackpoll Warblers (35-37, Sept. 14-Oct. 21) in 11 years. Black-and-white Warblers (17-18, Aug. 26-Nov. 13) were all strictly coastal, an unusual event. Only 18 Am. Redstarts (Sept. 9-Oct. 13) was also our poorest showing in years, being about the usual fall number for F.I. alone (where three were noted). An Ovenbird at Fairhaven Sept. 3 (CC) was *Humboldt's* 4th in 2 years, and two were at F.I.: Sept. 26 and Oct. 3. Of eight to 10 N. Waterthrushes (an average showing) Sept. 1—"early November," all were strictly coastal, with none on Pt. Reyes. Four reports of Connecticut Warblers indicated at least three birds: Sept. 20 at both outer Pt. Reyes (†JE, †LCB, †BBa *et al.*) and F.I. (no details received), Sept. 24 at Lanphere Dunes (†JSt) and Oct. 14 on outer Pt. Reyes (†DY, †JM), the Sept. 24 bird a first for *Humboldt*. Mourning Warblers echoed the pattern of Connecticut, with 4 reports also perhaps of three birds: Sept. 8 & 20 on F.I. (two birds; again, no details seen for either!), Sept. 21, outer Pt. Reyes (†RS), and Oct. 5, mouth of Big Sur R. (†LK, †JML, †ML). Two MacGillivray's Warblers lingered: Oct. 25, Willow Creek Rd., *Sonoma* (KFC) and Nov. 3, Durham's Ferry, *San Joaquin* (DY). A Hooded Warbler was at the Carmel R. mouth Sept. 11 (WR). Six Canada Warblers was an ample supply, Sept. 9-Oct. 13, with the recent average about four. Central California's first **Painted Redstart** was on outer Pt. Reyes Sept. 17 (DT, BR, m.ob.) but did not stay; the Region's other individual 15 years ago, singing in the s. Sierras, may have been an overshoot. A strikingly late Yellow-breasted Chat was at Coyote Pt., *San Mateo* Nov. 4 (*fide Gull*); observers should critically examine face pattern and back color of oddly timed chats, as e. forms probably occur (AB 36:216).



Canada Warbler on outer Pt. Reyes, Calif., Oct. 5, 1984. Photo/Dan Nelson.

**TANAGERS THROUGH EMBERIZINES** — An imm. ♂ Summer Tanager was in Golden Gate P., Aug. 15-Sept. 22 (*fide Gull*). Sightings of females there Aug. 9-22 (*fide Gull*), Nov. 13 (PJM), 23 & 30 (both *fide Gull*) apparently referred to two or three individuals. A 4th (or 5th) record was from the Mad R. mouth Nov. 6 (SH). All six Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were on or near the coast, Aug. 28-Oct. 21. A Black-headed Grosbeak procrastinated at Palomar Oct. 20. Fourteen Lazuli Buntings along the immediate coast Aug. 7-Oct. 6 (the most reports there ever) may have indicated good breeding success in the interior. Surprisingly, the three or four Indigo Buntings this fall were above average; one was on F.I., Aug. 11, with two to three at the Carmel R. mouth Oct. 6 (JD, DR). **Three Painted Buntings** were amazing; two were on F.I., Sept. 14 & 27, with the 3rd at Lanphere Dunes (†JSt) for a *Humboldt* first. Of six Green-tailed Towhees, five were coastal Sept. 3-Oct. 2 and one was in Elkhorn Regional P., *Yolo* (HJ) Sept. 30. Two Rufous-sided Towhees at Bodega Harbor Nov. 30 (where none breed) were *P. e. oregonus*, a small, dark, field-identifiable form whose winter status is unclear (†KFC). A **Cassin's Sparrow** on F.I., Oct. 1 was our 3rd in as many seasons, and 9th ever. Six Am. Tree Sparrows on the coast Oct. 22+ was typical, but none was reported elsewhere. Eight of our 13 (low) Clay-colored Sparrows, Sept. 10-Oct. 12, were from F.I. Of four to five coastal Brewer's Sparrows Sept. 8-Oct. 2, three were noted at F.I., one smelling strongly of sage! Fall Black-throated Sparrows stay an average of about 9 days/visit to F.I. (where four were noted Sept. 9-29). How then do you interpret the following sightings at various spots on outer Pt. Reyes: Sept. 17 (DT), 18 (LCB, †KFC *et al.*), 21 (*fide Gull*), 26 (*fide Gull*), 29 & 30 (RAE, GMcC *et al.*), and Oct. 13 (†HG)? Perhaps 2 records would be a prudent guess. A Sage Sparrow report Sept. 14 from Palomar gave no indication of the bird's race. It may have furnished their first fall record, and no assumptions about origin seem safe. Lark Buntings (Sept. 1-Oct. 22) did well, with six on F.I. and nine others elsewhere on the coast; one at Hayward Sept. 27-Oct. 1 (BR, m.ob.) was the e. S.F. Bay's first. Three Grasshopper Sparrows at Monte Bello Open Space Preserve Sept. 30 (PN, DSu) were at an apparent breeding locale. What is their status in fall at such sites? Undocumented reports of a Sharp-tailed Sparrow were "Nov. 9+" (*fide Gull*) and Nov. 23 (BDP, LCB), both at Pine Gulch Cr., *Marin*; observers should be aware that this is a C.B.R.C.-reviewed species and requires full details. Future undocumented reports of these sparrows will not be published. A Fox Sparrow Sept. 3 at Palomar was strikingly early. A Swamp Sparrow Oct. 26 at Crescent City, *Del Norte* (GSL) was apparently the only migrant; five more toward the coast Nov. 4+ all appeared to winter. It appears likely that because of 'vagrant inflation' some observers are no longer reporting White-throated Sparrows; nevertheless 16 reports (Oct. 1+) seemed to imply a poor showing. An Aug. 20 Golden-crowned Sparrow in Salinas (JB) was one of 6+ August reports on record for the Region, including a crippled bird July 15-Aug. 15, 1959. A juv. White-crowned Sparrow was very low at Durham's Ferry, *San Joaquin* Aug. 17 (DY). There were only 2 reports of "Slate-colored" Juncos (both November); have observers really lost interest in this form? Lapland Longspurs were reported in typical numbers (45±) from the typical coastal locales Sept. 23-Nov. 17. One or two Chestnut-collared Longspurs were all we could muster: Oct. 27 (KH, JM *et al.*) and Nov. 3-8 (*fide Gull*), both outer Pt. Reyes. A Snow Bunting at the Crescent City harbor Nov. 19-22 (MM, †GSL, †RAE) was only our 8th in 6 years.

**BOBOLINK THROUGH FRINGILLIDS** — A Bobolink at Younger Lagoon, *Santa Cruz* Nov. 10 (BLaB) was one of 19 this fall and our latest Regional record by 5 days; November Bobolinks should be at least briefly documented. Sixty Tricolored Blackbirds at Bodega Harbor Aug. 12 (KFC) constituted a first coastal report, with two near Ft. Dick Oct. 11-12 exceptionally far n.w. Ten coastal Yellow-headed Blackbirds Aug. 4-Sept. 28 was twice the norm. A Ø Orchard Oriole was at Salinas Oct. 6 & 15 (†KVV), but why were there no details for the following birds: Sept. 30 Cape Mendocino area (JSt), Sept. 18 and Oct. 4 (different birds) both F.I.? A late Hooded Oriole was in Dinuba, *Tulare* Oct. 22 (RHG). Purple Finches were called "widespread and fairly common" in parts of *Sacramento* Nov. 19+ (TM), but coastal observers lacked a consensus. There were more reports of Red Crossbills than any other species in this, our best irruption year ever. Numbers showed no clear trend through the fall, but the coast (especially *Marin*)



held more than interior mountains, where the best report was "at least 300 at the peak" near Chester, *Plumas* (DAA). Thirty-three were reported from *Yolo* and *Sacramento* in the C.V., Oct. 28+. Hundreds could be seen on any day in much of *Marin*; the largest count, 2000 on Mt. Tamalpais Aug. 11 (*fide Gull*) tempts one to contemplate the absolute numbers present. An abundance of douglas-fir cones provided food in most areas. Several specimens appeared to be referable to "West Coast" races (*fide* N. K. Johnson), but there were no signs of breeding. Pine Siskins as well had a most impressive fall through all (?) the Region. Palomarin recorded over 100 on one day in August, then on 8 days in September (1600 Sept. 23), 16 days in October, and 4 days in November. They were "widespread and abundant" in *Sacramento* (TM), but no reports informed us of their status in interior mountains. Lesser Goldfinches had "perhaps the best year ever" at Palomarin (peak 26 Oct. 2). Twelve Lawrence's Goldfinches on the immediate coast Sept. 8-28 could be tied to this spring's irruption. Scattered sightings of one to four Evening Grosbeaks on the n. coast Sept. 7+ (*fide* RAE) were not unusual, but 10+ sightings of singles and small flocks from *Sonoma* to *Monterey* and in *Sacramento* (first and largest: 40± Oct. 13 on Willow Creek Rd., *Sonoma*—KFC, NTC *et al.*) indicated a lowland invasion.

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