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**MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION**

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**F**or most of the Region the season began colder than usual, became milder than usual, and ended very stormy, with severe flooding in many coastal areas during February. Another major oil spill devastated already-depleted alcid populations (see S.A.). Few irruptives appeared, but see Northern Shrike, and the Region's first-ever "chaseable" Common Redpolls. As always contributors and sub-regional editors are to be thanked for the thousands of important records received this season. Only a small fraction of Christmas Bird Count results were seen by us, however, greatly weakening this report, as in past winters.

The status and distribution of Monterey County birds has now been thoroughly summarized in "Monterey Birds" (1985, Monterey Pen. Audubon Society, P.O. Box 52022, Pacific Grove, CA 93950, \$17 postpaid).

**ABBREVIATIONS** — C.B.R.C. = California Bird Records Committee; C.V. = Central Valley; O.S.P. = Open Space Preserve; S.F. = San Francisco; W.M.A. = Wildlife Management Area; ph. = photo on file with the Regional Editors. *Italicized names refer to counties.*

All of the many sightings from Palomarin and S. E. Farallon I. (hereafter F.I.) should be credited to Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory (hereafter P.R.B.O.). References to the *Gull* refer to Golden Gate





Audubon Society's publication, whose observations column is currently written by Helen Green.

**LOONS THROUGH PELICANS** — Eight loons were reported inland, including a Pacific at Redding Dec. 28 (SAL, MDH). A Yellow-billed Loon was  $\frac{3}{4}$  mi s.w. of Moss Landing Dec. 30 (tph.SFB, tAB, m.ob.). Pied-billed Grebes nested successfully in December at Monterey, as proven by the striped fledglings following adults there Dec. 26–27 (BW, DR). A Red-necked Grebe at L. Shastina Dec. 5 (RE) was the 2nd of 1985 for Siskiyou. A peak of only 11 Eared Grebes appeared at F.I., where up to 400 normally winter. Western Grebes suffered substantial mortality along the coast during the stormy, oily February (see below). The 1000+ Westerns wintering on L. San Antonio, Monterey (DR, BW), must have fared better. Clark's Grebes are now being reported in small numbers almost everywhere, including the n. and s. coasts where they are still considered scarce.

#### S.A.

We are learning more about the tendency of Laysan Albatrosses to appear in S.F. Bay. One off Cypress Pt., Monterey, Dec. 29 (LSc, fide DLS) was the only report before a wave appeared Feb. 2–4, apparently due to a storm. At Cordell Bank, Marin, one was found Feb. 2 (StW, fide Gull) but five were there the next day (RoM, fide Gull). A flightless bird one mi off Monterey Feb. 4 was thought perhaps oiled from the recent spill (RT, fide DLS). However, the same day three Laysans arrived in Oakland by freighter. Reportedly a total of 10 landed on the ship Feb. 1 during a storm off Hawaii. Three refused to leave the ship, and were fed by the crew. In Oakland, they were rehabilitated at the Rotary Natural Science Center, where two courted "constantly". On Feb. 14 they were sent back to Hawaii by freighter (fide R. Kaufman & Oakland Tribune). Two Laysans were 10–14 mi s.w. of Davenport, Santa Cruz, Feb. 23 (DLS, RS, AB).

Northern Fulmars were found in small numbers the full length of the coast, with a peak of 47 on the Monterey Bay pelagic C.B.C., Dec. 30 (DLS, SFB). The Monterey Bay C.B.C. also recorded the only Flesh-footed Shearwater and the peak counts of Pink-footed (four), Sooty (27), and Short-tailed shearwaters (26), along with 19 Black-vented Shearwaters (DLS, SFB). A few Black-vented were seen on most Monterey boat trips, with 48 Dec. 1 and 47 Feb. 16 the maxima (DLS, m.ob.). A Buller's Shearwater seen from Pt. St. George, Del Norte, Jan. 14 (ADB) was an exceptional winter bird. The winter's only storm-petrel report was of a Leach's being blown past Crescent City Harbor Jan. 16 (JK).

The banded Am. White Pelican was seen at the Mad R. mouth through Dec. 4 (fide JSt). Only six or seven Brown Pelicans remained into late December, and one through January (at Monterey). A small return flight was detected Feb. 11–19 at F.I. (two), Monterey (10—DLS), Pescadero (six—PJM), and Pt. St. George (one—JK et al.).

**HERONS THROUGH DUCKS** — Sixty Cattle Egrets were in a roost at Gray Lodge W.M.A., Dec. 7 (BED) but the species was otherwise found in very low numbers in the Sacramento Valley and along the coast; their status in the San Joaquin Valley was unreported. The last of the fall's coastal White-faced Ibis were singles (the same?) in San Mateo at Pescadero Marsh Dec. 14 and Half Moon Bay Dec. 28 (both fide Gull). At Colusa N.W.R., a count of 225 ibises Dec. 17 (GM) was nearly double any previous Sacramento Valley total we are aware of.

It was a good year in general for swans and geese in the Region with numbers along the coast well above average. In the C.V., 14,303 Tundra Swans on the Sacramento C.B.C., Dec. 29 (fide TM) was an impressive total. Four ad. Trumpeter Swans in the Smith River/Fort Dick area, Del Norte, Dec. 2–

Mar. 14 (tRAE, t.m.ob.) were especially welcome, as the last "chasable" individual in California was in Los Angeles over 10 years ago. More like other recent records were two ad. Trumpeters seen one day only at King I., San Joaquin, Feb. 1 (tDY).

About 100 Greater White-fronted Geese but only seven Snow Geese were reported from the coast. Ross' Geese continued their strong coastal showing from the fall with six-plus in Del Norte, one to four in Humboldt, five in Marin, and 10 in Monterey.

#### S.A.

Ten years ago there was only one known form of "Blue Goose". Today, some confusion still exists concerning blue-phase Snow Geese and Ross' Geese and intermediates between the two. The recent field guides have completely ignored the latter form despite the fact that intermediates were found to outnumber pure blue-phase Ross' Geese by nearly two to one in California (McLandress & McLandress. 1979. Blue-phase Ross' Geese and other blue-phase geese in western North America. Auk 96:544–550). Reports this winter from the C.V. included 10+ blue Snows (Sacramento N.W.R., Gray Lodge W.M.A., Merced N.W.R.), two-plus blue Ross' (Merced N.W.R.), and one intermediate (Gray Lodge W.M.A., Nov. 24, tBED) but details provided on two of the Ross' clearly indicate they were actually intermediates. Observers are urged to provide details on any blue-phase geese believed to be Ross' or intermediate.

Four Eur. Green-winged Teal appeared coastally, at San Leandro Bay, Dec. 13–Feb. 22 (JM, SFB, BB et al.), Alameda Feb. 8 (fide Gull), Palo Alto, Dec. 22 (fide Gull), and Elkhorn Slough Jan. 11 (DR, BT) for the 3rd Monterey record. High counts of Eur. Wigeon in S.F. Bay were three males and one to two females on San Leandro Bay Dec. 13 (SFB, JM, BB et al.) and three at Charleston Slough, Santa Clara Dec. 8 (LT, AR), while a male near Terminous Jan. 15+ (DY et al.) was, surprisingly, only the 2nd for San Joaquin.

Most interesting was a ♂ Canvasback x Ring-necked Duck at Abbott's Lagoon, Marin, Jan. 13–23 (RS). Male Tufted Ducks near Glenburn, Shasta, Jan. 18 (tRE, MR, BY, CY) and on O'Neill Forebay, Merced, Feb. 17 (tJ. Kiernan, fide JM) provided first county records. Female Tufteds included one at Arcata Marsh, Humboldt, Nov. 22–Feb. 1 (MH et al.) and one at the S.F. Zoo Jan. 25–Feb. 13 and Golden Gate Park Feb. 24–Mar. 4 (tJM, tLE et al.) apparently being the same bird. Greater Scaup numbers were exceptional at many inland localities with 150 at O'Neill Forebay Feb. 23 (MJL) being the high count.

A King Eider made a brief appearance at Moss Landing Jan. 12–13 (ph. FRC, fide JM). A count of 22 Harlequin Ducks at Pt. Saint George Dec. 15–Mar. 3 (JML, ADB et al.) was apparently the state's highest ever. Common Goldeneyes had very high n. coast counts with 28 at the Smith R. Estuary, Del Norte, Dec. 22 (DnS) and 23 there Jan. 25 (RAE). Barrow's Goldeneyes occurred Regionally in record numbers with highs of 60–70 at Belvedere Lagoon, Marin, Jan. 18 (DAH) and 60 at the L. Merritt outflow, Alameda, Feb. 15 (JM).

**HAWKS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS** — Immature Red-shouldered Hawks at Chester Dec. 28 (DAA) and Modoc N.W.R., Jan. 22–25 (tJML, SAL, MDH) were noteworthy sightings. An imm. Broad-winged Hawk wintered at Chualar Jan. 17–Feb. 24 (tKVV et al.). Was a dark-phase ad. Swainson's Hawk near Sacramento Feb. 19 (tBED) wintering or an early migrant? Five "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawks were found in the interior Oct. 20–Jan. 18 and there were 2 records from the coast: dark adults near Smith River (first for Del Norte) Nov. 6–Feb. 24 (tRAE, tJML et al.) and at Nicasio Res., Jan. 11–Feb. 19 (tDAH, RS et al.). Two Humboldt reports lacked details. Rough-legged Hawks were found in record numbers in the Sacramento Valley



and n.e. California (BED, SAL, JLo, BY) but were unimpressive along the coast.

A **Yellow Rail** was convincingly described from San Leandro Bay Dec. 12 (†DRI et al.). Although this species formerly nested in e. California and wintered on the coast, this was the first Regional record since 1970. Wandering individual Sandhill Cranes reached the S.F. Bay area at Crystal Springs Res., Dec. 28 for San Mateo's 2nd record (fide PJM), Livermore Valley Dec. 24 (ALE) and over Tilden Regional Park Dec. 22 (fide Gull). Cranes are "very unusual w. of the Sacramento R." in the n. Sacramento Valley so 65 at Sacramento N.W.R., Feb. 27 were probably migrating (fide BED).

Lesser Golden-Plovers (all *fulva*) wintered on the coast in Del Norte, Humboldt, Marin, and San Francisco. In the C.V., one again wintered at the Lodi sewage ponds (DY, m.ob.) and two were with 600+ Black-bellied Plovers at the Modesto sewage ponds Feb. 9–23 (ECa). Eight Snowy Plovers in the Tulare L. basin Dec. 22 (RHG) represented the 3rd inland winter record for the Region, all from the San Joaquin Valley. Mountain Plovers were found on the coast at Pacifica Dec. 1–7 (PJM et al.), for San Mateo's 2nd record, and Pt. Reyes Dec. 21–Jan. 1 (RS et al.). Another at the Jepson Prairie Preserve, Solano, Dec. 19 (JLo) was in the C.V. but away from traditional sites. Counts of 13 Lesser Yellowlegs in Eureka Dec. 18, 20 in the Loleta Bottoms Jan. 11, and two in the Arcata Bottoms Jan. 18–20 (all fide GSL) were exceptional numbers for Humboldt.

A Ruddy Turnstone at the Hollister sewage ponds Jan. 20 (SAL, MDH) was only about 20 mi from the coast but in an area generally considered the interior of the Region. There are no previous winter records from such an area. Apparently Sanderlings regularly frequent the Hollister ponds in winter; 35 were there Jan. 20 (SAL, MDH). Sanderlings also regularly winter at the Salinas sewage ponds (40 there Dec. 26—DR) where the Salinas R. presumably provides a corridor of suitable habitat from the coast. No such claim, however, can be made for the Pajaro and San Benito rivers in the case of the Hollister ponds. Farther inland there was only one previous Sanderling winter record, from the San Joaquin Valley, but this year one was in the Tulare L. basin Dec. 22 (RHG) and two were at the Modesto sewage ponds Jan. 26–Feb. 23 (fECa). Western Sandpipers are generally rare and local in the interior so 100–300 at L. Washington, Yolo, Dec. 29–Jan. 1 (fide TM) were significant. A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper on S.F. Bay at Alviso Nov. 17–Jan. 5 (PPE, ph. NJ, †RAE, †JM et al.) furnished the Region's first "winter" record. However, the bird was still mostly in juv. plumage and could not be found on later visits, so it may actually have been only a lingering migrant.

A Ruff was again found in Merced, a female at Merced N.W.R., Dec. 9–27 before overflowing made the area unsuitable (RJB). A Wilson's Phalarope n. of Terminous Jan. 15–Feb. 19 (DY) was the 6th to be found in the period December–February, all in the last 6 years.

**JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS** — Pomarine Jaeger counts of 18 Dec. 30 and 16 Feb. 22 off Monterey (DLS, m.ob.) were large counts for winter. An ad. Parasitic Jaeger at Charleston Slough, Santa Clara, Dec. 9–Jan. 18 chased birds ranging from Forster's Terns to Glaucous-winged Gulls (MWS, WGB, m.ob.). A 2nd ad. Little Gull joined the one present since fall at Stockton sewage ponds Jan. 10+ (JSL). Although two or three have occurred together during recent springs, this was the first multiple observation in winter. Both Little Gulls and the Com. Black-headed Gull remained there through the period (†JML, †MIL, m.ob.). At least 750 Heermann's Gulls off Monterey Dec. 30 (SFB, DLS) was a remarkable number for winter. Otherwise the highest number was 70 off Monterey Feb. 22 (DLS), and only 14 individuals were reported from 5 sites farther north. Mew Gulls were found at 8 C.V. sites, in numbers up to 10. The only Thayer's Gull reports farther inland than Sacramento were of singles at Redding Dec. 28 (SAL, MDH) and at Merced N.W.R., Feb. 10 (RJB). The largest concentration reported was of 65 at Sausalito Jan. 17 (DAH); contributors should monitor

this species closely and report their counts. Five Glaucous-winged Gulls were noted in Sacramento (TM, EH et al.). Farther inland were individuals at Chico Landfill Dec. 29–Jan. 5 (BED, PBS, JS), Whiskeytown L., Dec. 28 (SAL, MDH), and Redding Dec. 31 (BY). Single Glaucous Gulls occurred at F.I., along the coast in Humboldt, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey (two), by S.F. Bay in Santa Clara (one or two), and inland to Yolo (two) and Sacramento. Black-legged Kittiwakes were few except off Del Norte, where up to 80 were found off the Klamath R. mouth (Jan. 29—GSL).

A startling number of large terns appeared this winter. Up to two Caspians inhabited Moss Landing Dec. 11–Jan. 18 (†DGe, PJM) and one was at Asilomar Jan. 29 (DF, CG). December 29 found single Caspians at Sunnyvale sewage ponds (DC et al.) and at Yolo Bypass (CS, ES, TH). Up to five Caspians lingered around Humboldt Bay into mid-December, and at least one stayed to Feb. 15 (fide JSt, GSL). One Caspian was as far n. as Crescent City Harbor Dec. 25 (GSL, LPL), but eclipsing all Caspian Terns was an **Elegant Tern** there Jan. 9 (†ADB, GSL, JK). The latter was the first for Del Norte later than October.

A scrippsii Xantus' Murrelet off Monterey Dec. 30 was seasonally rare (SFB, AB, DLS), but another inside Crescent City Harbor, Jan. 23 (ph. JK, †ADB) was more so, providing the 4th Del Norte record and first winter record n. of Cordell Bank.

#### S.A.

After suffering repeated heavy population losses due to gill netting, El Niño, the "Puerto Rican" oil spill, etc., Common Murres and Rhinoceros Auklets were dealt a truly devastating blow by the February oil spill from the "Apex Houston". Murre numbers had been particularly tiny in the Monterey Bay area for several years, but by Dec. 29–30, boat trips censused aggregate totals of at least 4300 Com. Murres and 9500 Rhinoceros Auklets, probably the highest numbers in about 10 years (DLS, BLAB, SFB, m.ob.). These species remained concentrated in this area through January, when there were also 3000–5500 Red Phalaropes present (DLS, m.ob.). These concentrations became a death trap when the "Apex Houston" leaked oil along our entire coast s. from S.F., beginning Feb. 1. Immediately and for over a month large numbers of oiled seabirds were found dead and alive, both at sea and on beaches. Numbers of these species seen offshore plummeted 80–98% (DLS, m.ob.). Although the "Apex Houston" spilled one-quarter as much oil as the "Puerto Rican" had in 1984, an estimated 5 times as many birds were processed at cleaning centers because the oil spilled into such dense concentrations of birds (P.R.B.O.). The majority of birds treated were Com. Murres, but hundreds of Rhinoceros Auklets were also dead on many beaches (BW, m.ob.). Published estimates of seabird mortality ranged up to 30,000. However, DLS noted that these estimates were based solely on the birds taken to cleaning centers. If the numbers already dead on the beaches are added to the calculations, the true losses may have been much greater! Fortunately only small numbers of Cassin's Auklets were wintering locally before the spill; hopefully they were not hit too hard farther south. Common Murre and Rhinoceros Auklet populations may show the effects of this disaster for years to come.

**OWLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS** — Short-eared Owl reports were again few and of very small numbers this winter; CSt commented on "not one . . . seen at (Tule L. or Lower Klamath) refuges" in our Great Basin district, where they used to be most numerous. As has been the rule in recent years, Com. Poorwills appeared to winter at Palomarin, with two seen both Feb. 20 & 26. Seven Vaux's Swifts were seen over Santa Cruz Feb. 21 (DSu); the species is now being recorded every winter in the Region. It is easy to suspect a connection with their use of man-made habitats. Certainly a group of



White-throated Swifts were grateful for the shelter of the highway drainage holes from which they were heard twittering Dec. 7 in a storm in Sacramento (TM, KS).

A ♂ hummingbird studied in Salinas November to February (†BG) was a possible Anna's x Costa's hybrid. Observers should be cautious in reporting this hybrid, however, as several past reports in the Region apparently pertain to pure imm. ♂ Costa's (including one published, AB 31:219, as the Region's first such hybrid, and a bird not published this fall from Santa Clara). Fall imm. males of both *Calypte* hummers (Anna's and Costa's) can give unformed "practice singing" from perches, giving rise to pure Costa's being called hybrids. A ♂ hummingbird present at Shasta Sept. 2–Jan. 26 was reported as Black-chinned, but photos and written details strongly indicate Costa's—certainly more likely, as Costa's is a rare but annual winterer in the Region, while Black-chinned has not been acceptably recorded at this season. A ♂ Allen's Hummingbird in Salinas Jan. 18 (KVV) was 4 days earlier than the average first arrival date, 1973–1985, and "several" there the next day (BG) were noteworthy. Lewis' Woodpeckers were present in better numbers than usual, with impressive counts of 116 on the Mt. Hamilton C.B.C., Jan. 2 (fide DSc) and 87+ at Copco Res., Siskiyou, Feb. 26 (DAA). An ad. ♂ **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** returned to near Nicasio Jan. 5–Feb. 9 (JWh, RS, DDeS, †KLH et al.) where it spent last winter as an immature. This bird is only the Region's 9th. Five Red-naped Sapsuckers were reported, to Feb. 23. Four were in the coastal district, while the earliest bird, present to at least Dec. 15, was an apparent first for Sutter, along N. Butte Rd. (PBS et al.).

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WRENS** — An incredible four species of Empidonax flycatchers were discovered in the Region. A **Willow Flycatcher** at Watsonville Jan. 1–2 (†PJM) was our first for December to March (there are 2 such s. California records). A **Least Flycatcher**, studied on the Pt. Reyes C.B.C., Dec. 21 (†PP) was also the first ever identified at this season here. A **Dusky Flycatcher** provided our 2nd-ever record for the period, appearing at Carmel R. mouth Dec. 3–8 (DaS, †DR), while single W. Flycatchers were along Pebble Beach Dec. 27 (BB) and in Sebastopol Dec. 22 (LCB). An E. Phoebe along the San Joaquin R. in Fresno Mar. 1 (JLo, ZL) was notable inland, but most of the 8+ interior records are from the San Joaquin Valley area. A Say's Phoebe near Ft. Dick Dec. 22–Mar. 4 (RMu, RAE, GSL, RST et al.) gave Del Norte its first record of an overwintering bird. Exceptional in winter, Ash-throated Flycatchers were noted at Año Nuevo State Reserve Dec. 12 (†GJS) and returning for a 2nd winter to O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area, Merced, Dec. 19–20 (†CB, JSL, KFC). Two Cassin's Kingbirds were found in San Benito: at Paicines Feb. 8 (BSH, m.ob.) and on New Idria Rd., Feb. 15 (JZa).

Tree Swallows n. of their expected range at this season were three near Smith R., Jan. 17 (RST). Migrants were in evidence in Butte (BED) and at Palomar by Feb. 4. At L. Kaweah, Tulare, 20+ Violet-green Swallows Jan. 5 were said to be first arrivals there (LLN). Closer to typical "first migrant" dates for most of the Region, but still a little early if migrants, were 80–100 over Piedra, Fresno, Feb. 5 (JLo). More impressive was the Region's first-ever winter **Bank Swallow**, Jan. 1 at Elkhorn Slough, Monterey (†PJM, BS). Illustrative of the discrepancy in arrival dates for Cliff Swallows between C.V. and coastal areas were our first birds this year. One was over Merced N.W.R., Feb. 5 (RJB), while 25 at Chualar Feb. 23 (RR) gave Monterey its earliest-ever arrival date by 5 days. A Barn Swallow investigated Stanford University's linear accelerator Dec. 26 (KK), while very early migrants were two Feb. 24 at Palomar (earliest ever there) and one Feb. 28 in Jameson Canyon, Napa (MFR). An Am. Crow at Palomar was said to be "exceptional—very rare in winter." Six House Wrens in the central coastal district was probably par; the species is regular in small numbers in s. coastal and southern C.V. areas. In addition to three Winter Wrens on the C.V. floor (where rare), unexpected birds were at Pinnacles N.M., Jan. 10 and Salinas Jan. 18 (both KVV).

**BLUEBIRDS THROUGH WARBLERS** — In contrast to last winter's invasion of Mountain Bluebirds, very few were reported this season. Noteworthy were two each at Red Bluff Dec. 1 (KVV) and L. San Antonio, Monterey, Jan. 17 (RR). Quite unexpected was a Wrentit on L. Almanor Peninsula, Plumas, Dec. 29 (SAL), said to be a local first. Despite last fall's good show, only one coastal Sage Thrasher was uncovered, in Jameson Canyon Dec. 24 & 26 (MFR). Our 6th **Bendire's Thrasher** was a cooperative bird present n. of Lodi Dec. 21–Feb. 15 (TM, †JML, m.ob.). California Thrashers are generally very rare fall/winter wanderers to the C.V. floor, although they do breed at Caswell S.P., San Joaquin (fide DY). Thus 3 C.V. records this winter was an exceptional number: Feather R. near Oroville W.M.A., Dec. 28 (BED), Broderick Dec. 29 (KS, HCU), and Jelly's Ferry Rd., Tehama, Feb. 24–28 (BED).

No reports of Bohemian Waxwings reached us, and the few Cedar Waxwing reports were of low numbers. Northern Shrikes irrupted into the Sacramento Valley in better numbers than ever before, with at least 13 birds found there Dec. 4–Feb. 21. A coastward bird was an immature at Stafford L., Marin, Jan. 5–6 (PP, PH, RS et al.), and the southernmost report was of an immature in Panoche Valley Feb. 21–22 (BT, DaS, KVV, BG), the latter a San Benito first, fide KVV. The n. coast, which had most of last year's excellent numbers, reported "few" (RAE). Numbers may have been good in our Great Basin area, for although only one report came in, it was of six on the Fall River Mills C.B.C., Dec. 22 (BY, CY et al.). A late Solitary Vireo was at Inverness Dec. 3 (cassinii—RS), while a winterer was in Merced Dec. 12–Jan. 15 (race?—RJB). The Region's first clearly wintering **Warbling Vireo** was at Watsonville Community Hospital Jan. 1–19 (†PJM, JM, LCB, m.ob.). There are 2 previous one-day-only records from December.

Only four Tennessee Warblers were reported (all coastally), although more were likely found on C.B.C.s not reviewed by us. Twelve Nashville Warbler reports is well below average. Of eight Yellow Warblers reported for the period, an impressive four were at L. Merced, S.F., Dec. 30 (PJM). A very tardy Magnolia Warbler passed through Inverness Dec. 2 (RS). Of only 5 Black-throated Gray Warbler records, 3 were in the central C.V., one on the n. coast (Crescent City, Feb. 4—GSL), and one on the central coast (L. Merced, Dec. 30—PJM). Unexpected away from the regular wintering range on the coast, a Townsend's Warbler was at Cedar Ridge, Nevada, Dec. 28 and Mar. 22–24 (RAE). The **Blackburnian Warbler** studied at the Carmel R. mouth late last fall remained to Dec. 6 (REM, DaS) but apparently not thereafter, providing the state's latest record. A **Prairie Warbler** vacationed at Neary's Lagoon in Santa Cruz Dec. 8–Feb. 15 (†DGe, †PJM, †JML, m.ob.), only the 3rd definitely wintering individual for the Region. After a poor fall, a mere six Palm Warblers reported for the period was the fewest in 7 years; one on Matadero Cr., Santa Clara, Dec. 11–18 (DSu) was noteworthy away from the immediate coast. An Am. Redstart along the Pajaro R., Monterey and Santa Cruz, Jan. 1 (BB) had few precedents for this season. Even less expected was an **Ovenbird** wintering on Woody I., Eureka, Dec. 18–23 (JSt, †RAE); this was the first Regional record between Nov. 11 and May 16. Northern Waterthrushes are clearly more prone to winter in the Region than the former species, as one near Fort Dick Dec. 22–Feb. 2 (RAE, ADB, GSL, JM et al.) gave us our 10th definite such record. A Com. Yellowthroat near Smith River Dec. 22 (ADB, NCI) was n. of the expected coastal range in winter. Three Wilson's Warblers reported were only half the average.

**TANAGERS THROUGH SPARROWS** — Two Summer Tanagers were discovered: an ad. male at Watsonville Jan. 2–19 (PJM, m.ob.) and a female at L. Merced, S.F., Dec. 30 (PJM). Of seven W. Tanagers reported, six were in the coastal district (to Jan. 2), and one in Chico Dec. 29 (JHS) was the 4th in 6 years for that C.B.C. There are very few Regional records for late winter for this species, due to some combination of mortality, movement, and observer bias.



Three Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found this season: Foster City Dec. 1–21 (PJM—"2nd San Mateo record"), Smith River Dec. 8–9 (GSL, LPL, RAE, ADB *et al.*), and near Fort Dick Jan. 10–22 (RST, RAE, ADB, LCB *et al.*). The latter records were only the 3rd and 4th ever for *Del Norte*.

#### S.A.

**Indigo Buntings** are quite unexpected in winter (4 previous Regional winter records) so two were surprising: a male at Half Moon Bay Dec. 28 (†PJM) and a female/immature banded on F.I., Dec. 13. What then came as a shock was the appearance of a banded ♂ Indigo Bunting in Inverness (29 mi from F.I., "as the bunting flies"), Dec. 21 (RS); later close examination allowed the band to be read, proving it to be the F.I. bird (see spring report for last dates; RS plans to publish full details). This was apparently only the 2nd bird ever proven to return to the mainland from F.I., the first having been a House Sparrow banded Apr. 4, 1973 and recovered in S.F., Mar. 8, 1974. Observers are strongly encouraged to watch for bands on all vagrants (even to remarking on their absence when clearly not present) as this can be an invaluable aid in judging whether reports refer to more than one record.

Two Chipping Sparrows were at the n. locale of Dairyville, Tehama, Dec. 21 (SAL, MDH). A Clay-colored Sparrow Dec. 5 on F.I. was the latest ever there, and provided the 11th Regional December/January record (there are no records Jan. 23–Apr. 28). Single Lark Buntings were n. of Lodi Jan. 31–Feb. 2 (DY, ECa, m.ob.) and at Merced City Feb. 12–15 (ECa). At Palomar, Fox Sparrows were reported as "severely reduced compared to all previous years." Interestingly, three of four Swamp Sparrow reports (very low total) were away from the immediate coast: Salinas R. near Salinas Dec. 19–26 (BG), Lewiston L., Trinity, Jan. 5 (adult, SAL, MDH), and Mapes Ranch near Modesto Mar. 1 (†ECa). No Swamp Sparrow reports were sent in from Marin, where several are normally found. Reports of White-throated Sparrows totalled only seven—exceptionally low. Both Golden-crowned and White-crowned sparrows were reported in "remarkably low numbers" by P.R.B.O., but no other mention was received for either species. Two Harris Sparrows were away from Great Basin areas: Bolinas Lagoon Dec. 24–Jan. 1 (RS, JP, DAH) and Carmel Dec. 27 (N. Frodsham). Six "Slate-colored" Juncos were reported, surely only a fraction of those found. Reports of seven to 11 "Pink-sided" Juncos were received without details. As stated earlier (AB 38:956), there are no documented records of this form for the Region, although it is probably a rare visitor. There is a great deal of misunderstanding concerning the distribution and identification of this form in our area, much of it due to bad field guide illustrations. Lapland Longspurs were found at another new locale when seven were at Bayfront P., Menlo Park, Dec. 18 (DSu), with six there as late as Feb. 23 (JMS). As noted in the fall report, 16 in Moss Landing Dec. 6 (REM, DR, BW *et al.*) was an unprecedented number for Monterey. Fifty Laplands at Glenburn Dec. 30 (SAL, MDH) were excellent for the edge of our Great Basin areas, while a Chestnut-collared Longspur there Dec. 30–Jan. 26 (SAL, MDH, BY, CY, BVdM) was a Shasta first. A Snow Bunting near L. Talawa, *Del Norte*, first seen Nov. 14 & 16 (C & WC, †ADB, †RAE), was refound there Dec. 3 (C & WC, *fide* RAE).

**ICTERINES THROUGH HOUSE SPARROW** — Rusty Blackbird sightings continued on Cloverdale Rd., San Mateo, with one each Dec. 6 (JSL) and Feb. 1 (S. Finnegan). A sighting of 100+ Brown-headed Cowbirds at L. Merced, S.F., Dec. 30 (PJM) would be exceptional anywhere in the Region at this season. Single Hooded Orioles were on San Franciscuito Cr., Santa Clara/San Mateo, Dec. 18 (DSu) and in Auburn Feb. 22 (BBa). Records of 10 N. Orioles included one definite "Baltimore" (Pacific Grove, Dec. 27–28, LCB, DR *et al.*), and two



Common Redpoll at Tule Lake N.W.R., Cal., Dec. 29, 1985. Drawing by Alan D. Barron.

interior "Bullock's": males at Los Banos Dec. 19 (KFC) and Dinuba Jan. 2 (RHG). This is probably only a fraction of the total seen in the Region this period, many on C.B.C.s.

Purple Finches were clearly in poor numbers coastally, but a small irruption into the C.V. was evident: two near Fair Oaks Dec. 7 (JML), three in Merced Dec. 19 to February (RJB), 12 on the Sacramento C.B.C., Dec. 29 (*fide* TM), and two in Modesto Jan. 19 (ECa). Last winter's Cassin's Finch irruption was not repeated. The only reports were of one ♂-plumaged bird in Merced Dec. 19 (RJB) for a first Merced record, and two on Low Divide e. of Smith River Dec. 22 (GSL, LPL). Two reports of Red Crossbills were received (versus 52 last winter): one at Monte Bello O.S.P., Santa Clara, Dec. 18 (BRb, A. Kratter), and two at L. Merced Dec. 30 (PJM). The Region received its 4th record of **Common Redpolls** (2nd this century), when 18 were discovered at Tule Lake N.W.R., Dec. 29 (†ADB, NCL). Numbers appeared to decrease, with six to 10 on Jan. 11 the last there. On Jan. 20, 22 were discovered at Lower Klamath N.W.R. (DSi), only 5–6 mi away; varying numbers (up to "30–35") were then seen here through Mar. 2. This is best assumed one (very cooperative!) flock. As with Cassin's Finches and Red Crossbills, Pine Siskin numbers were apparently low or normal after last winter's irruption. No reports of Evening Grosbeaks were received (versus 34 last winter). A House Sparrow on F.I., Dec. 10 was seasonally unprecedented there; most records are late March through May.

**CORRIGENDUM** — In last winter's report the **Mottled Petrel** should have been boldfaced (AB 39:204).

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