

Kurt F. Campbell, Richard A. Erickson,
and Stephen F. Bailey

Early winter was abnormally wet, with mid- and late winter abnormally dry, leaving us with an extremely light Sierra snowpack. We are beginning to receive more CBC data, giving us at least more confidence in our guesses about what the birds were really doing.

The mild El Niño may have been related to the scarcity of northern seabirds such as Northern Fulmar, Black-legged Kittiwake, and Ancient Murrelet. A seabird die-off struck Monterey waters in December, and avian cholera again struck the Modesto sewage ponds. This was one of the best winters ever for the rare-but-regular insectivores; see especially the reports of warblers, many at all-time highs.

ABBREVIATIONS — C.B.R.C. = California Bird Records Committee; C.C.R.S. = Coyote Creek Riparian Station (banding station in Santa Clara); C.V. = Central Valley; F.I. = S.E. Farallon I., S.F.; O.S.P. = Open Space Preserve; S.F. = San Francisco; ph. = photo on file with the Regional Editors. Place names in *italics* are counties. All records from Palomarin, Marin, and F.I. should be credited to Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory (P.R.B.O.).

LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS — Highlights among numerous inland loons were four Pacific Loons in Santa Clara Dec. 3–Jan. 31. A rotting Yellow-billed Loon was found on Monterey Beach Dec. 24 (†AB, *California Academy of Sciences). Eared Grebes were virtually absent from San Joaquin, where there are often large numbers wintering (DGY).

Single Laysan Albatrosses were 4 mi west of Cypress Pt., Monterey, Dec. 5 (DR) and at Cordell Bank, Marin, Feb. 28 (EDG, DAH, DLSH). Only small numbers (up to 20) of N. Fulmars were reported, except for 150 on the Del Norte CBC Dec. 20. A late Buller's Shearwater was off Cypress Pt. Dec. 5 (DR). In the Monterey Bay area, the fall's big numbers of Black-vented Shearwaters declined through the winter: 700 Dec. 5 (DR), 42 Jan. 23 (DLSu), and one Feb. 29 (DLSu). Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels were in Monterey Bay Dec. 19–22, but the high count was only of three, blown into Monterey Harbor Dec. 22 (DR, RER).

On the heels of the fall irruption of Red-footed Boobies came an imm. **Brown Booby** at Pacific Grove Dec. 3 (T. Farrell, D. Hope, †DR, †RER, †AB). Only one of the 5 previous Regional reports has been accepted by the C.B.R.C. (although some have not completed their review). The mortality of Brown Pelicans continued at Monterey, where at least 400 died (AB). Some were killed by overhead wires or cars while flying inland. Large numbers lingered late into winter, as exemplified by 983 on the Monterey Pen. CBC Dec. 28. Many CBCs recorded Brown Pelicans in record numbers or for the first time (e.g., two at Benicia, Solano, Dec. 22). Several remained as far north as Crescent City until Jan. 31 (ADB) and Humboldt Bay to Feb. 14 (FJB). A large roost count of Double-crested Cormorants was of 509 at Beach L., Sacramento, Dec. 5 (GEW). An imm. Pelagic Cormorant at Benicia Jan. 16 was the first for Solano (†RAE).

HERONS, WATERFOWL — Santa Clara's Snowy Egret x Little Blue Heron hybrid at Charleston Slough since Nov. 7 was last seen Dec. 30 (†A. Kratter et al.). The poor showing of Cattle Egrets throughout the Region continued, with few reports of groups of greater than 10. Eight Green-backed Herons at L. Merced, San Francisco, Dec. 28 (PJM) was a high count.



S.A.

Avian cholera was again a serious problem at the Modesto sewage ponds (see AB 41:323). Hand guns with signal cartridges were successfully used by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service personnel to haze Aleutian Canada Geese, but other waterfowl were apparently little affected. Over 5000 dead birds were removed from the ponds between mid-December and the end of February. Most of these (well over 90%) were Ruddy Ducks. It is hoped that a major outbreak of cholera will not become an annual event at the ponds. But the forced concentration of these birds caused by the limited amount of habitat available (and probably exacerbated by hunting pressure) increases their susceptibility to outbreaks of this kind.—Harold M. Reeve



Immature Trumpeter Swan at Modesto, Cal., Jan. 20, 1988.
Photo/Eric Caine.

Tundra Swans made news on the c. coast: 31 at Pescadero Marsh Dec. 26 (PJM) and 37 at College L. Dec. 21 (A. & J. Harryman et al.) were reported as the largest flocks on record for San Mateo and Santa Cruz, respectively. A bird showing characteristics of "Bewick's Swan" was at Lower Klamath N.W.R., Siskiyou, Feb. 12 (WEH, SMS). Reports of Trumpeter Swans are on the increase with six birds found this season. Three were at Lower Klamath N.W.R. Feb. 12 (WEH, SMS; details to C.B.R.C.); one (one year old?) was on Hwy 12, 4.5 mi west of I-5 in San Joaquin Dec. 26 (†MjL); an immature at the Modesto sewage ponds Jan. 20–25 (ph. ERC) was found sick on the latter date and died in captivity Feb. 2, probably from avian cholera (fide HMR); and an adult with a numbered green collar at L. Almanor, Plumas, Jan. 1–Feb. 15 (†TDM, †HG et al.) answered the question of whether the relatively sedentary introduced population at Malheur N.W.R. in s.e. Oregon is capable of producing California sightings. The bird was marked as an adult at Malheur Aug. 26, 1986, and was last seen there in March 1987 (fide HG).

Venice I. hosted 32,000+ Snow Geese and 8000+ Ross' Geese in late December, a notable concentration for San Joaquin (MjL, DGY). A "blue" Snow Goose at Moss Landing Jan. 23 (MjL) was exceptional on the coast, for the first valid record for Monterey. Ten+ were reported from the C.V. After 2 consecutive big winters on the coast, Ross' Geese were back to more normal numbers with three in Humboldt and one or two in Santa Cruz the only ones reported. Five+ "blue" Ross' were found at Lower Klamath, Sacramento, and Sutter refuges, but no "blue" Snow/Ross' intermediates were reported (see comments in AB 40: 325). A very obliging imm. Emperor Goose at Alameda Dec. 19+ (R. Jarrell, tph. m. ob.) was seen by hundreds of observers. "Cackling" Canada Geese were found on the coast at the Garcia R. bottoms, Mendocino, Feb. 15 (SFB) and at Stafford L., Marin, Jan. 12 (two—DAH).

"Common" Green-winged Teal were found at Arcata Jan. 18–Feb. 13 (GSL, LPL et al.), Alameda Dec. 26–30 (L. Parmeter), and Hayward Regional Shoreline, Alameda, Feb. 6+ (RJR et al.). Selected Eur. Wigeon reports helped detail the species' status in our Region. In the C.V., 19 at Gray Lodge W.A. Dec. 29 (fide BED) was our all-time high count; five at Ft. Dick, Del Norte, Jan. 31 (ADB) was the most ever on the n. coast; one at Elkhorn Slough, Monterey, Dec. 31–Jan. 3 (DR et al.) and three to four in Santa Cruz Dec. 6–Jan. 13 (DLSu et al.) were in well-covered areas with few previous records; and four in Stanislaus Feb. 6+ (†HMR) were surprisingly the only recent records, although the county has been little birded until now. Eurasian x Am. Wigeon hybrids were reported from Alameda Jan. 1 (DEQ) and Bolinas Lagoon, Marin, Jan. 12 (†DES).

College L. was again home to record numbers of ducks for Santa Cruz: 675 Green-winged Teal Dec. 23; 757 Cinnamon Teal Feb. 26; 141 N. Shovelers Jan. 8; 465 Canvasbacks Dec. 23; 232 Ring-necked Ducks Feb. 5; 27 Hooded Mergansers Mar. 4; and 2985 Ruddy Ducks Mar. 4 (DLSu et al.). On the Peace Valley CBC, Butte/Sutter, 5200 Canvasbacks and 2037 Buffleheads were over 10 times the previous high counts (fide BED).

Five Tufted Ducks were found: a male at the Smith R. estuary, Del Norte, Jan. 24–Feb. 14 was joined by a female Feb. 5–7 (†ADB et al.); in Marin a female was at Belvedere Jan. 2 (†DAH et al.) and a male was in Novato Feb. 12–20 (JCS et al.); and a male was at O'Neill Forebay, Merced, Feb. 21–23 (†MjL, JMa). This was the first time that birds in the greater S.F. Bay area were outnumbered by birds elsewhere. Even more Greater Scaup were at O'Neill Forebay than in the previous 2 years; about 300 were estimated present Feb. 21–22 (MjL, HMR). At Benicia, 200+ Surf Scoters Dec. 25 was considered a high number (JCL), so 1400+ there Jan. 9 (RAE) was exceptional. We still have much to learn concerning the inner limits of marine species using the upper S.F. Bay system. An ad. ♂ Surf found dead at the Modesto sewage ponds Jan. 17 (fide HMR) was the only inland scoter report.

An imm. ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye at King Salmon, Humboldt, Jan. 3–Feb. 15 (SWH, †LPL et al.) and a male and female at the Hollister sewage ponds, San Benito, Dec. 23 (KVV) were in

areas with few previous records. High counts of Hooded Mergansers were of 76 at Foster City in early December (N. Coiro) and 50–60 at L. Almanor Jan. 1 (TDM). At Comanche Res., 1700 Com. Mergansers Jan. 13 furnished one of the highest counts ever in San Joaquin (DGY). Four Red-breasted Mergansers at O'Neill Forebay Jan. 25–Feb. 26 (HMR et al.) furnished the only inland reports. Differences in molt schedule were noted among the Ruddy Ducks of Santa Cruz (DLSu, CKf). "Resident" birds at such places as Neary's Lagoon and Westlake came into full breeding plumage and began displaying by late January, but wintering birds only began to show color by the period's end. Only about .05% were in breeding plumage at College L. by Mar. 4.

RAPTORS — Reports of 29 Ospreys this season probably reflected both better reporting and more individuals wintering. A Black-shouldered Kite at Tule L., Siskiyou, Dec. 31 (FrT) was rare that far north. Red-shouldered Hawk continued to increase and expand its range. Santa Clara and Santa Cruz CBCs had record counts, and the Springville, Tulare, CBC tallied 48 along the Tule R. and tributaries (RAB). Despite the record total of Broad-winged Hawks at Pt. Diablo last fall, only one was reported this season: a rare dark morph at Red Bluff, Tehama, Dec. 20 (SAL). This was in contrast to winter 1982–1983, when a November rush of Broad-winged Hawks was followed by 15 winter reports. We had both latest- and earliest-ever Swainson's Hawks. The former were dark and light adults over Bouldin I., San Joaquin, Dec. 25 (DGY). Two light morph birds (adult and immature) at the w. end of Woodbridge Rd., San Joaquin, Feb. 7 (†J. Walters) were followed by another migrant over Alamo, Contra Costa, Feb. 12 (JMR). Three adults (two dark and one intermediate morph) plus two immatures at Venice I., San Joaquin, Feb. 20 (DGY) may have represented the vanguard of normal arrivals. A remarkable concentration of 125–150 Red-tailed Hawks gathered for 3 hours in a small field that was being plowed on Venice I., San Joaquin, Feb. 20 (DGY). Three "Harlan's" Hawks were reported, but observers now seem to consider them too common to describe. The only de-



Gray morph immature Gyr Falcon found injured near McArthur, Shasta Co., Cal., December 1987. Photo/Bob Yutzky.

scription submitted suggested a possible "Harlan's" intergrade: Woodbridge Rd., San Joaquin, Dec. 19 (fKH). Ferruginous Hawk was considered relatively numerous in Humboldt, Santa Cruz, and Stanislaus but rather scarce in Sacramento. Rough-legged Hawk was in low numbers throughout cismontane California. Hunters found a gray morph imm. Gyrfalcon with a broken wing near McArthur, Shasta, Dec. 26 (ph. BY). As it will not be releasable, it will become part of a captive breeding program. This is the 4th Regional and California record.

GALLIFORMES THROUGH CRANES — A Ring-necked Pheasant in the hills above Soquel Dec. 19 was suspected of being a recent release/escapee as the species has almost completely vanished as a resident in Santa Cruz (DLSu). A "pure albino" California Quail with dark eyes found in Arcata Nov. 16 was present through the winter (fide GSL).

A Yellow Rail seen at Tomales Bay Dec. 2 (RS) was possibly the same one seen there Dec. 21 (PP, SNHG). Another was captured at Palo Alto Baylands Jan. 17, brought back to health, and released Jan. 19 (fJ). Broyles, L. & J. Young fide WGB). The surge in sightings recently might suggest this species is increasing in the West, but it seems more likely that increased observer coverage under the right conditions has been the cause. It is hoped that Yellow Rails still winter regularly in coastal California, as they were recognized as doing early in the century. Further, the breeding population of Yellow Rails in Klamath County, Ore., has rekindled hopes that California, too, still provides nesting habitat for the species.

The 2nd Yellow Rail at Tomales Bay was observed as it was caught and killed by a Great Egret. Thanks to the quick actions of the observers, the egret lost its meal, and the specimen is now housed at the California Academy of Sciences. An alarming number of Black Rails have fallen prey to egrets and other avian predators in recent years, and this year was no exception. There have already been calls for the placement of protective shelters to be used by rails during high tides (SFB).

Rare coastal Sandhill Cranes were at Bolinas Lagoon, Marin, Dec. 11 (P. Allen); Hayward, Alameda, Dec. 20 (RJR); and Portola Valley, San Mateo, Dec. 20–Jan. 3 (fide WGB, PJM).

SHOREBIRDS — Lesser Golden-Plovers provided no real surprises. Marin hosted 21+ wintering birds with seven others seen along the coast from Humboldt to San Mateo and seven more in the San Joaquin Valley, San Joaquin/Stanislaus. Semipalmated Plovers at Wilder Creek Beach, Santa Cruz, Nov. 27–Dec. 12 (DEG) and Crescent City Harbor Dec. 20 (RE) were apparently still on the move; neither was seen subsequently. Mendocino's first Mountain Plover was at McKerricher State Beach Jan. 3–10 (DT, JMa). Seventy-eight Am. Avocets at L. Washington, Yolo, Jan. 22 (GEW) were said to be "amazing" on that early date (TDM). One at San Felipe L. Feb. 6 was thought to provide only the 4th San Benito record (DSg).

As with a number of other shorebirds, Long-billed Curlews are local in the Region in winter. One at Sealcliff State Beach Jan. 25 furnished only the 5th winter record for Santa Cruz in 18 years (DLSu). Sanderlings were again found in Stanislaus with singles seen on 4 dates in December and February (ERC, HMR). Singles at Harkin's Slough, Santa Cruz, Dec. 21–22 (DEG et al.) and Feb. 3 (DLSu) were 2.3 mi from the ocean in flooded fields; one at Benicia, Solano, Jan. 16 (RAE) was far up the S. F. Bay system but in an area where they have been found wintering regularly in recent years (fide RbL). An alternate-plumaged W. Sandpiper at San Rafael, Marin, Jan. 2 (LJP) was an unusual winter sight. In Santa Cruz Feb. 26, four Westerns at Laguna Creek Beach and seven at Wilder Creek Beach were apparently early migrants, as none had been there on numerous earlier visits (DEG). A juv. Pectoral Sandpiper on lower Watsonville Slough, Santa Cruz, Nov. 22–Dec. 4 (C. Wolfe et al.) and a Ruff in the Arcata Bottoms, Humboldt, Dec. 3 (KI) were late.

Based on extensive birding in Santa Cruz this season, the wintering populations of several shorebirds were estimated for the entire county: up to 93 Black-necked Stilts (high), up to 10 Am. Avocets, 25 Greater Yellowlegs, up to eight Lesser

Yellowlegs, up to 11 W. Sandpipers, up to 160 Least Sandpipers, 145 Dunlins, and 425 Long-billed Dowitchers (DLSu et al.).

San Joaquin was host to another winter Wilson's Phalarope, this one at the Lodi sewage ponds Feb. 6 (DGY). The last Red-necked Phalaropes were all seen Dec. 7: one at Bolinas Lagoon, Marin (R. Alexander), and three in Santa Cruz (BLaB, RMrr et al.). Red Phalaropes were present in good numbers through December with 333 on the Del Norte County CBC Dec. 20 (fide ADB) and 9337 on the Monterey Peninsula CBC Dec. 28 (fide DR). All had vanished by mid-January.

GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS — The last Franklin's Gull of the fall lingered to Dec. 11 at Stockton sewage ponds, San Joaquin (DGY). An ad. Little Gull was at the same ponds Dec. 11+ (DGY, m.ob.). Whether this was "the" wintering bird arrived/detected late or was one of the usual spring birds that chose to winter is unknown. Heermann's Gulls were again abundant in the Monterey area into early winter. Thorough surveys of the coast in Santa Cruz and Monterey south to Carmel R. mouth Dec. 22–25 recorded 521 (DLSu, m.ob.). Within this area, their distribution correlated very closely with that of Brown Pelicans, with 83.5% around the Monterey Pen. (DLSu).

An apparent hybrid Herring x Glaucous-winged gull adult (see AB 41:324) was at Spreckles L., San Francisco, Dec. 28 (JM). The largest concentration of Herring Gulls reported was surprisingly of 160 at San Felipe L., San Benito, Dec. 30, by far a county record-high count (KVV). Four Thayer's Gulls, a W. Gull, and a Glaucous Gull there that day were all firsts for San Benito (fKVV). The highest report of Thayer's was of 120 at the Sausalito herring run Jan. 17 (DAH). Eight Glaucous-winged Gulls were reported in the C.V. from Butte to Stanislaus. Only six Glaucous Gulls were reported, including the one mentioned above. One was at the Davis dump, Yolo, Dec. 3 (fGEW), and four were coastal from Marin to Monterey Dec. 24–Feb. 23 (fDAH, fDLSu, et al.). Black-legged Kittiwakes remained scarce.

Barring duplication, 10 Caspian Terns were found, including six in Humboldt. These were two each at Mad R. mouth Jan. 24–29 (D. Muschalek), Arcata Marsh Feb. 7–15 (C. Ogan), and Eel R. mouth Feb. 13 (FJB). The others were two flying S at Pajaro Dunes, Santa Cruz, Jan. 2 (StG); one at Pajaro R. mouth, Santa Cruz/Monterey, Feb. 29 (DLSu); and one at Modesto sewage ponds Feb. 17 (fERC). A late Elegant Tern was at Carmel River Beach, Monterey, Dec. 5 (BJW). January and February counts of Forster's Terns continued to increase at Humboldt Bay and in the Delta region. Arcata hosted 25 on Feb. 7 (FJB); 107 were on Stockton sewage ponds Jan. 25 (DGY); four were at Pocket Area, Sacramento, Jan. 12 (GEW); and five were at L. Washington, Yolo, Jan. 22 (GEW). A Black Skimmer at Salinas R. mouth, Monterey, Feb. 12 (JWr) furnished the earliest record for the Region by over 2 months.

One Marbled Murrelet off Pt. Pinos Dec. 28 (DLSu) was perhaps average for the Monterey Pen. in winter. Ancient Murrelets were very scarce, with only 8 sightings reported, none of more than three birds. "Heavy mortality" of Cassin's Auklets was noted in the Monterey area in December, with many birds dead on beaches and at sea (AB). Yet the Monterey Pen. CBC tallied 7143 Dec. 28, two orders of magnitude higher than any other count this decade, and three times any in the 1970s. Presumably the occurrence of such high numbers and the mortality were both the results of unusual conditions.

OWLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — Reports of 37 Burrowing Owls, mostly at "new" locales, was encouraging, but they were "in real trouble" in Monterey (fide DR). The species was missed on the Monterey Pen. CBC for the first time in years and it is now gone from 2 formerly regular locales. Single Barred Owls were found, as now expected, at Willow Cr., Humboldt, Dec. 26 (SDF) and at Howland Hill, Del Norte, Dec. 27 (JAR). Last winter's Tule Lake N.W.R. bird also reappeared Dec. 15 (FrT) and Jan. 23 (RE, apparently on other dates by refuge personnel). A Long-eared Owl at Kirby Park, Elkhorn Slough, Jan. 1–9 (CT, PJM, m.ob.) provided the first "chaseable, day-roost" Monterey record (fide DR), and one of 9 records

this season in the Region. Short-eared Owls were apparently in usual to slightly better numbers, with one on the Fall River Mills CBC said to furnish a first winter record for Shasta (*fide* BY). Three N. Saw-whet Owls were on the C.V. floor, at Metro Airport, Sacramento, Dec. 27 (recent roadkill, GEW-Sacramento CBC); near Turlock, Stanislaus, Jan. 19 (road injured, to be released, *fide* HMR); and at Discovery Park, American River Parkway, Sacramento, Feb. 6-10 (DoM, DLO, ph. EDG, m.ob.). A Vaux's Swift over the Univ. of California, Santa Cruz, campus Jan. 12 (DLSu: "third Santa Cruz winter period record") was not unexpected for the Region, but 50 over Hayward Shoreline Jan. 19 (RJR, KGH, G. Graves) was the 2nd-largest number ever reported during this season. Nearly all winter records are in coastal lowlands from Marin south.

Single Costa's Hummingbirds were at Porterville, Tulare, Dec. 25 (C. Gunderson); on the Redding CBC Dec. 27 (BY, CY); and at Sanger, Fresno (I. Paine "? Feb.," *fide* RHG). A very early Rufous Hummingbird at Rio Dell, Humboldt, Feb. 10 (I. Siipola) should have been documented (AB 39:207). The first Allen's Hummingbird was a few days early for the Region Jan. 14 at Univ. of California Santa Cruz (DLSu). Four *Selasphorus* sp. were all coastal, Dec. 8-Jan. 1; all were reported as one-day-only birds. An amazing seven Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were noted: Eureka Dec. 18-Jan. 23 (†PFS, SDF, m.ob.); Olema Dec. 18 (juv.—RS); the Cheese Factory near Nicasio, Marin, Dec. 22-Mar. 13 (juv.—DWm, CLF, CLO, m.ob.); an adult at the same locale at least until Feb. 26 (CLF); Ferndale Jan. 3-9 ("imm. male"—GSL, ADB, m.ob.); Palo Alto Jan. 22 (A. Jasberg); and Moraga Jan. 24 (GA). At least the 4th and 6th birds above were returns, indicating considerable site fidelity. The Region had only 13 records previously; the unofficial total is now of 17. Also impressive were 11 cismontane Red-naped Sapsucker records this winter Dec. 9-Feb. 22. This included a very overdue first Humboldt record at Bayside Dec. 18-Feb. 14 (ADB, RAE, m.ob.). Red-naped x Red-breasted Sapsucker hybrids were described from San Joaquin, at Acampo Dec. 19-20 (†DGY) and at Stockton Feb. 20 (a different bird—†DGY). A Black-backed Woodpecker (rarely reported in winter) was at 7350 ft at Sierra Ski Ranch, El Dorado, Feb. 17 (WGB). The few reports of Yellow-shafted and intergrade N. Flickers were of above usual numbers. Pileated Woodpeckers were surprises at Fall Cr. Dec. 19 (†DLSu—"first ever for Santa Cruz CBC"), and Green Valley (RbL, JCL—"Scarcely known from Solano").

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS — A **Hammond's Flycatcher** in Inverness, Marin, gave us our 2nd winter record Dec. 14-Feb. 7 (†RS, JGE, PP, DWm, m.ob.), surviving "25 days of 20 (lows) and hard frost" (RS). Reports by several skilled observers of a 2nd Hammond's Flycatcher in Oakland's hills were undocumented (!). Details will be solicited for a later addendum here. A W. Flycatcher was in Santa Cruz Dec. 19-Jan. 6 (†DSe, BBrr, DLSu). I agree with DR's diagnosis of a 2nd bird in Garzas Canyon off Carmel Valley, seen Feb. 20 (T. Crisler): "could be a very early arrival, but better treated as [a] winterer." One Black Phoebe was far to the northeast on the Fall River Mills CBC Dec. 19 (*fide* BY—"New for CBC and winter here"), and another was remarkably high at 6000 ft near Dinkey Cr., Fresno, Jan. 21 (JCL). Two E. Phoebes were discovered, one near Jameson Canyon Dec. 22-24 (MFRi, †MBG, ph. T. Battiste, †JCL, RbL, m.ob.) and another at Faith Ranch west of Modesto, Stanislaus, Jan. 18-Mar. 13 (M. Larkin, †HMR, DSG, m.ob.). Eastern Phoebes appear exceptional among our vagrant passerines in that many records are inland and occur almost strictly in late fall and winter. I would predict also that a fair proportion are adults (this could be checked with banding), and that in fact we are simply at the far edge of a normal winter range; our birds are not "vagrants" in the classic sense (i.e., misoriented), simply very rare. Our 5th **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** was cooperative at Monterey Bay Academy, Santa Cruz, Jan. 21-Mar. 10 (†DLSu, †DR, m.ob.). Both Ash-throated Flycatchers this season were returnees, at Rohnert Park, Sonoma, Feb. 6-12 (†KFC) and O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area,

Merced, Dec. 23 (†KFC, Los Banos CBC). A Tropical Kingbird was at L. Merced Dec. 20-Mar. 12 (A. Smith, PJM, ASH, m.ob.). The timing of migration in Cassin's Kingbirds is, unsurprisingly, poorly known in the Region. Two just north of San Ardo Jan. 26-Feb. 7 (BGE) probably wintered. "Several" at Arroyo Seco Feb. 6 (DLSh) were of uncertain status, but one in Panoche Valley Feb. 27 (TAC) surely represented seasonal movement. An imm. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher reported from east of Linden, San Joaquin, Jan. 2 (D. & A. Filson) appeared to be correct based on the verbal description (*fide* DGY; written details may be forthcoming), but observers are reminded that this species is among those reviewed by the C.B.R.C., and written details are necessary.

Tree Swallows appeared to be in above average numbers. A sighting of five Dec. 5 at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, Butte, prompted this interesting comment from BED (the observer and subregional editor for the north C.V.): "At one time, any Tree Swallow records in this area before late December were unusual, but I now have several for early December. Still none for early November." Five Barn Swallows were well away from normal migration timing, Dec. 13-Jan. 23.

JAYS THROUGH THRASHERS — Of several Steller's Jay reports from low elevations, the most atypical locale was of one in Modesto Jan. 22+ (HMR, SLR; 75 ft). After a good fall, the only Pinyon Jay reports were of 40 Dec. 13 at Lava Beds N.M. (JMD) and one at Tule Lake N.W.R. Feb. 4 (RbL), both in Siskiyou. Reminiscent of last fall/winter is but one report of Clark's Nutcracker after a strong fall: 43 (very many!) along Emerford Rd., Lake, "evidently present throughout the period" (JRW). A Black-billed Magpie near Blue Lake, Humboldt (*fide* C. Ogan, no date), was dismissed by GSL as an escapee; no specific evidence for captivity was given, and I suspect that in general most extralimital magpie records are not of escapees. All 9 reports of Com. Ravens were of good numbers or of wanderers past usual limits. One or two on Sherman I. Feb. 21 (†TDM) were among "very few (2-3) records for Sacramento." Observers should watch for evidence of lowland colonization, especially in the C.V. in the next decade. Two Mountain Chickadees, visiting Spring Lakes Golf Course in Scott Valley Dec. 19 (†BSch), gave Santa Cruz its first records. Is that scored as one birdie or two? For once there was general agreement about Red-breasted Nuthatches: they were scarce, if somewhat wandering. A flock of 12 Pygmy Nuthatches at Smith R., 4-5 mi east of High Divide, Dec. 20 (GSL) established a first record for Del Norte, on the heels of last fall's Humboldt record (which was actually their 2nd, not first record, *fide* RAE). One Pygmy Nuthatch in Dinuba, Tulare (330 ft), Jan. 22 (RHG) was an unexpected wanderer to the C.V. floor.

In Santa Cruz this winter, DLSu and other active observers uncovered 23+ House Wrens. Nearly all were in coastal scrub adjacent to riparian habitat. The species is probably somewhat more common than currently known in much of the Region's lowlands in winter. Golden-crowned Kinglets, like Red-breasted Nuthatches, did not irrupt, being in decidedly low numbers. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were well reported, with one in Mix Canyon Dec. 20 (DSH) at 2500 ft; most in winter are at very low elevations. Mountain Bluebirds were reported in average numbers at traditional posts but were virtually absent in areas of irruption (e.g., the C.V. floor) and as vagrants, with none toward the coast. Townsend's Solitaires were well reported (16+), with eight toward the coast. There was no striking pattern to Am. Robin numbers despite good reporting; they were in roughly average numbers for most areas, with the only large report being of roughly 10,000 in the Summit City area on the Redding CBC Dec. 27 (BVDm, R. Hull). Varied Thrushes invaded the Region in large numbers, especially along the coast. Although interior and coastal wintering populations are largely separate (see Grinnell and Miller 1944, *The Distribution of the Birds of California*), there seems to be a good correlation in annual numbers between these groups. In w. Marin, RS noted exceedingly high mortality, especially because of cats. Fascinating was a record of a Wrentit singing

over 2–4 inches of snow along Providence Creek Rd., Fresno, Dec. 7 at 6200 ft (JCL). The observer was “reasonably certain these high elevation birds are resident.” Coastward Sage Thrashers were singles in the Arcata Bottoms Dec. 18 (JCS, Arcata CBC) and near Mt. Diablo Jan. 2 (†JM, Contra Costa CBC); two at Lava Beds N.M. Dec. 13 (JMD) were exceptional as winter Great Basin reports and were far north as well. A Brown Thrasher skulked in Chico at least from early December to Feb. 13 (A. Dauterman, †HG, BED, TDM, BY, m.ob.). It was obviously difficult to see, as it was variously reported as having one foot and being three-legged. As noted last fall, our 6th **Bendire's Thrasher** returned to Lodi, San Joaquin, Oct. 31–Mar. 1 (GEW, DGY, m.ob.) after a hiatus last winter.

WAXWINGS THROUGH VIREOS — Bohemian Waxwings strongly irrupted into the n. counties. Some 550 were tallied through Siskiyou Dec. 19+ (NEC, RE, MFRb, CST, m.ob.). Up to nine in Arcata Feb. 12–Mar. 8 (C. Dillingham, RAE, GSL, m.ob.) were the first for Humboldt since 1969 (when up to 2000 were present, *fide* GSL). A startling fill-in was the first confirmed record for *Del Norte* (three near Hiouchi Feb. 17, ADB), and also surprising were 2 among very few records for *Shasta* (six at Glenburn Jan. 23, BVdM, BY *et al.*, and five from Fall River Mills to McArthur Jan. 25, BY, BVdM *et al.*). Our only other records were from elsewhere in our portion of the Great Basin, with the southernmost 2 at Mono Lake County Park Jan. 22 (RS). Cedar Waxwings were in good numbers, but with no obvious pattern.

Of 19 N. Shrikes, 12 were in the Great Basin, six were coastward (*Del Norte* to Marin), and one was in the C.V. just north of Gray Lodge Wildlife Area Jan. 24 (†ERI). Two Loggerhead Shrikes at Eel River Beach Jan. 3 (J. Nusbaum, Centerville Beach CBC) were the less expected shrike species for the n. coast. Five of our eight Solitary Vireos were in the C.V.—our best winter showing ever. The five *V. s. cassinii* (three coastal) were noted Dec. 9–28, except for one present “throughout the period” (DGY). Both *V. s. plumbeus* birds were interior, at Lodi L. Dec. 19 (DGY, Stockton CBC) and Kewin Park, Modesto, Dec. 22 (†HMR), the latter for Stanislaus’ 2nd record of that form. Some 13 Hutton's Vireos were noted on the C.V. floor Dec. 3–Jan. 31, which was better than average but generally expected. Less well established are fall and spring timing for such birds and winter habitat and elevations in general. A bird at 5450 ft along Providence Cr., Fresno, Jan. 25 (JCL) was in dense mixed coniferous forest. Our 4th December record of **Warbling Vireo** was in the Corral de Tierra area of Monterey Dec. 28 (L. Jensen, Monterey Peninsula CBC; details reviewed by DR).

WOOD WARBLERS THROUGH TANAGERS — Only four Tennessee Warblers (one on the Crystal Springs CBC, two

on the Monterey Pen. CBC and another in Pacific Grove Jan. 30, LRBe) were reported. Some 34+ Nashville Warblers was above average, apparently due both to improved CBC reporting to us and a good winter for them. All were coastal. A **Virginia's Warbler** sighting at Kewin Park, Modesto, Dec. 22–Jan. 30 (†HMR, †ERC, EHa, m.ob.) furnished our 3rd winter record and one of fewer than 10 records at any season away from both the coast and Mono, for which most of the few such are from the well-birded Yosemite region. Not to be outdone, Monterey, site of the first 2 winter period records, added another on Feb. 29 (†RER). A usual 13 Yellow Warblers (all coastal) included eight at L. Merced, S.F., Dec. 28 (PJM, San Francisco CBC). Livermore, Alameda, was home to the Region's 2nd wintering **Chestnut-sided Warbler** Feb. 9–Mar. 7 (†KGH, ph. RJR, †JMR, †RAE, m.ob.). A **Cape May Warbler** at Inverness Dec. 19–Jan. 10 (DDK, RS, JaW, Pt. Reyes CBC) provided only the Region's 4th or 5th winter record.

Numbers of Black-throated Gray Warblers vary greatly from winter to winter; 18+ this season was roughly average. Impressive were four Townsend's Warblers in the C.V. Dec. 22+, and four at Jameson Canyon, Napa, Dec. 31 (RAE, MFRi) were “apparently unusual here in winter.” The interior edges of the wintering population's range are poorly documented in our notebooks. Amazing were three wintering Prairie Warblers, Oct. 27–Dec. 10 east of Sunset State Beach (RAE, DLSu), Nov. 9–Feb. 20 at Princeton Harbor (ALE, PJM, JMR, RSTh, m.ob.), and Jan. 2–Feb. 7 at Bolinas Lagoon (R. McDonald, *fide* PP; DWm, CLO, DSg). The 2nd (and possibly the 3rd) were returnees. In an echo of last fall's remarkable invasion, 39+ Palm Warblers were noted along our coast through the period, for the best total in 4 years. Included was one apparent *D. p. hypochrysea* at Kentfield, Marin, Dec. 17–Mar. 14 (BiL, GHg). The Yellow-throated Warbler noted last season visited Stinson Beach Nov. 29–Dec. 6 (KH *et al.*). Ten more Black-and-white Warblers were reported this season than in any past winter, with 26 in coastal counties (including the S.F. Bay area). Also an all-time high was six Am. Redstarts, which were scattered the length of the coast; our average for the past 7 winters is now two. MacGillivray's Warblers were noted at Half Moon Bay Dec. 19 (†RSTh, Crystal Springs CBC) and College L., Santa Cruz, Jan. 1 (DLSu). Far north at this season were Com. Yellowthroats at College of the Redwoods, Humboldt, Jan. 3 (SWH) and Arcata marsh Jan. 24 (FJB). Nine Wilson's Warblers was about par; they dotted the length of the coast. Male and female Summer Tanagers were along Corralitos Cr., the ad. male spending its 3rd winter at least, Dec. 5–Mar. 15 (RAE, BLAB, †DLSu, DSg, m.ob.), with the female nearby Jan. 24–Mar. 19 (M. Mammoser, †CKf, †DLSu). A 3rd bird was a well-studied female at Suisun, Solano, Dec. 15–Feb. 25 (D. Salvato, †MBG, ph. T., Battiste, †JCL, m.ob.). A total of 15 W. Tanagers was our best ever for the season by two. The northernmost were two in Chico Dec. 30, with one to Jan. 3 (†TDM, AM, m.ob., Chico CBC), the interior total being a very impressive six.

EMBERIZINES — Rose-breasted Grosbeaks vacationed at Pacific Grove Dec. 7–9 (imm. male; R. Bethel) and Inverness Dec. 19+ (imm. female?; RS, DDK *et al.*, Pt. Reyes CBC). A ♂ Black-headed Grosbeak was singing in Saratoga, Santa Clara, Feb. 13 (D. Leal), 2 months early. Such birds are generally presumed to have wintered somewhere nearby. This season garnered our 7th and 8th winter records for Indigo Bunting: an imm. male Dec. 3–4 at Westhaven (GSL, LPL) and a female at Ano Nuevo Jan. 25–30 (GJS, RAE, PJM; ph.?). The latter bird apparently furnished the first record for any season there. A Rufous-crowned Sparrow on the n.w. slope of Twin Peaks Dec. 28 (RS, San Francisco CBC) apparently provided a first county record for San Francisco. A remarkable count of 21 in the Battlecreek area Feb. 20 (BVdM *et al.*) had as precedent only one bird for Shasta (Feb. 23, 1985). Just 2 reports of Am. Tree Sparrow was quite few: four were at Tule Lake N.W.R. Dec. 30 (FrT), and one was on the Honey L. CBC Dec. 31 (*fide* TDM). Among records for 18 Chipping Sparrows was a peak of 13 in Acampo, San Joaquin, Dec. 19–Jan. 26 (TDM, AM, DGY). Four



Chestnut-sided Warbler at Livermore, Cal., Feb. 16, 1988. Photo/Robert J. Richmond.

Clay-colored Sparrows along the coast gave us 12th–15th Regional records for the period: Nov. 30–Dec. 11 at Salinas (BHG, †KVV), Dec. 19 at Princeton Harbor (PJM), and Jan. 3 in Fernald, with the latter bird joined by a 2nd Jan. 4 (GSL, ADB, MFRb, RE). There are still no records for the Region Jan. 23–Apr. 28. Some 40+ Vesper Sparrows included a first winter record for Siskiyou: Dec. 27 at Tule Lake N.W.R. (RE, Tule Lake CBC). This also apparently furnished California's northernmost record for this season. A Black-throated Sparrow in San Jose Dec. 4–Feb. 29+ (F. & D. O'Sullivan, †WGB) constituted our first winter record in 6 years (about our 10th ever).

A Lark Bunting Dec. 2 along W. Butte Rd., Sutter (KH, BED, WDS), was at a popular locale for that species. A male near Hornitos, Mariposa, Jan. 10 (CLY, JW) was noteworthy in the Sierra foothills. The past few winters have held several records of Grasshopper Sparrow, virtually unknown at this season previously. Not to disappoint, one was on Mt. Diablo at Curry Pt. this Jan. 2 (†JM, ph. J. Edgar, Contra Costa CBC), with another nearby at Briones Regional Park Feb. 27 (M. Stern). Seven Sharp-tailed Sparrows were widely dispersed: singles were at Jacoby Cr. mouth Dec. 18–Mar. 16 (ADB *et al.*; 2nd Humboldt record), s. end of Tomales Bay Nov. 23–Dec. 19 (RS *et al.*; see last fall's report), Palo Alto Baylands Dec. 21–Jan. 20 (†M. Mammoser, †DEQ, †WGB, m.ob.), Pine Gulch Cr. mouth in Bolinas Lagoon Jan. 2–Feb. 6 (MJL, PP), and Arcata Marsh Jan. 18–19 (KS); two were at Limantour Spit, Marin, Feb. 7 (MJL).

A remarkable 88+ Swamp Sparrows were reported, more than in the previous 2 best winters combined. Most were in Marin, with only two birds not in coastal counties, on Woodbridge Rd., San Joaquin, Dec. 19 (KH; present from fall) and "Taylor Rd. at Jennings Rd.," Stanislaus, Dec. 30–Feb. 22 (†HMR, JHG). White-throated Sparrows equalled last winter's good show and were less concentrated toward the coast than Swamps, as expected, with 12 of 52+ records away from coastal counties. An impressive five Harris' Sparrows were away from Great Basin areas, at Ft. Dick Dec. 20 (RST), San Jose Jan. 5–9 (banded; LRM), n. Stockton Jan. 11–Feb. 21 (F. Clayton, MJL, m.ob.), n. spit Humboldt Bay Jan. 27 (D. Muschalek), and Pescadero Jan. 31–Feb. 27 (PJM, RSTh, m.ob.). Ten more in Great Basin areas was usual. Mind-boggling was a sober estimate of 500+ Lapland Longspurs on Gazelle Flats northwest of Gazelle, Siskiyou, Jan. 18 (RE, MFRb), with only a few present before and after this date (e.g., 15 on Jan. 24). Nevertheless, there were 4 previous records of 100 or more, all from the n.e. portion of the state, including a Honey L. CBC total of 492 in December 1978 (this year's total: one). Chestnut-collared Longspur numbers on Bear River Ridge, Humboldt, peaked at an impressive 30 Nov. 29–Feb. 21 (FJB, RE, GSL, SDF, m.ob.), and also noteworthy were three to five at Ave. 276 and Rd. 176, Tulare, Feb. 28 (RH). A Snow Bunting drifted to Bear River Ridge Nov. 29–Jan. 5 (FJB, †A. Desch, m.ob.); observers are reminded that this is a C.B.R.C.-reviewed species and requires documentation.

ICTERINES THROUGH FINCHES — Tricolored Blackbird was unreported away from Santa Cruz; observers are reminded that this species needs close checking, as it is very likely in a decline (of unknown speed). Anecdotal evidence indicates the species is occurring in smaller flocks than historically, perhaps a behavioral shift in response to fragmented habitat. Will breeding success decline? Half Moon Bay's Rusty Blackbird clearly wintered, being seen through the period Nov. 18–Jan. 20 (BS, CGR). My recent statement (AB 40:328) that a count of 100 Brown-headed Cowbirds was "exceptional anywhere in the Region at this season," was unfortunately quite wrong. While most CBCs, for example, record modest numbers, the species is still locally numerous in winter (e.g., 866 on the Sacramento CBC this year was very low for them). Other concentrations reported this winter were of 107 on the S.F. CBC; a series of pre-roost flock counts at one site in Rohnert Park, Sonoma, of about 100–210 Dec. 6–Feb. 5, indicating overwintering (KFC); and 210 on Harkin's Slough Rd., Santa Cruz, Feb. 15 (DLSu). Observers are encouraged to read the recent cowbird



Male Orchard Oriole at Pacific Grove, Cal., December 1987. Photo/R. F. Tintle.

paper by SAL (Western Birds 18:63–70) and to track population levels at all seasons. The Monterey CBC gave us an impressive three Orchard Orioles Dec. 28. A ♀-plumaged bird remained at Yankee Pt. to Jan. 4 (RLB, C. Hartzell *et al.*) as did one male in Pacific Grove (DLSu, BLAb, T. Crisler *et al.*), while another male there hung around through Feb. 15 (DLSu, BLAb, ph. DR, ph. RFT, m.ob.). An imm. ♂ Hooded Oriole was observed in La Selva Dec. 31–Jan. 1 (DLSu; † to Moss Landing CBC). Of eight N. Orioles (slightly below average), five were "Bullock's" and three unidentified to form.

Purple Finches were in modestly above average numbers throughout most of the Region. Among 8 Cassin's Finch reportings were six birds in Smith R. Jan. 22 (ADB—"first Del Norte lowland record") and eight in upper foothills west of the C.V. Dec. 30–Jan. 30 (HMR, DGY). It was clearly a Red Crossbill irruption year—good but much smaller than the record-setting 1984–1985 invasion. Only 4 reports were away from coastal counties (28 birds; RHG, MP, StS), with greatest enthusiasm and highest numbers from the 3 subregional editors surrounding the Santa Cruz Mts. (PJM, WGB, DLSu). An estimated 1050 birds were reported from Santa Cruz through the period (DLSu). Pine Siskins too were in good numbers at least in some areas (e.g., Santa Cruz, Shasta, the C.V.). A ♂ Lesser Goldfinch in Fresno Feb. 20–Feb. 21 (†JCL) showed black in the face. We have several records of "dark-backed" Lessers on file from throughout the Region, and it seems most likely this is genetic variation, not vagrancy. Still, full descriptions of any odd birds are valuable. Reports of 16+ Lawrence's Goldfinches Dec. 20+ was just above average seasonally and included three on the coast at Pescadero Feb. 27 (RSTh, D. Keller, SEF). Evening Grosbeaks appeared in typical modest numbers.

CORRIGENDUM — Santa Cruz held six Yellow Warblers last winter (not five as stated, AB 41:326), with a seasonal total thus of 13.

CITED CONTRIBUTORS (subregional editors in bold-face) — Garth Alton, Stephen F. Bailey, Alan Baldrige, Robert A. Barnes, Bruce Barrett (BBrr), Alan D. Barron, Tony Battiste, Robert Bethel, Louis R. Bevier (LRBe), **William G. Bousman**, Ronald L. Branson, Fred J. Broerman, Eric R. Caine, Kurt F. Campbell, Theodore A. Chandik, Neal E. Clark, Frank Clayton, Jr., Tim Crisler, J. Michael Danzenbaker, Abbie Dauterman, Anthony Desch, **Bruce E. Deuel**, Colin Dillingham, Jimm Edgar, Art L. Edwards, Ray Ekstrom, Bruce G. Elliot, Richard A. Erickson, Jules G. Evens, Gil Ewing (GEW), Terry Farrell, Carter L. Faust, Dick & Ann Filson, Shawneen E. Finnegan, Sam D. Fitton, James H. Gain, Douglas E. George, Bruce H. Gerow, **Ron H. Gerstenberg**, Steven Getty (StG), Gen Graves, Edward D. Greaves, **Helen Green**, Marguerite B. Gross, Conitia Gunderson, Keith Hansen, Rob Hansen, W. Edward Harper, Stanley W. Harris, Chris Hartzell, Ed Hase (EHa), Kevin G. Hints, David A. Holway, Doris Hope, Alan S. Hopkins, George Hugenberg

(GHg), Roland Hull, Ken Irwin, Alberta Jasberg, Lin Jensen, Durrel D. Kapan, Dan Keller, Clay Kempf, Bruce LaBar (BLaB), Michael Larkin, Steven A. Laymon, David Leal, Bill Lenarz (BiL), Robin Leong (RbL), Gary S. Lester, Lauren P. Lester, Michael J. Lippsmeyer, John C. Lovio, Cliff Lyons (CLy), Mike Mammosser, Timothy D. Manolis, Anne Manolis, John Mariani (JMa), Rod McDonald, Peter J. Metropulos, L. Richard Mewaldt, Joseph Morlan, Don Munson (DoM), Derek Muschalek, Jerry Nusbaum, Charles O'Connor, Chet Ogan, Diana L. Oretsky, Frank & Duane O'Sullivan, Ingrid Paine, Michael Perrone, Lina Jane Prairie, Peter Pyle, Dave E. Quady, Harold M. Reeve, Sherrie L. Reeves, Clifford G. Richer, Elsie Richey (ERi), Jean M. Richmond, Robert J. Richmond, Michael F. Rippey (MFRi), Michael F. Robbins (MFRo), Don Roberson, Robin E. Roberson, James A. Rooney, Dorothy Salvato, Ken Salzman, Barry Sauppe, Barbara Scharfenstein (BSch), Donald E. Schmoldt, Steve Schubert, Susan M. Scott, Dennis Serdehely (DSe),

Douglas Shaw (DSh), Debra L. Shearwater (DLSh), W. David Shuford, Ida Siipola, Dan Singer (DSg), Anne Smith, Paul F. Springer, Rich Stallcup, John C. Sterling, Maury Stern, Chris Stromsness (CSt), David L. Suddjian, Chris Tenney, Ron S. Thorn (RSTh), Robert F. Tintle, Dorothy Tobkin, Francis Toldi (FrT), Richard S. Tryon, Kent Van Vuren (KVV), Bill Von der Mehden (BVdM), Jack Walters, John Warriner (JWr), Janet Wessel (JaW), Jerry R. White, David Wimpfheimer (DWm), Jon Winter, David G. Yee, Bob Yutzy, Carol Yutzy. Many more contributors were not specifically cited; all are appreciated.—STEPHEN F. BAILEY (loons through cormorants, raptors, jaegers through alcids), Dept. of Ornithology & Mammology, Calif. Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA 94118; RICHARD A. ERICKSON (herons and waterfowl, quails through shorebirds), P.O. Box B-1, Felton, CA 95018; KURT F. CAMPBELL (pigeons through finches), P.O. Box 268, Cotati, CA 94928.