

MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

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Rare and occasionally high numbers of seabirds reflected a persisting warm water pattern along the coast. The breaking of the drought led to extensive waterfowl production in several areas. For example, 1350 chicks from more than 200 broods were found at one lake east of the Sierra Nevada. The emphasis on breeding birds reflected the work of countrywide atlas projects. Readers are encouraged to participate in local efforts.

Continuing the pattern set in spring, vagrant landbirds were few and far between. If not for a decent May, the vagrant warbler season would have been a washout.

Abbreviations: B.S.O.L. (*Big Sur Ornithology Lab., Monterey*); C.C.R.S. (*Coyote Cr. Riparian banding Station, Santa Clara*); C.V. (*Central Valley*); Cyn. (*Canyon*); F.I. (*Southeast Farallon I., S.F.*); P.R.B.O. (*Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory*); S.F. (*San Francisco*); ph. (*photo on file with Regional Editors*). All records from F.I. and Palomarin should be credited to Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS TO FRIGATEBIRDS

Many loons summer along our coast, but few go inland. *Trinity* had an alternate-plumaged Pacific Loon on Lewiston Res., and a basic-plumaged Com. Loon on Trinity Res., both July 31 (†R.W. Hewitt, †GjH, Dfx). Conversely, the alternate-plumaged Horned Grebe at the Elk R. mouth, Humboldt Bay July 4 (BED) was rarer because it was coastal. A count of 1080 Eared Grebe nests at Crowley L., *Mono* July 20–21 was the highest ever at that locale (PJM). Three W. Grebe nests and a Clark's nest at Calaveras Res., June 10 (SCR, MMR) were firsts in *Santa Clara*. Most of the 496 W. Grebes and 233 Clark's Grebes counted on L. San Antonio, *Monterey* June 14 were nesting or courting in now-flooded brush that grew in during the 6-year drought (SFB). These were the first nestings in *Monterey* since the species were distinguished.

Two Laysan Albatrosses were scarce in summer, but we now find a few year-round. Two hours of seawatching at Pigeon Pt., *San Mateo* July 18 tallied 125 Pink-footed Shearwaters, an exceptional number from shore (RSTh). As in recent years, Black-vented Shearwaters arrived early. The first one was

at Pigeon Pt., July 18 (RSTh), with six there (BS) and eight off Monterey (ASH, DLSh) July 25. Five species of storm-petrel at Cordell Bank, *Marin*, June 19 included a Wilson's and 15 Blacks (both very early), along with five Fork-taileds, 18 Leach's, and 90 Ashies (C. Lieurance, DLSh). A Fork-tailed at Ano Nuevo I., *San Mateo* July 13 (GJS, *fide* RSTh) adds another island where nesting might be found in the future. A Fork-tailed over S.F. Bay at *Alameda* June 3 (RJR) was a vagrant.

Only 2 mi n.w. of Pt. Lobos, a Red-billed Tropicbird at *Monterey* July 25 (DLSh) was very close to shore and reflected a warm water pattern. A juv. Brown Pelican flying W at Los Banos, *Merced* July 5 (†SCR) was seasonally unprecedented, as all 5 previous C.V. records have been in fall. Nesting Double-crested Cormorants at S.F. Bay increased in both *San Mateo* (RSTh) and *Santa Clara* (MMR, PJM, MJM). Five sightings of frigatebirds, all presumed imm. Magnificents, probably represented two to four individuals. Birds at F.L., June 8 and at Sausalito and Tiburon, *Marin* June 16–17 (†J.R. Blair, B. Randolph) preceded the one watched by many fishing boat skippers flying N from Pt. Sur to Pacific Grove, *Monterey* June 25. The final reports were from Limantour Spit, *Marrin* July 13 (J. Dineen) and flying S past Devil's Slide, *San Mateo* July 25 (BS, *fide* RSTh).

BITTERNS TO DUCKS

A Least Bittern found on S. Coyote Slough, *Santa Clara* July 3 (MJM *et al.*) was considered a non-breeding stray. This bird is still rarely seen anywhere in the Region. An ad. Little Blue Heron at the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve June 5–9 (SCR *et al.*) was only the 2nd for *San Mateo*, in spite of their presence for years in adjacent *Santa Clara*, where up to 3 adults and a nest were found in the Alviso heronry this summer (m.ob.). Nesting Cattle Egrets were reported from S. Wilbur Flood Area, *Kings* (J. Engler, 32 nests) and the Alviso heronry (PJM *et al.*, 2 nests). Until we obtain a complete report from all nesting areas, we will not be able to determine the true status of Cattle Egret in the Region. The species continues to explore new areas, with four at San Felipe L., June 21 (B. Merrill) comprising the first summer record for *San Benito*. White-faced Ibis nesting was documented at S. Wilbur Flood Area, with 117 nests (J.

Engler). This is another species with a population in a state of flux, making a more thorough survey of its nesting status desirable.

A Tundra Swan, probably injured, summered at Humboldt Bay (*fide* Sandpiper). The N. Pintail responds better than most ducks to opportunistic breeding conditions, as evidenced by the 29 broods found at Pixley N.W.R., *Tulare*, after the wet winter (J. Engler). A brood of Canvasbacks in Sierra V., June 15 (LJ) was the first known from *Plumas*, and *Mono's* 2nd Ring-necked Duck nesting was documented when broods were seen at Crowley L., July 20 (PJM). Single ♂ Harlequin Ducks lingered in *Monterey* at the Big Sur R. mouth to July 17 (m.ob.) and *Monterey* to June 4 (m.ob.). An Oldsquaw present at the Pescadero Cr. mouth, *San Mateo* Apr. 18–July 27 (m.ob.) was variously called a female, an imm. male, and an ad. male in partial breeding plumage, suggesting that we all need to study up on Oldsquaw plumages. Continuing the recent expansion of coastal breeding records, a Com. Merganser brood was discovered at the Pescadero Cr. mouth June 22 to the end of the period (RSTh *et al.*).

RAPTORS

Among the widespread records of Bald Eagles, most surprising was the adult flying E over Casa de Fruta June 18 (†SCR), for the first recent summer record for *Santa Clara*. A Bald Eagle nest in *Napa* was active at least until June 11 (G. Gamble), much later than recent aborted nesting attempts. More accipiters are nesting in urban areas. A Sharp-

shinned Hawk nest that fledged four in Pacific Grove June 26 (K. Travaille, RC, DR, SFB) was the first proven nest in *Monterey* since Joseph Grinnell found one near Carmel in 1901. A Sharp-shinned nest with 3 young, near Calistoga June 14 (BiG), was the first nesting known in *Napa* since 1939. Two Cooper's Hawk nests were successful in *Sacramento* (E. Vak, H. & C. Smith), and Cooper's continue to expand through cities around S.F. Bay.

Large concentrations of Swainson's Hawks in the C.V. probably represented non-breeders hunting concentrated prey. First and largest was the 150 near Los Banos, *Merced* June 7 (KHt). Eighty-seven at Mountain House, *Alameda* June 17 (RJR) lingered in decreasing numbers throughout the period (SAG, R. Cimino). Sixty-five kettled 1/2 mi s. of Stockton July 11 (ShH), 50 were in fields and overhead in *Sutter* July 19 (JAM), and 17 attended a field near Davis, *Yolo* July 26 (GeM). Three ad. Ferruginous Hawks n.e. of Ravendale, *Lassen* June 20 (TDM, AM) were close to where they were recently found nesting (AB 44:1182).

SHOREBIRDS

An extremely rare summer Lesser Golden-Plover, unidentifiable as to race, was at the C.C.R.S., *Santa Clara* July 24 (SCR, MMR). Snowy Plovers studied in *Humboldt* and *Del Norte* produced no young from 17 nests (M. Fisher), illustrating why this population was recently listed as *threatened*. A Semipalmated Plover at MacKerricker S.P., *Mendocino* June 10 (DT) was a late spring migrant. A pair of Am. Avocets with chicks at Humboldt Bay N.W.R., June 15 (K. Forester) represented the first confirmed nesting on the n. coast. A Solitary Sandpiper was considered early at *Mono L.*, July 24 (R. Scaif) and was the only one reported.

A flock of 2185 Long-billed Curlews at the S. Wilbur Flood Area June 27–July 7 (J. Engler) was impressive, though not unprecedented for the C.V. Although Black Turnstones are sometimes found within S.F. Bay, a bird in alternate plumage at the Alviso salt ponds July 31 (PJM) was very rare for the locale. An ad. Semipalmated Sandpiper at the Pescadero Marsh June 27 (RSTh) provided one of very few June records, while 12 coastal reports July 18–31 was an above-normal number.

Occasionally, Pectoral Sandpipers return in July. This year's was at Pescadero Marsh July 25



(RSTh). Ruffs were reported from Lower Coyote Cr. W.M.A., *Santa Clara* July 16 (R. Colwell) and Tulare L. Drainage District, *Kings* July 25 (†R. Saval, B. Barnes, J. Wilson). In contrast to previously published reports, there are now records from every month of the year in the S.J. Valley. A Com. Snipe in the Arcata Bottoms June 26 (TWL, J. Hunter) was a very rare find in summer for *Humboldt*, while one at Ft. Hunter-Liggett July 4 (CHo, JDv, S. Rovell) was the earliest by a month for *Monterey*.

LARIDS, ALCIDS

An ad. Long-tailed Jaeger at Pacifica, *San Mateo* July 19 (BS, *fide* RSTh) was an exceptional sighting before August. Five Franklin's Gulls in the Great Basin was expected, but a first-summer bird in Sierra Valley June 15 (†KL) was only the 2nd for *Plumas*. A Mew Gull at Hayward Shoreline July 17 (RJR) plus two Mew and two Herring gulls summering in *Santa Clara* were rare (PJM, SCR). A new California Gull colony at the Mountain View salt ponds fledged 50+ (PJM). Sabine's Gull was again at Cordell Bank in June, with five June 19 (C. Lieurance, DLSh), while 103 offshore *Monterey* July 25 (DLSh, ASH) demonstrated a strong early migration.

Caspian Terns nested at San Felipe L., June 21 (RMrr) for a *San Benito* first. Seven Arctic Terns tarried at Cordell Bank June 19 (C. Lieurance, DLSh), and singles strayed shoreward to Hayward Shoreline June 1 (R. Lindeman, RJR) and Bolinas Lagoon July 6 (KH). Four Black Skimmers at the Tulare L. basin July 8 (C. Marn, *fide* J. Engler) made only the 2nd C.V. record, though skimmers nested there in 1986 (AB 40:1251).

Used Marbled Murrelet nests were found in Jediah Smith S.P., *Del Norte*, and Prairie Creek S.P., *Humboldt*, by searching for dropped eggshells (*fide* R.W. Hewitt). An unseasonal Ancient Murrelet visited Ano Nuevo July 14 (GJS, *fide* RSTh). At least 3 pairs of Rhinoceros Auklet still nest at Davenport, *Santa Cruz* (RMrr, DLSu), where they were first confirmed in 1987.

OWLS TO HUMMINGBIRDS

A dead Long-eared Owl at Pixley N.W.R., *Tulare* June 6 (J. Engler) and one in Petaluma, *Sonoma* July 23 (BBu) were from areas with no nesting precedent. However, summer wanderings do occur, as evident by one at Pt. Reyes July 11 (G. Griffith) and these at F.I. (i.e., two July 29 and one Aug. 4). Common Nighthawks are rarely noted in migration, especially from the C.V. floor. Actively calling birds at Citrus Heights June 18 (EKS) and at Fair Oaks June 23 (†BMo) provided first mid-summer records for the valley floor of *Sacramento*. However, another



This first-year male Indigo Bunting mated with a female Lazuli Bunting and attempted nesting in Santa Clara County, California, in June 1993. Photograph/Mike M. Rogers.

at Folsom, *Sacramento* July 24 (AEn) in the neighboring e. foothills may have indicated local nesting.

Not surprisingly, Black-chinned Hummingbirds appeared to be doing more home-steading in the s. S.F. Bay area, as 2 pairs were noted along Coyote Cr., June 15 (SCR), 15 mi from the breeding population at C.C.R.S.. Regional range expansion among Costa's Hummingbirds has been occurring, as demonstrated by regular extralimital records. After its incipient discovery in our Great Basin district last year, they invaded *Mono*. An amazing 27 birds, including 2 nests, were discovered at Owens R. Gorge June 13 (PJM), with at least five more in the Mono Basin June 12–July 22 (PJM, DJK, †ES, M. McClaskey). Farther north, one at Indian Valley May 27–June 11 (M. & B. McMillan, G. Rotta, †LJ) was a first for *Plumas*. A displaying male at Colorado Cr., June 1 (MMR, SCR) was a first probable nesting for *Santa Clara*, while a possible pair at Prunedale, *Monterey* July 21–31 (KVV) was well away from known breeding sites. Finally, the seemingly resident male at Fair Oaks, *Sacramento* was last seen June 30 (GEw). A Calliope Hummingbird was again found nesting at low elevations around Granite Bay, Folsom L., *Placer* June 6 (BW).

WOODPECKERS TO VIREOS

Arousing nesting suspicions, the Red-breasted Sapsucker at L. Elizabeth, *San Mateo* June 6 (RSTh, MFe) was probably a late migrant. Nine Ash-throated Flycatchers along coastal *Del Norte* June 1–18 (ADB, J. Gartland *et al.*) was a hefty showing for the n. coast. Giving us a discourse on upslope post-breeding dispersal, a W. Kingbird elevated to 8100 ft. at Sawmill Meadows, *Mono*

July 17 (PJM). After a strong May showing, only four E. Kingbirds appeared coastally June 5–July 2. Another was in Sierra Valley July 11 (†LJ, KL), the 2nd for *Plumas*. The Dusky Flycatcher at F.I., July 9 provided an odd mid-summer record, as all Regional sightings from this time period are from breeding grounds.

The Am. Pipit at Crescent City, *Del Norte* July 12 (ADB) was a real head-scratcher, the Region's first summer record away from local breeding populations in the Sierra Nevada. Up to six Cedar Waxwings at the Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey* June 24 (B.S.O.L., SFB, BW) were very late, even for this traditionally late-moving migrant. The birds may have nested locally, as suspected in recent recent years. Likewise, three Loggerhead Shrikes spent the summer at the Big Sur R. mouth for the first time (B.S.O.L.), suggesting local nesting. Regionally, Loggerheads rarely nest anywhere on the unprotected outer coast.

A territorial ♂ Bell's Vireo on the Salinas R. at Bradley, *Monterey* June 14–July 4 (†SFB, DR, RC) brought cheers for the underdog. Though there were no signs of nesting, its presence was very encouraging. Their numbers have been increasing in s. California, thanks to strategic cowbird trap-pings; *always* look for color bands. The last Regional nesting birds were at this same location in 1983. The banded Red-eyed Vireo at B.S.O.L., July 10 was likely the bird banded there in May and would constitute the Region's first record of a truly summering individual.

WOOD WARBLERS

A juv. Orange-crowned Warbler in Wildrose Cyn., *Mono* July 19 (PJM) was of the expected Great Basin race *orestera*. The breeding status of the Orange-crowned in the Region's Great Basin district away from the Warner Mts. remains unclear. Little Sulphur Cr. held nesting Nashville Warbler, as an adult fed 3 fledglings June 20 (†LLu, C. Lieurance, S. Coogan). This was *Sonoma's* first nesting record; they traditionally breed at the e. edge of the coastal forest along the n. coast, so this record is not unexpected. For the 3rd consecutive year, N. Parulas successfully bred along the c. coast. In *Marin*, a male fed 2 young near Samuel P. Taylor S.P., June 17–20 (RS); a territorial pair in Olema May 21–June 5 (RS, m.ob.) and a singing male at Tomales Bay S.P., June 12–20 (A. Tabor, RS) were also noteworthy. Successful breeding again occurred along Gazos Cr. Road, *San Mateo*, as up to four singing males, one female, and a juvenile were observed May 29–July 17 (PJM, †RSTh, m.ob.). Four additional June birds were spotted along the c. coast, including *Napa's* first at L. Berryessa

June 11 (†R. Bertoli, G. Ganble, J. O'Connell).

Apparently lacking precedent on the C.V. floor during July, a Yellow-rumped Warbler in Fair Oaks, *Sacramento* July 30 (GEW) was either a very early fall migrant or a non-breeding dispersant. The breeding status of the Black-throated Gray Warbler in *Alameda* was again affirmed during the county's first breeding bird atlas year, when five territorial males were at Alameda Cr., June 16 (KGH). Confirmed breeding was the word for Hermit Warbler in *Santa Clara*, as an adult was feeding young in Upper Stevens Cr. S.P., in the Santa Cruz Mts., July 21 (SCR). The Region's 4th spring *Prairie Warbler* was at the Big Sur R. mouth June 8 (JDv). In addition to a Blackpoll Warbler at F.I., July 9, one found inland at Davis, *Yolo*



Male Dickcissel (with Brown-headed Cowbirds) at Mono City, California, on June 12, 1993. First record for the interior of northern California. Photograph/Jean Collins.

June 18 (ph. J. Whitcombe, †ECB *et al.*) was exceptional during spring.

Coastally, three Black-and-white Warblers June 13–July 12 was an average tally, but 15 Am. redstarts June 1–July 12 along with the four in May was above average. Three Ovenbirds at F.I., July 9–11 epitomized the poor vagrant season. The Hooded Warbler at B.S.O.L. from last season lingered to June 12; additional birds in *Monterey* were at Pacific Grove June 12 (SFB) and San Jose Cr., July 17 (BHG, KK). Another Hooded at Arcata, *Humboldt* June 25 (†PFS) made it another healthy spring for the species. Two singing ♂ Yellow-breasted Chats at the Big Sur R. mouth May–June 17 (BW) suggested local nesting. They are very rare nesters along the coast s. of *Mendocino*.

TANAGERS TO FINCHES

Our lone Summer Tanager was at Stanford, *Santa Clara* June 5 (DS). Breeding W. Tanagers at Rose Peak June 26 (RJR) provided *Alameda's* first nesting record in 29 years. Add the seven Rose-breasted Grosbeaks along the c. coast June–July 9 to the 13 present in

May and you have an above-average showing. As with N. Parula, Indigo Bunting is definitely undergoing a range expansion in the c. portion of the state, especially along the c. coast. *Santa Clara* established its first breeding record when a first-year male and a ♀ Lazuli Bunting nested, had 2 eggs, but eventually abandoned the nest along Colorado Cr. in the San Antonio Valley June 1–12 (†SCR, ph. MMR). An apparent pair was at the Big Sur R. mouth July 18 (B.S.O.L.), and another pair on Woodbridge Road June 19 (†D. Hoffman, †RAR) would be *San Joaquin's* first (p.a. Sacramento Bird Records Committee). Three more coastal birds were observed July 4–13.

The Dickcissel at Mono City, *Mono* June 12 (†ph. J. Collins, G. Zeitlin, S. Jewett) was the Region's first for the interior. Confirmation of nesting Rufous-crowned Sparrow for *Mendocino* at Dos Rios July 4 (DT) was overdue. *Sierra's* first Black-throated Sparrow was at Knudsen Meadow June 13 (R. Little); the bird is a regular breeder just to the east. Widespread nesting Grasshopper Sparrows were along the *Monterey* coast from the Big Sur R. mouth to Marina. These areas lacked nesting birds during the drought because of insufficient grass (DR). A Bobolink was at the Big Sur R. mouth July 1 (JDv). The Region averages a couple each spring. Two Hooded Orioles at Ft. Bragg July 3–5 (JRW, DT) were coastal *Mendocino's* first.

S.A.

The Great-tailed Grackle saga in the West continued. Having their best year Regionally (see last season), they persisted in our Great Basin district into June with singles near Likely June 11 and Modoc N.W.R., June 21, both *Modoc* (RLR), Benton Hot Springs, *Mono* June 17 (PJM), and Mapes Ranch, *Lassen* June 19 (TDM, AM). Another at MacKeriker S.P., *Mendocino* July 15–26 (†DT, ph. JRW *et al.*) was the n. coast's first above *Marin*. This invader from Middle America was initially detected in Arizona in 1935, in s. California in 1964, and Regionally in 1978; records in Oregon are now annual, and they have recently descended on Washington. Their spectacular expansion, however, has not been met all that favorably, as they are very aggressive and have been known to uproot native nesters, such as Com. Grackles in the Midwest. They have even been blamed for the extinction of the Slender-billed Grackle in w. Mexico during the early part of the century (C. Oberholser, *Birds of Texas*, 1974, University of Texas Press, Austin).

Always unpredictable, Red Crossbills staged a small summer invasion on the c. coast from *Monterey* to *Sonoma*, as groups of more than 20 were observed July 3–30 (m.ob.). Five in Davis, *Yolo* July 13 (MP) were most unseasonal for the C.V. A pair of Lawrence's Goldfinches at Beegum, *Tehama* June 26 was at the n. limit of their range Regionally, but the species is probably regular in *Tehama* and *Shasta* despite the paucity of records (BY, CY). An Evening Grosbeak at Bale Mill, *Napa* June 13–26 (†G. Statton) has few summer precedents s. of *Humboldt* in the Coast Ranges.

Corrigendum: In AB 46:1174, the reference to a breeding range extension for Willets should be deleted. They are known to nest much farther south in the Great Basin.

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