

## MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

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As if on cue, birds that had disappeared in areas during the drought, such as Bald Eagle, Black-capped Chickadee, and Black-throated Sparrow, reappeared as heavy rains continued well into spring. And speaking of Bald Eagles, they are again nesting in *Monterey*. Marbled Murrelets may also have nested in *Monterey*.

Most observers felt that the landbird migration started very early, especially among swallows. Many counties recorded early arrival dates for a number of passerines. After somewhat of a lull in April, another late push came during the second week of May, particularly along the central coast. Sparrows and buntings were heavily involved in the movement.

It was a very poor season for rarities, almost antithetical to last year's picture. Even that vagrant capital, Southeast Farallon I., had little to report this spring.

One of the big highlights was the opening of the Big Sur Ornithology Laboratory at the Big Sur River mouth, *Monterey*. Patterned after Point Reyes Bird Observatory and Coyote Creek Riparian Banding Station, it is operated by the Ventana Wilderness Sanctuary. We look forward to its contribution to knowledge of the Region's avifauna.

**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.*); M.B.O.S.P. (*Monte Bello Open Space Preserve, San Mateo*); 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 P.R.B.O. Place names in *italics* are counties.

### GREBES TO FRIGATEBIRDS

The grounding of five Eared Grebes in *Mono* in late March–early April was a rarely observed event. Considering that millions of grebes make long overland migrations at night, one might expect weather and other hazards to force them down more often. Twelve pairs of Eared Grebes were nesting at the Mountain View salt ponds, *Santa Clara*, May 11 (PJM). This species breeds around S.F. Bay only sporadically.

A Laysan Albatross found exhausted in a field near Tracy, *San Joaquin*, Apr. 30 was rehabilitated and released coastally May 2 (A. Ramirez). The field was 20 mi from the San Joaquin ship channel; it is becoming increasingly difficult to attribute all S.F. Bay and inland records of this species to ship transport. Three of five Laysan Albatrosses at sea were

seen on trips far offshore. Both trips to 70+ mi s.w. of Pt. Reyes were rewarded with Murphy's Petrels, with five Apr. 25 (SFB, BHi) and nine May 10 (THK, BHi). The only Cook's Petrel was seen Apr. 25 (SFB, BHi). A Flesh-footed Shearwater offshore Monterey Mar. 27 (DLSh) was seasonally rare. A Buller's Shearwater 17 mi offshore Humboldt Bay May 1 (†BED, DFx, MHM) provided the first spring record for the Region. The last report of many Black-vented Shearwaters was of 73 passing Pt. Pinos, *Monterey*, in one hour Mar. 29 (SFB). One there Apr. 29 (DR) was the last individual.

Small numbers of Brown Pelicans lingered through spring, and 920 at Bolinas Lagoon May 24 (KH) was a large number for that date and latitude. Brandt's Cormorants nested for the first time on Año Nuevo I., *San Mateo*, with 37 nests built (GJS). An imm. Magnificent Frigatebird at F.I., May 20, was probably the same bird seen next day at Pescadero Beach, *San Mateo* (R. Mayer, M. Mayer).

#### HERONS TO DUCKS

A Great Blue Heron nest found at Stowe L., Apr. 11 (DSg) may be the first recorded in S.F.; this species is expanding its nesting range along the c. coast. Up to two ad. Little Blue Herons were seen after Apr. 21 near Alviso (SCR *et al.*), still the only regular location in the Region. Straggling Cattle Egrets included two at Crowley L., *Mono*, May 9 (DWh) and four at Manchester, *Mendocino*, May 30 (JRW). The coastal White-faced Ibis flight was very light, with 15 at Ten Mile R., *Mendocino*, May 17 (DT), the only report involving more than single birds.

Presumably having been lost in the masses of wintering Tundra Swans, the Whooper Swan returned to Lower Klamath N.W.R., *Siskiyou*, Mar. 20 (RE). As frequently occurs, a few Arctic-nesting geese lingered through May, most notably an imm. Snow Goose at MacKerricker S.P., *Mendocino* (DT) and a "cackling" Canada Goose at L. Mendocino, May 1 (RJK *et al.*).

A pair of Wood Ducks, thought to be casual in the Great Basin, were in the Pit R. Valley s. of Alturas, *Modoc*, Apr. 30 (DS). Sightings have been increasing recently. The only Eur. Green-winged Teals reported were singles at Gray Lodge W.M.A., *Butte*, Mar. 4 (TDM, BWb) and near Davis Mar. 14 (GEw), both inland, where they are casual. About 38 Blue-winged Teals were reported from all parts of the Region, below the recent average. The latest Eur. Wigeon, a male near Goose L., *Modoc*, Apr. 30 (DS), was also in the most unusual locale.

Redheads are sometimes parasitic nesters, as 3 chicks in a Mallard brood in Sunnyvale,



near L. San Antonio, though the nest may be just across the line in *San Luis Obispo* (JDv, CHO). This is the first Bald Eagle nest in central-coastal California since 1934. Migrating Swainson's Hawks straggled to coastal counties at the lower Pajaro R., *Santa Cruz*, Apr. 25 (CKf), the Ukiah sewage ponds, *Mendocino*, May 1 (RJK *et al.*), and Chews Ridge, *Monterey*, May 22 (JMa, A. Verdi). A "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk on the *Butte-Sutter* line was nicely drawn Mar. 4 (†TDM, BWb). Thirteen Ferruginous Hawks, including ≥3 adults, were in Surprise Valley, *Modoc*, May 1 (DS). An abundance of Belding's Ground Squirrels appeared to concentrate these hawks, and some may linger to nest. The Ferruginous Hawk was first confirmed nesting in California in 1988 (AB 44:1182).

#### RAILS TO PHALAROPES

Calling Black Rails at Palo Alto Baylands Apr. 26–27 (MMR, WGB, SCR) furnished the first spring record for *Santa Clara*. North of their regular range along

*Santa Clara*, May 2 (SCR) attested. A ♂ Tufted Duck at L. Talawa Apr. 1726 (ADB *et al.*) was only the 5th in *Del Norte*. Single Greater Scaup at Quincy Mar. 12 (†LJ, KL), Chester Mar. 20 (W), and Sierra V., Mar. 21 (†LJ) represented first *Plumas* spring records. Almost as rare were a male and female at Crowley L., Apr. 20 (ES).

*Humboldt's* wintering ♀ King Eider was last reported Mar. 25 (*vide JM*), while another female appeared at Año Nuevo State Reserve, *San Mateo*, Mar. 28–Apr. 4 (G. Sobraski *et al.*, ph. †RSTh). Ten Oldsquaws were found from Pt. Reyes to Monterey, including a female inside S.F. Bay at Doolittle Pond, *Alameda*, Apr. 1–May 8 (LRF *et al.*). A ♂ Black Scoter was at the Big Sur R. mouth Mar. 19 (†JDv), where they are very scarce. Barrow's Goldeneyes were gone by late March, except for a pair 5 mi e. of Truckee, *Nevada* May 1–2 (†M. Meyers). They didn't stay to nest, however. Twelve Red-breasted Mergansers, a very high number, were found inland.

#### RAPTORS

Three Osprey nests at Camanche Res., *Amador* and *Calaveras*, and another at the Mokelumne R. e. of Clements, all found May 29 (J. Atkinson), were surprisingly low in the foothills; the latter was the first nest for *San Joaquin*. Bald Eagles lingered in widespread areas, apparently reflecting both increased numbers and the increased water supply after the drought, as at Modoc N.W.R., where an adult stayed until May 20 (RLR). The reintroduction of Bald Eagles to *Monterey* by the Ventana Wilderness Sanctuary is working. A pair of eagles hatched in 1988 raised 2 nestlings

the coast were single Com. Moorhens at Ft. Bragg, *Mendocino*, Apr. 19 (DT) and Arcata Marsh, *Humboldt* May 23–26 (TWL, J. Roberti). A Black-bellied Plover at the Redding sewer ponds May 3 (BED) provided one of very few records for *Shasta*, a county with little shorebird habitat. A Lesser Golden-Plover at Alviso Apr. 22–May 1 (SCR *et al.*) was described as *dominica*, a rare find in spring.

Black-necked Stilts venturing n. of S.F. Bay included one at Ukiah, *Mendocino*, May 1 (RJK *et al.*) and 2 pairs nesting at L. Berryessa, *Napa* May 18 (G. Gambel). Unusually large numbers of Lesser Yellowlegs were found in the n.e., with nine s. of Alturas Apr. 30 (DS), 10 on the Madeline Plains, *Lassen* May 4 (DS), and 16 in Sierra Valley Apr. 5 (LJ). Solitary Sandpipers were reported in slightly above-average numbers, with four coastally Apr. 23–May 5, five in the interior Coast Range Apr. 29–May 8, and five in the C.V., Apr. 18–May 2. Six Willets at Big Cr., 1500', *Fresno* Apr. 11 (RAK) were at a most unusual location on the w. slope of the Sierras. A *Hudsonian* Godwit at Lower Klamath N.W.R., May 31 (†B. Williams) supplied only the 2nd Regional spring record. In the "rare inland" category were a Ruddy Turnstone at Black L., *Mono*, Apr. 22 (†ES); one Red Knot at Lower Klamath N.W.R., Apr. 25 (RE) and four at Middle Alkali L., *Modoc*, May 4 (DS); and 11 Sanderlings in Sierra Valley Apr. 25 (†LJ) and one at Delevan N.W.R., *Columbia*, Apr. 27 (DS, M. Wolder). Semipalmated Sandpipers had a very light showing, with just one on Pt. Reyes May 1 (SBT, LT) and one at Mt. View Forebay, *Santa Clara*, May 16 (JMcK). Baird's Sandpipers may be regular on the w. edge of



the Great Basin; four at Goose L., Apr. 29 (DS) mark the 4th consecutive spring sightings there. However, one in Sierra V., Apr. 25 (†LJ) was a first in spring for *Plumas*. A wintering Ruff remained near Lemoore, *Kings*, until May 4 (JSe, A. Gordus); one was at Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento*, Mar. 31–Apr. 2 (JMHu, MP, †TDM, GEw); one appeared in Alviso Apr. 21–May 8 (SCR *et al.*); and one was at Sutter N.W.R., Apr. 26 (DS, M. Wolder), a first for *Sutter*.

## LARIDS, ALCIDS

A Long-tailed Jaeger and a S. Polar Skua far s.w. of Pt. Reyes May 10 (THK) were both rare in spring. The first basic Laughing Gull lingered at L. Mendocino until Mar. 3 (*fide* JM), almost certainly the same bird seen at the Palo Alto Duck Pond, *Santa Clara*, Apr. 17 (G. Walter). All represented first county records. Three Franklin's Gulls in *Marin*, May 5–28 (J. Kelly *et al.*), as well as two in *Kings* May 20 (SBT) were all adults. The imm. Com. Black-headed Gull that remained at Arcata until Mar. 9 (RJA) moved to the Mad R. Estuary Mar. 14–Apr. 6 (RLeV, JH). An ad. Mew Gull at the Lyaltan sewage ponds Mar. 13–14 (†M. Myers, †LJ), Sierra's first, was very rare in our mountain district.

The high counts for migrant Black Terns were 18 at Hayward (RJR) and 11 at Grant L., *Santa Clara* (MJM), both May 9 around S.F. Bay, and 185 at the Woodland sewage ponds in the C.V., May 13 (MP). A rare Black Skimmer rested at the Pajaro R. mouth, *Santa Cruz* and *Monterey*, May 21 (ELb). The same day two skimmers stopped at Bolinas Lagoon, for *Marin*'s first, departing next day flying N (CLE; ph. PP, m.ob.).

Two ad. Pigeon Guillemots at E. Marin I., Apr. 16 were at a new site well inside S.F. Bay (RS). An alternate-plumaged Marbled Murrelet at the Big Sur R. mouth *Monterey*, Mar. 16 (†JDv, CHo, L. Henkal, B. Christman) was the first documented for the Big Sur coast but suggested possible breeding in the nearby Redwood–Douglas-fir canyons (DR). The only Ancient Murrelet seen later than March was far s.w. of Pt. Reyes May 10 (BHi). alcids continue to colonize or prospect Año Nuevo I., *San Mateo* (all GJS). Three pairs of Cassin's Auklets were present, but no nesting was yet confirmed. Ninety-seven Rhinoceros Auklet nests was far more than in previous years. A Tufted Puffin was likely prospecting there.

## PIGEONS TO WOODPECKERS

Observers for the *Santa Clara Breeding Alert Atlas* found nesting Band-tailed Pigeons at Alum Rock Park Mar. 21 (MMR) and Henry Coe S.P., May 8 (SCR), confirming breeding in this portion of the Diablo Range. Long-eared Owl continues to be one of our least understood owls, especially regarding its breeding requirements. There are few nesting records for the edge of the Sacramento Valley, so a nest containing young at the Spenceville Wildlife Area, *Yuba*, May 26–28 (†BW, TDM) was of interest.

Three Lesser Nighthawks at Paynes Cr.

Wildlife Area, *Tehama* May 16 (G. Horn, J. Coon) flirted with the n. limit of the species' range. Thirty-eight Black Swifts over Croy Ridge, *Santa Clara–Santa Cruz*, May 12 (DLSu) and 70 over M.B.O.S.P., May 22 (SCR) represented substantial movements along the Santa Cruz Mts. Recently, such large concentrations have been primarily along the immediate coast. Few are recorded in the Sacramento Valley, so 6 birds over the Spenceville Wildlife Area May 28 (†TDM) were a welcome sight. A very rare Chimney Swift over Pt. Reyes May 17 (RS) provided our earliest spring record ever.

The Anna's Hummingbird at Tom's Place May 14–25 (CDHa) was *Mono*'s 3rd for spring. Not only were the 2 previous spring records at CHHa's feeders, but nearly all extralimital records and early arrival dates of *Mono*'s hummingbirds come from here (ES), exemplifying the significance of feeders. Up to 10 Costa's Hummingbirds in Gloria Valley, *San Benito*, May 14 (DLSH) was a noteworthy concentration. The wintering male at Fair Oaks, *Sacramento*, has seemingly taken up residency, as it was present at the end of the period (GEw). Costa's x Anna's hybrids are reported with fair regularity; one was at Pt. Reyes Station May 25 (RS).

Single Red-naped Sapsuckers at Berkeley, *Alameda*, Mar. 6–11 (JsC, m.ob.) and Carmichael, *Sacramento*, Mar. 27–28 (†WEH, GEw) were rare spring migrants in the w. portion of the Region. The Red-breasted X Red-naped sapsucker hybrid at McCumber L., *Shasta*, May 15 (R. & N. Mod-een) was one of few reported in recent years.

## FLYCATCHERS TO THRASHERS

For the 3rd consecutive spring the Region had a strong Hammond's Flycatcher movement, with about 42 observed Mar. 29–May 16, again mostly in the Diablo Range. Singles in *Monterey* May 9 (L. Bevier) and at Pt. Reyes May 12 were a rare find along the c. coast, as was one Dusky Flycatcher at the Big Sur R. mouth May 8 (B.S.O.L.); only six migrant Dusksies were noted in the Region. Three singing territorial males were again found on Mt. St. Helena, *Sonoma*, May 16 (BDP; AB 46:447). Gray Flycatchers had a higher-than-average total with 10 birds, including one May 12 at Pt. Reyes (RS), where they are very rare.

The last dates for our wintering E. Phoebes in Davis and Livermore were Mar. 14 (GEw) & 22 (JsC), respectively. Such wintering individuals have recently been annual events, but birds at Dechambeau Ponds, *Mono*, May 8 (†J. & D. Parker, J. Finkbeiner) and Manteca, *San Joaquin*, May 22 (†DGY) were casual spring vagrants. The wintering Ash-throated Flycatcher in Davis was last seen Mar. 13 (WEH). In addition to the nesting pair at the Tracy Golf Course, *San Joaquin*, Apr. 18 (WRH), Cassin's Kingbirds were at San Ardo, *Monterey* as early as Mar. 5 (DLSH), along Mines Rd., *Alameda*, Mar. 20 (†JMR *et al.*), and in Panoche Valley, *San Benito*, Apr. 4 (DSg, DL). This species continues to be one of the least detected nesters in our Region.

Pre-June E. Kingbirds are rare, so four found coastally May 22–30, with a record-early bird at Pt. Reyes May 10 (RS), was noteworthy.

The arrival of two ♂ Purple Martins at the colony in Old Sacramento Mar. 6 (GEw) matched the early date for the Region. Large numbers of martins collected over Arcata Marsh, *Humboldt*, Apr. 1–May 20, including a Regional high count of 120 (BBA). Six Bank Swallows at Año Nuevo S.P., *San Mateo*, Mar. 6 (GJS) were record early. Yellow-billed Magpies rarely venture out into the San Joaquin Delta, so one at Bethel I., *Contra Costa*, May 28 (Gfi) came as no surprise.

The return of two Black-capped Chickadees to Greenhorn Park, *Siskiyou*, Mar. 14 (RE) after several years' absence may have been induced by the break of the drought. A Townsend's Solitaire on Mt. Diablo May 4 (KGH) and a Varied Thrush at Los Gatos, *Santa Clara*, May 30 (A. Campbell) were late lingerers. The wintering Sage Thrasher at Bay Farm I., *Alameda*, was last observed Mar. 14 (JM). One of the few highlights from F.I. this spring was a Brown Thrasher May 17.

## VIREOS, WOOD WARBLERS

*Monterey*'s first spring "plumbeous" Solitary Vireo was in *Monterey* May 9 (L. Bevier). The Yellow-throated Vireo at Pt. Reyes May 17–23 (RS, †JM, m.ob.) was a very rare spring vagrant, whereas Red-eyed at B.S.O.L. and at Pt. Reyes, both May 23 (RS), were rare for May despite last year's phenomenal showing.

Three Tennessee Warblers along the c. coast May 15–23, including one slightly inland at Mt. View Shoreline Park, *Santa Clara*, May 25 (SCR), constituted a decent showing. Last season's amazing invasion of s.e. U.S. nesters dotting the state was an anomaly for all species except N. Parula. While totals come up shy compared with last year's, 16 N. Parulas Apr. 16–May 31, primarily along the c. coast, was far and away the 2nd highest total. Considering the presence of large numbers, early arrival dates, 25 territorial males, and successful breeding for the past 2 years, we may be on the verge of a major range expansion in the West.

One Chestnut-sided Warbler at Mt. Tamalpais, *Marin*, May 29 (D. Weintraub) and three Magnolia Warblers along the c.coast May 16–25 were average spring numbers. Close scrutiny of Townsend's–Hermit warbler flocks produced three Hermit x Townsend's warbler hybrids, one each at Mt. Diablo Apr. 24 (D. Sandee) and May 11 (JMR) and Fremont Park, *Monterey*, May 2 (†ph. DSi). Very rare warblers for spring were one Blackburnian at Pt. Reyes May 16 (T. Easterla), a Yellow-throated at Gazos Cr. Road, *San Mateo*, May 19 (†RSTh), and a Bay-breasted at F.I., May 23. A Palm Warbler in Glen Park, S.F., Apr. 8 (JsC) may have wintered locally, while two others discovered coastally Apr. 24 and May 1 were typical migrants. Four Blackpoll Warblers were evenly split between Pt. Reyes and *San Mateo*, May 21–31.

Three Black-and-White Warblers May

15–23, for Am. Redstarts Apr. 19–23, and two Ovenbirds May 23–24, all along the c. coast, were average totals. A N. Waterthrush at C.C.R.S., May 2–5, and Hooded Warblers at Tilden Regional Park, *Contra Costa*, May 3–4 and at C.C.R.S., May 23–24 (J. Buffa, R. Colwell) were slightly inland. Another Hooded was coastal at B.S.O.L., May 30–31.

#### TANAGERS TO FINCHES

Summer Tanagers at Bolinas, *Marin*, May 9 (PP) and at B.S.O.L., May 22 were above-average finds for spring. A nest-building ♀ W. Tanager at Fremont Peak May 22 (CT) was the first confirmed nesting for the Gabilan Range (DR). An impressive 13 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found May 4–31, including three in the interior. The Blue Grosbeak at Benton Valley Apr. 22 (†ES) was the 2nd for Mono away from Oasis. An Indigo Bunting in Novato, *Marin*, Apr. 5 (H. Karr) may have wintered locally. A male at Mare I., Apr. 21 (†DAsh) was *Solano*'s first, but one at Gazos Cr. Road May 25 (BS) was at an expected locale. A Green-tailed Towhee at Arcade Cr., *Sacramento* Apr. 30 (WEH) was a C.V. vagrant. Late winter records of Am. Tree Sparrows in the n. country are rare but expected; singles were at Ferndale, *Humboldt* Jan. 23–Mar. 13 (S. Rovell, D. Sandee, m.ob.) and Crescent City, *Del Norte*, Mar. 7–9 (ADB). Unexpected was one in Walnut Cr., Mar. 29–Apr. 7 (†Gfi), *Contra Costa*'s 2nd. Always rare away from F.I. in spring, a Clay-colored Sparrow was in Petaluma, *Sonoma*, Apr. 16–18 (ChW, AWi). A Brewer's Sparrow at Spenceville Wildlife Area, *Yuba* May 23 (BW) carried the label of vagrant, but five to six singing on territory at McArthur Swamp May 30 (BY, CY) strongly suggested nesting and established the 2nd record for *Shasta*. Reports of two Black-chinned Sparrows on Rayhouse Road, *Yolo*, May 13 (MP) were among few county records.

After a 6-year absence, six Black-throated Sparrows were again found in the Kilgore Hills, *Siskiyou*, May 28 (RE). Extralimittals were at Spenceville Wildlife Area Mar. 22 (†BW) and at F.I., May 11–17. Grasshopper Sparrows continue to be well reported (see *AB* 43:534); however, their occurrence in and around the edge of the C.V. remains mysterious. Two birds in Merced, *Merced*, Mar. 2 (D. Gray) and singles at Pixley N.W.R., *Tulare*, Apr. 2 (J. Engler) and W. Butte Road, *Sutter*, May 29–June 1 (BWb, J. Conry, TDM) have few precedents. A Harris' Sparrow in Redding May 8 (BY) was late. Lapland Longspur departure dates of Mar. 14 at MacKerricher S.P., *Mendocino* (DT) and Mar. 21 at Pt. Reyes (AD) were typical. Quite atypical were two breeding-plumaged Chestnut-collared Longspurs in Foster City, *San Mateo*, Apr. 18 (†J. Hanson). There are few, if any, spring migrant records away from F.I.

Undoubtedly a result of the break in the drought, large breeding colonies of Tricolored Blackbirds were again reported from the San Joaquin Valley: 50,000 n. of Pixley N.W.R. during March–April and 20,000 in

w. *Kings* (both J. Engler). Thirty birds prospecting for nesting sites near Alturas, *Modoc*, Apr. 30 (DS) were noteworthy in our Great Basin district. Great-tailed Grackles continue to invade the Region, as two in Benton Valley, *Mono*, Apr. 22 (ph., ES), ≤4 at Ft. Bidwell, *Modoc*, May 17 (RL), and ≤6 at Honey L. Wildlife Area, *Lassen* May 30 (†BMS) were Regional firsts in the Great Basin; however, they have been annual in e. Oregon. An actual nesting colony of 8–10 birds was found in Fresno as of May (D. Winton *et al.*). The Pine Siskin invasion through the lowlands remained prevalent into May, with single remnants in *San Joaquin* noted May 28 in Ripon (S. Viss) and Lodi L., May 29 (DGY).

**Corrigendum:** In *AB* 46:477, the Red Knots at Mono L. should be credited to Mike McClaskey, not Mac McCormick. In *AB* 46:476, the number of Tufted Puffins on Castle Rock in 1992 was published (due to a reporting error) as two to four, instead of the correct 40.

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