



ago and about three weeks later (for most birds) than last year in some mountain areas. Air temperatures during the nesting season ranged about average for the particular locality while precipitation was al-

most nil throughout the Region. A few summer thunderstorms tempered the climate in mountain areas from time to time in the San Bernardino Mountains. Crops of seeds, fruits, berries, acorns, etc. were moderate at best, but most species were reported to have had successful nesting. Happily this year fires were few and far between in the southern California mountains and indeed throughout the state. Of course, our most dangerous fire season commences in September when Santa Ana conditions prevail. As was expected severe fires raged during early September in the chaparral hills near Lakes Henshaw and Elsinore while smaller fires were springing up almost as fast as others were checked in the mountain areas immediately north and east of Los Angeles. It was reported by Waldo Abbott of Santa Barbara that natural reseeding and recovery of more than one hundred thousand acres which burned near Santa Barbara last year was more successful than the artificial means attempted. At the risk of being redundant, your editor must again report on the "improvements" being effected in Newport Bay. At a visit made in early September, it was clearly apparent that a most valuable marsh and tidal mudflat area was completely buried under 15 feet of sand. Newport Bay, adjacent to Highway U. S. 101, is no longer tenable for the thousands of willets, godwits, "peep," curlew, plover, and sandpipers which annually paused there on their fall migration southward. Mission Bay near San Diego and parts of San Diego Bay fared no better. Donald W. Moore reported that the settling ponds near China Lake, which formerly provided nesting and feeding areas for Am. Avocets and other shorebirds, have for the most part been drained and there was no nesting of avocets there this year.

Loons through Ibis.—A single Arctic Loon was near Santa Barbara as late as June 25 (Waldo G. Abbott). Very few *bona-fide* nesting records for Western Grebes in southern California exist, and so it is with extreme interest that your editor reports the following records. An immature flightless Western Grebe was found dead along the Salton Sea shore, June 13 (Ed. J. O'Neill). Western Grebes nested on Sweetwater Reservoir, San Diego County, as follows: nests were first observed on May 5 by James E. Crouch and Margaret Ellis; 9 nests were found on May 17; 3 of these (containing one egg each) were destroyed; 3 contained 4 eggs each and 1 contained 3 eggs, while

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Southern California wallowed in its usual summer doldrums as early as the middle of May. Temperatures in desert areas soared to sizzling high nineties and above late in May (which is to be expected). The nesting seasons in lowland and desert regions were as usual confined to the brief period between spring and summer. For the mountain areas with the better than average snowpack spring was somewhat late in arriving. In some of the shaded, northern-exposed and protected canyons summer almost never arrived at all. In general, nesting of mountain birds was about two weeks later than two years

were inaccessible. The adult grebes incubated throughout June and were still present on the lake, July 12. No evidence of young (other than the eggs) was observed. On Aug. 22, no Western Grebes remained on the lake, and the nesting area was dry. Prior to this there have been but two nesting records for southern California (Grinnell & Miller: *Pacific Coast Avifauna* #27). No other summering Western Grebes were reported. Summer observations of pelagic birds were almost lacking. Some 4000 Sooty Shearwaters were feeding on a large school of anchovies very close to shore near Santa Barbara, June 25 (WGA). About 100 White Pelicans nested on a small sandy island along the south shore of the Salton Sea. For some unknown reason the species abandoned nests and nestlings in early June (EJO'N). In contrast, Double-crested Cormorants, Common and Snowy Egrets, Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons nested successfully at the Salton Sea. It was estimated that about 800 egret's, 10 Great Blue Heron's and more than 100 Double-crested Cormorant's nests were occupied during May and June. An adult female **Magnificent Frigate-bird** was carefully studied near Seal Beach, June 27 (John Tramontano, Pat Gould). Two of the rare Least Bittern were photographed near Fisherman's Retreat, April 24 (Ethel West). Wood Ibises arrived about three weeks early in coastal southern California. Twenty-two birds were found at the San Luis Rey River near Highway U. S. 101, July 8 (Jim Lane, Fern Zimmerman, Francis Raymond). Four birds were at Lt. Maxton Brown Sanctuary near Oceanside, July 19 (FR) and some thirty had gathered there by the end of August. None were reported from the Imperial Valley this year. In mid-July White-faced Ibis nested in partly submerged growths along the shore of the Salton Sea. An estimated 30 pairs successfully reared some young (EJO'N).

Waterfowl.—Black Brant were reported as follows early in the season: 3 at Malibu Creek, June 5 (R. Dudley Ross) and a single bird at Bolsa Chica, June 28 (JT). At the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge, a few broods of Ruddy Ducks, Am. Coots, and Cinnamon Teal were recorded as well as at other places along the shore of the Salton Sea which, incidentally, is still slowly rising. In August, a small brood of Redheads was observed near the Salton Sea and Fulvous Tree-ducks raised several broods as in past years. The first brood seen, of 7 young, was observed on the Salton Sea Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, July 8 (EJO'N). A few non-breeding Surf Scoters (10) were in the surf near Huntington Beach, June 28 (JT).

Birds of Prey.—White-tailed Kites again successfully nested at the Audubon Center of Southern California, as well as having a generally successful nesting throughout the southern part of the Region. A single Peregrine Falcon was at Newport Bay, June 28 (JT).

Shorebirds.—Small numbers of non-breeding shorebirds such as willets, godwits, Hudsonian and Long-billed Curlews, and Sanderlings spent the summer along our coast. Twenty Black Turnstones were at Malibu Inlet, Aug. 5, and were again seen, Aug. 25,

while 12 were at the Ballona Creek breakwater, Aug. 7 (RDR): a rather large number of non-breeding birds and yet too early for migrants. Again at Malibu, 10 Snowy Plover on Aug. 5 had increased to 50 by Aug. 25; 50-60 Black-bellied Plover on Aug. 5 had increased to more than 100 by Aug. 25; 5 Hudsonian Curlews had increased to about 20 by Aug. 25; Willets numbered about 60 there on Aug. 5 and had increased to several hundreds by Aug. 25; and Marbled Godwits increased from a single bird there, Aug. 5, to about a dozen in the middle of the month (RDR). These figures tended to reflect the general trend of slow shorebird build-up during the month of August as early southbound migrants swelled their numbers. Black-necked Stilts were reported to have nested at Bixby Slough in south Los Angeles (now a sanctuary administered by the Los Angeles Audubon Society) and at Bolsa Chica as well as many at the Salton Sea. Phalaropes of all three species were generally scarce in late summer. Only a single Northern Phalarope was at Malibu, Aug. 25 (RDR). Even the number of 600 Northern Phalaropes at Upper Newport Bay during September (FR) was low. Wilson's Phalaropes were very scarce. Only nine were counted at Upper Newport Bay, July 12; only 100 (est.) were there on July 25 and none remained. Sept. 1 (FR). Forty birds remained until Aug. 23 at Lt. Maxton Brown Sanctuary (FR). Apparently our migrating phalaropes came through during mid-August and left almost immediately. It is not unusual to see literally hundreds of phalaropes in our bays well into September. A single Wilson's Phalarope was in a small pond 16 miles northwest of Essex, San Bernardino Co., July 29 (Burgess W. Heacox). The only Baird's Sandpiper reported was a single bird at Upper Newport Bay, Sept. 1 (FR).

Jaegers, Gulls, and Terns.—Only small numbers of jaegers were encountered along the coast in late summer, perhaps reflecting the small Elegant Tern flight this year. At the Salton Sea, Gull-billed Terns, Caspian Terns, and Laughing Gulls all succeeded in nesting and rearing some young. Least Terns nesting near Playa del Rey were displaced by motorcyclists this year. Elsewhere, as at Bixby Slough they fared somewhat better, yet these birds are under constant pressure from recreationists. Caspian Terns nested successfully near San Diego and seemed quite abundant everywhere along the coast in late summer. The annual Elegant Tern flight appeared to be one of the smallest in years. Observations were as follows: no Elegant Terns were reported from San Diego until the first week of September; 2 birds were reported from Malibu, Aug. 25 (RDR); and 6 birds were at Playa del Rey, Sept. 3 (Ed.). Small groups of fewer than 10 birds were reported coastwise as far south as Oceanside during early September. Almost no Black Terns were reported during late summer.

Doves, Goatsuckers, Hummingbirds.—A few Ringed Turtle Doves were reported from near San Diego, July 14 (Maureen J. Heraty). A pair of Mexican Ground Doves was near Corona, April 22 (Norman H. Mellor). Mourning and White-winged Doves were reported to have brought off many young in the Mecca-Palm Springs area (Cecelia Foulkes).

A single (Pacific) Common Nighthawk was over Pacific Palisades, Aug. 24 (RDR). A few southbound Rufous Hummingbirds were seen in and about gardens in late July and early August while most of the Allen's Hummingbirds had departed by the third week of that month. Alma Stultz, Director of the Audubon Center of Southern California, reported that her hummingbird population had doubled over last year. Calliope Hummingbirds had departed from mountain areas by the third week of August this year.

Flycatchers, Swallows.—Nesting of most small landbirds was about normal. Both Western and Cassin's Kingbirds nested at the Audubon Center of Southern California (AS). Violet-green Swallows (6) nested at the Tucker Bird Sanctuary in Modjeska Canyon on June 30—rather unusual for a mountain-dwelling summer visitant (*vide* JT). Six Purple Martin nests were noted at De Luz, July 8 (JL, FZ, FR).

Jays, Magpies, Thrushes.—A nest of the Steller's Jay was found in Redlands (elev. 1500 ft.) at Sylvan Park. This species ordinarily nests in the Transition and Canadian Zones but was here nesting in the Upper Sonoran Zone (*vide* JDG). Unusual is the report of a Yellow-billed Magpie seen near San Fernando between San Fernando Road and Sepulveda Blvd., Aug. 7 (Mrs. Edna Fichtel, *vide* AS). Russet-backed (Olive-backed) Thrushes were reported as almost *abundant* as nesting birds near De Luz in late spring (May) (Jim Lane, *vide* FR). About 15 pairs were noted nesting in Holy Jim Canyon, June 28 (JL, FZ, Alice Zimmerman).

Phainopeplas, Starlings, Vireos.—At least 60 Phainopeplas were counted along a quarter-mile stretch of road near De Luz, July 8 (FZ, AZ, JL, FR) while more than 100 birds congregated near Modjeska Canyon in early September (Josephine Bull, *vide* FR). An interesting report was just received of a flock of more than 100 Common Starlings in the fields near Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley, Nov. 24, 1955 (L. A. Shelton). Gray Vireos may still be seen along the Oak Spring Road near Phelan in June and July (RDR).

Warblers, Orioles, Blackbirds.—Extremely interesting is the report by John D. Goodman of a sing-

ing male Nashville Warbler in Snow Creek Canyon of the San Bernardino Mountains during June and July. This species is not known to nest south of Greenhorn Mountain in the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. An adult female and 2 young birds were found in this area together with a singing male (same bird?) on July 23, but no nest was found. It has been suspected that Nashville Warblers nest in these mountains because of similar reports in years past from here and also from the Mount Pinos area, but no nest has as yet been found. All but one immature Bullock's Oriole had gone from the Audubon Center of Southern California by Sept. 1 (AS) and this was indicative of the entire Region. A single male Yellow-headed Blackbird was found among a flock of Brewer's Blackbirds 10 miles west of Needles, July 13 (BWH) and a pair was near Essex, July 17. D. W. Moore of China Lake reported a great influx of cowbirds during the summer.

Tanagers, Finches, Sparrows.—A Western Tanager nest was found in Holy Jim Canyon, June 28 (JL, FZ, AZ) which is a rather low elevation. Nesting of Cardinals and Black-headed Grosbeaks was about normal in the San Gabriel River Valley (AS). Evening Grosbeaks were reported as numerous near Idyllwild in April (*vide* NHM) and 2 were at a feeding station there, Aug. 25 (EW). A pair of Red Crossbills was seen just below the summit of Mount San Jacinto, Aug. 2 (JT). Black-chinned Sparrows nested in good numbers near Modjeska Canyon this year and several have come to the bird baths there (*vide* FR). The nest of a White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*?) was found by J. D. Goodman in South Fork Meadows on the north slope of Mount San Gorgonio, July 24. The nest was situated at the base of a *Veratrum* and contained two young. The singing male had been located in that area, July 19. This is most interesting since this species is not known to breed south of the central Sierra Nevada. Competent field work in the San Bernardino Mountains by Dr. Goodman is disclosing interesting possibilities of breeding birds hitherto overlooked or perhaps recently developed.—ARNOLD SMALL, 5838 W. 88th St., Los Angeles 45, Calif.