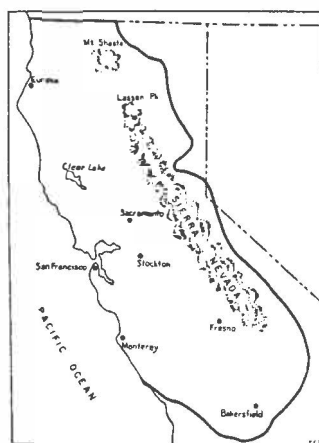


MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION.—Rainfall during the winter and spring of 1956-57 was generally below normal. Most of the Region experienced



an exceedingly dry March, the weather station at Sacramento reporting the driest March on record. Temperatures for April and May were about normal, and, following the March dry spell, light rains fell in April and have continued to fall even up to the end of the period. This has resulted in

grass remaining green considerably later than usual. The immediate effect of such conditions cannot be shown in the present report, except in the case of California Quail at Oakland (see below).

In the region of Sebastopol, Sonoma County, J. Kittredge writes that the "numbers of birds of almost all species have been far below normal." Specific mention is made by four other contributors from different areas of the scarcity of the Varied Thrush during the past winter and spring. On the other hand, the range of the Chestnut-backed Chickadee seems to be continuing to spread in the East Bay area (*viz.* report from A. S. Campbell, below) and the Black-headed Grosbeak has been reported as increasing again after a year of scarcity (see below).

Grebes, Albatrosses, Herons.—Counts of 158 Western Grebes on San Francisco Bay on April 8 (Golden Gate Audubon Society) and 200 at Jenner on May 3 (JK) indicate movements of this species. Two Black-footed Albatrosses were seen on each of two boat trips: the first, to the Farallon Islands on April 8 (G.G.A.S.); the second, on Monterey Bay, April 16 (Pacific Coast Conference of the N.A.S.). On March 19 Grace Miller observed an undetermined number of Great Blue Herons and Am. Egrets at a nesting colony near Bolinas, Marin County, and 2 of

the former were seen carrying nesting material. On May 5 she again visited the colony and found half-grown Great Blues and some very small Am. Egrets. Howard L. Cogswell found Great Blue Herons (one carrying a stick) at a nesting colony on Little Marin Island, east of San Raphael on April 20. Also on this island on April 20 were more than 95 Am. Egrets perched on trees, and about 40 Black-crowned Night Herons. J. Eric Thorsen found a Green Heron on April 6 roosting in a large elm in a garden between Alviso and Milpitas, Santa Clara County.

Ducks, Hawks.—A pair of Blue-winged Teal was seen on a sugar refinery pond east of Woodland in the Sacramento Valley on May 12, and the male of this same pair (presumably) was again seen at the same place on May 19 (E. A. Albertson). Two Wood Ducks were seen to fly low overhead and alight on a creek in dense forest in Taylor State Park, Marin County, on April 20 (HCL and G.G.A.S.); and a pair of the same species was seen in the Gray's Bend area of the Sacramento River on the same day (EAA). On May 11 Paul Covel (with HLC) recorded a late appearance of the Am. Golden-eye, an immature male and a female, at Lake Merritt, Oakland. Any report on the occurrence of the Red-shouldered Hawk on the Pacific Coast is of interest because this bird has become greatly reduced in numbers nearly everywhere. The report by Ken Legg of a single bird of this species seen in an unusual area, *i.e.*, a half mile south of Orick, Humboldt County, April 19, 29 and May 4, is of particular importance. The first seasonal record for the Osprey at Jenner was March 13 (JK). An Osprey was seen at Searsville Lake, Palo Alto, on May 8 (Roberta Wright, *vide* Emily D. Smith); one was at the southeast end of Tomales Bay on March 20 (Jerry Craig, *vide* GM) and on March 23, 31, and April 1 and May 31 (GM).

Quail, Shorebirds, Terns, Alcids.—The rains in April and May apparently interfered with many nestings of California Quail at Mills College, Oakland, where an unusual number of unmated males were crowing throughout the period; also it was noted that although the females of pairs were not in evidence on about May 1 (incubating?) many pairs were flocking again in late May with no broods of young with them; up to the end of the period no broods had been observed at all (HLC). Two Snowy Plover nests each containing 3 eggs were found near Alviso, May 5, by Etta W. Smith (*vide* EDS). The Ringed Plover, which is not frequently recorded at inland points, was found three times at the sugar refinery ponds east of Woodland; 1, April 7 (Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Argante, *vide* E. R. Pickett); 1, April 27 (EAA and William Kirscher); 8, May 5 (EAA, Georgia H. Botchert). Three Am. Avocet nests, 1 with 4 eggs, the others with 1 each, were found near Alviso on April 24 (EWS, *vide* EDS). Several hundred Black Terns were seen at the Woodland sugar ponds on April 27, their first seasonal appearance (EAA, WK). There were very few Common Murres and no Rhinoceros Auklets on Monterey Bay, as seen from the shore at the Hopkins Marine Station, Pacific Grove, on April 14 (Laidlaw Wil-

liams), in contrast to Feb. 20 when 1550 Common Murres and 1280 Rhinoceros Auklets were counted, the highest count of the auklet ever made by the observers (Frank Preston, LW). However, 4 Rhinoceros Auklets were seen from a boat on Monterey Bay, April 16 (N.A.S. Pacific Coast Conference). An Ancient Murrelet was seen at Point Lobos on May 12, a late date (Dudley Ross).

Doves, Owls, Swifts, Hummingbirds, Woodpeckers.—A large Mourning Dove fledgling, accompanied by 2 adults, was seen at Mills College on May 30 (HLC). A brood of 4 young Barn Owls was seen on the lower Del Puerto Creek, west of Patterson, Stanislaus County, May 26 (HLC). Vaux's Swifts were recorded for the first time this spring as follows: Duncan Mills, 2, April 26 (JK); Arcata, Humboldt County, 1, May 1, and 3, May 3, becoming abundant thereafter (R. T. Holmes); and Prairie Creek State Park, April 30 (KL). The first records for Allen's Hummingbirds were as follows: St. Mary's College, Moraga, Contra Costa County, Feb. 6 (ASC); Oakland, March 8 (Betty Trousdale); and near Trinidad, Humboldt County, 2, March 18 (RTH). A nest of this species with 2 eggs was found at Mills College on March 24, and a fledgling just out of the nest was seen in the same vicinity on April 19 (HLC). Two male Calliope Hummingbirds were found dead in a garden where syrup feeders are kept at Menlo Park in "late March or early April" and were taken to EDS who identified them. A Pileated Woodpecker was heard calling and drumming repeatedly at Taylor State Park on April 20 (HLC and G.G.A.S.). Two adult Lewis's Woodpeckers and a nest with young were seen in the San Antonio Valley, northeast of Mount Hamilton, Santa Clara County, on May 26 (HLC and G.G.A.S.). A brood of Hairy Woodpeckers left a nest at Carmel Highlands, Monterey County on May 27 (LW).

Flycatchers.—No Ash-throated Flycatchers could be found at Searsville Lake on April 18, but 2 were seen there on April 27 in addition to 2 others at Stanford University on April 27 (HLC and G.G.A.S.). The first arrival of this species was noted at St. Helena, one bird on April 23 (JK). The Western Flycatcher was "somewhat late" in arrival at Mills College, none being seen on March 24 despite a special search (HLC). None had been heard up to March 26 at Portola State Park (Eleanor A. Pugh). Other localities and dates of arrival for this species were as follows: Carmel Highlands, March 24 (late for this area—LW); Big Basin State Park, March 28 (EAP); Forestville 1, March 28, and 8, April 7 (JK); Putah Creek, April 3, (BT); Soquel, April 4 (R. J. Richardson); San Jose, April 5 (EDS); Mills College, April 5 (HLC).

Swallows.—The Rough-winged Swallow was recorded at St. Mary's College on March 9 (HLC); at Jenner on March 18 (arrival, JK) and at Yosemite Valley, March 27 (early for this locality—Walter J. Fitzpatrick). The Barn Swallow was first seen at Prairie Creek State Park on April 26 and incubation was in progress there on May 18 (KL). Cliff Swallows arrived in small numbers on March 7 at St.

Mary's College but were there in considerable numbers by March 17 (ASC). They were first seen, 12, at Forestville on March 28 and 100 were there on May 4 (JK). The population of the downtown Sacramento colony of Purple Martins was 50 per cent lower this year (Donald D. McLean, *vide* ERP).

Jays, Chickadees, Wrens.—The Steller's Jay was nest-building on April 5 and feeding nestlings on May 25 at Carmel Highlands (LW); nest-building was also observed at Big Basin State Park on April 13 (EAP). Scrub Jays were building at Berkeley on April 4 (Junea W. Kelly), and at Mills College on April 21 (HLC). Evidence of the continued spreading of the range of the Chestnut-backed Chickadee is offered by ASC who writes that in past years he has rarely, if ever, seen any of these birds at St. Mary's College. Last fall, however, a few were seen and this spring a great many were found in February and March, and on May 22 and 29. A pair of Winter Wrens with 3 or 4 young just able to fly were noted at Little River, Mendocino County, April 26 (Mrs. R. Coy).

Dippers, Thrushes, Gnatcatchers and Kinglets.—An adult Dipper was seen feeding 2 fully-grown young at Whitehall, Eldorado County on May 17, about 2 weeks earlier than usual (ERP). A wintering Hermit Thrush (banded) was last seen by EDS in her garden at Saratoga, April 12, but the species was heard there up to April 14 (EDS). On May 9 the species was first heard persistently singing in the hills west of Saratoga (presumably returning summer population, EDS). The Olive-backed Thrush arrived late, April 29, at Mills College (HLC); one was seen at Inverness, April 8 (GM) and one at Loleta, Humboldt Co., April 11 (RTH). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was nest-building near Menlo Park on April 7 (EDS). The Ruby-crowned Kinglet, recorded daily throughout late March and early April at Carmel Highlands, was last seen there April 24 (LW).

Phainopeplas, Vireos.—The first Phainopepla record in 3 years at Loomis, Placer County, was reported by Muriel Kaminsky, *vide* ERP: a pair seen on May 12. The first arrival of the Solitary Vireo at Saratoga was on April 8 (EDS). The Warbling Vireo arrived on a normal date at Mills College; 1, March 24; and at Tilden Park, Berkeley, several on the same day (HLC).

Warblers.—Three or more Yellow Warblers were seen at Stanford University on April 18 (HLC); this species first arrived at Forestville (2 seen) on April 20 (JK); at Soquel, April 23 (RJR); at Samoa, Humboldt County, April 28 (RTH). Two Myrtle Warblers were seen at Point Reyes Station, April 20 (HLC). An early Black-throated Gray Warbler reached Carmel Highlands, March 31 (LW). The rare Palm Warbler was carefully studied at close range at Prairie Creek Park on May 1 (KL). The several previous records of this species in our Region in recent years have been in the fall and winter. Macgillivray's Warbler was first seen at Calistoga on April 23 (JK). Some first arrival dates for Black-capped Warbler were: Muir Beach, Marin County, March 20 (BT); Tilden Park, March 24

(HLC, G.G.A.S.); Los Gatos, March 26 (EDS); Forestville, March 30 (JK); Fort Bragg, April 11 (Mrs. Coy).

Orioles, Grosbeaks, Sparrows.—The first Bullock's Oriole arrived at Soquel on April 4 (RJR); the first male of this species at Murphy's on April 15, a week later than last year, followed by a female on April 25 (Ednah C. Scoles). The numbers of Black-headed Grosbeaks at Mills College were higher than last year, when they were very scarce (HLC); and "many more" were also seen at Inverness this year (GM). A pronounced movement of Golden-crowned Sparrows was indicated by an increase in numbers at four places in the Sacramento area on April 20, followed by a decline one week later in the same area (EAA). The species was last recorded at Saratoga on May 3 (2 banded individuals, EDS).—LAIDLAW WILLIAMS.
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