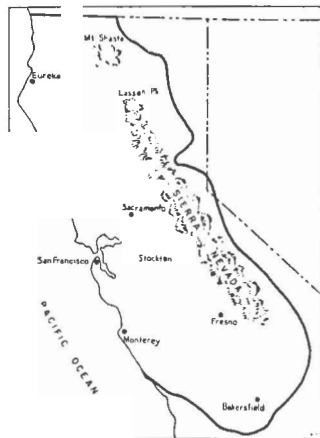


**MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION.**—The U. S. Weather Bureau characterized the month of May as "one of the wettest Mays on Record" for this Region.

For the 15 weeks ending July 21 most of the Middle Pacific Coast Region received precipitation ranging from 100 per cent to 350 per cent of normal. At the Hastings Reservation in the Santa Lucia Mountains of Monterey County, the resultant grass growth was the "best in years," according to John Davis.



who also comments that there was an unusually large number of birds nesting on the Reservation and mentions the ease with which he could find nests of Western

Flycatchers, House Wrens, Bewick's Wrens, Warbling Vireos, Lesser Goldfinches, and other species. Also, at Whitehall, Eldorado County (elevation 3400 feet), "the birds that nested in that area seemed to have a very successful season" (E. R. Pickett). Specific references to more numerous occurrences of certain species will be found below under California Quail, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Western Tanager, Brown-headed Cowbird, Pine Siskin and Lawrence's Goldfinch.

*Grebes, Quail, Rails, Gallinules*.—Counts of Western Grebes on salt water off the mouth of the Russian River remained high from the end of May through June and July: ten counts from May 27 to July 24 ranged from 27 (May 27) to 71 (on both June 24 and July 9) (Joseph Kittredge).

Although the May rains may have interfered with the nesting of the California Quail at Oakland in that month (see previous report), the species was present in many large family groups and coveys at Hastings Reservation throughout the period of the present report. This bird had been down in numbers for at least two years at the Reservation but is now making a very noticeable comeback (JD). Twenty-one families of California Quail with an average of 11 young per family were reported from Calera Canyon, Monterey County (Louise M. Hatton).

Two nests of the Clapper Rail were found in the marshes adjacent to Southampton Bay (San Francisco Bay area) on June 10, one nest with 1 egg, the other with 2 eggs (1 about to hatch) and a dead young (Camm Swift). A "colony" of Florida Gallinules (highest count was on July 4: 6 adults, 12 first-year birds) was under observation during the summer at the intersection of Singleton Road and the Coyote River, 2 miles south of San Jose (Ken Schulz).

*Terns, Alcids, Pigeons, Owls*.—Three to 6 Caspian Terns were frequently seen fishing in Los Gatos Creek, within the city limits of Los Gatos, from mid-April through mid-July. They carried the fish north out of sight (Emily D. Smith). If these birds were taking food to young it indicates that the foraging range of the species may be very wide as the nearest breeding colony known to the compiler is on San Francisco Bay. Caspian Terns were also noted in May, June, and July at Bodega Bay, Tomales Bay, and Jenner (JK). Two Marbled Murrelets, in winter or immature plumage, were seen at Santa Cruz on July 21 (EDS). During the third week of July flocks of 30 to 40 Band-tailed Pigeons were seen in a hayfield near Fort Bragg (Mrs. R. Coy). A pair of Spotted Owls was seen at Tomales Bay State Park on June 3, 4 and 10 (Grace Miller).

*Swifts, Hummingbirds, Woodpeckers*.—Two Vaux's Swifts were feeding nestlings in a chimney of an occupied house at Los Gatos on July 16 and were still feeding them on July 25 (EDS). Black-chinned Hummingbirds were unusually numerous this year at Hastings Reservation (JD). Allen's Hummingbirds, which had been abundant earlier in Calera Canyon, left that area on July 14 (LMH). A pair of Downy Woodpeckers was feeding young in the

Kings River bottom near Sanger on June 10 (Kay Paulson).

*Flycatchers, Swallows*.—A Black Phoebe was seen at Prairie Creek State Park, Humboldt County, on July 5 (Ken Legg). This record is of interest because the species "distinctly lessens" in numbers in the humid coast belt toward the north (see Grinnell and Miller, *Pacific Coast Avifauna*, No. 27). A pair of Western Flycatchers in Calera Canyon repaired an old nest for a second brood and completed a set of 3 eggs on June 14 (LMH). At Saratoga a female Violet-green Swallow began nest-building in a bird house on May 31, three days after having been ousted from a nearby bird house by a pair of House Sparrows after she had worked on the first nest for at least two days. The young left the second nest on July 16 (EDS).

*Chickadees, Nuthatches*.—A record for the Chestnut-backed Chickadee, far east of its normal range, is furnished by William Kirsher and ERP: one seen on July 14, and another heard on July 21, at Whitehall. An adult and 3 or 4 young Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen on Castle Rock Ridge in the Santa Cruz Mountains on June 15; call notes were heard in this area on June 5, 7, 12 and July 7 (EDS).

*Thrushes, Wood Warblers*.—A nest of the Olive-backed Thrush containing 4 eggs was found at Prairie Creek State Park on June 17 (KL). Townsend's Solitaires were observed all summer at Whitehall, and were carrying insects (presumably an indication of breeding) on July 7. This is "about the lowest elevation at which they are known to nest" (ERP).

A male Audubon's Warbler was seen feeding a fledgling on Castle Rock Ridge, July 7, and the species was seen and heard at other places along the Ridge on June 5, 7, 12, 15, 16 and July 7 and 9 (EDS). A female Townsend's Warbler was seen at the Sacramento By-pass, June 2 (Lee Stallcup, E. A. Albertson). A singing Hermit Warbler was seen near Castle Rock, on Castle Rock Ridge, June 15; singing of this species was heard in this area, where a pair nested in 1954, on June 5, 7 and 12 (EDS).

*Icterids*.—A first-year male Hooded Oriole was seen calling and occasionally singing at Los Gatos on June 27; and a pair was found feeding nestlings in this area on July 25. The nest was in a fan palm, a block from the main business district and appeared to be a second nest of the season because of another recently used nest in a palm 10 feet away. This is the first nesting record known to the observer for Los Gatos, although the bird is now not uncommon in San Jose and elsewhere in the Santa Clara Valley (EDS). A pair of this species was seen along the Ashby Freeway, Berkeley, where there are a number of Washington Palms, June 14 to 21 (A. S. Campbell). One wonders just how long their increase in the central California coastal area will continue if they are dependent on palms for nesting, for the planting of palms is no longer fashionable and old trees are being rapidly cut down. All known nesting areas in our Region should continue to be observed, even if the first occasion of the breeding of the Hooded Oriole has already been recorded.

"The most noticeable difference I have observed in birds in this area (Inverness) is the increase in the number of Brown-headed Cowbirds," writes Grace Miller. An increase is also noted at Alameda (Junea W. Kelly). A frequently reported host, possibly because an obvious one, is the Song Sparrow; fledgling Brown-headed Cowbirds were reported to be in the care of Song Sparrows at Saratoga (EDS), Alameda (JWK), and Berkeley (ASC). A Wren-tit was feeding a fledgling Brown-headed Cowbird at Inverness on July 22 (GM).

*Tanagers, Fringillids.*—ERP and associates believe that Western Tanagers were more numerous at Whitehall than "at any other time we can remember." A male Western Tanager was observed feeding fledglings at Saratoga, July 11, and young were seen frequently in this area after that, especially in a fig tree bearing ripe fruit (EDS).

Fledgling Black-headed Grosbeaks were first noted at Saratoga, June 9; and again recently fledged birds on July 17 (EDS). Two male Pine Grosbeaks were seen at 8500 feet elevation in Yosemite National Park on June 19 (KP). Two female Purple Finches were seen nest-building on Castle Rock Ridge, June 12; in one case the female was accompanied by a male which was feeding a young bird (EDS). A "great many" Pine Siskins have been present at Inverness and on the fields of Tomales Point (GM); and they have been reported "in unusual numbers" at Mount Hermon, where they have been "a nuisance at feed trays" (Mrs. Adist Boylan, *vide* EDS). The plant *Amsinkia intermedia* on which goldfinches feed extensively at Hastings Reservation was unusually lush in one section of the Reservation this year, creating an attraction for an exceptionally large flock of Lawrence's Goldfinches which remained near this source of food for some time (JD).

A color-banded female Spotted Towhee at Saratoga carried nesting material for a second brood on May 3, after successful fledging of the first brood. This second brood was also successful, the fledglings being fed up to, but not after, July 4 (EDS).—LAIDLAW WILLIAMS, RFD 1, Box 152, Carmel, Calif.