



above normal) spring rainfall was slight and somewhat below normal. The wildflower growth, particularly in the desert areas, was spectacular during the first two weeks in April. Throughout the valleys, foothills and mountains flor-

middle of May, and water from springs there continued a heavy flow well into the dry summer months. The rather severe winter rains caused some flooding and landslides but filled mountain lakes to capacity and brought lowland water tables almost up to normal in many areas, thus insuring rich plant growth into the summer months. The fire danger in these areas was at a minimum during the spring and almost no fires were reported. The migration of landbirds did not seem to fit into a comprehensible pattern. Various migrants seemed to appear in certain areas well before others and yet most observers agreed that the migratory flights of April and May were about 10 days late; but when observed they were quite substantial. The late storms of April 1-3 seemed to have some effect in retarding northbound and mountain-bound migrants but winter visitants such as White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows remained until the middle of the month. Clear skies with fairly regular afternoon westerly winds prevailed throughout most of May and into June in coastal areas. Temperatures during this season were about normal. There was more than the usual number of reports of eastern strays during the spring period.

*Loons, Grebes.*—Migrating loons of all three species appeared offshore rather suddenly in early May after an absence here during most of the winter. On May 3, for example, the waters near Huntington Beach, Long Beach, Newport Bay, Seal Beach, and other beach areas were literally swarming with loons in full breeding plumage and hundreds could be seen flying northwestward just offshore. In anticipation of making visual counts of these migrants your editor returned on May 10 but could find almost no evidence of a loon migration (in fact could find very few loons). In conjunction with the fine loon migration of May 3 a great offshore flight of terns was noted. Western Grebes remained in local waters until at least the middle of May after which time most had departed. Small numbers of Eared Grebes lingered until the end of the month. An albino Eared Grebe was observed at Upper Newport Bay, March 23 (Ed., Ben King, Jr.) and remained there at least until May 10. Three more albino Eared Grebes were seen at the south end of San Diego Bay on May 17 (Fred S. Gallup).

*Shearwaters, Pelicans, Cormorants.*—The main migration of shearwaters went unobserved this spring and very few shearwaters were reported in the San Pedro Channel, May 18 (Catherine Shaw). Only 3 Sooty and 5 Pink-footed Shearwaters were seen near Anacapa Island, March 23 (Los Angeles Audubon Society). The main flight of White Pelicans passed through the Region during the middle of April. Twenty-five were seen on Lake Henshaw, April 10 (FG). 20 more were seen flying westward through San Geronio Pass, April 18 (Ed., Mimi Small), and about 500+ were seen over Lake Lebec, April 19 (Mrs. William W. Harding). Brandt's Cormorants far outnumbered Double-crested and Pelagic Cormorants along the coast during the spring season.

*Hérons and Ibises.*—About 20 Common and 30 Snowy Egrets were still present at Upper Newport

Bay, May 3 (Ed., BK, Jr.). A single **Louisiana Heron** was reported from the south end of San Diego Bay, April 13 (Arthur and Jean Morley) and another (or possibly the same individual) was at the Lt. Maxton Brown Sanctuary near Carlsbad, May 7, and remained for several days (Mrs. Boyd Robinson). A single **Reddish Egret** (white phase) was seen at Mission Bay, April 19 (AM, JM, Mrs. T. H. Brown, Mrs. Mary Schuldenfrei). The only Least Bittern reported (outside the lower Colorado River Valley) was a single bird at Lt. Maxton Brown Sanctuary, May 11 (Bess M. Hoffman). Two White-faced Ibis were at the Lomita gun clubs, May 3 (Dean Fisher) and a single bird was still there, May 10 (DF, Ed.) and dead remains (old) of another were found there.

*Waterfowl.*—Most species of dabbling ducks had left the Region by the last week in April but small numbers of diving ducks remained somewhat later. Two Blue-winged Teal were found in the sloughs near South Main Street in Los Angeles in early May and another male of this species was at the Lomita gun clubs, May 10 (DF, Ed.). Small numbers of Buffleheads were still present during the middle of May and flocks of scoters (numbering several hundreds), mostly Surf, were still present in coastal waters until at least May 20. Common Mergansers, scarce throughout the winter months, were almost absent during the spring season.

*Vultures, Hawks, Owls.*—Migrating Turkey Vultures moved through the Region early in March and Mrs. Emma W. Kryder of Claremont reported observing many migrating Turkey Vultures, March 16, 22, and 23. She reported that these Vulture flights occurred after rainstorms when strong westerly winds were blowing and cumulus clouds were present over the San Gabriel Mountains (indicating the presence of thermals on the south face of these same mountains). She observed a six-hour flight of Turkey Vultures on March 16 and larger flights on March 22 and 23 when similar conditions prevailed. The birds were flying westward into the face of westerly winds indicating perhaps that they had come through the San Geronio Pass after crossing the deserts of northwestern Mexico and southeastern California. The Swainson's Hawk migration may have been very brief this year. At any rate, no reports were received of sizable flocks on the move. Mr. Eben McMillan of Cholame (eastern San Luis Obispo County) reported small numbers of Swainson's Hawks, April 5, but stated that very few observations were made thereafter, although in past years thousands of these hawks flew through eastern San Luis Obispo County in late April and early May. Although Mr. McMillan was afield those days he encountered no such flights as he described for other years. Other observers working in the field in late April and early May also failed to note the flight of Swainson's Hawks. No explanation is offered as to dates or routes of flight this year. Most birds of prey seemed reduced in numbers this season as only small numbers of accipiters were noted and very few Ospreys were observed. A single Osprey was seen at Irvine Park, April 12 (Ed., BK, Jr.) and another was at Newport Bay, May 10 (Ed., DF). No migrating Pigeon Hawks

were recorded and Peregrines continued to be scarce in this Region as were Prairie Falcons. The increasing number of untrained young falconophiles in southern California is a new factor to be reckoned with by conservation agencies here. A pair of Burrowing Owls was seen near the isthmus at Catalina Island, May 18 (CS).

*Cranes, Plovers.*—The Sandhill Cranes were reported to have left the Carizzo Plains, Feb. 28 (EMcM). The large wintering flocks of shorebirds had departed by early April, and migrant shorebirds moved through the Region in about normal numbers during the latter part of April and early May. The last wintering flocks of Mountain Plover on the Carizzo Plains were noted, March 24 (EMcM). Black-bellied Plover numbers were somewhat lower than normal but this may have been due to reduction of habitat.

*Identification of Dowitchers.*—Dowitchers of both species were present in normal numbers during late April and early May with the Short-billed outnumbering the Long-billed by about 4 to 1. Identification of these two species is a new problem to those who had been grouping the two dowitchers as one prior to publication of the Fifth Edition of the *A. O. U. Check-list*. Your editor has yet to read a good analysis of field characteristics for separating these difficult birds. Extremes in bill-length are probably a good guide but since there is so much individual variation, and since sizes overlap, this by itself is not a reliable mark. Both species utter a musical twittering sound but the whistled *phen phen* or *phen phen phen* (rising in pitch and softer and more rapid than the similar notes of the Lesser Yellowlegs) is characteristic of the Short-billed Dowitcher. In the breeding plumage, the throat and breast markings of the Short-billed Dowitcher are not as heavy as on the Long-billed Dowitcher and the markings on the flanks and the sides tend to be *spots* rather than *bars* as in the Long-billed Dowitcher. The single or multiple high weak *keeeek* note of the Long-billed Dowitcher is likewise distinctive. Identification of silent winter-plumaged birds would be most difficult.

*Phalaropes, Jaegers.*—Red Phalaropes were very rare close to the coast (a single bird was at Mission Bay, April 5, and another at the south end of San Diego Bay, April 14, AM, JM) while both Wilson's and Northern Phalaropes were present in coastal lagoons during April and the early part of May. A single Parasitic Jaeger flew over the lagoon at Bolsa Chica, May 3 (Ed., BK, Jr.). A single Pomarine Jaeger was seen near Huntington Beach, May 10 (Ed., DF).

*Gulls, Terns, Alcids.*—Bonaparte's Gulls were numerous along the coast throughout April and into the first part of May. A large northbound flight of terns (Forster's, Common, Black) was observed on May 3 near Huntington Beach. Hundreds of terns (mostly Forster's) could be seen moving northward along the coast in continuous streams for several hours during the early morning hours. Six Xantus' Murrelets, 1 Rhinoceros Auklet, and 2 Cassin's Auklets were seen in the waters around Anacapa

Islands, March 23 (L. A. A. S.).

*Doves, Swifts.*—Ground Doves were seen in the Tijuana River Valley near San Ysidro, San Diego Co., May 15 and May 25. Two nests were found (AM). The migration of Vaux's Swifts was very disappointing. Almost no migratory flocks were seen and all observations were of single birds or small groups. As swifts tend to migrate close to the ground only on heavily overcast days (of which we had almost none this spring in the interior valleys) these large flights were not observed this year. The flight was dispersed over the entire Region from desert to coast and lasted almost the entire month of May. Large flocks of White-throated Swifts were observed from time to time but these were probably local populations as they were not seen in migratory flight. No Black Swifts were noted in migration, probably because large flocks of migrating Vaux's Swifts could not be located.

*Hummingbirds, Woodpeckers.*—Many observers commented on the lack of hummingbirds in and about gardens and I can only attribute this to the abundance of wildflowers available to them this spring. The migration of Allen's Hummingbirds was over by March 15 but Rufous Hummingbirds were still seen in the middle of May (which was late). Large numbers of Calliope Hummingbirds were feeding at chaparral flowers during late April but remained scarce in the mountain areas during May and June as many of the mountain meadows were still blanketed by snow. Black-chinned Hummingbirds had arrived in small numbers by the third week in March but Costa's Hummingbirds were scarce away from desert areas during the spring. The only reported Lewis' Woodpecker during the spring season was a single bird near Castaic Junction, May 18 (Dean Fisher, Paul Herman).

*Passerine Landbirds (general).*—The migration of many species of passerines (particularly tanagers, vireos, warblers, and flycatchers) was almost 10 days late for the bulk of the migrants. As a result, when the main flights arrived in early May the flocks of migrants were large and contained many species. The annual San Diego County May census was held on May 3 and 4 and during those two days birders counted 232 species and nesting activity of 52 species was observed. Owing to the somewhat tardy migration your editor did not attempt an annual "Big Day" until May 3. At that time two observers counted 190 species in a single 24-hour period. The choice of dates was a fortunate one as many flocks of migrants were seen. Flocks of thrushes, flycatchers, tanagers, and warblers were seen almost at the beach early on the morning of May 3. Indeed, small groups of Wilson's Warblers (also Hermit and Townsend's Warblers) were seen moving northward *along the beach* stopping to feed occasionally on sand-dwelling flies. Shrubs near the beach areas were literally swarming with Wilson's and other warblers at this time. On this date of good migratory movement no Vaux's Swifts were seen!

*Flycatchers, Swallows.*—Western and Cassin's Kingbirds were numerous during early April with the latter seeming more abundant than usual. Ash-

throated Flycatchers (which sometimes winter here) were seen early and sporadically with no pattern of their movements being clear. Western Wood Pewees were late with the main flight not commencing until April 30. Olive-sided Flycatchers likewise were late. Vermilion Flycatchers nested near San Diego on at least 2 occasions. A single Vermilion Flycatcher was at Morongo Valley, April 19 (James W. Huffman) and a pair was near Loma Linda early in May (Ethel West). The migration of swallows was normal and Purple Martins seemed more numerous than previously.

*Thrashers, Waxwings, Starlings.*—Sage Thrashers were reported as numerous in the San Felipe Valley, April 10 (FG). Cedar Waxwings, which had a heavy flight this winter, lingered long into the spring season and large flocks were reported in the Region as late as May 20. A single Starling was in the Santa Clara River bottom, May 18 (Ed., *et al.*) and at least one nest was found near San Gabriel during April (John Tramontano). They were also reported as nesting about 6 miles southeast of Cholame in northeastern San Luis Obispo County (Eben McMillan, *vide* A. I. Roest).

*Vireos, Warblers, Orioles, Tanagers.*—Gray Vireos may still be seen in the vicinity of Phelan as the Rosses found at least 5 on May 24. None of the

eastern warblers were reported this spring. The migration of most species of warblers passed through the Region during the first week of May, and on May 10 Mr. McMillan reported a large wave of migrants including Wilson's Warblers, Yellow Warblers, Lazuli Buntings, Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Warbling and Hutton's Vireos, plus other species near Cholame. Bullock's and Hooded Orioles had arrived by the fourth week of March and their numbers swelled thereafter. Very unusual was the report from Dr. Thomas R. Howell that Dr. Frank E. Peabody, Department of Zoology, U.C.L.A., observed both **Orchard Oriole** and **Baltimore Oriole** in his garden in Santa Monica together with Hooded and Bullock's Orioles for comparison. The main flight of Western Tanagers occurred on the night of May 2 after which woodland areas were literally alive with this species. A single **Summer Tanager** was near Loma Linda, May 10 (EW).

*Sparrows.*—A single Grasshopper Sparrow was found near Laguna (on San Miguel road) on April 19 in exactly the same locality as last year (Francis Raymond). Northbound White-crowned Sparrows could be seen moving through until the last week in April.—ARNOLD SMALL, 3028 Cavendish Drive, Los Angeles 64, Calif.

**Corrigenda:** Vol. 12: 248, change Red-headed Woodpecker, 75 (*Ohio*, Cincinnati) to Red-headed Woodpecker, 227, (*Okla.*, Tulsa).

Vol. 12: 249, change, Am. Dipper, 12 (*Colo.*, Durango) to Am. Dipper, 13 (*Calif.*, Yosemite).