

MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION.—The spring migration season of April and May in California necessarily includes much nesting activity. Some



nesting notes, particularly when connected with migrational movements or nearer the beginning of the period covered by the report, will be included in this report. Others that seem better connected with nesting will be deferred until the next report. The emphasis, as much as seems chronologically practical, will be on migration.

Since the fairly hard rains in the middle two weeks of February, there has been very little precipitation. It has been an exceedingly dry spring with the total rainfall considerably below normal through the state. In very general terms, April was quite warm and dry, while May became windy and cool, with a trace of rain. The one general rain of April, on the 25th and 26th, brought damaging hail and local flooding to a limited area in the Central Great Valley and the adjoining Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Apparently, this low pressure area had a "grounding" effect on several species of birds. Vaux's Swift got as far as 3 miles north of Sebastopol on the 24th, which was a "first sighted" report (GLB). Peak numbers of Wilson's Warblers were found on April 24 and 25, at Mills College, Oakland (HLC), while the Lazuli Bunting probably best showed this effect of weather in a series of local reports. The earliest one was heard singing at Stevens Creek Park in the Santa Clara Valley near Cupertino, on April 22 (Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society); one was at Saratoga on the next day (EDS); the species was judged to be "remarkably abundant" at St. Mary's College, Moraga, on April 24 (ASC); one in Portola Valley, near Palo Alto, on April 25 (RW); and 3 singing on April 26 at Sacramento By-Pass (EAA).

A cold front passing through San Francisco the night of April 5 and 6 also appears to have grounded many birds. Many first sightings occurred during the period between April 5 and 8, and some birds tended to "group up" ready to move on, if their breeding areas had not yet been reached. Among those which were observed in rather unusual small groups were: 8 Townsend's Warblers, restlessly singing, at Big Basin Redwood State Park, on April 6 (EAP); and 5 Varied Thrushes that seemed to be on the move in a Fort Bragg yard on April 8 (RC).

By far the heaviest migration occurred on April 18. Departures of winter visitants, as well as arrivals of migrants from southern areas came in the greatest movement of the season. Dr. Campbell in Moraga, Contra Costa County, reports a regular "wave" of the smaller birds: Yellow Warblers, the peak of the Townsend's Warblers, Wilson's Warblers, Lawrence's Goldfinches, and Lark Sparrows were most in evidence (AS). It also brought the first of numbers of Wilson's Warblers to Fort Bragg, April 17 (RC) and the first Western Wood Pewee to Moraga (ASC). A few wandering migrants turned up in unusual spots, probably taking advantage of favorable weather conditions: a Pigeon Hawk in an area where only 2 have been previously reported, 10 miles south of Sacramento (GMcC); a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Berkeley (ASC); a Hooded Oriole in Capitol Park, Sacramento, new for this area (DM); and a Cassin's Finch in Oakland (LS & RS).

The fact that migration is often spotty here can probably be attributed to the fact that the prevailing NW winds (and variations) in the Region are interrupted by southerly winds in the Central Valley, and on the coast at different times. Birds coming through the Valley may hit tailwinds at the one end and headwinds at the other, or migrants on the coast may experience quite different weather conditions than

birds simultaneously using the valley flyways. Thus, it tends to be unlikely that birds will be grounded throughout the state at the same time.

Loons, Grebes, Pelagic Birds.—Common, Arctic, and Red-throated Loons, Horned, Eared and Western Grebes were seen during a boat trip from San Francisco to the Farallon Islands on April 12 by members of the Golden Gate Audubon Society. The 200± Eared Grebes, many in breeding plumage, remained in a raft on the surface of the ocean near the Islands, perhaps detained by headwinds. Two or 3 Black-footed Albatrosses, a Fulmar, a few Pink-footed Shearwaters and a few thousand Sooty Shearwaters also were recorded on the Farallons trip (G.G.A.S.), while on May 10, "thousands" of Sooties were seen from the Golden Gate Park vicinity beach as they flew north (ELP). A Fork-tailed Petrel was seen on April 17 from a wharf at Monterey, and another on the same day was sighted from Point Pinos, Pacific Grove (GPL).

Pelicans, Herons, Geese.—Numbers of Brown Pelicans on Bird Island, Point Lobos, were down from last year (MF). Three Snowy Egrets rested, foraged, and flew north from Pebbly Beach at Point Lobos on April 29th—the first record of them there (MF). A pair of Canada Geese with 5 young were reported on May 9 to the Cooper Ornithological Society meeting as having nested on an island in San Francisco Bay (Drs. W. Z. Lidicker & P. K. Anderson). But 7 geese of the same species were at Crystal Springs Reservoir, San Mateo County, on the very late date of May 18 (EDS). Bringing up the rear, as far as is known, of the flight of Black Brant were 9 flying north from the Golden Gate on April 12 (G.G.A.S.).

Ducks.—Blue-winged Teal were observed at so many coastal areas that all seemed newsworthy: a male and 2 females on April 17 at Elkhorn Slough, Moss Landing (CA & VA); 2 pairs at Carmel River Lagoon on April 28 (GPL), while one pair was seen in the same vicinity on May 7 (GPL, MF); a lone male among Mallards was found in the Santa Rosa Lagoon area on May 16 (GLB & EHM), and another lone male was reported from McClusky Slough, Moss Landing, on May 28, staying at least until June 6 (CA & VA). Six Wood Ducks, scarce enough in the San Francisco area, were found on Lake Merced on April 17 (EH, Jr., *vide* CH). Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, White-winged, Common, and Surf Scoters, and Red-breasted Mergansers were all reported from the boat trip to the Farallon Islands, April 12 (G.G.A.S.). An albino scoter, probably a Surf Scoter, was seen at Lighthouse Point, near Santa Cruz, on April 11 (CCH & JH).

Kites, Hawks.—A White-tailed Kite was seen at the Merced Wildlife Refuge, April 18, and another was noted near Mariposa, Mariposa County, on the following day (CH). Ospreys are so infrequently reported that single birds are worth mention: Casper Creek, Mendocino County, on March 28 (ERP); near Merced Falls on April 19 (CH); and on May 14 at Moss Landing (GPL). A Peregrine Falcon was recorded on the Farallon boat trip, April 12 (G.G.A.S.). A Pigeon Hawk near Kelseyville, Lake County, on May 23 (EH, Jr., *vide* CH) was very late. Swainson's

Hawks were observed near Tracy, San Joaquin County, in a plowed alfalfa field that was so teeming with mice that one could catch them bare-handed (LS & RS). The 75 or 80 hawks on that day, May 24, had been reduced to 25 on the next day, when Cogswell collected one, found 5 *Microtus* in its stomach, and ascertained that most of the hawks were immatures.

Shorebirds.—No report of any remarkable flight of shorebirds was received. Normal numbers were present on normal dates. Two Ruddy Turnstone were observed at Bay Farm Island, Alameda County, on April 22 and 25, notable because of irregular appearances (JWK). One hundred and fifty Long-billed Curlews were present on April 5 and 7 in a marsh 3 miles NW of Chico (VKC), and a straggling group of 12 flew northward off the coast near Santa Cruz on May 16 (EAP). Spotted Sandpipers were observed in greater numbers than a year ago at Point Lobos (MF), while 3 were located at Lake Merced on May 16, the first these regular observers have seen there (EH, Jr., & CH). Greater Yellowlegs were reported from 5 miles W. of Gridley, Butte County, on April 5 as being the best count in recent years—70 of them in company with Black-necked Stilts (EAA). About 6 Knots, the best report since 1956, were at Bay Farm Island on April 22 and 25 (JWK). Am. Avocets with young too small to fly were observed on Bay Farm Island on April 18 (JWK).

Gulls, Terns, Alcids.—An immature Glaucous Gull, authoritatively identified, spent at least a week at a feeding station at Lake Merritt, Oakland, about April 21—for the first record there since 20 years ago (PC). Again this year, Bonaparte's Gulls were numerous and widespread. They were reported as conspicuous at Point Lobos Reserve State Park (MF), and as averaging 175 to 200 (occasionally as high as 300 at once) at Lake Merced during the season (EH, Jr., CH). On April 30, members of the Santa Cruz Bird Club watched two flights of these striking gulls, totaling 40, migrate along the sea cliffs near Santa Cruz; and as late as May 28, near Natural Bridges, not far away, there were still about 35 (1/3 in breeding plumage) (EAP). Three Black-legged Kittiwakes were observed on April 12, on the Farallon boat trip (G.G.A.S.). A Black Tern was the first reported since the fall of 1955 at Moss Landing; it was at Elkhorn Slough on May 14 (GDL). Pigeon Guillemots (26) were first seen off Point Lobos on March 25 (MF), which is about normal; but those that nest along the Santa Cruz shore cliffs were late in carrying out their activities. A Marbled Murrelet, in a 6:00 A.M. drizzle, was over Big Basin RSP on April 19 (EAP). Ancient Murrelets, Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets, but only 4 or 5 Tufted Puffins, were found during the April 12 Farallon boat trip (G.G.A.S.).

Pigeons.—Band-tailed Pigeons became so numerous near Sonora, Tuolumne County, that the newspapers from Stockton, Sonora and other localities reported the event. Apparently this is part of a major shift in the state population of these birds that has been occurring during the past three years. In areas where they have been regularly reported, the numbers have been decreasing, while occasional reports from the Sierra Nevada tell of "thousands" present at different sea-

sons. Unfortunately, our coverage of the Sierra and foothills is not complete enough to trace these movements in detail. In mid-February, a small flock of Band-tailed Pigeons was seen near Sonora for the first time in the observer's 11 years' experience with the U. S. Forest Service. Then, flocks were seen from 3:30 P.M. to sunset each day as they flew in to roost in large Digger Pines. Numbers built up gradually until by April 11 the two nearby flocks totaled an estimated 2000, with other flocks also in the area. By then, flocks could be seen coming and going all through the day. On May 5, birds were reported as maintaining their numbers (AMC). In 1956, the breeding population in Yosemite was said to be very large, while the flocks during the following winter were reported as up to 3000. Ten thousands birds were estimated during that year in the northern Central Valley and in the spring of 1958, "thousands" were reported in the area near Paradise, Butte County. After that, no large numbers were reported until this spring season.

Swifts.—A Black Swift was spotted over Folsom Lake, near Sacramento, on May 2 during a field trip of the Sacramento Audubon Society. Since this was a new bird for that area, there was a great deal of surprise when 7 more were found later in the day. Sure enough, at MacArthur-Burney Falls State Park, where they are a regular nesting species, the arrival of these swifts was right on time, May 5 (LP). Could it be that this will help trace their migration route? Vaux's Swifts were first noted near Sebastopol on April 24 (GLB). A pair seen over Saratoga was suspected of nesting in the chimney of the observer's home during the first half of May; on June 13, nestlings were heard each time the adults flew in with food (EDS).

Hummingbirds, Woodpeckers.—A Black-chinned Hummingbird was observed on May 21 in upper Arroyo Mocho Canyon, Alameda County, which is rather far north for an almost coastal occurrence (LS, RS, HLC). An early migrant Rufous Hummingbird showed up at Stanford University on Feb. 23 (LD), but others at Davis, Oakland, Courtland, Chico, and Murphy's were more normal in their April and early May appearances. Calliope Hummingbirds, all males, were noted at El Cerrito, near Berkeley, on April 13, 24, 25, and at least 5 were observed in Tilden Regional Park nearby on April 26 (ALC), unusual so near the coast and this far north. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was last seen on March 20 in Soquel (FEH), and on April 2 in the Santa Cruz Mountains (EAP).

Nuthatches, Mockingbirds.—Red-breasted Nuthatches continued in short supply, but were found twice: one on May 9 just north of Sebastopol (GLB), and 2 singles on Castle Rock Ridge, Santa Cruz Mountains, on May 27 (EDS, JH, DBH). Observers have felt that Mockingbirds are much more common than the records hold. It is known, of course, that this species has been favored by the spread of human settlement and land cultivation, but what the present prevalence of the species is was the question. Members of the Santa Cruz Bird Club decided to hold a census and find out. The results, complete with map, show

that the Mockingbird has indeed increased: In contrast to the maximum of 4 in the Santa Cruz vicinity credited in 1955, they now report 34 nesting pairs in Santa Cruz, and Capitola, 2 in Soquel, and 1 in Aptos (VW)! In addition, 3 were present, with a nest, south of Sonoma, one was present for many days at Windsor, north of Santa Rosa (MS); and one was found along the beach north of Orick, Humboldt County, on May 26, 50 miles north of previous records—and not a winter visitor either (KL)!

Thrushes.—Varied Thrushes can usually be counted on to have gone by mid-April, but there were a few that lingered: the last 2 seen at Fort Bragg were there on April 26 (RC); and, as a surprise, after expecting 3 on April 19 to be the last in Big Basin RSP, there was a pair present on May 2 (EAP). Hermit Thrushes departed as usual in early April from most wintering areas, just as song began in the breeding areas such as Big Basin RSP. Singing normally continues until mid-July (EAP). Swainson's Thrush was reported as arriving by April 3 at St. Mary's College (ASC), and was first heard singing at Inverness, Marin County, on April 4 (GM).

Waxwings, Starlings, Vireos, Warblers.—The last small flocks of Cedar Waxwings were at Saratoga on May 14 (EDS), and at Mills College, 3 flocks, on May 28 (HLC). There were no reports of Starlings. Solitary and Warbling Vireos were numerous and widespread. Twelve Solitary Vireos at China Camp, south of Carmel Valley, on May 30 seemed like a fairly large concentration of late migrants (FJW, *vide* CH). Plymell termed the movement of Warbling Vireos through San Francisco on May 7 as a "heavy migration." Orange-crowned Warblers in the San Francisco Bay area (JWK), Myrtle Warblers in Saratoga on April 2 (EDS) and at Auburn, near Sacramento, on the same day (GMCc), MacGillivray's Warblers throughout the covered parts of the Region, and plenty of Wilson's Warblers indicate a good season for these migratory birds. Hermit Warblers were present on Middle Ridge in Big Basin RSP by April 27, and remained throughout the period (about 6 singing males and at least 2 females for possible nesting) (EAP); and on May 5 a male Hermit Warbler was seen to chase another on Fremont Peak (San Benito County, EDS). On Castle Rock Ridge, May 27, 2 singing males were singing in the same vicinity where a nest under incubation was found on May 30, 1953 (EDS).

Blackbirds, Tanagers, Grosbeaks, Finches.—Twelve ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbirds were seen east of Gonzales, Monterey County, on May 17 (CA & VA), and on the same day, a female was seen under good conditions in the tules at Lake Merced, San Francisco (FP & Aileen Pierson). Fifty ♂ Tricolored Blackbirds were observed in a pasture at Moss Landing on May 31 (FEH, CCH, JH & DBH), while 400 were present during the period near Salinas (nesting activity under way, CA & VA). From all reports, Western Tanagers were widespread and abundant. A surprise Cardinal (maybe an escape from captivity?) turned up at Mills College, singing, on April 22, and then disappeared (HLC). A pair of Blue Grosbeaks was found on May 24, on the Cienega Road south of Hollister,

where a pair had nested in the mustard on June 1, 1958. An excellent color slide had been made then (Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Moser, *vide* EDS). Lawrence's Goldfinches had an excellent year so far: in addition to their abundant presence in Moraga, April 18, flocks of from 20 to 200 were observed feeding on *Amsinckia intermedia* (Fiddleneck) on both sides of the Salinas Valley (CA & VA) from April 20 to May 8; a pair was observed gathering material from an old rug in Sunol on April 25 (MLS); some were listed at St. Mary's College on May 13 (JWK); at least 4 were near Folsom Lake on May 24 (EAA); 50 were also feeding on Fiddleneck on Fremont Peak, May 25 (FEH, CCH, JH & DBH); a pair was at El Cerrito on May 28, 29 and June 1 for the first time in Curl's experience; and 12 were observed at McClusky Slough, Moss Landing on May 31 (JH, DBH & FEH). About 10 Red Crossbills were photographed on May 3 on Inverness Ridge, Marin County, as they visited a water hole (PL) among the Bishop Pines (with Pine Siskins); and on May 8, a Green-tailed Towhee came to a feeder 3 miles north of Sebastopol (GLB).

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